

Poverty, Income, and Health Insurance in Will County, Illinois

September 2009

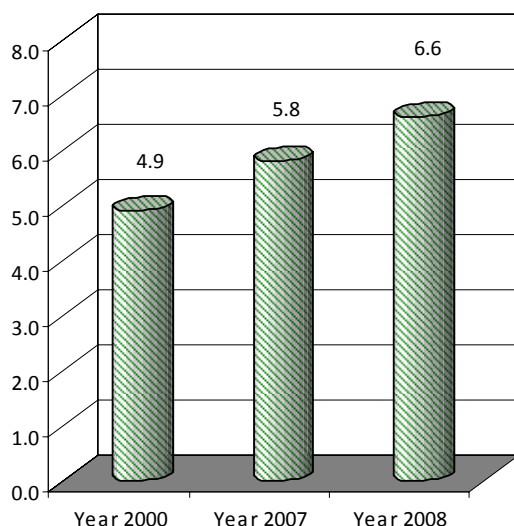
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Recessions have a disproportionate impact on lower-income families because they cause rising unemployment, a reduction in work hours, and the stagnation of family incomes—all of which have the greatest impact on those with the least income. The data in this fact sheet reflect the year 2008 and so begin to capture the first effects of the recession on low-income Illinois families. However, the economic downturn has greatly accelerated since 2008, making it very likely that these figures underestimate the true deterioration of incomes and increases in poverty currently impacting families.

Poverty and Child Poverty

In Will County, 44,290 people live below the poverty line, a poverty rate of 6.6%. The poverty rate change in Will County from 2007 to 2008 is not statistically significant, and the change from 2000 to 2008 is statistically significant.

Poverty Rates in Will County

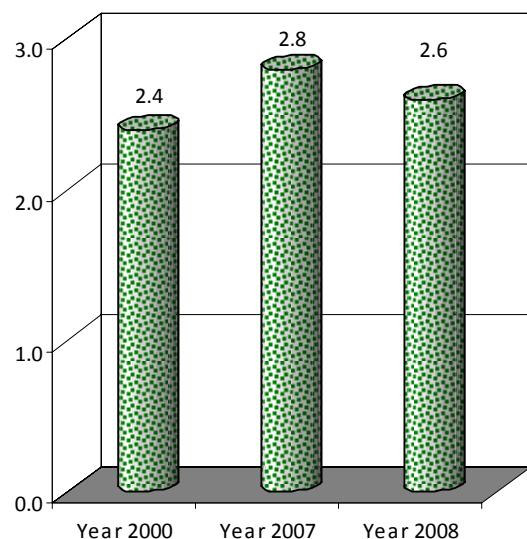


Children are particularly vulnerable to poverty. 17,000 children live below the poverty line in Will County, a child poverty rate of 8.9%. The child poverty rate in 2007 was 6.5%, and in 2000 it was 5.6%. The change from 2007 to 2008 is not statistically significant, and the change from 2000 to 2008 is statistically significant.

Extreme Poverty

Extreme poverty, living on an annual income of less than half the poverty line (below \$10,600 for a family of four), affects 17,470 people in Will County, an extreme poverty rate of 2.6%. The extreme poverty rate change from 2007 to 2008 is not statistically significant, and the change from 2000 to 2008 also is not statistically significant. Those living in extreme poverty are often in unsafe living conditions and struggle to meet the most basic of their needs.

Extreme Poverty Rates in Will County



Asset Poverty

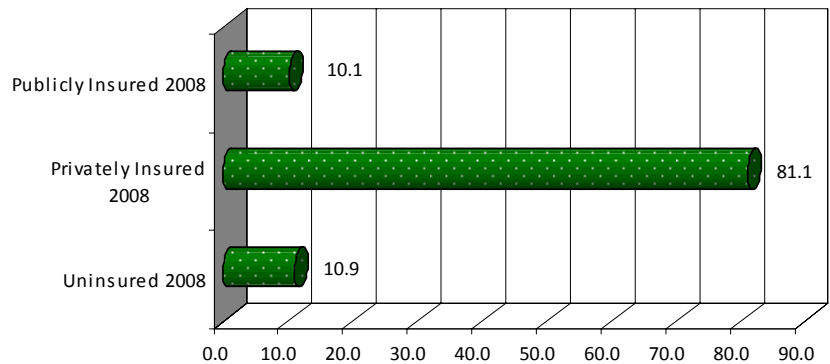
Fourteen percent of families in Will County are asset poor, meaning they do not have enough saved to subsist at the poverty level for even 3 months if their income suddenly dried up. Without this cushion to fall back on in tough times, job loss, reduction in hours, loss of benefits, or “crises” like a car breaking down, can catapult families into poverty and hardship. (Local Poverty Asset Index for Illinois. Visit www.illinoisassetbuilding.org for more information.)

Health Insurance Coverage

In Will County, 67,344 people do not have health insurance. This translates into 10.9% of the population being uninsured.

Of those with coverage in Will County, 81.1% are covered by private insurance, and 10.1% are covered by public insurance. (civilian, non-institutionalized population; sum of uninsured, privately insured, and publicly insured percents do not add up to 100 because for certain populations it is possible have both public and private coverage.)

Health Insurance Coverage Status in Will County, 2008



Measuring Hardship and Establishing What Families Need to Get By

The Federal Poverty Measure

Official poverty data are based on the federal poverty guidelines, which were developed in the 1960s. The measure is not geographically specific and does not reflect what it takes for families to make ends meet.

2008 Federal Poverty Guidelines

Family Size	Poverty Guideline
1	\$10,400
2	\$14,000
3	\$17,600
4	\$21,200

The Self-Sufficiency Standard

Efforts targeted at helping families escape poverty or as measured by the federal poverty measure are vitally important. However, it is abundantly clear that just because someone is not officially poor does not mean they have a standard of living that allows them to fully participate in American life. Estimates based on **real costs** in local areas reveal that in Will County it takes a 1-parent family with a preschooler and a school-age child **\$54,804 a year to make ends meet**. (The 2009 Illinois Self-Sufficiency Standard. Visit www.ilsufficiency.org to learn more.)

Data Source Explanation:

Unless otherwise noted, all data are derived from the U.S. Census Bureau’s *American Community Survey* and from the *2000 Decennial Census*. The *American Community Survey* recently released estimates on 2008 income, poverty, and health insurance coverage, which are the most current data available for geographies with populations over 65,000. For more information on the *American Community Survey*, visit www.census.gov/acs/www/.

For further analysis and comments on poverty trends, implications, and solutions, contact us:

Social IMPACT Research Center

a program of Heartland Alliance
33 W. Grand Avenue, Suite 500
Chicago, IL 60654

312.870.4949 | research@heartlandalliance.org

