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The 10-20-30 Provision: Defining Persistent Poverty Counties

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SUMMARY

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The 10-20-30 Provision: Defining Persistent Poverty Counties

Research has suggested that areas for which the *poverty rate* (the percentage of the population that is below *poverty*, or economic hardship as measured by comparing income against a dollar amount that represents a low level of need) reaches 20% experience more acute systemic problems than in lower-poverty areas. Recent congresses have enacted antipoverty policy interventions that target resources on local communities based on the characteristics of those communities, rather than solely on those of individuals or families. One such policy, dubbed the *10-20-30 provision*, was first implemented in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA, P.L. 111-5). Title I, Section 105 of ARRA required the Secretary of Agriculture to allocate at least 10% of funds from three rural development program accounts to *persistent poverty counties*—counties that maintained poverty rates of 20% or more for the past 30 years, as measured by the 1980, 1990, and 2000 decennial censuses.

One notable characteristic of this provision is that it did not increase spending for the rural development programs addressed in ARRA, but rather targeted existing funds differently. Since ARRA, Congress has applied the 10-20-30 provision for other programs in addition to rural development programs, and may continue to do so, using more recent estimates of poverty rates. Doing this, however, requires updating the list of counties with persistent poverty, and that requires making certain decisions about the data that will be used to compile the list.

Poverty rates are computed using data from household surveys fielded by the U.S. Census Bureau. The list of counties identified as persistently poor may differ by roughly 60 to 100 counties in a particular year, depending on the surveys selected to compile the list and the rounding method used for the poverty rate estimates. In the past, the decennial census was the only source of county poverty estimates across the entire country. After 2000, however, the decennial census is no longer used to collect income data. However, there are two newer data sources that may be used to provide poverty estimates for all U.S. counties: the American Community Survey (ACS) and the Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates program (SAIPE). The Census Bureau implemented both the ACS and SAIPE in the mid-1990s. Therefore, to determine whether an area is *persistently* poor in a time span that ends after the year 2000, policymakers and researchers must first decide whether ACS or SAIPE poverty estimates will be used for the later part of that time span. Which of these surveys is the best data source to use for compiling an updated list of counties with persistent poverty may differ based on the specific area or policy for which the antipoverty intervention is intended.

When defining *persistent poverty counties* in order to target funds for programs or services, the following factors may be relevant:

- Characteristics of interest: SAIPE is suited for analysis focused solely on poverty or median income; ACS for poverty and income and other topics (e.g., housing characteristics, disability, education level, occupation, veteran status).
- Geographic areas of interest: SAIPE is recommended for counties and school districts only; ACS may be used to produce estimates for other small geographic areas as well (such as cities, towns, and census tracts).
- Reference period of estimate: Both data sources produce annual estimates. However, the SAIPE estimate is based on one prior year of data while ACS estimates draw on data from the past five years.
- Rounding method for poverty rates: Rounding to 20.0% (one decimal place) yields a shorter list of counties with persistent poverty than rounding to 20% (whole number).
- Special populations: Poverty status is not defined for all persons. This includes unrelated individuals under age 15 (e.g., children in foster care), institutionalized persons, and residents of college dormitories; the homeless are not explicitly targeted by household surveys; and areas with large numbers of students living off-campus may have higher poverty rates than might be expected, because poverty is measured using cash income and does not include student loans.

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Introduction

Antipoverty interventions that provide resources to local communities, based on the characteristics of those communities, have been of interest to Congress. One such policy, dubbed the *10-20-30 provision*, was implemented in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA, P.L. 111-5). Title I, Section 105 of ARRA required the Secretary of Agriculture to allocate at least 10% of funds provided in that act from three rural development program accounts to persistent poverty counties; that is, to counties that have had poverty rates of 20% or more for the past 30 years, as measured by the 1980, 1990, and 2000 decennial censuses.[1]

One notable characteristic of this provision is that it did not increase spending for the rural development programs addressed in ARRA, but rather targeted existing funds differently. Given Congress's interest both in addressing *poverty* (economic hardship as measured by comparing income against a dollar amount that represents a low level of need)[2] and being mindful about levels of federal spending, the 113th through the 117th Congresses included 10-20-30 language in multiple appropriations bills, some of which were enacted into law.[3] However, the original language used in ARRA could not be re-used verbatim, because the decennial census—the data source used by ARRA to define persistent poverty—stopped collecting income information. As a consequence, the appropriations bills varied slightly in their definitions of *persistent poverty counties* as it was applied to various programs and departments. This variation occurred even within different sections of the same bill if the bill included language on different programs. In turn, because the definitions of *persistent poverty* differed, so did the lists of counties identified as persistently poor and subject to the 10-20-30 provision. The bills included legislation for rural development, public works and economic development, technological innovation, and brownfields site assessment and remediation.

Most recently, in the 117th Congress, much of the language used in these previous bills was included in P.L. 117-103 (the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2022).[4] References to persistent poverty counties, with provisions other than a 10% set-aside, also appeared in P.L. 117-58 (the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act). Additionally, more than 40 other bills introduced but not

[1] While the 1980-2000 period is actually 20 years, local communities have traditionally relied upon the decennial census data for small areas up to 10 years after their publication, hence the reference to "30 years." However, since the late 1990s newer data sources have become available for small communities at intervals shorter than 10 years, which has implications that will be discussed in this report.

[2] For a more thorough discussion of how poverty is defined and measured, see CRS Report R44780, *An Introduction to Poverty Measurement*, by Joseph Dalaker.

[3] Additionally, in the 112th Congress, the 10-20-30 provision was proposed as an amendment to H.R. 1 but was not adopted.

[4] In the 117th Congress, the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2022 (P.L. 117-103) included 10-20-30 language in numerous sections: Section 736, in reference to loans and grants for rural housing, business and economic development, and utilities; Section 533, in reference to grants authorized by the Public Works and Economic Development Act of 1965 and grants authorized by section 27 of the Stevenson-Wydler Technology Innovation Act of 1980; Division E, Title I, in reference to the Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFI) Fund Program Account; and Division G, Title II, in reference to the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA) of 1980 and its role in authorizing funding for brownfields site assessment and remediation. Further, Division L, Title I of the act refers to persistent poverty counties, though without specifying a figure of 10% to be set aside. That portion of the act set aside $20 million for National Infrastructure Investment grants for "projects in historically disadvantaged communities or areas of persistent poverty," and $20 million for Transit Infrastructure Grants for areas of persistent poverty; both of these programs include persistent poverty counties in their definitions. It also enabled the Secretary of Transportation to prioritize persistent poverty counties to receive technical assistance under the Thriving Communities Initiative.

enacted as of the cover date of this report also referred to persistent poverty counties, with or without requiring a 10% set-aside specifically.

This report discusses how data source selection, and the rounding of poverty estimates, can affect the list of counties identified as persistently poor. After briefly explaining why targeting funds to persistent poverty counties might be of interest, this report explores how *persistent poverty* is defined and measured, and how different interpretations of the definition and different data source selections could yield different lists of counties identified as persistently poor. This report does not compare the 10-20-30 provision's advantages and disadvantages against other policy options for addressing poverty, nor does it examine the range of programs or policy goals for which the 10-20-30 provision might be an appropriate policy tool.

Motivation for Targeting Funds to Persistent Poverty Counties

Research has suggested that areas for which the *poverty rate* (the percentage of the population that is below poverty) reaches 20% experience systemic problems that are more acute than in lower-poverty areas. The poverty rate of 20% as a critical point has been discussed in academic literature as relevant for examining social characteristics of high-poverty versus low-poverty areas.[5] For instance, property values in high-poverty areas do not yield as high a return on investment as in low-poverty areas, and that low return provides a financial disincentive for property owners to spend money on maintaining and improving property.[6] The ill effects of high poverty rates have been documented both for urban and rural areas.[7] Depending on the years in which poverty is measured and the data sources used, between 360 and 500 counties have been

[5] For instance, George Galster of Wayne State University conducted a literature review that suggested "that the independent impacts of neighborhood poverty rates in encouraging negative outcomes for individuals like crime, school leaving, and duration of poverty spells appear to be nil unless the neighborhood exceeds about 20 percent poverty." Galster distinguishes the effects of living in a poor neighborhood from the effects of being poor oneself but not necessarily in a poor neighborhood. Cited in George C. Galster, "The Mechanism(s) of Neighborhood Effects: Theory, Evidence, and Policy Implications," presented at the Economic and Social Research Council Seminar, "Neighbourhood Effects: Theory & Evidence," St. Andrews University, Scotland, UK, February 2010.

