



Research Brief

The Commonwealth's Official Source for Population and Economic Statistics

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2006 American Community Survey Data Released Income, Earnings and Poverty Statistics Included

MIDDLETOWN, Pa –The U.S. Census Bureau yesterday released new data on income, earnings and poverty from the 2006 American Community Survey (ACS) for areas with populations of 65,000 or more. The ACS, as an integral part of the Census Bureau's reengineered 2010 census, will replace the decennial census long form and provide yearly information about the nation's changing and diverse population.

In Pennsylvania, data was released for all of the congressional districts, 39 counties, the cities of Allentown, Bethlehem, Erie, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, Reading, and Scranton, 19 school districts, metropolitan statistical areas, and several other geographies. Columbia County, the only new Pennsylvania county in the 2006 ACS, will have data released for the first time this year.

The 2006 release is the first time ACS will include data on group quarters (any non-traditional living arrangement, such as nursing homes, prisons, college dormitories, etc.). Group quarters data are set to be released on September 27, in the third of three data releases for the 2006 ACS.

Pennsylvania and the Nation

According to the 2006 ACS, 1,448,228 people in Pennsylvania were in poverty in the preceding 12 months, representing 12.1% of the population. Compared to the nation, Pennsylvania ranks 30th, well below the national average of 13.3%. Children under 18 represented 464,686 of the persons in poverty, or 16.9 of all children in the commonwealth. Pennsylvania ranked 26th in the nation in terms of the percent of its children under 18 years old, below the national average of 18.3%.

Pennsylvania's median household income was \$46,259, below the national median of \$48,451. Pennsylvania ranked 26th in terms of its median household income. In terms of median family income, Pennsylvania ranked 21st, with \$58,148, also below the national median.

Selected Data for Pennsylvania's Largest Counties and Cities

Persons in Poverty

Among the counties covered by the 2006 ACS, Philadelphia County had the largest proportion of its population in poverty, with more than a quarter residents in poverty in the preceding 12 months (see table 1). Centre County followed, with more than 20 percent of its population in poverty (income data from Penn State University students is included). Reading led Pennsylvania's largest cities, with 30.9% of its population in poverty, followed by Erie City, which had 26.1% in poverty.

Table 1. Percent of persons with income below poverty level in the past 12 months: top five Pennsylvania counties ranked, 2006

County	Total Population:	Income in the past 12 months below poverty level:	Percent with income below poverty level:
Philadelphia County	1,409,593	354,135	25.1%
Centre County	124,043	24,830	20.0%
Fayette County	141,050	27,769	19.7%
Northumberland County	88,198	15,376	17.4%
Erie County	268,046	44,219	16.5%

Elderly Persons in Poverty

For the population 65 and over, Somerset County had the largest percent in poverty, with 2.9% of those 65 or above (2,116 persons) in poverty in the preceding 12 months (see table 2). Philadelphia followed, with 2.5% of elderly persons in poverty (35,049 persons). Of the counties currently covered, the lowest percentage of elderly persons in poverty was in Cumberland County, which had 0.5% of its elderly population living in poverty. Of the cities with a population of 65,000 or higher, Allentown City had the largest proportion of elderly persons living in poverty, 2.9% or 3,187 persons. Reading City had the smallest percentage of elderly residents in poverty, with 1.5% of persons 65 and older in poverty (1,169 people).

Table 2. Percent of persons 65 years and over with income below poverty level in the past 12 months: top five Pennsylvania counties ranked, 2006

	Total Population:	65 years and over with income below poverty level:	Percent 65 years and over with income below poverty level
Somerset County	74,220	2,116	2.9%
Philadelphia County	1,409,593	35,049	2.5%
Northumberland County	88,198	2,188	2.5%
Luzerne County	303,708	5,757	1.9%
Lycoming County	112,636	2,127	1.9%

Household and Family Income

Of the 39 counties covered by the 2006 ACS, Fayette County had the lowest median household income, with \$31,637, followed by Philadelphia with \$33,229. The county with the highest median household income was Chester County, with \$77,570. Among Pennsylvania's largest cities, Bethlehem City had the highest median household income with \$39,249. Reading City had the lowest median household income with \$30,270. In terms of median family income, Clearfield County had the lowest among 2006 ACS counties in Pennsylvania, with \$42,081. Chester County had the highest median family income, with \$93,698. Among the largest Pennsylvania cities, Allentown had the lowest median family income, with \$36,190, while Scranton had the highest, at \$43,463.

More about the ACS

Yesterday's ACS release coincided with the release of the Annual Social and Economic Supplement (ASEC) to the Current Population Survey (CPS). Other 2006 ACS releases, set for the middle and end of September, will include demographic and social information such as race, Hispanic origin, age, education, marital status, grandparents as caregivers, veterans, disability status, and U.S. citizenship.

As part of the Census Bureau's reengineered 2010 Census, the data collected by the ACS helps federal officials determine where to distribute more than \$300 billion each year, and responses to the survey are strictly confidential and protected by law.

The 2006 ACS estimates are based on an annual, nationwide household sample of about 250,000 addresses per month, or 2.5 percent of the population a year. Geographic areas for which data are available are based on total populations of 65,000 or more. As is the case with all surveys, statistics from sample surveys are subject to sampling and nonsampling error.

To request custom American Community Survey data tables or maps, contact the Pennsylvania State Data Center at 717.772.2710.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2006 American Community Survey
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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.