Overview of Poverty Statistics for the United States

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U.S. Census Bureau

DRB-FY19-ROSS-B0129

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This presentation has undergone a more limited review than official Census Bureau reports. All views and any errors are solely those of the author and do not necessarily reflect any official position of the Bureau. All comparative statements in this presentation have undergone statistical testing, and, unless otherwise noted, all comparisons are statistically significant at the 10 percent significance level. Do not cite or distribute without author permission.

The Census Bureau reviewed this data product for unauthorized disclosure of confidential information and has approved the disclosure avoidance practices applied to this release. DRB-FY19-ROSS-B0129.
• Data are based on the Current Population Survey’s Annual Social and Economic Supplement (CPS ASEC).

• CPS ASEC is the official source of national poverty estimates.

• Official poverty estimates are calculated in accordance with OMB Statistical Policy Directive 14.
The official poverty rate in 2017 was 12.3 percent, down 0.4 percentage points from 2016. In 2017, there were 39.7 million people in poverty, not statistically different from the number in poverty in 2016.

Poverty Rates by Race and Hispanic Origin: 1959 to 2017

Note: The data for 2013 and beyond reflect the implementation of the redesigned income questions.
Poverty Rates by Age: 1959 to 2017

Note: The data for 2013 and beyond reflect the implementation of the redesigned income questions. Data for people aged 18 to 64 and 65 and older are not available from 1960 to 1965.

People with Income Below 50 Percent of Their Poverty Threshold: 1975 to 2017

Individuals with Income Below 50% of the Poverty Threshold as a Share of Total Poverty Population: 1975 to 2017

Note: The data for 2013 and beyond reflect the implementation of the redesigned income questions.
2017 Estimates from the American Community Survey for States

- Poverty rates over 18 percent in Mississippi, New Mexico, Louisiana and West Virginia.
- Poverty rates less than 11 percent in 13 states.
• 4th consecutive annual decline in national poverty in the ACS

• Poverty down in 20 states and District of Columbia

• Poverty up in West Virginia and Delaware
• Poverty declined in 3 of the 5 years in 16 states.

• Poverty declined in 4 of the 5 years in California, Texas, Michigan, Florida Georgia and North Carolina.

• No state saw poverty decline in all five years.
Between 2012 and 2017:

- Poverty fell in 42 states.
- Poverty increased in Delaware and West Virginia.
The Supplemental Poverty Measure (SPM) rate in 2017 was 13.9 percent. This is not statistically different from the 2016 SPM rate of 14.0 percent.

The SPM rate for 2017 was 1.6 percentage points higher than the official poverty rate of 12.3 percent.

There were 16 states plus the District of Columbia for which SPM rates were higher than official poverty rates, 18 states with lower rates, and 16 states for which the differences were not statistically significant.

Official and SPM Thresholds for Units with Two Adults and Two Children

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Official poverty measure</th>
<th>Owners with a mortgage</th>
<th>Owners without a mortgage</th>
<th>Renters</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$24,858</td>
<td>$27,085</td>
<td>$23,261</td>
<td>$27,005</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Official and Research SPM Thresholds for Two Adult, Two Child Units with Geographic Adjustments: 2017

Supplemental Poverty Thresholds

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Official</th>
<th>New York Nonmetro: No Mortgage</th>
<th>Albany: Homeowner with Mortgage</th>
<th>New York City: Renter</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No Geo Adj</td>
<td>$24,858</td>
<td>$23,261</td>
<td>$27,085</td>
<td>$27,005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPM</td>
<td>$20,976</td>
<td>$27,902</td>
<td>$32,943</td>
<td>$32,943</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

https://www2.census.gov/programs-surveys/demo/tables/p60/265/pov-threshold-2017.xlsx
Figure 7. Difference in Poverty Rates by State Using the Official Measure and the SPM: 3-Year Average 2015 to 2017


United States Census Bureau
Economics and Statistics Administration
U.S. CENSUS BUREAUCensus.gov
Change in Number of People in Poverty After Including Each Element: 2017

