



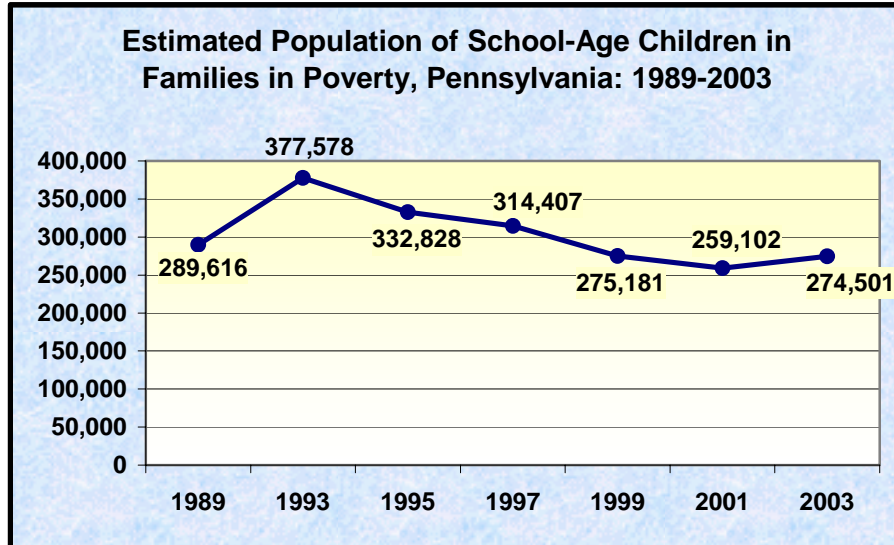
Research Brief

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Estimates Indicate Number of School-Age Children in Poverty Again on the Rise

MIDDLETOWN, Pa –The Pennsylvania State Data Center at Penn State Harrisburg reports that the estimated number of Pennsylvania school-age children in families in poverty increased by 6,208 between 2002 and 2003. Data from the 2003 Small Area Income & Poverty Estimates (SAIPE), recently released by the U.S. Census Bureau, indicates that the estimated number of children ages 5 to 17 years old in poverty rose from 268,293 in 2002 to 274,501 in 2003, an increase of 2.3 percent. After declining in the late 1990s, the number and proportion of school-age children in poverty in Pennsylvania has consistently risen since 2000, signaling a trend that is not just tied to population increase. Impoverished school-age children now comprise 13.2 percent of the population ages 5-17, 2 percent more than in 2000, but still below the national average of 16.1 percent. Pennsylvania ranks 27th nationally (excluding Washington, D.C.) in order of the highest proportion of school-age children in poverty. Overall, more than 420,000 children (ages 0-17) in the commonwealth live in poverty.



What is SAIPE data?

The U.S. Census Bureau, with support from other Federal agencies, created the Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates (SAIPE) program to provide more current estimates of selected income and poverty statistics than the most recent decennial census. Estimates are created for states, counties, and school districts. The main objective of the program is to provide updated estimates of income and poverty statistics for the administration of federal programs and the allocation of federal funds to local jurisdictions. A Government Accounting Office report issued in September 1990 identified \$30 billion in annual federal allocations that rely on decennial census data.

In addition to these federal funds, there are hundreds of state and local programs that depend on income and poverty estimates for distributing funds and managing programs.

The estimates are neither direct counts from enumerations or administrative records nor direct estimates from sample surveys. Data from these sources are not adequate to provide intercensal estimates for all counties. Instead, the Census Bureau models the relation between income or poverty and tax and program data for the states and subsets of counties using estimates of income or poverty from the Current Population Survey (CPS) Annual Social and Economic Supplement (ASEC). The Census Bureau then uses the modeled relations to obtain estimates for all states and counties. For school districts, the Census Bureau uses the model-based county estimates and the decennial census distribution of the population of poor of each county over its constituent school districts.

