
Appendix C. Definitions and Explanations

Population coverage. The estimates in this report are restricted to the civilian non-institutional resident population of the United States and members of the Armed Forces living off post or with their families on post.

Race and Hispanic origin. The population is divided into two groups on the basis of race: White and Black. Persons of Hispanic origin were determined on the basis of a question that asked for self-identification of the person's origin (or the origin of some other household member) from a "flashcard" listing ethnic origins. Hispanics were those who indicated that their origin was Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Central or South American, or some other Hispanic origin. Persons of Hispanic origin may be of any race.

Householder. The instructions call for listing first the person (or one of the persons) in whose name the home is owned or rented. If the house is owned jointly by a married couple, either the husband or the wife may be listed first, thereby becoming the reference person, or householder, to whom the relationship to the other household members is recorded. One person in each household is designated as the "householder." The number of householders, therefore, is equal to the number of households.

Family. The term "family" refers to a group of two or more persons related by birth, marriage, or adoption who reside together; all such persons are considered as members of one family. For example, if the son of the person who maintains the household and the son's wife are members of the household, they are treated as members of the parent's family. Every family must include a householder; two or more people living in the same household who are related to one another, but are not related to the householder, form an "unrelated subfamily."

Subfamily. A subfamily is a married couple with or without children, or one parent with one or more own single children under 18 years old living in a household but not including among its members the person or couple maintaining the household. Because a subfamily does not include a householder, it is by definition excluded from the count of families. There are two kinds of subfamilies, related and unrelated.

Related Subfamily. A related subfamily is a subfamily whose members are related to the person or couple maintaining the household. The most common example

of a related subfamily is a young married couple sharing the home of the husband's or wife's parents. Members of a related subfamily are also members of the householders family.

Unrelated subfamily. An unrelated subfamily is a subfamily whose members are not related to the person or couple maintaining the household. Persons in unrelated subfamilies are not part of the householder's family, but are classified by family status as if they were separate families. They are included in the overall count of family members.

Family status. Persons were classified as members of a married-couple family, a family with a female householder, no spouse present, or as an unrelated individual.

Married-couple family. A married couple, as defined for census purposes, is a husband and wife enumerated as members of the same household. The married couple may or may not have children living with them. The expression "husband-wife" or "married-couple" before the term "household," or "family" indicates that the household, or family, is maintained by a husband and wife.

Unrelated individuals. The term "unrelated individuals" refers to persons 15 years old and over (other than inmates of institutions) who are not living with any relatives. An unrelated individual may (1) constitute a one-person household, (2) be part of a household including one or more other families or unrelated individuals, or (3) reside in group quarters such as a rooming house. Thus, a widow living by herself or with one or more other persons not related to her, a lodger not related to the householder or to anyone else in the household, and a servant living in an employer's household with no relatives are examples of unrelated individuals. The poverty status of unrelated individuals is determined independently of other household members' incomes.

Educational attainment. The definitions of educational attainment relate to persons 18 years old and older. Data on years of school completed were derived from the combination of answers to questions concerning the highest grade of school attended by the person and whether or not that grade was finished. Educational attainment applies only to progress in "regular" schools. Such schools included public, private, and parochial

elementary and high schools (both junior and senior), colleges, universities, and professional schools (both day and night schools). Thus, regular schooling is that which may advance a person toward an elementary school certificate, a high school diploma, or a college, university, or professional school degree.

Metropolitan areas. The population residing in metropolitan statistical areas (MSAs) as defined in June 1984 constitutes the metropolitan population. MSAs are defined by the Office of Management and Budget for use in the presentation of statistics by agencies of the Federal Government. An MSA is a geographic area consisting of a large population nucleus, together with adjacent communities which have a high degree of economic and social integration with that nucleus. The definitions specify a boundary around each large city so as to include most or all its suburbs. Entire counties form the MSA building blocks, except in New England where cities and towns are used. The former term SMSA was changed to MSA in 1983. An area qualifies for recognition as an MSA if (1) it includes a city of at least 50,000 population, or (2) it includes a Census Bureau-defined urbanized area of at least 50,000 with a total metropolitan population of at least 100,000 (75,000 in New England). In addition to the county containing the main city or urbanized area, an MSA may include other counties having strong commuting ties to the central county. If specified conditions are met, certain large MSAs are designated as consolidated MSAs (CMSAs) and divided into component primary MSAs (PMSAs).

