Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates: 2024

Small Area Estimates

Current Population Reports

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P30-15

INTRODUCTION

This report presents summary statistics from the 2024 data released by the Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates (SAIPE) program of the U.S. Census Bureau in January 2026.[1] Each year, the SAIPE program provides timely and reliable estimates of income and poverty for the administration of federal programs and the allocation of federal funds to local jurisdictions and school districts. SAIPE is the only source of single-year, median household income and poverty statistics for the nation's 3,143 counties and 13,126 school districts.[2] State and local governments rely on SAIPE income and poverty estimates to distribute funds and manage programs.

The Census Bureau and other federal agencies created the SAIPE program in the early 1990s to provide annual income and poverty statistics for states, counties, and school districts in the United States.[3] The SAIPE program produces annual poverty estimates for the total population (all ages) and by selected characteristics for counties and states. These estimates include the number of children under the age of 5 in poverty (for states only), the number of related children ages 5 to 17 in families in poverty, the number of children under the age of 18 in poverty, and median household income.

[1] The U.S. Census Bureau has reviewed this data product to ensure appropriate access, use, and disclosure avoidance protection of the confidential source data used to produce this product (Data Management System [DMS] number: P-7502872; and Disclosure Review Board [DRB] approval number: CBDRB-FY25-0429).

[2] There are 3,144 total counties in the United States; Kalawao County, HI, was omitted due to small sample size. There are also 13,131 school districts in the United States; however, five school districts were excluded due to a lack of school-age children.

[3] For more information on the creation of the SAIPE program, visit <www.census.gov/programs-surveys/saipe/about/origins.html>.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Based on median household income estimates for counties in the United States, 88.1 percent of counties (2,770) did not experience a significant change in median household income between 2023 and 2024. In the same period, 10.1 percent (319) had an increase and 1.7 percent (54) had a decrease in median household income.
- Based on poverty rate estimates for counties in the United States for all ages, 1.9 percent of counties (60) had an increase in poverty between 2023 and 2024. Meanwhile, 4.5 percent of counties (143) had a decrease in poverty.
- For all school districts, the median estimated poverty rate for school-age children was 12.5 percent in 2024.

The U.S. Department of Education uses SAIPE data to help determine annual Title I federal funds for states and school districts. At the school district level, estimates are generated for the total population, the number of children ages 5 to 17, and the number of related children ages 5 to 17 in families in poverty.[4] Due to the comprehensive geographic coverage and annual focus, SAIPE data can be used to analyze spatiotemporal variation in poverty and income.

[4] For more information on allocations and the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) of 1965, as currently reauthorized, visit <https://nces.ed.gov/fastfacts/display.asp?id=158>.

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The purpose of this report is to highlight several key aspects of such analyses.[5]

COUNTY-LEVEL ESTIMATES

Median Household Income

The SAIPE program provides estimates of median household income for 3,143 counties in the United States. At the county level, the 2024 median household income ranged from $34,802 to $177,457 (Figure 1). One-half of the counties had values below $66,757.[6]

Between 2023 and 2024, 10.1 percent of all counties (319) increased in median household income, 1.7 percent (54) decreased in median household income, and 88.1 percent (2,770) experienced no statistically significant change. Less than one-half of the counties that had increased income (137) were in the Southern United States. Similarly, less than one-half of counties whose income decreased were located in the Southern United States.

Figure 2 details the percent change in median household income between 2023 and 2024.[7]

[5] All data presented are estimates containing uncertainty. Unless specifically noted in the text, apparent differences among the estimates may not be statistically significant. All direct comparisons cited in the text have been statistically tested at the 90 percent confidence level. Confidence intervals for all state and county estimates are available at <www.census.gov/data/datasets/2024/demo/saipe/2024-state-and-county.html>. Guidance on the uncertainty contained in the school district estimates is available at <www.census.gov/programs-surveys/saipe/guidance/district-estimates.html>.

[6] The median value of county-level median household income estimates ($66,756) is not the same measure as the United States median household income reported by the 2024 ACS, which is $81,604. For information on how the Census Bureau organizes states into the four regions, refer to <https://www2.census.gov/geo/pdfs/maps-data/maps/reference/us_regdiv.pdf>.

[7] Income is measured in U.S. dollars and inflation adjusted for the stated year.

HOW CAN I ACCESS SAIPE DATA?

There are several ways to access and use SAIPE data:

- The **SAIPE main page** for information is available by data release year from 2005 to 2024 at <www.census.gov/programs-surveys/saipe.html>.
- The **SAIPE Interactive Data Tool** provides detailed school district, county, and state data tables by selected year(s) from 1989 to 2024 at <www.census.gov/programs-surveys/saipe/data/tools.html>.
- Download **datasets**, annual reports, maps, figures, and ranking tables from <www.census.gov/programs-surveys/saipe/data.html>.
- Additional information can be found on the SAIPE **FAQs page** at <www.census.gov/programs-surveys/saipe/about/faq.html>.
- For **video tutorials** on SAIPE methodology, refer to <www.census.gov/programs-surveys/saipe/library/video.html>.

Household income includes income of the householder and all other people 15 years and older in the household.

Median is the point that divides the household income distribution into halves: one-half with income above, and the other with income below. The median is based on the income distribution of all households, including those with no income.

