



Poverty Estimates for New Hampshire Counties

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On October 20, 2017, the U.S. Census Bureau made available estimates of poverty and other indicators for 2016 for small geographic areas. In considering these data from the American Community Survey (ACS), it is important to pay close attention to the margins of error (MOE) before reaching any conclusions—especially when doing comparisons such as comparing poverty rates between counties and years.

The margins of error are quite high for small counties, making those estimates particularly unreliable and imprecise. For example, the recently released data show Coös County with a poverty rate of 11.7 percent, but the associated margin of error of 4.0 percentage points suggests a wide range of probable values (estimated poverty rate between of 7.7 and 15.7 percent). The estimates for child poverty are even more imprecise, due to even larger margins of error with this smaller population. As New Hampshire has small counties generally, county differences in these estimated poverty rates within New Hampshire are not substantially or statistically meaningful.

It is possible to do such comparisons but only by combining multiple years of ACS data to increase the statistical validity of the estimates. In our work, we rely on multi-year data to specifically provide more reliable estimates of poverty for New Hampshire counties. The table below uses the most recent five-year estimates from the ACS (2011–2015). These will be updated in December when the U.S. Census Bureau releases 2012–2016 data.



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ESTIMATED NUMBER AND PERCENT POOR FOR TOTAL AND CHILD POPULATION, BY NEW HAMPSHIRE COUNTY

	TOTAL POPULATION				CHILDREN			
	Estimate	MOE	Percent	MOE	Estimate	MOE	Percent	MOE
Belknap County, New Hampshire	6,214	948	10.5%	1.6%	2,119	511	18.2%	4.2%
Carroll County, New Hampshire	4,484	771	9.5%	1.6%	900	286	11.2%	3.5%
Cheshire County, New Hampshire	8,467	1,278	11.8%	1.8%	2,374	556	16.9%	3.8%
Coos County, New Hampshire	4,257	487	14.1%	1.6%	1,202	209	21.7%	3.5%
Grafton County, New Hampshire	9,609	1,182	11.6%	1.4%	2,372	516	15.5%	3.3%
Hillsborough County, New Hampshire	34,681	2,533	8.8%	0.6%	10,367	1,078	11.7%	1.2%
Merrimack County, New Hampshire	12,840	1,161	9.1%	0.8%	3,619	556	12.3%	1.9%
Rockingham County, New Hampshire	16,192	1,561	5.5%	0.5%	4,586	709	7.3%	1.1%
Strafford County, New Hampshire	12,997	1,303	11.1%	1.1%	3,118	528	12.9%	2.1%
Sullivan County, New Hampshire	4,099	851	9.7%	2.0%	1,062	365	12.7%	4.3%

Note: MOEs represent 95% confidence interval

Source: American Community Survey 2015 5-year Estimates, Table B17020