

# Poverty: 2014 and 2015

## American Community Survey Briefs

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### INTRODUCTION

The poverty rate measures the percentage of people whose income fell below their assigned poverty threshold. Poverty thresholds are assigned to individuals or families based on family size and composition. Planners and policy makers often use poverty rates as a key economic indicator to evaluate trends and current economic conditions within communities and to make comparisons between sectors of the population. Federal and state governments frequently use poverty rate estimates to allocate funds to local communities. Furthermore, government agencies and local organizations use these estimates to identify the number of individuals and families eligible for various programs.

This brief uses the 2014 and 2015 American Community Surveys (ACS) 1-year data to analyze poverty rates for 2015 as well as the change in poverty from 2014 for the nation, states and the District of Columbia, and the most populous metropolitan areas.<sup>1</sup> The brief will also discuss the depth of poverty, which measures the distribution of people by income-to-poverty ratio.

<sup>1</sup> Metropolitan and micropolitan statistical areas (metro and micro areas) are geographic entities delineated by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) for use by federal statistical agencies in collecting, tabulating, and publishing federal statistics. The term Core Based Statistical Area (CBSA) is a collective term for both metro and micro areas. A metro area contains a core urban area of 50,000 or more population, and a micro area contains an urban core of at least 10,000 (but less than 50,000) population. For more information see <[www.census.gov/population/metro/](http://www.census.gov/population/metro/)>.

### HIGHLIGHTS

- In 2015, 14.7 percent of the U.S. population had income below the poverty level, a decline from 15.5 percent in 2014.
- This is the second consecutive year that the ACS national poverty rate declined, the first consecutive decline since the inception of the ACS in 2005.
- Between 2014 and 2015, the poverty rate declined in 23 states. The poverty rate did not increase in any states.
- Among the most populous 25 metropolitan areas, the poverty rate declined in 16 from 2014 to 2015. The poverty rate did not increase in any of the 25 most populous metropolitan areas.
- The percentage of the U.S. population with income less than 50 percent of their poverty thresholds was 6.5 percent in 2015, a decline from 6.8 percent in 2014.
- In 2015, the proportion of people with an income-to-poverty ratio less than 50 percent declined in 16 states and in 9 of the 25 most populous metropolitan areas.

The estimates contained in this report are primarily based on the 2014 and 2015 ACS. The ACS is conducted every month, with income data collected for the 12 months preceding the interview. Since the survey is continuous, adjacent ACS years have income reference months in common. Therefore, comparing the 2014 ACS with the 2015 ACS is not an exact comparison of

the economic conditions in 2014 with those in 2015, and comparisons should be interpreted with care.<sup>2</sup> For more information on the ACS sample design and other topics, visit <[www.census.gov/acs](http://www.census.gov/acs)>.

## POVERTY

According to the 2015 ACS, 14.7 percent of the U.S. population had income below their respective poverty levels, a decline from the 2014 estimate of 15.5 percent. The percent of the U.S. population in poverty declined significantly 2 years in a row (from 2013 to 2014 and from 2014 to 2015); this is the first consecutive year-to-year decline since the inception of the ACS in 2005 (see Figure 1).<sup>3</sup>

<sup>2</sup> For a discussion of this and related issues see Howard Hogan, "Measuring Population Change Using the American Community Survey," *Applied Demography in the 21st Century*, eds. Steven H. Murdock and David A. Swanson, Springer Netherlands, 2008.

<sup>3</sup> All the year-to-year changes between 2006 and 2015, except the changes between 2011–2012 and 2012–2013, were statistically significant.

## How Poverty Is Measured

Poverty status is determined by comparing annual income to a set of dollar values, called poverty thresholds, that vary by family size, number of children, and the age of the householder. If a family's before-tax money income is less than the dollar value of their threshold, then that family and every individual in it are considered to be in poverty. For people not living in families, poverty status is determined by comparing the individual's income to his or her poverty threshold.

The poverty thresholds are updated annually to account for changes in the cost of living using the Consumer Price Index (CPI-U). They do not vary geographically.

The ACS is a continuous survey and people respond throughout the year. Since income is reported for the previous 12 months, the appropriate poverty threshold for each family is determined by multiplying the base-year poverty threshold from 1982 by the average of monthly CPI values for the 12 months preceding the survey month.

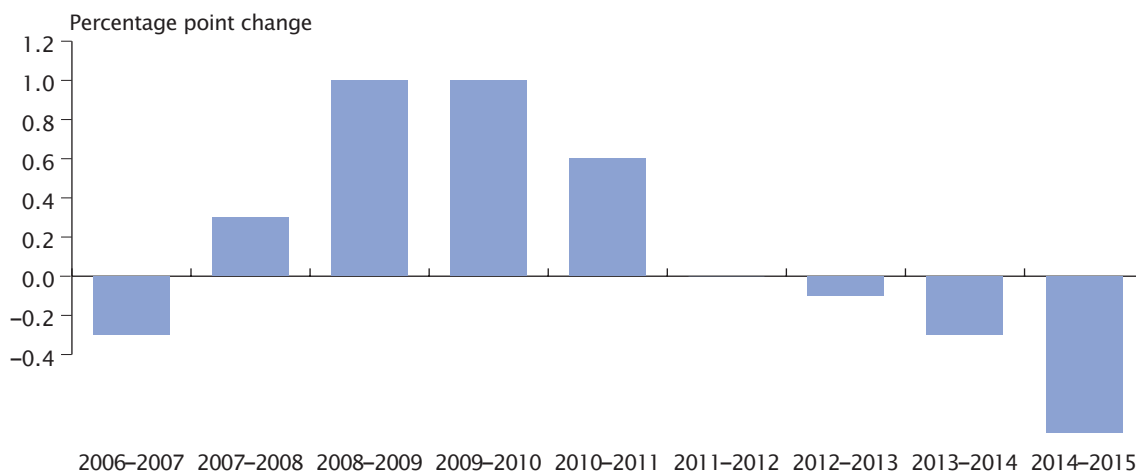
For more information see page 104 of "American Community Survey and Puerto Rico Community Survey 2014 Subject Definitions" at <[www2.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/tech\\_docs/subject\\_definitions/2014\\_ACSSubjectDefinitions.pdf](http://www2.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/tech_docs/subject_definitions/2014_ACSSubjectDefinitions.pdf)>.

Among the states, poverty rates ranged from a low of 8.2 percent

in New Hampshire to a high of 22.0 percent in Mississippi (Table 1).

Figure 1.  
**Year-to-Year Percentage Point Change in Poverty Rate: 2006–2015**

(For information on confidentiality protection, sampling error, nonsampling error, and definitions, see [www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/technical-documentation/code-lists.html](http://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/technical-documentation/code-lists.html))



Note: All the changes are statistically significant except the changes for 2011–2012 and 2012–2013.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2006 to 2015 American Community Surveys.

Table 1.

## Number and Percentage of People in Poverty in the Past 12 Months by State and Puerto Rico: 2014 and 2015

(For information on confidentiality protection, sampling error, nonsampling error, and definitions, see [www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/technical-documentation/code-lists.html](http://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/technical-documentation/code-lists.html))

Area	Below poverty in 2014				Below poverty in 2015				Change in poverty (2015 less 2014)			
	Number <sup>1</sup>	Margin of error <sup>2</sup> (±)	Percentage <sup>1</sup>	Margin of error <sup>2</sup> (±)	Number <sup>1</sup>	Margin of error <sup>2</sup> (±)	Percentage <sup>1</sup>	Margin of error <sup>2</sup> (±)	Number <sup>1</sup>	Margin of error <sup>2</sup> (±)	Percentage <sup>1</sup>	Margin of error <sup>2</sup> (±)
<b>United States . . .</b>	<b>48,208,387</b>	<b>241,557</b>	<b>15.5</b>	<b>0.1</b>	<b>46,153,077</b>	<b>275,061</b>	<b>14.7</b>	<b>0.1</b>	<b>*-2,055,310</b>	<b>366,071</b>	<b>*-0.8</b>	<b>0.1</b>
Alabama . . . . .	910,175	25,515	19.3	0.5	876,016	23,918	18.5	0.5	-34,159	34,972	*-0.8	0.7
Alaska . . . . .	80,627	6,821	11.2	0.9	74,532	5,835	10.3	0.8	-6,095	8,977	-0.9	1.2
Arizona . . . . .	1,199,061	26,607	18.2	0.4	1,159,043	29,822	17.4	0.4	*-40,018	39,966	*-0.9	0.6
Arkansas . . . . .	543,882	15,436	18.9	0.5	550,508	17,473	19.1	0.6	6,626	23,315	0.2	0.8
California . . . . .	6,259,098	64,461	16.4	0.2	5,891,678	66,827	15.3	0.2	*-367,420	92,850	*-1.1	0.3
Colorado . . . . .	630,786	21,138	12.0	0.4	613,549	20,501	11.5	0.4	-17,237	29,447	-0.6	0.6
Connecticut . . . . .	374,772	16,369	10.8	0.5	366,909	15,789	10.5	0.5	-7,863	22,743	-0.2	0.7
Delaware . . . . .	113,508	7,940	12.5	0.9	114,360	9,567	12.4	1.0	852	12,433	-0.1	1.3
District of Columbia . . . . .	110,666	7,793	17.7	1.2	110,500	8,628	17.3	1.4	-166	11,626	-0.4	1.8
Florida . . . . .	3,211,615	59,681	16.5	0.3	3,116,886	47,330	15.7	0.2	*-94,729	76,171	*-0.8	0.4
Georgia . . . . .	1,797,969	39,080	18.3	0.4	1,694,988	33,156	17.0	0.3	*-102,981	51,250	*-1.3	0.5
Hawaii . . . . .	156,729	10,340	11.4	0.8	147,984	8,530	10.6	0.6	-8,745	13,404	-0.7	1.0
Idaho . . . . .	237,981	11,550	14.8	0.7	245,551	13,820	15.1	0.9	7,570	18,011	0.3	1.1
Illinois . . . . .	1,804,535	31,908	14.4	0.3	1,703,258	35,831	13.6	0.3	*-101,277	47,979	*-0.8	0.4
Indiana . . . . .	974,218	25,464	15.2	0.4	933,181	24,656	14.5	0.4	*-41,037	35,445	*-0.7	0.6
Iowa . . . . .	367,816	14,237	12.2	0.5	367,414	13,279	12.2	0.4	-402	19,468	-0.1	0.6
Kansas . . . . .	382,712	13,369	13.6	0.5	368,879	13,898	13.0	0.5	-13,833	19,284	-0.5	0.7
Kentucky . . . . .	817,542	22,333	19.1	0.5	794,055	21,101	18.5	0.5	-23,487	30,725	-0.6	0.7
Louisiana . . . . .	896,524	23,296	19.8	0.5	889,946	24,422	19.6	0.5	-6,578	33,751	-0.2	0.7
Maine . . . . .	182,791	8,933	14.1	0.7	172,620	9,255	13.4	0.7	-10,171	12,863	-0.8	1.0
Maryland . . . . .	589,818	21,635	10.1	0.4	570,776	21,279	9.7	0.4	-19,042	30,346	-0.4	0.6
Massachusetts . . . . .	757,235	20,233	11.6	0.3	752,071	21,473	11.5	0.3	-5,164	29,503	-0.2	0.4
Michigan . . . . .	1,568,844	28,256	16.2	0.3	1,529,645	27,659	15.8	0.3	-39,199	39,540	*-0.4	0.4
Minnesota . . . . .	611,354	19,609	11.5	0.4	546,431	16,392	10.2	0.3	*-64,923	25,558	*-1.3	0.5
Mississippi . . . . .	623,113	18,212	21.5	0.6	637,128	21,554	22.0	0.7	14,015	28,218	0.5	0.9
Missouri . . . . .	908,628	22,347	15.5	0.4	875,495	21,660	14.8	0.4	*-33,133	31,121	*-0.6	0.6
Montana . . . . .	153,954	7,951	15.4	0.8	147,287	8,916	14.6	0.9	-6,667	11,946	-0.8	1.2
Nebraska . . . . .	227,310	9,475	12.4	0.5	231,321	10,619	12.6	0.6	4,011	14,232	0.1	0.8
Nevada . . . . .	426,730	18,737	15.2	0.7	418,243	18,129	14.7	0.6	-8,487	26,072	-0.6	0.9
New Hampshire . . . . .	117,983	7,687	9.2	0.6	106,046	8,442	8.2	0.7	*-11,937	11,418	*-0.9	0.9
New Jersey . . . . .	972,903	23,646	11.1	0.3	946,114	26,304	10.8	0.3	-26,789	35,370	-0.3	0.4
New Mexico . . . . .	436,153	17,466	21.3	0.9	417,834	15,720	20.4	0.8	-18,319	23,498	-0.9	1.2
New York . . . . .	3,062,938	48,945	15.9	0.3	2,970,032	47,607	15.4	0.2	*-92,906	68,279	*-0.5	0.4
North Carolina . . . . .	1,668,686	32,408	17.2	0.3	1,607,835	31,818	16.4	0.3	*-60,851	45,416	*-0.8	0.4
North Dakota . . . . .	82,264	6,353	11.5	0.9	80,170	5,329	11.0	0.7	-2,094	8,292	-0.6	1.1
Ohio . . . . .	1,785,780	29,476	15.8	0.3	1,674,415	34,580	14.8	0.3	*-111,365	45,438	*-1.0	0.4
Oklahoma . . . . .	623,840	14,892	16.6	0.4	610,828	15,093	16.1	0.4	-13,012	21,203	-0.5	0.6
Oregon . . . . .	644,450	21,249	16.6	0.5	607,029	22,484	15.4	0.6	*-37,421	30,936	*-1.2	0.8
Pennsylvania . . . . .	1,682,212	31,577	13.6	0.3	1,629,995	31,848	13.2	0.3	*-52,217	44,849	*-0.4	0.4
Rhode Island . . . . .	145,596	9,132	14.3	0.9	141,035	9,670	13.9	1.0	-4,561	13,301	-0.5	1.3
South Carolina . . . . .	843,860	23,093	18.0	0.5	790,715	22,651	16.6	0.5	*-53,145	32,347	*-1.3	0.7
South Dakota . . . . .	116,843	6,179	14.2	0.7	114,071	7,467	13.7	0.9	-2,772	9,692	-0.4	1.1
Tennessee . . . . .	1,171,307	27,981	18.3	0.4	1,077,900	30,450	16.7	0.5	*-93,407	41,354	*-1.6	0.6
Texas . . . . .	4,523,708	59,686	17.2	0.2	4,255,517	65,900	15.9	0.2	*-268,191	88,911	*-1.3	0.3
Utah . . . . .	339,900	16,334	11.7	0.6	331,854	15,217	11.3	0.5	-8,046	22,324	-0.5	0.8
Vermont . . . . .	73,149	4,724	12.2	0.8	61,314	5,009	10.2	0.8	*-11,835	6,885	*-1.9	1.1
Virginia . . . . .	953,395	25,894	11.8	0.3	909,346	25,335	11.2	0.3	*-44,049	36,227	*-0.6	0.4
Washington . . . . .	913,619	25,464	13.2	0.4	857,801	23,751	12.2	0.3	*-55,818	34,821	*-1.0	0.5
West Virginia . . . . .	327,764	12,083	18.3	0.7	321,583	14,177	17.9	0.8	-6,181	18,628	-0.3	1.1
Wisconsin . . . . .	738,270	19,830	13.2	0.4	677,964	19,332	12.1	0.3	*-60,306	27,694	*-1.1	0.5
Wyoming . . . . .	63,774	5,334	11.2	0.9	63,425	7,239	11.1	1.3	-349	8,992	-0.1	1.6
Puerto Rico . . . . .	1,624,453	25,674	46.2	0.7	1,586,285	22,921	46.1	0.7	*-38,168	34,417	-0.1	1.0

\* Statistically different from zero at the 90 percent confidence level.

<sup>1</sup> Poverty status is determined for individuals in housing units and noninstitutional group quarters. The poverty universe excludes children under age 15 who are not related to the householder, people living in institutional group quarters, and people living in college dormitories or military barracks.

<sup>2</sup> Data are based on a sample and are subject to sampling variability. A margin of error is a measure of an estimate's variability. The larger the margin of error in relation to the size of the estimate, the less reliable the estimate. This number when added to or subtracted from the estimate forms the 90 percent confidence interval.

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, 2014 and 2015 American Community Survey and 2014 and 2015 Puerto Rico Community Survey.

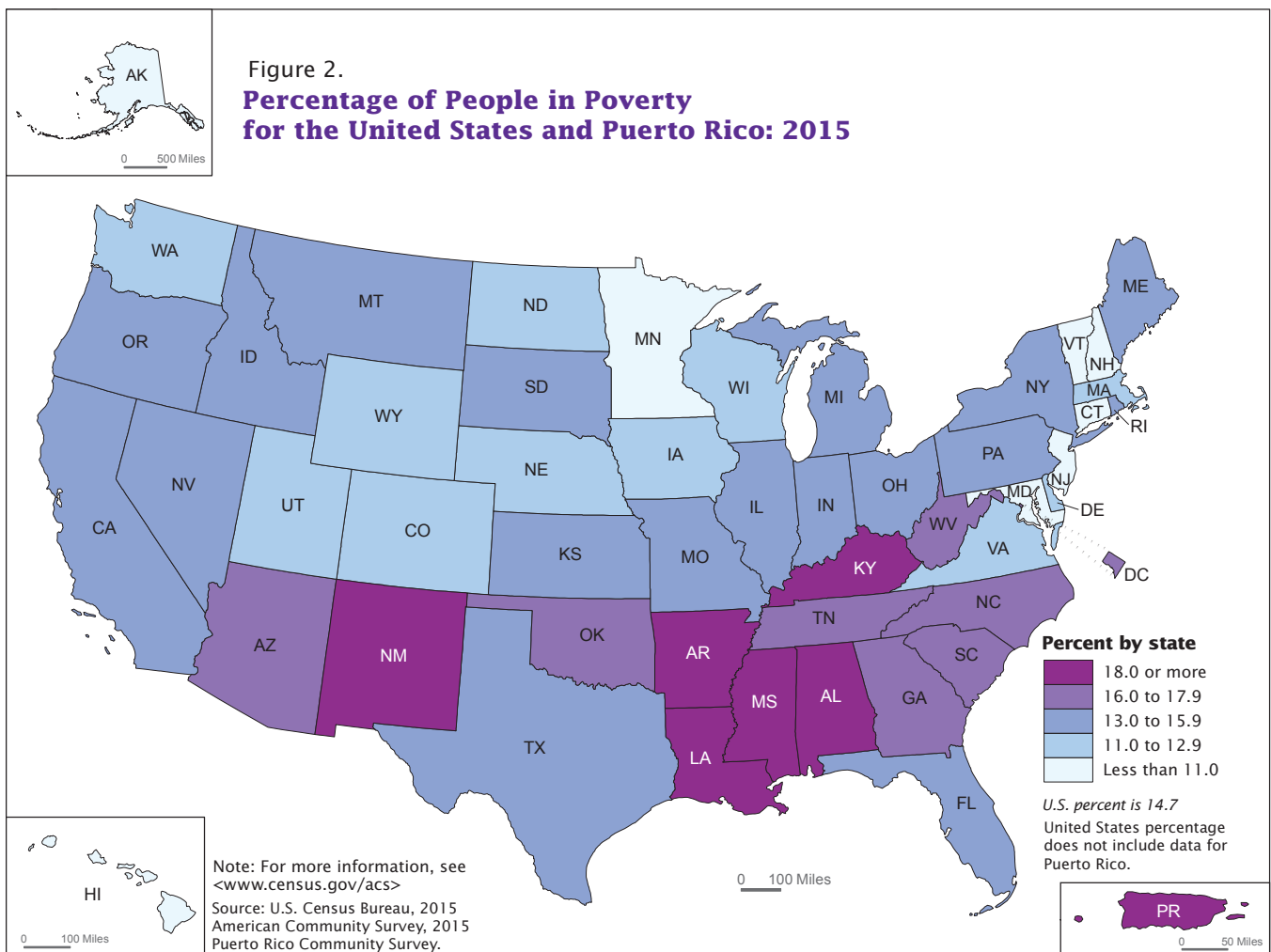
Figure 2 displays the percent of people in poverty for all states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico based on 2015 ACS 1-year data. According to Figure 2, higher poverty rates are observed in Alabama, Arkansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, and New Mexico. Alternatively, the figure shows lower poverty rates for Alaska, Connecticut, Hawaii, Maryland, Minnesota, New Hampshire, New Jersey, and Vermont.

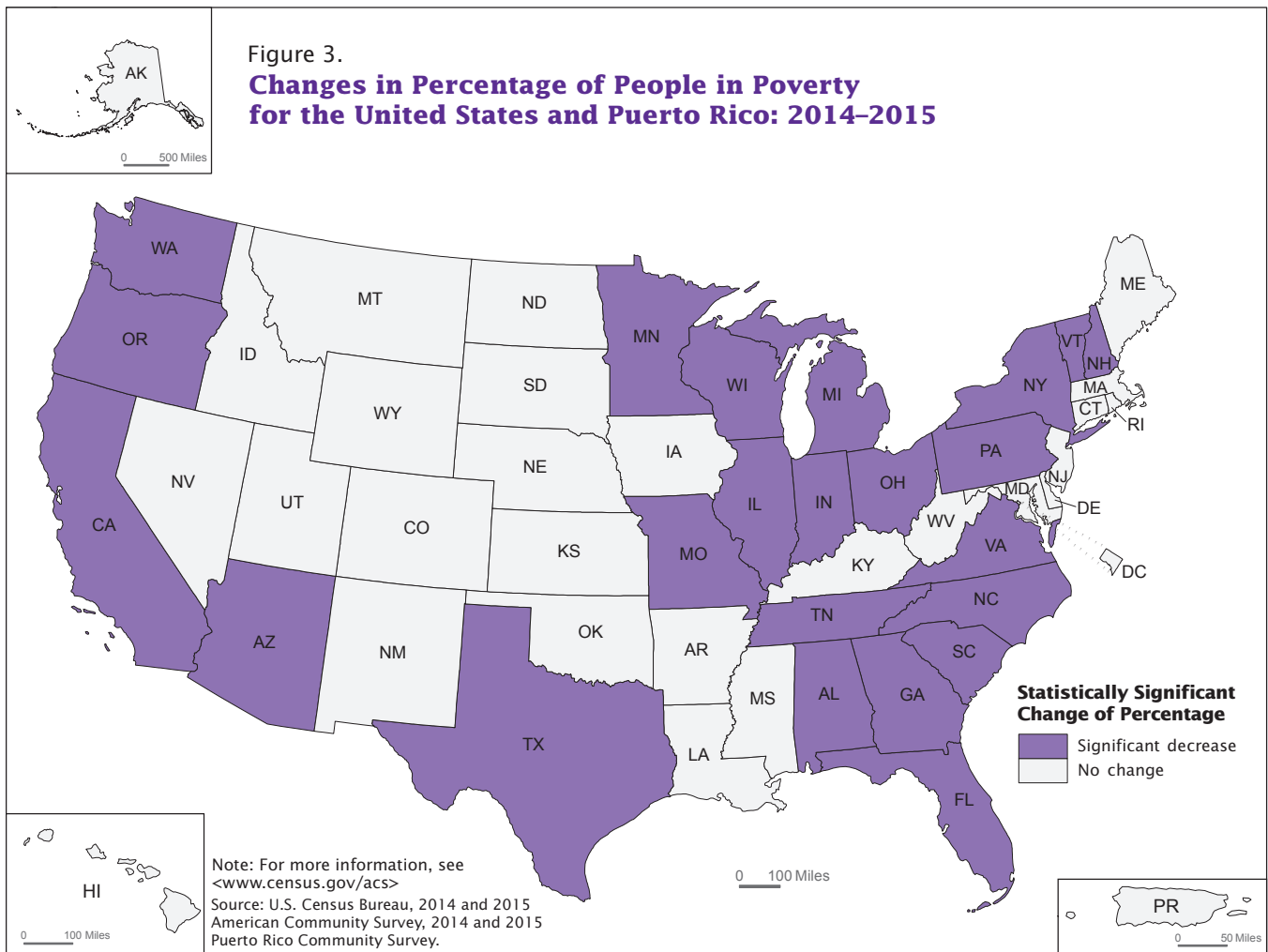
From 2014 to 2015, the percent of people in poverty declined in 23 states (Table 1). For 27 states and the District of Columbia, there were no significant changes in the percent of people in poverty across years. Between 2014 and 2015, there was not an increase in the percent of people in poverty in any state.

District of Columbia and Puerto Rico. The figure shows statistically significant declines in poverty in 23 states, located in all the regions of the country, from 2014 to 2015.

According to the 2014 and 2015 Puerto Rico Community Surveys, the poverty rate for Puerto Rico in 2015 (46.1 percent) was not statistically different from 2014.

Figure 3 maps changes in the percent of people in poverty from 2014 to 2015 for all states, the





**POVERTY IN METROPOLITAN AREAS**

Table 2 shows the estimated number and percentage of people in poverty in 2014 and 2015 for the 25 most populous metropolitan areas. In 2015, the Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, DC-VA-MD-WV Metro Area had the lowest poverty rate (8.3 percent), and Minneapolis-St. Paul-Bloomington, MN-WI Metro Area had the second

lowest poverty rate (9.3 percent) for the most populous 25 metropolitan areas (see Figure 4). The Riverside-San Bernardino-Ontario, CA Metro Area had the highest poverty rate in 2015 (17.5 percent) among these metropolitan areas.

From 2014 to 2015, the percentage of people in poverty significantly decreased in 16 of the 25 most populous metropolitan areas (Table 2). There was no metropolitan

area shown in Table 2 that experienced an increase in the percent of individuals in poverty from 2014 to 2015. The percentage of people in poverty decreased from 2014 to 2015 in the four most populous metropolitan areas (New York-Newark-Jersey City, NY-NJ-PA Metro Area; Los Angeles-Long Beach-Anaheim, CA Metro Area; Chicago-Naperville-Elgin, IL-IN-WI Metro Area; and Dallas-Fort Worth-Arlington, TX Metro Area).

Table 2.  
**Number and Percentage of People in Poverty in the Past 12 Months for the 25 Most Populous Metropolitan Areas: 2014 and 2015**  
 (For information on confidentiality protection, sampling error, nonsampling error, and definitions, see [www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/technical-documentation/code-lists.html](http://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/technical-documentation/code-lists.html))

Metropolitan areas	Below poverty in 2014			Below poverty in 2015			Change in poverty (2015 less 2014)					
	Number <sup>1</sup>	Margin of error <sup>2</sup> (±)	Percent- age <sup>1</sup>	Margin of error <sup>2</sup> (±)	Number <sup>1</sup>	Margin of error <sup>2</sup> (±)	Percent- age <sup>1</sup>	Margin of error <sup>2</sup> (±)	Number <sup>1</sup>	Margin of error <sup>2</sup> (±)	Percent- age <sup>1</sup>	Margin of error <sup>2</sup> (±)
	Atlanta-Sandy Springs-Roswell, GA Metro Area . . . . .	855,499	28,390	15.5	0.5	780,892	29,178	13.9	0.5	*-74,607	40,711	*-1.6
Baltimore-Columbia-Towson, MD Metro Area . . . . .	302,852	13,758	11.1	0.5	288,786	13,900	10.6	0.5	-14,066	19,557	-0.5	0.7
Boston-Cambridge-Newton, MA-NH Metro Area . . . . .	486,954	15,505	10.6	0.3	471,869	17,554	10.2	0.4	-15,085	23,421	-0.4	0.5
Charlotte-Concord-Gastonia, NC-SC Metro Area . . . . .	355,868	16,867	15.2	0.7	337,010	15,184	14.1	0.6	-18,858	22,695	*-1.1	0.9
Chicago-Naperville-Elgin, IL-IN-WI Metro Area . . . . .	1,304,499	27,162	13.9	0.3	1,252,772	29,768	13.3	0.3	*-51,727	40,298	*-0.6	0.4
Dallas-Fort Worth-Arlington, TX Metro Area . . . . .	1,018,299	31,810	14.8	0.5	936,012	31,523	13.4	0.4	*-82,287	44,784	*-1.4	0.6
Denver-Aurora-Lakewood, CO Metro Area . . . . .	292,869	13,048	10.8	0.5	285,724	14,662	10.3	0.5	-7,145	19,627	-0.5	0.7
Detroit-Warren-Dearborn, MI Metro Area . . . . .	685,817	18,945	16.1	0.4	685,863	20,180	16.1	0.5	46	27,679	0.0	0.6
Houston-The Woodlands-Sugar Land, TX Metro Area . . . . .	982,651	32,731	15.3	0.5	958,566	32,515	14.6	0.5	-24,085	46,136	*-0.7	0.7
Los Angeles-Long Beach-Anaheim, CA Metro Area . . . . .	2,259,876	37,710	17.3	0.3	2,064,301	42,315	15.7	0.3	*-195,575	56,680	*-1.6	0.4
Miami-Fort Lauderdale-West Palm Beach, FL Metro Area . . . . .	1,004,600	32,546	17.2	0.6	980,283	29,167	16.5	0.5	-24,317	43,703	-0.7	0.8
Minneapolis-St. Paul-Bloomington, MN-WI Metro Area . . . . .	354,392	15,359	10.3	0.4	321,741	14,408	9.3	0.4	*-32,651	21,059	*-1.0	0.6
New York-Newark-Jersey City, NY-NJ-PA Metro Area . . . . .	2,884,130	51,265	14.6	0.3	2,793,698	41,582	14.1	0.2	*-90,432	66,009	*-0.5	0.4
Orlando-Kissimmee-Sanford, FL Metro Area . . . . .	379,500	22,617	16.7	1.0	351,315	18,449	15.0	0.8	-28,185	29,187	*-1.7	1.3
Philadelphia-Camden-Wilmington, PA-NJ-DE-MD Metro Area . . . . .	791,664	21,691	13.4	0.4	773,078	20,864	13.1	0.4	-18,586	30,097	-0.3	0.6
Phoenix-Mesa-Scottsdale, AZ Metro Area . . . . .	758,076	25,476	17.2	0.6	729,904	22,624	16.2	0.5	-28,172	34,072	*-1.0	0.8
Portland-Vancouver-Hillsboro, OR-WA Metro Area . . . . .	314,387	14,101	13.6	0.6	288,119	16,149	12.2	0.7	*-26,268	21,439	*-1.4	0.9
Riverside-San Bernardino-Ontario, CA Metro Area . . . . .	814,692	28,406	18.7	0.6	768,690	25,415	17.5	0.6	-46,002	38,116	*-1.2	0.8
St. Louis, MO-IL Metro Area . . . . .	356,662	15,755	13.0	0.6	337,010	13,441	12.2	0.5	-19,652	20,709	-0.8	0.8
San Antonio-New Braunfels, TX Metro Area . . . . .	380,650	16,256	16.7	0.7	341,912	16,885	14.6	0.7	*-38,738	23,438	*-2.1	1.0
San Diego-Carlsbad, CA Metro Area . . . . .	467,054	18,548	14.7	0.6	444,260	18,840	13.8	0.6	-22,794	26,438	*-0.9	0.8
San Francisco-Oakland-Hayward, CA Metro Area . . . . .	491,991	18,148	10.9	0.4	485,243	17,632	10.6	0.4	-6,748	25,303	-0.3	0.6
Seattle-Tacoma-Bellevue, WA Metro Area . . . . .	408,352	15,389	11.3	0.4	375,320	14,531	10.2	0.4	*-33,032	21,165	*-1.1	0.6
Tampa-St. Petersburg-Clearwater, FL Metro Area . . . . .	453,051	19,301	15.8	0.7	431,209	16,902	14.7	0.6	-21,842	25,656	*-1.1	0.9
Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, DC-VA-MD-WV Metro Area . . . . .	514,383	19,101	8.7	0.3	494,913	20,631	8.3	0.3	-19,470	28,116	-0.4	0.4

\* Statistically different from zero at the 90 percent confidence level.

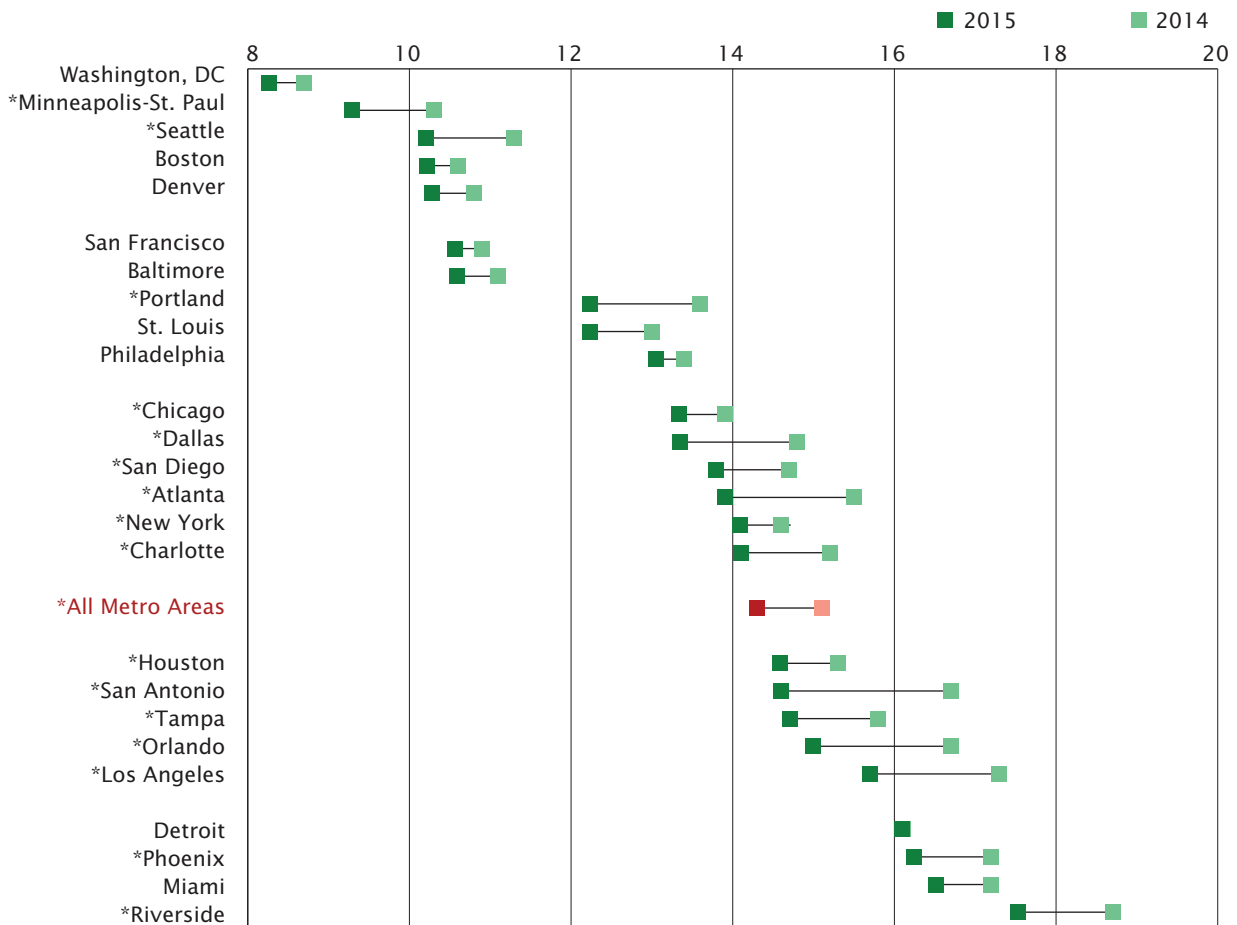
<sup>1</sup> Poverty status is determined for individuals in housing units and noninstitutional group quarters. The poverty universe excludes children under age 15 who are not related to the householder, people living in institutional group quarters, and people living in college dormitories or military barracks.

<sup>2</sup> Data are based on a sample and are subject to sampling variability. A margin of error is a measure of an estimate's variability. The larger the margin of error in relation to the size of the estimate, the less reliable the estimate. This number when added to or subtracted from the estimate forms the 90 percent confidence interval.

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, 2014 and 2015 American Community Surveys.

Figure 4.  
**Percentage of People in Poverty in the Past 12 Months for the 25 Most Populous Metropolitan Areas: 2014 and 2015**

(For information on confidentiality protection, sampling error, nonsampling error, and definitions, see [www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/technical-documentation/code-lists.html](http://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/technical-documentation/code-lists.html))



\* Change statistically different from zero at the 90 percent confidence level.

Source: American Community Survey 2014 and 2015.

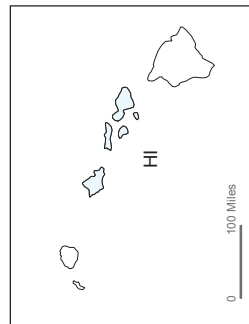
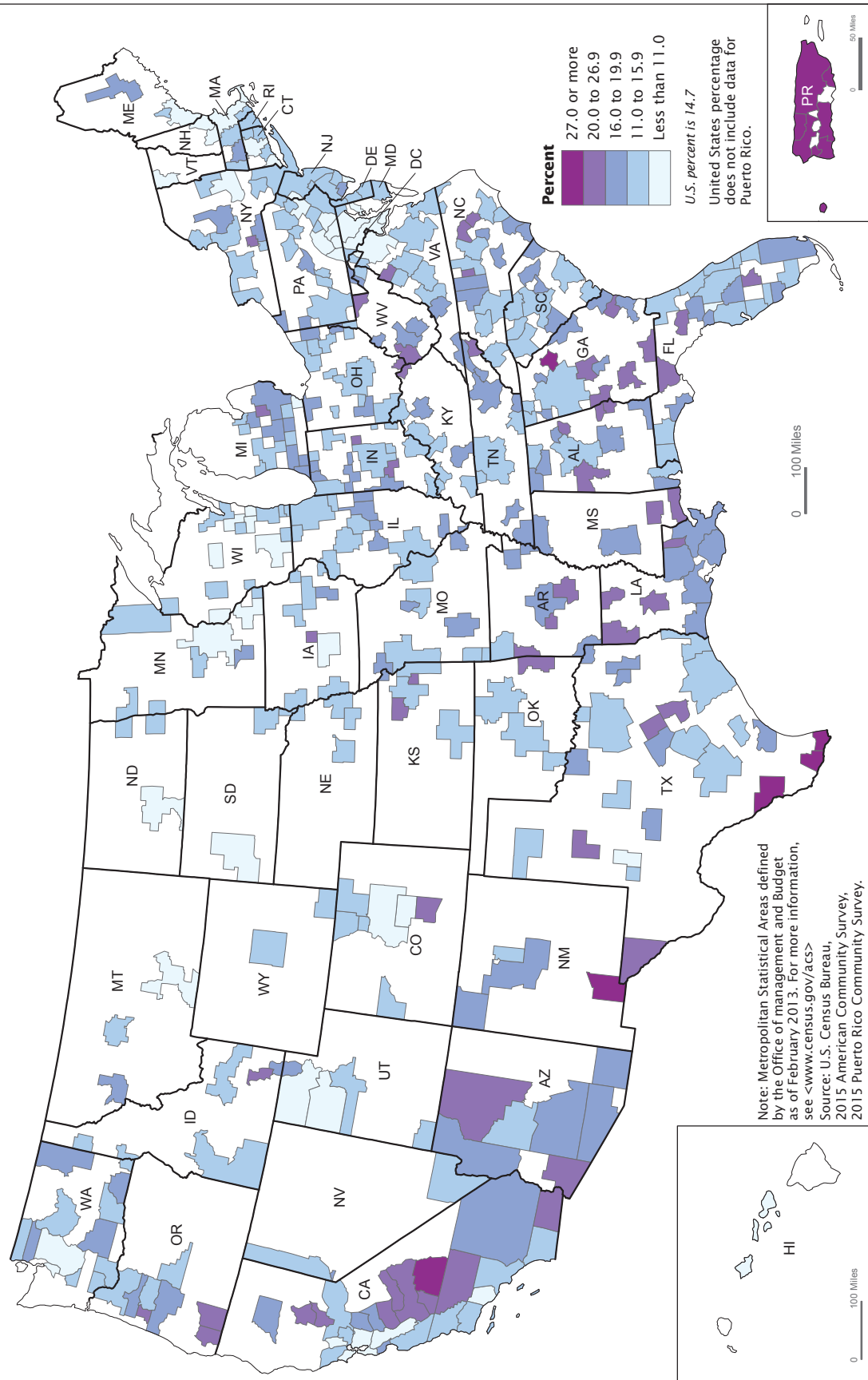
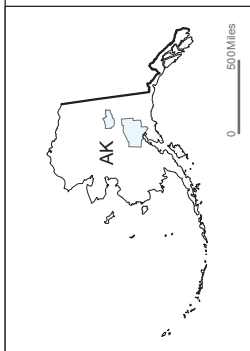
Figure 5 maps the 2015 poverty rates for all metropolitan statistical areas (MSA). MSA poverty rates ranged from a low of 6.6 percent in Barnstable Town, MA Metro Area and Midland, TX Metro Area to a high of 32.4 percent in Brownsville-Harlingen, TX Metro

Area.<sup>4</sup> Geographically, higher poverty MSAs are scattered throughout

<sup>4</sup> The poverty rate for Barnstable Town, MA Metro Area (6.6 percent) is not statistically different from Midland, TX Metro Area (6.6 percent); Fairbanks, AK Metro Area (7.4 percent); Gettysburg, PA Metro Area (7.9 percent); California-Lexington Park, MD Metro Area (8.0 percent); Manchester-Nashua, NH Metro Area (8.0 percent); The Villages, FL Metro Area (8.1 percent); Ocean City, NJ Metro Area (8.7 percent); and Chambersburg-Waynesboro, PA Metro Area (8.9 percent). The poverty rate for Brownsville-Harlingen, TX Metro Area (32.4 percent) is not statistically different from the rates for Laredo, TX Metro Area (31.8 percent) and McAllen-Edinburg-Mission, TX Metro Area (31.5 percent).

the country, however, the heaviest concentrations were in the West and the South. Alternatively, lower poverty MSAs are mostly located in the Midwest.

Figure 5.  
**Percentage of People in Poverty by Metropolitan Statistical Area: 2015**





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## DEPTH OF POVERTY

The poverty rate is an estimate of the proportion of people with family or personal income below their poverty threshold. The income-to-poverty ratio evaluates how close a family's or individual's income is to their poverty threshold. It measures the depth of poverty for those with income below their poverty threshold and the proximity to poverty for those with income above their poverty threshold.

In this report, the income-to-poverty ratio is reported as a percentage. For example, an income-to-poverty-ratio of 125 percent indicates a family or individual with income equal to 1.25 times their poverty threshold, while an income-to-poverty ratio of 50 percent identifies families or individuals with income equal to one-half of their poverty threshold. Families and individuals identified as in poverty as described in the preceding sections of this report have an income-to-poverty ratio of less than 100 percent.

Table 3 reports the number and percent of people with income below 50 percent of their poverty threshold for 2014 and 2015 for all states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico. In 2015, 6.5 percent of the U.S. population had income below 50 percent of the

poverty threshold. This reflects a decline from the 2014 estimate of 6.8 percent of the total population.

Among the states, the percent of people with an income-to-poverty ratio below 50 percent ranged from a low of 3.6 percent in New Hampshire to a high of 10.4 percent in Mississippi.<sup>5</sup> According to the 2014 and 2015 ACS data, the percent of people with income-to-poverty ratios below 50 percent of the poverty level significantly decreased in 16 states. In one state (South Dakota), the percent of individuals with an income-to-poverty ratio below 50 percent increased.

Table 4 displays the number and percent of people with income-to-poverty ratios below 125 percent of poverty for 2014 and 2015 for all states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico. In 2015, 19.3 percent of people in the United States had income-to-poverty ratios below 125 percent, a statistically significant decline from the 2014 estimate of 20.3 percent. Estimates of the percent of individuals with income-to-poverty ratios below 125 percent in 2015 ranged from a low

<sup>5</sup> The percent of people with an income-to-poverty ratio below 50 percent in 2015 was not statistically different between New Hampshire (3.6 percent) and Alaska (4.2 percent). The percent of people with an income-to-poverty ratio below 50 percent for Mississippi (10.4 percent) in 2015 was not statistically different from the percent for the District of Columbia (9.2 percent).

of 10.7 percent in New Hampshire to a high of 28.3 percent in Mississippi.

In 2015, the percent of people with income-to-poverty ratios below 125 percent of poverty declined in 28 states.

## DEPTH OF POVERTY IN METROPOLITAN AREAS

Table 5 reports the number and percent of people with income-to-poverty ratios below 50 percent of poverty for 2014 and 2015 among the 25 most populous metropolitan areas. In 2015, the percent of people with income-to-poverty ratios below 50 percent ranged from a low of 3.9 percent in Minneapolis-St Paul-Bloomington, MN-WI Metro Area and in Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, DC-VA-MD-WV metro area to a high of 7.7 percent in Riverside-San Bernardino-Ontario, CA Metro Area and 7.8 percent in Phoenix-Mesa-Scottsdale, AZ Metro Area.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>6</sup> The percent of people with income-to-poverty ratios below 50 percent of the poverty threshold in Minneapolis-St Paul-Bloomington, MN-WI Metro Area (3.9 percent) and in Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, DC-VA-MD-WV Metro Area (3.9 percent) were not statistically different from each other. The percent of people with income-to-poverty ratios below 50 percent of the poverty threshold in Phoenix-Mesa-Scottsdale, AZ Metro Area (7.8 percent) and Riverside-San Bernardino-Ontario, CA Metro Area (7.7 percent) were not statistically different from each other.

Table 3.

## Number and Percentage of People With Income Below 50 Percent of the Poverty Level by State and Puerto Rico: 2014 and 2015

(For information on confidentiality protection, sampling error, nonsampling error, and definitions, see [www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/technical-documentation/code-lists.html](http://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/technical-documentation/code-lists.html))

States	Below 50 percent of the poverty level in 2014				Below 50 percent of the poverty level in 2015				Change (2015 less 2014)			
	Number <sup>1</sup>	Margin of error <sup>2</sup> (±)	Per-centage <sup>1</sup>	Mar-gin of error <sup>2</sup> (±)	Number <sup>1</sup>	Margin of error <sup>2</sup> (±)	Per-centage <sup>1</sup>	Mar-gin of error <sup>2</sup> (±)	Number <sup>1</sup>	Margin of error <sup>2</sup> (±)	Per-centage <sup>1</sup>	Mar-gin of error <sup>2</sup> (±)
<b>United States . . . . .</b>	<b>21,244,778</b>	<b>145,073</b>	<b>6.8</b>	<b>0.1</b>	<b>20,441,866</b>	<b>156,191</b>	<b>6.5</b>	<b>0.1</b>	<b>*-802,912</b>	<b>213,171</b>	<b>*-0.3</b>	<b>0.1</b>
Alabama . . . . .	390,019	18,009	8.2	0.4	385,733	15,876	8.1	0.3	-4,286	24,008	-0.1	0.5
Alaska . . . . .	34,387	4,030	4.8	0.6	30,067	3,654	4.2	0.5	-4,320	5,440	-0.6	0.8
Arizona . . . . .	561,138	19,231	8.5	0.3	547,868	22,497	8.2	0.3	-13,270	29,596	-0.3	0.4
Arkansas . . . . .	217,844	11,688	7.6	0.4	228,019	12,753	7.9	0.4	10,175	17,299	0.3	0.6
California . . . . .	2,677,525	46,284	7.0	0.1	2,568,959	47,903	6.7	0.1	*-108,566	66,610	*-0.3	0.1
Colorado . . . . .	287,952	11,728	5.5	0.2	273,501	13,881	5.1	0.3	-14,451	18,172	*-0.4	0.4
Connecticut . . . . .	171,654	10,666	4.9	0.3	174,686	10,493	5.0	0.3	3,032	14,962	0.1	0.4
Delaware . . . . .	54,216	5,471	6.0	0.6	53,449	6,143	5.8	0.7	-767	8,226	-0.2	0.9
District of Columbia . . . . .	56,790	6,173	9.1	1.0	58,611	6,805	9.2	1.1	1,821	9,188	0.1	1.5
Florida . . . . .	1,396,477	36,785	7.2	0.2	1,329,921	34,082	6.7	0.2	*-66,556	50,147	*-0.5	0.3
Georgia . . . . .	810,355	25,848	8.2	0.3	761,945	25,436	7.7	0.3	*-48,410	36,264	*-0.5	0.4
Hawaii . . . . .	68,688	6,919	5.0	0.5	74,746	7,175	5.4	0.5	6,058	9,968	0.4	0.7
Idaho . . . . .	96,609	9,388	6.0	0.6	96,781	8,190	6.0	0.5	172	12,458	0.0	0.8
Illinois . . . . .	829,130	21,730	6.6	0.2	784,584	28,635	6.2	0.2	*-44,546	35,947	*-0.4	0.3
Indiana . . . . .	434,407	17,502	6.8	0.3	422,132	18,581	6.6	0.3	-12,275	25,526	-0.2	0.4
Iowa . . . . .	163,544	8,509	5.4	0.3	164,920	9,343	5.5	0.3	1,376	12,637	0.1	0.4
Kansas . . . . .	165,153	10,913	5.9	0.4	159,767	10,717	5.6	0.4	-5,386	15,295	-0.3	0.6
Kentucky . . . . .	349,221	16,195	8.2	0.4	332,398	14,004	7.7	0.3	-16,823	21,410	-0.5	0.5
Louisiana . . . . .	409,170	20,113	9.1	0.4	399,056	16,767	8.8	0.4	-10,114	26,185	-0.3	0.6
Maine . . . . .	76,427	5,488	5.9	0.4	67,868	5,779	5.2	0.4	*-8,559	7,970	*-0.7	0.6
Maryland . . . . .	274,369	14,824	4.7	0.3	275,043	17,106	4.7	0.3	674	22,636	0.0	0.4
Massachusetts . . . . .	351,952	15,014	5.4	0.2	355,730	17,000	5.4	0.3	3,778	22,681	0.0	0.4
Michigan . . . . .	719,061	19,213	7.4	0.2	673,796	20,833	6.9	0.2	*-45,265	28,340	*-0.5	0.3
Minnesota . . . . .	260,064	11,845	4.9	0.2	233,791	10,447	4.4	0.2	*-26,273	15,794	*-0.5	0.3
Mississippi . . . . .	293,739	12,593	10.1	0.4	301,574	15,351	10.4	0.5	7,835	19,855	0.3	0.6
Missouri . . . . .	403,117	17,418	6.9	0.3	378,734	14,791	6.4	0.3	*-24,383	22,851	*-0.5	0.4
Montana . . . . .	69,360	6,392	7.0	0.6	63,304	4,561	6.3	0.5	-6,056	7,852	-0.7	0.8
Nebraska . . . . .	95,149	6,923	5.2	0.4	96,268	6,151	5.2	0.3	1,119	9,261	0.0	0.5
Nevada . . . . .	208,738	11,482	7.5	0.4	188,103	12,149	6.6	0.4	*-20,635	16,716	*-0.9	0.6
New Hampshire . . . . .	47,168	4,925	3.7	0.4	46,789	5,705	3.6	0.4	-379	7,537	-0.1	0.6
New Jersey . . . . .	431,657	18,048	4.9	0.2	437,079	19,002	5.0	0.2	5,422	26,207	0.1	0.3
New Mexico . . . . .	191,449	12,871	9.4	0.6	178,880	11,329	8.7	0.6	-12,569	17,147	-0.7	0.8
New York . . . . .	1,349,961	31,364	7.0	0.2	1,335,126	33,044	6.9	0.2	-14,835	45,559	-0.1	0.3
North Carolina . . . . .	712,244	20,097	7.3	0.2	697,968	23,016	7.1	0.2	-14,276	30,555	-0.2	0.3
North Dakota . . . . .	40,799	4,538	5.7	0.6	39,134	3,652	5.4	0.5	-1,665	5,825	-0.3	0.8
Ohio . . . . .	821,838	23,071	7.3	0.2	771,435	21,394	6.8	0.2	*-50,403	31,464	*-0.5	0.3
Oklahoma . . . . .	276,433	11,658	7.4	0.3	265,938	9,240	7.0	0.2	-10,495	14,876	*-0.4	0.4
Oregon . . . . .	277,749	14,245	7.1	0.4	271,974	13,307	6.9	0.3	-5,775	19,493	-0.2	0.5
Pennsylvania . . . . .	765,187	25,065	6.2	0.2	725,873	22,068	5.9	0.2	*-39,314	33,395	*-0.3	0.3
Rhode Island . . . . .	64,970	6,681	6.4	0.7	58,599	5,995	5.8	0.6	-6,371	8,976	-0.6	0.9
South Carolina . . . . .	395,480	17,643	8.4	0.4	344,307	14,310	7.2	0.3	*-51,173	22,717	*-1.2	0.5
South Dakota . . . . .	47,820	4,248	5.8	0.5	55,221	5,349	6.7	0.6	*7,401	6,831	*0.9	0.8
Tennessee . . . . .	502,189	20,922	7.9	0.3	472,717	20,086	7.3	0.3	*-29,472	29,003	*-0.6	0.4
Texas . . . . .	1,881,475	43,673	7.1	0.2	1,783,216	43,509	6.6	0.2	*-98,259	61,647	*-0.5	0.3
Utah . . . . .	145,545	9,443	5.0	0.3	142,038	11,575	4.8	0.4	-3,507	14,938	-0.2	0.5
Vermont . . . . .	31,783	3,656	5.3	0.6	27,015	3,598	4.5	0.6	-4,768	5,130	-0.8	0.8
Virginia . . . . .	441,667	16,380	5.5	0.2	439,350	16,187	5.4	0.2	-2,317	23,029	-0.1	0.3
Washington . . . . .	413,973	15,991	6.0	0.2	405,847	14,452	5.8	0.2	-8,126	21,554	-0.2	0.3
West Virginia . . . . .	142,062	9,895	7.9	0.6	143,749	10,230	8.0	0.6	1,687	14,232	0.1	0.8
Wisconsin . . . . .	309,226	15,283	5.5	0.3	292,435	11,049	5.2	0.2	-16,791	18,859	-0.3	0.4
Wyoming . . . . .	27,848	3,578	4.9	0.6	25,822	2,956	4.5	0.5	-2,026	4,641	-0.4	0.8
Puerto Rico . . . . .	895,730	21,258	25.5	0.6	889,086	22,201	25.8	0.6	-6,644	30,737	0.3	0.8

\* Statistically different from zero at the 90 percent confidence level.

<sup>1</sup> Poverty status is determined for individuals in housing units and noninstitutional group quarters. The poverty universe excludes children under age 15 who are not related to the householder, people living in institutional group quarters, and people living in college dormitories or military barracks.

<sup>2</sup> Data are based on a sample and are subject to sampling variability. A margin of error is a measure of an estimate's variability. The larger the margin of error in relation to the size of the estimate, the less reliable the estimate. This number when added to or subtracted from the estimate forms the 90 percent confidence interval.

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, 2014 and 2015 American Community Survey and 2014 and 2015 Puerto Rico Community Survey.

Table 4.

## Number and Percentage of People With Income Below 125 Percent of the Poverty Level by State and Puerto Rico: 2014 and 2015

(For information on confidentiality protection, sampling error, nonsampling error, and definitions, see [www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/technical-documentation/code-lists.html](http://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/technical-documentation/code-lists.html))

States	Below 125 percent of the poverty level in 2014				Below 125 percent of the poverty level in 2015				Change (2015 less 2014)			
	Number <sup>1</sup>	Margin of error <sup>2</sup> (±)	Percentage <sup>1</sup>	Margin of error <sup>2</sup> (±)	Number <sup>1</sup>	Margin of error <sup>2</sup> (±)	Percentage <sup>1</sup>	Margin of error <sup>2</sup> (±)	Number <sup>1</sup>	Margin of error <sup>2</sup> (±)	Percentage <sup>1</sup>	Margin of error <sup>2</sup> (±)
<b>United States . . . . .</b>	<b>63,010,024</b>	<b>269,299</b>	<b>20.3</b>	<b>0.1</b>	<b>60,552,019</b>	<b>291,801</b>	<b>19.3</b>	<b>0.1</b>	<b>*-2,458,005</b>	<b>397,076</b>	<b>*-1.0</b>	<b>0.1</b>
Alabama . . . . .	1,182,910	28,256	25.0	0.6	1,129,280	23,418	23.8	0.5	*-53,630	36,699	*-1.2	0.8
Alaska . . . . .	108,653	7,751	15.1	1.1	100,422	6,807	13.9	0.9	-8,231	10,316	-1.2	1.4
Arizona . . . . .	1,564,526	28,952	23.8	0.4	1,490,362	32,375	22.3	0.5	*-74,164	43,432	*-1.5	0.6
Arkansas . . . . .	722,248	19,072	25.1	0.7	729,974	20,665	25.3	0.7	7,726	28,121	0.2	1.0
California . . . . .	8,198,675	75,342	21.5	0.2	7,768,650	70,792	20.2	0.2	*-430,025	103,382	*-1.3	0.3
Colorado . . . . .	854,664	25,659	16.3	0.5	812,553	22,356	15.2	0.4	*-42,111	34,032	*-1.1	0.6
Connecticut . . . . .	484,099	17,387	13.9	0.5	478,550	17,177	13.7	0.5	-5,549	24,441	-0.2	0.7
Delaware . . . . .	143,860	8,919	15.8	1.0	146,612	10,280	15.9	1.1	2,752	13,610	0.1	1.5
District of Columbia . . . . .	130,514	7,880	20.9	1.3	136,322	8,962	21.4	1.4	5,808	11,934	0.5	1.9
Florida . . . . .	4,264,883	59,137	21.9	0.3	4,194,063	56,120	21.1	0.3	-70,820	81,527	*-0.8	0.4
Georgia . . . . .	2,292,330	42,470	23.3	0.4	2,201,142	40,034	22.1	0.4	*-91,188	58,365	*-1.2	0.6
Hawaii . . . . .	209,439	11,905	15.2	0.9	184,671	9,484	13.2	0.7	*-24,768	15,221	*-2.0	1.1
Idaho . . . . .	338,551	15,636	21.1	1.0	322,009	15,887	19.9	1.0	-16,542	22,291	-1.2	1.4
Illinois . . . . .	2,355,441	35,429	18.7	0.3	2,233,291	40,704	17.8	0.3	*-122,150	53,963	*-0.9	0.4
Indiana . . . . .	1,283,057	28,837	20.1	0.5	1,219,906	26,274	19.0	0.4	*-63,151	39,011	*-1.1	0.6
Iowa . . . . .	500,834	16,643	16.7	0.6	493,318	15,548	16.3	0.5	-7,516	22,776	-0.4	0.8
Kansas . . . . .	504,927	14,694	17.9	0.5	490,927	15,932	17.3	0.6	-14,000	21,674	-0.6	0.8
Kentucky . . . . .	1,054,949	23,008	24.7	0.5	1,000,159	23,442	23.3	0.5	*-54,790	32,847	*-1.4	0.7
Louisiana . . . . .	1,142,650	26,417	25.3	0.6	1,128,564	27,150	24.8	0.6	-14,086	37,881	-0.5	0.8
Maine . . . . .	241,610	10,077	18.7	0.8	229,862	11,443	17.8	0.9	-11,748	15,248	-0.9	1.2
Maryland . . . . .	781,607	25,904	13.4	0.4	747,057	23,496	12.7	0.4	-34,550	34,973	*-0.7	0.6
Massachusetts . . . . .	978,814	23,507	15.0	0.4	973,763	23,373	14.8	0.4	-5,051	33,149	-0.2	0.6
Michigan . . . . .	2,032,883	30,229	21.0	0.3	1,961,687	30,913	20.2	0.3	*-71,196	43,237	*-0.8	0.4
Minnesota . . . . .	788,480	20,690	14.8	0.4	750,284	18,560	14.0	0.3	*-38,196	27,795	*-0.8	0.5
Mississippi . . . . .	812,858	20,378	28.1	0.7	819,297	22,117	28.3	0.8	6,439	30,074	0.2	1.1
Missouri . . . . .	1,195,344	25,932	20.3	0.4	1,142,790	24,009	19.4	0.4	*-52,554	35,340	*-0.9	0.6
Montana . . . . .	208,149	9,982	20.9	1.0	192,976	8,701	19.1	0.9	*-15,173	13,242	*-1.8	1.3
Nebraska . . . . .	310,538	11,598	17.0	0.6	305,376	10,869	16.6	0.6	-5,162	15,895	-0.4	0.8
Nevada . . . . .	577,339	21,486	20.6	0.8	561,034	19,028	19.7	0.7	-16,305	28,700	-0.9	1.1
New Hampshire . . . . .	157,157	8,693	12.2	0.7	138,076	9,701	10.7	0.8	*-19,081	13,026	*-1.5	1.1
New Jersey . . . . .	1,268,403	26,332	14.5	0.3	1,257,255	28,987	14.3	0.3	-11,148	39,161	-0.2	0.4
New Mexico . . . . .	564,143	18,591	27.6	0.9	531,630	17,620	26.0	0.9	*-32,513	25,614	*-1.6	1.3
New York . . . . .	3,910,928	52,055	20.3	0.3	3,817,118	48,693	19.8	0.3	*-93,810	71,279	*-0.5	0.4
North Carolina . . . . .	2,214,894	35,280	22.9	0.4	2,133,530	35,488	21.8	0.4	*-81,364	50,041	*-1.1	0.6
North Dakota . . . . .	107,768	6,397	15.1	0.9	105,089	5,568	14.4	0.8	-2,679	8,481	-0.7	1.2
Ohio . . . . .	2,280,425	32,511	20.2	0.3	2,180,344	34,842	19.3	0.3	*-100,081	47,654	*-0.9	0.4
Oklahoma . . . . .	825,232	17,209	22.0	0.5	816,349	16,349	21.5	0.4	-8,883	23,737	-0.5	0.6
Oregon . . . . .	847,831	23,408	21.8	0.6	788,531	25,442	20.0	0.6	*-59,300	34,572	*-1.8	0.8
Pennsylvania . . . . .	2,196,807	30,298	17.8	0.2	2,107,958	33,949	17.0	0.3	*-88,849	45,503	*-0.8	0.4
Rhode Island . . . . .	188,567	10,424	18.6	1.0	183,385	10,827	18.0	1.1	-5,182	15,029	-0.6	1.5
South Carolina . . . . .	1,106,809	26,464	23.6	0.6	1,030,953	23,119	21.7	0.5	*-75,856	35,140	*-1.9	0.8
South Dakota . . . . .	148,685	6,880	18.0	0.8	152,366	8,628	18.4	1.0	3,681	11,035	0.4	1.3
Tennessee . . . . .	1,530,083	30,241	24.0	0.5	1,425,698	33,976	22.1	0.5	*-104,385	45,485	*-1.9	0.7
Texas . . . . .	5,928,534	74,224	22.5	0.3	5,669,421	82,239	21.1	0.3	*-259,113	110,781	*-1.4	0.4
Utah . . . . .	461,657	18,686	15.9	0.6	446,870	16,777	15.2	0.6	-14,787	25,112	-0.7	0.8
Vermont . . . . .	96,765	5,538	16.1	0.9	90,330	5,954	15.0	1.0	-6,435	8,131	-1.1	1.3
Virginia . . . . .	1,249,846	31,874	15.5	0.4	1,202,425	29,901	14.8	0.4	*-47,421	43,704	*-0.7	0.6
Washington . . . . .	1,188,472	28,543	17.2	0.4	1,122,481	26,660	16.0	0.4	*-65,991	39,057	*-1.2	0.6
West Virginia . . . . .	424,222	14,401	23.7	0.8	415,363	15,865	23.2	0.9	-8,859	21,426	-0.5	1.2
Wisconsin . . . . .	957,356	21,519	17.1	0.4	906,049	20,077	16.1	0.4	*-51,307	29,430	*-1.0	0.6
Wyoming . . . . .	90,608	7,457	15.9	1.3	85,897	7,944	15.0	1.4	-4,711	10,896	-0.9	1.9
Puerto Rico . . . . .	1,927,553	27,008	54.8	0.8	1,880,584	22,641	54.6	0.7	*-46,969	35,243	-0.2	1.1

\* Statistically different from zero at the 90 percent confidence level.

<sup>1</sup> Poverty status is determined for individuals in housing units and noninstitutional group quarters. The poverty universe excludes children under age 15 who are not related to the householder, people living in institutional group quarters, and people living in college dormitories or military barracks.

<sup>2</sup> Data are based on a sample and are subject to sampling variability. A margin of error is a measure of an estimate's variability. The larger the margin of error in relation to the size of the estimate, the less reliable the estimate. This number when added to or subtracted from the estimate forms the 90 percent confidence interval.

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, 2014 and 2015 American Community Survey and 2014 and 2015 Puerto Rico Community Survey.

Table 5.

**Number and Percentage of People With Income Below 50 Percent of the Poverty Level for the 25 Most Populous Metropolitan Areas: 2014 and 2015**

(For information on confidentiality protection, sampling error, nonsampling error, and definitions, see [www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/technical-documentation/code-lists.html](http://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/technical-documentation/code-lists.html))

Metropolitan areas	Below 50 percent of poverty level in 2014			Below 50 percent of poverty level in 2015			Change (2015 less 2014)					
	Number <sup>1</sup>	Margin of error <sup>2</sup> (±)	Per-cent-age <sup>1</sup>	Margin of error <sup>2</sup> (±)	Per-cent-age <sup>1</sup>	Margin of error <sup>2</sup> (±)	Number <sup>1</sup>	Margin of error <sup>2</sup> (±)	Per-cent-age <sup>1</sup>	Margin of error <sup>2</sup> (±)		
Atlanta-Sandy Springs-Roswell, GA Metro Area . . . . .	385,190	17,361	7.0	0.3	351,157	18,158	6.3	0.3	*-34,033	25,123	*-0.7	0.4
Baltimore-Columbia-Towson, MD Metro Area . . . . .	143,854	10,206	5.3	0.4	144,820	9,993	5.3	0.4	966	14,284	0.0	0.6
Boston-Cambridge-Newton, MA-NH Metro Area . . . . .	234,449	11,423	5.1	0.3	229,476	13,149	5.0	0.3	-4,973	17,418	-0.1	0.4
Charlotte-Concord-Gastonia, NC-SC Metro Area . . . . .	150,700	10,291	6.4	0.4	142,747	8,584	6.0	0.4	-7,953	13,402	-0.4	0.6
Chicago-Naperville-Elgin, IL-IN-WI Metro Area . . . . .	590,514	18,472	5.9	0.2	567,425	23,805	6.0	0.3	-23,089	30,132	-0.3	0.4
Dallas-Fort Worth-Arlington, TX Metro Area . . . . .	405,272	19,479	5.9	0.3	358,218	16,853	5.1	0.2	*-47,054	25,757	*-0.8	0.4
Denver-Aurora-Lakewood, CO Metro Area . . . . .	130,007	8,546	4.8	0.3	125,634	9,210	4.5	0.3	-4,373	12,564	-0.3	0.4
Detroit-Warren-Dearborn, MI Metro Area . . . . .	322,326	13,808	7.6	0.3	301,681	12,483	7.1	0.3	*-20,645	18,614	*-0.5	0.4
Houston-The Woodlands-Sugar Land, TX Metro Area . . . . .	377,399	19,232	5.9	0.3	403,707	22,642	6.1	0.3	26,308	29,707	0.2	0.4
Los Angeles-Long Beach-Anaheim, CA Metro Area . . . . .	912,045	27,539	7.0	0.2	880,522	26,790	6.7	0.2	-31,523	38,420	*-0.3	0.3
Miami-Fort Lauderdale-West Palm Beach, FL Metro Area . . . . .	412,571	19,388	7.0	0.3	384,458	19,790	6.5	0.3	*-28,113	27,705	*-0.5	0.4
Mimeapolis-St. Paul-Bloomington, MN-WI Metro Area . . . . .	153,050	10,481	4.5	0.3	134,330	8,548	3.9	0.2	*-18,720	13,525	*-0.6	0.4
New York-Newark-Jersey City, NY-NJ-PA Metro Area . . . . .	1,248,882	31,951	6.3	0.2	1,233,929	30,424	6.2	0.2	-14,953	44,118	-0.1	0.3
Orlando-Kissimmee-Sanford, FL Metro Area . . . . .	154,309	13,146	6.8	0.6	139,976	11,082	6.0	0.5	-14,333	17,194	*-0.8	0.8
Philadelphia-Camden-Wilmington, PA-NJ-DE-MD Metro Area . . . . .	378,797	19,071	6.4	0.3	375,182	16,093	6.3	0.3	-3,615	24,954	-0.1	0.4
Phoenix-Mesa-Scottsdale, AZ Metro Area . . . . .	359,678	16,905	8.2	0.4	348,523	18,035	7.8	0.4	-11,155	24,719	-0.4	0.6
Portland-Vancouver-Hillsboro, OR-WA Metro Area . . . . .	136,710	10,257	5.9	0.4	131,939	10,400	5.6	0.4	-4,771	14,607	-0.3	0.6
Riverside-San Bernardino-Ontario, CA Metro Area . . . . .	343,464	15,411	7.9	0.4	339,773	17,017	7.7	0.4	-3,691	22,959	-0.2	0.6
St. Louis, MO-IL Metro Area . . . . .	166,720	11,192	6.1	0.4	157,139	10,667	5.7	0.4	-9,581	15,461	-0.4	0.6
San Antonio-New Braunfels, TX Metro Area . . . . .	153,553	12,192	6.7	0.5	152,302	12,621	6.5	0.5	-1,251	17,548	-0.2	0.7
San Diego-Carlsbad, CA Metro Area . . . . .	225,580	14,315	7.1	0.4	200,816	14,381	6.2	0.4	*-24,764	20,292	*-0.9	0.6
San Francisco-Oakland-Hayward, CA Metro Area . . . . .	229,902	13,077	5.1	0.3	225,685	11,904	4.9	0.3	-4,217	17,684	-0.2	0.4
Seattle-Tacoma-Bellevue, WA Metro Area . . . . .	193,133	11,065	5.3	0.3	191,489	10,201	5.2	0.3	-1,644	15,050	-0.1	0.4
Tampa-St. Petersburg-Clearwater, FL Metro Area . . . . .	217,600	13,479	7.6	0.5	197,560	10,834	6.7	0.4	*-20,040	17,293	*-0.9	0.6
Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, DC-VA-MD-WV Metro Area . . . . .	234,562	11,804	4.0	0.2	234,697	13,026	3.9	0.2	135	17,579	-0.1	0.3

\* Statistically different from zero at the 90 percent confidence level.

<sup>1</sup> Poverty status is determined for individuals in housing units and noninstitutional group quarters. The poverty universe excludes children under age 15 who are not related to the householder, people living in institutional group quarters, and people living in college dormitories or military barracks.

<sup>2</sup> Data are based on a sample and are subject to sampling variability. A margin of error is a measure of an estimate's variability. The larger the margin of error in relation to the size of the estimate, the less reliable the estimate. This number when added to or subtracted from the estimate forms the 90 percent confidence interval.