Additionally, the Census Bureau has published a series of reports examining local areas (census tracts) with poverty rates of 20% or greater. See, for instance, Alemayehu Bishaw, Craig Benson, Emily Shrider, and Brian Glassman, "Changes in Poverty Rates and Poverty Areas Over Time: 2005 to 2019," American Community Survey Brief 20-08, December 2020; Alemayehu Bishaw, "Changes in Areas With Concentrated Poverty: 2000 to 2010," U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey Reports ACS-27, June 2014; and Leatha Lamison-White, "Poverty Areas," U.S. Census Bureau Statistical Brief, June 1995.

[6] The effects of poverty rates on property values are explored by George C. Galster, Jackie M. Cutsinger, and Ron Malega in "The Costs of Concentrated Poverty: Neighborhood Property Markets and the Dynamics of Decline," pp. 93-113 in N. Retsinas and E. Belsky, eds., *Revisiting Rental Housing: Policies, Programs, and Priorities* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2008). They indicate that "the relationship between changes in a neighborhood's poverty rate and maintenance choices by local residential property owners will be lumpy and non-linear. Substantial variations in poverty rates in the low-moderate range yield no deviations in the owner's decision to highly maintain the building.... Past some percentage of poverty, however, the owner will switch to an undermaintenance mode whereby net depreciation will occur."

[7] See, for instance, a 2008 report issued jointly by the Federal Reserve System and the Brookings Institution, "The Enduring Challenge of Concentrated Poverty in America: Case Studies from Communities Across the U.S.," David Erickson et al., eds., 2008. Additional research into concentrated poverty in both rural and urban areas has been undertaken for decades; for example, educational attainment and health disability were discussed in a rural context by Calvin Beale in "Income and Poverty," chapter 11 in Glenn V. Fuguitt, David L. Brown, and Calvin L. Beale, eds., *Rural and Small Town America*, Russell Sage Foundation, 1988.

identified as persistent poverty counties, out of a total of 3,143 counties or county-equivalent areas nationwide. Therefore, policy interventions at the community level, and not only at the individual or family level, have been and may continue to be of interest to Congress.[8]

Defining Persistent Poverty Counties

Persistent poverty counties are counties that have had poverty rates of 20% or greater for at least 30 years. The county poverty rates for 1999 and previous years are measured using decennial census data. For more recent years, either the Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates (SAIPE) or the American Community Survey (ACS) are used. Both of these Census Bureau data sources were first implemented in the mid-1990s and both provide poverty estimates no longer available from the decennial census.[9] The data sources used, and the level of precision of rounding for the poverty rate, affects the list of counties identified as persistent poverty counties, as will be described below.

Computing the Poverty Rate for an Area

Poverty rates are computed by the Census Bureau for the nation, states, and smaller geographic areas such as counties.[10] The official definition of poverty in the United States is based on the money income of families and unrelated individuals. Income from each family member (if family members are present) is added together and compared against a dollar amount called a *poverty threshold,* which represents a level of economic hardship and varies according to the size and characteristics of the family (ranging from one person to nine persons or more). Families (or unrelated individuals) whose income is less than their respective poverty threshold are considered to be in poverty (sometimes also described as *below poverty*).[11]

[8] In the 117th Congress, P.L. 117-103 (Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2022) used 10-20-30 provisions in multiple sections (see footnote 4 for details), and P.L. 117-58 (Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act) referred to persistent poverty counties without specifically using a figure of 10% for a set-aside. Of the public laws passed by the 116th Congress, P.L. 116-6 (Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2019), P.L. 116-93 (Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2020), and P.L. 116-94 (Further Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2020) used the 10-20-30 provision; multiple other bills with the provision were introduced but not enacted into public law. Of the public laws passed by the 115th Congress, 10-20-30 language was included in P.L. 115-31 (Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2017), P.L. 115-141 (Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2018), and P.L. 115-334 (Agricultural Improvement Act of 2018), as well as multiple bills introduced but not enacted. In the 114th Congress, no bills containing 10-20-30 language were enacted into public law, but 10-20-30 language was included in H.R. 1360 (America's FOCUS Act of 2015), H.R. 5393 (Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2017), H.R. 5054 (Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2017), H.R. 5538 (Department of the Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2017), and S. 3067 and H.R. 5485 (Financial Services and General Government Appropriations Act, 2017). However, the Consolidated Appropriations Acts for 2017, 2018, and 2019 used language analogous to the bills introduced in the 114th Congress, with some modification. Additionally, in the 113th Congress, H.R. 5571 (The 10-20-30 Act of 2014) was introduced and referred to committee but not passed.

[9] The decennial census does not collect income information in the 50 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico, but still asks for income information in American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Guam, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. Neither ACS nor SAIPE poverty estimates are currently available for these island areas.

[10] There are two definitions of poverty used in the United States: one for statistical purposes, which is used by the Census Bureau and described in Statistical Policy Directive 14 by the Office of Management and Budget; and the other for program administration purposes, which is used by the Department of Health and Human Services and is referred to in the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1981. Measuring the poverty rates of counties, which are in turn used in the 10-20-30 plan, is a statistical use of poverty data; thus, the statistical definition of poverty (used by the Census Bureau) applies.

[11] For further details about the official definition of poverty, see CRS Report R44780, *An Introduction to Poverty*

Every person in a family has the same poverty status. Thus, it is possible to compute a poverty rate based on counts of persons. This is done by dividing the number of persons below poverty within a county by the county's total population,[12] and multiplying by 100 to express the rate as a percentage.

Data Sources Used in Identifying Persistent Poverty Counties

Poverty rates are computed using data from household surveys. Currently, the only data sources that provide poverty estimates for all U.S. counties are the ACS and SAIPE. Before the mid-1990s, the only poverty data available at the county level came from the Decennial Census of Population and Housing, which is collected once every 10 years. In the past, these data were the only source of estimates that could determine whether a county had persistently high poverty rates (ARRA referred explicitly to decennial census poverty estimates for that purpose). However, after Census 2000, the decennial census has no longer collected income information in the 50 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico, and as a result cannot be used to compute poverty estimates.[13] Therefore, to determine whether an area is persistently poor in a time span that ends after 2000, it must first be decided whether ACS or SAIPE poverty estimates will be used for the later part of that time span.

The ACS and the SAIPE program serve different purposes. The ACS was developed to provide continuous measurement of a wide range of topics similar to that formerly provided by the decennial census long form, available down to the local community level. ACS data for all counties are available annually, but are based on responses over the previous five-year time span (e.g., 2016-2020). The SAIPE program was developed specifically for estimating poverty at the county level for school-age children and for the overall population, for use in funding allocations for the Improving America's Schools Act of 1994 (P.L. 103-382). SAIPE data are also available annually, and reflect one calendar year, not five. However, unlike the ACS, SAIPE does not provide estimates for a wide array of topics. For further details about the data sources for county poverty estimates, see the **Appendix**.

Measurement, by Joseph Dalaker.

[12] Poverty rates are computed using adjusted population totals because there are some individuals whose poverty status is not determined. These include unrelated individuals under age 15, such as foster children, who are not asked income questions and who are not related to anyone else in their residence by birth, marriage, or adoption; persons living in military barracks; and persons in institutions such as nursing homes or prisons. Some surveys (such as those described in this report) do not compute poverty status for persons living in college dormitories. These persons are excluded from the total population when computing poverty rates. Furthermore, people who have no traditional housing and who do not live in shelters are typically not sampled in household surveys.

[13] The decennial census still collects income information in American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Guam, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. Neither the ACS nor the SAIPE program is conducted for these island areas; decennial census data are the only small-area poverty data available for them. The 2020 Census questionnaire for these island areas covered the same topics as the ACS; see the Island Areas Censuses Operation Detailed Operational Plan at https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/decennial-census/2020-census/planning-management/planning-docs/IAC-detailed-op-plan.html. For Puerto Rico, ACS estimates are still produced, but SAIPE estimates stopped being produced after 2003. For details see https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/saipe/technical-documentation/methodology/puerto-rico.html.

Considerations When Identifying and Targeting Persistent Poverty Counties

Selecting the Data Source: Strengths and Limitations of ACS and SAIPE Poverty Data

Because poverty estimates can be obtained from multiple data sources, the Census Bureau has provided guidance on the most suitable data source to use for various purposes.[14]

Characteristics of Interest: SAIPE for Poverty Alone; ACS for Other Topics in Addition to Poverty

The Census Bureau recommends using SAIPE poverty estimates when estimates are needed at the county level, especially for counties with small populations, and when additional demographic and economic detail is not needed at that level.[15] When additional detail is required, such as for county-level poverty estimates by race and Hispanic origin, detailed age groups (aside from the elementary and secondary school-age population), housing characteristics, or education level, the ACS is the data source recommended by the Census Bureau.

