



Research Brief

The Commonwealth's Official Source for Population and Economic Statistics

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Number of Estimated School-Age Children in Poverty Increases by Over 9,000

MIDDLETOWN, Pa –The Pennsylvania State Data Center at Penn State Harrisburg reports that the estimated number of school-age children in poverty in Pennsylvania school districts increased by over 9,000 from 2001 to 2002. This data is from the recently released Small Area Income & Poverty Estimates (SAIPE) from the U.S. Census Bureau. The data indicates the estimated number of relevant children age 5 to 17 years old in poverty in Pennsylvania public schools increased from 259,102 in 2001 to 268,293 in 2002, an increase of 9,191 or 3.5 percent.

What is SAIPE data?

The U.S. Census Bureau, with support from other Federal agencies, created the Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates (SAIPE) program to provide more current estimates of selected income and poverty statistics than the most recent decennial census. Estimates are created for states, counties and school districts. The main objective of the program is to provide updated estimates of income and poverty statistics for the administration of federal programs and the allocation of federal funds to local jurisdictions. A Government Accounting Office report issued in September 1990 identified \$30 billion in annual federal allocations that rely on decennial census data. In addition to these federal funds, there are hundreds of state and local programs that depend on income and poverty estimates for distributing funds and managing programs.

The estimates are not direct counts from enumerations or administrative records, nor direct estimates from sample surveys. Data from these sources are not adequate to provide intercensal estimates for all counties. Instead, the Census Bureau models the relation between income or poverty and tax and program data for the states and subset of counties using estimates of income or poverty from the Current Population Survey (CPS) Annual Social and Economic Supplement (ASEC). The Census Bureau then uses the modeled relations to obtain estimates for all states and counties. For school districts, the Census Bureau uses the model-based county estimates and the decennial census distribution of the population of poor of each county over its constituent school districts.

School-Age Children in Poverty

The Philadelphia School District had by far the most children in poverty in 2002 with 73,967, which is not surprising as Philadelphia has the most school age children in the state with over 271,000 children age 5 to 17 years of age. The Pittsburgh School District had the second highest number of children in poverty with 10,462. Reading (5,542), Erie City (5,045) and Allentown City (4,774) School Districts round out the top five. The school district with the lowest number of children in poverty was the Bryn Athyn School District, which had five children in poverty. The Peters Township School District has the second lowest number of children in

poverty with 15. Neshannock Township (30), Southern Lehigh (33) and Salisbury Township (34) School Districts complete the list of top five school districts with the least number of children in poverty.

On a percentage basis, Farrell School District had the highest percent of school age children in poverty with 40.3 percent. Second was Duquesne City School District with 39.8 percent. Completing the top five school districts is York City at 33.0 percent, Reading 32.1 percent and Midland Borough School District at 32.0. The Philadelphia School District, which had the highest number of children in poverty, had 27.2 percent of all children in the school district in poverty. The school district with the lowest percent of children in poverty was Peters Township at 0.4 percent. Second was Southern Lehigh at 1.0 percent, third and fourth were Salisbury Township and Hampton Township at 1.4 percent.

Looking at changes from 2001 to 2002, the Philadelphia School District has the highest numeric increase with 6,904 more children in poverty in 2002 than in 2001, an increase of 10.3 percent, which was also the highest percentage increase in the state. The school district with the highest numeric decrease in children in poverty was the Harrisburg City School District. Harrisburg had 240 fewer children in poverty in 2002 than it did in 2001. South Butler County School District had the highest percent decrease in children in poverty at 13.1 percent.

Median Household Income

SAIPE data also provides estimates of median household income. The estimated median household income in Pennsylvania in 2002 was \$42,043. This represents a decrease of \$245 from 2001, or -0.6 percent. At the county level, Chester County had the highest median household income at \$67,790 and Montgomery County was second at \$64,808. Cumberland County had the highest median household income of counties not in the Delaware Valley at \$48,096. Forest County had the lowest median household income at \$28,060. Pike County had the highest increase in median household income from 2001 to 2002 at \$1,928. Delaware County had the largest decrease in median household income with a decrease of \$508 from 2001 to 2002. Pike County also had the highest percentage increase in median household income from 2001 to 2002 at 4.3 percent. Philadelphia had the highest percentage decrease in median household income with a 1.4 percent decrease from 2001 to 2002.

2002 Poverty Estimates for Pennsylvania

There were an estimated 1,210,508 people in poverty in Pennsylvania in 2002, or 10.0 percent of the population. This is an increase of 4,566 persons since 2001, or 0.4 percent. Philadelphia had the highest percentage of people in poverty in 2002 at 20.3 percent. Second was Fayette County at 15.2 percent. Chester County had the lowest percentage of people in poverty at 4.8 percent.

Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates, Pennsylvania Counties: 2002

Area	Persons in Poverty		Persons in Poverty Age 0 to 17		Median Household Income
	Total	Percent	Total	Percent	
Pennsylvania	1,210,508	10.0	393,466	14.0	\$42,043
Adams County	6,047	6.4	1,865	8.4	\$45,572
Allegheny County	120,762	9.7	37,284	13.8	\$41,063
Armstrong County	7,496	10.4	2,325	15.2	\$33,150
Beaver County	16,960	9.6	5,225	13.5	\$37,127
Bedford County	5,101	10.2	1,729	15.5	\$34,172
Berks County	34,116	9.0	11,801	13.0	\$44,626
Blair County	15,241	12.2	4,757	17.4	\$33,516
Bradford County	6,884	11.0	2,263	15.2	\$35,823
Bucks County	29,991	4.9	8,236	5.6	\$61,230

Area	Persons in Poverty		Persons in Poverty Age 0 to 17		Median Household Income
	Total	Percent	Total	Percent	
Butler County	12,820	7.3	3,716	8.8	\$45,029
Cambria County	16,841	11.7	4,887	16.3	\$30,647
Cameron County	594	10.3	191	15.2	\$32,623
Carbon County	4,654	7.8	1,618	13.1	\$36,989
Centre County	13,265	10.4	2,319	9.8	\$37,064
Chester County	21,580	4.8	6,628	5.9	\$67,790
Clarion County	4,892	12.4	1,249	15.1	\$31,901
Clearfield County	9,965	12.4	3,062	17.6	\$32,124
Clinton County	4,247	11.9	1,332	17.4	\$32,376
Columbia County	6,311	10.3	1,644	13.4	\$35,705
Crawford County	11,408	13.1	3,952	19.0	\$33,473
Cumberland County	11,546	5.5	2,901	6.4	\$48,096
Dauphin County	20,474	8.2	7,376	12.3	\$44,498
Delaware County	43,176	8.0	14,226	10.7	\$49,981
Elk County	2,615	7.6	766	9.9	\$38,787
Erie County	32,548	12.1	11,668	17.6	\$36,695
Fayette County	22,278	15.2	7,462	23.7	\$28,904
Forest County	597	12.3	188	18.3	\$28,060
Franklin County	9,678	7.4	3,322	10.9	\$41,740
Fulton County	1,293	8.9	429	12.8	\$36,744
Greene County	5,456	14.5	1,650	19.8	\$30,834
Huntingdon County	5,034	12.1	1,481	15.7	\$33,286
Indiana County	11,745	13.7	3,252	18.8	\$31,627
Jefferson County	5,337	11.7	1,752	17.3	\$32,306
Juniata County	1,835	8.0	608	11.1	\$37,249
Lackawanna County	20,586	10.0	5,834	13.2	\$35,641
Lancaster County	34,533	7.3	13,721	11.0	\$47,053
Lawrence County	10,672	11.6	3,527	17.1	\$33,557
Lebanon County	9,634	8.0	3,204	11.6	\$41,630
Lehigh County	27,250	8.7	9,557	12.9	\$43,717
Luzerne County	31,923	10.4	9,109	14.5	\$34,336
Lycoming County	12,489	10.9	4,002	15.4	\$34,732
McKean County	5,142	12.0	1,614	16.2	\$33,529
Mercer County	13,919	12.1	4,765	18.1	\$34,674
Mifflin County	5,436	11.8	1,971	18.1	\$32,945
Monroe County	11,371	7.4	3,830	10.1	\$47,196
Montgomery County	36,941	4.9	10,148	5.6	\$64,808
Montour County	1,437	8.2	455	10.9	\$39,693
Northampton County	18,653	6.9	5,411	8.8	\$47,936
Northumberland County	9,408	10.4	2,716	14.2	\$32,609
Perry County	3,105	7.0	1,096	10.4	\$43,756
Philadelphia County	293,375	20.3	106,332	28.8	\$29,540
Pike County	3,841	7.3	1,236	9.9	\$47,174
Potter County	2,000	11.1	720	16.2	\$34,650
Schuylkill County	14,142	10.0	3,775	12.9	\$33,591

Area	Persons in Poverty		Persons in Poverty Age 0 to 17		Median Household Income
	Total	Percent	Total	Percent	
Snyder County	3,185	8.8	1,045	12.0	\$36,600
Somerset County	9,265	12.1	2,814	17.1	\$31,394
Sullivan County	731	11.5	191	14.9	\$30,572
Susquehanna County	4,447	10.6	1,529	15.6	\$34,525
Tioga County	4,821	12.0	1,492	16.6	\$32,336
Union County	3,786	11.2	924	11.7	\$39,019
Venango County	6,913	12.4	2,255	17.9	\$31,927
Warren County	4,355	10.3	1,422	14.8	\$35,596
Washington County	18,054	8.9	5,241	12.1	\$39,525
Wayne County	5,113	10.7	1,618	15.0	\$35,089
Westmoreland County	32,075	8.8	9,258	12.1	\$38,741
Wyoming County	2,548	9.2	807	12.5	\$37,786
York County	26,573	6.8	8,684	9.4	\$47,418

For more information on Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates data for Pennsylvania counties and school districts, please contact the Pennsylvania State Data Center at 717.772.2710.

The Pennsylvania State Data Center is the commonwealth's official source for population and economic statistics. It is based at Penn State Harrisburg's Institute of State and Regional Affairs. The Pennsylvania State Data Center is part of the U.S. Census Bureau's National State Data Center Program.

Editors: For additional data, contact the Pennsylvania State Data Center's State Capital Office at 717.772.2710 or for faculty comment on this topic, contact Penn State Harrisburg's Public Information Office at 717.948.6029.

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