

Poverty: 2004 Snapshot

The data presented here are from the Current Population Survey (CPS), 2005 Annual Social and Economic Supplement (ASEC), the source of official poverty estimates. The CPS ASEC is a sample survey of approximately 100,000 households nationwide. These data reflect conditions in calendar year 2004.

HIGHLIGHTS

The official poverty rate in 2004 was 12.7 percent, up from 12.5 percent in 2003.

In 2004, 37.0 million people were in poverty, up 1.1 million from 2003.

Poverty rates remained unchanged for Blacks (24.7 percent) and Hispanics (21.9 percent), rose for non-Hispanic Whites (8.6 percent in 2004, up from 8.2 percent in 2003) and decreased for Asians (9.8 percent in 2004, down from 11.8 percent in 2003).

The poverty rate in 2004 (12.7 percent) was 9.7 percentage points lower than in 1959, the first year for which poverty estimates are available. Both the poverty rate and number have risen for four consecutive years, from 31.6 million and 11.3 percent in 2000, to 37.0 million and 12.7 percent in 2004 respectively.

For children under 18 years old, both the 2004 poverty rate (17.8 percent) and the number in poverty (13.0 million) remained unchanged from 2003. The poverty rate for children under 18 remained higher than that of 18-to-64-year olds (11.3 percent) and that of people aged 65 and over (9.8 percent).

Both the poverty rate and number in poverty have increased for people 18 to 64 years old (11.3 percent and 20.5 million in 2004, up from 10.8 percent and 19.4 million in 2003).

The poverty rate decreased for seniors aged 65 and over. The rate was 9.8 percent in 2004, down from 10.2 percent in 2003, while the number of seniors in poverty in 2004 (3.5 million) was unchanged.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Housing and Household Economic Statistics Division

Last Revised: August 30, 2005