Numbers in millions

Social Security: -27.0
Refundable tax credits: -8.3
SNAP: -3.4
SSI: -3.2
Housing subsidies: -2.9
Child support received: -1.0
School lunch: -1.2
TANF/general assistance: -0.5
Unemployment insurance: -0.5
LIHEAP: -0.2
Workers’ compensation: -0.2
WIC: -0.3
Child support paid: 0.2
Federal income tax: 1.5
FICA: 4.7
Work expenses: 5.6
Medical expenses: 10.9

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- FICA: 1.5
- Work expenses: 4.7
- Medical expenses: 5.6
- Under 18 years: 10.9

Change in Number of People in Poverty After Including Each Element: 2017

Numbers in millions

Social Security
Refundable tax credits
SNAP
SSI
Housing subsidies
Child support received
School lunch
TANF/general assistance
Unemployment insurance
LIHEAP
Workers' compensation
WIC
Child support paid
Federal income tax
FICA
Work expenses
Medical expenses

Under 18 years 18 to 64 years 65 years and over

-27.0
-8.3
0.2

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- Child support paid: 0.2
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Current Population Survey (CPS)

- Produce specific socioeconomic and demographic estimates for the United States and states for total population and selected subpopulations.
- With the Annual Social Economic Supplement (ASEC), provide timely estimates of income and health insurance, as well as official poverty estimates.
- Annual sample size is about 100,000 addresses.
- Telephone and personal-visit interviews for the 50 states and the District of Columbia. The CPS is a voluntary survey.
• CPS ASEC asks a series of 50 questions about various sources of income, including questions about the amount of several noncash benefits such as food stamps and employment-related health insurance, during the previous calendar year.
• Interviews conducted between February-April, asks about last calendar year income.
• Unrelated subfamilies are identified and poverty status is determined as a family
• Rich historical data
  • For characteristics of U.S. population – since 1959
  • For state level – since 1980
Decennial Censuses

- Census 2000 & Prior Censuses
  - Conducted every ten years.
  - Used a mail-out/mail-back questionnaire and only personal-visit follow-up using paper questionnaires. Internet options for 2020.
  - “Short” form basic demographic and housing information, such as age, sex, race, housing.
  - “Long” form collected the same information for selected sample as the short form but also collected more in-depth information such as income, education, and language spoken at home.
- 2010 Census and future – provide only basic short form information

American Community Survey (ACS)

• The American Community Survey (ACS), is a nationwide survey that collects essentially the same information on people and housing that was collected on the short and the long-form questionnaires used in Census 2000 and earlier censuses.

• The ACS is a continuous survey,
  • Each month a sample of about 300,000 housing unit addresses receive a questionnaire.
  • Nearly, 3.5 million addresses are surveyed each year.

• Three modes of data collection methods are used
  • Online (internet)
  • Mail out/mail back
  • Personal visit (CAPI) (for those sampled non responding addresses)

• Includes resident population of the United States and Puerto Rico living in housing units and group quarters
ACS (cont’d)

• Reference period is the 12-month period prior to the interview month.

• Asks about money income using a series of eight questions during the past 12 months.

• ACS estimates are period estimates, describing the average characteristics over a specified period.

• 1-year and 5-year estimates released for geographic areas that meet specific population thresholds.

• Using the 5-year estimates provides data for all geographic areas.

