

## U.S. Poverty Statistics

Here are the current U.S. Poverty Statistics released September 2015. They represent poverty measured by the Census Bureau for the year 2014.

### Here are the highest to lowest categories of poverty:

Measured as the percentage of the population in poverty

Adults not working - 34%  
Single moms - 31%  
Adults without a high school diploma - 29%  
Adults with a disability - 29%  
Black Americans - 26%  
Hispanic Americans - 24%  
Foreign born non-citizens - 24%  
Children - 21%  
Single dads - 16%  
Seniors - 10%  
Married couples - 6%  
Adults with college degree or higher - 5%  
Full time working adults - 3%

## Poverty Dynamics

Percentage of the U.S. Population in a poverty status in 2009 and remaining in poverty at the start of 2013

<b>White, non-Hispanic</b>	<b>54%</b>
<b>Black</b>	<b>62%</b>
<b>Asian</b>	<b>33%</b>
<b>Hispanic</b>	<b>65%</b>
<b>All People</b>	<b>58%</b>

The chart at the left shows the turnover rate of poverty [i]. 58% of those in poverty in

2009 remained in poverty in 2013 - only 42% escaped poverty over the four year period. Nearly two-thirds of Blacks and Hispanics in poverty in 2009 were in poverty for the entire four year reporting period of 2009 – 2012. Only one-third of the Asian population in poverty in 2009 remained in poverty for the four year period.

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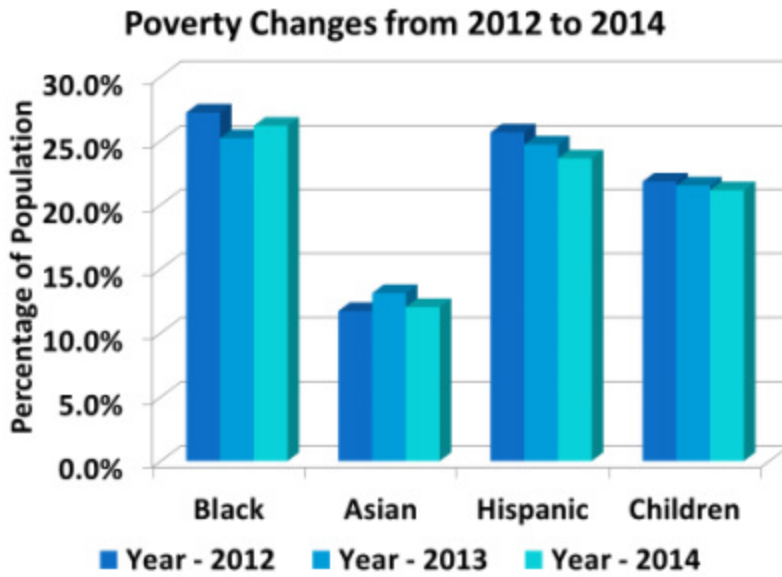
**Percentage of the population in poverty for a four year period from 2009 - 2012**

<b>Married Couples with Children</b>	<b>1.5%</b>
<b>Single Mothers with Children</b>	<b>10.1%</b>
<b>Single Fathers with Children</b>	<b>3.3%</b>

The chart to the right shows the dynamics of families in poverty [ii]. 10.1% of single mother families were in poverty for the entire four year reporting period from 2009 - 2012. For comparison only 1.5% of married couples with children were in poverty for the entire four year period.

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## **Change in Poverty Rate From The Prior Year**



The U.S. poverty rate for the nation as a whole remained constant at 14.8% of the population from 2013 to 2014. The Census Bureau reported a 14.5% poverty rate last year for 2013, but revised the number up to 14.8% based on improved sampling techniques.

The poverty rate has been very static over the past 30 years. The rate in 1984 was 14.4% and the average for the past thirty years is 13.9%. To understand why the rate of poverty is so static see [Poverty and Spending over the Years](#).

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## Full U.S. poverty statistics are shown below:

The statistics were generated from data reported by the U.S. Census Bureau including the annual report on income and poverty released in September 2015[iii]. Overall the total population of the U.S. was 315.8 million in 2014 and 46.7 million Americans were in poverty. Therefore the overall Poverty Rate for the year was 14.8%. For more information on how poverty is defined and determined, see the [Poverty Threshold page](#).

### U.S. Poverty Statistics – Age of the Population

	<b>All Americans (Millions)</b>	<b>Americans In Poverty (Millions)</b>	<b>Poverty Rate</b>
<b>Under 18 years</b>	<b>73.6</b>	<b>15.5</b>	<b>21.1%</b>
<b>18 to 64 years</b>	<b>196.3</b>	<b>26.5</b>	<b>13.5%</b>
<b>65 years and older</b>	<b><u>46.0</u></b>	<b><u>4.6</u></b>	<b><u>10.0%</u></b>
	<b>315.8</b>	<b>46.7</b>	<b>14.8%</b>

The Poverty Rate for seniors was 10.0% which is lower than the population as a whole of 14.8%. This is due to the Social Security and Medicare Programs which have worked well at protecting seniors from poverty. Seniors in a poverty status generally did not work ten or more years and pay enough taxes into the Social Security system to generate an adequate retirement pension.

The child Poverty Rate is 21.1% which equals more than one in five children in a poverty status. This is a disturbing poverty statistic to many Americans because children are helpless to influence their living conditions. Many of these children come from single parent families as shown below.

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## **U.S. Poverty Statistics - Race**

	All Americans In Category (Millions)	Americans In Poverty (Millions)	Poverty Rate
White, not Hispanic	195.2	19.7	10.1%
Black	41.1	10.8	26.2%
Asian	17.8	2.1	12.0%
Hispanic, any race	55.5	13.1	23.6%

While the poverty rate for the population as a whole is 14.8% the rate varies greatly by race. Blacks have the highest poverty rate at 26.2% and Non-Hispanic whites the lowest at 10.1%.