Children ages 5 to 17 in families are children related to the householder by birth, marriage, or adoption. Foster children are not included in families.

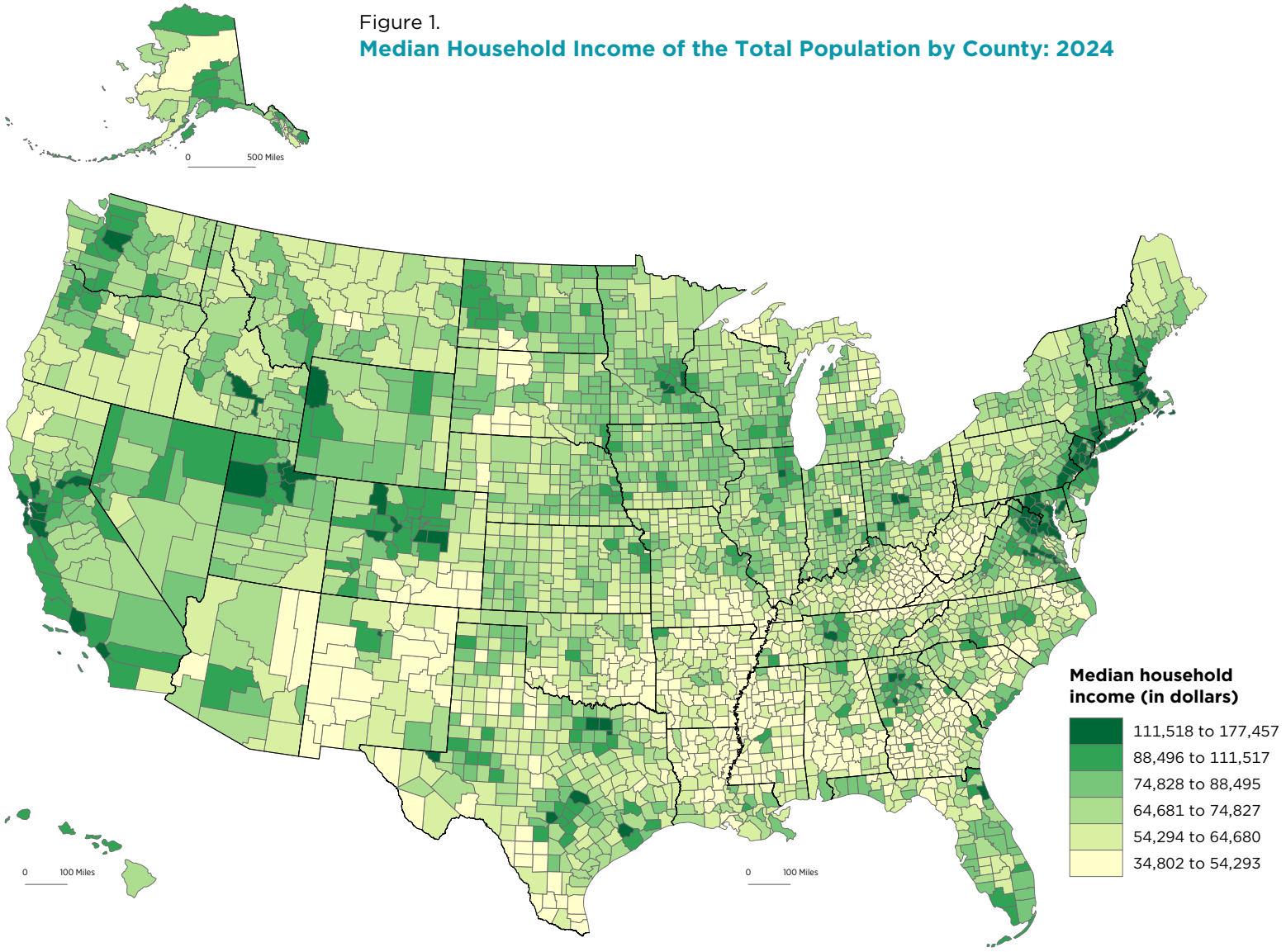
School-age population refers to ages 5 to 17 who live within the geographic boundaries of a school district and are in an appropriate grade range. It is not a measure of school district enrollment.

Twenty-nine of the counties with increased income were in Texas; fifteen were in Georgia and Missouri; and twelve each were in Nebraska, North Carolina, and Pennsylvania. Most counties with decreases in income were in California (5), Colorado (4), and Georgia (4).

Poverty in Counties

The SAIPE data also include poverty estimates for all counties in the United States except one (refer to footnote 2). In 2024, county poverty rates for all ages ranged from 3.8 percent to 55.7 percent, with a median value of 13.2 percent. Figure 3 presents 2024 county-level estimated poverty rates for all ages throughout the United States.

