



INCOME SECURITY AND EDUCATION

NATIONAL SNAPSHOT: POVERTY AMONG WOMEN & FAMILIES, 2015

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The U.S. Census Bureau data released in September 2016 shows that many American families are experiencing some real economic gains. Despite this good news, women's poverty rates were substantially above the poverty rate for men in 2015. More than one in eight women – more than 16.9 million – and nearly one in five children – more than 14.5 million – lived in poverty in 2015. More than half of all poor children lived in families headed by women.

Women were 35 percent more likely to live in poverty than men

- More than one in eight women, more than 16.9 million, lived in poverty in 2015. More than 2 in 5 (45.7 percent) of these women lived in extreme poverty, defined as income at or below 50 percent of the federal poverty level. This means nearly 1 in 16 women lived in extreme poverty last year.
- Women (13.4 percent) were 35 percent more likely than men (9.9 percent) to live in poverty in 2015. Women were also more likely than men to be in extreme poverty: 6.1 percent of women versus 4.4 percent of men lived in extreme poverty in 2015.

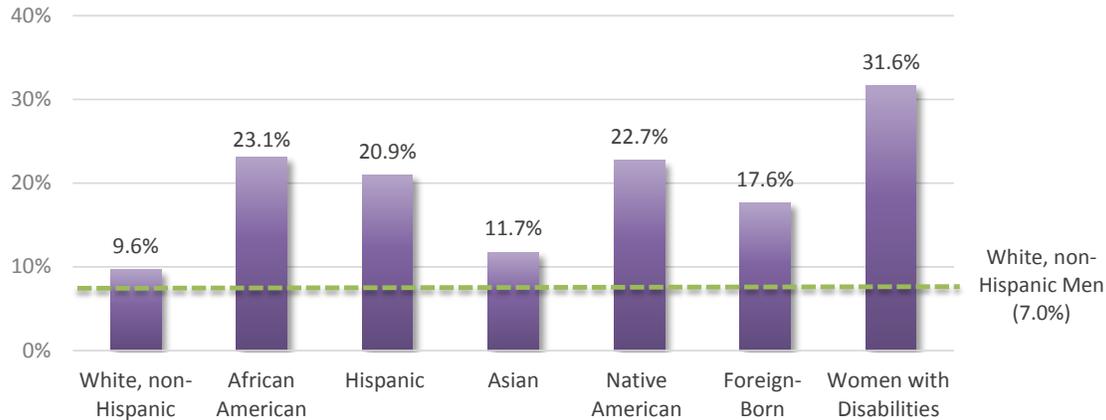
Poverty was even higher for certain groups of women

- Women in all racial and ethnic groups were more likely than white, non-Hispanic men to be in poverty. 9.6 percent of white, non-Hispanic women lived in poverty in 2015, compared to 7.1 percent of white, non-Hispanic men. However, poverty rates were particularly high for women of color:¹
 - **African American women:** 23.1 percent of African American women lived in poverty.
 - **Native American women:** 22.7 percent of Native American women lived in poverty.
 - **Hispanic women:** 20.9 percent of Hispanic women lived in poverty.
 - **Asian women:** 11.7 percent of Asian women lived in poverty.
- More than 1 in 6 (17.6 percent) foreign-born women lived in poverty in 2015.
- The poverty rate for women with disabilities (ages 18-64) (31.6 percent) was higher than it was for women without disabilities (12.7 percent), men with disabilities (25.3 percent), and men without disabilities (9.3 percent).

¹ The "African American" race category includes those who identified themselves in the U.S. Census Bureau Current Population Survey as Black or African American. The "Asian" race category includes those who identified themselves as Asian. The "Native American" race category includes those who identified themselves as American Indian or Alaskan Native. The "white" race category includes those who identified themselves as white, but not of Hispanic origin. The "Hispanic" category includes people of any race who identified themselves to be of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin.



Poverty Rates for Adult Women, 2015



Source: Census Bureau, Current Population Survey. Figures for women with disabilities are for women 18-64.

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What Does the Federal Poverty Rate Measure?

