

SUBJECT: 2017 State-Level Estimates of Infants and Pre-School-Age Children at or Below 185 Percent of Poverty

TO: Sarah Widor
Director
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Attached are estimates of the number of infants and children (ages 1-4) in each State at or below 185 percent of poverty in 2017. The 2017 estimates are provided for use in the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) funding formula to determine States' fair shares of WIC food funds for fiscal year (FY) 2020. The 2017 estimates are recommended for use in FY 2020 funding allocations because they reflect the most recent data available. These estimates are directly estimated from the American Community Survey (ACS). Estimates for Puerto Rico are based on the 2017 Puerto Rico Community Survey. Estimates for the other territories are based on data from the 2010 Census. (Note: the estimates for the States presented in this memo were produced using direct estimates from the ACS. These estimates are not comparable to the more comprehensive WIC eligibility estimates produced by Insight Policy Research under contract with FNS and to be published sometime this fall/winter.)

Nationwide, the estimated number of infants and children (ages 1-4) at or below 185 percent of poverty decreased by 3 percent from 2016 to 2017.¹ It is important to note that we do not know how much of this decrease is real and how much is due to sampling variation in the ACS. The State-level estimates provided here are consistent with the national number of infants and children at or below 185 percent of poverty. Because the 2017 data will be updating 2016 data for funding formula purposes, comparisons are shown between these two years.

Attached is a brief summary of the estimates and the methodology used to develop them. We recommend releasing these materials to the States and other interested organizations on request.



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Attachments

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¹ These findings are different than the findings in the WIC eligibility reports, as the WIC eligibility reports take into account additional considerations such as adjunctive income eligibility, monthly fluctuations in income, and certification periods, so the two estimates are not directly comparable.

2017 STATE-LEVEL ESTIMATES OF INFANTS AND CHILDREN (AGES 1-4) AT OR BELOW 185 PERCENT OF POVERTY

Overview

Prior to Fiscal Year (FY) 1995, estimates of the number of infants and children (ages 1-4) at or below 185 percent of poverty were available for Census years only. For the FY 1995-2015 funding allocations, annual estimates were developed using a statistical technique known as “shrinkage.” The Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) used this methodology to develop State-level estimates of infants and children at or below 185 percent of poverty for 1992-2012.

Starting with the 2013 estimates, FNS has used a different methodology to develop the estimates for the States and Puerto Rico, per the decision memo from WIC (dated February 23, 2015). The 2017 estimates are directly estimated from the ACS/PRCS, with an adjustment to account for the fact that WIC uses federal poverty guidelines to establish eligibility, rather than the poverty thresholds used by the Census Bureau.

Since the territories are not included in the ACS, the estimates assume that the Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, and the Northern Mariana Islands have the same share of the number of infants and children at or below 185 percent of poverty that they did in 2010.

As the most current data, the 2017 estimates should be used for funding allocations for FY 2020.

Results

For 2017, the total number of infants and children at or below 185 percent of poverty in the United States, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, and the Northern Mariana Islands was estimated to be 8.1 million. Table 1 provides estimates of the number of infants and children at or below 185 percent of poverty in 2017 in each State and territory and the national totals. Also shown are the 2016 direct ACS estimates.

Use of the Estimates in the Funding Formula

State-level estimates of infants and children at or below 185 percent of poverty are used in the funding formula to determine each State's share of the national total of infants and children at or below 185 percent of poverty. This percentage share is used to determine a State's “fair share” of food funds. For example, for a State with 1 percent of the national total of infants and children at or below 185 percent of poverty, the fair share would be 1 percent of the total food funds.

Estimates of pregnant, postpartum and breastfeeding women at or below 185 percent of poverty are not used in determining fair share for the allocation process. Women are estimated directly from the number of infants at or below 185 percent of poverty. As a

result, inclusion of estimates of women would have no significant impact on the percentage distribution of people at or below 185 percent of poverty among States. Therefore, for simplicity, estimates of pregnant, postpartum, and breastfeeding women are not included in the calculation.

