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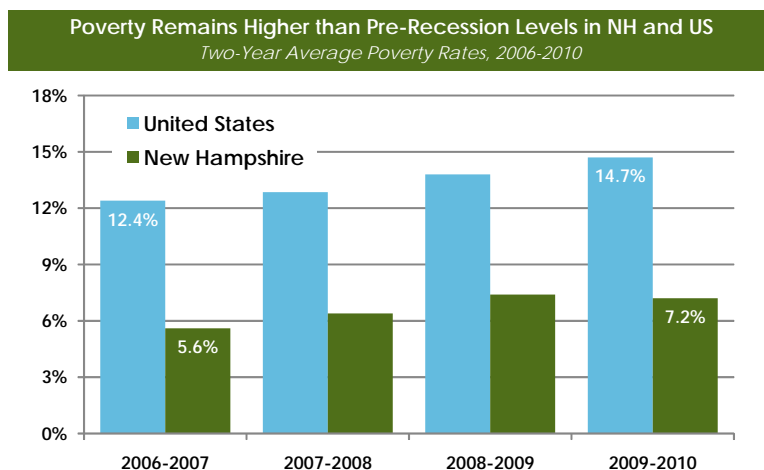
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Jeff McLynch
617.835.1421

Poverty Continues to Climb in the United States, Remains Above Pre-Recession Levels in New Hampshire

Data released earlier today by the US Census Bureau indicate that poverty continues to climb across the country, as millions of individuals and families experience firsthand the effects of the nation's sluggish economic recovery.ⁱ The same data suggest that poverty in New Hampshire remains at relatively elevated levels, though such state-oriented findings should be considered preliminary until the Census Bureau issues more definitive state-by-state data later this month.

"This latest information from the Census Bureau shows that many New Hampshire residents – and millions of their fellow Americans – continue to struggle to make ends meet," said Jeff McLynch, Executive Director of the New Hampshire Fiscal Policy Institute. "Policymakers considering further cuts to the state budget should heed this warning and take a more balanced approach to addressing any future shortfalls."

According to today's Census Bureau figures, approximately 94,000 Granite Staters – or 7.2 percent of the state's population – lived in poverty during the two year period from 2009 to 2010.ⁱⁱ For the nation as a whole, 46.2 million people had incomes below the poverty line in 2010, resulting in a poverty rate of 15.1 percent.



Source: US Census Bureau

While New Hampshire's poverty rate is markedly lower than that for the entire country, it is still substantially higher than it was several years ago, reflecting the state's ongoing difficulties in bouncing back from the recession. As the figure above illustrates, for the 2006-2007 period, the Granite State's poverty rate stood at 5.6 percent – or some 1.6 percentage points lower than it was in 2009-2010.

McLynch added, "So far this year, elected officials in Concord have relied solely on budget cuts to meet the fiscal challenges facing New Hampshire, cuts that will make it much harder for many New Hampshire families to find or to keep a job or to pay for health care for their children. Making still deeper cuts in the months ahead would only add to the problems highlighted by the Census Bureau today."

Background on Poverty Thresholds

To be considered poor, a person must have total income below the federal poverty threshold that corresponds to the size of his or her family, the number of children in that family, and the age of the head of that family. In the case of a single individual, his or her own income must fall below that threshold; in the case of a child, he or she is

Family Structure and Age	Threshold
Single person (under age 65)	\$11,344
Single person (age 65 and older)	\$10,458
Married couple (under age 65)	\$14,602
Married couple (age 65 and older)	\$13,180
Single parent, one child under age 18	\$15,030
Two parents, one child under age 18	\$17,552
Two parents, two children under age 18	\$22,113

Source: US Census Bureau

counted as poor if his or her family's income is below the given threshold for his or her family. The figure at left lists several different family structures and their corresponding poverty thresholds for 2010.

In determining an individual's or a family's poverty status, the Census Bureau uses a definition of income that includes cash income before taxes and tax credits, as well

as any unemployment insurance benefits that individual or family may receive. However, that definition excludes capital gains and non-cash benefits like housing assistance or Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program benefits (also referred to as food stamps). This failure to account for all forms of income for a particular individual or family is one of several shortcomings – in addition to the failure to account for the true expenses people face on a day to day basis and for any regional variation in those expenses – that have long plagued the federal poverty measure.

ⁱ DeNavas-Walt, Proctor, and Smith, *Income, Poverty, and Health Insurance Coverage in the United States: 2010*, US Census Bureau, September 2011, available at <http://www.census.gov/prod/2011pubs/p60-239.pdf>.

ⁱⁱ These rates are based on data from the Census Bureau's Current Population Survey, which serves as the official source of information on poverty and incomes at the *national* level and is the basis for the Census Bureau's *Income, Poverty, and Health Insurance Coverage in the United States* report. For *state* level trends and analysis, the Census Bureau recommends the use of its American Community Survey; however, the Census Bureau does not plan to release the 2010 American Community survey data until later this month. The Census Bureau further recommends that, in deriving state-by-state statistics from the Current Population Survey, two-year averages be used to compare trends within states over time and three-year averages be used to make comparisons among states.