

Using the New Poverty Data

*How Much Progress?
Why Not More?*

September 9, 2015



Thanks to our generous funders

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Jared Bernstein

Jared Bernstein has been a Senior Fellow at the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities since May 2011. From 2009 – 2011, he was Chief Economist and Economic Advisor to Vice President Joe Biden. His blog, *On the Economy*, is a model of clarity about complex and critical economic issues. He is a frequent commentator on CNBC and MSNBC and in the *New York Times*.



Deborah Weinstein

Deborah Weinstein has been executive director of the Coalition on Human Needs since 2003. Before that she was director of the Family Income Division at the Children's Defense Fund. Debbie has been helping advocates use Census and other data to combat poverty and hardship for more than two decades.



Ellen Teller, Moderator



Ellen Teller is Director of Government Affairs at the Food Research and Action Center (FRAC). She joined FRAC in 1986, and previously served as an attorney at the American Bar Association, Center for Science in the Public Interest and the Consumer Federation of America. She is the Board Chair of the Coalition on Human Needs.

Poverty and income
day:
What to expect, what to
look for

Jared Bernstein
CBPP
9/15

Let's talk about:

- What's in the Sept. 16 release?
- What do we expect in terms of changes in key variables?
- Why? What economic factors point in that direction?
- Is there anything important missing from the report?
- How might poverty and incomes be moving right now?

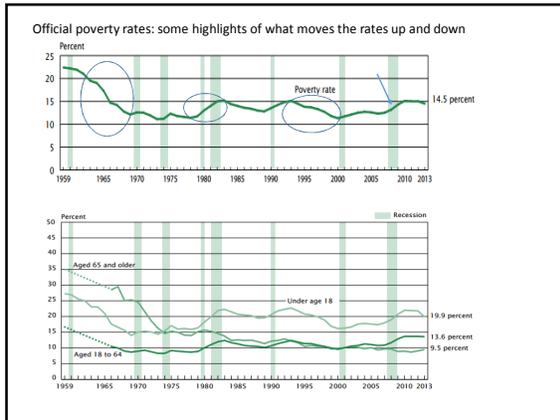
What's in the 9/16 release? (Really, what are the usual highlights? There's a lot more in this report.)

- The official poverty rate for 2014 (2013: 14.5%, 45 million)
- The child poverty rate for 2014 (2013: 19.9%, 15 million)
[these measures by race, age, gender, family status]
- Median household income
- Some income inequality measures (income shares, "Gini")
- Health coverage, share uninsured.
- The SPM poverty rate (I'll explain what that means...)

Expectations/forecasts?

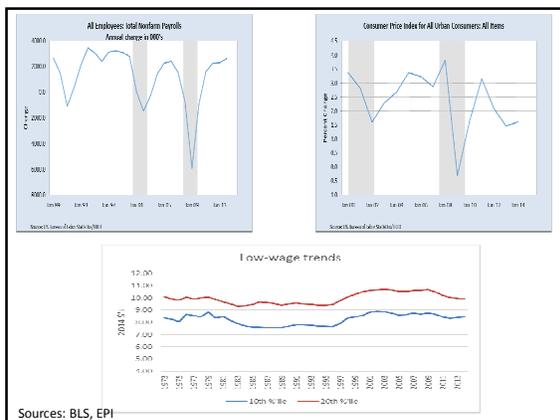
- I expect the poverty rate to fall a few tenths of a percent, leaving it well above pre-recession level of 12.5% in 2007.
- I expect median household income to go about 2% in nominal terms; given the inflation was about 1.5% in 2014, that's about a 0.5% real gain.

[Statistical significance: Poverty rate usually has to change by 0.2-0.3 pts to be significant; median income, by about 1% in real terms; also some sampling issues may be in play this year.]



Key takeaways from official history

- Anti-poverty policy matters a ton...“we fought a war on poverty and much of what we’ve done has helped to reduce poverty rates.”
- Poverty is counter-cyclical, i.e., economy improves, it tends to go down (though inequality critical factor here).
- Full employment and its impact on wages are key.
- The official rate leaves out a lot of policy.