Figure 1.
Median Household Income of the Total Population by County: 2024

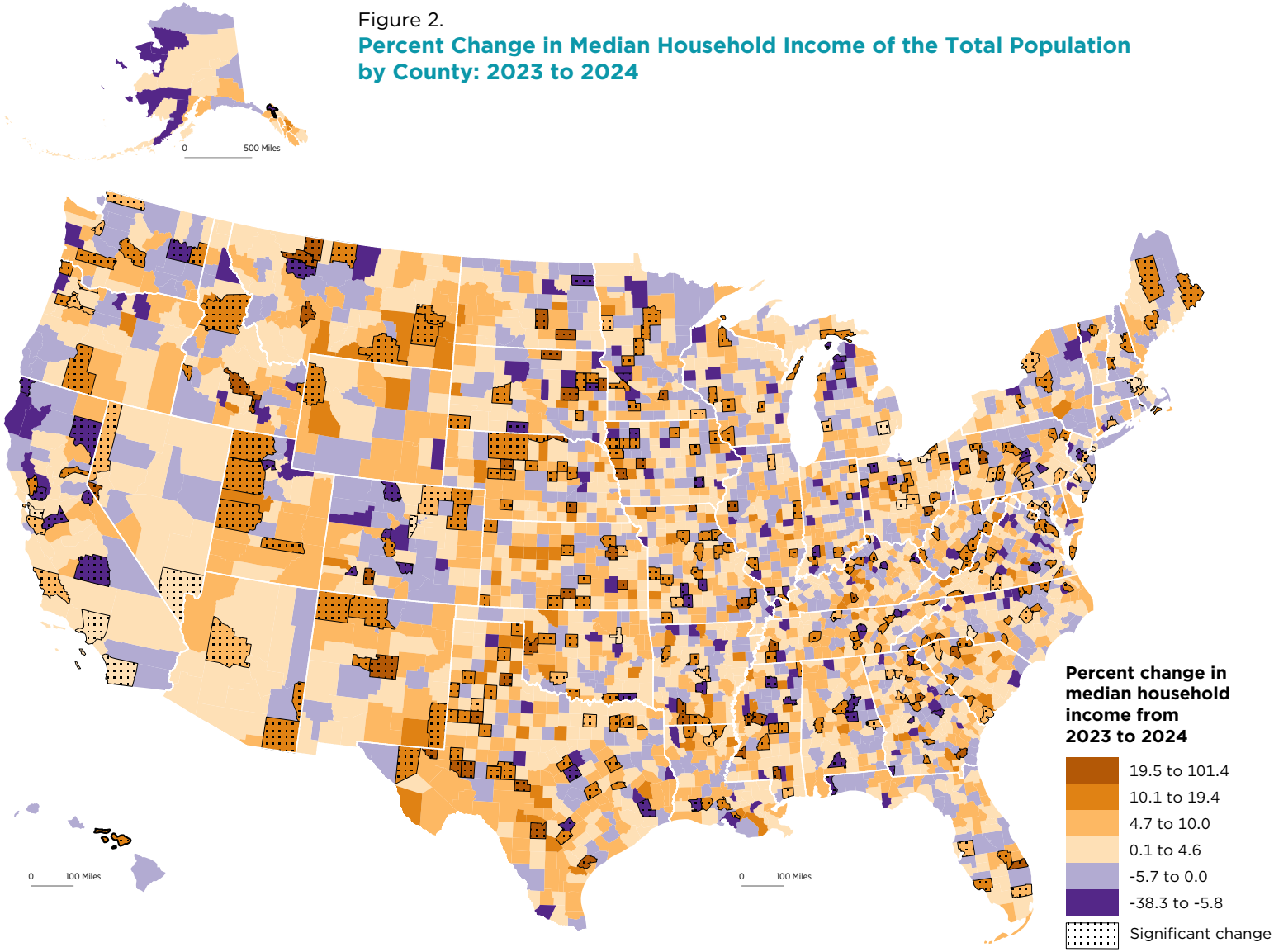


Note: The data provided are indirect estimates produced by statistical model-based methods using sample survey, decennial census, and administrative data sources. The estimates contain error stemming from model error, sampling error, and nonsampling error.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates (SAIPE) Program, January 2026 (Data Management System [DMS] number: P-7502872 and Disclosure Review Board [DRB] approval number: CBDRB-FY25-0429).

Figure 2.

