

Poverty in the U.S 2014*

- Median household income was \$53,657 in 2014, 6.5% lower than in 2007, the year before the last recession.
- The official poverty threshold for one person (under 65) was \$12,316, for a family of 4 it was \$24,230
- The Census estimated that there were 315 million Americans in 2014. In that population, 46.7 million Americans were in poverty in 2014 and the official poverty rate was 14.8 percent. For the fourth consecutive year in a row, the number of people in poverty remained unchanged. The 2014 poverty rate was 2.3 percentage points higher than in 2007, the year before the recession.

Poverty Rates among selected groups – how different groups are affected by poverty

By Race and Hispanic Origin

- 12.7% of Whites were poor in 2014 (31 million people)
- 10.1% of non-Hispanic Whites were poor (19.6 million)
- 26.2% of Blacks were poor (11 million people)
- 12% of Asians were poor (2.1 million people)
- 23.6% of Hispanics were poor (13.1 million people)

By Age

- 21.1% of children under 18 (15.5 million) were poor
- 23.7% of children age 6 & under (6.5 million) were poor
- 24.4% of children under a year old (Nearly 1 million)
- 13.5% of adults 18-64 (26.5 million) were poor
- 10% of all adults over 65 (4.5 million) were poor

By Nativity

- 14.2% of those born in the U.S. (38.8 million) were poor
- 18.5% of those Foreign born (7.8 million) were poor
- 11.9% of naturalized citizens (2.3 million) were poor
- 24% of foreign born, not citizens (5.4 million) were poor

By Family status

- 6.2% or 3.7 million married-couple families were poor
- 30.6 or 4.7 million mother-only families were poor
- 15.7% or nearly a million father-only families were poor

Who's poor in 2014 – those in the poverty population**

The poor were mostly White – 66% of the poor were White and nearly 42% were non-Hispanic White

- 66% or 31 million of the poor were White
- 42% or 19.6 million were non-Hispanic White
- 23% or 11 million were Black
- 4.4% or 2.1 million were Asian
- 28% or 13.1 million were Hispanic (can be any race)

Nearly half of the poor were either children or older people – 43% of the poor were under 18 or over 65

- 33.3% or 15.5 million were Children under 18
- 30.3% or 14.1 million were Children 15 & under
- 14% or 6.6 million were Children 6 & under
- 9.8% or 4.5 million were 65 and over

Poverty is largely a family affair – nearly 33 million people or 70% of the poor lived in family households

- 29% or 13.7 million lived in married-couple families
- 34% or 15.9 million lived in female householder families
- 6% or 2.9 million lived in male householder families

The size of poor households mirrors those of the non-poor. Most of the poor lived in relatively small households

- 29% or 13 million of the poor live alone
- 45% or 21 million lived in 2-4 person households
- 25% or 11.7 million lived in households with 5 and up

The poor were made in the U.S.A.

- 83% or 38.8 million of the poor were born in the U.S.
- 17% or 7.3 million of the poor were foreign born
- Less than 12% of the poor were non-citizen immigrants

Poverty touches many but for many who are poor, it is severe

- Close to one in five Americans (19.4% or 61 million people) were either poor or near poor – with incomes at the 125% (or up to 25% above) the poverty line.
- Nearly half (44% or 20.8 million people) the poor were severely poor – their incomes were below 50 percent of the poverty line – or around \$12,000 for a family of four
- Of those living in severe poverty, one-third are children (nearly 7 million children)

Most poor households received means-tested aid but most poor families didn't receive the most direct form of assistance

- 75% of the poor lived in households receiving means-tested aid
- 63.6% of the poor lived in households in which one or more persons were covered by Medicaid
- 49.4% of the poor lived in households receiving food stamps (SNAP)
- 17.6% of the poor lived in households receiving means-tested cash assistance (TANF)
- 14.9% of the poor lived in households in public/subsidized housing

*Data source: DeNavas-Walt, Carmen and Bernadette D. Proctor, U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Reports, P60-252, *Income and Poverty in the United States: 2014*, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, DC, 2015.

**My calculations based the Census data for 2014

Poverty Programs Aren't Just For the Officially Poor – many Americans receive governmental assistance

- 22 million Americans of all incomes lived households receiving means-tested cash assistance. Only 8.2 million (or 37% of those receiving this aid) were in households below the poverty line.
- 43 million Americans of all incomes lived in households that received food stamps. 23 million (or 53% of those receiving this aid) were in households below the poverty line.
- 12 million Americans of all incomes lived in public or authorized housing. 6.9 million (56% of those receiving housing aid) were in households below the poverty line
- 92 million Americans of all incomes lived in households in which someone was covered by Medicaid. 29.7 million (32%) were in households below the poverty line.

Social circumstances associated with those in poverty were varied as indicated by the reasons for not working and labor force status

- 15.5 million of the poor – a third of the poverty population – were *children under 18*
- 31.1 million *adults over 18* lived below the poverty line
 - 10.5 million – a third of poor adults – actually worked full/part-time in 2014
 - 20.7 million poor adults *did not work* in 2014 – the Census recorded the following reasons for not working:
 - 5.9 million poor adults were *ill or disabled*
 - 5.1 million poor adults were *retired*
 - 4.2 million poor adults had *family reasons* - family responsibilities
 - 3.7 million poor adults were *attending school*
 - 1.6 million poor adults *could not find work*

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