



MANY CHILDREN AND FAMILIES ARE IMPACTED BY INCOMES BELOW POVERTY IN NORTH DAKOTA

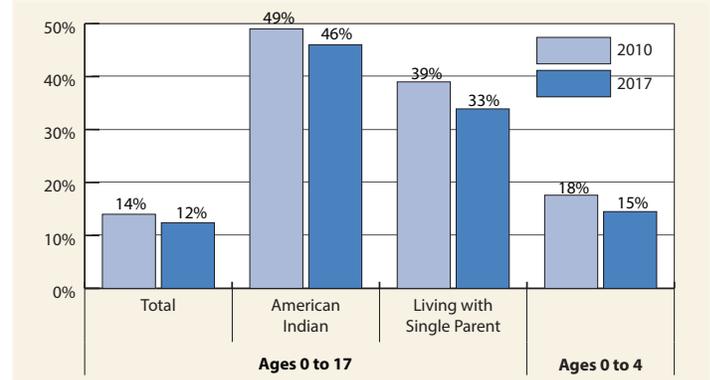
A family's economic situation has important implications for the health and well-being of a child. Financially stable families have resources to cover their expenses and save for the future. This stability helps provide their children with a foundation for future success. Many families face significant barriers to financial stability. For some, growing up in an impoverished family can create cumulative disadvantages that can powerfully influence the direction of a child's life, especially if those disadvantages are not mitigated by other sources of support.

While there is continuing debate about the best approach to measuring poverty in the United States, the official poverty measure uses a set of income thresholds that vary by family size and composition, and are adjusted annually for changes in the cost of living (but are the same across the United States). In 2017, a four-person family (i.e., two adults, two children) in United States earning \$24,858 or less was considered to be living in poverty¹. In North Dakota, nearly 21,000 children live in families with incomes below the federal poverty level (12% of all children in 2017) (Figure 1)². However, many researchers agree that, on average, families need an income of about twice the federal poverty level to meet their most basic needs³. In North Dakota, 30 percent of children live in families with incomes below 200 percent of the federal poverty level (50,602 children in 2017)². Nationally, 42 percent of children live in families with incomes below 200 percent of poverty (31 million children in 2017)².

When compared with other states, North Dakota has the second lowest child poverty rate in the nation (behind New Hampshire at 10%)². In addition, North Dakota has the fifth lowest percentage of children living in families with incomes less than 200% of poverty².

Contributing to the state's relatively low child poverty rate is that most North Dakotans are working. North Dakota has the largest percentage of adults working in the nation (80% in 2017)⁴ and the second smallest annual unemployment rate among states (2.6% in 2017)⁵. Thus, most children have working parents. In fact, three-fourths of children ages 0 to 13 live in households where all the parents are in the labor force (75% in 2017)². While this is encouraging, unfortunately nearly one in five working parents in North Dakota have incomes falling below 200% of the federal poverty level (19 percent)⁶.

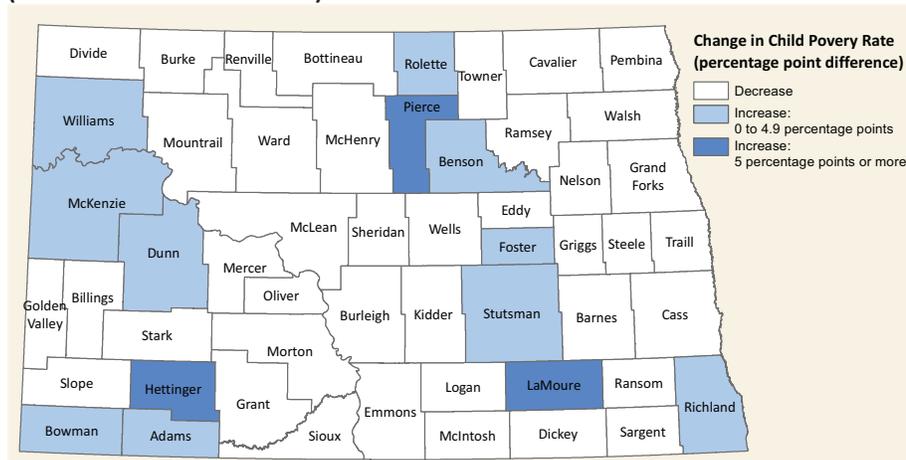
FIGURE 1. NORTH DAKOTA CHILD POVERTY RATES BY AGE, RACE, AND FAMILY TYPE: 2010 AND 2017^{2,7}