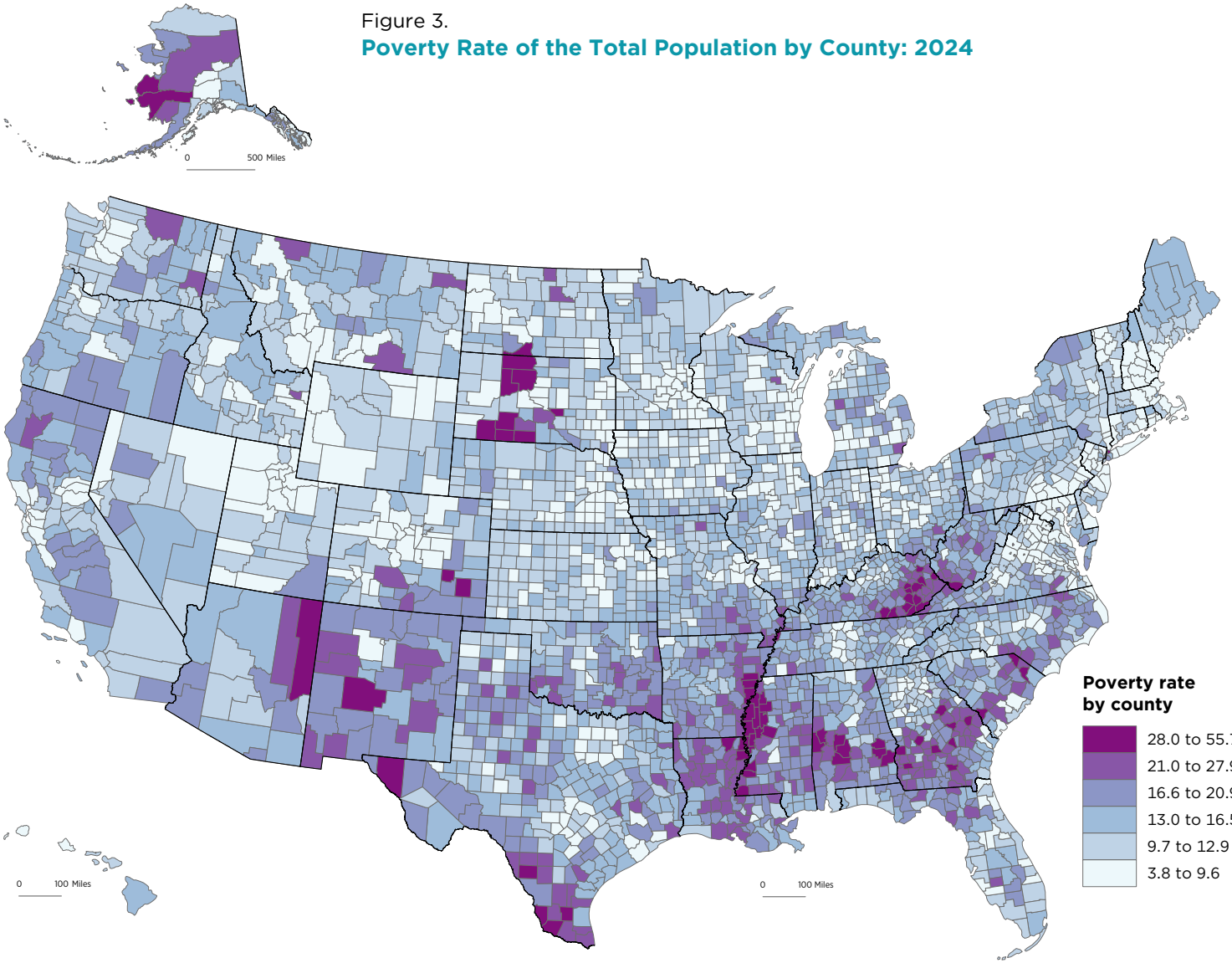
Percent Change in Median Household Income of the Total Population by County: 2023 to 2024



Note: The data provided are indirect estimates produced by statistical model-based methods using sample survey, decennial census, and administrative data sources. The estimates contain error stemming from model error, sampling error, and nonsampling error. The percent change was adjusted for inflation using the national Consumer Price Index (CPI-U). All counties have been statistically tested at the 90 percent confidence level to determine significant changes.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates (SAIPE) Program, January 2026 (Data Management System [DMS] number: P-7502872 and Disclosure Review Board [DRB] approval number: CBDRB-FY25-0429).

Figure 3.
Poverty Rate of the Total Population by County: 2024



Note: The data provided are indirect estimates produced by statistical model-based methods using sample survey, decennial census, and administrative data sources. The estimates contain error stemming from model error, sampling error, and nonsampling error.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates (SAIPE) Program, January 2026 (Data Management System [DMS] number: P-7502872 and Disclosure Review Board [DRB] approval number: CBDRB-FY25-0429).

Figure 4 details the poverty rate by county for school-age (5 to 17) children in families. In 2024, 24.8 percent of counties (779) had a poverty rate statistically greater than the national poverty rate of 14.7 percent for children ages 5 to 17 in families, while 20.8 percent of counties (654) had a poverty rate statistically lower than the national poverty rate.[8]

Figure 5 details the change in county-level poverty rates for all ages between 2023 and 2024. Among U.S. counties (3,143), 1.9 percent (60) had a statistically significant increase in their poverty rate, and 4.5 percent (143) had a significant decrease in total poverty from 2023 to 2024. Most counties (93.5 percent) did not experience a significant change in their level of poverty (2,940 counties).

[8] The national poverty rate for school-age children (5 to 17) is derived from the 2024 1-year ACS. While the Annual Social and Economic Supplement to the Current Population Survey (CPS ASEC) serves as the official national estimate of poverty, the primary input to the SAIPE model is the ACS and therefore is an appropriate reference in this context.

SCHOOL DISTRICT-LEVEL ESTIMATES

Boundary Updates

To estimate the number of children living in poverty within a school district, the SAIPE program uses the most recent school district boundary updates from the Census Bureau's School District Review Program (SDRP). The SDRP collects annual updates to school district boundaries, names, Local Education Agency ID numbers, grade ranges, and levels for which each school district is financially responsible.[9]

[9] For more information regarding the SDRP, refer to <www.census.gov/programs-surveys/sdrp/about.html programs-surveys/sdrp/about.html>.

The most recent school district boundary updates are effective as of January 1, 2025.

