Poverty and Hardship – Then and Now

What to expect from the Census Bureau’s annual poverty, income, and health insurance data

September 9, 2021
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Tip: Should the header and chat be in the way of the captions, click and drag the closed captioning to move its position in the meeting window.
Thanks to CHN’s generous funders

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Deborah Weinstein, Moderator

**Deborah Weinstein** has been Executive Director of the Coalition on Human Needs since 2003. At CHN and previously at the Children’s Defense Fund and the Massachusetts Human Services Coalition, Debbie has helped advocates to combat poverty and hardship for about 40 years.
William Spriggs is a professor in, and former Chair of, the Department of Economics at Howard University and serves as Chief Economist to the AFL-CIO. In his role with the AFL-CIO he chairs the Economic Policy Working Group for the Trade Union Advisory Committee to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, and serves on the board of the National Bureau of Economic Research.
Megan A. Curran is Policy Director at the Center on Poverty and Social Policy at Columbia University with a focus on policy strategies for poverty reduction and how the tax system and social safety net can better support children and families. She has worked as a researcher, advocate, legislative aide, and direct services provider and holds a PhD in Social Policy from University College Dublin, Ireland.
Christopher Wimer is Co-Director of the Center on Poverty and Social Policy at the Columbia University School of Social Work. He is also the Project Director on the Robin Hood Poverty Tracker, which measures poverty in New York City. Wimer conducts research on the measurement of poverty, as well as historical trends in poverty and the impacts of social policies on the poverty rate. He also focuses on how families cope with poverty and economic insecurity, with a particular focus on how families manage food insecurity and other forms of material hardship.
Claire Zippel

Claire Zippel is a Senior Research Analyst in the Income and Poverty Trends team. Before joining the Center, Claire worked as a data analyst at Enterprise Community Partners, where she provided consulting services in support of evidence-based community development. Prior to that, she was the housing policy analyst and research coordinator at the DC Fiscal Policy Institute, a State Priorities Partnership member. At DCFPI, Claire conducted research on housing subsidy programs, poverty trends, and tax credits.
Poverty and Hardship: Then & Now

Coalition on Human Needs
September 2021

Megan Curran and Christopher Wimer
3 Ways CPSP Is Measuring Poverty During COVID-19

- **Traditional Supplemental Poverty Measure (SPM) poverty analysis**
  Use annual data available on a considerable lag; assess impact of policy on poverty within a one-year window (e.g. assess poverty and policy based on 2019 or 2020 data)

- **Forecasting ‘real-time’ monthly SPM poverty estimates**
  Use combination of available monthly data to assess changes in family income & poverty rates by month (monthly SPM poverty threshold = annual SPM income threshold divided by 12)

- **Forecasting ‘real-time’ annual SPM poverty estimates**
  Project family income & poverty rates for the current or near-future years (e.g. what might 2021 or 2022 poverty look like?)
Monthly Child Poverty During COVID-19

January 2020 to July 2021

Based on: Parolin, Curran, Matsudaira, Waldfogel, and Wimer (2020)
Access all results at: https://www.povertycenter.columbia.edu/forecasting-monthly-poverty-data
Identifying Effects of COVID Relief

For Whole US Population

The New York Times
Oct. 15. 2020
8 Million Have Slipped Into Poverty Since May as Federal Aid Has Dried Up

JAN
MARCH 4, 2021
Stimulus checks, unemployment benefits, and SNAP kept 13 million out of poverty in January
MONTHLY POVERTY

For Children

Anti-Poverty Policy Effects in July 2021
As the new monthly Child Tax Credit rolls-out, food hardship and child poverty drops.

The overall monthly child poverty rate fell.
15.9% JUNE 2021
11.9% JULY 2021

The CTC kept 3 million children from living in poverty in its first month alone.
The first CTC payment reduced food hardship among low-income families by approximately 30%.
Tracking Monthly Poverty


- View monthly poverty rates under three scenarios:
  1. pre-tax/transfer;
  2. without COVID relief;
  3. with COVID relief

- Find breakouts by age (*children; working age adults; seniors*) and race and ethnicity (*Asian, Black, Latino, White*)
Poverty Measures: US Census Bureau

Official Measure

The official measure uses income, such as wages and salaries. Social Security benefits, interest, dividends, pension, or other retirement income.