Geographic Area of Interest: SAIPE for Counties and School Districts Only; ACS for Other Small Areas

For counties (and school districts) of small population size, SAIPE data have an advantage over ACS data in that the SAIPE model uses administrative data to help reduce the uncertainty of the estimates. However, ACS estimates are available for a wider array of geographic levels, such as ZIP code tabulation areas, census tracts (subcounty areas of roughly 1,200 to 8,000 people), cities and towns, and greater metropolitan areas.[16]

Reference Period of Estimate: SAIPE for One Year, ACS for a Five-Year Span

While the ACS has greater flexibility in the topics measured and the geographic areas provided, it can only provide estimates in five-year ranges for the smallest geographic areas. Five years of survey responses are needed to obtain a sample large enough to produce meaningful estimates for populations below 65,000 persons. In this sense the SAIPE data, because they are based on a single year, are more current than the data of the ACS. The distinction has to do with the reference period of the data—both data sources release data on an annual basis; the ACS estimates for small areas are based on the prior five years, not the prior year alone.

[14] This guidance is posted on the Census Bureau's website at https://www.census.gov/topics/income-poverty/poverty/guidance/data-sources.html, and is reproduced in the **Appendix**.

[15] SAIPE county-level estimates are available for the poverty status of the total population, persons under age 18, and related children ages 5 to 17 living in families, and for median household income.

[16] Some bills, including Division L, Title I of P.L. 117-103 (see footnote 3) define *areas of persistent poverty* to include census tracts with poverty rates "not less than 20 percent" along with persistent poverty counties and "any territory or possession of the United States" per 49 U.S.C. §6702(a)(1).

Other Considerations

Treatment of Special Populations in the Official Poverty Definition

Regardless of the data source used to measure it, poverty status is not defined for persons in institutions, such as nursing homes or prisons, nor for persons residing in military barracks. These populations are excluded from totals when computing poverty statistics. Furthermore, the homeless population is not counted explicitly in poverty statistics. The ACS is a household survey, thus homeless individuals who are not in shelters are not counted. SAIPE estimates are partially based on Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) administrative data and tax data, so the part of the homeless population that either filed tax returns or received SNAP benefits might be reflected in the estimates, but only implicitly.

In the decennial census, ACS, and SAIPE estimates, poverty status also is not defined for persons living in college dormitories.[17] However, students who live in off-campus housing are included. Because college students tend to have lower money income (which does not include school loans) than average, counties that have large populations of students living off-campus may exhibit higher poverty rates than one might expect given other economic measures for the area, such as the unemployment rate.[18]

Given the ways that the special populations above either are or are not reflected in poverty statistics, it may be worthwhile to consider whether counties that have large numbers of people in those populations would receive an equitable allocation of funds. Other economic measures may be of use, depending on the type of program for which funds are being targeted.

Persistence Versus Flexibility to Recent Situations

The 10-20-30 provision was developed to identify counties with persistently high poverty rates. Therefore, using that funding approach by itself would not allow flexibility to target counties that have recently experienced economic hardship, such as counties that had a large manufacturing plant close within the past three years. Other interventions besides the 10-20-30 provision may be more appropriate for counties that have had a recent spike in the poverty rate.

Effects of Rounding and Data Source Selection on Lists of Counties

In ARRA, persistent poverty counties were defined as "any county that has had 20 percent or more of its population living in poverty over the past 30 years, as measured by the 1980, 1990, and 2000 decennial censuses."[19] Poverty rates published by the Census Bureau are typically reported to one decimal place. The numeral used in the ARRA language was the whole number 20. Thus, for any collection of poverty data, there are two reasonable approaches to compiling a list of persistent poverty counties: using poverty rates of at least 20.0% in all three years, or using

[17] Details on the poverty universe in the ACS are available at https://www2.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/tech_docs/subject_definitions/2020_ACSSubjectDefinitions.pdf#page=112 and for the SAIPE estimates at https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/saipe/guidance/model-input-data/denominators/poverty.html.

[18] For some counties, the percentage-point difference could be large when off-campus students are excluded. Using ACS data for 2009-2011, Whitman County, WA, experienced the largest poverty rate difference among all counties when off-campus students were excluded—its poverty rate fell by 16.5 percentage points. For the United States as a whole, the poverty rate fell from 15.2% to 14.5% when off-campus students were excluded (based on the same dataset). For details, see Alemayehu Bishaw, "Examining the Effect of Off-Campus College Students on Poverty Rates," Working Paper SEHSD 2013-17, U.S. Census Bureau, May 1, 2013.

[19] P.L. 111-5, Section 105.

poverty rates that *round up* to the whole number 20% or greater in all three years (i.e., poverty rates of 19.5% or more in all three years). The former approach is more restrictive and results in a shorter list of counties; the latter approach is more inclusive.

Table 1 illustrates the number of counties identified as persistent poverty counties using the 1990 and 2000 decennial censuses, and various ACS and SAIPE datasets for the last data point, under both rounding schemes. The rounding method and data source selection can each have large impacts on the number of counties listed. From 2011 to 2018, using SAIPE for the latest year resulted in more counties being identified as persistently poor than were identified by using the ACS; since then, the reverse has been true. Compared to using 20.0% as the cutoff (rounded to one decimal place), rounding up to 20% from 19.5% adds approximately 40 to 60 counties to the list. Taking both the data source and the rounding method together, the list of persistent poverty counties could vary by roughly 60 to 100 counties in a given year depending on the method used.

Table 1. Number of Counties Identified as Persistently Poor, Using Different Datasets and Rounding Methods

Counties identified as having poverty rates of 20% or more (applying rounding methods as indicated below) in 1989 (from 1990 Census), 1999 (from Census 2000), and latest year from datasets indicated below.

Dataset	Rounded to One Decimal Place (20.0% or Greater)	Rounded to Whole Number (19.5% or Greater)	Difference Between Rounding Methods
ACS, 2007-2011	397	445	48
ACS, 2008-2012	404	456	52
ACS, 2009-2013	402	458	56
ACS, 2010-2014	401	456	55
ACS, 2011-2015	397	453	56
ACS, 2012-2016	392	446	54
ACS, 2013-2017 [a]	386	436	50
ACS, 2014-2018 [a]	384	430	46
ACS, 2015-2019	375	418	43
ACS, 2016-2020	355	397	42
			Mean difference: 50.2
SAIPE, 2011	433	495	62
SAIPE, 2012	435	491	56
SAIPE, 2013	427	490	63
SAIPE, 2014	427	486	59
SAIPE, 2015	419	476	57
SAIPE, 2016	420	469	49
SAIPE, 2017	411	460	49
SAIPE, 2018	395	443	48

Dataset	Rounded to One Decimal Place (20.0% or Greater)	Rounded to Whole Number (19.5% or Greater)	Difference Between Rounding Methods
SAIPE, 2019	361	407	46
SAIPE, 2020	306	354	48
			Mean difference: 53.7
Differences between datasets released in same year			
Difference, SAIPE 2011 minus ACS 2007-2011	36	50	
Difference, SAIPE 2012 minus ACS 2008-2012	31	35	
Difference, SAIPE 2013 minus ACS 2009-2013	25	32	
Difference, SAIPE 2014 minus ACS 2010-2014	26	30	
Difference, SAIPE 2015 minus ACS 2011-2015	22	23	
Difference, SAIPE 2016 minus ACS 2012-2016	28	23	
Difference, SAIPE 2017 minus ACS 2013-2017	25	24	
Difference, SAIPE 2018 minus ACS 2014-2018	11	13	
Difference, ACS 2015-2019 minus SAIPE 2019	14	11	
Difference, ACS 2016-2020 minus SAIPE 2020	49	43	
Mean difference:	26.7	28.4	

Source: Congressional Research Service (CRS) tabulation of data from U.S. Census Bureau, 1990 Census, Census 2000, 2012-2020 Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates, and American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates for 2007-2011, 2008-2012, 2009-2013, 2010-2014, 2011-2015, 2012-2016, 2013-2017, 2014-2018, 2015-2019, and 2016-2020.

Notes: ACS: American Community Survey. SAIPE: Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates. Comparisons between ACS and SAIPE estimates are between datasets released in the same year (both are typically released in December of the year following the reference period). There are 3,143 county-type areas in the United States.

