



Research Brief

The Commonwealth's Official Source for Population and Economic Statistics

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New 2005 Estimates of Population in Poverty in Pennsylvania Released

MIDDLETOWN, Pa –New data from the Small Area Income & Poverty Estimates (SAIPE) program show that there were an estimated 305,450 Pennsylvania school-age children in families in poverty in 2005. The 2005 SAIPE data, recently released by the U.S. Census Bureau, indicate that impoverished school-age children now comprise 15.1 percent of the population ages 5-17, below the national average of 17.0 percent. Pennsylvania ranks 26th nationally (including Washington, D.C.) in order of the highest proportion of school-age children in poverty. Overall, an estimated 457,751 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. 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. 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 American Community Survey (ACS). This is the first year that the SAIPE estimates are based on ACS data, and previous estimates should not be compared to 2005 estimates. 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 had the largest estimated population of impoverished school-age children in the Commonwealth (85,700) in 2005. Pittsburgh and Reading followed Philadelphia with 10,466 and 6,613 school-age children in poverty, respectively. The Bryn Athyn (4), Jenkintown (36), and Camp Hill (37) school districts had the smallest numbers of students living in poverty.

Proportionally, the Reading and Farrell Area school districts led the Commonwealth with the highest percentages (38.3 and 37.4 percent, respectively) of school-age children in poverty in 2005, followed by Duquesne City (36.1 percent) and West Green school districts (34.7 percent). The Bryn Athyn School District had the lowest percentage of children in poverty (1.2 percent), followed by the Downingtown Area (2.6 percent) and Council Rock (2.7 percent) school districts.

Poverty Estimates for the Total Population

There were an estimated 1,416,884 people in poverty in Pennsylvania in 2005. Nationally, the Commonwealth ranks 7th in number of people in poverty, but is 30th (including Washington, D.C.) in percentage of impoverished persons (11.9 percent) and below the national average of 13.3 percent. Philadelphia led Pennsylvania counties in both number and percent of people in poverty with an estimated 339,111 people, or 24.2 percent of its population in poverty. Allegheny was home to the second largest number of impoverished people, 146,324. Centre, home to the main campus of Penn State University, followed Philadelphia in proportion of the population in poverty, with a 20.1 percent rate, followed by Greene (17.9 percent) county. Montgomery (5.0 percent) and Bucks (5.6) counties had the lowest poverty rates in 2005.

Philadelphia also had the highest proportion of children (ages 0-17) in poverty in 2005 (35.4 percent), followed by Forest (29.7 percent) and Fayette (28.2 percent) Counties. Montgomery (5.8 percent), Chester and Bucks (6.5 percent each) had the lowest rates of child poverty among Pennsylvania counties.

Median Household Income

The estimated median household income in Pennsylvania in 2005 was \$44,545. Chester (\$72,753), Montgomery (\$68,167), and Bucks (\$64,573) counties had the highest median household incomes in 2005. The lowest median household incomes were in Forest (\$30,554), Fayette (\$31,153), and Mifflin (\$32,501) counties.

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 2005, the number of recipients in Pennsylvania reached 1,037,237, the most since 1996. That figure has increased by 245,802 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: 2005

