

CAPITOL FACTS & FIGURES

FEDERAL POVERTY LEVEL

Living in Poverty

2009 Census Bureau Poverty Guidelines:

An income of \$10,830 a year or less = poverty for one person

An income of \$22,050 a year or less = poverty for a family of four.

Long-term unemployment and a depressed economy drove poverty levels up in 2009.¹

- Poverty levels increased substantially last year as 3.5 million more Americans joined the ranks of those earning incomes below the federal poverty level.
- In 2009, an estimated 42.9 million people were living below the poverty level representing 14.3 percent of the U.S. population. This is up from an estimated 39.4 million Americans, or 13.3 percent of the population, in 2008.
- Many state and federal assistance programs use another statistic—the percentage of the population earning incomes that are at or below 200 percent of the poverty guideline, or around \$21,660 for an individual and \$44,000 for a family of four—to determine the level of need in a state. Thirty-three percent of Americans earned 200 percent of the poverty level in 2009, up from 31.9 percent in 2008.
- The percentage of the population living in extreme poverty, or 50 percent of the poverty level, jumped from 5.6 percent in 2008 to 6.3 percent in 2009.
- The average annual unemployment rate for the U.S. in 2009 was 9.3 percent and it's rising. In October 2010, the unemployment rate was 9.6 percent, according to the latest figures from the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Poverty levels vary significantly across states and age groups

- The percentage of people living in poverty in 31 states increased from 2008 to 2009, while no state experienced a decline in poverty levels.
- New Hampshire (8.5 percent), Alaska (9 percent), Maryland (9.1 percent), Connecticut and New Jersey (both at 9.4 percent) had the lowest levels of poverty in 2009. Mississippi (21.9 percent), Arkansas (18.8 percent), Kentucky (18.6 percent), New Mexico (18 percent) and West Virginia (17.7 percent) had the

Nearly 1 in 7 Americans live below the Federal Poverty Level (FPL).



1 in 3 lives within 200% of FPL.



Over 1 in 5 children live below FPL.



Almost 1 in 2 children live at or below 200% of FPL.



highest levels of poverty.

- The South had the highest average population percentage in poverty at 16.8 percent, while the East had the lowest average at 10.9 percent.
- Children continue to be the most impoverished segment of the population, with an estimated 20 percent of the population under age 18 living in poverty. Child poverty rates range from 10.8 percent in New Hampshire to nearly one-third—31 percent—in Mississippi.
- Those age 65 and older fared better than the general population, with 9.5 percent of the U.S. population in this age group under the poverty level.
- An additional 3.3 million Americans would have fallen below the poverty line in 2009 if it weren't for unemployment insurance benefits, including temporary expansions in those benefits included in the economic recovery legislation, according to the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities.



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REFERENCES

¹U.S. Census Bureau. "Income, Poverty, and Health Insurance Coverage in the United States: 2009." Issued September 2010. <http://www.census.gov/prod/2010pubs/p60-238.pdf>

2009 Poverty Data

States	Population Below Poverty Level ¹	People 65 Years and Over Below Poverty Level ²	Children Below Poverty Level ³	Median Household Income ⁴	Households With Cash Public Assistance Income ⁵	Annual Average Unemployment Rate ⁶
Alabama	18%	11%	25%	40,489	2%	10%
Alaska	9%	3%	13%	66,953	6%	8%
Arizona	17%	8%	23%	48,745	3%	9%
Arkansas	19%	12%	27%	37,823	2%	7%
California	14%	9%	20%	58,931	4%	11%
Colorado	13%	9%	17%	55,430	2%	8%
Connecticut	9%	6%	12%	67,034	3%	8%
Delaware	11%	7%	17%	56,860	3%	8%
Florida	15%	10%	21%	44,736	2%	11%
Georgia	17%	12%	22%	47,590	2%	10%
Hawaii	10%	7%	14%	64,098	4%	7%
Idaho	14%	8%	18%	44,926	3%	8%
Illinois	13%	9%	19%	53,966	2%	10%
Indiana	14%	8%	20%	45,424	3%	10%
Iowa	12%	7%	16%	48,044	2%	6%
Kansas	13%	8%	18%	47,817	3%	7%
Kentucky	19%	13%	26%	40,072	3%	11%
Louisiana	17%	12%	24%	42,492	1%	7%
Maine	12%	9%	17%	45,734	5%	8%
Maryland	9%	8%	12%	69,272	2%	7%
Massachusetts	10%	9%	13%	64,081	3%	8%
Michigan	16%	9%	23%	45,255	4%	14%
Minnesota	11%	9%	14%	55,616	3%	8%
Mississippi	22%	15%	31%	36,646	3%	10%
Missouri	15%	9%	21%	45,229	2%	9%
Montana	15%	9%	21%	42,322	2%	6%
Nebraska	12%	8%	15%	47,357	2%	5%
Nevada	12%	8%	18%	53,341	3%	12%
New Hampshire	9%	7%	11%	60,567	3%	6%
New Jersey	9%	8%	14%	68,342	2%	9%
New Mexico	18%	12%	25%	43,028	2%	7%
New York	14%	11%	20%	54,659	3%	8%
North Carolina	16%	10%	23%	43,674	2%	11%
North Dakota	12%	12%	13%	47,827	2%	4%
Ohio	15%	8%	22%	45,395	3%	10%
Oklahoma	16%	10%	22%	41,664	3%	6%
Oregon	14%	8%	19%	48,457	3%	11%
Pennsylvania	13%	9%	17%	49,520	3%	8%
Rhode Island	12%	9%	17%	54,119	2%	11%
South Carolina	17%	11%	24%	42,442	2%	12%
South Dakota	14%	11%	19%	45,043	2%	5%
Tennessee	17%	11%	24%	41,725	3%	11%
Texas	17%	12%	24%	48,259	2%	8%
Utah	12%	7%	12%	55,117	2%	7%
Vermont	11%	8%	13%	51,618	4%	7%
Virginia	11%	8%	14%	59,330	2%	7%
Washington	12%	8%	16%	56,548	4%	9%
West Virginia	18%	10%	24%	37,435	3%	8%
Wisconsin	12%	8%	17%	49,993	2%	9%
Wyoming	10%	6%	13%	52,664	2%	6%
Wyoming	1	1	0.3	0.3	5	4

¹ Percent of People Below Poverty Level in the Past 12 Months (For Whom Poverty Status is Determined)
Universe: Population for whom poverty status is determined"

Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2009 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates

² Percent of People 65 Years and Over Below Poverty Level in the Past 12 Months
Universe: Population 65 years and over"

Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2009 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates

³ Percent of Children Under 18 Years Below Poverty Level in the Past 12 Months (For Whom Poverty Status is Determined)Universe: Children under 18 years for whom poverty status is determined"Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2009 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates

⁴ Median Household Income (In 2009 Inflation-Adjusted Dollars)
Universe: Households"

Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2009 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates

⁵ Percent of Households With Cash Public Assistance Income
Universe: Households"

Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2009 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates

⁶ 2009 Annual Average Unemployment Rate

Source: U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics