

Children's Defense Fund Child Poverty in the States: 2011



September 2012

The U.S. Census Bureau released new poverty data for the states that show families still struggling in the wake of the Great Recession. There were statistically significant increases in the rates of child poverty between 2010 and 2011 in 14 states, and slight increases in 26 others. Only nine states and the District of Columbia saw some small decline in their rates of children living in poverty in 2011. In South Dakota, the rate did not change.

The 14 states with statistically significant increases include:

	Child Poverty Rate (2010)	Child Poverty Rate (2011)
Arizona	24.4	27.2
California	22.0	22.8
Connecticut	12.8	14.9
Florida	23.5	24.9
Georgia	24.8	26.3
Hawaii	13.9	17.0
Illinois	19.4	21.6
Indiana	21.7	23.0
Louisiana	27.3	28.8
Michigan	23.5	24.8
New York	21.2	22.6
Oregon	21.6	23.6
South Carolina	26.1	27.8
Texas	25.7	26.6

Child Poverty

- More than one in five children were poor in over half (26) the states and the District of Columbia in 2011, and in half of these states more than one in four children were poor.
- More than one in four children under six were poor in 21 states and the District of Columbia.

- Thirteen states plus the District of Columbia had child poverty rates of 25 percent or higher:
 - Mississippi: 31.8%
 - New Mexico: 30.7
 - District of Columbia: 30.3
 - Louisiana: 28.8
 - Arkansas: 28.1
 - South Carolina: 27.8
 - Alabama: 27.6
 - Kentucky: 27.4
 - Arizona: 27.2
 - Texas: 26.6
 - Georgia: 26.3
 - Tennessee: 26.3
 - West Virginia: 25.8
 - North Carolina: 25.6

- No state had a poverty rate lower than 12 percent in 2011. (Only New Hampshire had a child poverty rate of 10 percent or lower in 2010. It was 12 percent in 2011.)

- More than half of all poor children lived in eight states in 2011:

	Number Poor	Percent Poor
California	2,084,522	22.8%
Texas	1,829,214	26.6
Florida	980,002	24.9
New York	950,921	22.6
Illinois	658,340	21.6
Georgia	646,824	26.3
Ohio	640,884	24.2
North Carolina	579,725	25.6

Extreme Child Poverty

- In a third of the states and the District of Columbia, more than 10 percent of the children lived in extreme poverty – at half or less of the poverty level.

- In 30 states and the District of Columbia, ten percent or more of poor young children under six lived in extreme poverty.

- More than half of all children in extreme poverty lived in eight states in 2011.

	Number Poor	Percent Poor
California	868,106	9.5%
Texas	762,622	11.1
New York	433,319	10.3
Florida	425,393	10.8
Ohio	306,512	11.6
Illinois	299,673	9.8
Georgia	285,013	11.6
Michigan	264,452	11.7

Children of Color

- In half the states and the District of Columbia, at least 40 percent of Black children were poor. In 32 states, at least 33 percent of Hispanic children were poor.
- Black and Hispanic children are far more likely to be poor than White children. Almost two in five Black children and one in three Hispanic children were poor in 2011; more than one in eight White, Non-Hispanic children were poor.
- The five states with the highest poverty rates for Black children were:
 - Iowa: 55.7%
 - Maine: 52.8
 - Ohio: 50.5
 - Michigan: 50.0
 - Mississippi: 49.6
- The six (because there is a tie for fifth) states with the highest poverty rates for Hispanic children were:
 - Alabama: 47.8%
 - North Carolina: 43.6
 - Pennsylvania: 42.9
 - South Carolina: 42.8
 - Arkansas: 42.7
 - Indiana: 42.7
- The five states with the highest poverty rates for White, Non-Hispanic children were:
 - West Virginia: 24.4%
 - Kentucky: 3.9
 - Arkansas: 20.0
 - Tennessee: 19.6
 - Oregon: 19.1

Figure 1:

Children in Poverty, 2010 and 2011

State	Number of Poor Children (2010)	Child Poverty Rate (2010)	Number of Poor Children (2011)	Child Poverty Rate (2011)	Percent Change in the Child Poverty Rate (2010-2011)
Alabama	310,590	27.7	306,973	27.6	-0.4
Alaska	23,773	12.9	26,941	14.5	12.4
Arizona	392,229	24.4	434,950	27.2	11.5
Arkansas	193,081	27.6	196,538	28.1	1.8
California	2,012,585	22.0	2,084,522	22.8	3.6
Colorado	210,532	17.4	217,049	17.9	2.9
Connecticut	103,498	12.8	118,809	14.9	16.4
Delaware	36,655	18.1	35,216	17.5	-3.3
District of Columbia	30,555	30.4	31,769	30.3	-0.3
Florida	923,963	23.5	980,002	24.9	6.0
Georgia	610,722	24.8	646,824	26.3	6.0
Hawaii	41,230	13.9	50,834	17.0	22.3
Idaho	80,316	19.0	85,173	20.4	7.4
Illinois	600,045	19.4	658,340	21.6	11.3
Indiana	342,172	21.7	360,859	23.0	6.0
Iowa	115,365	16.3	122,828	17.3	6.1
Kansas	131,258	18.4	133,556	18.8	2.2
Kentucky	262,760	26.3	275,394	27.4	4.2
Louisiana	299,779	27.3	317,468	28.8	5.5
Maine	47,727	17.8	49,561	18.8	5.6
Maryland	173,113	13.0	178,725	13.5	3.8
Massachusetts	200,817	14.3	211,789	15.2	6.3
Michigan	538,649	23.5	560,109	24.8	5.5
Minnesota	192,437	15.2	194,260	15.4	1.3
Mississippi	241,595	32.5	235,727	31.8	-2.2
Missouri	290,959	20.9	306,038	22.1	5.7
Montana	43,818	20.1	43,110	19.7	-2.0
Nebraska	81,952	18.2	81,943	18.1	-0.5
Nevada	144,204	22.0	144,440	22.1	0.5
New Hampshire	28,315	10.0	33,031	12.0	20.0
New Jersey	295,346	14.5	296,198	14.7	1.4
New Mexico	153,558	30.0	157,383	30.7	2.3
New York	900,626	21.2	950,921	22.6	6.6
North Carolina	559,875	24.9	579,725	25.6	2.8
North Dakota	24,116	16.2	21,827	14.6	-9.9
Ohio	623,852	23.3	640,884	24.2	3.9
Oklahoma	226,679	24.7	215,804	23.4	-5.3
Oregon	183,859	21.6	199,489	23.6	9.3
Pennsylvania	522,189	19.1	531,993	19.6	2.6
Rhode Island	42,221	19.0	47,127	21.9	15.3
South Carolina	277,722	26.1	296,759	27.8	6.5
South Dakota	35,960	18.2	35,793	18.2	0.0
Tennessee	377,066	25.7	385,931	26.3	2.3
Texas	1,751,189	25.7	1,829,214	26.6	3.5
Utah	135,565	15.7	138,024	15.9	1.3
Vermont	21,143	16.7	18,263	14.9	-10.8
Virginia	264,601	14.5	280,115	15.3	5.5
Washington	284,045	18.2	283,176	18.3	0.5
West Virginia	95,744	25.5	97,677	25.8	1.2
Wisconsin	249,826	19.1	236,730	18.2	-4.7
Wyoming	19,253	14.3	20,689	15.6	9.1
United States	15,749,129	21.6	16,386,500	22.5	4.2

Figure 2:

Children Under 6 in Poverty, 2010 and 2011

State	Number of Poor Children (2010)	Child Poverty Rate (2010)	Number of Poor Children (2011)	Child Poverty Rate (2011)	Percent Change in the Child Poverty Rate (2010-2011)
Alabama	115,617	31.9	111,887	31.6	-0.9
Alaska	11,248	17.8	9,141	14.4	-19.1
Arizona	148,456	27.5	158,188	29.8	8.4
Arkansas	76,073	32.5	74,552	32.4	-0.3
California	705,084	23.6	731,962	24.3	3.0
Colorado	85,282	20.9	85,470	21.1	1.0
Connecticut	37,962	15.8	41,046	17.5	10.8
Delaware	14,607	22.4	13,405	20.6	-8.0
District of Columbia	10,280	27.4	13,113	30.6	11.7
Florida	336,149	26.5	360,231	28.1	6.0
Georgia	232,948	28.8	239,403	29.6	2.8
Hawaii	15,913	16	17,638	17.5	9.4
Idaho	34,606	23.9	32,264	23.1	-3.3
Illinois	218,182	22.1	238,997	24.4	10.4
Indiana	130,691	25.3	135,949	26.8	5.9
Iowa	45,985	19.4	45,791	19.5	0.5
Kansas	53,598	22	56,506	23.7	7.7
Kentucky	103,486	31.6	103,566	31.5	-0.3
Louisiana	119,318	32.1	119,297	32.2	0.3
Maine	18,111	22	18,353	23.5	6.8
Maryland	65,276	15.2	66,658	15.5	2.0
Massachusetts	74,625	17	75,123	17.4	2.4
Michigan	194,128	27.6	203,647	29.5	6.9
Minnesota	73,424	17.4	76,718	18.4	5.7
Mississippi	93,290	37.8	87,610	36.4	-3.7
Missouri	117,645	26	120,227	26.3	1.2
Montana	17,475	24.2	16,891	22.8	-5.8
Nebraska	34,153	22.2	34,317	22.4	0.9
Nevada	58,563	26.4	52,173	23.4	-11.4
New Hampshire	11,360	13.8	11,853	14.7	6.5
New Jersey	108,513	16.8	116,805	18.2	8.3
New Mexico	55,922	32.9	61,943	35.5	7.9
New York	321,805	23.7	339,921	24.9	5.1
North Carolina	216,604	28.8	221,918	29.8	3.5
North Dakota	11,386	20.5	10,041	19.1	-6.8
Ohio	240,242	28.2	249,530	29.5	4.6
Oklahoma	87,412	28.4	85,530	27.5	-3.2
Oregon	68,323	24.7	72,428	26.2	6.1
Pennsylvania	188,340	21.8	195,391	22.8	4.6
Rhode Island	15,412	22.7	18,698	27.7	22.0
South Carolina	112,739	31.9	115,821	32.4	1.6
South Dakota	14,419	21.4	15,585	23	7.5
Tennessee	141,683	29.4	141,397	29.9	1.7
Texas	655,415	28.7	688,397	29.6	3.1
Utah	52,161	16.7	55,760	18	7.8
Vermont	8,761	23.5	8,535	23.3	-0.9
Virginia	105,874	17.5	106,127	17.5	0.0
Washington	109,298	21.1	102,199	20	-5.2
West Virginia	35,796	30.2	36,135	29.6	-2.0
Wisconsin	96,044	22.8	87,288	21.2	-7.0
Wyoming	9,245	18.5	8,592	18.7	1.1
United States	5,908,929	24.8	6,090,017	25.6	3.2

Figure 3:

Children in Extreme Poverty, 2010 and 2011

State	Number of Children Living in Extreme Poverty (2010)	Percent of Children Living in Extreme Poverty (2010)	Number of Children Living in Extreme Poverty (2011)	Percent of Children Living in Extreme Poverty (2011)	Percent Change in Child Poverty Rate (2010-2011)
Alabama	144,386	12.9	134,329	12.1	-6.2
Alaska	8,330	4.5	12,856	6.9	53.3
Arizona	187,864	11.7	196,441	12.3	5.1
Arkansas	82,847	11.8	88,384	12.6	6.8
California	847,366	9.3	868,106	9.5	2.2
Colorado	91,476	7.5	98,881	8.1	8.0
Connecticut	50,340	6.2	54,304	6.8	9.7
Delaware	15,473	7.6	17,604	8.7	14.5
District of Columbia	16,257	16.2	17,317	16.5	1.9
Florida	411,134	10.4	425,393	10.8	3.8
Georgia	278,546	11.3	285,013	11.6	2.7
Hawaii	21,313	7.2	25,645	8.6	19.4
Idaho	31,744	7.5	36,604	8.8	17.3
Illinois	264,378	8.6	299,673	9.8	14.0
Indiana	154,936	9.8	180,971	11.6	18.4
Iowa	47,791	6.7	57,203	8.1	20.9
Kansas	56,430	7.9	52,730	7.4	-6.3
Kentucky	126,216	12.6	132,602	13.2	4.8
Louisiana	134,938	12.3	159,314	14.4	17.1
Maine	16,921	6.3	18,181	6.9	9.5
Maryland	92,180	6.9	93,295	7.1	2.9
Massachusetts	92,332	6.6	101,496	7.3	10.6
Michigan	248,100	10.8	264,452	11.7	8.3
Minnesota	81,353	6.4	81,165	6.4	0.0
Mississippi	115,078	15.5	112,589	15.2	-1.9
Missouri	133,543	9.6	143,983	10.4	8.3
Montana	20,975	9.6	18,584	8.5	-11.5
Nebraska	32,591	7.2	37,940	8.4	16.7
Nevada	65,642	10.0	62,523	9.6	-4.0
New Hampshire	13,639	4.8	17,326	6.3	31.3
New Jersey	131,256	6.4	141,122	7.0	9.4
New Mexico	66,342	13.0	72,883	14.2	9.2
New York	426,713	10.1	433,319	10.3	2.0
North Carolina	258,770	11.5	259,877	11.5	0.0
North Dakota	11,679	7.9	10,715	7.2	-8.9
Ohio	309,869	11.6	306,512	11.6	0.0
Oklahoma	98,058	10.7	97,646	10.6	-0.9
Oregon	80,601	9.5	83,604	9.9	4.2
Pennsylvania	230,286	8.4	249,808	9.2	9.5
Rhode Island	18,339	8.3	22,756	10.6	27.7
South Carolina	142,050	13.3	139,974	13.1	-1.5
South Dakota	15,469	7.8	15,118	7.7	-1.3
Tennessee	179,557	12.2	176,643	12.0	-1.6
Texas	720,680	10.6	762,622	11.1	4.7
Utah	55,826	6.5	52,973	6.1	-6.2
Vermont	9,086	7.2	6,647	5.4	-25.0
Virginia	114,051	6.2	130,657	7.1	14.5
Washington	121,897	7.8	123,045	8.0	2.6
West Virginia	40,872	10.9	44,194	11.7	7.3
Wisconsin	101,312	7.7	102,810	7.9	2.6
Wyoming	6,320	4.7	8,168	6.2	31.9
United States	7023152	9.6	7,335,997	10.1	5.2

Figure 4:

Children Under 6 in Extreme Poverty, 2010 and 2011

State	Number of Children Under 6 Living in Extreme Poverty (2010)	Percent of Children Under 6 Living in Extreme Poverty (2010)	Number of Children Under 6 Living in Extreme Poverty (2011)	Percent of Children Under 6 Living in Extreme Poverty (2011)	Percent Change in the Rate of Children Under 6 Living in Extreme Poverty (2010-2011)
Alabama	54,844	15.2	53,519	15.1	-0.7
Alaska	3,639	5.8	4,323	6.8	17.2
Arizona	75,645	14.0	69,904	13.2	-5.7
Arkansas	34,532	14.8	33,464	14.5	-2.0
California	307,513	10.3	313,016	10.4	1.0
Colorado	35,360	8.7	38,429	9.5	9.2
Connecticut	18,216	7.6	20,553	8.7	14.5
Delaware	5,257	8.1	6,470	10.0	23.5
District of Columbia	6,145	16.3	7,715	18.0	10.4
Florida	152,934	12.1	159,504	12.4	2.5
Georgia	108,359	13.4	113,235	14.0	4.5
Hawaii	8,614	8.7	10,447	10.4	19.5
Idaho	12,730	8.8	14,710	10.5	19.3
Illinois	104,420	10.6	109,052	11.1	4.7
Indiana	60,438	11.7	72,914	14.4	23.1
Iowa	19,270	8.1	22,674	9.6	18.5
Kansas	24,085	9.9	23,469	9.8	-1.0
Kentucky	53,465	16.3	51,083	15.5	-4.9
Louisiana	57,387	15.4	63,630	17.2	11.7
Maine	7,198	8.8	7,698	9.9	12.5
Maryland	33,326	7.8	35,509	8.2	5.1
Massachusetts	37,458	8.5	39,066	9.0	5.9
Michigan	98,897	14.1	105,334	15.2	7.8
Minnesota	32,023	7.6	33,927	8.1	6.6
Mississippi	47,366	19.2	44,034	18.3	-4.7
Missouri	56,316	12.4	59,959	13.1	5.6
Montana	8,687	12.0	7,596	10.2	-15.0
Nebraska	14,519	9.4	16,697	10.9	16.0
Nevada	28,099	12.7	23,802	10.7	-15.7
New Hampshire	5,316	6.4	6,363	7.9	23.4
New Jersey	50,251	7.8	56,653	8.8	12.8
New Mexico	24,644	14.5	30,266	17.4	20.0
New York	158,651	11.7	162,247	11.9	1.7
North Carolina	103,778	13.8	103,029	13.8	0.0
North Dakota	5,829	10.5	4,978	9.5	-9.5
Ohio	127,860	15.0	125,781	14.9	-0.7
Oklahoma	42,648	13.8	39,543	12.7	-8.0
Oregon	30,378	11.0	29,907	10.8	-1.8
Pennsylvania	91,123	10.6	96,132	11.2	5.7
Rhode Island	7,235	10.6	10,324	15.3	44.3
South Carolina	61,753	17.5	59,478	16.6	-5.1
South Dakota	5,533	8.2	5,558	8.2	0.0
Tennessee	74,439	15.4	67,907	14.4	-6.5
Texas	284,689	12.5	305,867	13.1	4.8
Utah	21,534	6.9	21,143	6.8	-1.4
Vermont	4,076	10.9	2,910	7.9	-27.5
Virginia	48,682	8.1	50,307	8.3	2.5
Washington	47,117	9.1	45,629	8.9	-2.2
West Virginia	16,908	14.2	17,984	14.7	3.5
Wisconsin	40,263	9.5	38,543	9.4	-1.1
Wyoming	3,036	6.1	3,795	8.3	36.1
United States	2,762,485	11.6	2,846,077	12.0	3.4

Figure 5:

