



Research Brief

The Commonwealth's Official Source for Population and Economic Statistics

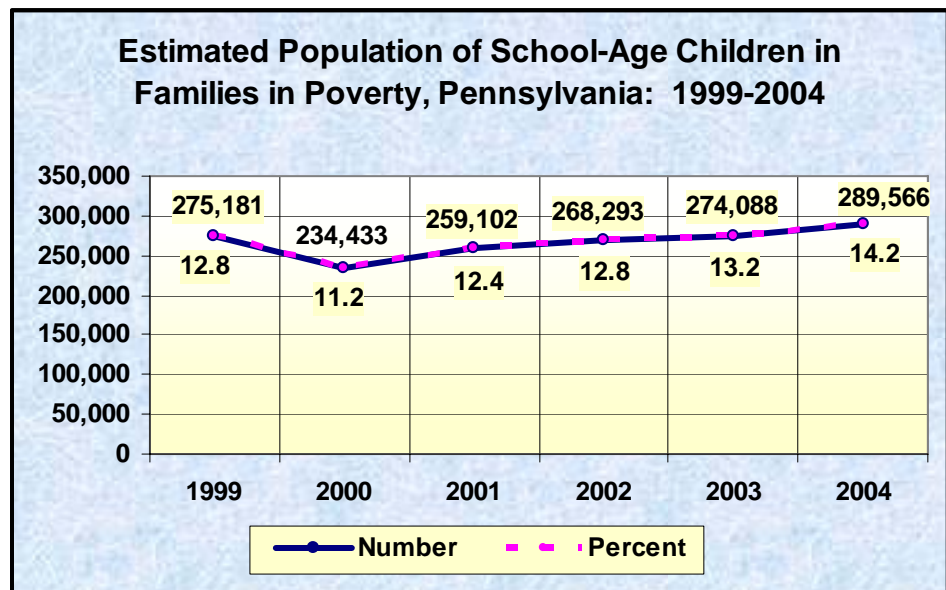
January 16, 2007

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

MIDDLETOWN, Pa –New data from the Small Area Income & Poverty Estimates (SAIPE) program show that the estimated number of Pennsylvania school-age children in families in poverty increased 15,478 between 2003 and 2004, more than double the increase of the previous year. The 2004 SAIPE data, recently released by the U.S. Census Bureau, indicate that the estimated number of children ages 5 to 17 years old in poverty grew from 274,088 in 2003 to 289,566 in 2004, an increase of 5.6 percent. After briefly declining in 2000, the number and proportion of school-age children in poverty in Pennsylvania are again on the rise (see chart). Impoverished school-age children now comprise 14.2 percent of the population ages 5-17, 3 percent higher than 2000, but still below the national average of 16.2 percent. Pennsylvania ranks 27th nationally (including Washington, D.C.) in order of the highest proportion of school-age children in poverty. Overall, an estimated 446,151 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

Philadelphia, the largest school district in Pennsylvania, again had the largest estimated population of impoverished school-age children in the Commonwealth (73,906) in 2004. Pittsburgh followed Philadelphia with 11,575 school-age children in poverty and Reading School District overtook Allentown with 6,553 impoverished students. The Bryn Athyn (6), Peters Township (19), and Neshannock Township (36) school districts had the smallest numbers of students living in poverty.

Proportionally, Duquesne City and York City school districts led the Commonwealth with the highest percentages (39.9 percent) of school-age children in poverty in 2004, followed by Chester-Upland (39.1 percent) and Farrell Area school districts (38.6 percent). Peters Township School District again had the lowest percentage of children in poverty (0.5 percent), followed by Southern Lehigh (1.1 percent) and Salisbury Township (1.6 percent).

After a reduction in the number of impoverished students in 2003, Philadelphia's population of school-age children in poverty increased by nearly 3,000 in 2004. Philadelphia's population of impoverished students has grown by more than 14,000 since 2000. Harrisburg City (+864) and Reading (+480) rounded out the top three Pennsylvania school districts in terms of increase in the number of school-age children in poverty between 2003 and 2004. Halifax Area (37.0 percent), Derry Township (36.8 percent), and Susquehanna Township and Lower Dauphin (36.7 percent) school districts experienced the highest percent increases in school-age child poverty between 2003 and 2004. Since 2000, poverty among school-aged children in families has more than doubled in 18 Pennsylvania school districts, led by Shaler Area School District, where the poverty rate has increased 601.8 percent.