School-Age Children in Poverty by School District

The Philadelphia School district again had the largest estimated population of impoverished school-age children in the commonwealth (70,886), but this is unsurprising since Philadelphia is by far the largest school district. In a national comparison of districts, Philadelphia had the fifth largest estimated population of impoverished students (excluding Puerto Rico). Philadelphia was followed by Pittsburgh with 11,220 school-age children in poverty in 2003, and Reading School District, which overtook Allentown with 6,061 impoverished students. The Bryn Athyn (5), Peters Township (18), Neshannock Township (36), and Jenkintown (36) school districts had the smallest numbers of students living in poverty.

Proportionally, Duquesne School District led the commonwealth with the highest percentage (38.0 percent) of school-age children in poverty in 2003, followed by Farrell Area (37.3 percent) and Reading (34.9 percent). In 24 Pennsylvania school districts, 25 percent or more of the school-age population lived in poverty in 2003, though none of the districts ranked among the top 100 nationally. Peters Township School District again had the lowest percentage of children in poverty (0.5 percent), followed by Southern Lehigh (1.1 percent) and Bryn Athyn (1.5 percent).

Pittsburgh (+758), Reading (+519), and Allentown (+411) school districts experienced the largest numeric increases in number of school-age children in poverty from 2002-2003. Pittsburgh's population of impoverished students has increased by more than 2,000 since 2000. Philadelphia reduced its population by 3,081 between 2002 and 2003, which may be tied to the shrinking school-age population, but was not enough to overcome an increase of 11,088 children since 2000. Bristol Borough (30.5 percent), Bermudian Springs (29.1 percent), and Morrisville Borough (23.0 percent) school districts saw the highest percentage increases in school-age child poverty from 2002-2003. Since 2000, poverty among school-aged children in families has risen by more than 40 percent in Bristol Borough (+48.3 percent) and Pottstown (+42.3 percent) school districts and dropped by 10.5 percent in the Milton Area School District.

Poverty Estimates

SAIPE data also estimates poverty statistics in the general population. There were an estimated 1,279,821 people in poverty in Pennsylvania in 2003. Numerically, this represents an additional 69,313 people, but proportionally it is an increase of just 5.7 percent over last year. Nationally, the commonwealth ranks 6th in number of people in poverty, but is 32nd (excluding Washington, D.C.) in percentage of impoverished persons and below the national average of 12.5 percent. Philadelphia led Pennsylvania counties with an estimated 288,178 people, or 20.1 percent of its population in poverty. Fayette (15.9 percent) and Greene (14.6 percent) counties followed Philadelphia in proportion of the population in poverty, while Allegheny was home to the second largest number of impoverished people, 132,325. Chester (5.3 percent), Montgomery (5.5 percent) and Bucks (5.6) counties had the lowest proportions of residents in poverty in 2003. Since 2000, Allegheny County

has led the commonwealth in numeric increase of residents in poverty (+18,811), while Bucks County has seen the highest proportional increase (+29.8 percent).

Philadelphia also had the highest proportion of children (ages 0-17) in poverty in 2003 (28.5 percent), followed by Fayette (25.2 percent) and Forest (22.5 percent) Counties. Montgomery (6.3 percent), Chester (6.4 percent), and Bucks (6.6 percent) were among the top 100 counties nationally with the lowest percentage of child poverty. (Table 1)

