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This report is based on data produced by the U.S. Census Bureau and may differ from data produced by other entities.

Poverty in the District of Columbia 2011

Introduction

This report presents data on poverty in the District of Columbia based on information collected in decennial censuses since 1970, and the 2011 and earlier publications of the American Community Survey (ACS) conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau. Also presented is the poverty threshold for 2011 that determines who is in poverty. As demonstrated in this report, like the nation, poverty rate varies by age, race, educational attainment, employment status, nativity, and household type in the District of Columbia.

Poverty in the District of Columbia since 1970

As indicated in Table 1 and Figure 1, the District of Columbia has experienced fluctuating levels of poverty, both by numbers and rates

Figure 1. Poverty Rates: District of Columbia 1970 to 2011

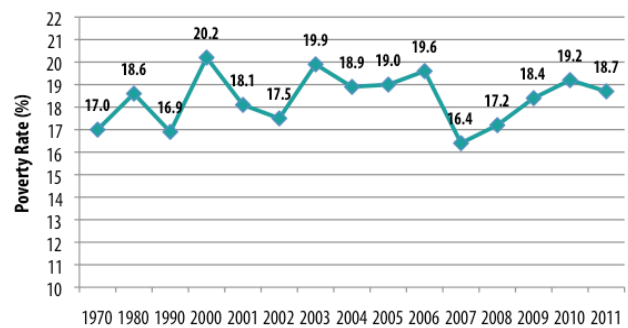


Table 1. Number of People in Poverty and Poverty Rate: District of Columbia 1970 to 2011

Year	Total*	Below Poverty Level	
		Number	Percent
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	19.0
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
1990	570,826	96,278	16.9
1980	610,454	113,356	18.6
1970	724,306	123,109	17.0

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

Source: U.S. Census Bureau Decennial Censuses 1970 to 2000; American Community Survey (ACS) 1-year estimates 2001 to 2011.

throughout the period covered in this report. In 1970, there were 123,109 people living in poverty, accounting for a poverty rate of 17.0 percent. By Census 2000, this rate increased to 20.2 percent but with less people in poverty (109,500), given the declining population. By 2002, both the poverty rate (17.5 percent) and the number of people in poverty (93,021) declined once more. These fluctuations continued throughout, with the District of Columbia experiencing the lowest number of people in poverty at 91,934, and the lowest poverty rate of 16.4 percent, both occurring in 2007.

According to the American Community Survey (ACS), in 2011, among states and the District of Columbia, poverty rates ranged from 8.8 percent for New Hampshire, to 22.6 percent for Mississippi. The District of Columbia's poverty rate of 18.7 percent was higher than the national average of 15.9 percent, and the 10th highest poverty rate in the United States among states and state equivalent (Table 2).

Poverty Rate by Age and Sex

Poverty rate varies by age and sex in the District of Columbia. As presented in Table 3, children under 18 years in the District of Columbia were more likely to live in poverty than other age groups. In 2011, 30.3 percent of children under 18 years of age were in poverty, compared with 16.8 percent of people between 18 to 64 years, and 12.5 percent of people 65 years and over. Five years earlier, in 2006, rates were slightly higher for children under 18 years (32.6 percent), and persons 65 years and over (15.2 percent), but lower for persons 18 to 64 years (16.5 percent).

Table 2. States with the Highest Poverty Rate: 2011

Rank	State	Below Poverty Percent
1	Mississippi	22.6
2	New Mexico	21.5
3	Louisiana	20.4
4	Arkansas	19.5
5	Georgia	19.1
5	Kentucky	19.1
7	Alabama	19.0
7	Arizona	19.0
9	South Carolina	18.9
10	District of Columbia	18.7

Source: 2011 American Community Survey (ACS) 1-year estimates

In 2011, the District of Columbia's child poverty rate was the third highest in the United States behind Mississippi (31.8 percent) and New Mexico (30.7 percent). The District of Columbia's child poverty rate was 30.3 percent in 2011 and higher than the national rate of 22.5 percent.

Table 3 also shows poverty rate by sex. In 2011, 17.4 percent of males in the District of Columbia were in poverty, compared with 19.8 percent of females. The poverty rates for both male and female decreased by 0.9 percent between 2006 and 2011.

Poverty Rate by Race and Hispanic Origin

Poverty rate varies by race and ethnicity in the District of Columbia. In 2011, 27.8 percent of Blacks had income below the poverty level, compared with 8.0 percent of Whites and 10.1 percent of Asians. Hispanics or Latinos had an 18.1 percent poverty rate in 2011.