2016 Official Poverty Thresholds (Two Adults and Two Children)

$24,339

Supplemental Measure

The SPM starts with cash income, then...

Adding Benefits

The SPM adds benefits from the government that are not cash but help families meet their basic needs.

Subtracting Expenses

The SPM subtracts necessary expenses like taxes, health care, commuting costs for all workers, and child care expenses while parents work.

For images & more information, see US Census Bureau
Questions?

Keep in touch!

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@cpsppoverty

Join our email list for policy updates and information about upcoming policy seminars.
Poverty and Hardship – Then and Now

How to find and use data from 2020 and 2021 to make the case for Building Back Better

Deborah Weinstein
September 9, 2021
What’s available – and what’s not

• September 8: USDA Food Security data for 2020
• September 14: Supplemental Poverty Measure for 2020
• Columbia U Monthly Poverty Estimates from Jan. 2020 through July 2021
• Census Household Pulse Data – food, housing, other hardships, tracked from April 2020 – August 2021 so far (state data available)
• **NOT till NOV.**: 2020 American Community Survey state/local data
Finding the CPS Data on 9/14: Links at Census.gov on that day

Census Bureau Press Conf Online 10 a.m.
WebEx access:
https://uscensus.webex.com/uscensus/onstage/g.php?MTID=e1982487b3649dfa94c667dd7a6b1e907

Password: Census#1 (if requested)
The webinar will consist of a simultaneous audio conference and online presentation. Credentialed media will be able to ask questions via the audio access number following the presentation. Questions are limited to media.
Audio access: 800-857-4863, passcode: 2426222

News conference page:
The Census Bureau will post the reports, data tables and news release online shortly after the news conference begins. They will be available at www.census.gov/newsroom/press-kits/2021/income-poverty.html
Or at https://www.census.gov, then Browse by Topic; pick Income and Poverty; also Health.
10.5% of people were food insecure in 2020, unchanged from 2019. Still, 38.3 million people lived in households unable always to afford adequate food in 2020.

Household Food Security in the United States in 2020

www.ers.usda.gov

- **Children**: 14.8% of households with children were food insecure in 2020, up from 13.6% in 2019.
- **Households with children headed by single women**: 27.7% food insecure.
- **White non-Hispanic households**: 7.1 percent food insecure.
- **Black non-Hispanic households**: 21.7 percent food insecure.
- **Hispanic (may be of any race)**: 17.2 percent food insecure.
- **Below 185% of Federal Poverty Line**: 28.6% food insecure.
USDA Food Security by State:

Prevalence of food insecurity, average 2018–20

Food insecurity below U.S. average
Food insecurity near U.S. average (10.7 percent)
Food insecurity above U.S. average

CPS Health Insurance report, Sept. 14

Appendix Table 1 shows insurance by race, income...

Appendix Table 2 shows insurance by work experience, etc.
Find Income Data in Income and Poverty Report: go to census.gov – then “browse by topic”, then “Income and Poverty”
From last yr’s Income report

Figure 4. Median Earnings and Percent Change by Work Status and Sex
(People 15 years and older with earnings as of March of the following year)

2019 Median Earnings

Total Workers
- Men: $41,537
- Women: $35,826

Full-Time, Year-Round Workers
- Men: $52,000
- Women: $47,299

Change: 2018 to 2019
- Total Workers:
  - Men: 1.4%
  - Women: 2.5%
- Full-Time, Year-Round Workers:
  - Men: 0.8%
  - Women: 3.0%

Notes: Statistically significant indicates the change is statistically different from zero at the 90 percent confidence level. For more details, see Table A-6. For information on confidentiality protection, sampling error, nonsampling error, and definitions, see <https://www2.census.gov/programs-surveys/cps/techdocs/cpsmar20.pdf>.

