



Research Brief

The Commonwealth's Official Source for Population and Economic Statistics

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2007 American Community Survey Data Released: Income, Earnings and Poverty Data Included

PENN STATE HARRISBURG – The number and percent of Pennsylvania's residents in poverty decreased between 2006 and 2007, from 1,448,228 people in 2006 (12.1 percent) to 1,393,026 people (11.6 percent) in 2007, according to new data from the U.S. Census Bureau's 2007 American Community Survey (ACS), released today. This data release includes areas with populations of 65,000 or more and covers income, earnings and poverty. The ACS, 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 unified school districts, all metropolitan statistical areas, and several other geographies. No new counties were added to the one-year ACS estimates this year.

Pennsylvania and the Nation

According to the 2007 ACS, 1,393,026 people in Pennsylvania were in poverty in the preceding 12 months, representing 11.6 percent of the population, a decrease from 12.1 percent in 2006. Compared to the nation, Pennsylvania ranked 32nd in percent of the total population in poverty, well below the national average, 13.0 percent. Children under 18 represented 446,832 of the persons in poverty in Pennsylvania, or 16.3 percent of all children in the state. Pennsylvania ranked 28th in the nation in terms of the percent of its children under 18 years old in poverty, below the national average of 18.0 percent.

Pennsylvania's median household income was \$48,576 in 2007, below the national median of \$50,740, but an increase from 2006, when it was \$46,259. Pennsylvania ranked 26th among the states in terms of its median household income. In terms of median family income, Pennsylvania ranked 23rd, with \$60,825, just below the national median, \$61,173, and an increase from 2006, when the median family income was \$58,148.

Selected Data for Pennsylvania's Largest Counties and Cities

Persons in Poverty

Among the counties covered by the 2007 ACS, Philadelphia County had the largest proportion of its population in poverty, with nearly a quarter of its residents in poverty in the preceding 12 months (see table 1). Indiana County followed, with more than 20 percent of its population in poverty. For the largest cities in Pennsylvania, Reading City led Pennsylvania's largest cities, with 34.5 percent of its population in poverty, followed by Erie City, which had 24.6 percent in poverty.

Table 1. Percent of persons with income below poverty level in the past 12 months: top five Pennsylvania counties ranked, 2007

County	Total population:*	Income in the past 12 months below poverty level:	Percent with income below poverty level:
Philadelphia County	1,400,617	333,142	23.8%
Indiana County	82,478	17,118	20.8%
Fayette County	140,596	27,800	19.8%
Clearfield County	76,118	12,043	15.8%
Centre County	124,981	18,878	15.1%

* Population for whom the poverty status has been determined.

Elderly Persons in Poverty

Philadelphia County had the largest proportion of its population 65 or older in poverty in 2007, with 18.1 percent of those 65 or above (32,467 persons) in poverty in the preceding 12 months (see table 2). Columbia followed, with 12.3 percent of elderly persons in poverty (1,263 persons). The lowest percentage of elderly persons in poverty was in Franklin County, which had 3.7 percent of its elderly population living in poverty. For the largest cities, Philadelphia City had the largest proportion of elderly persons living in poverty (as above). Bethlehem City had the smallest percentage of elderly residents in poverty, with 8.7 percent of persons 65 and older in poverty (999 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, 2007

County	Total population 65 and over:*	65 years and over with income below poverty level:	Percent 65 years and over with income below poverty level:
Philadelphia County	179,072	32,467	18.1%
Columbia County	10,305	1,263	12.3%
Lackawanna County	36,349	4,216	11.6%
Blair County	20,269	2,219	10.9%
Fayette County	24,172	2,573	10.6%

* Population for whom the poverty status has been determined.

Household and Family Income

Of the 39 counties covered by the 2007 ACS, Fayette County had the lowest median household income, with \$31,344, followed by Indiana with \$33,441. The county with the highest median household income was Chester County, with \$83,146. Among Pennsylvania's largest cities, Bethlehem City had the highest median household income with \$45,172. Reading City had the lowest median household income with \$25,536.

More about the ACS

Today's ACS release coincided with the release of the Annual Social and Economic Supplement (ASEC) to the Current Population Survey (CPS). Other 2007 ACS releases, set for September 23, 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, and in December, the introduction of three-year estimates for geographic areas with a population of 20,000 or more. These three-year estimates average data collected between 2005 and 2007, and will provide data for 22 new counties in Pennsylvania (and many other geographies). That release will provide the first updated demographic data for these areas since the release of Census 2000.

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.

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.

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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.