

District of Columbia

# STATE DATA CENTER MONTHLY BRIEF

JANUARY  
2016



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These indicators were derived from data produced by the U.S. Census Bureau and may differ from data produced by other entities.

## Poverty in the District of Columbia 2014

### Introduction

This report presents data on poverty in the District of Columbia by exploring trends from 2000 to 2014 and breaking down the recent poverty rate data by age, race, educational attainment, employment status, disability status, nativity, and household type. At the end of this report are the poverty thresholds for 2014 that determines who is in poverty.

### Poverty in the District of Columbia since 2000

Table 1 presents the number of people living in poverty and the poverty rate in the District of Columbia from 2000 to 2014. Figure 1 illustrates how the poverty rate has risen and fallen over that time period in the District of Columbia, and provides the poverty rate of the United States as a comparison. From 2000 to 2014, the average poverty rate for the District was 18.5 percent while the average U.S. poverty rate was 13.8 percent. The average annual number of people living in poverty in the District over this time period was 103,600. The District's poverty rate fell to its lowest point (16.5 percent) in 2007, just before the economic recession began in December 2007. The greatest number of people living in poverty in the District of Columbia was 115,551 in 2013. Despite this recent increase, the poverty rate has generally declined since 2010 - as the economy recovers from the recession.

In 2014, the District of Columbia's poverty rate of 17.7 percent was higher than the national average of 15.5 percent. The District of Columbia's poverty rate ranked 27th highest among major cities (with population of 500,000 or more for whom the poverty status is determined). Table 2 compares the poverty rates of several other major cities and shows how the poverty rate has changed from 2010 to 2014 in those cities. The Washington Metro Area (Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, DC-VA-MD-WV) had a poverty rate of 8.7% in 2014.

The American Community Survey (ACS) measures the depth of poverty by comparing the ratio of an individual's or family's income to the poverty threshold. It is therefore possible to determine how many people are living in "deep" poverty, or incomes below half of the poverty threshold. In 2014, 6.8 percent of people in the United States fell into this category. In the District of Columbia, 9.1 percent of its residents (56,790 people) had incomes below half the poverty threshold.

## The District's average poverty rate was 18.5

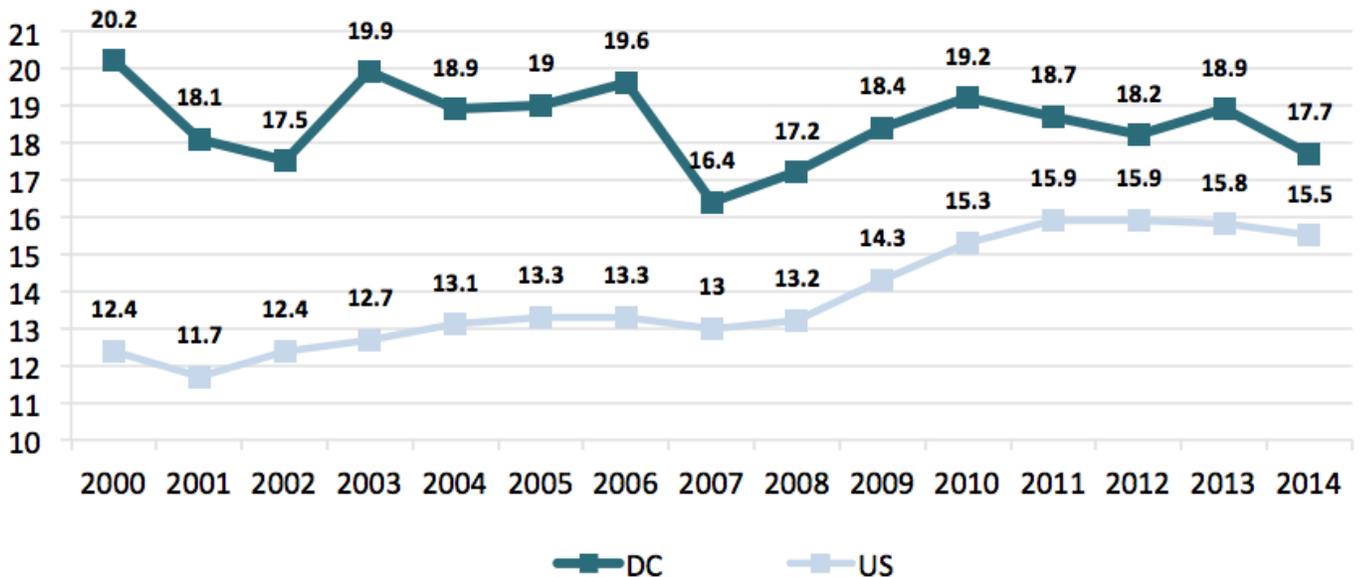
**Table 1. Number of People in Poverty and Poverty Rate: District of Columbia 2000 to 2014**

