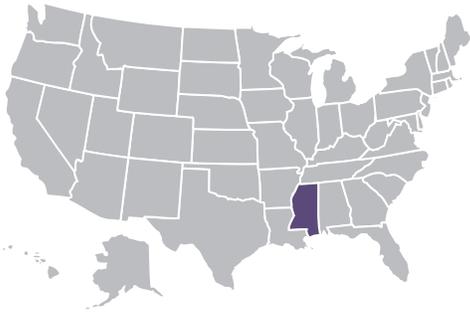


Issue Brief

INCOME IN MISSISSIPPI



As of 2009, 21.9% of the Mississippi population—620,000 people—lived in poverty.

WHAT IS SOCIETAL DISTRESS?

Societal distress describes living conditions that do not satisfy basic human needs, such as food, shelter, health, income, and education.

Visit www.humanneeds.vcu.edu for more details.

What are income and poverty?

As used here, **income** refers to the money received by a household in the preceding calendar year. **Poverty** refers to the condition in which household income falls below the official federal poverty threshold, which depends on the household size and composition.

How many Mississippi residents are affected?

As of 2009—the most current year for which data are available:

- The income of half of households in Mississippi (the median income) was less than \$36,646, a 3.0% decline in household income from 2008.
- Households in the highest income quintile (top 20%), with a mean income of \$125,888, earned 50.0% of all money income. Households in the lowest income quintile, with a mean income of \$8,032, earned 3.2% of all income.
- Approximately one out of 10 Mississippi residents—representing 270,000 (±14,000) individuals—were living in severe poverty (with incomes below 50% of the federal poverty threshold).
- Besides those in poverty, more than one in five (22.7%) Mississippi residents—representing 650,000 individuals—were living near poverty (with incomes between 100% and 200% of the poverty threshold).



One out of five
children in the United States
lives in poverty—about
15.5 million children in 2009.



THE PROJECT ON SOCIETAL DISTRESS is an initiative of the Virginia Commonwealth University Center on Human Needs, which examines the prevalence of societal distress in five domains—food security, housing, health, education, and income—and makes the information available to the public and policymakers. This research effort focuses on presenting accurate data on the number of Americans affected by these conditions and not examining the causes or proposing solutions. The Project on Societal Distress is funded by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation.

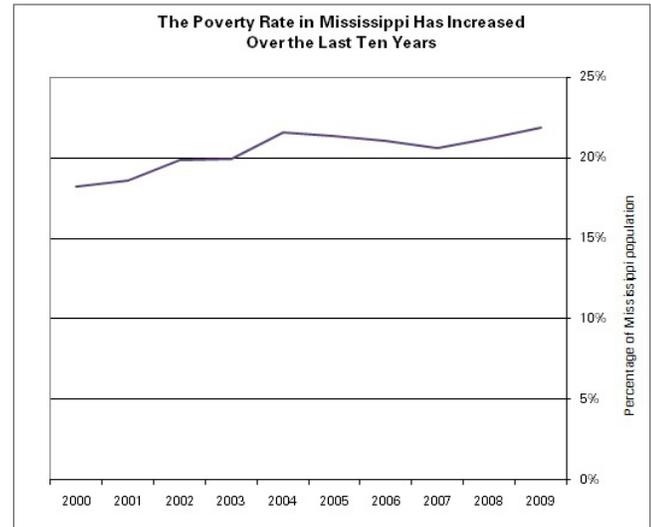
In Mississippi in 2009, approximately two-thirds of blacks and more than half of Hispanics lived in poverty or near poverty.

WHY DOES IT MATTER?

Insufficient income to meet basic needs, low net worth, and inadequate savings intensifies material hardship, stress, and poor health. It limits opportunities for advancement by individuals, children, and families and limits in aggregate to the well-being of communities, consumer spending, and economic growth.

What are the trends?

The poverty rate in Mississippi has increased over the past decade, from 18.2% in 2000 to 21.9% in 2009. The past two years have shown an increasing trend reflecting the recession.



Who is affected?

As of 2009—the most current year for which data are available:

Females: Among full-time, year-long workers in Mississippi, women earned 76.6% of the median annual earnings of men.

Young Adults: The highest poverty rate among Mississippi adults of 32.7% ($\pm 2.1\%$) occurred among those ages 18 to 24.

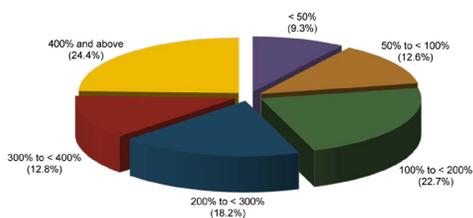
Minorities: The median income of blacks and Hispanics was \$23,895 and \$38,566 ($\pm \$4,632$) respectively, compared to \$45,583 for non-Hispanic whites.

Households with Less Education: Among Mississippi adults age 25 and older, the poverty rate was 34.0% ($\pm 1.7\%$) for those without a high school education, compared with 4.3% ($\pm 0.5\%$) for those with a bachelor's degree or higher.

SOURCES AND METHODS

The statistics reported here were obtained from U.S. Census Bureau, *American Community Survey One Year Estimates, 2009* and the *ACS 2009 Public Use Microdata Sample*. The data underwent statistical analysis by the research staff of the Virginia Commonwealth University Center on Human Needs. Analytic methods are detailed at www.humanneeds.vcu.edu.

Almost Half of Individuals in Mississippi are Living in Poverty or in Near Poverty



Ratio of Income to Poverty Threshold, 2009

THE VIRGINIA COMMONWEALTH UNIVERSITY CENTER ON HUMAN NEEDS (www.humanneeds.vcu.edu) was chartered in 2007 to provide the public and policymakers with information about the prevalence of societal distress in the United States. Its mission is to document how many Americans confront food insecurity, precarious housing or homelessness, inadequate health and health care, inferior education, and inadequate income/poverty.

For more details, visit www.humanneeds.vcu.edu.