The selection of the data source and rounding method has a large effect on the number of counties identified as being in persistent poverty. The longest list of persistent poverty counties (SAIPE, 19.5% or greater, that is, rounded up to the whole number 20%) minus the shortest list of persistent poverty counties (ACS, 20.0% or greater) yields the maximum difference. Comparing datasets that were released in the same year, the maximum differences in the lists of counties were:

SAIPE 2011, whole number - ACS, 2007-2011, one decimal = 98 counties
SAIPE 2012, whole number - ACS, 2008-2012, one decimal = 87
SAIPE 2013, whole number - ACS, 2009-2013, one decimal = 88
SAIPE 2014, whole number - ACS, 2010-2014, one decimal = 85
SAIPE 2015, whole number - ACS, 2011-2015, one decimal = 79
SAIPE 2016, whole number - ACS, 2012-2016, one decimal = 77
SAIPE 2017, whole number - ACS, 2013-2017, one decimal = 74
SAIPE 2018, whole number - ACS, 2014-2018, one decimal = 59
ACS, 2015-2019, whole number - SAIPE 2019, one decimal = 57
ACS, 2016-2020, whole number - SAIPE 2020, one decimal = 91

The lists of persistent poverty counties vary by about 80 counties on average (mean: 79.5), depending on which data source is used for the most recent poverty rate estimate, and which rounding method is applied to identify persistent poverty.

a. These counts include Rio Arriba County, New Mexico, despite an ACS data collection error that occurred in that county in both 2017 and 2018. The Census Bureau detected the error after the five-year data for 2013-2017 had been released, but before the 2014-2018 data had been released. As a result, the 2014-2018 poverty rate for Rio Arriba County was not published, and the 2013-2017 poverty rate (formerly reported as 26.4%) was removed from the Census Bureau website. The 2012-2016 ACS poverty rate for Rio Arriba County was 23.4%, and the 2018 SAIPE poverty rate was 22.0%. Because the ACS poverty rate immediately before the error (2012-2016) and the SAIPE poverty rate were both above 20.0%, Rio Arriba County is included in this table's counts of persistent poverty counties. For details see https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/technical-documentation/errata/125.html.

Example List of Persistent Poverty Counties

The list of persistent poverty counties below (**Table 2**) is based on data from the 1990 Census, Census 2000, and the 2020 SAIPE estimates, and includes the 354 counties with poverty rates of 19.5% or greater (that is, counties with poverty rates that were at least 20% with rounding applied to the whole number). These same counties are mapped in **Figure 1**.

This list of 354 counties (out of a total of 3,143 nationwide) is similar but not identical to a list that would be compiled if ACS data were used with 1990 and 2000 Census data to determine counties with persistent poverty.

Table 2. List of Persistent Poverty Counties, Based on 1990 Census, Census 2000, and 2020 Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates (SAIPE), Using Poverty Rates of 19.5% or Greater

Count	FIPS Geographic Identification Code	State	County	Congressional District(s) Representing the County[a]	Poverty Rate, 1989 (from 1990 Census)	Poverty Rate, 1999 (from Census 2000)	Poverty Rate, 2020 (from SAIPE)
1	01005	Alabama	Barbour	2	25.2	26.8	25.5
2	01011	Alabama	Bullock	2	36.5	33.5	30.8
3	01013	Alabama	Butler	2	31.5	24.6	20.6
4	01023	Alabama	Choctaw	7	30.2	24.5	20.4
5	01025	Alabama	Clarke	1,7	25.9	22.6	19.5
6	01035	Alabama	Conecuh	2	29.7	26.6	22.9
7	01047	Alabama	Dallas	7	36.2	31.1	26.7
8	01053	Alabama	Escambia	1	28.1	20.9	20.4
9	01061	Alabama	Geneva	2	19.5	19.6	21.0
10	01063	Alabama	Greene	7	45.6	34.3	27.9
11	01065	Alabama	Hale	7	35.6	26.9	21.9
12	01085	Alabama	Lowndes	7	38.6	31.4	21.9

Count	FIPS Geographic Identification Code	State	County	Congressional District(s) Representing the County[a]	Poverty Rate, 1989 (from 1990 Census)	Poverty Rate, 1999 (from Census 2000)	Poverty Rate, 2020 (from SAIPE)
13	01087	Alabama	Macon	3	34.5	32.8	27.9
14	01099	Alabama	Monroe	1	22.7	21.3	22.5
15	01105	Alabama	Perry	7	42.6	35.4	30.7
16	01107	Alabama	Pickens	7	28.9	24.9	22.7
17	01109	Alabama	Pike	2	27.2	23.1	19.7
18	01113	Alabama	Russell	3	20.4	19.9	20.3
19	01119	Alabama	Sumter	7	39.7	38.7	29.2
20	01131	Alabama	Wilcox	7	45.2	39.9	22.2
21	02050	Alaska	Bethel Census Area	at large	30.0	20.6	25.3
22	02158	Alaska	Kusilvak Census Area[b]	at large	31.0	26.2	27.9
23	02290	Alaska	Yukon-Koyukuk Census Area	at large	26.0	23.8	20.5
24	04001	Arizona	Apache	1	47.1	37.8	32.4
25	04012	Arizona	La Paz	4	28.2	19.6	20.8
26	04017	Arizona	Navajo	1	34.7	29.5	23.3
27	05011	Arkansas	Bradley	4	24.9	26.3	20.6
28	05017	Arkansas	Chicot	1	40.4	28.6	26.8
29	05035	Arkansas	Crittenden	1	27.1	25.3	22.9
30	05037	Arkansas	Cross	1	25.4	19.9	21.2
31	05041	Arkansas	Desha	1	34.0	28.9	22.8
32	05073	Arkansas	Lafayette	4	34.7	23.2	19.8
33	05077	Arkansas	Lee	1	47.3	29.9	36.8
34	05079	Arkansas	Lincoln	1	26.2	19.5	23.6
35	05093	Arkansas	Mississippi	1	26.2	23.0	21.0
36	05095	Arkansas	Monroe	1	35.9	27.5	23.8
37	05103	Arkansas	Ouachita	4	21.2	19.5	20.5
38	05107	Arkansas	Phillips	1	43.0	32.7	22.1

Count	FIPS Geographic Identification Code	State	County	Congressional District(s) Representing the County[a]	Poverty Rate, 1989 (from 1990 Census)	Poverty Rate, 1999 (from Census 2000)	Poverty Rate, 2020 (from SAIPE)
39	05111	Arkansas	Poinsett	1	25.6	21.2	21.2
40	05123	Arkansas	St. Francis	1	36.6	27.5	30.1
41	05129	Arkansas	Searcy	1,3	29.9	23.8	22.3
42	05147	Arkansas	Woodruff	1	34.5	27.0	22.6
43	08011	Colorado	Bent	4	20.4	19.5	26.6
44	08023	Colorado	Costilla	3	34.6	26.8	21.8
45	12039	Florida	Gadsden	5	28.0	19.9	21.9
46	12047	Florida	Hamilton	5	27.8	26.0	24.2
47	12049	Florida	Hardee	17	22.8	24.6	21.2
48	12079	Florida	Madison	5	25.9	23.1	23.8
49	12107	Florida	Putnam	3	20.0	20.9	24.3
50	13003	Georgia	Atkinson	8	26.0	23.0	21.6
51	13005	Georgia	Bacon	1	24.1	23.7	21.1
52	13007	Georgia	Baker	2	24.8	23.4	23.7
53	13017	Georgia	Ben Hill	8	22.0	22.3	22.3
54	13027	Georgia	Brooks	8	25.9	23.4	20.6
55	13031	Georgia	Bulloch	12	27.5	24.5	20.7
56	13033	Georgia	Burke	12	30.3	28.7	20.0
57	13037	Georgia	Calhoun	2	31.8	26.5	34.4
58	13043	Georgia	Candler	12	24.1	26.1	20.1
59	13059	Georgia	Clarke	9,10	27.0	28.3	24.6
60	13061	Georgia	Clay	2	35.7	31.3	24.1
61	13065	Georgia	Clinch	1	26.4	23.4	20.4
62	13071	Georgia	Colquitt	8	22.8	19.8	20.4
63	13075	Georgia	Cook	8	22.4	20.7	19.5
64	13081	Georgia	Crisp	2	29.0	29.3	24.5

