

Definition of Poverty (2007):

For 2007, the federal Department of Health and Human Services has issued the following poverty guidelines for the continental U.S.:

<u>Household Size</u>	<u>Income</u>
One person	\$ 10,210
Two	13,690
Three	17,170
Four	20,650

SOURCE: *Federal Register*, vol. 72, no. 15, Jan. 24, 2007

How Many Texans are Poor?

In 2006, an estimated 3.8 million people in Texas lived below the federal poverty guidelines. Children accounted for 1.4 million of the state’s poor.

The poverty rate in Texas was 16.4% overall in 2006. The Texas rate is 5th highest among states (using a 2004-06 three-year average), after Mississippi (19.8%), Louisiana (17.4%), New Mexico (17.1%), and Kentucky (16.5%). The U.S. average is 12.3% (36.5 million people).

SOURCE: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey 2007, Annual Social and Economic Supplement.

By Age Group (2005-06):

- Under 18: 22.0% (1.4 million)
- 18 to 64: 14.3% (2.0 million)
- 65 & over: 12.9% (322,600)

SOURCE: U.S. Census Bureau, CPS 2006 & 2007, ASES.

By Race/Ethnicity (2005-06)

- 2.1 million Hispanics
- 660,100 Blacks
- 985,300 Non-Hispanic White and Other

Within ethnic categories, poverty rates are:

- 25.1% for Hispanics
- 25.3% for Blacks
- 8.2% for Non-Hispanic White/Other

SOURCE: U.S. Census Bureau, CPS 2006 & 2007, ASES.

By County (2006)

The 10 most populous counties in Texas have the following estimated poverty populations:

	<u>Rate</u>	<u>Total Poor</u>
Harris	16.4%	631,006
Dallas	16.5	382,161
Tarrant	13.0	213,599
Bexar	16.7	251,729
Travis	15.2	137,687
El Paso	27.7	199,184
Hidalgo	36.9	256,225
Collin	6.2	42,927
Denton	8.6	49,143
Fort Bend	7.5	36,610

Cameron and Hidalgo have poverty rates greater than 30% and are among the poorest large counties in the nation.

SOURCE: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, Table S1701

Working, but Poor

Most poor families in Texas include at least one adult who works.

- The federal minimum wage was increased in July 2007 to \$5.85 per hour, or \$12,168 annually for a full-time worker—about 71% of the federal poverty line for a family of three. Before 1980, the federal minimum wage was high enough to keep a family of three out of poverty; by 2006, it had fallen to 65% of poverty.
- Almost 60% of Texas’ poor families with children in 2005 had one or more adults who worked half the year or more (26 to 39 weeks). About 1.1 million Texas children have parents who will directly benefit from the federal minimum wage increase.

Poverty vs. Public Assistance

In 1997, when the state had an estimated 3.3 million poor residents, 2.1 million Texans were receiving Food Stamps on average each month, or about two-thirds of the poor. The cash assistance (TANF) caseload was only 600,128 per month—fewer than one-fifth of Texans in poverty. Food Stamp caseloads declined to 1.4 million in fiscal 2000, then recovered to 2.3 million by 2007. TANF rolls were down to 133,167 recipients in July 2007.

SOURCE: Texas Health and Human Services Commission

Among the states, Texas is tied for last place in family welfare benefits (TANF, Food Stamps, and federal EITC) as a percentage of poverty-level income (69.9% in 2003).

SOURCE: *CQ’s State Fact Finder 2007*.