

Consumer Credit Insights

Credit Card Debt in Third District States

BY ALAINA BARCA¹

Percentage of borrowers with credit card debt, 2025Q1

88%	85%	84%	83%
New Jersey	Delaware	Pennsylvania	United States



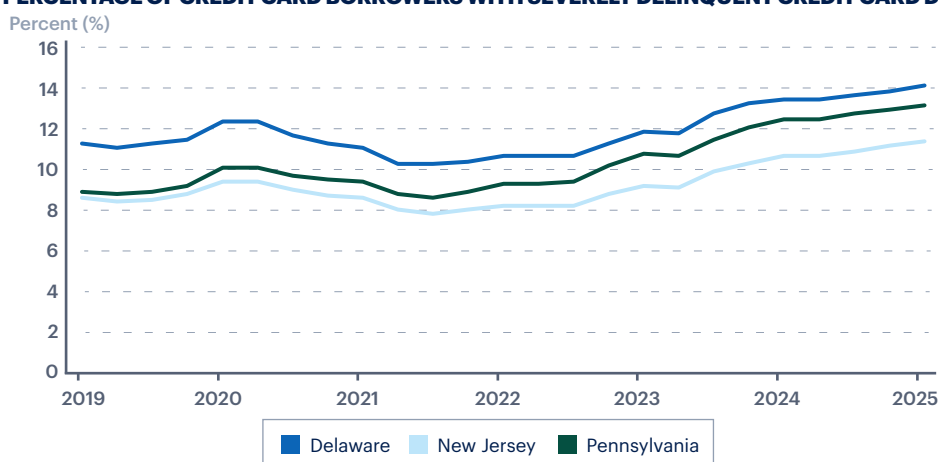
Average total credit card debt, 2025Q1

\$7,000	\$6,500	\$5,900	\$6,500
New Jersey	Delaware	Pennsylvania	United States

New data from the Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia's Consumer Credit Explorer (CCE) offer insights into consumer credit conditions in the Federal Reserve's Third District states: Delaware, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania.² This brief uses data from the CCE to highlight key trends in consumer credit card debt as of the first quarter of 2025 ("2025Q1").³

Credit Card Debt Overall

About the same share of borrowers had credit card debt in 2025Q1 compared with the same period one year before, although more borrowers in Third District states had credit card debt than in the United States overall.⁴ Average inflation-adjusted credit card debt has remained relatively stable for Third District states in the past year.⁵ In 2025Q1, average credit card debt was \$5,900 in Pennsylvania, \$6,500 in Delaware, and \$7,000 in New Jersey. Generally, average credit card debt and shares of

PERCENTAGE OF CREDIT CARD BORROWERS WITH SEVERELY DELINQUENT CREDIT CARD DEBT

borrowers with credit card debt were higher in middle- and upper-income (MUI) neighborhoods and neighborhoods that are majority non-Hispanic White compared with low- and moderate-income (LMI) neighborhoods and neighborhoods that are majority people of color (POC).⁶

Credit Card Delinquencies

The share of credit card borrowers with severely delinquent credit card debt has been on the rise in Third District states, most recently reaching levels not seen in over 20 years.⁷ Some borrowers face higher rates: In 2025Q1, at least 20

¹ The views expressed here are those of the author and do not necessarily represent the views of the Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia or the Federal Reserve System.

² The Federal Reserve's Third District is a region that covers eastern and central Pennsylvania, southern New Jersey, and Delaware. Data shown are for the entirety of each state.

³ All series included in this brief are publicly available via the CCE, an interactive tool for examining quarterly trends in consumer credit use at the regional, state, and national levels, available at www.philadelphiafed.org/surveys-and-data/community-development-data/consumer-credit-explorer. The tool's series are generated using the Federal Reserve Bank of New York Consumer Credit Panel/Equifax Data, which is a nationally representative dataset of anonymized individual credit files. Refer to the CCE for more details on data and methodology. This brief is part of a series that highlights regional trends in CCE data across different debt types. The related briefs are available at www.philadelphiafed.org/community-development/credit-and-capital/consumer-credit-insights-debt-in-third-district-states.