Also encouraging is that the child poverty rate has been gradually showing improvement. Child poverty in North Dakota decreased by two percentage points since 2010 (12% in 2017 compared to 14% in 2010)². In fact, from 2010 to 2017, the child poverty rate decreased in a majority of counties (40 of 53 counties) (Figure 2)^{2,7}. That said, the remaining 13 counties showed an increase in the child poverty rate since 2010 - they are mostly rural in nature and about half of them are located in the far western part of the state (Figure 2 and Table 1)^{2,7}.

For children experiencing the effects of lower family incomes, barriers to moving out of poverty are more prevalent depending on where they live, age, race, and family composition. Within North Dakota, younger children (i.e., ages 0-4) have a higher poverty rate than older children (i.e., ages 5 to 17) (15% and 12%, respectively in 2017)². North Dakota children living with a single parent are eight times more likely to live in poverty than children living with married parents (34% compared to 4%, respectively in 2017)². Nearly half of all American Indian children living in North Dakota were impoverished in 2017 (46%), six times the rate for white children in the state (7%)². Similar to the overall trend, there has been slight improvement in these rates since 2010 (Figure 1)^{2,7}.

FIGURE 2. CHANGE IN THE CHILD POVERTY RATE FOR NORTH DAKOTA COUNTIES (DIFFERENCE IN PERCENTAGES): 2010-2017^{2,7}



When children lack opportunities to fulfill their potential, the cost to communities can be steep. Economists estimate that child poverty costs the United States \$500 billion annually in lost productivity and spending on health care and the criminal justice system⁸. Fortunately, research also suggests that there are effective ways to intervene at all points in the life course and improve child outcomes. The Brookings Institution highlights four key policy areas that play an important role in addressing poverty in America: promoting early childhood development, supporting opportunities for disadvantaged youth, skill development and job creation, and improving safety net and work supports. Efforts in these areas are shown to improve school readiness; social, emotional, and cognitive development; physical health; school achievement; and adult success³. Understanding these data is critical to making good public policy and strategic investments that can make a tremendous difference in children's lives.

¹U.S. Census Bureau. Poverty Thresholds for 2017 by Size of Family and Number of Related Children Under 18 Years, <https://bit.ly/2cQ6Ya1>. ²U.S. Census Bureau. 2013-2017 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, <https://factfinder.census.gov> and <https://dataferrett.census.gov/>. ³The Hamilton Project, Policies to Address Poverty in America, <https://bit.ly/2tumX3o>. ⁴North Dakota Compass, Workforce, Proportion of Adults Working, <https://bit.ly/2coIWXu>. ⁵U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Local Area Unemployment Statistics, <https://www.bls.gov/lau/tables.htm>. ⁶Institute for Child, Youth and Family Policy. The Heller School Brandeis University, <http://www.diversitydatakids.org>. ⁷U.S. Census Bureau, 2006-2010 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, <https://factfinder.census.gov>. ⁸U.S. Census Bureau. Census 2000 Summary File 3, <https://factfinder.census.gov>. ⁹National Center for Children in Poverty, Ten Important Questions about Child Poverty and Family Economic Hardship, <http://www.nccp.org/taq.html>.