Brief detour: is the current job market really that tight?

- Unemp rate is 5.1%, but...
- Labor force participation rate still low
- Lots of involuntary part-timers
- Wage and price trends flat! (relevant for Federal Reserve)

The safety net has become more effective while the official measure has become less informative

The increased effectiveness of anti-poverty policy:
Change in child poverty rates over two deep downturns

Downturn	SHM (inclusive rate)	Official
1979-84	6.8%	5.1%
2007-12	0.9%	3.8%

Final issues

- Deep poverty (\$2-a-Day book)
- What's happening now re poverty/economy?
- What are the key poverty policy debates right now?
 - Budget, approps, EITC/CTC provisions
 - Concentrated poverty, residential segregation
 - Fed "liftoff," absence of full employment
 - Min wages, "Fight for \$15"
- Poverty and the campaigns—not hearing much...

Source: Bearbin and Bischoff

The New Data: Finding and Using it

Deborah Weinstein



Questions the data can answer:

- **Poverty** – Poverty finally started to decline in 2013. Will progress continue in 2014? Do children, minorities, people with disabilities remain disproportionately poor?
- How much have SNAP, UI, tax credits reduced poverty?
- How many work but remain poor, or near poor?
- **Income** – has income continued to slide for most people? Has inequality continued to widen?
- **Health insurance** – signs of the impact of the Affordable Care Act?

More questions

- **Deep poverty** – how many are below half the poverty line?
- **Rent hardships** - how many people are paying more than 35 or 50 percent of their income on rent?
- **Food hardships** – are more people using SNAP? How many are food insecure?
- **Education** - of those who haven't finished high school, how many are poor? Unemployed?

How to Find the Answers

- On September 16 and 17, the Census Bureau will release survey data for 2014:
 - Sept. 16: **Current Population Survey (CPS)** – national data: poverty, income, health insurance. Also, **American Community Survey (ACS)** health insurance data.
 - **New:** Supplemental Poverty Measure report out on the 16th.
 - Sept. 17: **American Community Survey (ACS)** – state, local data (including congressional district).
- USDA released **Household Food Security in the U.S. in 2014** (with state data) **today** (Sept. 9).

This just in...

Stubbornly high numbers of families remain unable to afford enough food

Household Food Security in the United States in 2014
(www.ers.usda.gov)

- 17.4 million households (14%) were food insecure – difficulty at some point in the year affording enough food. Not significant change from last year. But down from 14.9% in 2011.
- 6.9 million households more severe food insecurity – going without food – unchanged from last year.
- Children: food insecure in 9.4% of households with children (3.7 million households) – not significantly reduced from 2013.

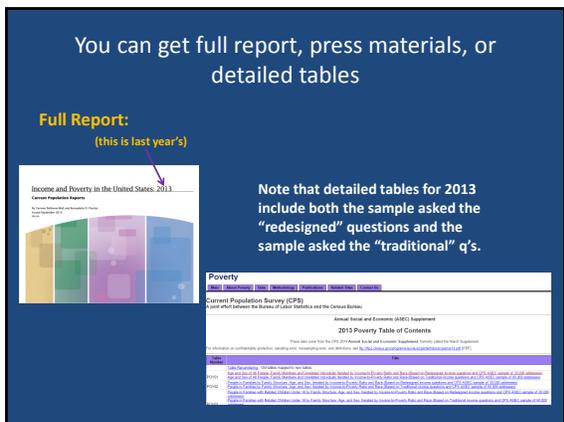
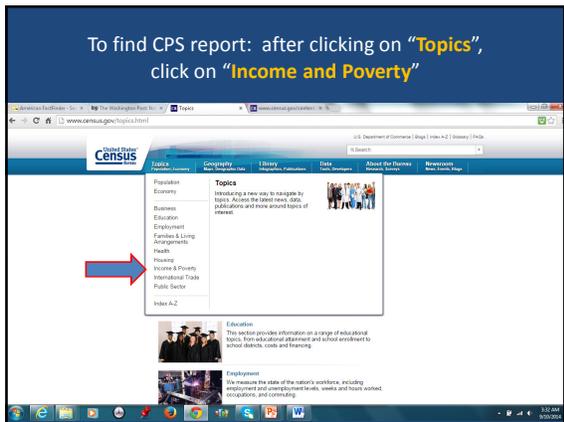
The New Data – Part 1

