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Newly Released 2008 Census National Income, Poverty and Health Insurance Data, September 10, 2009

Data derived from DeNavas-Wait, C., Procto, B.D., & Smith, J.C. (2009, September). [Income, poverty, and health insurance coverage in the United States: 2008](#). (P60-236). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Commerce, Economics and Statistics Administration, U.S. Census Bureau.

Newly released 2008 data from the U.S. Census Bureau reveals that hardship continues to be a reality for millions of families in the U.S. Millions of families are struggling to make ends meet, and far too many are living extreme poverty with incomes below half of the poverty line. However, these bleak findings understate the deterioration in incomes and poverty since 2008 –the economic downturn has accelerated greatly since then.

NEW NATIONAL POVERTY DATA and FORECASTS

- **While poverty grew last year, the reality today is almost certainly worse:** 39.8 million people were poor across the nation in 2008 as the recession began, (13.2%) up from 37.3 million (12.5%) in 2007. The Census data does not cover 2009, and unemployment has been rising sharply this year. Economists tell us that poverty rises with rising joblessness, and the increase is sharper for vulnerable groups like children.
- **The poverty rate is higher than it has been in over a decade and the number in poverty is the highest since 1960:** The 2008 poverty rate, 13.2%, was the highest poverty rate since 1997. Since 1960, the number of people below poverty has not exceeded the 2008 figure of 39.8 million people.
- **A growing number are falling into extreme poverty, far below the poverty line:** 17.1 million people (5.7%) are living in extreme poverty, way up from 2007 when 5.2%, or 15.6 million people, lived in extreme poverty. This group represents 42.9% of the poverty population. 6.3 million of those in extreme poverty are children. The income deficit for families in poverty (the difference in dollars between a family's income and the poverty threshold) averaged \$9,102 in 2008, far higher in real terms than in 2007 (\$8,523).
- **Child poverty has increased since 2006 and is projected to continue growing:** For children younger than 18, the poverty rate increased from 17.4% in 2006 to 19.0% in 2008 (it was 18.0% in 2007). The number of children in poverty climbed by 1.3 million, from 12.8 million in 2006 to 14.1 million in 2008 (was 13.3 million in 2007). In fact, the Economic Policy Institute estimates that if unemployment reaches 10 percent in 2010 or later, a shocking 27.3% of children nationwide will be poor. Among African American children, the picture is even bleaker – it is projected that more than half of all African American children will be living in poverty, up from 34.7% in 2008.
- **Poverty in the Midwest is growing:** Poverty in the Midwest increased to 12.4% in 2008, up from 11.1% in 2007.

NEW NATIONAL INCOME DATA

- **Median household income declined and the decline was widespread:** Median income declined 3.6% from 2007 to 2008 (\$50,303 in 2008 down from \$52,163). Median earnings of men declined from \$46,846 to \$46,367 and of women declined from \$36,451 to \$35,745. These declines in income coincide with the recession that started in December 2007.

NEW NATIONAL AND MIDWEST STATE HEALTH INSURANCE DATA

National Data

- **The number of Americans without health insurance grew from 45.7 million in 2007 to 46.3 million in 2008.** The percentage and number of people receiving employer-sponsored health insurance decreased (58.5% receive employer-sponsored health insurance down from 59.3% in 2007). The percentage of people receiving government health insurance programs increased (29% receive government health insurance up from 27.8% in 2007). The number of workers who were uninsured increased to 27.8 million in 2008.
- **State children's health insurance programs continue to succeed at significantly lowering the number of uninsured children.** The number of uninsured children declined from 8.1 million (11.0%) in 2007 to 7.3 million (9.9%) in 2008. The uninsured rate and number of uninsured children are the lowest since 1987, the first year that comparable health insurance data were collected.
- **The lowest income continue to be the least likely to have health insurance.** Nearly 1 of every 4 persons (24.5%) living in households with annual incomes of less than \$25,000 are without health insurance. In addition, children in poverty are the most likely to be uninsured of all children.

Illinois Data

- **The number of Illinoisans without health insurance declined slightly** to 1,668,781 (13.1%) in 2008, (13.7% and 1,737,876 people in 2007). That number is likely worse today given that the Census data does not cover the worsening economic conditions in 2009.
- **Illinoisans receiving employer-sponsored health coverage declined slightly:** in 2008 8,108,271 (63.9%) Illinoisans are receiving employer-sponsored health insurance.
- **There was a slight up tick in the number and percentage of Illinoisans receiving government health insurance:** 3,239,123 (25.5%) of Illinoisans are receiving government health insurance. In 2007 it was 24.1% and 3,055,227 people.
- **More children are receiving health insurance coverage:** The number of uninsured children declined from 255,982 (8.0%) in 2007 to 207,552 (6.5%) in 2008.

Midwest State Data

	Number Uninsured 2008	Percent Uninsured 2008	Number Uninsured 2007	% change in number from 2007 to 2008
Illinois	1,668,781	13.1	1,737,876	-4.0%
Indiana	744,564	11.9	732,256	1.7%
Iowa	279,274	9.4	291,009	-4.0%
Michigan	1,151,132	11.7	1,096,821	5.0%
Minnesota	438,462	8.5	453,544	-3.3%
Missouri	734,066	12.6	750,218	-2.2%
Ohio	1,315,300	11.6	1,229,769	7.0%

Wisconsin	492,964	8.9	465,762	5.8%
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