For more information visit http://www.census.gov/acs/www/
# One-year vs Five-year ACS Data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1-year estimates</th>
<th>5-year estimates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12 months of collected data</td>
<td>60 months of collected data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data for areas with populations of 65,000+</td>
<td>Data for all areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smallest sample size</td>
<td>Largest sample size</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less reliable than 5-year</td>
<td>Most reliable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most current data</td>
<td>Least current</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Best used when</th>
<th>Best used when</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Currency is more important than precision</td>
<td>Precision is more important than currency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analyzing large populations</td>
<td>Analyzing very small populations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Examining tracts and other smaller geographies because 1-year estimates are not available</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
When to Use ACS- CPS Data

- In general national level estimates from both surveys are consistent and comparable, most of the differences are not statistically significant.
- It is recommended to use the CPS estimates at the national level.
- State level estimates in general are similar and no systematic differences observed.
- For use at state and lower geographic levels ACS estimates are recommended.
Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP)

- A longitudinal survey designed to track changes (income) over time for the same households.
- The SIPP covers a household for 3 or 4 years.
- Interviewers return to the same household and attempt to follow people interviewed in the first wave even if they move.
- About 65,500 addresses were in the initial sample for the SIPP 2008 Panel. State estimates only for larger states.
- SIPP 2014 panel – first wave of data released last year

Household Economic Studies

by Shirley A. Kennedy and Tracy A. Lowless

May 2013

The U.S. Census Bureau, an agency of the U.S. Department of Commerce, conducts surveys, such as the Current Population Survey (CPS), the SIPP, to follow the same people over time. This longitudinal quality allows examination of the SIPP sample from two perceptive views:

First, it is possible to observe the same people over a span of time. The number of months within a period of time when individuals receive benefits from one or more means-tested assistance programs can be examined, and survey and accuracy for such programs can be measured. For example, the number, timing, and duration of people moving into and out of a particular situation within a time period can be studied, such as the length of time an individual continuously receives program benefits.

Figure 1.

Average Monthly Participation Rates for Major Means-Tested Programs: 2009–2012

(Percentage of noninstitutionalized civilian population)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2012</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Medicaid One or more major assistance programs</td>
<td>18.6</td>
<td>20.3</td>
<td>20.1</td>
<td>20.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SNAF</td>
<td>13.9</td>
<td>14.3</td>
<td>13.2</td>
<td>15.3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Housing assistance</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>133</td>
<td>134</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SSI</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TANF/GA</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One or more major assistance programs</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates (SAIPE)
How to Find CPS Data

From the main Census Bureau page (www.census.gov)

• Sequentially click on - ‘Topics’, ‘Income & Poverty’ and ‘Poverty’ or
• Go directly to the poverty page using (http://www.census.gov/topics/income-poverty/poverty.html)
• From the poverty page click on ‘Data’ and then Poverty Data Tables
Current Population Survey

CPS Certification Items Extract File
Basic Monthly CPS January 1994 - Present
CPS Basic Extraction for 2000 Based Weights and Revised 1 & 0
CPS March Supplement 1998 - Present
CPS Supplement
CPS Replicate Weight

CPS Certification Items Extract Files

<table>
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<tr>
<th>File</th>
<th>Size (in Bytes)</th>
<th>Compression Type (Size in Bytes)</th>
<th>Record Count</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>1,424</td>
<td>DOS/Windows 5,204,539, GNU gzip 5,204,403</td>
<td>1,262,023</td>
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<tr>
<td>2015 Data File</td>
<td>167,849,059</td>
<td>5,204,403</td>
<td>1,262,023</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016 Data Dictionary</td>
<td>1,995</td>
<td>DOS/Windows 5,362,461, GNU gzip 5,362,325</td>
<td>1,259,774</td>
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<tr>
<td>2016 Data File</td>
<td>167,549,942</td>
<td>5,362,325</td>
<td>1,259,774</td>
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</table>

Basic Monthly CPS

<table>
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<th>File</th>
<th>Size (in Bytes)</th>
<th>Compression Type (Size in Bytes)</th>
<th>Record Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jan 2017 to Present</td>
<td></td>
<td>DOS/Windows 12,707,013, GNU gzip 12,706,888</td>
<td>NA[1] 146,456</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data Dictionary</td>
<td>104,678</td>
<td>Standard Unix</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Dec 2017</td>
<td>146,602,456</td>
<td>12,707,013, GNU gzip 12,706,888</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Current Population Survey (CPS) Data at the NBER

The CPS is the U.S. Government’s monthly survey of unemployment and labor force participation. The BLS maintains a CPS Home Page with a great deal of information about the survey and access to downloads of recent data. The NBER maintains an extensive collection of historical CPS public use tapes for its research staff. All of the data is available for download.

