

Children in Poverty

Definition

The Percent of Children in Poverty is the percentage of children under the age of 18 who live in families with incomes below the U.S. poverty threshold. In 1999, the U.S. poverty threshold for a family of four was \$16,895.

Current Population Survey

The official and most current source of poverty estimates is the March supplement to the Current Population Survey (CPS), which samples about 50,000 households across the U.S. The data reflect the status of persons during calendar year 1999. Based on these data, **the poverty rate for the U.S. in 1999 was 11.8 percent for all persons and 16.3 percent for children under age 18.**¹

To improve the statistical reliability of poverty estimates, the Census Bureau also calculates a three-year average of poverty for the U.S. and for individual states. **In 1999, the three-year average of poverty for the U.S. was 12.6 percent. The corresponding rate for Nevada was 11 percent.**² (The Census does not estimate state rates using single years of data.) Among the states, **Nevada ranks 20th in the number of all people in poverty.** (The state rankings are arranged in sequential order from highest/best [1] to lowest/worst [50].)

Additional highlights from the March 2000 supplement from the CPS include:³

- ❖ The 1999 U.S. poverty rate for all people was the lowest rate since 1979. This was also the case for children in poverty.
- ❖ Every racial and ethnic group experienced a decline in the poverty rate. Except for whites, poverty rates “fell below or equalled the lowest rate ever recorded” for each of the major ethnic/racial groups.

- ❖ Poverty rates for the racial and ethnic groups in 1999 were 23.6 percent for blacks; 7.7 percent for whites, non-Hispanics; 22.8 percent for Hispanics; and 10.7 percent for Asians and Pacific Islanders. The 1997-1999 average poverty rate for American Indians and Alaska Natives was 25.9 percent.

Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates

To provide more current estimates of income and poverty than that which the decennial Census provides for states, the U.S. Census Bureau implemented the Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates (SAIPE) program. Estimates are calculated by modeling “the relation between income or poverty and tax and program data for the states and a subset of counties using estimates of income or poverty from the Current Population Survey.”⁴ The Bureau then uses “the modeled relations to obtain estimates for all states and counties.”⁵ The estimates are modeled on 1997 income reported in the March 1998 CPS. The following are poverty highlights for Nevada using SAIPE (refer also to the table on the following page).

- ❖ **Nevada’s poverty rate for all ages was 10.7 percent**, similar to the 11 percent calculated from the three-year average of poverty using the March supplement to the CPS.⁶
 - ❖ Among the counties in Nevada, **Mineral had the highest poverty rate (16.3 percent) for all ages**, followed by Esmeralda and Lincoln (15.2 and 14.8 percents, respectively). **Storey County had the lowest rate (4.2 percent).**⁷
- ❖ **Nevada’s poverty rate for children under age 18 was 15.4 percent.**⁸
 - ❖ **Mineral County had the highest poverty rate (23.1 percent) for children**, followed by Nye and Esmeralda counties (20.7 and 17.8 percents, respectively). **Storey County had the lowest rate (5.4 percent).**⁹

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Estimated Number and Percent of People of All Ages in Poverty by Nevada County: 1997

County	People of All Ages With incomes less than 100% of poverty threshold	
	Number	Percent
Carson City	4,964	10.6
Churchill	2,469	10.7
Clark	129,276	11.1
Douglas	2,698	7.3
Elko	3,365	7.3
Esmeralda	176	15.2
Eureka	165	8.2
Humboldt	1,442	8.0
Lander	623	8.8
Lincoln	571	14.8
Lyon	3,436	11.4
Mineral	858	16.3
Nye	3,652	12.7
Pershing	529	10.9
Storey	127	4.2
Washoe	20,791	9.8
White Pine	1,201	13.4
NEVADA	186,345	10.7

Note: These estimates were released in November 2000.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates Program.

Estimated Number and Percent of Children under Age 18 in Poverty by Nevada County: 1997

County	Children under Age 18 With incomes less than 100% of poverty threshold	
	Number	Percent
Carson City	1,853	15.4
Churchill	1,004	13.7
Clark	52,257	16.4
Douglas	1,079	10.8
Elko	1,414	8.4
Esmeralda	52	17.8
Eureka	52	8.9
Humboldt	594	9.4
Lander	258	9.6
Lincoln	231	17.7
Lyon	1,398	15.8
Mineral	348	23.1
Nye	1,465	20.7
Pershing	211	12.5
Storey	42	5.4
Washoe	11,307	13.8
White Pine	441	15.3
NEVADA	74,006	15.4

Note: These estimates were released in November 2000.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates Program.

Children in Poverty Continued

Low-Income Status of All Persons and of Children in the U.S. and Nevada: 1997-1999 (Three-year average of data from 1998-2000 CPS)

	All Persons		
	Total Population (in thousands)	Total Number with Incomes Less Than 200% of Poverty Threshold (in thousands)	Percent of All Population with Incomes Less Than 200% of Poverty Threshold
United States	271,010	83,986	31
Nevada	1,830	533	29

	Children under Age 18		
	Total Population of Children under Age 18 (in thousands)	Total Number of Children under Age 18 with Incomes Less Than 200% of Poverty Threshold (in thousands)	Percent of All Children under Age 18 with Incomes Less Than 200% of Poverty Threshold
United States	71,379	28,603	40
Nevada	522	195	37

Note: Percentages were calculated from unrounded numbers.
Source: Population Reference Bureau, analysis of data from U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey (March supplement), 1998 to 2000.

Low income is defined as incomes less than twice the federal poverty line--\$16,895 for a family of two adults and two children under 18 years of age in 1999.

- ❖ Nevada has 533,000 people who are low income (less than 200 percent of poverty threshold). Twenty-nine percent of Nevada's population can be classified as low income. This is slightly lower than that of the nation (29 versus 31 percent).
- ❖ Nevada ranks 22nd in the nation in the percentage of all persons with low income (the state rankings are arranged in sequential order from highest/best [1] to lowest/worst [50]).
- ❖ Nevada has 195,000 children under age 18 who are low income. Nevada's percentage of children under age 18 who are low income is slightly lower than the nation's (37 versus 40).

*"Child poverty is America's dirty little secret. We must get it out in the open and clean it up now."*¹⁰

*Marian Wright Edelman, president
Children's Defense Fund*

*"One in six nonelderly Americans lives in families in which the adults work at least half-time but whose incomes fall below twice the federal poverty level."*¹¹

*G. Acs, K.R. Phillips, and D. McKenzie
The Urban Institute*

*"Regardless of a family's race, age, or structure, poverty and economic hardship can penetrate its boundaries."*¹²

*Mark. R. Rank
Handbook of Family Diversity*