TABLE 1. NUMBER AND PERCENT OF CHILDREN LIVING IN POVERTY* IN NORTH DAKOTA BY COUNTY: 2000, 2010, AND 2017^{2,7,8}

	Children Ages 0 through 17 Living in Families with Incomes Below Poverty (i.e., below 100% of the federal poverty level)					
	2000		2010		2017	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
North Dakota	22,163	14.0%	20,713	14.2%	20,789	12.4%
Adams	67	11.1%	31	7.1%	42	8.8%
Barnes	286	11.0%	277	12.6%	241	11.1%
Benson	958	39.2%	1,062	48.3%	1,169	50.8%
Billings	23	11.0%	23	11.9%	23	10.8%
Bottineau	192	12.3%	198	16.5%	121	9.0%
Bowman	77	9.9%	17	2.6%	44	5.8%
Burke	81	17.3%	34	9.4%	43	7.1%
Burleigh	1,547	9.1%	2,060	11.6%	1,833	8.9%
Cass	2,699	9.5%	3,451	11.0%	4,035	10.8%
Cavalier	198	16.8%	102	12.8%	99	12.7%
Dickey	283	21.0%	119	9.3%	21	1.9%
Divide	89	19.5%	129	40.7%	46	10.5%
Dunn	221	22.4%	57	7.5%	70	7.6%
Eddy	75	11.5%	121	21.0%	90	17.0%
Emmons	249	23.4%	170	22.0%	23	3.5%
Foster	107	11.2%	39	5.2%	44	6.3%
Golden Valley	103	21.4%	57	17.7%	64	14.8%
Grand Forks	1,926	12.4%	2,046	15.6%	2,138	15.2%
Grant	194	29.1%	63	18.1%	53	11.2%
Griggs	64	10.3%	53	11.4%	47	10.5%
Hettinger	134	21.2%	43	9.3%	80	14.5%
Kidder	133	20.8%	146	29.1%	36	7.0%
LaMoure	191	17.0%	61	6.8%	132	15.3%
Logan	85	16.2%	33	7.5%	LNE	NA
McHenry	264	18.5%	205	17.1%	114	8.2%
McIntosh	99	15.2%	45	9.7%	27	5.9%
McKenzie	390	22.6%	199	12.8%	545	16.1%
McLean	382	17.5%	213	12.5%	217	11.1%
Mercer	128	5.2%	132	7.2%	128	7.1%
Morton	763	11.4%	674	10.8%	481	7.4%
Mountrail	435	23.6%	431	24.2%	399	15.8%
Nelson	100	12.4%	86	14.0%	57	10.7%
Oliver	134	23.6%	55	13.0%	LNE	NA
Pembina	232	11.0%	155	9.5%	69	4.9%
Pierce	142	12.8%	107	11.2%	230	26.2%
Ramsey	546	18.3%	403	16.7%	380	14.5%
Ransom	159	10.9%	178	13.2%	68	5.5%
Renville	85	14.1%	30	5.9%	17	2.8%
Richland	375	8.6%	323	8.8%	337	9.9%
Rolette	1,948	39.5%	1,861	41.5%	2,201	45.8%
Sargent	102	8.9%	97	10.5%	27	3.7%
Sheridan	90	24.9%	56	31.1%	51	23.5%
Sioux	718	45.2%	866	58.4%	784	47.9%
Slope	34	17.2%	15	9.3%	LNE	NA
Stark	688	12.1%	645	12.9%	445	6.0%
Steele	54	8.9%	32	7.1%	19	5.0%
Stutsman	647	13.3%	625	14.5%	717	18.0%
Towner	70	10.0%	80	17.1%	85	15.6%
Traill	204	9.8%	195	10.9%	78	4.4%
Walsh	384	12.6%	271	10.8%	242	10.1%
Ward	2,011	13.3%	1,771	13.0%	1,630	10.2%
Wells	129	11.3%	101	12.5%	LNE	NA
Williams	868	17.1%	470	9.7%	931	11.1%

Notes: *Poverty status is determined for all persons except institutionalized persons, persons in military group quarters and in college dormitories, and children under 15 years old in non-relative based foster care settings. Established in the 1960s, the official poverty measure is a specific dollar amount that varies by family size but is the same across the continental U.S. It was based on research indicating that families spent about one-third of their incomes on food. The official poverty level was set by multiplying food costs by three. Since then, the same figures have been updated annually for inflation but have otherwise remained unchanged. For more information on how poverty is measured, visit <https://bit.ly/2IN0msG>. LNE refers to a low number event. NA refers to not applicable.