**Five Categories:**

- **Basic Monthly Data** are the primary source of labor force statistics in the U.S. Topics include employment, earnings, and demographic data. CPS Supplements, when collected, are not a part of the Basic Monthly Data files.

  Households are in the survey eight times: four consecutive months, eight months off, and then a final four months. Available for every month from 1976 on. SAS, SPSS, & Stata data definition statement files are available.

- **CPS Supplements** have the same data as the Basic Monthly Files sometimes in a different order, plus supplemental information on topics such as schooling, fertility, immigration, and income. We have many of these files from 1964 to present in the original BLS formats. SAS, SPSS, & Stata data definition statement files and CPS Replicate Weight files are available.

- **Merged Outgoing Rotation Groups (MORG)** are extracts of the Basic Monthly Data during the household’s fourth and eighth month in the survey, when usual weekly hours/earnings are asked. Documentation Files are also available.
PUMAS- Public Use MicroData Areas

- Nest within states or equivalent entities
- Contain at least 100,000 people
- Cover the entirety of the United States, Puerto Rico, Guam, and the U.S. Virgin Islands
- Are built on census tracts and counties
- Should be geographically contiguous
HOW WE DEFINE POVERTY
How is Poverty Defined?

Resource

Money Income

Need

Thresholds (Orshansky)
Defining Resources: Income

• Includes earnings, unemployment compensation, workers' compensation, Social Security, Supplemental Security Income, public assistance, veterans' payments, survivor benefits, pension or retirement income, interest, dividends, rents, royalties, income from estates, trusts, educational assistance, alimony, child support, assistance from outside the household, and other miscellaneous sources.

• Noncash benefits (such as food stamps and housing subsidies) do not count.

• Before taxes

• Excludes capital gains or losses.

• If a person lives with a family, add up the income of all family members. (Non-relatives, such as housemates, do not count.)
Measure of Need (Poverty Thresholds)

- Poverty thresholds are the dollar amounts used to determine poverty status.
- Poverty thresholds were originally derived in 1963-1964, based on
  - U.S. Department of Agriculture food budgets designed for families under economic stress.
  - Data about what portion of their income families spent on food to estimate total income
  - Equivalence scale calculate total income for different family size and compositions
- Thresholds vary according to family size, number of related children, and age of householder
- The same thresholds are used throughout the United States (do not vary geographically).
- Updated annually for inflation using the Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Size of family unit</th>
<th>None</th>
<th>One</th>
<th>Two</th>
<th>Three</th>
<th>Four</th>
<th>Five</th>
<th>Six</th>
<th>Seven</th>
<th>Eight or more</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>One person (unrelated individual):</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Under age 65</td>
<td>13,064</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aged 65 and older</td>
<td>12,043</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two people:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Householder under age 65</td>
<td>16,815</td>
<td>17,308</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Householder aged 65 and older</td>
<td>15,178</td>
<td>17,242</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three people:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four people</td>
<td>19,642</td>
<td>20,212</td>
<td>20,231</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Five people</td>
<td>25,900</td>
<td>26,324</td>
<td>25,465</td>
<td>25,554</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Six people</td>
<td>31,234</td>
<td>31,689</td>
<td>30,718</td>
<td>29,967</td>
<td>29,509</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seven people</td>
<td>35,925</td>
<td>36,068</td>
<td>35,324</td>
<td>34,612</td>
<td>33,553</td>
<td>32,925</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eight people</td>
<td>41,336</td>
<td>41,594</td>
<td>40,705</td>
<td>40,085</td>
<td>38,929</td>
<td>37,581</td>
<td>36,102</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nine people or more</td>
<td>46,231</td>
<td>46,640</td>
<td>45,800</td>
<td>45,064</td>
<td>44,021</td>
<td>42,696</td>
<td>41,317</td>
<td>40,967</td>
<td>48,546</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: U.S. Census Bureau.
How to Determine Poverty Status