Year	Total*	Below Poverty Level	
		Number	Percent
2014	624,327	110,666	17.7
2013	611,788	115,551	18.9
2012	598,151	108,732	18.2
2011	584,583	109,363	18.7
2010	570,953	109,423	19.2
2009	570,093	104,901	18.4
2008	561,874	96,769	17.2
2007	559,557	91,934	16.4
2006	551,161	108,100	19.6
2005	513,137	97,617	19
2004	515,581	97,525	18.9
2003	527,071	105,050	19.9
2002	532,970	93,021	17.5
2001	534,544	96,543	18.1
2000	541,657	109,500	20.2

\*Total refers to population for whom the poverty status is determined, not the total population.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000; American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates 2001 to 2014.

**Figure 1. Poverty Rates: District of Columbia 2000 to 2014**



**Table 2: Poverty Rates for Selected Major U.S. Cities in 2010 and 2014**

City	2010	2014	Percent Change
Detroit, Michigan	37.6	39.3	+1.7
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania	26.7	26	-0.7
Baltimore, Maryland	25.6	23.6	-2.0
Chicago, Illinois	22.5	22	-0.5
New York, New York	20.1	20.9	+0.8
District of Columbia	19.2	17.7	-1.5
San Francisco, California	12.5	12	-0.5
<b>National Average</b>	15.3	15.5	+0.2

Source: 2010 & 2014 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates

### Poverty Rate By Age and Sex

As shown in Table 3, one in four children (26 percent) were living in poverty in the District of Columbia in 2014. The number of children in poverty dropped from 30,555 in 2010 to 29,404 in 2014 - a difference of 1,151. The percentage of children in poverty fell 4.4 percent from 2010 to 2014. The District of Columbia's child poverty rate ranks 25th highest in the nation among major cities.

One in six adults (16.1 percent) were living poverty, while 14.5 percent of seniors were living below the poverty line in the District of Columbia in 2014. The number of adults in poverty grew by 692 people from 2010 to 2014 while the number of seniors in poverty increased by 1,702 during that time. The District of Columbia had the 11th highest rate of seniors living in poverty among major cities in 2014.

In 2014, the percentage of men living in poverty was 16 percent, while nearly one in five women (19.2 percent) were living below the poverty line in the District of Columbia.

## More women than men lived in poverty

**Table 3. Poverty Rates by Age and Sex: District of Columbia 2010 and 2014**

	2010			2014			Percent Change
	Total	Number	%	Total	Number	%	
Population for whom poverty status is determined	570,953	109,423	19.2	624,327	110,666	17.7	-1.5
AGE							
Under 18 years	100,353	30,555	30.4	113,123	29,404	26.0	-4.4
18 to 64 years	403,628	70,100	17.4	439,224	70,792	16.1	-1.3
65 years and over	66,972	8,768	13.1	71,980	10,470	14.5	+1.4
SEX							
Male	267,612	45,717	17.1	295,954	47,584	16.1	-1.0
Female	303,341	63,706	21.0	328,373	63,082	19.2	-1.8

Source: 2010 & 2014 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates

### Poverty Rate by Race and Hispanic Origin

As presented in Table 4, over a quarter of the Black or African American population (25.9 percent) was living in poverty in 2014. This percentage is down from 27.1 percent in 2010. The number of Black or African American residents living in poverty fell by 970 during that time period. The number of Asians in the District of Columbia living in poverty remained relatively unchanged from 2010 to 2014. The number of the White population living in poverty fell by 1,356 over this time period. The Hispanic or Latino poverty rate increased from 14.7 percent in 2010 to 16.9 percent in 2014, as the number of Hispanic or Latinos living in poverty increased by 3,225.