The official poverty rate reported by the Census Bureau measures the percentage of the U.S. population with total income below the federal poverty threshold for their family size (e.g., \$24,036 in 2015 for a family of four with two children). “Income” is calculated before taxes and includes only cash income, such as:

- Earnings
- Pension income
- Investment income
- Social Security

- Unemployment benefits
- Child support payments

A number of other federal and state benefits that help support low-income families are not counted as income under the official poverty measure. These include:

- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits (formerly known as Food Stamps)
- Tax benefits (e.g., Earned Income Tax Credit, Child Tax Credit)
- Housing subsidies

Nearly 1 in 5 children lived in poverty in 2015

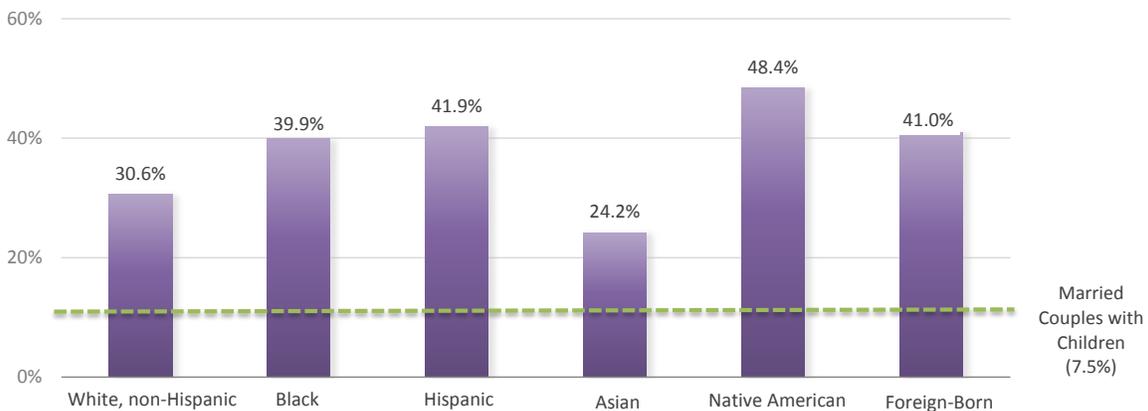
- More than 14.5 million kids lived in poverty in 2015, more than two out of five of whom (45.1 percent) lived in extreme poverty. This means that nearly one in five (19.7 percent) children was poor last year.
- Poverty rates were even higher for certain groups of children:
 - **African American children:** Nearly 1 in 3 (32.9 percent) African American children lived in poverty.
 - **Hispanic children:** More than 1 in 4 (28.9 percent) Hispanic children lived in poverty.
 - **Native American children:** More than 1 in 4 (30.7 percent) Native American children lived in poverty.
 - **Asian children:** Nearly 1 in 8 (12.3 percent) Asian children lived in poverty.
 - **White children:** More than 1 in 9 (12.1 percent) white, non-Hispanic children lived in poverty.
 - **Foreign-born children:** More than 1 in 4 (28.3 percent) foreign-born children lived in poverty.



More than 1 in 3 single mother families lived in poverty in 2015

- Over half of all poor children (56.2 percent) lived in families headed by women.
- About 525,000 single women with children (11.2 percent) who held full time jobs throughout 2015 were poor last year.
- Female-headed households with children were much more likely to be in poverty than male-headed households or households headed by married couples. The poverty rate for female-headed families with children was 36.5 percent, compared to 22.1 percent for male-headed families with children and 7.5 percent of families with children headed by married couples.
- Families headed by women of color fared even worse:
 - **African American female-headed families:** Nearly 2 in 5 (39.9 percent) of African American female-headed families with children lived in poverty.
 - **Hispanic female-headed families:** More than 2 in 5 (41.9 percent) of Hispanic female-headed families with children lived in poverty.
 - **Native American female-headed families:** Nearly half (48.4 percent) of Native American female-headed families lived in poverty.
 - **Asian female-headed families:** Nearly 1 in 4 (24.2 percent) of Asian female-headed families lived in poverty.
 - **White female-headed families:** More than 1 in 4 (30.6 percent) white, non-Hispanic female-headed families lived in poverty.
- Families headed by foreign-born women also experienced high rates of poverty: more than 2 in 5 (41.0 percent) of foreign-born female-headed families lived in poverty in 2015.

Poverty Rates for Single Mother Families with Children, 2015



Source: Census Bureau, Current Population Survey.

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Older women were more likely to be poor than older men

- Women made up nearly two-thirds (64.6 percent) of all poor people 65 and older in 2015.
- The poverty rate for women 65 and older was 10.3 percent, 3.3 percentage points higher than the poverty rate for older men (7.0 percent).