• Compare
  • total income of an individual from all sources with appropriate threshold (poverty level) or
  • total family income (total individual income from all sources for all family members) with appropriate threshold (poverty level), then

• If total family income is less than the threshold appropriate for that family,
  • The family is in poverty.
  • All family members have the same poverty status.
• For individuals who do not live with family members, their own income is compared with the appropriate threshold.
How the Census Bureau Determines Poverty (Cont’d)

• For example
  • A total family income for a family of three with one child under 18 years in 2016 was $20,000
  • The appropriate threshold in 2016 for this type of families was $19,318
  • Since the total family income is greater than the threshold, the poverty status for this family of three in 2013 was “above poverty level” (family income of $20,000 is greater than the threshold of $19,318)

• Also publish estimates of poverty gaps – resources required to bring a family or individual up to the poverty threshold

• Income-to-poverty ratios used to define “extreme” poverty, “near” poverty, etc
Poverty: The History of a Measure

First Census Bureau Report on Poverty: 1967
National Academy of Sciences convenes a panel of experts to conduct a study of statistical issues in the measurement and understanding of poverty, June 1992.

An Interagency Technical Working Group on Developing a Supplemental Poverty Measure is formed by Commerce Under Secretary Rebecca Blank and Office of Management and Budget Chief Statistician Katherine Wallman and charged with developing a set of initial starting points to permit the U.S. Census Bureau, in cooperation with the Bureau of Labor Statistics, to produce a Supplemental Poverty Measure, December 2009.

Poverty


Criticisms of the Official Poverty Measure

• The official measure does not account for:
  • Provision of in-kind benefits
  • Necessary expenses (taxes, health care, work)
  • Changes in family or household structure
  • Higher standards and levels of living since 1965
  • Geographic price differences among regions
Supplemental Poverty Measure (SPM)

Observations from the Interagency Technical Working Group (ITWG) - March 2, 2010

- Will not replace the official poverty measure
- Will not be used for resource allocation or program eligibility
- Census Bureau and BLS responsible for improving and updating the measure
- Continued research and improvement
- Based on National Academy of Sciences expert panel recommendations in *Measuring Poverty: A New Approach* (Citro and Michael, 1995)
For both measures, individuals are considered poor if the resources they share with others in the household are not enough to meet basic needs.

But the two measures are very different.

Official Measure

Supplemental Measure
**Official Measure**  +  **Supplemental Measure**

**Who shares resources?**

The two measures make different assumptions about who shares resources. The SPM assumes that more people in a household share resources with one another.

The official measure of poverty assumes that all individuals residing together who are related by birth, marriage, or adoption share income.

The SPM starts with the family and then adds some unrelated people such as foster children and unmarried partners.
How do we measure needs?

The poverty threshold, or poverty line, is the minimum level of resources that are adequate to meet basic needs.

The official measure uses three times the cost of a minimum food diet in 1963 in today’s prices.

The SPM uses information about what people spend today for basic needs—food, clothing, shelter, and utilities.

1963: \[ \text{Plate} \times 3 \]

2016: \[ \text{Plate} + \text{Clothing} + \text{Shelter} + \text{Utilities} \]
**Are needs the same in every state?**

**Poverty thresholds** for both measures are adjusted to reflect the needs of families of different types and sizes. Only the SPM thresholds take into account geographic differences in housing costs.

**Yes**, the official poverty threshold is the same throughout the United States. In 2016, the poverty threshold for a family with two adults and two children was $24,339.

**No**, SPM thresholds vary based on several factors such as place of residence and whether it is a rental unit or purchased property or home with a mortgage. The map below shows the SPM thresholds for renters with two adults and two children in 2016.

