

WHAT'S NEW WITH KIDS?

August 2009

Site of the Month

Rural Child Poverty

In my June 2004 newsletter, I reviewed a report by William O'Hare titled *Child Poverty in America*. That report, based on 2000 census data, discussed the characteristics of poor children living in America with an emphasis on poor children in rural areas. In this newsletter, I review a 2009 report by O'Hare titled *The Forgotten Fifth: Child Poverty in Rural America*, which he prepared for the Carsey Institute at the University of New Hampshire.

Using 2007 U.S. census data, O'Hare's 2009 report shows that the rural child poverty rate was higher than the urban child poverty rate (22 percent versus 17 percent). The report includes a U.S. map that illustrates three categories of rural child poverty rates: (1) low rate (under 15 percent), (2) moderate rate (15 to 25 percent), and (3) high rate (over 25 percent). Nevada is one of 11 states with a low rural child poverty rate.

O'Hare's report does not provide the actual percentage of rural poor by state. Below, I provide Nevada's rural poverty rate in 2007, using the U.S. Census Bureau's American FactFinder. Nevada's rural child poverty rate was lower than its urban child poverty rate.

Table 1. Estimated Percent of Rural and Urban Children in Nevada: 2007

	Percent of children under age 18 in poverty
Nevada	15.3
Urban Nevada	16.6
Rural Nevada	9.5

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2007 American Community Survey, Table GCT1704, Percent of Children Under 18 Years Below Poverty Level in the Past 12 Months (For Whom Poverty Is Determined), accessed through American FactFinder, 8/12/09.

O'Hare also provides the regional distribution of the urban and the rural poverty rates. See Table 2. The largest percentage of urban and rural poor children resided in the South.

Table 2. Distribution of All Urban and Rural Children Who Are Poor by Region of the Country: 2007

Region	Percent of all urban poor children located in this region	Percent of all rural poor children located in this region
Northeast	16	7
Midwest	19	25
South	39	55
West	25	13
Total	100	100

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2007, Table c17001, in *The Forgotten Fifth: Child Poverty in Rural America*, available online at: <http://www.carseyinstitute.unh.edu/publications/Report-OHare-ForgottenFifth.pdf>, as of 8/7/09.

The distribution of poor children also differed by race/ethnicity. In rural areas, most poor children were white (57 percent) (alone, non-Hispanic), followed by black (21 percent), Hispanic (15 percent), and American Indian/Alaskan Native (4 percent).* In contrast, in urban areas, Hispanics made up the largest portion (35 percent) of poor children, followed by blacks (30 percent), whites (28 percent), and American Indians/Alaskan Natives (1 percent).

Family structure also contributed to differences between the rural and urban poor children. Children in single-mother families were more likely to be in poverty than children in married couple families or children in single-father families. With respect to single-mother families, rural areas did worse than urban areas. See the table below.

Table 3. Child Poverty Rates by Family Structure in Urban and Rural America: 2007

Family Structure	Urban child poverty (%)	Rural child poverty (%)
Children in married couple families	8	11
Children in single-father families	19	25
Children in single-mother families	42	51

Source: 2007 American Community Survey online custom table, in *The Forgotten Fifth: Child Poverty in Rural America*, available online at: <http://www.carseyinstitute.unh.edu/publications/Report-OHare-ForgottenFifth.pdf>, as of 8/7/09.

For additional information on demographic differences between the two poverty groups go to: <http://www.carseyinstitute.unh.edu/publications/Report-OHare-ForgottenFifth.pdf>.

*Totals do not sum to 100 percent because some groups are not included in the distribution and some children are double counted in the race and Hispanic groups.