Tuesday, September 16: **Current Population Survey** release:

- Provides national picture re income, poverty, and health insurance.
- Will have state health insurance data from American Community Survey.
- Will release Supplemental Poverty Measure – will show people lifted out of poverty by SNAP, Social Security, tax credits, housing subsidies, etc.

Complication:

- New income survey questions introduced.
- Split sample in 2013:
 - New questions: 30,000
 - Old questions: 68,000
- In 2014, full sample has new q's.
- Comparisons of 2013 to 2014 – okay – compare to 2013 sample with new questions.
- Comparisons of 2014 to prior years more complicated – they are working on ways to make accurate comparisons.
- No state data from CPS this year.



A few examples of detailed tables:

- **POV01:** Shows people below 50% FPL, below 100%, below 200%, etc. White, Black, Asian, Hispanic (may be of any race).
- **POV06:** Families by number of working family members and family structure
- **POV22:** Work experience by age, sex, household relationship, poverty status
- **POV29:** Years of school by poverty status – age, sex, nativity



This year, the Supplemental Poverty Measure will also be released on 9/16

Important analysis showing how the proportion of people in poverty declines because of Social Security, low-income tax credits, SNAP, UI, housing subsidies, etc.

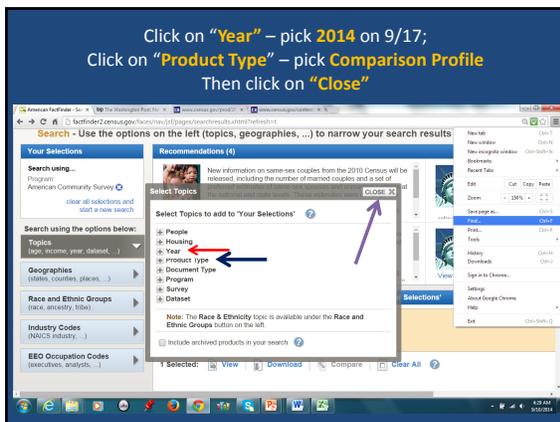
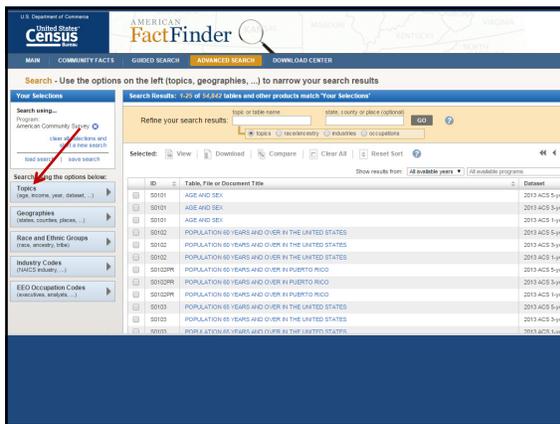
May be written up in [Random Samplings](#) blog, [blogs.census.gov](#)