TABLE 1
STATE-LEVEL ESTIMATES OF INFANTS AND CHILDREN AT OR BELOW 185% OF POVERTY, 2016 AND 2017

	2016	2016	2016	2017	2017	2017
State	Infants	Children (ages 1-4)	Infants + Children (ages 1-4)	Infants	Children (ages 1-4)	Infants + Children (ages 1-4)
Alabama	25,882	108,700	134,582	29,228	117,673	146,901
Alaska	5,343	21,534	26,877	5,567	19,653	25,220
Arizona	36,891	173,848	210,739	37,807	166,260	204,067
Arkansas	21,141	80,918	102,059	17,743	74,238	91,981
California	178,925	844,635	1,023,560	166,109	757,763	923,872
Colorado	19,022	83,879	102,901	21,039	83,798	104,837
Connecticut	9,184	47,630	56,814	8,259	42,957	51,216
Delaware	3,438	15,108	18,546	4,952	20,171	25,123
District of Columbia	2,695	12,135	14,830	4,029	13,179	17,208
Florida	104,756	423,103	527,859	99,627	418,206	517,833
Georgia	60,905	254,166	315,071	63,111	241,839	304,950
Hawaii	6,695	23,143	29,838	6,194	25,889	32,083
Idaho	9,378	39,407	48,785	11,961	39,171	51,132
Illinois	56,992	235,931	292,923	51,521	236,689	288,210
Indiana	35,444	151,504	186,948	30,102	145,273	175,375
Iowa	16,960	52,121	69,081	15,148	53,985	69,133
Kansas	11,376	61,439	72,815	16,231	63,294	79,525
Kentucky	23,546	115,038	138,584	26,557	106,349	132,906
Louisiana	30,720	118,332	149,052	29,373	127,386	156,759
Maine	4,217	20,694	24,911	6,149	16,550	22,699
Maryland	16,699	93,045	109,744	16,763	84,673	101,436
Massachusetts	18,538	79,474	98,012	21,569	82,015	103,584
Michigan	51,109	205,063	256,172	43,113	207,854	250,967
Minnesota	20,733	84,465	105,198	19,307	82,123	101,430
Mississippi	20,650	75,628	96,278	17,821	73,975	91,796
Missouri	30,920	128,013	158,933	30,173	124,633	154,806
Montana	3,647	25,042	28,689	4,606	19,299	23,905
Nebraska	9,067	39,700	48,767	10,360	38,833	49,193
Nevada	15,216	70,303	85,519	16,606	63,275	79,881
New Hampshire	2,902	10,295	13,197	3,302	12,110	15,412
New Jersey	33,759	131,303	165,062	28,833	127,380	156,213
New Mexico	13,352	54,901	68,253	15,893	52,864	68,757
New York	88,697	367,912	456,609	80,798	359,688	440,486
North Carolina	54,863	216,371	271,234	53,248	217,799	271,047
North Dakota	2,445	14,231	16,676	3,576	11,759	15,335
Ohio	56,272	241,740	298,012	60,497	243,624	304,121
Oklahoma	22,527	102,914	125,441	28,500	95,191	123,691
Oregon	15,602	77,222	92,824	15,993	76,428	92,421
Pennsylvania	47,613	209,222	256,835	48,293	223,438	271,731
Rhode Island	4,830	15,866	20,696	3,423	14,045	17,468
South Carolina	28,364	114,693	143,057	28,142	110,836	138,978
South Dakota	6,671	19,117	25,788	5,090	15,600	20,690
Tennessee	34,029	162,466	196,495	35,470	150,369	185,839
Texas	183,993	744,124	928,117	171,522	739,125	910,647
Utah	20,341	66,299	86,640	16,369	69,420	85,789
Vermont	1,860	6,960	8,820	864	8,572	9,436
Virginia	30,180	127,248	157,428	32,469	129,568	162,037
Washington	33,218	127,599	160,817	31,159	111,567	142,726
West Virginia	12,091	42,728	54,819	9,510	37,788	47,298
Wisconsin	24,526	101,603	126,129	21,835	88,326	110,161
Wyoming	2,130	10,796	12,926	2,086	13,489	15,575
United States	1,570,354	6,649,608	8,219,962	1,527,897	6,455,989	7,983,886
Puerto Rico	20,100	112,781	132,881	21,258	100,654	121,912
Virgin Islands	790	3,021	3,811	768	2,933	3,701
Guam	1,417	5,766	7,183	1,378	5,598	6,977
American Samoa	1,057	3,840	4,897	1,029	3,728	4,757
CNMI	681	2,612	3,293	663	2,536	3,198
Total- US + territories	1,594,399	6,777,628	8,372,026	1,552,993	6,571,438	8,124,431