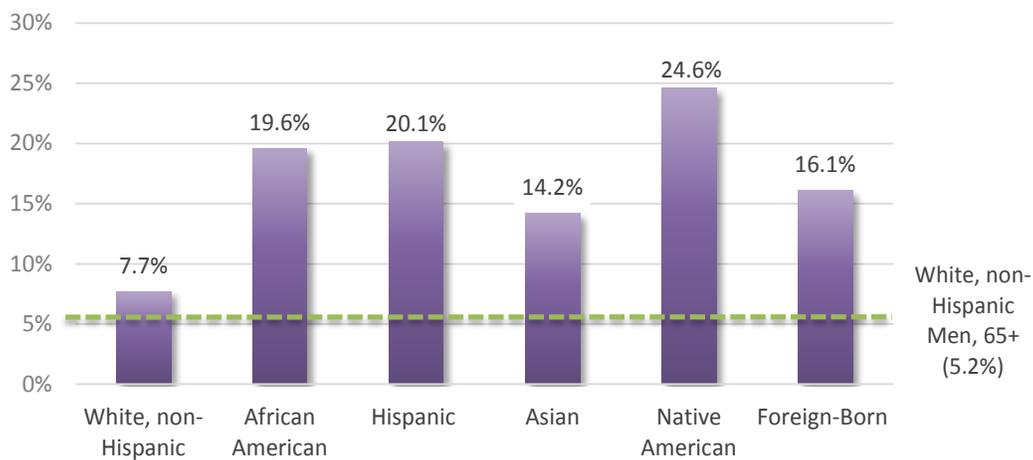


• Poverty rates were particularly high for certain groups of older women in 2015:

- o **African American women:** Nearly 1 in 5 (19.6 percent) African American women 65+ lived in poverty.
- o **Hispanic women:** About 1 in 5 (20.1 percent) Hispanic women 65+ lived in poverty.
- o **Native American women:** Nearly 1 in 4 (24.6 percent) Native American women 65+ lived in poverty

- o **Asian women:** About 1 in 7 (14.2 percent) Asian women 65+ lived in poverty.
- o **White women:** More than 1 in 13 (7.7 percent) white, non-Hispanic women 65+ lived in poverty.
- o **Foreign-born women:** Nearly 1 in 6 (16.1 percent) foreign-born women 65+ lived in poverty.
- o **Women living alone:** More than 1 in 6 (16.8 percent) women 65+ living alone lived in poverty, compared to 12.6 percent for men 65 and older living alone.

Poverty Rates for Women 65 and Older, 2015



Source: Census Bureau, Current Population Survey.



Summary Table: Poverty Rates among Women, Men, and Children 2015

Group	Number in Poverty, 2015 (in millions)	Poverty Rate, 2015
Adult Women 18+	16.9 million	13.4%
White, non-Hispanic	7.78 million	9.6%
African American	3.85 million	23.1%
Hispanic	4.05 million	20.9%
Asian	.90 million	11.7%
Native American	.35 million	22.7%
Foreign-Born	3.66 million	17.6%
Women with disabilities (18-64)	2.47 million	31.6%
Adult Men 18+	11.7 million	9.9%
White, non-Hispanic	5.45 million	7.1%
African American	2.52 million	18.2%
Hispanic	2.82 million	14.7%
Asian	.72 million	10.6%
Native American	.24 million	17.1%
Foreign-Born	2.74 million	14.0%
Men with disabilities (18-64)	1.89 million	25.3%
Female-Headed Households with Children	3.68 million	36.5%
White, non-Hispanic	1.31 million	30.6%
African American	1.22 million	39.9%
Hispanic	1.00 million	41.9%
Asian	.06 million	24.2%
Native American	.12 million	48.4%
Foreign-Born	.66 million	41.0%
Children	14.5 million	19.7%
White, non-Hispanic	4.56 million	12.1%
African American	3.65 million	32.9%
Hispanic	5.27 million	28.9%
Asian	.47 million	12.3%
Native American	.40 million	30.7%
Foreign-Born	.75 million	28.3%
Older Women 65+	2.71 million	10.3%
White, non-Hispanic	1.55 million	7.7%
African American	.51 million	19.6%
Hispanic	.44 million	20.1%
Asian	.17 million	14.2%
Native American	.04 million	24.6%
Foreign-Born	.56 million	16.1%
Living Alone	1.56 million	16.8%
Older Men 65+	1.49 million	7.0%
White, non-Hispanic	.86 million	5.2%
African American	.29 million	16.7%
Hispanic	.23 million	14.0%
Asian	.08 million	8.6%
Native American	.02 million	11.6%
Foreign-Born	.33 million	12.5%
Living Alone	.54 million	12.6%

Source: Census Bureau, Current Population Survey.