The Poverty rate for Blacks and Hispanics is more than double that of non-Hispanic Whites.

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## U.S. Poverty Statistics – Marital Status

	All Families (Millions)	Families In Poverty (Millions)	Poverty Rate
Married Couple	60.0	3.7	6.2%
Single Mother	15.6	4.8	30.6%
Single Father	<u>6.2</u>	<u>1.0</u>	<u>15.7%</u>
	81.7	9.1	11.6%

Overall 11.6% of the families in America are in poverty. Families headed by a single female have a Poverty Rate of 30.6% - about five times higher than married couple families.

There are 15.6 million families headed by a single mother which represent 19% of all families in America. But 4.8 million of these single mom families are in poverty which account for an astounding 50% of all the families in poverty. These statistics are the basis for the conclusion that marriage is one of the best defenses against poverty.

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## U.S. Poverty Statistics – Working Age Adults

	Working Age Americans (Millions)	Americans In Poverty (Millions)	Poverty Rate
Full time workers	103.4	3.1	3.0%
Part time workers	44.3	7.1	15.9%
Not working	<u>48.5</u>	<u>16.4</u>	<u>33.7%</u>
	<b>196.3</b>	<b>26.5</b>	<b>13.5%</b>

Adults that work full time have a low Poverty Rate of 3.0% which is not surprising. The 3.1 million full time workers that are in poverty generally have low paying jobs, such as a minimum wage job paying \$16,000 per year, but have two or more children and therefore the family is in poverty.

There are 48.5 million adults between the ages of 18 and 64 (working age) that are not working which totals 25% of the work force. Nonworking adults includes individuals looking for work and adults who are not searching for work such as stay at home moms and dads, individuals that have enough resources that they can live without work and others that are low-income but have given up looking for work and rely on the welfare system. Nonworking adults have a high Poverty Rate of 33.7%.

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## U.S. Poverty Statistics – Disability

	<b>Working Age Americans (Millions)</b>	<b>Americans In Poverty (Millions)</b>	<b>Poverty Rate</b>
<b>With a disability</b>	<b>15.4</b>	<b>4.4</b>	<b>28.5%</b>
<b>With no disability</b>	<b><u>179.9</u></b>	<b><u>22.1</u></b>	<b><u>12.3%</u></b>
	<b>195.3</b>	<b>26.5</b>	<b>13.5%</b>

15.4 million working age adults have a disability which represents 8% of the work force[iv]. They have a Poverty Rate of 28.5% which is slightly less than the nonworking adult rate of 33.7% (See working age adults above).

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## **U.S. Poverty Statistics – Residence**

	All Americans (Millions)	Americans In Poverty (Millions)	Poverty Rate
Inside metropolitan statistical areas	265.8	38.4	14.5%
Outside metropolitan statistical areas	<u>50.0</u>	<u>8.2</u>	<u>16.5%</u>
	315.8	46.7	14.8%

The Poverty Rate for those living in cities is slightly less than those living in rural areas. Many Americans would guess low-income Americans are disproportionately from metropolitan areas but that is not the case.

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## U.S. Poverty Statistics – Nativity and Citizenship

	All Americans (Millions)	Americans In Poverty (Millions)	Poverty Rate
Native born	273.6	38.9	14.2%
Foreign born			
Naturalized citizen	19.7	2.3	11.9%
Not a citizen	<u>22.4</u>	<u>5.4</u>	<u>24.2%</u>
	315.8	46.7	14.8%



Foreign born non-citizens have a Poverty Rate of 24.2% - twice as high as foreign born naturalized citizens.

Foreign born non-citizens make up 7% of the U.S. population but account for 12% of all Americans in poverty.

Foreign born naturalized citizens had a Poverty Rate of 11.9% which is slightly less than the population as a whole of 14.8%.

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### U.S. Poverty Statistics – Educational Attainment

	Americans Over 25 years old (Millions)	Americans In Poverty (Millions)	Poverty Rate
No high school diploma	24.6	7.1	28.9%
High school diploma, no college	62.6	8.9	14.2%
Some college, no degree	56.0	5.7	10.2%
College degree or higher	<u>68.9</u>	<u>3.4</u>	<u>5.0%</u>
	212.1	25.2	11.9%

The educational level attained by individuals has a dramatic impact on poverty. 28.9% of adults over 25 year old without a high school diploma are in poverty versus 5% for those with a college degree.

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**Only 2% of the population is in poverty with three attributes**



“young people can virtually assure that they and their families will avoid poverty if they follow three elementary rules for success – complete at least a high school education, work full time, and wait until age 21 and get married before having a baby. Based on an analysis of Census data, people who followed all three of these rules had only a 2 percent chance of being in poverty and a 72 percent chance of joining the middle class (defined as above \$55,000 in 2010.”

Ron Haskins of the Brookings Institution, testifying before Congress on June 5, 2012

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[i] The United States Census Bureau. Dynamics of Economic Well-Being: Poverty 2009-2012. Table 6. [Internet] Retrieved August 1, 2015. [Available here](#).

[ii] The United States Census Bureau. Dynamics of Economic Well-Being: Poverty 2009-2012. Table 4. [Internet] Retrieved August 1, 2015. [Available here](#).

[iii] U.S. Census Bureau. Income and Poverty in the United States: 2014; September 2015. [Available here](#).

[iv] As reported by the Census Bureau “The sum of those with and without a disability does not equal the total [population] because disability status is not defined for individuals in the Armed Forces”. See U.S. Census Bureau. Income and Poverty in the United States: 2014; September 2015. Table 3. [Available here](#).

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