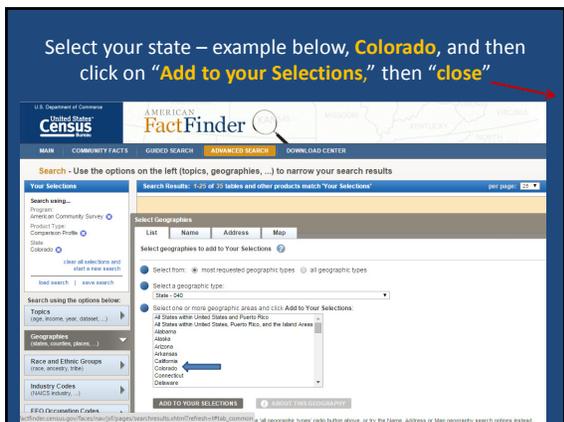
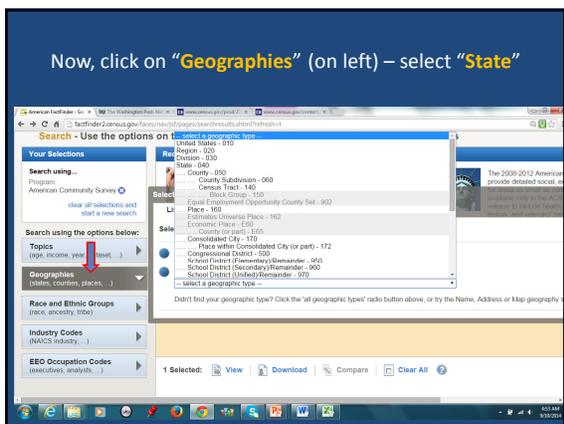
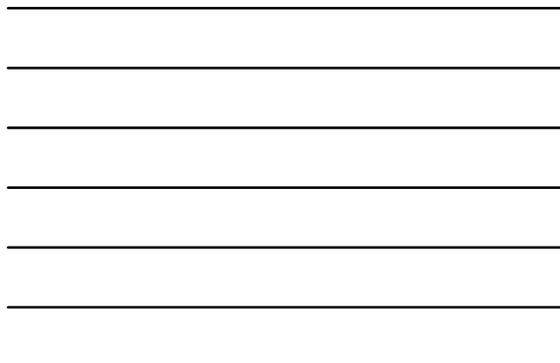
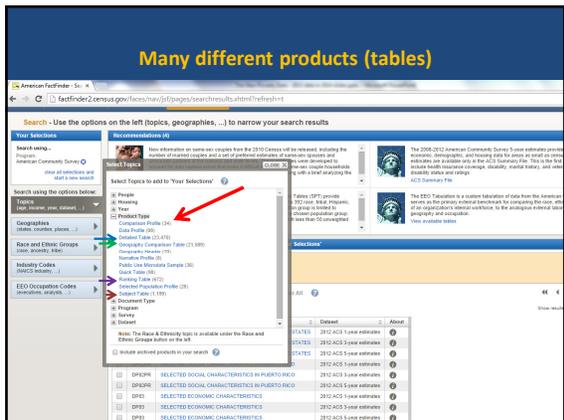
Elements	All people		Under 18 years		18 to 64 years		65 years and over	
	Estimate	CI (Lo-Hi)	Estimate	CI (Lo-Hi)	Estimate	CI (Lo-Hi)	Estimate	CI (Lo-Hi)
ADDITIONS	16.4	0.3	16.4	0.1	16.6	0.4	16.6	0.6
Social Security	16.4	0.4	22.6	0.5	17.2	0.4	16.9	0.6
EMCF	17.2	0.2	19.2	0.2	16.0	0.4	15.4	0.5
Unemployment insurance	16.2	0.3	17.3	0.5	16.0	0.4	16.9	0.6
SNAP	16.6	0.2	17.4	0.2	16.7	0.4	16.1	0.5
Housing subsidies	16.5	0.2	17.8	0.2	16.2	0.4	15.8	0.5
Credit support received	16.2	0.3	17.4	0.5	16.7	0.4	16.7	0.6
Food stamps	16.6	0.2	17.5	0.2	16.7	0.4	16.1	0.5
WIC/General Assistance	16.6	0.3	16.9	0.5	16.0	0.4	16.7	0.6
Medicaid	16.6	0.2	16.8	0.1	16.2	0.4	16.1	0.5
UI	16.6	0.3	16.8	0.5	16.0	0.4	16.1	0.5
Workers' compensation	16.6	0.3	16.8	0.5	16.0	0.4	16.6	0.6
SUBTRACTIONS	15.4	0.3	16.3	0.5	16.0	0.4	16.6	0.6
Capital income	16.1	0.2	16.2	0.1	16.6	0.4	16.3	0.5
PCA assistance	16.2	0.3	16.4	0.5	16.8	0.3	16.3	0.5
Welfare benefits	16.6	0.2	16.8	0.1	16.4	0.3	16.7	0.5
MOOP	16.2	0.3	16.3	0.1	16.2	0.3	16.2	0.5