Area	All Persons in Poverty		School-Age Children in Poverty (Ages 5-17 in Families)		Median Household Income
	Total	Percent	Total	Percent	
Pennsylvania	1,416,884	11.9	305,450	15.1	44,545
Adams County	7,272	7.6	1,520	9.2	47,016
Allegheny County	146,324	12.3	26,855	14.1	41,602
Armstrong County	9,436	13.6	1,803	16.5	35,501
Beaver County	18,503	10.7	4,093	14.6	41,224
Bedford County	6,796	13.7	1,388	17.2	36,895
Berks County	42,348	11.1	10,627	16.0	50,570
Blair County	17,122	14.0	3,466	17.7	34,545
Bradford County	8,553	14.0	1,774	16.5	37,048
Bucks County	34,410	5.6	6,022	5.5	64,573
Butler County	14,624	8.4	2,908	9.6	48,354
Cambria County	18,718	13.5	3,490	16.5	34,258
Cameron County	659	11.9	146	16.0	33,572
Carbon County	5,934	9.8	1,305	14.2	44,265
Centre County	24,872	20.1	1,585	10.4	39,036
Chester County	26,295	5.8	4,733	5.6	72,753
Clarion County	5,993	15.5	1,000	17.1	34,772
Clearfield County	12,181	15.5	2,470	19.6	32,951
Clinton County	4,721	13.4	929	17.6	36,454
Columbia County	7,645	12.6	1,188	13.4	36,232
Crawford County	11,608	13.7	2,511	17.3	35,888
Cumberland County	15,231	7.3	2,327	7.0	54,951
Dauphin County	25,640	10.4	6,079	14.3	48,385
Delaware County	50,663	9.6	11,367	11.7	55,372
Elk County	2,849	8.6	583	10.6	40,884
Erie County	37,695	14.2	8,577	18.1	40,069
Fayette County	24,783	17.5	5,961	26.4	31,153
Forest County	754	16.9	153	25.6	30,554
Franklin County	11,526	8.6	2,469	11.1	45,323
Fulton County	1,423	9.8	340	14.0	40,861
Greene County	6,536	17.9	1,537	25.8	32,541
Huntingdon County	5,220	12.8	1,117	16.9	36,848
Indiana County	13,865	16.7	2,114	17.7	32,898
Jefferson County	6,124	13.7	1,252	17.5	34,282
Juniata County	2,251	9.8	465	11.8	40,525

Table 1 (continued): Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates, Pennsylvania Counties: 2005

Area	All Persons in Poverty		School-Age Children in Poverty (Ages 5-17 in Families)		Median Household Income
	Total	Percent	Total	Percent	
Lackawanna County	26,658	13.3	5,293	16.7	37,317
Lancaster County	42,657	9.0	10,383	11.7	49,412
Lawrence County	11,501	12.9	2,703	18.3	39,112
Lebanon County	8,828	7.3	2,114	10.5	46,984
Lehigh County	33,969	10.7	8,094	14.7	48,725
Luzerne County	37,890	12.7	7,029	15.4	37,295
Lycoming County	14,088	12.6	2,778	15.1	38,243
Mc Kean County	5,837	14.1	1,250	17.6	36,476
Mercer County	13,614	12.1	3,653	19.3	38,543
Mifflin County	7,105	15.7	1,679	21.6	32,501
Monroe County	14,874	9.4	3,376	11.2	51,936
Montgomery County	37,751	5.0	7,396	5.7	68,167
Montour County	1,765	10.4	433	14.9	46,396
Northampton County	20,101	7.3	4,471	9.7	53,147
Northumberland County	10,866	12.3	2,117	15.9	35,876
Perry County	3,657	8.3	834	11.1	46,741
Philadelphia County	339,111	24.2	85,700	33.7	32,671
Pike County	4,763	8.5	999	9.5	49,967
Potter County	2,337	13.4	555	17.8	33,988
Schuylkill County	16,911	12.1	3,268	15.6	35,777
Snyder County	3,862	10.8	894	14.9	41,911
Somerset County	9,885	13.3	2,054	17.5	33,665
Sullivan County	707	12.0	134	17.1	33,834
Susquehanna County	6,688	16.1	1,419	19.9	35,734
Tioga County	5,560	14.0	1,187	18.7	35,714
Union County	3,295	9.7	545	9.8	42,589
Venango County	8,003	14.9	1,832	20.3	35,444
Warren County	4,694	11.5	1,192	17.4	37,970
Washington County	20,257	10.1	3,571	11.3	44,317
Wayne County	5,503	11.4	1,277	15.8	38,432
Westmoreland County	31,358	8.8	6,005	10.7	43,056
Wyoming County	3,019	11.1	735	15.7	39,809
York County	31,199	7.8	6,326	9.3	49,021

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