Count	FIPS Geographic Identification Code	State	County	Congressional District(s) Representing the County[a]	Poverty Rate, 1989 (from 1990 Census)	Poverty Rate, 1999 (from Census 2000)	Poverty Rate, 2020 (from SAIPE)
65	13087	Georgia	Decatur	2	23.3	22.7	25.6
66	13093	Georgia	Dooly	2	32.9	22.1	27.0
67	13095	Georgia	Dougherty	2	24.4	24.8	27.4
68	13099	Georgia	Early	2	31.4	25.7	24.0
69	13107	Georgia	Emanuel	12	25.7	27.4	26.4
70	13109	Georgia	Evans	12	25.4	27.0	19.6
71	13141	Georgia	Hancock	10	30.1	29.4	30.7
72	13163	Georgia	Jefferson	10	31.3	23.0	21.1
73	13165	Georgia	Jenkins	12	27.8	28.4	28.0
74	13167	Georgia	Johnson	10	22.2	22.6	25.9
75	13193	Georgia	Macon	2	29.2	25.8	31.1
76	13197	Georgia	Marion	2	28.2	22.4	20.6
77	13201	Georgia	Miller	2	22.1	21.2	19.8
78	13205	Georgia	Mitchell	2	28.7	26.4	38.2
79	13239	Georgia	Quitman	2	33.0	21.9	23.1
80	13243	Georgia	Randolph	2	35.9	27.7	27.4
81	13251	Georgia	Screven	12	22.9	20.1	20.7
82	13253	Georgia	Seminole	2	29.1	23.2	22.9
83	13259	Georgia	Stewart	2	31.4	22.2	31.3
84	13261	Georgia	Sumter	2	24.8	21.4	24.3
85	13263	Georgia	Talbot	2	24.9	24.2	20.8
86	13265	Georgia	Taliaferro	10	31.9	23.4	23.2
87	13267	Georgia	Tattnall	12	21.9	23.9	20.7
88	13269	Georgia	Taylor	2	29.5	26.0	23.2
89	13271	Georgia	Telfair	8	27.3	21.2	29.9
90	13273	Georgia	Terrell	2	29.1	28.6	27.8

Count	FIPS Geographic Identification Code	State	County	Congressional District(s) Representing the County[a]	Poverty Rate, 1989 (from 1990 Census)	Poverty Rate, 1999 (from Census 2000)	Poverty Rate, 2020 (from SAIPE)
91	13277	Georgia	Tift	8	22.9	19.9	20.5
92	13279	Georgia	Toombs	12	24.0	23.9	22.2
93	13283	Georgia	Treutlen	12	27.1	26.3	23.4
94	13287	Georgia	Turner	8	31.3	26.7	22.2
95	13289	Georgia	Twiggs	8	26.0	19.7	20.0
96	13299	Georgia	Ware	1	21.1	20.5	26.0
97	13301	Georgia	Warren	10	32.6	27.0	23.4
98	13303	Georgia	Washington	10	21.6	22.9	21.3
99	13309	Georgia	Wheeler	12	30.3	25.3	35.6
100	13315	Georgia	Wilcox	8	28.6	21.0	27.9
101	17003	Illinois	Alexander	12	32.2	26.1	24.2
102	17153	Illinois	Pulaski	12	30.2	24.7	20.4
103	21001	Kentucky	Adair	1	25.1	24.0	22.1
104	21011	Kentucky	Bath	6	27.3	21.9	22.5
105	21013	Kentucky	Bell	5	36.2	31.1	29.8
106	21025	Kentucky	Breathitt	5	39.5	33.2	27.9
107	21045	Kentucky	Casey	1	29.4	25.5	22.7
108	21051	Kentucky	Clay	5	40.2	39.7	37.3
109	21053	Kentucky	Clinton	1	38.1	25.8	21.5
110	21057	Kentucky	Cumberland	1	31.6	23.8	21.0
111	21063	Kentucky	Elliott	5	38.0	25.9	28.8
112	21065	Kentucky	Estill	6	29.0	26.4	20.6
113	21071	Kentucky	Floyd	5	31.2	30.3	28.3
114	21075	Kentucky	Fulton	1	30.3	23.1	25.2
115	21095	Kentucky	Harlan	5	33.1	32.5	28.0
116	21099	Kentucky	Hart	2	27.1	22.4	22.1

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117	21109	Kentucky	Jackson	5	38.2	30.2	24.0
118	21115	Kentucky	Johnson	5	28.7	26.6	22.5
119	21119	Kentucky	Knott	5	40.4	31.1	27.7
120	21121	Kentucky	Knox	5	38.9	34.8	27.8
121	21127	Kentucky	Lawrence	5	36.0	30.7	22.3
122	21129	Kentucky	Lee	5	37.4	30.4	32.1
123	21131	Kentucky	Leslie	5	35.6	32.7	25.8
124	21133	Kentucky	Letcher	5	31.8	27.1	24.4
125	21135	Kentucky	Lewis	4	30.7	28.5	22.2
126	21147	Kentucky	McCreary	5	45.5	32.2	36.2
127	21153	Kentucky	Magoffin	5	42.5	36.6	30.9
128	21159	Kentucky	Martin	5	35.4	37.0	31.9
129	21165	Kentucky	Menifee	6	35.0	29.6	22.7
130	21169	Kentucky	Metcalfe	1	27.9	23.6	21.4
131	21171	Kentucky	Monroe	1	26.9	23.4	22.5
132	21175	Kentucky	Morgan	5	38.8	27.2	24.5
133	21189	Kentucky	Owsley	5	52.1	45.4	30.6
134	21193	Kentucky	Perry	5	32.1	29.1	22.0
135	21195	Kentucky	Pike	5	25.4	23.4	23.7
136	21197	Kentucky	Powell	6	26.2	23.5	20.5
137	21203	Kentucky	Rockcastle	5	30.7	23.1	22.4
138	21205	Kentucky	Rowan	5	28.9	21.3	24.4
139	21231	Kentucky	Wayne	5	37.3	29.4	23.6
140	21235	Kentucky	Whitley	5	33.0	26.4	21.7
141	21237	Kentucky	Wolfe	6	44.3	35.9	29.7
142	22001	Louisiana	Acadia Parish	3	30.5	24.5	20.7

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143	22003	Louisiana	Allen Parish	4	29.9	19.9	21.1
144	22009	Louisiana	Avoyelles Parish	5	37.1	25.9	21.6
145	22013	Louisiana	Bienville Parish	4	31.2	26.1	22.8
146	22017	Louisiana	Caddo Parish	4	24.0	21.1	20.9
147	22021	Louisiana	Caldwell Parish	5	28.8	21.2	21.4
148	22025	Louisiana	Catahoula Parish	5	36.8	28.1	28.4
149	22027	Louisiana	Claiborne Parish	4	32.0	26.5	31.9
150	22029	Louisiana	Concordia Parish	5	30.6	29.1	28.6
151	22031	Louisiana	De Soto Parish	4	29.8	25.1	19.8
152	22035	Louisiana	East Carroll Parish	5	56.8	40.5	37.6
153	22037	Louisiana	East Feliciana Parish	5,6	25.0	23.0	19.9
154	22039	Louisiana	Evangeline Parish	4	35.1	32.2	24.5
155	22041	Louisiana	Franklin Parish	5	34.5	28.4	24.1
156	22045	Louisiana	Iberia Parish	3	25.8	23.6	22.5
157	22047	Louisiana	Iberville Parish	2,6	28.0	23.1	23.7
158	22049	Louisiana	Jackson Parish	5	23.9	19.8	20.9
159	22061	Louisiana	Lincoln Parish	5	26.6	26.5	21.7
160	22065	Louisiana	Madison Parish	5	44.6	36.7	33.6
161	22067	Louisiana	Morehouse Parish	5	31.0	26.8	23.3
162	22069	Louisiana	Natchitoches Parish	4	33.9	26.5	21.7
163	22071	Louisiana	Orleans Parish	1,2	31.6	27.9	21.1
164	22073	Louisiana	Ouachita Parish	5	24.7	20.7	23.7
165	22081	Louisiana	Red River Parish	4	35.1	29.9	23.7
166	22083	Louisiana	Richland Parish	5	33.2	27.9	22.5
167	22085	Louisiana	Sabine Parish	4	27.1	21.5	22.1
168	22091	Louisiana	St. Helena Parish	5,6	34.4	26.8	22.7

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169	22097	Louisiana	St. Landry Parish	3,4,5	36.3	29.3	22.6
170	22101	Louisiana	St. Mary Parish	3	27.0	23.6	19.8
171	22105	Louisiana	Tangipahoa Parish	1,5	31.5	22.7	20.1
172	22107	Louisiana	Tensas Parish	5	46.3	36.3	30.8
173	22117	Louisiana	Washington Parish	5	31.6	24.7	22.5
174	22119	Louisiana	Webster Parish	4	25.1	20.2	19.7
175	22123	Louisiana	West Carroll Parish	5	27.4	23.4	20.8
176	22125	Louisiana	West Feliciana Parish	5	33.8	19.9	21.9
177	22127	Louisiana	Winn Parish	5	27.5	21.5	22.6
178	24510	Maryland	Baltimore city	2,3,7	21.9	22.9	20.0
179	28001	Mississippi	Adams	3	30.5	25.9	27.2
180	28005	Mississippi	Amite	3	30.9	22.6	21.7
181	28009	Mississippi	Benton	1	29.7	23.2	19.8
182	28011	Mississippi	Bolivar	2	42.9	33.3	28.1
183	28017	Mississippi	Chickasaw	1	21.3	20.0	24.8
184	28021	Mississippi	Claiborne	2	43.6	32.4	34.1
185	28025	Mississippi	Clay	1	25.9	23.5	21.5
186	28027	Mississippi	Coahoma	2	45.5	35.9	39.6
187	28029	Mississippi	Copiah	2	32.0	25.1	22.5
188	28031	Mississippi	Covington	3	31.2	23.5	20.3
189	28035	Mississippi	Forrest	4	27.5	22.5	24.9
190	28037	Mississippi	Franklin	3	33.3	24.1	21.4
191	28041	Mississippi	Greene	4	26.8	19.6	21.4
192	28043	Mississippi	Grenada	2	22.3	20.9	21.4
193	28049	Mississippi	Hinds	2,3	21.2	19.9	25.9
194	28051	Mississippi	Holmes	2	53.2	41.1	34.5