SAIPE school district population estimates are not a measure of school district enrollment. Rather, they are reflective of children ages 5 to 17 who reside within the school district boundaries and are age-relevant to the grade ranges served by the school district.

The latest SDRP update includes 13,131 U.S. public school districts, down from 13,143 in the previous SDRP update. This net decrease of 12 school districts reflects the deletion of 18 previously defined school districts and the creation of six school districts.

HOW IS POVERTY MEASURED?

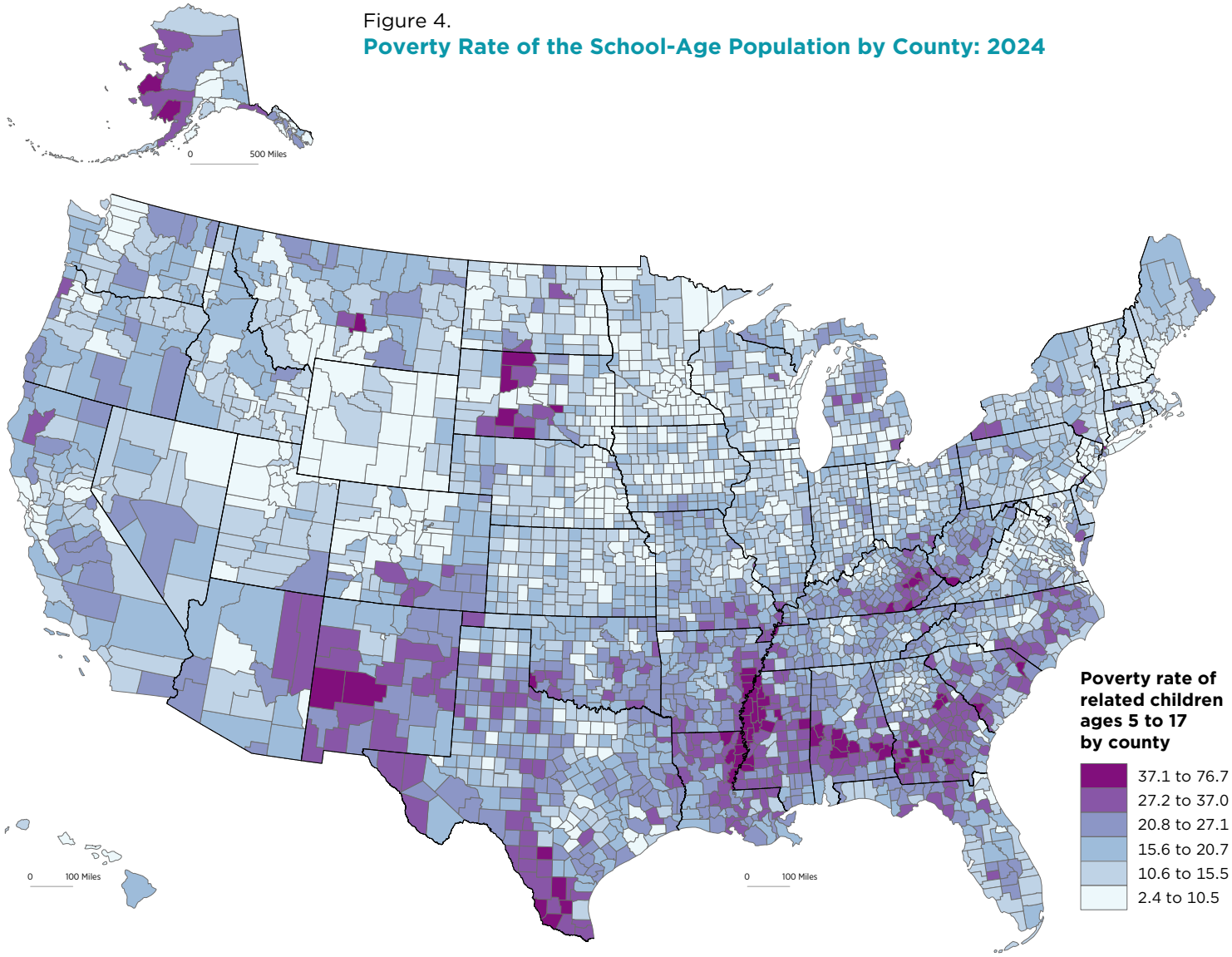
Poverty status is determined by comparing total annual family pretax income to a set of dollar values (called poverty thresholds) that can vary by family size, number of related children, and age of householder. If a family's income is less than the dollar value of the appropriate threshold, then that family (and every individual in it) is considered to be in poverty. For people not living in families, poverty status is determined by comparing individuals' total income to their threshold. For more general information on poverty, refer to <www.census.gov/topics/income-poverty/poverty.html>.

The table of federal poverty thresholds is updated annually by the U.S. Census Bureau to allow for changes in the cost of living based on the Consumer Price Index (CPI-U). The thresholds do not vary geographically.

Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates' primary inputs are estimates of poverty from the American Community Survey (ASC), an annual survey in which sampled units are assigned a specific month of participation, with data collected throughout the year as participants respond during their assigned month. 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 (1982) by the average of the monthly CPI values for the 12 months preceding the survey month.