Table 3. Poverty Rate by Age and Sex: District of Columbia 2006, 2010, 2011

	2006 Below Poverty			2010 Below Poverty			2011 Below Poverty			Percent Change 2006 to 2011
	Total	Number	%	Total	Number	%	Total	Number	%	
Population for whom poverty status is determined	551,161	108,100	19.6	570,953	109,423	19.2	584,583	109,363	18.7	-0.9
AGE										
Under 18 years	112,439	36,678	32.6	100,353	30,555	30.4	104,750	31,769	30.3	-2.3
18 to 64 years	370,468	61,064	16.5	403,628	70,100	17.4	412,138	69,155	16.8	+0.3
65 years and over	68,254	10,358	15.2	66,972	8,768	13.1	67,695	8,439	12.5	-2.7
SEX										
Male	255,626	46,883	18.3	267,612	45,717	17.1	276,576	48,227	17.4	-0.9
Female	295,535	61,217	20.7	303,341	63,706	21.0	308,007	61,136	19.8	-0.9

Source: 2006, 2010, 2011 American Community Survey (ACS) 1-year estimates

Table 4. Poverty Rate by Race and Hispanic Origin: District of Columbia 2006, 2010, 2011

	2006 Below Poverty			2010 Below Poverty			2011 Below Poverty			Percent Change 2006 to 2011
	Total	Number	%	Total	Number	%	Total	Number	%	
White	183,970	16,415	8.9	224,091	20,769	9.3	228,001	18,136	8.0	-0.9
Black	310,793	83,376	26.8	297,061	80,412	27.1	297,909	82,745	27.8	+1.0
Asian	N	N	N	19,905	3,998	20.1	20,294	2,055	10.1	N
Hispanic (any race)	45,926	8,444	18.4	53,759	7,899	14.7	57,263	10,371	18.1	-0.3

N indicates there is no data available for that category and year.

Source: 2006, 2010, 2011 American Community Survey (ACS) 1-year estimates

Table 5. Poverty Rate by Educational Attainment for Population 25 years and over: District of Columbia 2010, 2011

	2010 Below Poverty			2011 Below Poverty			Percent Change 2010 to 2011
	Total	Number	%	Total	Number	%	
Population 25 years and over	408,792	56,836	13.9	421,168	57,622	13.7	-0.2
Less than high school graduate	50,047	14,721	29.4	52,424	18,660	35.6	+6.2
High school graduate (includes equivalency)	82,001	19,389	23.6	73,291	16,729	22.8	-0.8
Some college, associate's degree	69,558	9,034	13.0	71,529	12,807	17.9	+4.9
Bachelor's degree or higher	207,186	13,692	6.6	223,924	9,426	4.2	-2.4

Source: 2010, 2011 American Community Survey (ACS) 1-year estimates

Poverty Rate by Educational Attainment

Poverty rates are inversely proportional to educational attainment. The higher a person's level of education, the less likely they are to be living in poverty. In 2011 in the District of Columbia, the poverty rate for persons 25 years and over who were less than high school graduates was 35.6 percent, compared to high school graduates with a poverty rate of 22.8 percent. Similarly, poverty rate for persons with some college or associate's degree was 17.9 percent, compared to persons with a Bachelor's degree or higher at a poverty rate of 4.2 percent. Poverty rates for 2010 showed a similar pattern (Table 5).

Poverty Rate by Employment Status

As expected, people who worked full-time, year-round were almost never living in poverty. In 2011, 1.4 percent of the District of Columbia's population who worked full-time, year-round were living in poverty. The poverty rate among people who worked part-time or part-year was 23.8 percent, still lower than the population who did not work at all with a poverty rate of 36.4 percent (Table 6).

Table 6. Poverty Rate by Employment Status for Population 16 years and over: District of Columbia 2010, 2011

	2010 Below Poverty			2011 Below Poverty			Percent Change 2010 to 2011
	Total	Number	%	Total	Number	%	
All workers 16 years and over	482,669	82,947	17.2	490,209	80,595	16.4	-0.8
Worked full-time, year round	227,425	3,165	1.4	242,231	3,416	1.4	0
Worked part-time or part-year	111,082	26,315	23.7	103,730	24,692	23.8	+0.1
Did not work	144,162	53,467	37.1	144,248	52,487	36.4	-0.7

Source: 2010, 2011 American Community Survey (ACS) 1-year estimates

Poverty Rate by Household Type

In 2011, 16.1 percent of households in the District of Columbia had incomes below the poverty level (Table 7). Family households were less likely to live in poverty than nonfamily households. In 2011, 15.4 percent of family households were in poverty, compared with 16.7 percent of nonfamily households. Among family households, married-couple family households were less likely to be in poverty (3.8 percent) than other family households (27.2 percent). Among other family households, male householders, no wife present, were less likely to be in poverty (18.2 percent) than female householders, no husband present (29.4 percent).