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**Source:** U.S. Census Bureau, 2017 Current Population Reports, P60-259.

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**2016 SPM Poverty Thresholds for Renters**

(Two Adults and Two Children)

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**Sources:** U.S. Census Bureau, Geographic adjustments based on housing costs from the American Community Survey 2011-2013. Unadjusted thresholds are from the Bureau of Labor Statistics at [https://stats.bls.gov/opln/spmhome.htm](https://stats.bls.gov/opln/spmhome.htm).
What resources do people have to meet their needs?

What we count as available resources differs between the two poverty measures.

The official measure uses cash income, such as wages and salaries, Social Security benefits, interest, dividends, pension or other retirement income.

The SPM starts with cash income, then...

**ADDING BENEFITS**

The SPM adds benefits from the government that are not cash but help families meet their basic needs.

**SUBTRACTING EXPENSES**

The SPM subtracts necessary expenses like taxes, health care, commuting costs for all workers, and childcare expenses while parents work.
Official and Research SPM Thresholds for Two Adult, Two Child Units with Geographic Adjustments: 2017

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Official</th>
<th>New York Nonmetro: No Mortgage</th>
<th>Albany: Homeowner with Mortgage</th>
<th>New York City: Renter</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No Geo Adj</td>
<td>$24,858</td>
<td>$23,261</td>
<td>$27,085</td>
<td>$27,005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPM</td>
<td>$20,976</td>
<td>$27,902</td>
<td>$32,943</td>
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</table>

Supplemental Poverty Thresholds

https://www2.census.gov/programs-surveys/demo/tables/p60/265/pov-threshold-2017.xlsx
Figure 7.
Difference in Poverty Rates by State Using the Official Measure and the SPM: 3-Year Average 2015 to 2017

Includes unrelated individuals under the age of 15.
For more information on the SPM

**Supplemental Poverty Measure**

An Interagency Technical Working Group on Developing a Supplemental Poverty Measure was formed in 2008 and charged with developing a set of initial starting points to permit the U.S. Census Bureau, in cooperation with the Bureau of Labor Statistics...

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<tr>
<td><strong>The Supplemental Poverty Measure: 2016</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><em>September 27, 2017</em></td>
<td>This report describes research on the Supplemental Poverty Measure (SPM).</td>
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<td><strong>The Supplemental Poverty Measure: 2015</strong></td>
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<td><em>September 13, 2014</em></td>
<td>This is the sixth report describing research on the Supplemental Poverty Measure (SPM).</td>
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<td><em>September 10, 2013</em></td>
<td>This is the fifth report describing research on the Supplemental Poverty Measure (SPM).</td>
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Contact Information

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  – Trudi.j.renwick@census.gov
  – 301-763-5133
  – Census.gov
WAS MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME IN 2017 THE HIGHEST EVER?
Median household income was $61,400 in 2017, an increase in real terms of 1.8 percent from the 2016 median of $60,300. This is the third consecutive annual increase in median household income.

Note: The data for 2013 and beyond reflect the implementation of the redesigned income questions. Income rounded to nearest $100.
Real Median Household Income: 1967 to 2017

Note: The data for 2013 and beyond reflect the implementation of the redesigned income questions. Income rounded to nearest $100.

Redesigned Household Income Comparison: 1999 to 2017

Note: The data for 2013 and beyond reflect the implementation of the redesigned income questions. Income rounded to nearest $100.

2017 American Community Survey

- National median household income from the ACS was highest since full implementation of the ACS in 2005. Fifth consecutive increase.

- Median household income up in 24 states and District of Columbia; only Alaska and Puerto Rico saw declines.

- Median income ranged from about $80,000 in DC, Maryland and New Jersey to $43,500 in West Virginia.
• Gini index from the 2017 ACS = 0.482.

• Ranged from 0.528 for the District of Columbia to 0.423 for Utah.

• Increased (implying greater inequality) for Alaska, Delaware, Massachusetts and Pennsylvania.

• Decreased for Alabama and California.