For more information, refer to "How the Census Bureau Measures Poverty" at <www.census.gov/topics/income-poverty/poverty/guidance/poverty-measures.html>.

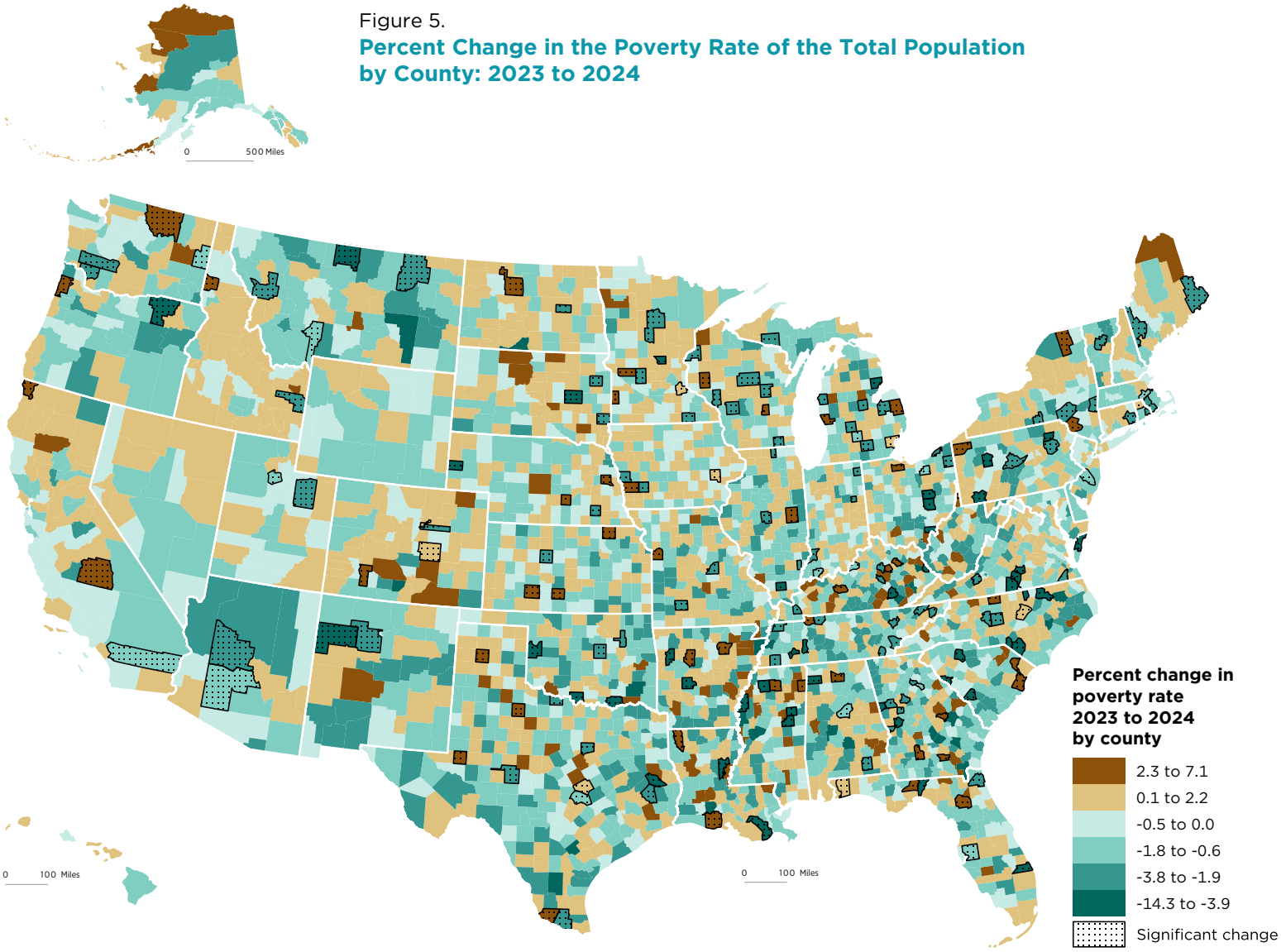
Figure 4.
Poverty Rate of the School-Age Population by County: 2024



Note: The data provided are indirect estimates produced by statistical model-based methods using sample survey, decennial census, and administrative data sources. The estimates contain error stemming from model error, sampling error, and nonsampling error.
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates (SAIPE) Program, January 2026 (Data Management System [DMS] number: P-7502872 and Disclosure Review Board [DRB] approval number: CBDRB-FY25-0429).

Figure 5.

Percent Change in the Poverty Rate of the Total Population by County: 2023 to 2024



Note: The data provided are indirect estimates produced by statistical model-based methods using sample survey, decennial census, and administrative data sources. The estimates contain error stemming from model error, sampling error, and nonsampling error. All counties have been statistically tested at the 90 percent confidence level to determine significant changes.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates (SAIPE) Program, January 2026 (Data Management System [DMS] number: P-7502872 and Disclosure Review Board [DRB] approval number: CBDRB-FY25-0429).

Changes in the number of school districts are typically the result of school districts shifting, splitting, or consolidating boundaries, which are often driven by state or local policy changes.