Poverty rate for male householders, no wife present, increased significantly (6.7 percentage points) between 2010 and 2011, compared with the rest of the family categories that experienced

decreases. Married-couple families decreased by 1.9 percentage points and female householder, no husband present decreased by 1.5 percentage points. Nonfamily households experienced minor decreases in poverty from 2010 to 2011 regardless of whether the householder was male or female.

Poverty Rate by Nativity

Poverty rate varies by nativity in the District of Columbia. Poverty rates are higher for the native-born population when compared to the foreign-born population. In 2011, 19.1 percent of the native-born population was in poverty, compared with 16.3 percent of the foreign-born. However, while there was a 2.3 percent increase in the poverty rate for the foreign-born between 2010 and 2011, the rate for the native-born decreased by 0.9 percent. Among the foreign-born population in 2011, those who

Table 7. Poverty Rate by Household Type: District of Columbia 2006, 2010, 2011

	2006 Below Poverty			2010 Below Poverty			2011 Below Poverty			Percent Change 2010 to 2011
	Total	Number	%	Total	Number	%	Total	Number	%	
Households	250,456	42,499	17.0	252,388	39,155	15.5	268,670	43,360	16.1	-0.9
Family households:	108,759	17,690	16.3	101,519	14,285	14.1	114,045	17,608	15.4	-0.9
Married-couple family	55,871	3,183	5.7	57,275	1,765	3.1	57,247	2,165	3.8	-1.9
Other family:	52,888	14,507	27.4	44,244	12,520	28.3	56,798	15,443	27.2	-0.2
Male householder, no wife present	9,401	1,066	11.3	8,740	1,209	13.8	11,128	2,022	18.2	+6.9
Female householder, no husband present	43,487	13,441	30.9	35,504	11,311	31.9	45,670	13,421	29.4	-1.5
Nonfamily households:	141,697	24,809	17.5	150,869	24,870	16.5	154,625	25,752	16.7	-0.8
Male householder	64,126	10,324	16.1	66,097	8,087	12.2	70,090	10,709	15.3	-0.8
Female householder	77,571	14,485	18.7	84,772	16,783	19.8	84,535	15,043	17.8	-0.9

Source: 2006, 2010, 2011 American Community Survey (ACS) 1-year estimates

Table 8. Poverty Rate of the Native and Foreign-born Population: District of Columbia 2010, 2011

	2010 Below Poverty		2011 Below Poverty		Percent Change 2010 to 2011
	Total	%	Total	%	
Population for whom poverty status is determined	570,953	19.2	584,583	18.7	-0.5
Native	491,605	20.0	504,434	19.1	-0.9
Foreign-born	79,348	14.0	80,149	16.3	+2.3
Naturalized citizen	31,786	10.7	30,665	9.0	-1.7

were not citizens of the United States experienced higher rates of poverty (20.9 percent) than those who were naturalized citizens (9.0 percent). This holds true for 2010 as well.

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 for 2011 Poverty Thresholds). 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 (CPI). In 2011 for example, the poverty threshold for a single person living alone was \$11,484; for a two-person family, \$14,657; for a family consisting of one adult and two children, it was \$18,123; and for two adults and two children, it was \$22,811.

Poverty status was determined for 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 in 2011 by Size of Family and Number of Related Children Under 18 years (Dollars)

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)	11,484									
Under 65 years	11,702	11,702								
65 years and over	10,788	10,788								
Two people	14,657									
Householder under 65 yrs	15,139	15,063	15,504							
Householder 65 yrs and over	13,609	13,596	15,446							
Three people	17,916	17,595	18,106	18,123						
Four people	23,021	23,201	23,581	22,811	22,891					
Five people	27,251	27,979	28,386	27,517	26,844	26,434				
Six people	30,847	32,181	32,309	31,643	31,005	30,056	29,494			
Seven people	35,085	37,029	37,260	36,463	35,907	34,872	33,665	32,340		
Eight people	39,064	41,414	41,779	41,027	40,368	39,433	38,247	37,011	36,697	
Nine people or more	46,572	49,818	50,059	49,393	48,835	47,917	46,654	45,512	45,229	43,487

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

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