⁴ Calculated as the number of borrowers with credit card debt greater than \$0 divided by the number of consumers with total debt greater than \$0. Credit card debt is debt from general-purpose credit cards and excludes both debit cards and credit cards for use at specific retailers.

⁵ This refers to the average credit card balance for borrowers with outstanding credit card debt (greater than \$0). Not all balances are necessarily revolving balances. All dollar figures are reported in 2025Q1 dollars, adjusted using the BEA Personal Consumption Expenditures deflator.

⁶ LMI neighborhoods are census tracts in which the 2016–2020 American Community Survey (ACS) median family income (MFI) is less than 80 percent of the MFI in the associated metropolitan statistical area (MSA) or non-MSA counties in the state, while MUI neighborhoods are census tracts in which the MFI is greater than or equal to 80 percent. Majority-POC neighborhoods are census tracts in which more than 50 percent of residents identify their race as anything other than White alone or their ethnicity as Hispanic or Latino in the 2016–2020 ACS, while majority non-Hispanic White neighborhoods are census tracts in which more than 50 percent of residents identify their race as White alone and their ethnicity as non-Hispanic.

⁷ Calculated as the number of credit card borrowers with at least one severely delinquent credit card account divided by the number of borrowers with credit card debt greater than \$0. The 2025Q1 shares of credit card borrowers with severely delinquent credit card debt in Delaware (14.4 percent), New Jersey (11.6 percent), and Pennsylvania (13.4 percent) are each the highest share for their respective areas since the start of our series in 2005, including during the aftermath of the Great Recession. Shares have been rising more sharply since a relative dip in delinquencies in 2021Q3, when values were 10.5 percent in Delaware, 8.8 percent in Pennsylvania, and 8.0 percent in New Jersey.

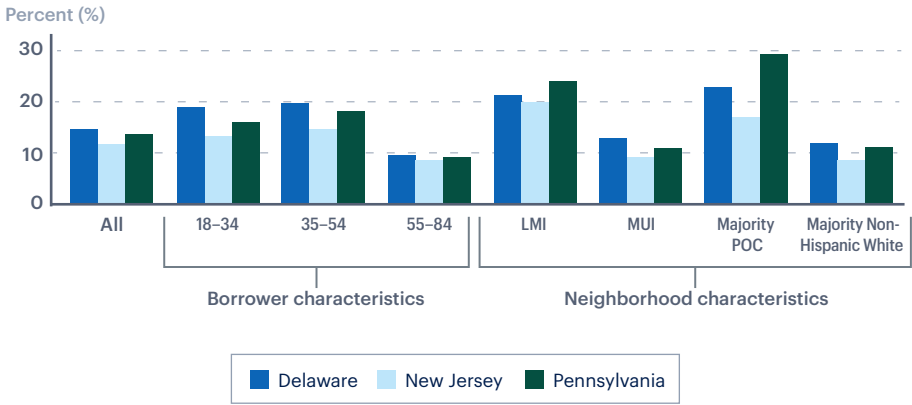
percent of credit card borrowers living in LMI neighborhoods across the three states and 29 percent of those in majority-POC neighborhoods in Pennsylvania had severely delinquent credit card debt. Borrowers under 55 years old also had higher rates than borrowers 55 and older. Some regions in the Third District had a higher share of severely delinquent credit card borrowers than others, including the Vineland, NJ, Dover, DE, and Scranton-Wilkes-Barre, PA, metropolitan areas.