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, 2014 and 2015 American Community Surveys.

Table 6.

### Number and Percentage of People With Income Below 125 Percent of the Poverty Level for the 25 Most Populous Metropolitan Areas: 2014 and 2015

(For information on confidentiality protection, sampling error, nonsampling error, and definitions, see [www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/technical-documentation/code-lists.html](http://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/technical-documentation/code-lists.html))

Metropolitan areas	Below 125 percent of poverty level in 2014			Below 125 percent of poverty level in 2015			Change (2015 less 2014)					
	Number <sup>1</sup>	Margin of error <sup>2</sup> (±)	Per-cent-age <sup>1</sup>	Margin of error <sup>2</sup> (±)	Per-cent-age <sup>1</sup>	Margin of error <sup>2</sup> (±)	Number <sup>1</sup>	Margin of error <sup>2</sup> (±)	Per-cent-age <sup>1</sup>			
Atlanta-Sandy Springs-Roswell, GA Metro Area . . . . .	1,098,770	30,619	19.9	0.6	1,038,229	33,236	18.5	0.6	*-60,541	45,190	*-1.4	0.8
Baltimore-Columbia-Towson, MD Metro Area . . . . .	389,485	16,261	14.3	0.6	377,166	15,870	13.8	0.6	-12,319	22,722	-0.5	0.8
Boston-Cambridge-Newton, MA-NH Metro Area . . . . .	630,086	19,044	13.8	0.4	615,332	20,577	13.3	0.4	-14,754	28,037	-0.5	0.6
Charlotte-Concord-Gastonia, NC-SC Metro Area . . . . .	454,150	17,358	19.4	0.7	449,584	16,665	18.8	0.7	-4,566	24,063	-0.6	1.0
Chicago-Naperville-Elgin, IL-IN-WI Metro Area . . . . .	1,698,873	29,438	18.1	0.3	1,648,754	34,971	17.5	0.4	*-50,119	45,712	*-0.6	0.5
Dallas-Fort Worth-Arlington, TX Metro Area . . . . .	1,358,403	36,648	19.8	0.5	1,281,107	37,668	18.3	0.5	*-77,296	52,554	*-1.5	0.7
Denver-Aurora-Lakewood, CO Metro Area . . . . .	401,903	15,952	14.8	0.6	375,928	15,893	13.5	0.6	*-25,975	22,518	*-1.3	0.8
Detroit-Warren-Dearborn, MI Metro Area . . . . .	873,910	17,876	20.5	0.4	873,290	23,075	20.5	0.5	-620	29,189	0.0	0.6
Houston-The Woodlands-Sugar Land, TX Metro Area . . . . .	1,296,970	34,120	20.3	0.5	1,259,435	34,310	19.2	0.5	-37,535	48,388	*-1.1	0.7
Los Angeles-Long Beach-Anaheim, CA Metro Area . . . . .	2,991,667	42,689	22.9	0.3	2,768,203	43,681	21.0	0.3	*-223,464	61,077	*-1.9	0.4
Miami-Fort Lauderdale-West Palm Beach, FL Metro Area . . . . .	1,347,492	37,577	23.0	0.6	1,344,512	30,338	22.7	0.5	-2,980	48,295	-0.3	0.8
Minneapolis-St. Paul-Bloomington, MN-WI Metro Area . . . . .	455,990	16,669	13.3	0.5	437,064	15,712	12.6	0.5	-18,926	22,907	-0.7	0.7
New York-Newark-Jersey City, NY-NJ-PA Metro Area . . . . .	3,694,189	47,918	18.7	0.2	3,613,185	41,938	18.2	0.2	*-81,004	63,678	*-0.5	0.3
Orlando-Kissimmee-Sanford, FL Metro Area . . . . .	511,556	24,709	22.5	1.1	485,157	20,118	20.7	0.9	-26,399	31,863	*-1.8	1.4
Philadelphia-Camden-Wilmington, PA-NJ-DE-MD Metro Area . . . . .	1,002,730	22,805	17.0	0.4	983,943	23,721	16.6	0.4	-18,787	32,905	-0.4	0.6
Phoenix-Mesa-Scottsdale, AZ Metro Area . . . . .	983,317	26,287	22.3	0.6	943,599	25,984	21.0	0.6	*-39,718	36,962	*-1.3	0.8
Portland-Vancouver-Hillsboro, OR-WA Metro Area . . . . .	413,074	17,508	17.9	0.8	373,341	18,273	15.8	0.8	*-39,733	25,307	*-2.1	1.1
Riverside-San Bernardino-Ontario, CA Metro Area . . . . .	1,041,124	30,158	23.9	0.7	1,001,119	30,034	22.8	0.7	-40,005	42,562	*-1.1	1.0
St. Louis, MO-IL Metro Area . . . . .	466,508	16,603	17.0	0.6	433,730	14,962	15.8	0.5	*-32,778	22,350	*-1.2	0.8
San Antonio-New Braunfels, TX Metro Area . . . . .	505,075	20,120	22.1	0.9	462,123	19,406	19.7	0.8	*-42,952	27,954	*-2.4	1.2
San Diego-Carlsbad, CA Metro Area . . . . .	604,190	21,540	19.0	0.7	581,014	21,624	18.0	0.7	-23,176	30,522	*-1.0	1.0
San Francisco-Oakland-Hayward, CA Metro Area . . . . .	637,948	17,885	14.1	0.4	639,158	22,916	13.9	0.5	1,210	29,069	-0.2	0.6
Seattle-Tacoma-Bellevue, WA Metro Area . . . . .	517,767	18,332	14.3	0.5	487,453	16,832	13.3	0.5	*-30,314	24,887	*-1.0	0.7
Tampa-St. Petersburg-Clearwater, FL Metro Area . . . . .	600,018	21,676	20.9	0.8	570,734	18,030	19.5	0.6	*-29,284	28,195	*-1.4	1.0
Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, DC-VA-MD-WV Metro Area . . . . .	674,703	23,626	11.4	0.4	645,921	24,733	10.8	0.4	-28,782	34,204	*-0.6	0.6

\* Statistically different from zero at the 90 percent confidence level.

<sup>1</sup> Poverty status is determined for individuals in housing units and noninstitutional group quarters. The poverty universe excludes children under age 15 who are not related to the householder, people living in institutional group quarters, and people living in college dormitories or military barracks.

<sup>2</sup> Data are based on a sample and are subject to sampling variability. A margin of error is a measure of an estimate's variability. The larger the margin of error in relation to the size of the estimate, the less reliable the estimate. This number when added to or subtracted from the estimate forms the 90 percent confidence interval.

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, 2014 and 2015 American Community Surveys.

Between 2014 and 2015, the percent of people with income-to-poverty ratios below 50 percent of the poverty threshold significantly declined in 9 of the 25 most populous metropolitan areas.

Table 6 displays the number and percent of people with income-to-poverty ratios below 125 percent for 2014 and 2015 among the 25 most populous metropolitan areas. The Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, DC-VA-MD-WV Metro Area had the lowest percent of people with income-to-poverty ratios below 125 percent in 2015 (10.8 percent). The Miami-Fort Lauderdale-West Palm Beach, FL Metro Area (22.7 percent) and Riverside-San Bernardino-Ontario, CA Metro Area (22.8 percent) had the highest rate of individuals with income-to-poverty ratios below 125 percent among the most populous metropolitan areas listed.<sup>7</sup>

In 2015, the percent of people with income-to-poverty ratios below 125 percent decreased in 17 of the 25 most populous metropolitan areas (Table 6).

### SOURCE AND ACCURACY

The data presented in this report are based on the ACS sample interviewed from January 2014 through December 2014 (2014 ACS) and the ACS sample interviewed from January 2015 through December 2015 (2015 ACS). The estimates based on these samples describe the average values of person, household, and housing unit characteristics over this period of col-

<sup>7</sup> The percentage of people with income-to-poverty ratios below 125 percent in Miami-Fort Lauderdale-West Palm Beach, FL Metro Area (22.7 percent) and Riverside-San Bernardino-Ontario, CA Metro Area (22.8 percent) were not statistically different from each other.

### What Is the American Community Survey?

The American Community Survey (ACS) is a nationwide survey designed to provide communities with reliable and timely demographic, social, economic, and housing data for the nation, states, congressional districts, counties, places, and other localities every year. It has an annual sample size of about 3.5 million addresses across the United States and Puerto Rico and includes both housing units and group quarters (e.g., nursing facilities and prisons). The ACS is conducted in every county throughout the nation, and every municipio in Puerto Rico, where it is called the Puerto Rico Community Survey. Beginning in 2006, ACS data have been released annually for geographic areas with populations of 65,000 and greater. For information on the ACS sample design and other topics, visit [www.census.gov/acs](http://www.census.gov/acs).

lection. Sampling error is the uncertainty between an estimate based on a sample and the corresponding value that would be obtained if the estimate were based on the entire population (as from a census). Measures of sampling error are provided in the form of margins of error for all estimates included in this report. All comparative statements in this report have undergone statistical testing, and comparisons are significant at the 90 percent level unless otherwise noted. In addition to sampling error, nonsampling error may be introduced during any of the operations used to collect and process survey data, such as editing, reviewing, or keying data from questionnaires. For more information on sampling and estimation methods, confidentiality protection, and sampling and nonsampling errors, please see the 2015 ACS Accuracy of the Data document located at [www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/technical-documentation/code-lists.html](http://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/technical-documentation/code-lists.html).

### NOTES

The Census Bureau also publishes poverty estimates based on the Current Population Survey's Annual Social and Economic Supplement (CPS ASEC). Following the standard specified by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) in Statistical Policy Directive 14, data from the CPS ASEC are used to estimate the official national poverty rate, which can be found in the report *Income and Poverty in the United States: 2015*, available at [www.census.gov/content/dam/Census/library/publications/2016/demo/p60-256.pdf](http://www.census.gov/content/dam/Census/library/publications/2016/demo/p60-256.pdf).

For information on poverty estimates from the ACS and how they differ from those based on the CPS ASEC, see "Differences Between the Income and Poverty Estimates From the American Community Survey and the Annual Social and Economic Supplement to the Current Population Survey" at [www.census.gov/topics/income-poverty/poverty/guidance/data-sources/acs-vs-cps.html](http://www.census.gov/topics/income-poverty/poverty/guidance/data-sources/acs-vs-cps.html).