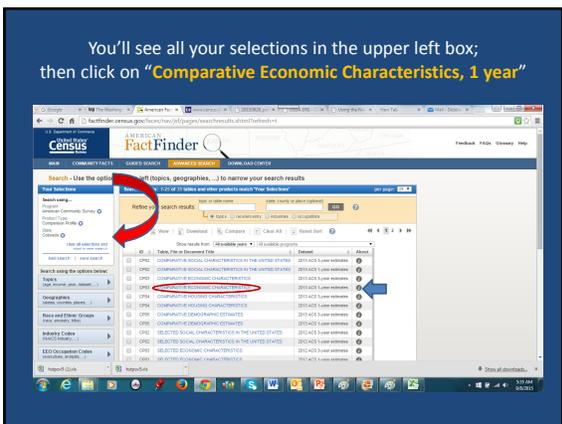
For a wealth of state and local data, wait for Part 2: The American Community Survey, 9/17







You'll see all your selections in the upper left box; then click on "Comparative Economic Characteristics, 1 year"



Comparison Profile will show 2010 – 2014 changes, and whether they are statistically significant (not just chance)

Subject	Census								
	2013 Estimate	2012 Estimate	2010-2014 Statistical Significance	2011 Estimate	2010-2011 Statistical Significance	2010 Estimate	2009-2010 Statistical Significance	2008 Estimate	2007-2008 Statistical Significance
POPULATION									
Total population	4,054,536	4,050,454		4,032,272		3,855,076		3,827,345	
Population 18 years and over	3,174,174	3,171,874		3,154,714		2,985,076		2,957,345	
Population 65 and over	624,174	621,874		607,214		585,076		577,345	
Population 18-64	2,550,000	2,549,000		2,547,500		2,400,000		2,380,000	
Population 18-24	1,000,000	1,000,000		1,000,000		950,000		950,000	
Population 25-34	800,000	800,000		800,000		750,000		750,000	
Population 35-44	700,000	700,000		700,000		650,000		650,000	
Population 45-54	600,000	600,000		600,000		550,000		550,000	
Population 55-64	500,000	500,000		500,000		450,000		450,000	
Population 65-74	400,000	400,000		400,000		350,000		350,000	
Population 75 and over	300,000	300,000		300,000		250,000		250,000	
Population 18-24	1,000,000	1,000,000		1,000,000		950,000		950,000	
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Time to be heard



Use the data:

- In letters or tweets to your Rep and Senators
- Blog posts; comment on blogs (www.chn.org/blog)
- In letters to the editor
- In a Tweet chat: **MomsRising**, Sept. 18, 1-2 p.m. Eastern
- Posts, links on your Facebook page
- In meetings with members of Congress or staff

Join the Tweetchat!

Who: @MomsRising @CoalitiononHN @NWLC

What: #FoodFri tweetchat to discuss the USDA hunger data and U.S. Census poverty and healthcare data and how they relate to the upcoming budget and sequester debates.

When: Friday, September 18th from 1-2pm ET

Please use #FoodFri to join the conversation!

Comment, Share ...

- State groups will release reports in 16+ states tying Census, other data to need to end sequester cuts while protecting and investing in anti-poverty programs: AR, CO, CT, FL, IL, IN, MA, ME, MI, NH, OH, PA, TN, VA, WA, WI
- If you're in any of those states, or have networks there, use social media to share press about the report.
- Make your own press – blog, LTE, op-ed...
- Share link to report with members of Congress.

We'll send you...

- These slides and the webinar recording
- Quick key points
- State tables (*thank you, Center on Budget and Policy Priorities!*)
- Links to Census Bureau tables with the data we've discussed
- Analyses by other expert organizations
- CHN national report and state reports
- Infographics you can use and share
- Suggested tweets, sample letters to the editor, etc.

Thanks!

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