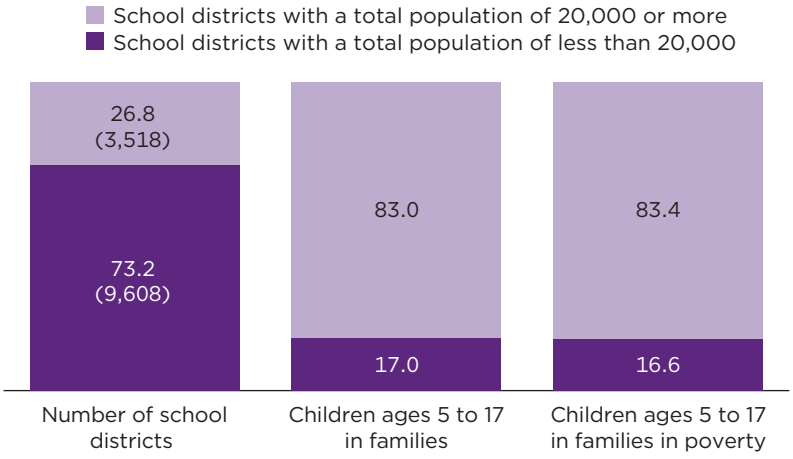
Poverty in School Districts

The 2024 SAIPE data use the most recently updated school district boundaries from the 2025 SDRP. This accounts for all school districts in the Title I universe.[10] Since five school districts did not have any school-age children, these districts were excluded from the analysis (13,131 school districts in the universe, but 13,126 school districts in the analysis).[11]

Figure 6 presents the distribution of school districts, school-age children, and school-age children in families in poverty by school district resident population. School-age children, including school-age children of families in poverty, were often concentrated in school districts with a population of 20,000 or more. In 2024, an estimated 26.8 percent of school districts (3,518) had a total population of 20,000 or more. These school districts contained an estimated 83.0 percent of all school-age children in the nation and an estimated 83.4 percent of school-age children in poverty.

Figure 7 presents the distribution of school-age children living in families in poverty by school district. This map details the range of poverty rates throughout the United States by school district.

Figure 6.
Distribution of School Districts, School-Age Children, and School-Age Children in Families in Poverty by School District Population: 2024



Note: There are 13,131 Title I eligible school districts used in the graph (five school districts were removed for having zero school-age children, for a total of 13,126 school districts used in this analysis). Of that total, 3,518 school districts have populations of 20,000 or more and 9,608 school districts have populations of less than 20,000.
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Small Area Income and Poverty Estimate (SAIPE) program, January 2026 (Data Management System [DMS] number: P-7502872 and Disclosure Review Board [DRB] approval number: CBDRB-FY25-0429).

School districts with high and low poverty rates were scattered throughout the nation, with some clustering within regions. For all school districts, the median estimated poverty rate for school-age children was 12.5 percent.

SUMMARY

This report presents summary statistics of the 2024 data released by the SAIPE program for the administration of federal programs and the allocation of federal funds to local jurisdictions and school districts.

In 2024, the median household income at the county level ranged from $34,802 to $177,457, with a median value of $66,756. Since 2023, 10.1 percent of all counties (319) had an increase in median household income and 1.7 percent (54) had a decrease.

The SAIPE data also include poverty estimates for all counties (except one) in the United States. In 2024, county poverty rates for all ages ranged from 3.8 percent to 55.7 percent, with a median value of 13.2 percent. Between 2023 and 2024, 1.9 percent of all counties (60) had an increase in the poverty rate, and 4.5 percent (143) had a decrease.