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195	28053	Mississippi	Humphreys	2	45.9	38.2	33.3
196	28055	Mississippi	Issaquena	2	49.3	33.2	43.3
197	28063	Mississippi	Jefferson	2	46.9	36.0	30.8
198	28065	Mississippi	Jefferson Davis	3	33.3	28.2	25.2
199	28069	Mississippi	Kemper	3	35.1	26.0	25.2
200	28075	Mississippi	Lauderdale	3	22.8	20.8	22.5
201	28079	Mississippi	Leake	2	29.6	23.3	21.0
202	28083	Mississippi	Leflore	2	38.9	34.8	25.3
203	28093	Mississippi	Marshall	1	30.0	21.9	22.7
204	28097	Mississippi	Montgomery	2	34.0	24.3	21.2
205	28103	Mississippi	Noxubee	3	41.4	32.8	26.2
206	28105	Mississippi	Oktibbeha	1,3	30.1	28.2	23.5
207	28107	Mississippi	Panola	2	33.8	25.3	21.0
208	28113	Mississippi	Pike	3	32.9	25.3	26.5
209	28119	Mississippi	Quitman	2	41.6	33.1	29.9
210	28125	Mississippi	Sharkey	2	47.5	38.3	30.3
211	28127	Mississippi	Simpson	3	22.7	21.6	21.2
212	28133	Mississippi	Sunflower	2	41.8	30.0	34.8
213	28135	Mississippi	Tallahatchie	2	41.9	32.2	32.0
214	28143	Mississippi	Tunica	2	56.8	33.1	26.7
215	28147	Mississippi	Walthall	3	35.9	27.8	23.5
216	28151	Mississippi	Washington	2	33.8	29.2	27.7
217	28153	Mississippi	Wayne	4	29.5	25.4	22.1
218	28157	Mississippi	Wilkinson	3	42.2	37.7	28.4
219	28159	Mississippi	Winston	1	26.6	23.7	21.8
220	28161	Mississippi	Yalobusha	2	26.4	21.8	21.2

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221	28163	Mississippi	Yazoo	2	39.2	31.9	31.0
222	29035	Missouri	Carter	8	27.6	25.2	20.3
223	29069	Missouri	Dunklin	8	29.9	24.5	20.2
224	29085	Missouri	Hickory	4	21.9	19.7	19.6
225	29149	Missouri	Oregon	8	27.4	22.0	22.0
226	29153	Missouri	Ozark	8	22.1	21.6	20.3
227	29155	Missouri	Pemiscot	8	35.8	30.4	35.3
228	29181	Missouri	Ripley	8	31.5	22.0	21.3
229	29203	Missouri	Shannon	8	24.1	26.9	21.8
230	29215	Missouri	Texas	8	22.9	21.4	20.3
231	29223	Missouri	Wayne	8	29.0	21.9	23.2
232	29510	Missouri	St. Louis city	1	24.6	24.6	20.8
233	30003	Montana	Big Horn	at large	35.3	29.2	28.9
234	30005	Montana	Blaine	at large	27.7	28.1	20.9
235	30035	Montana	Glacier	at large	35.7	27.3	24.3
236	30085	Montana	Roosevelt	at large	27.7	32.4	23.8
237	30107	Montana	Wheatland	at large	21.3	20.4	20.9
238	35003	New Mexico	Catron	2	25.6	24.5	22.8
239	35006	New Mexico	Cibola	2	33.6	24.8	25.1
240	35013	New Mexico	Doña Ana	2	26.5	25.4	20.5
241	35019	New Mexico	Guadalupe	2	38.5	21.6	22.8
242	35023	New Mexico	Hidalgo	2	20.7	27.3	19.8
243	35029	New Mexico	Luna	2	31.5	32.9	22.3
244	35031	New Mexico	McKinley	2,3	43.5	36.1	32.0
245	35033	New Mexico	Mora	3	36.2	25.4	19.8
246	35037	New Mexico	Quay	3	25.1	20.9	22.0

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247	35039	New Mexico	Rio Arriba	3	27.5	20.3	19.7
248	35045	New Mexico	San Juan	3	28.3	21.5	21.5
249	35047	New Mexico	San Miguel	3	30.2	24.4	20.9
250	35051	New Mexico	Sierra	2	19.6	20.9	22.1
251	35053	New Mexico	Socorro	2	29.9	31.7	25.1
252	36005	New York	Bronx	13,14,15,16	28.7	30.7	24.4
253	37015	North Carolina	Bertie	1	25.9	23.5	22.8
254	37017	North Carolina	Bladen	7,9	21.9	21.0	21.6
255	37047	North Carolina	Columbus	7	24.0	22.7	21.3
256	37065	North Carolina	Edgecombe	1	20.9	19.6	24.1
257	37083	North Carolina	Halifax	1	25.6	23.9	23.9
258	37117	North Carolina	Martin	1	22.3	20.2	20.1
259	37131	North Carolina	Northampton	1	23.6	21.3	21.7
260	37155	North Carolina	Robeson	9	24.1	22.8	26.6
261	37177	North Carolina	Tyrrell	3	25.0	23.3	20.8
262	37181	North Carolina	Vance	1	19.6	20.5	21.3
263	37187	North Carolina	Washington	1	20.4	21.8	24.3
264	38005	North Dakota	Benson	at large	31.7	29.1	24.2
265	38079	North Dakota	Rolette	at large	40.7	31.0	21.3
266	38085	North Dakota	Sioux	at large	47.4	39.2	28.3
267	39009	Ohio	Athens	6,15	28.7	27.4	22.0
268	40001	Oklahoma	Adair	2	26.7	23.2	22.3
269	40021	Oklahoma	Cherokee	2	28.8	22.9	19.6
270	40023	Oklahoma	Choctaw	2	32.7	24.3	19.5
271	40055	Oklahoma	Greer	3	23.4	19.6	22.9
272	40057	Oklahoma	Harmon	3	34.2	29.7	23.3

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273	40063	Oklahoma	Hughes	2	26.9	21.9	21.4
274	40107	Oklahoma	Okfuskee	2	29.4	23.0	21.7
275	40119	Oklahoma	Payne	3	21.7	20.3	20.1
276	40133	Oklahoma	Seminole	5	24.0	20.8	21.2
277	40141	Oklahoma	Tillman	4	22.9	21.9	21.9
278	45005	South Carolina	Allendale	6	35.8	34.5	31.6
279	45009	South Carolina	Bamberg	6	28.2	27.8	21.0
280	45011	South Carolina	Barnwell	2	21.8	20.9	21.6
281	45029	South Carolina	Colleton	1,6	23.4	21.1	20.1
282	45033	South Carolina	Dillon	7	28.1	24.2	22.2
283	45049	South Carolina	Hampton	6	27.7	21.8	19.6
284	45061	South Carolina	Lee	5	29.6	21.8	23.0
285	45067	South Carolina	Marion	7	28.6	23.2	21.8
286	45069	South Carolina	Marlboro	7	26.6	21.7	26.0
287	45089	South Carolina	Williamsburg	6	28.7	27.9	25.4
288	46007	South Dakota	Bennett	at large	37.6	39.2	28.3
289	46017	South Dakota	Buffalo	at large	45.1	56.9	32.8
290	46023	South Dakota	Charles Mix	at large	31.4	26.9	24.0
291	46031	South Dakota	Corson	at large	42.5	41.0	37.1
292	46041	South Dakota	Dewey	at large	44.4	33.6	24.9
293	46071	South Dakota	Jackson	at large	38.8	36.5	28.7
294	46085	South Dakota	Lyman	at large	24.7	24.3	23.9
295	46095	South Dakota	Mellette	at large	41.3	35.8	29.9
296	46102	South Dakota	Oglala Lakota[c]	at large	63.1	52.3	38.1
297	46121	South Dakota	Todd	at large	50.2	48.3	42.5
298	46137	South Dakota	Ziebach	at large	51.1	49.9	43.9