Non-metropolitan areas. The territory outside metropolitan statistical areas is referred to here as non-metropolitan.

Central cities. The largest city in each MSA is always designated a central city. There may be additional central cities if specified requirements, designed to identify places of central character within the MSA, are met. Although the largest central cities are generally included in the title of the MSA, there may be central cities that are not part of the title. The balance of the MSA outside the central city or cities often is regarded as equivalent to "suburban areas."

Non-central cities. The territory outside central cities of metropolitan statistical areas but within MSAs is referred to here as non-central cities or "suburban areas."

Labor force and employment status. The definitions of labor force and employment status relate to persons 18 years old and older.

Full-time employed. A person was employed full-time in a given month if he or she worked at least 1 week during that month and at least 35 hours during a usual week of employment.

Part-time employed. A person was employed part-time in a given month if he or she worked at least one week during that month and less than 35 hours during a usual week of employment.

Unemployed. A person was unemployed in a given month, if he or she had no job during the month and spent 1 or more weeks looking for employment or on layoff.

Not in the labor force. A person was not in the labor force in a given month if he or she held no job during the month and spent no time looking or on layoff.

Reference periods for the characteristics age, education, employment status, family status, and residence. While residence and employment status are observed each wave, the other characteristics are observed each month. In order to calculate average monthly participation, the characteristics are used as they prevail in the month of participation. In order to determine the number of persons who ever or always participated during a given time period, the characteristics are used as of the first month (wave) of the time period in question.

Income. The cash income concept used in this report includes the sum of all income received from any of the sources listed in table C-1. Rebates, refunds, loans and capital gain or loss amounts from the sale of assets, and interhousehold transfers of cash such as allowances are not included.

Accrued interest on Individual Retirement Accounts, KEOGH retirement plans, and U.S. Savings bonds are also excluded. This definition differs somewhat from that used in the annual income reports based on the March CPS income supplement questionnaire. The data in those reports, published in the Current Population Reports, Series P-60, are based only on income received in a regular or periodic manner and, therefore, exclude lump-sum or one-time payments, such as inheritances, or insurance settlements which are included as income in SIPP. Educational assistance, which is included in the March CPS income concept, is not included in the SIPP income concept.

The income amounts represent amounts actually received during the month, before deductions for income and payroll taxes, union dues, Part B Medicare premiums, etc.

The SIPP income definition includes three types of earnings: wages and salary, nonfarm self-employment, and farm self-employment. The definition of nonfarm self-employment and farm self-employment is not based on the net difference between gross receipts or sales on the one hand and operating expenses, depreciation, etc. on the other. Rather, the monthly amounts for these income types are based on the salary or other income received from the business by the owner of the business or farm during the 4-month period.

While the income amounts from most sources are recorded monthly for the 4-month reference period, property income amounts such as interest, dividends, and rental income, were recorded as totals for the 4-month period. These totals were distributed equally between months of the reference period for purposes of calculating poverty status in this report.

Premeans-tested income. This income concept represents income as defined above, minus the amount of cash benefits received from AFDC, general assistance, SSI, and means-tested veterans compensation or pensions.

Pre-transfer income. Pre-transfer income represents premeans-tested income minus the amount of cash benefits received from nonmeans-tested veterans compensation or pensions, unemployment benefits, Social Security, and Railroad Retirement.