## The number of Hispanics living in poverty has increased

**Table 4. Poverty Rate by Race and Hispanic Origin: District of Columbia 2010 and 2014**

	2010			2014			Percent Change
	Total	Number	%	Total	Number	%	
White	224,091	20,769	9.3	249,670	19,413	7.8	-1.5
Black or African American	297,061	80,412	27.1	307,045	79,442	25.9	-1.2
Asian	19,905	3,998	20.1	22,074	4,064	18.4	-1.7
Hispanic (of any race)	53,759	7,899	14.7	65,758	11,124	16.9	+2.2

Source: 2010 & 2014 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates

## Poverty Rate by Educational Attainment

As seen in Table 5, educational attainment greatly influences a person's economic status. Of the population who were 25 years or older and did not have a high school degree in 2014, one in three (33.7 percent) were living in poverty in the District of Columbia. Finishing high school reduced the poverty rate to 23.9 percent. Attending college or earning an associate's degree reduced the percentage of the population living in poverty to 18 percent in 2014 (13 percent in 2010). The population with a bachelor's degree had poverty rates around 6 percent in 2010 and 2014.

## Educational attainment and poverty are inversely related

**Table 5. Poverty Rate by Educational Attainment for Population 25 years and over: District of Columbia 2010 and 2014**

	2010			2014			Percent Change
	Total	Number	%	Total	Number	%	
Population 25 years and over	408,792	56,836	13.9	455,801	62,745	13.8	-0.1
Less than high school graduate	50,047	14,721	29.4	44,280	14,943	33.7	+4.3
High school graduate (includes equivalency)	82,001	19,389	23.6	80,615	19,279	23.9	-0.3
Some college, Associate's degree	69,558	9,034	13.0	77,707	13,964	18.0	+5.0
Bachelor's degree or higher	207,186	13,692	6.6	253,199	14,559	5.8	-0.8

Source: 2010 & 2014 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates

## Poverty Rate by Employment Status

In the District of Columbia, those who had full time employment were unlikely to find themselves living below the poverty line. Table 6 shows that only 2 percent of those with a full time job had an income below the poverty level in 2014. Those with part time work experienced a rate of poverty of 22.1 percent. One in three people (36.2 percent) without work found themselves living below the poverty level.

**Table 6. Poverty Rate by Employment Status for Population 16 years and over: District of Columbia 2010 and 2014**

	2010			2014			Percent Change
	Total	Number	%	Total	Number	%	
Population 16 years and over	482,669	82,947	17.2	522,048	84,105	16.1	-1.1
Worked full-time, year-round in the past 12 months	227,425	3,165	1.4	261,453	5,356	2.0	+0.06
Worked part-time or part-year in the past 12 months	111,082	26,315	23.7	109,996	24,304	22.1	-1.6
Did not work	144,162	53,467	37.1	150,599	54,445	36.2	-0.09

Source: 2010 & 2014 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates

## Poverty Rate by Disability

Of the disabled population, one in three were living in poverty in the District of Columbia in 2014. This number of people (26,864) equals nearly a quarter of all those living in poverty in the District. The ACS estimates 11,255 people with a disability were living in “deep” poverty in 2014. This number accounted for almost 20 percent of all those who live below half the poverty level.

## About 25 percent of people living in poverty were disabled

## Poverty Rate by Household Type

As presented in Table 7, one in six households (16.9 percent) had incomes below the poverty level in the District of Columbia in 2014. This is an increase over 2010, when the household poverty rate was 15.5 percent. The number of households in poverty increased by 7,786 from 2010 to 2014. This increase was largely due to nonfamily households, with an additional 5,364 nonfamily households living in poverty in 2014. There was an increase in family households living in poverty as well – with an increase of 2,422 married-couple families and 495 single-male households. There were 1,400 fewer single-mother households in poverty in 2014 than in 2010.

**Table 7. Poverty Rate by Household Type: District of Columbia 2010 and 2014**

	2010			2014			Percent Change
	Total	Number	%	Total	Number	%	
<b>Households</b>	<b>482,669</b>	<b>82,947</b>	<b>17.2</b>	<b>522,048</b>	<b>84,105</b>	<b>16.1</b>	<b>-1.1</b>
<b>Family households:</b>	<b>227,425</b>	<b>3,165</b>	<b>1.4</b>	<b>261,453</b>	<b>5,356</b>	<b>2.0</b>	<b>+0.06</b>
Married-couple family	111,082	26,315	23.7	109,996	24,304	22.1	-1.6
Other family:	144,162	53,467	37.1	150,599	54,445	36.2	-0.09
Male householder, no wife present	8,740	1,209	13.8	9,496	1,704	17.9	+4.1
Female householder, no husband present	35,504	11,311	31.9	42,124	12,711	30.2	-1.7
<b>Nonfamily households:</b>	<b>150,869</b>	<b>24,870</b>	<b>16.5</b>	<b>159,514</b>	<b>30,234</b>	<b>19.0</b>	<b>+2.5</b>
Male householder	66,097	8,087	12.2	70,508	11,440	16.2	+4.0
Female householder	84,772	16,783	19.8	89,006	18,794	21.1	+1.3