Count	FIPS Geographic Identification Code	State	County	Congressional District(s) Representing the County[a]	Poverty Rate, 1989 (from 1990 Census)	Poverty Rate, 1999 (from Census 2000)	Poverty Rate, 2020 (from SAIPE)
299	47013	Tennessee	Campbell	2,3	26.8	22.8	20.0
300	47029	Tennessee	Cocke	1	25.3	22.5	19.7
301	47067	Tennessee	Hancock	1	40.0	29.4	28.6
302	47069	Tennessee	Hardeman	7	23.3	19.7	22.0
303	47095	Tennessee	Lake	8	27.5	23.6	36.4
304	47151	Tennessee	Scott	3	27.8	20.2	19.8
305	48025	Texas	Bee	34	27.4	24.0	23.1
306	48041	Texas	Brazos	17	26.7	26.9	22.3
307	48047	Texas	Brooks	15	36.8	40.2	28.7
308	48061	Texas	Cameron	34	39.7	33.1	24.4
309	48107	Texas	Crosby	19	29.5	28.1	19.8
310	48123	Texas	DeWitt	34	25.3	19.6	20.5
311	48127	Texas	Dimmit	23	48.9	33.2	25.5
312	48131	Texas	Duval	15	39.0	27.2	20.0
313	48145	Texas	Falls	17	27.5	22.6	20.0
314	48163	Texas	Frio	23	39.1	29.0	22.3
315	48169	Texas	Garza	19	23.1	22.3	20.6
316	48207	Texas	Haskell	19	20.8	22.8	20.0
317	48215	Texas	Hidalgo	15,28,34	41.9	35.9	23.9
318	48225	Texas	Houston	8	25.6	21.0	20.0
319	48229	Texas	Hudspeth	23	38.9	35.8	24.2
320	48247	Texas	Jim Hogg	15	35.3	25.9	20.1
321	48249	Texas	Jim Wells	34	30.3	24.1	20.1
322	48273	Texas	Kleberg	34	27.4	26.7	20.8
323	48283	Texas	La Salle	23,28	37.0	29.8	24.0
324	48315	Texas	Marion	4	60.6	22.4	20.0

Count	FIPS Geographic Identification Code	State	County	Congressional District(s) Representing the County[a]	Poverty Rate, 1989 (from 1990 Census)	Poverty Rate, 1999 (from Census 2000)	Poverty Rate, 2020 (from SAIPE)
325	48323	Texas	Maverick	23	50.4	34.8	20.0
326	48347	Texas	Nacogdoches	1	25.2	23.3	19.5
327	48405	Texas	San Augustine	1	29.7	21.2	19.6
328	48427	Texas	Starr	28	60.0	50.9	25.2
329	48479	Texas	Webb	28	38.2	31.2	19.9
330	48489	Texas	Willacy	34	44.5	33.2	24.7
331	48505	Texas	Zapata	28	41.0	35.8	24.6
332	48507	Texas	Zavala	23	50.4	41.8	27.2
333	51027	Virginia	Buchanan	9	21.9	23.2	23.7
334	51105	Virginia	Lee	9	28.7	23.9	26.0
335	51195	Virginia	Wise	9	21.6	20.0	20.3
336	51660	Virginia	Harrisonburg city	6	21.5	30.1	22.2
337	51720	Virginia	Norton city	9	26.7	22.8	20.5
338	51730	Virginia	Petersburg city	4	20.3	19.6	20.8
339	51750	Virginia	Radford city	9	32.2	31.4	24.6
340	53047	Washington	Okanogan	4	21.5	21.3	19.8
341	54001	West Virginia	Barbour	1	28.5	22.6	20.8
342	54013	West Virginia	Calhoun	2	32.0	25.1	20.0
343	54015	West Virginia	Clay	2	39.2	27.5	23.3
344	54019	West Virginia	Fayette	3	24.4	21.7	20.8
345	54021	West Virginia	Gilmer	1	33.5	25.9	23.0
346	54043	West Virginia	Lincoln	3	33.8	27.9	20.6
347	54045	West Virginia	Logan	3	27.7	24.1	22.3
348	54047	West Virginia	McDowell	3	37.7	37.7	31.8
349	54059	West Virginia	Mingo	3	30.9	29.7	24.9
350	54087	West Virginia	Roane	2	28.1	22.6	20.7

Count	FIPS Geographic Identification Code	State	County	Congressional District(s) Representing the County[a]	Poverty Rate, 1989 (from 1990 Census)	Poverty Rate, 1999 (from Census 2000)	Poverty Rate, 2020 (from SAIPE)
351	54089	West Virginia	Summers	3	24.5	24.4	21.1
352	54101	West Virginia	Webster	3	34.8	31.8	23.7
353	54109	West Virginia	Wyoming	3	27.9	25.1	21.3
354	55078	Wisconsin	Menominee	8	48.7	28.8	22.6

Source: Congressional Research Service (CRS) tabulation of data from U.S. Census Bureau, 1990 Census, Census 2000, 2020 Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates, and Nation-Based Relationship File for Congressional Districts and Counties (116th Congress, the latest available as of the cover date of this report).

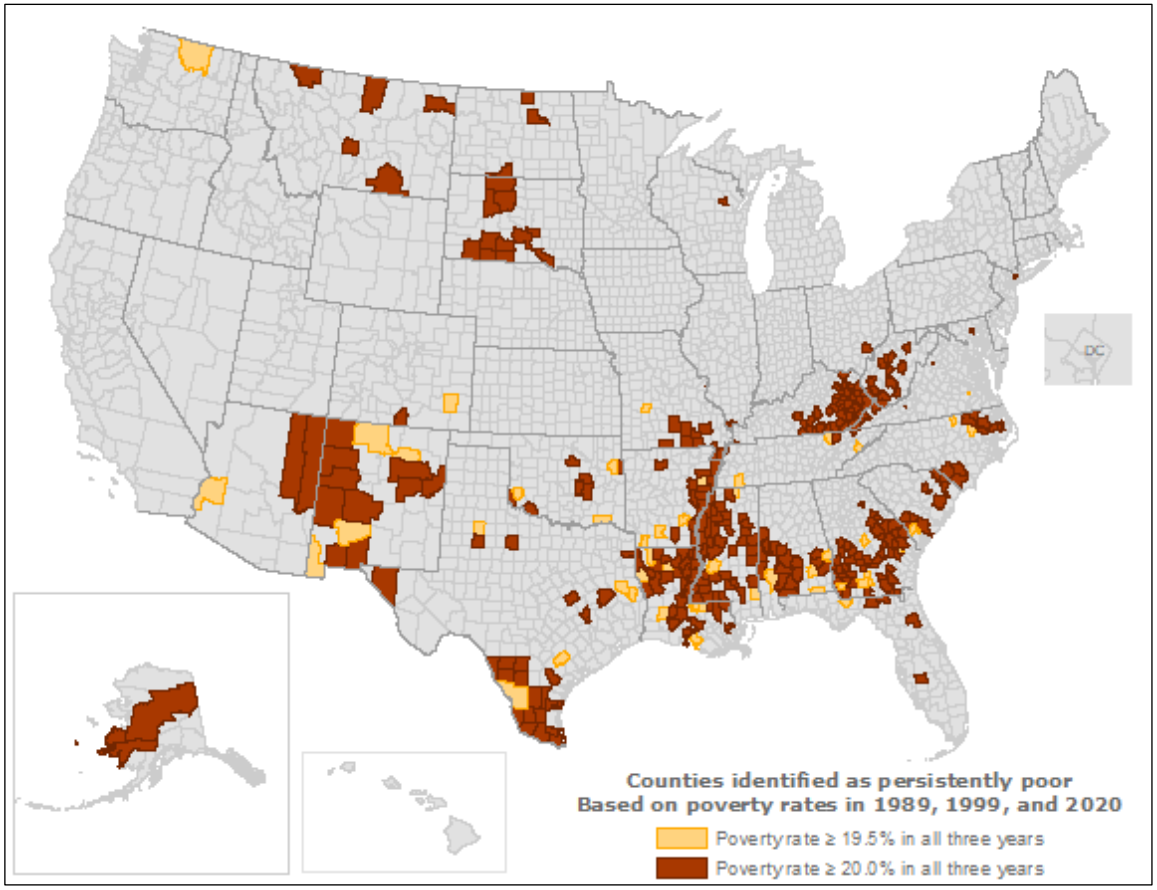
Notes: FIPS: Federal Information Processing Standard.

a. Numbers are ordinal, referring to the name of the congressional district(s) present in the county. For example, Barbour County, Alabama, is represented by Alabama's 2nd Congressional District (indicated by the 2). A congressional district may span multiple counties; conversely, a single county may be split among multiple congressional districts. Part of Clarke County, Alabama, for example, is represented by Alabama's 1st Congressional District (indicated by the 1) and part by the 7th Congressional District (indicated by the 7). Counties labeled "at large" are located in states that have one member of the House of Representatives for the entire state.

b. Changed name and geographic code effective July 1, 2015, from Wade Hampton Census Area (02270) to Kusilvak Census Area (02158).

c. Changed name and geographic code effective May 1, 2015, from Shannon County (46113) to Oglala Lakota County (46102).