Credit Card Utilization

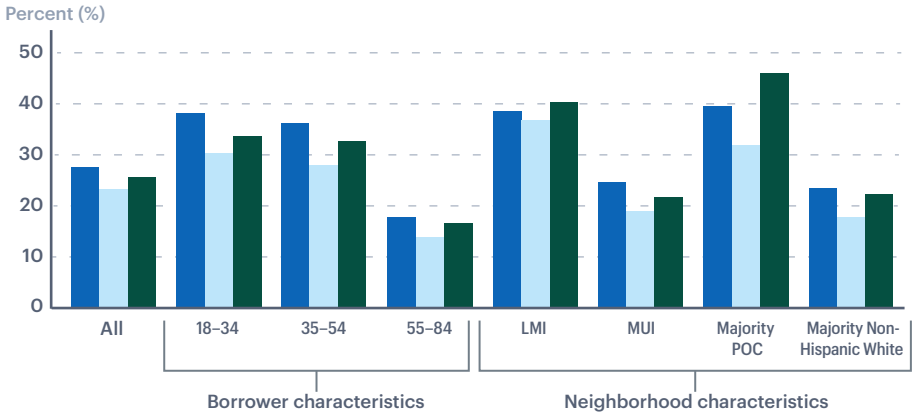
The share of credit card borrowers in Third District states with a high utilization rate — 75 percent or more of their credit card limit — has remained

similar over the past year.⁸ Still, about one-quarter of credit card borrowers had a high utilization rate in 2025Q1: 27 percent of borrowers in Delaware, 25 percent in Pennsylvania, and 23 percent in New Jersey. Borrowers who are younger or living in LMI or majority-POC neighborhoods were more likely to have a high utilization rate, including 40 percent of Pennsylvania borrowers in LMI areas, 46 percent of Pennsylvania borrowers in majority-POC areas, and 38 percent of 18- to 34-year-old Delaware borrowers. This was higher in some regions: Over one-third of borrowers in the Vineland, NJ, and Dover, DE, metropolitan areas were using at least 75 percent of their credit card limit.

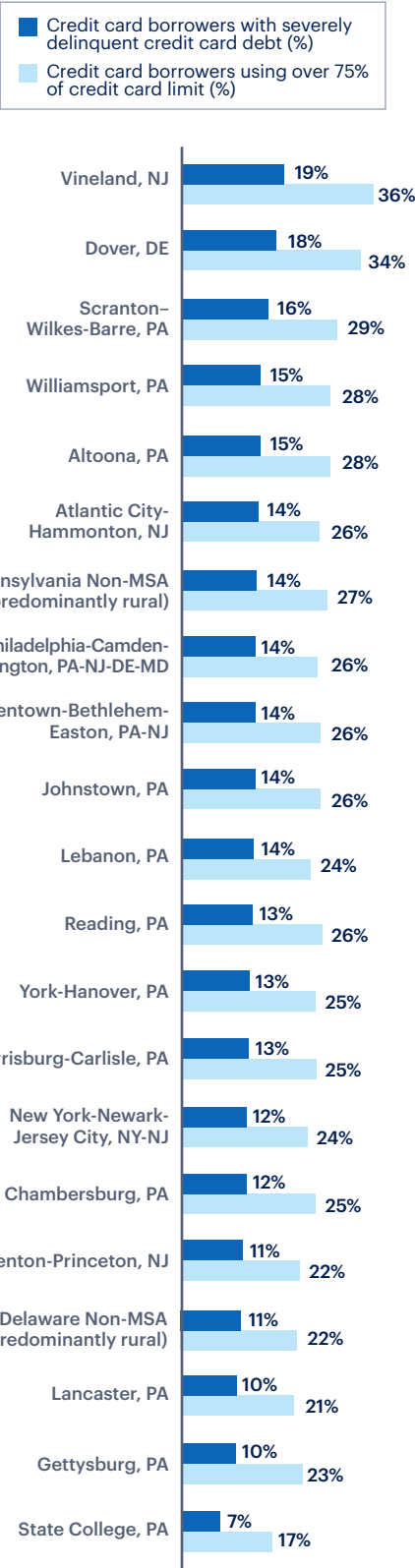
PERCENTAGE OF CREDIT CARD BORROWERS WITH SEVERELY DELINQUENT CREDIT CARD DEBT, 2025Q1



PERCENTAGE OF CREDIT CARD BORROWERS USING OVER 75% OF CREDIT CARD LIMIT, 2025Q1



CREDIT CARD DEBT BY METROPOLITAN AREA, 2025Q1



⁸ This refers to the share of credit card borrowers with debt greater than \$0 for which outstanding debt is equal to or greater than 75 percent of their total credit card limit.



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