



Children in the States

WEST VIRGINIA

September 2015

Child Population

380,147 children lived in West Virginia in 2014; 11 percent were children of color.

- 89 percent were White
- 2 percent were Hispanic
- 4 percent were Black
- 1 percent were Asian
- 4 percent were two or more races
- <1 percent were American Indian/Alaska Native
- <1 percent were Pacific Islander

Child Poverty

Nearly 1 in 4 (24.7 percent) of West Virginia's children were poor in 2014, a total of 91,533 children.¹

- West Virginia ranked 40th in child poverty among states.²
- More than 1 in 9 children lived in extreme poverty at less than half the poverty level.
- The youngest children were the poorest age group. Nearly 3 in 10 children under age 6 were poor; more than half of the poor children were extremely poor.

Children of color in West Virginia are disproportionately poor.

- Nearly 1 in 2 Black children and nearly 2 in 5 Hispanic children were poor in 2014, compared to nearly 1 in 4 White children.

Child Hunger and Homelessness

Child poverty in West Virginia leads to unacceptable child homelessness and hunger.

- More than 8,000 West Virginia public school students were homeless in the 2012-2013 school year.
- In 2014, nearly 2 full-time minimum-wage jobs were necessary to be able to afford a fair market rent two-bedroom apartment in West Virginia and still have enough left over for food, utilities and other necessities.
- More than 23 percent of children lived in households that lacked access to adequate food in 2013. Nearly 34 percent of children ages 10-17 were overweight or obese in 2011-2012. West Virginia ranked 33rd of 50 states in child food security and 37th in percent of children overweight and obese.
- Nearly 34 percent of West Virginia children relied on the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) to meet their nutritional needs on an average month in FY2013.
- Nearly 90 percent of West Virginia children receiving a free and reduced-price lunch during the school year did not participate in Summer Nutrition Programs in 2014 – ranking West Virginia 40th of 50 states in ensuring that children have adequate summer nutrition.

Child Health

Although the majority of West Virginia's children have access to health coverage, that does not guarantee enrollment in coverage or access to care, which can jeopardize their education and their future.

- In 2013, 91.6 percent of eligible children participated in Medicaid or CHIP, West Virginia's Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP). In FY2013, a total of 260,326 West Virginia children ages 0-18 were enrolled in Medicaid, and 37,065 in CHIP.

¹ A family of four was poor if it was living on less than \$23,834 a year, \$1,986 a month, \$458 a week and \$65 a day, and extremely poor if living on less than \$11,917 a year, \$993 a month, \$229 a week and \$33 a day.

² The state ranked 1st is the best for children for that outcome and the state ranked 50th is the worst for children.

- More than 20,000 West Virginia children ages 0-17 (5.3 percent) were uninsured in 2013. The state had the 14th lowest rate of uninsured children among states.
- In 2012, 15,000 uninsured children ages 0-18 were eligible for Medicaid or CHIP but not enrolled.

Early Childhood and Education

Lack of early childhood investments deprives children of critical supports in the early years and reduces school readiness.

- In 2013, the average annual cost of center-based child care for an infant was \$7,800 – 24.8 percent more than the average annual in-state tuition and fees at a public four-year college in West Virginia.
- West Virginia did not have a waiting list for child care assistance in early 2014.
- On average, 36 percent of West Virginia's 3- and 4-year-olds were enrolled in public or private preschool from 2011-2013. Only 33 percent of children from families with incomes under 200 percent of poverty were enrolled.
- West Virginia's state-funded preschool program met 9 of the 10 quality benchmarks set by the National Institute for Early Education Research in 2013-2014.

West Virginia's schools fail to educate all children, closing off a crucial pathway out of poverty.

- In 2013, 73 percent of West Virginia's fourth grade public school students were unable to read at grade level and 65 percent were unable to compute at grade level.
 - 86 percent of Black fourth graders could not read at grade level and 75 percent could not compute.
- 80 percent of West Virginia public high school students graduated on time in 2012, placing West Virginia 27th among states. 76 percent of Black students and 81 percent of Hispanic students graduated on time compared to 80 percent of White students.
- Students who are suspended or expelled are more likely to drop out of school. During the 2011-2012 school year, 14 percent of West Virginia public school students received at least one out-of-school suspension, placing West Virginia 41st among states. For Black and Hispanic students, the percentages were 27 percent and 12 percent, respectively.

Children Facing Special Risks

Many vulnerable children need treatment, services and permanent families.

- In West Virginia, 4,695 children were abused or neglected in 2013 – 12.3 out of 1,000 children.
- On the last day of FY2013, there were 4,369 West Virginia children in foster care.

Too many West Virginia children are involved in the juvenile justice system.

- 2,295 children were arrested in West Virginia in 2012 – a rate of 1,312 out of 100,000 children ages 10-17.
- 489 children and youth were in residential placement in 2011. 12 percent of the children in residential placement were Black, 1 percent was Hispanic, and 77 percent were White.
- No West Virginia children were in adult jails in 2013.
- West Virginia spent 3.9 times as much per prisoner as per public school student in FY2012.

West Virginia ranked 8th out of 41 ranked states in preventing child and teen gun deaths.

- A total of 10 children and teens were killed by guns in West Virginia in 2013 – a rate of 2.3* out of 100,000 children and teens.

For sources please visit www.childrensdefense.org/cits

* Rate is unreliable because it based on fewer than 20 deaths.