Supplemental Poverty Measure More Accurate Assessment of Poverty – go to [census.gov](http://census.gov); browse by topic; income and poverty – select Supplemental Poverty Measure

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Official</th>
<th>SPM</th>
<th>Difference</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>Percent</td>
<td>Margin of error</td>
<td>Margin of error</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All people</td>
<td>325,268</td>
<td>10.5</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>38,163</td>
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<td>Sex</td>
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<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>159,461</td>
<td>9.4</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>17,655</td>
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<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>165,807</td>
<td>11.5</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>20,508</td>
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<tr>
<td>Age</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Under 18 years</td>
<td>73,151</td>
<td>14.4</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>9,119</td>
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<tr>
<td>18 to 64 years</td>
<td>197,471</td>
<td>8.4</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>22,072</td>
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<tr>
<td>65 years and older</td>
<td>54,622</td>
<td>8.9</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>6,972</td>
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<tr>
<td>Type of Unit</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Married couple</td>
<td>197,884</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>13,703</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cohabiting partners</td>
<td>26,094</td>
<td>22.2</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>3,167</td>
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<tr>
<td>Female reference person</td>
<td>40,891</td>
<td>22.9</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>9,526</td>
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<tr>
<td>Male reference person</td>
<td>15,079</td>
<td>9.8</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>2,162</td>
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<tr>
<td>Unrelated individuals</td>
<td>45,320</td>
<td>18.6</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>9,605</td>
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<tr>
<td>Race and Hispanic Origin</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>248,400</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>26,089</td>
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<tr>
<td>White, not Hispanic</td>
<td>194,858</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>15,914</td>
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<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>43,094</td>
<td>18.8</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>7,907</td>
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<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>19,940</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>2,327</td>
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<td>Hispanic (any race)</td>
<td>60,724</td>
<td>15.7</td>
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<td>11,464</td>
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<td>Nativity</td>
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<tr>
<td>Native-bom</td>
<td>280,361</td>
<td>10.1</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>30,238</td>
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<tr>
<td>Foreign-bom</td>
<td>44,807</td>
<td>12.6</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>7,624</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
### Supplemental Poverty Measure has state data – will average 2018, 2019, 2020

#### Appendix Table 5.
**Number and Percentage of People in Poverty by State Using 3-Year Average Over: 2017, 2018, and 2019**

(Numbers in thousands. Margin of error in thousands or percentage points as appropriate. People as of March of the following year. For information on confidentiality protection, sampling error, nonsampling error, and definitions, see [https://www2.census.gov/programs-surveys/cps/techdocs/cpsmar20.pdf](https://www2.census.gov/programs-surveys/cps/techdocs/cpsmar20.pdf)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Margin of error(^2)</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Margin of error(^2)</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Margin of error(^2)</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Difference</th>
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<td></td>
<td>Estimate</td>
<td>(£)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Estimate</td>
<td>(£)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Estimate</td>
<td>(£)</td>
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<tr>
<td>United States</td>
<td>37,316</td>
<td>497</td>
<td>11.5</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>40,553</td>
<td>562</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>0.2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Alabama</td>
<td>715</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>14.7</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>635</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>13.1</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alaska</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>11.8</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>12.3</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arizona</td>
<td>870</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>12.1</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>880</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>12.0</td>
<td>1.6</td>
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<td>Arkansas</td>
<td>437</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>15.0</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>366</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>California</td>
<td>4,482</td>
<td>182</td>
<td>11.4</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>6,745</td>
<td>225</td>
<td>17.2</td>
<td>0.6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Colorado</td>
<td>516</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>639</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>11.3</td>
<td>1.4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Connecticut</td>
<td>338</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>9.7</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>392</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>11.2</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delaware</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7.6</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>10.5</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District of Columbia</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>13.7</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>1.3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Florida</td>
<td>2,725</td>
<td>203</td>
<td>12.9</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>3,265</td>
<td>204</td>
<td>15.4</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Georgia</td>
<td>1,383</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>13.3</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>1,378</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>13.3</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The SPM answers questions about how effective certain programs are in reducing poverty.

Without SS income, 26.5m more people would be poor

Without tax credits, 7.5m more people would be poor

Without SNAP, 2.5m more people would be poor

Without housing subsidies, 2.6m more people would be poor
Preliminary estimate of weighted average Official Poverty Measure thresholds for 2020:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Size of Family Unit</th>
<th>Estimated Threshold</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 person (unrelated individual)</td>
<td>$13,172</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Under 65 years</td>
<td>$13,465</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65 years and over</td>
<td>$12,413</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 people</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Householder under 65</td>
<td>$17,408</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Householder 65 years and over</td>
<td>$15,659</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 people</td>
<td>$20,586</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 people</td>
<td>$26,495</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 people</td>
<td>$31,404</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 people</td>
<td>$35,562</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 people</td>
<td>$40,510</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 people</td>
<td>$45,010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 people</td>
<td>$53,527</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Check on 9/14 to make sure there are no changes in the poverty thresholds.
Quick look at CPS poverty data

