



Poverty in Westchester: An Update

Poverty persists and remains stable

Over the five year period from 2012-2016 poverty in Westchester has remained relatively stable, with slight improvements in some categories and slight worsening in others. The overall poverty rate for the population increased slightly from 9.3% in 2012 to 9.8% in 2016. The overall poverty rate for families did not change significantly, varying between 12.0% and 12.2%.

Men Fare Better than Women

Since the Westchester Women's Agenda published its 2016 "Report on the Status of Women in Westchester," based primarily on comparisons between 2009 and 2014, poverty rates have worsened very slightly for both men and women. Women in Westchester are still more likely than men to live in poverty.

For men, the rates of poverty increased from 8.5% in 2012 to 9.0% in 2016. For women, the rates increased from 10.0% to 10.5%.

Female-headed households are more likely to suffer poverty

For families, the rates of poverty remained stable over the 2012-2016 period, hovering between 6.7%-6.9%. Households headed by women continued to have far higher rates of poverty than

married-couple households (18.4% vs. 3.5 % in 2016). Interestingly, married couple household poverty rates worsened slightly over the period, going from 2.7% to 3.5%; while female-headed households improved from 20.6% to 18.4%. This may reflect an ongoing trend toward greater labor force participation rates by women.

Blacks and Hispanics continue to have higher rates of poverty than Whites

Blacks and Hispanics are far more likely to live in poverty than Whites in Westchester County. For Whites the rates of poverty worsened slightly over the 5-year period—from 5.9% in 2012 to 6.8% in 2016. For Blacks, the rates also worsened slightly, from 16.6% to 17.2%. For Hispanics, on the other hand, poverty rates improved slightly, from 19.4% to 18.1%.

These changes may reflect underlying changes in the composition of job opportunities in the County and the ways those opportunities are distributed across racial and ethnic groups. However, we cannot discern these trends without deeper analysis of the data.

The comparisons above are based on US Census American Community Survey 5-year estimates for 2012-2016.

By Sheila Klatzky
For the Westchester Women's Agenda
10/24/18