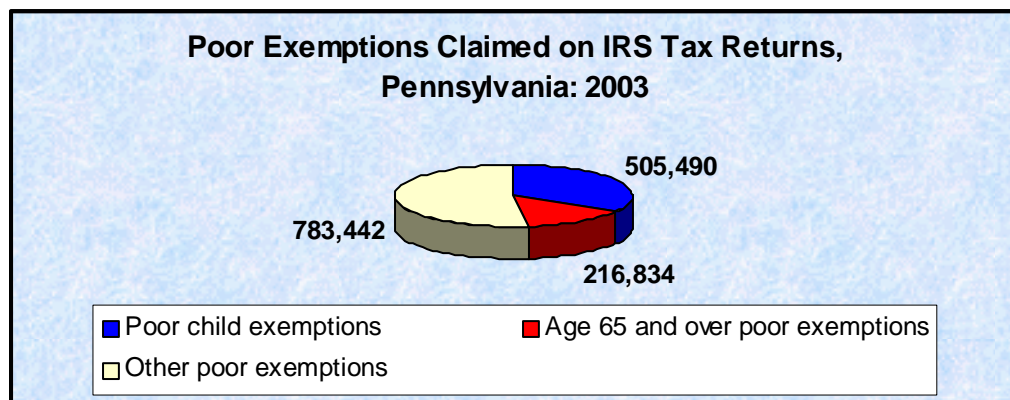
Median Household Income

Median household income is another component of SAIPE data. The estimated median household income in Pennsylvania in 2003 was \$42,952, an increase of \$909 or 2.2 percent over 2002. Chester (\$67,639), Montgomery (\$65,234), and Bucks (\$62,375) counties had the highest median household incomes in 2003. Median household income in these three eastern Pennsylvania counties was at least \$12,000 more than in the other 64 counties. Between 2002 and 2003, median household income increased the most in Pike County (+\$1,798), and grew by more than \$1,000 in 21 Pennsylvania counties. Since 2000, median household income in Pike and Westmoreland Counties has increased by \$3,637 (+8.0 percent) and \$2,618 (+7.0 percent), respectively. Median household income declined by \$2,017 (-3.9 percent) in Delaware County during the same period.

SAIPE Model Input Data

As previously mentioned, SAIPE data is not collected through direct count or survey, but relies on modeling relationships between income, poverty, tax, and program data to derive estimates. Some of this data, also available from the U.S. Census Bureau, is worth mentioning on its own. Food stamp recipient statistics are one of the types of data used to produce SAIPE. In 2003, the number of recipients in Pennsylvania was 930,851, the highest since 1995. That figure has increased by 179,843 since 2000. Philadelphia led all counties with 280,212 recipients, followed by Allegheny, with 94,081 recipients. Led by Lancaster County (+78.3 percent), the number of food stamp recipients has increased by more than 50 percent in 12 Pennsylvania counties since 2000.

Tax records are yet another data source for SAIPE. Though the median adjusted gross income of Pennsylvanians increased slightly (+1.5 percent) to \$32,640 from 2002, the number of poor exemptions increased by 110,397. In fact, since 2000 poor exemptions have increased by more than 15.6 percent in Pennsylvania, and poor children and the poor over age 65 now account for a little less than half of these. Notably, the number of exemptions claimed for the poor age 65 and over has increased by 73,354, or 51.1 percent since 2000.



Additional tables may be viewed on the PaSDC website at:

http://pasdc.hbg.psu.edu/pasdc/PA_Stats/SAIPE_Data/SAIPE_Data.htm

For more information on Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates data for Pennsylvania counties and school districts, please contact the Pennsylvania State Data Center at 717.772.2710.

Table 1: Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates, Pennsylvania Counties: 2003					
Area	All Persons in Poverty		Persons in Poverty Ages 0-17		Median Household Income
	Total	Percent	Total	Percent	
Pennsylvania	1,279,821	10.6	420,086	14.9	42,952
Adams County	7,134	7.5	2,288	10.2	47,095
Allegheny County	132,325	10.8	40,626	15.2	41,346
Armstrong County	7,915	11.1	2,489	16.6	34,478
Beaver County	18,507	10.5	5,925	15.5	37,866
Bedford County	5,363	10.7	1,831	16.4	34,792
Berks County	38,789	10.1	13,411	14.5	45,158
Blair County	15,348	12.3	4,950	18.0	34,224
Bradford County	6,973	11.2	2,419	16.4	36,745
Bucks County	34,777	5.6	9,828	6.6	62,375
Butler County	14,464	8.2	4,246	10.2	46,340
Cambria County	16,804	11.8	4,991	16.9	31,230
Cameron County	568	10.1	190	15.3	33,685
Carbon County	5,523	9.1	1,742	13.9	38,745
Centre County	14,381	11.5	2,685	11.6	37,569
Chester County	24,365	5.3	7,439	6.4	67,939
Clarion County	4,948	12.7	1,374	16.9	32,683
Clearfield County	10,212	12.8	3,301	19.2	32,960
Clinton County	4,400	12.4	1,386	18.1	32,938
Columbia County	6,800	11.1	1,827	14.8	36,538
Crawford County	10,669	12.3	3,875	18.9	33,914
Cumberland County	13,057	6.2	3,436	7.5	48,977
Dauphin County	22,355	8.9	7,303	12.2	45,465
Delaware County	48,100	8.9	15,828	11.9	49,743
Elk County	2,802	8.2	874	11.7	39,376
Erie County	34,242	12.6	12,632	19.0	37,045
Fayette County	23,201	15.9	7,840	25.2	29,415
Forest County	626	12.9	226	22.5	29,407
Franklin County	10,953	8.2	3,695	12.0	42,888
Fulton County	1,383	9.4	492	14.7	37,852
Greene County	5,460	14.6	1,776	21.8	31,622
Huntingdon County	4,922	11.9	1,573	16.9	34,180
Indiana County	12,044	14.2	3,335	19.8	32,443
Jefferson County	5,348	11.7	1,808	18.1	32,882
Juniata County	1,969	8.5	667	11.9	38,272