Figure 1. Persistent Poverty Counties Using Two Rounding Methods, Based on 1990 Census, Census 2000, and 2020 Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates



Source: Created by Congressional Research Service (CRS) using data from U.S. Census Bureau, 1990 Census, Census 2000, and 2020 Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates.

Appendix. Details on the Data Sources

Decennial Census of Population and Housing, Long Form

Poverty estimates are computed using data from household surveys, which are based on a sample of households. In order to obtain meaningful estimates for any geographic area, the sample has to include enough responses from that area so that selecting a different sample of households from that area would not likely result in a dramatically different estimate. If estimates for smaller geographic areas are desired, a larger sample size is needed. A national-level survey, for instance, could produce reliable estimates for the United States without obtaining any responses from many counties, particularly counties with small populations. In order to produce estimates for all 3,143 county areas in the nation, however, not only are responses needed from every county, but those responses have to be plentiful enough from each county so that the estimates are meaningful (i.e., their margins of error are not unhelpfully wide).

Before the mid-1990s, the only data source with a sample size large enough to provide meaningful estimates at the county level (and for other small geographic areas) was the decennial census. The other household surveys available prior to that time did not have a sample size large enough to produce meaningful estimates for small areas such as counties. Income questions were asked on the census long form, which was sent to one-sixth of all U.S. households; the rest received the census short form, which did not ask about income. While technically still a sample, one-sixth of all households was a large enough sample to provide poverty estimates for every county in the nation, and even for smaller areas such as small towns. The long form was discontinued after Census 2000, and therefore poverty data are no longer available from the decennial census for the 50 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico.[20] Beginning in the mid-1990s, however, two additional data sources were developed to ensure that poverty estimates for small areas such as counties would still be available: the American Community Survey (ACS), and the Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates program (SAIPE).

American Community Survey (ACS)

The ACS replaced the decennial census long form. It was developed to accommodate the needs of local government officials and other stakeholders who needed detailed information on small communities on a more frequent basis than once every 10 years. To that end, the ACS questionnaire was designed to reflect the same topics asked in the census long form.

In order to produce meaningful estimates for small communities, however, the ACS needs to collect a number of responses comparable to what was collected in the decennial census.[21] In order to collect that many responses while providing information more currently than once every 10 years, the ACS collects information from respondents continuously, in every month, as opposed to at one time of the year, and responses over time are pooled to provide estimates at varying geographic levels. To obtain estimates for geographic areas of 65,000 or more persons,

[20] Poverty estimates from the decennial census continue to be produced for American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Guam, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. SAIPE and ACS estimates are not. See footnote 13.

[21] A sample of approximately 18.3 million households received the Census 2000 long form. Scott Boggess and Nikki L. Graf, "Measuring Education: A Comparison of the Decennial Census and the American Community Survey," presented at Joint Statistical Meetings, San Francisco, CA, August 7, 2003. http://census.gov/content/dam/Census/library/working-papers/2003/acs/2003_Boggess_01_doc.pdf.
From 2014 to 2018, 17.7 million housing unit addresses were sampled in the ACS. http://www.census.gov/acs/www/methodology/sample-size-and-data-quality/sample-size/index.php.

one year's worth of responses are pooled—these are the ACS one-year estimates. For the smallest geographic levels, which include the complete set of U.S. counties, five years of monthly responses are needed: these are the ACS five-year estimates. Even though data collection is ongoing, the publication of the data takes place only once every year, both for the one-year estimates and the estimates that represent the previous five-year span.

Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates (SAIPE)

The SAIPE program was developed in the 1990s in order to provide state and local government officials with poverty estimates for local areas in between the decennial census years. In the Improving America's Schools Act of 1994 (IASA, P.L. 103-382), which amended the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA), Congress recognized that providing funding for children in disadvantaged communities created a need for poverty data for those communities that were more current than the once-a-decade census. In the IASA, Congress provided for the development and evaluation of the SAIPE program for its use in Title I-A funding allocations.[22]

SAIPE estimates are model-based, meaning they use a mathematical procedure to compute estimates using both survey data (ACS one-year data) and administrative data (from tax returns and numbers of participants in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, or SNAP). The modeling procedure produces estimates with less variability than estimates computed from survey data alone, especially for counties with small populations.

Guidance from the U.S. Census Bureau, "Which Data Source to Use"[23]

> The CPS ASEC[24] provides the most timely and accurate national data on income and is the source of official national poverty estimates, hence it is the preferred source for national analysis. Because of its large sample size, the ACS is preferred for subnational data on income and poverty by detailed demographic characteristics. The Census Bureau recommends using the ACS for 1-year estimates of income and poverty at the state level. Users looking for consistent, state-level trends should use CPS ASEC 2-year averages and CPS ASEC 3-year averages for state to state comparisons.
>
> For substate areas, like counties, users should consider their specific needs when picking the appropriate data source. The SAIPE program produces overall poverty and household income 1-year estimates with standard errors usually smaller than direct survey estimates. Users looking to compare estimates of the number and percentage of people in poverty for counties or school districts or the median household income for counties should use SAIPE, especially if the population is less than 65,000. Users who need other characteristics such as poverty among Hispanics or median earnings, should use the ACS, where and when available.

[22] Details about the origins of the SAIPE project are available on the Census Bureau's website at https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/saipe/about/origins.html.

[23] Downloaded from http://www.census.gov/topics/income-poverty/poverty/guidance/data-sources.html, March 24, 2022.

[24] *Author's note:* CPS ASEC: Current Population Survey Annual Social and Economic Supplement.

The SIPP[25] is the only Census Bureau source of longitudinal poverty data. As SIPP collects monthly income over 2.5 to 5 year panels, it is also a source of poverty estimates for time periods more or less than one year, including monthly poverty rates.

Table A-1 below reproduces the Census Bureau's recommendations, summarized for various geographic levels:

Table A-1. U.S. Census Bureau's Guidance on Poverty Data Sources by Geographic Level and Type of Estimate

Geographic Level	Cross-Sectional Estimates			Longitudinal Estimates
	Income/Poverty Rate	Detailed Characteristics	Year-to-Year Change	
United States	CPS ASEC	CPS ASEC/ ACS 1-year estimates for detailed race groups	CPS ASEC	SIPP
States	ACS 1-year estimates CPS ASEC 3-year averages	ACS 1-year estimates	ACS 1-year estimates	
Substate (areas with populations of 65,000 or more)	ACS 1-year estimates/ SAIPE for counties and school districts	ACS 1-year estimates	ACS 1-year estimates / SAIPE for counties and school districts	None
Substate (areas with populations less than 20,000)[a]	SAIPE for counties and school districts/ ACS using 5-year period estimates for all other geographic entities/ Decennial Census 2000 and prior	ACS 5-year estimates/ Decennial Census 2000 and prior	SAIPE for counties and school districts/ ACS using 5-year period estimates for all other geographic entities	None
State-to-Nation comparison	CPS ASEC	CPS ASEC	CPS ASEC	

Source: Congressional Research Service (CRS) formatted reproduction of table by U.S. Census Bureau, with an expansion to the notes. Original table downloaded from http://www.census.gov/topics/income-poverty/poverty/guidance/data-sources.html, March 24, 2022.

Notes:

ACS: American Community Survey.

CPS ASEC: Current Population Survey, Annual Social and Economic Supplement.

SAIPE: Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates.

SIPP: Survey of Income and Program Participation.

a. *Author's note*: Data for areas with populations of 20,000 to 65,000 persons previously had been produced using ACS three-year estimates, but are now only produced using the ACS five-year estimates. ACS three-year estimates are no longer produced (with 2011-2013 data as the last in the series). For details, see https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/guidance/estimates.html.

[25] *Author's note*: SIPP: Survey of Income and Program Participation; mentioned here only as part of a quotation.

b. Use non-overlapping periods for ACS trend analysis with multiyear estimates. For example, comparing 2006-2010 ACS five-year estimates with 2011-2015 ACS five-year estimates is preferred for identifying change.

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