Poverty Estimates for the Total Population

There were an estimated 1,361,724 people in poverty in Pennsylvania in 2004. Numerically, this represents an additional 82,316 people and an increase of 6.4 percent over the previous year. Nationally, the Commonwealth ranks 6th in number of people in poverty, but is 30th (including Washington, D.C.) in percentage of impoverished persons (11.2 percent) and below the national average of 12.7 percent. Philadelphia led Pennsylvania counties in both number and percent of people in poverty with an estimated 309,297 people, or 21.6 percent of its population in poverty. Fayette (16.9 percent) and Greene (15.7 percent) counties followed Philadelphia in proportion of the population in poverty, while Allegheny was home to the second largest number of impoverished people, 138,311. Chester (5.5 percent), Montgomery (5.8 percent), and Bucks (5.9 percent) counties had the lowest poverty rates in 2004. Philadelphia has led the commonwealth in numeric increase of residents in poverty (+37,767) since 2000, while York County experienced the highest proportional increase (+39.3 percent).

Philadelphia also had the highest proportion of children (ages 0-17) in poverty in 2004 (30.3 percent), followed by Fayette (25.9 percent) and Greene (23.0 percent) Counties. Montgomery (6.7 percent), Chester (6.8 percent), and Bucks (7.2 percent) had the lowest rates of child poverty among Pennsylvania counties.

Median Household Income

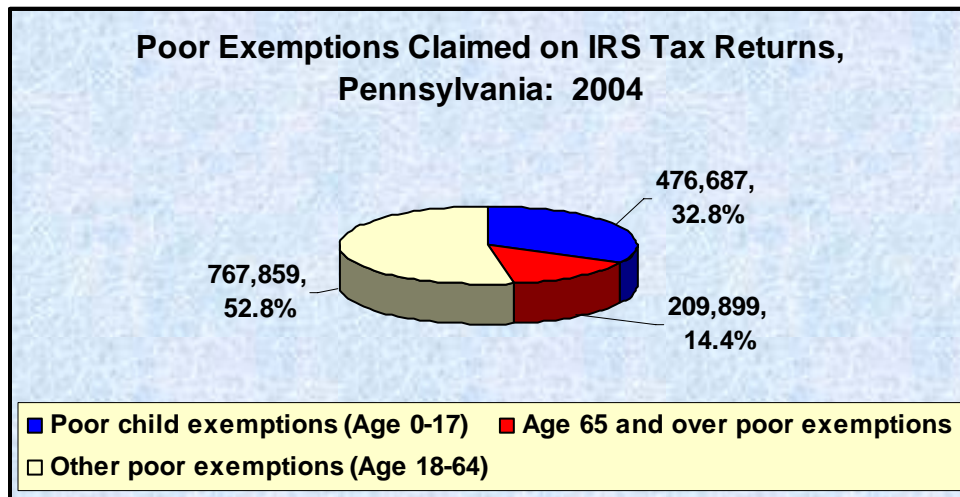
The estimated median household income in Pennsylvania in 2004 was \$43,714, an increase of \$762 or 1.8

percent over 2003. Chester (\$69,904), Montgomery (\$65,889), and Bucks (\$64,696) counties had the highest median household incomes in 2003. Median household income in these three eastern Pennsylvania counties was at least 20 percent higher than the remaining counties. Between 2003 and 2004, median household income increased the most in Franklin County (+\$2,491 or 5.8 percent) and grew more than 3 percent in 35 Pennsylvania counties. Since 2000, median household income has grown the most in Pike County (+\$5,033 or 11.1 percent). Median household income declined \$473 (-0.9 percent) in Delaware County during the same period.

SAIPE Model Input Data

As previously described, 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. Food stamp recipient statistics are one of the types of data used to produce SAIPE. In 2004, the number of recipients in Pennsylvania reached 1,026,142, the most since 1995. That figure has increased by 275,134 over 2000. Philadelphia led all counties with 299,555 recipients, followed by Allegheny, with 102,442 recipients. The number of food stamp recipients has increased by more than 50 percent in 30 Pennsylvania counties since 2000.

Tax records are yet another data source for SAIPE. The median adjusted gross income of Pennsylvanians increased slightly (+3.8 percent) to \$33,886 in 2004. During the same period, the number of poor exemptions increased by 6,831, or 0.5 percent. Since 2000, the number of poor exemptions claimed in Pennsylvania has grown 11.7 percent, and poor children and the poor over age 65 now account for a slightly less than half of all poor exemptions (chart). The number of exemptions claimed for the poor age 65 and over has grown 46.3 percent since 2000.



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Data Integration Division, Small Area Estimates Branch

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.