Source: 2010 & 2014 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates

## Moving In and Moving Out

The ACS tracks the migration of those in poverty from one jurisdiction to another. In 2014, the ACS reports 11,522 people whose income was below the poverty line moved into the District of Columbia. That number can be broken down by domestic movers (9,067 people moved to the District of Columbia from within the United States), and international movers (2,455 people moved in from abroad). The ACS also tracks those who moved out of the District in 2014. There were 7,800 people who moved to a different state whose income was below the poverty level. Unfortunately, the ACS does not track those who left the country. Therefore, we cannot determine the total net migration of those in poverty moving in and out of the District of Columbia.

## Foreign born non-citizens had higher poverty rates than naturalized citizens

### Poverty Rate by Nativity

As presented in Table 8, in 2014 there were 86,951 residents in the District of Columbia who were born in a foreign country (for whom poverty status is determined). Of those residents, 16.5 percent were living in poverty. The percentage of foreign born in poverty was 1.4 percent lower than those who were born in the United States. Of those who have become a United States Citizen, 12 percent were living in poverty. For foreign born non-citizens, 19.2 percent were in poverty.

**Table 8: Poverty Rate of the Native and Foreign Born Population: District of Columbia 2014**

	2010			2014			Percent Change
	Total	Number	%	Total	Number	%	
Population for whom poverty status is determined	570,953	109,423	19.2	624,327	110,666	17.7	-1.5
Native	491,605	98,330	20.0	537,376	96,358	17.9	-2.1
Foreign Born	79,348	11,093	14.0	86,951	14,308	16.5	+2.5
Naturalized citizen	31,786	3,415	10.7	33,319	3,988	12.0	+1.3
Not a citizen	47,562	7,678	16.1	53,632	10,320	19.2	+3.1

Source: 2010 & 2014 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates

## Determining Who Is In Poverty

The U.S. Census Bureau uses a set of dollar value thresholds that vary by family size and composition to determine who is in poverty (see Table 9). If a family's total income is less than the dollar value of the appropriate threshold, then that family and every individual in it are considered to be in poverty. Similarly, if an unrelated individual's total income is less than the appropriate threshold, then that individual is considered to be in poverty. The poverty thresholds do not vary geographically, but they are updated annually to allow for changes in the cost of living (inflation factor) using the Consumer Price Index. In 2014 for example, the poverty threshold for a single person living alone was \$12,071; for a two-person family, \$15,379; for a family consisting of one adult and two children, it was \$19,073; and for two adults and two children it was \$24,008.

Poverty status was determined by all people except institutionalized people, people in military group quarters, people in college dormitories, and unrelated individuals under 15 years old.

**Table 9: Poverty Thresholds for 2014 by Size of Family and Number of Related Children Under 18 Years**

Size of Family	Weighted average thresholds	Related children under 18 years								
		None	One	Two	Three	Four	Five	Six	Seven	Eight or More
One person (unrelated individual)	12,071									
Under 65 years	12,316	12,316								
65 years and over	11,354	11,354								
Two people	15,379									
Householder under 65 years	15,934	15,853	16,317							
Householder 65 years and over	14,326	14,309	16,256							
Three people	18,850	18,518	19,055	19,073						
Four people	24,230	24,418	24,817	24,008	24,091					
Five people	28,695	29,447	29,875	28,960	28,252	27,820				
Six people	32,473	33,869	34,004	33,303	32,631	31,633	31,041			
Seven people	36,927	38,971	39,214	38,375	37,791	36,701	35,431	34,036		
Eight people	40,968	43,586	43,970	43,179	42,485	41,501	40,252	38,953	38,622	
Nine people or more	49,021	52,430	52,685	51,984	51,396	50,430	49,101	47,899	47,601	45,768

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

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