**Table 1 (Continued): Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates,
Pennsylvania Counties: 2003**

Area	All Persons in Poverty		Persons in Poverty Ages 0-17		Median Household Income
	Total	Percent	Total	Percent	
Lackawanna County	20,933	10.2	6,404	14.7	36,632
Lancaster County	39,942	8.3	15,741	12.5	47,380
Lawrence County	11,213	12.2	3,807	18.6	34,483
Lebanon County	10,603	8.7	3,632	12.9	42,598
Lehigh County	30,711	9.6	10,878	14.3	44,335
Luzerne County	32,905	10.8	9,548	15.3	35,448
Lycoming County	12,924	11.3	4,129	16.2	35,892
McKean County	5,331	12.6	1,769	18.1	34,402
Mercer County	14,090	12.3	4,939	19.0	35,635
Mifflin County	5,526	12.0	2,055	18.8	34,024
Monroe County	13,675	8.7	4,567	11.6	48,271
Montgomery County	41,955	5.5	11,470	6.3	65,234
Montour County	1,533	8.7	531	12.9	41,314
Northampton County	21,186	7.7	6,260	10.1	48,704
Northumberland County	9,162	10.2	2,692	14.4	33,708
Perry County	3,494	7.9	1,227	11.8	44,298
Philadelphia County	288,178	20.1	105,457	28.5	30,414
Pike County	3,837	7.1	1,314	10.1	48,972
Potter County	2,052	11.5	766	17.6	35,003
Schuylkill County	14,502	10.3	4,114	14.2	34,684
Snyder County	3,088	8.5	1,060	12.4	37,608
Somerset County	9,359	12.3	2,971	18.3	31,824
Sullivan County	681	10.8	191	14.9	31,417
Susquehanna County	4,727	11.3	1,664	17.1	34,843
Tioga County	4,833	12.0	1,565	17.5	33,054
Union County	3,250	9.5	912	11.5	39,434
Venango County	7,260	13.1	2,451	19.9	32,900
Warren County	4,429	10.5	1,542	16.3	36,303
Washington County	19,770	9.7	5,720	13.2	40,372
Wayne County	5,204	10.8	1,750	16.1	36,533
Westmoreland County	34,308	9.4	10,043	13.2	39,837
Wyoming County	2,741	9.9	907	14.2	38,649
York County	29,693	7.5	9,701	10.4	47,928

The Pennsylvania State Data Center is the commonwealth's official source for population and economic statistics. It is based at Penn State Harrisburg's Institute of State and Regional Affairs. The Pennsylvania State Data Center is part of the U.S. Census Bureau's National State Data Center Program.

Editors: For additional data, contact the Pennsylvania State Data Center's State Capital Office at 717.772.2710 or for faculty comment on this topic, contact Penn State Harrisburg's Public Information Office at 717.948.6029.