Table 1: Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates, Pennsylvania Counties: 2004

Area	All Persons in Poverty		School-Age Children in Poverty (Ages 5-17 in Families)		Median Household Income
	Total	Percent	Total	Percent	
Pennsylvania	1,361,724	11.2	289,566	14.2	43,714
Adams County	7,476	7.7	1,686	10.2	48,439
Allegheny County	138,311	11.4	26,739	14.0	42,182
Armstrong County	8,695	12.3	1,771	16.1	35,090
Beaver County	20,011	11.4	4,252	15.2	39,688
Bedford County	5,396	10.8	1,157	14.3	36,059
Berks County	40,730	10.5	9,267	13.9	46,008
Blair County	16,679	13.4	3,312	16.9	35,185
Bradford County	7,341	11.8	1,663	15.5	37,380
Bucks County	36,263	5.9	6,914	6.3	64,696
Butler County	14,862	8.3	2,638	8.6	47,773
Cambria County	17,532	12.4	3,341	15.7	32,727
Cameron County	591	10.5	135	14.7	34,755
Carbon County	6,153	10.0	1,239	13.5	39,678
Centre County	15,189	12.1	1,689	11.0	38,625
Chester County	25,605	5.5	5,123	6.1	69,904
Clarion County	4,951	12.7	896	15.3	34,110
Clearfield County	10,854	13.6	2,197	17.4	34,189
Clinton County	4,617	13.0	910	17.1	34,162
Columbia County	7,043	11.5	1,184	13.3	37,871
Crawford County	11,372	13.2	2,504	17.1	35,386
Cumberland County	14,110	6.7	2,561	7.6	50,733
Dauphin County	25,858	10.3	6,094	14.2	46,761
Delaware County	53,367	9.9	11,681	12.0	51,287
Elk County	2,949	8.8	580	10.5	40,482
Erie County	37,089	13.7	8,379	17.6	37,876
Fayette County	24,476	16.9	5,302	23.4	30,287
Forest County	707	14.8	140	22.4	29,217
Franklin County	11,182	8.2	2,477	11.1	45,454
Fulton County	1,424	9.7	330	13.5	40,198
Greene County	5,840	15.7	1,208	20.2	32,551
Huntingdon County	5,115	12.4	1,015	15.3	35,828
Indiana County	12,429	14.6	2,125	17.7	33,906
Jefferson County	5,523	12.1	1,193	16.6	34,443
Juniata County	2,049	8.8	418	10.6	40,162

Table 1 (Continued): Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates, Pennsylvania Counties: 2004

Area	All Persons in Poverty		School-Age Children in Poverty (Ages 5-17 in Families)		Median Household Income
	Total	Percent	Total	Percent	
Lackawanna County	22,987	11.2	4,438	13.9	37,545
Lancaster County	42,229	8.8	10,318	11.6	48,960
Lawrence County	11,891	13.1	2,551	17.2	36,079
Lebanon County	10,986	9.0	2,399	11.9	44,636
Lehigh County	32,153	9.9	7,358	13.3	46,015
Luzerne County	34,865	11.5	6,408	14.0	36,968
Lycoming County	13,669	12.0	2,817	15.3	36,891
Mc Kean County	5,728	13.6	1,257	17.6	35,144
Mercer County	14,846	13.0	3,323	17.5	36,536
Mifflin County	5,676	12.4	1,316	16.9	35,392
Monroe County	15,018	9.3	3,343	11.1	49,918
Montgomery County	44,256	5.8	8,160	6.2	65,889
Montour County	1,655	9.5	369	12.6	42,883
Northampton County	23,043	8.2	4,509	9.8	49,667
Northumberland County	9,553	10.6	1,935	14.5	34,901
Perry County	3,649	8.2	849	11.3	45,892
Philadelphia County	309,297	21.6	73,906	28.9	30,892
Pike County	4,190	7.4	970	9.2	50,368
Potter County	2,109	11.9	524	16.8	36,088
Schuylkill County	15,272	10.8	2,725	13.0	36,115
Snyder County	3,178	8.8	771	12.8	39,265
Somerset County	9,532	12.6	1,891	16.0	33,425
Sullivan County	712	11.3	130	15.8	32,749
Susquehanna County	4,830	11.5	1,120	15.6	36,104
Tioga County	4,960	12.3	1,078	16.9	34,037
Union County	3,431	10.0	584	10.4	40,584
Venango County	7,710	14.0	1,699	18.8	34,403
Warren County	4,644	11.2	1,065	15.5	37,399
Washington County	21,573	10.6	4,031	12.7	41,831
Wayne County	5,397	11.0	1,197	14.7	38,365
Westmoreland County	35,089	9.6	6,489	11.6	41,232
Wyoming County	2,855	10.3	639	13.6	39,883
York County	32,952	8.1	7,277	10.7	49,292

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Data Integration Division, Small Area Estimates Branch