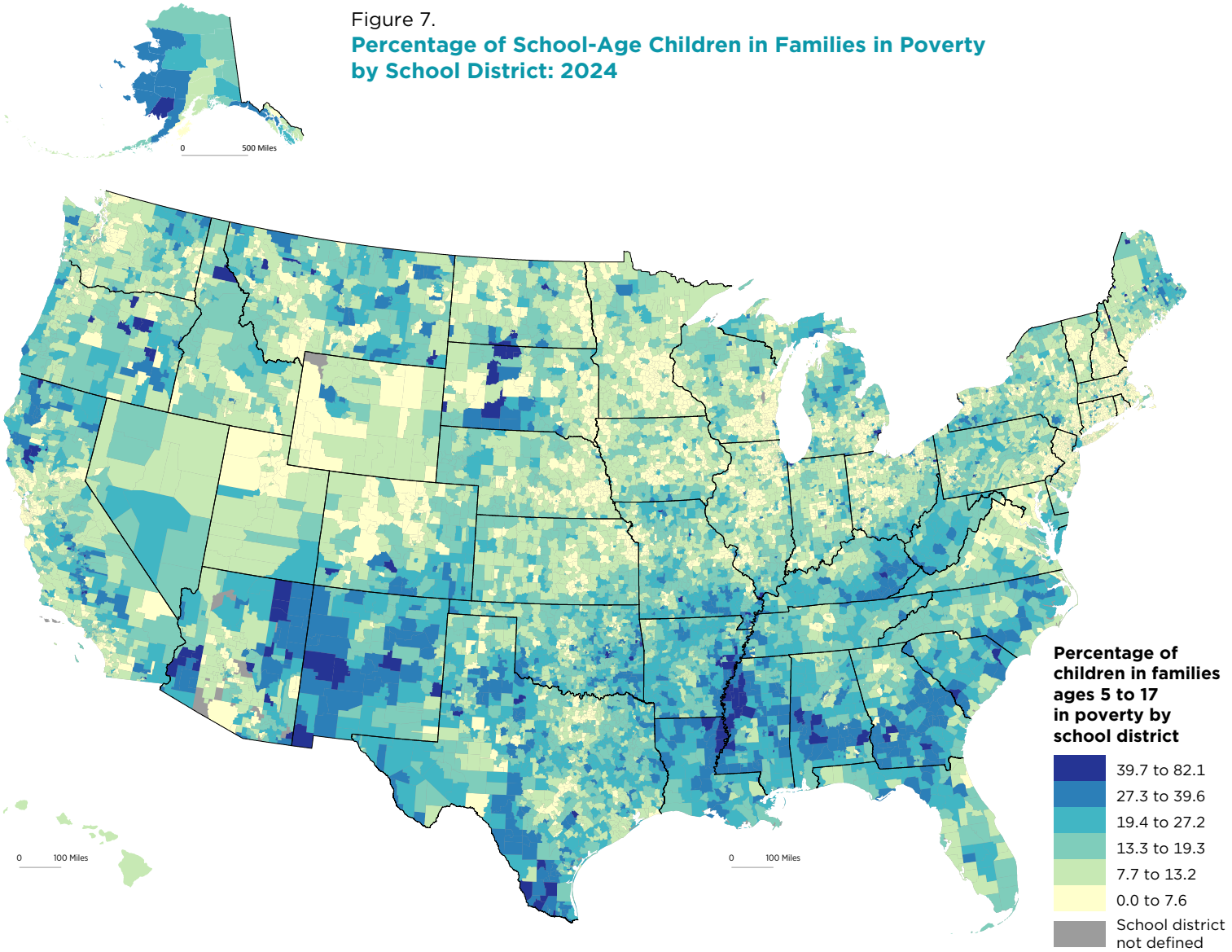
The median school district poverty rate for school-age children was 12.5 percent in 2024. The largest districts—with a population of 20,000 or more—contained the majority of school-age children in poverty (83.4 percent).

[10] The Title I universe is the set of U.S. school districts to which Title I of the ESEA pertains.

[11] Refer to the National Center for Education Statistics for a list of public school districts during the 2024–2025 school year at <https://nces.ed.gov/programs/edge/geographic/schoollocations>.

Figure 7.

Percentage of School-Age Children in Families in Poverty by School District: 2024



Note: The data provided are indirect estimates produced by statistical model-based methods using sample survey, decennial census, and administrative data sources. The estimates contain error stemming from model error, sampling error, and nonsampling error. The map displays unified and elementary school district boundaries as of January 1, 2025.
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates (SAIPE) Program, January 2026 (Data Management System [DMS] number: P-7502872 and Disclosure Review Board [DRB] approval number: CBDRB-FY25-0429).

INCOME AND POVERTY DATA SOURCES AVAILABLE FROM THE U.S. CENSUS BUREAU

Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates (SAIPE) is one of several sources of income and poverty data available from the Census Bureau. Other sources include the Annual Social and Economic Supplement to the Current Population Survey (CPS ASEC), the American Community Survey (ACS), the Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP), and the long forms from the 1960 to 2000 Censuses. Each of these sources differs from the others in various ways, such as the length and detail of its questionnaire, the number of households included (sample size), and the methodology used to collect and process the data.

With its detailed questionnaire, the CPS ASEC is the source of both the official national estimates of poverty rates and widely used estimates of the distribution of household income and individual earnings. It provides a consistent historical time series at the national level beginning in 1959 and can also be used to study state-level trends and differences (through multiyear averages) beginning in 1980.

Since 2006, the ACS has released annual subnational estimates of income and poverty for places, counties, and metropolitan statistical areas with a population of at least 65,000, as well as for all states and the nation. The sample size of the ACS is about 3.5 million addresses per year, making this survey exceptionally useful for subnational analyses. ACS 3-year estimates were made available for 2008 through 2013 for areas and subpopulations as small as 20,000. Since 2015, supplemental 1-year estimates have been available for populations as small as 20,000. ACS 5-year estimates became available for census tracts/block groups and for small subgroups of the population starting in 2010. More information on the ACS is available at <www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/>.

The SIPP is useful for understanding the dynamics of income and poverty (changes in income and poverty rates for the same households over 3 or 4 years) and for examining the nature and frequency of poverty spells. The SIPP also permits researchers to look at monthly or quarterly changes in income and poverty.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS AND CONTACT

The Census Bureau's Small Area Estimates Branch prepared this report.

For questions related to income and poverty definitions, the American Community Survey, or other Census Bureau surveys, contact the Census Bureau Call Center at 1-800-923-8282 (toll-free) or visit <http://ask.census.gov>.

The Census Bureau's Small Area Health Insurance Estimates (SAHIE) is similar to the SAIPE program, but instead of income and poverty, it produces annual estimates of health insurance coverage by various domains in all counties and states. Information about SAHIE is available at <www.census.gov/programs-surveys/sahie.html>.

SUGGESTED CITATION

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