



Fact Sheet: Poverty, Income & Health Insurance Data in Pennsylvania and the U.S. in 2009

The U.S. Census Bureau's Current Population Survey

*Pennsylvania Budget and Policy Center • 412 North 3rd Street, Harrisburg, PA 17101
717-255-7156 • www.pennbpc.org • September 17, 2010*

The U.S. Census Bureau released data on September 16, 2010 on poverty, income and health insurance coverage in the United States and the states for 2009.¹ This report is the first to include a full year of data during the Great Recession and provides important information on the effect of the recession on individuals and families.

As expected, the share of individuals in poverty and without health insurance increased and median income declined in the U.S. Pennsylvania experienced a small increase in poverty and a large decline in health insurance coverage.

The data also indicate that Recovery Act strategies designed to help Americans cope with the economic downturn were a success. Unemployment compensation for laid off workers saved 3.3 million Americans and as many as 120,000 Pennsylvanians from falling into poverty.²

Public health insurance programs, Medicaid, the State Children's Insurance Program (SCHIP) and Medicare all grew, somewhat offsetting the decline in employment-based coverage.

Measure	PENNSYLVANIA ³		UNITED STATES	
	2008-2009	Change from 2006-2007	2008-2009	Change from 2006-2007
Poverty Rate	11.0%	+0.2% (*)	13.8%	+1.4%
Median Income	\$49,690	-\$1,150	\$49,945	-\$1,677
Uninsured Non-Elderly (0-64)	12.4%	+1.1%	18.1%	+0.6%
Uninsured Children (Under 18)	6.8%	-0.6% (*)	10.0%	-1.4%

(*) indicates that change is not statistically significant.

The National Picture

The share of Americans living in poverty grew from 13.2% in 2008 to 14.3% in 2009. A total of 43.6 million people were poor, an increase of 3.7 million individuals over 2008.

¹ 2010 Current Population Survey (CPS) Annual Social and Economic Supplement (ASEC)

² The Census Bureau estimates that unemployment compensation kept 3.3 million Americans out of poverty in 2009. Pennsylvania's share of all unemployed in 2009 was 3.6%. Taking that share of 3.3 million Americans allows us to estimate the number of Pennsylvanians likely kept out of poverty because of unemployment compensation.

³ CPS data for individual states is best averaged over two or three years. To aid comparison between state and national results in this table, national data was averaged over the same period for both Pennsylvania and the U.S.

The number of uninsured increased to 50.7 million people, up from 46.3 million in 2008. In 2009, 16.7% of the population was uninsured up from 15.4% in 2008.

Over 6.4 million fewer Americans had private insurance, while the share who received coverage through Medicaid or SCHIP increased from 14.1% to 15.7% in 2009.

Nationally, as expected, median income declined from \$51,622 in 2006-2007 to \$49,945 in 2008-2009, a statistically significant reduction.

The Pennsylvania Story

Poverty

The increase in poverty was not as large as expected, growing from 10.8% in 2006-2007 to 11.0% in 2008-2009 (not a statistically significant change). This may reflect in Pennsylvania's unemployment rate, which was not as low as the national average during the period, and the success of Recovery Act programs, including unemployment compensation and SNAP (Food Stamp) benefits. Poverty is much higher, a full 2 percentage points, than in 1999-2000.

Health Insurance

The impact of the recession is most notable in its effect on health insurance coverage. The share of Pennsylvanians under the age of 65 without health insurance grew to 12.4% in 2008-2009, up from 11.3% in 2006-2007. The number of non-elderly individuals lacking insurance grew by 105,000 to 1.3 million in 2008-2009.

There was a modest decline in the share of uninsured children, 6.8% for the two-year period, down from 7.4% in 2006-2007.

Employment-based coverage continued its decline from 1999-2000 and was particularly impacted by the recession: 67.6% of Pennsylvanians were covered by an employer, down from 70.3% in 2006-2007, and much lower than the 75.8% in 1999-2000. In 2008-2009, 316,000 fewer Pennsylvanians were covered through their job than two years ago.

Public health insurance programs played an important role in stemming some of the loss of employment-based coverage; the share of Pennsylvanians under the age of 65 enrolled in Medical Assistance or Pennsylvania's Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) increased to 15.7% from 13.3%.