Child Poverty, by Race/Ethnicity, 2011

State	White, non-Hispanic		Black		Hispanic	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Alabama	106,239	16.2	157,722	45.8	31,901	47.8
Alaska	9,057	9.4	1,199	20.1	1,208	8.2
Arizona	101,690	15.4	20,924	27.1	257,958	37.2
Arkansas	90,688	20.0	61,544	45.4	32,174	42.7
California	254,195	10.3	182,842	34.3	1,449,440	30.8
Colorado	69,599	10.0	18,467	36.9	116,101	30.9
Connecticut	27,240	5.7	32,860	34.0	56,233	35.3
Delaware	9,658	9.0	13,797	26.9	7,755	28.6
District of Columbia	87	0.4	28,881	43.2	2,376	17.9
Florida	262,936	14.8	340,841	41.2	339,246	30.6
Georgia	168,408	14.7	320,753	38.5	134,854	42.2
Hawaii	5,794	14.0	610	10.6	11,626	25.4
Idaho	48,917	15.3	n/a	n/a	28,045	39.2
Illinois	183,239	11.4	224,740	44.8	216,490	30.0
Indiana	191,365	16.6	82,960	48.7	65,853	42.7
Iowa	72,945	12.6	16,237	55.7	25,326	41.3
Kansas	57,737	11.9	21,636	46.2	40,474	33.4
Kentucky	192,812	23.9	41,244	45.7	21,172	41.9
Louisiana	86,212	14.9	199,543	48.3	14,822	26.8
Maine	40,610	17.2	2,608	52.8	2,449	37.0
Maryland	41,806	6.9	91,277	21.2	26,456	17.7
Massachusetts	78,661	8.5	33,203	27.8	85,034	40.4
Michigan	267,425	17.3	183,218	50.0	63,412	37.5
Minnesota	83,637	9.1	41,563	45.8	30,744	30.0
Mississippi	56,585	15.6	161,229	49.6	11,042	40.9
Missouri	176,214	17.1	76,496	41.7	28,426	34.6
Montana	26,839	15.4	n/a	n/a	2,986	25.4
Nebraska	37,237	11.4	10,051	40.2	25,284	36.1
Nevada	35,497	13.9	20,539	36.2	76,316	29.1
New Hampshire	26,175	10.9	1,596	40.6	3,482	25.9
New Jersey	71,154	6.9	83,965	28.1	122,664	26.4
New Mexico	19,998	14.9	3,468	27.9	108,295	35.9
New York	281,707	13.2	248,721	34.0	345,395	36.0
North Carolina	185,897	15.0	217,873	40.0	138,433	43.6
North Dakota	10,269	8.5	n/a	n/a	1,558	28.0
Ohio	345,347	17.6	188,612	50.5	51,704	38.6
Oklahoma	84,118	16.4	33,867	44.8	47,974	35.2
Oregon	105,041	19.1	8,116	40.7	65,540	36.2
Pennsylvania	237,232	12.3	144,397	40.8	112,197	42.9
Rhode Island	16,252	11.9	7,096	38.9	18,903	41.2
South Carolina	98,976	16.8	151,263	44.4	36,162	42.8
South Dakota	14,734	9.8	1,876		2,762	34.6
Tennessee	194,089	19.6	126,038	43.6	45,762	41.7
Texas	248,649	10.9	281,325	34.1	1,247,373	37.1
Utah	70,572	10.8	2,558	19.4	49,017	34.0
Vermont	15,602	14.0	n/a	n/a	496	17.8
Virginia	93,230	9.1	109,758	27.8	49,074	23.8
Washington	115,142	12.4	20,340	33.7	107,930	35.7
West Virginia	83,081	24.4	5,290	48.5	2,508	38.4
Wisconsin	111,211	11.7	56,134	49.1	47,408	35.4
Wyoming	13,533	13.0	n/a	n/a	4,411	22.7
United States	5,225,338	13.5	4,079,277	39.4	5,814,251	33.9

Notes and Citations:

Figure 1: Source: U.S. Census Bureau. 2012. 2010 and 2011 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates, Table B17001. Accessed via American FactFinder 2: <http://factfinder2.census.gov>. Additional calculations by the Children's Defense Fund.

Figure 2: Source: U.S. Census Bureau. 2012. 2010 and 2011 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates, Table B17001. Accessed via American FactFinder 2: <http://factfinder2.census.gov>. Additional calculations by the Children's Defense Fund.

Figure 3: Source: U.S. Census Bureau. 2012. 2010 and 2011 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates, Table B17024. Accessed via American FactFinder 2: <http://factfinder2.census.gov>. Additional calculations by the Children's Defense Fund.

Figure 4: Source: U.S. Census Bureau. 2012. 2010 and 2011 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates, Table B17024. Accessed via American FactFinder 2: <http://factfinder2.census.gov>. Additional calculations by the Children's Defense Fund.

Figure 5: Source: U.S. Census Bureau. 2012. 2011 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates, Table B17020B, B17020H, B17020I. Accessed via American FactFinder 2: <http://factfinder2.census.gov>. Additional calculations by the Children's Defense Fund.