



Minnesota Children and the 2000 Census: Poverty and Ethnicity

The 2000 Census asked people about their incomes and made that information available by age and ethnicity as a percentage of the Federal Poverty Line. The Federal Poverty Line is a measurement determined annually by the government and used as an eligibility limit for numerous government assistance programs. Someone living at 150% of the poverty line has one and a half times the income as someone at the poverty line; someone at 200% has twice the income. In 2003, the most recent year available, the Federal Poverty Line for a family of four was \$18,400. Because this level is so low, families up to 200% of poverty are considered “low-income.”

Overall, about 10% of Minnesota children were below the poverty line in 2000; 17% lived below 150% of poverty and 26% lived below 200% of poverty. As this report shows, these percentages were significantly higher for most children of color in Minnesota and vary greatly between ethnic groups. This data shows the importance of looking beneath categories such as “Asian”, “American Indian”, or “Hispanic/Latino” to see substantial differences within those categories.

Poverty Among Asian Children

Overall, 23% of Asian-American children in Minnesota were below the poverty line and almost half lived in low-income families. The percent of children of Asian descent living in low-income families varies greatly among Asian communities. The highest percentage of low-income children were in the Hmong community; 37% were below the poverty line, and 73% were at less than 200% of poverty. Children in Laotian and Cambodian communities were also more likely to be poor than were Asians as a whole. Chinese, Asian Indian and Korean-American children were far less likely than other Asian communities to be low-income, and rates in these communities were closer to those of white children.

Poverty Among American Indian Children

Although many American Indian respondents did not indicate a tribal affiliation in the census, and although numerous tribes are represented in Minnesota, the two largest responses to the survey question regarding tribal affiliation were Chippewa/Ojibwe/Anishinaabe, and Sioux/Lakota/Dakota. (These groupings are selected by the Census Bureau.) American Indian children as a whole were much more likely than white children to be low-income. Ojibwe children were more likely to live in low-income families than were Lakota children in Minnesota.

Poverty Among Hispanic/Latino Children

As a group, children of Hispanic/Latino heritage were more likely to be poor than their white, non-Hispanic counterparts. These poverty rates vary greatly depending on the country of origin. Children of Mexican heritage were most likely to be low-income (25% lived below the poverty line and over half lived below 200% of poverty), followed by Cuban and Puerto Rican children. Children with ancestry from South American countries had poverty rates comparable to white, non-Hispanic children.

Poverty Among African-American Children

African-American children also had much higher rates of poverty than white children. Thirty-two percent lived below the poverty line, and 60% were below 200% of poverty. While it would be interesting to compare poverty rates of more recent African immigrants with U.S.-born African-Americans, the Census did not collect information in a way that allows for that comparison.

	Total Under 18	% Under 18	Under 18 Below Poverty	% Below Poverty	Under 18 Below 150% of Poverty	% Below 150% of Poverty	Under 18 Below 200% of Poverty	% Below 200% of Poverty
All Minnesotans	1,266,622	26%	121,691	10%	217,451	17%	330,962	26%
White, Non-Hispanic total	1,044,445	6%	62,016	6%	125,341	12%	210,116	20%
Asian total	62,902	40%	14,471	23%	22,282	35%	29,785	47%
Hmong	25,320	55%	9,420	37%	14,339	57%	18,489	73%
Korean	7,265	48%	421	6%	605	8%	955	13%
Vietnamese	5,816	29%	1,038	18%	1,703	29%	2,195	38%
Asian Indian	5,364	29%	456	9%	817	15%	1,302	24%
Chinese	5,233	29%	430	8%	615	12%	1,032	20%
Laotian	4,340	41%	1,142	26%	1,810	42%	2,527	58%
Cambodian	2,574	42%	669	26%	1,049	41%	1,390	54%
American Indian total	30,882	39%	9,052	29%	14,342	46%	18,034	58%
Chippewa (Ojibwe, Anishinaabe)	15,021	37%	5,084	34%	7,815	52%	9,804	65%
Sioux (Lakota/Dakota)	3,121	38%	916	29%	1,404	45%	1,652	53%
Hispanic/Latino total	53,362	39%	12,259	23%	20,559	39%	28,446	53%
Mexican	36,141	39%	8,921	25%	14,882	41%	20,441	57%
South American	2,428	32%	193	8%	409	17%	624	26%
Puerto Rican	2,418	40%	512	21%	857	35%	1,234	51%
Central American	2,059	33%	376	18%	581	28%	1,019	49%
Cuban	762	35%	211	28%	290	38%	341	45%
African-American total	80,824	42%	25,864	32%	38,197	47%	48,463	60%

Racial and ethnic groups in this table include all of those who identified with that group, e.g. multi-racial individuals are included. Thus, some children are counted two or more times in this table. In addition, Hispanic/Latino children may be of any race.