• We’ll go to www.census.gov
• Then to Browse by topic
• Then to Income and Poverty
• Then to Poverty
• Click on Poverty in the U.S. 2019 Official Poverty Report (on Sept. 14 will be 2020)
• Scroll down to find Table B-1
A few examples of detailed CPS tables:
https://www.census.gov/data/tables/time-series/demo/income-poverty/cps-pov.html

For all, select weighted person count, choose percent of poverty you want and demographic groups you want

- **POV01**: Shows people below 50% FPL, below 100%, below 200%, etc. White, Black, Asian, Hispanic (may be of any race); age breakdowns
- **POV06**: Families by number of working family members and family structure
- **POV15**: Families With Related Children Under 18 by Householder's Work Experience and Family Structure
- **POV22**: Work experience by age, sex, household relationship, poverty status
- **POV29**: Years of school by poverty status – age, sex, nativity, citizenship
- **POV46**: Poverty by state (use with caution – sample size may be too small to be reliable)
That was then. Telling a more current story.


• Census Bureau’s Household Pulse surveys – Started April 2020, ongoing through October 2021 (as of now): [https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/household-pulse-survey.html](https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/household-pulse-survey.html)

• Covers hardship, not poverty: ability to get enough food, afford rent or other bills, employment, health, education, child care, Child Tax Credit – [has state and metro area data as well as national](https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/household-pulse-survey.html)
Monthly Child Poverty During COVID-19

January 2020 to July 2021

- Large share of EITC/CTC transfers delivered
- $300 per week unemployment supplement + stimulus checks + SNAP expansions
- CARES Act enacted March 27
- $600 per week unemployment supplement expires
- Large share of EITC/CTC transfers + stimulus checks delivered
- Without COVID relief
- With COVID relief
- First monthly CTC payment delivered

Based on: Parolin, Curran, Matsudaira, Waldfogel, and Wimer (2020)
Access all results at: https://www.povertycenter.columbia.edu/forecasting-monthly-poverty-data
How to use Household Pulse

Example: food scarcity

Go to https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/household-pulse-survey.html

Then take a look at data tools: https://www.census.gov/data-tools/demo/hhp/#/ (shows food scarcity (sometimes/often not having enough to eat in the previous week) by state)

Then go to data tables: https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/household-pulse-survey/data.html

We’ll choose most recent: Week 36, August 18-30, Food table 1
Using the data during this critical time

Points to make:

• Benefits/assistance are making/have made a real difference in people’s lives
  • Child Tax Credit, Unemployment Insurance, rental aid, food aid...

• This help is vitally needed during the pandemic – but the need persists if we want to make and sustain economic progress


• We need to add investments that create jobs and help people stay and advance at work, stay healthy, live in communities in affordable housing and with home care, build/rebuild infrastructure, include immigrants, –

• We need the Build Back Better budget now being considered in Congress
A message you can send to your Rep and Senators:

Congress is drafting a historic ten-year $3.5 trillion investment in jobs, healthcare, childcare, education, the environment, housing and more. Every dollar of revenue not raised from the rich and corporations is a dollar not invested in children, families and working people.

"27% of adults reported having difficulty covering usual expenses. 15% of adults reported their household is not caught up on rent. Congress needs to move forward on @POTUS' #BuildBackBetter plan and ease the economic hardship that millions continue to endure."

Send out this tweet by clicking this link: [https://ctt.ac/Fa6eG](https://ctt.ac/Fa6eG) and don't forget before tweeting away- to add in Reps and Senators' Twitter handles at [https://bit.ly/117thCongressTwitter](https://bit.ly/117thCongressTwitter)
Tell your Rep and Senators to make the Child Tax Credit Permanent!

This link will connect you:
https://p2a.co/nilqmtb

Thanks to the Children’s Defense Fund!
What you’ll get from us

• This recording and follow-up email with live links to resources
• On September 14: CHN’s **First Look** at the data and other helpful info via email
• Updates and opportunities to take action to support the Build Back Better investment agenda
• Social media resources
Thank you!

Look out for an email with a captioned recording, slides, and other resources from our presenters.

www.chn.org