Poverty definition. The poverty definition used in this report is based on the government's official definition but was calculated on a monthly basis using the family composition at that time rather than fixing it throughout the year as is done in the Current Population Survey. These data differ from the official figures and are not part of the standard data series on poverty established by Directive 14 from the Office of Management and Budget. Official figures are published annually from the March Current Population Survey in the P-60 Series of Current Population Reports.

The poverty definition is based on an index developed at the Social Security Administration in 1964 and revised by Federal interagency committees in 1969 and 1981. The poverty concept is a statistical measure based on the Department of Agriculture's 1961 Economy Food Plan. It reflects the different consumption requirements of families in relation to their size and composition, and the age of the family householder. A ratio of food expenditures to income of one-third, based on the Department of Agriculture's 1955 Survey of Food Consumption, was used to derive the original poverty thresholds from the economy food plan. The poverty thresholds have been updated annually based on changes in the Consumer Price Index.

Average weighted poverty thresholds for 1987 and 1988 are shown below in table C-2.

A person's annual poverty status in this report was determined by comparing the sum of the person's family income each month against the sum of the appropriate monthly poverty thresholds. If the person's family income (personal income if an unrelated individual) was below the sum of the monthly poverty thresholds, the person was classified as below the poverty level for the year shown. For further discussion of differences between the CPS and SIPP poverty estimates, see the section entitled "Computation of Poverty Status in SIPP and

Comparison with CPS Estimates" in appendix E. For further discussion of the poverty definition, see Current Population Reports, Series P-60, No. 171, Poverty in the United States: 1988-89.

Income-to-poverty ratio. The income-to-poverty ratio used in this report incorporates an adjustment in every month for family size and composition. The poverty threshold for each family is calculated based on the size and composition of that family in each month. For unrelated individuals, individual income is divided by the appropriate one-person-family poverty threshold. In order to obtain the income-to-poverty ratio during a certain period, the family income of a person is summed over each month of that period and divided by the sum of the respective monthly poverty thresholds.

AFDC or other cash assistance. AFDC or other cash assistance includes payments under the Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC or ADC) Program and payments often categorized as General Assistance.

Title VII of the Social Security Act permits States to give cash assistance to needy children who lack financial support of one parent because a parent is continuously absent from home, incapacitated, dead, or unemployed.¹ The Federal and State government share in the cost of benefit payments and administrative outlays and some States require local governments to share costs. Able-bodied AFDC recipients are required by federal law to register for training and employment services. Mothers receiving AFDC payments are required to assign their child support rights to the State and to cooperate in establishing paternity of a child born out of wedlock.

General assistance consists of a host of State and local programs to provide cash assistance to needy persons not qualifying for AFDC or SSI. Eligibility rules vary from State to State, and often from county to county within a State, ranging from aid to mostly unemployable single adults (District of Columbia), to workfare programs, where recipients work in exchange for the assistance (New York).

Persons are considered participants in AFDC or General assistance if they are identified as primary recipients or if they are covered under other persons' allotment.

Federal and State rent assistance. There are several programs designed to "remedy the unsafe and unsanitary housing conditions and the acute shortage of decent, safe, and sanitary dwellings for families of low

¹The Family Support Act of 1988 requires all jurisdictions with AFDC programs to extend benefits to children in two-parent families in which the principal earner is unemployed (AFDC-UP). Jurisdictions with such a program already in place must continue year round support for such families. Other jurisdictions have to cover such families for 6 out of 12 months. The law will take effect October 1, 1990 for the States and the District and 2 years later for the outlying areas.

income."² Among these, the most important are Low Rent Public Housing and Sections 8, 236, and 101 of the U.S. Housing Act, all of which are funded in full by the Federal Government. Under sections 8 and 101, Federal funds are used to subsidize private sector housing. The difference between the "fair market" rent and the rent charged to the tenant is paid to the owner by the government. Under an interest reduction program (e.g. section 236), the amount of interest paid on the mortgage by the owner is reduced and the subsequent savings are passed on to low-income tenants in the form of lower rent charges.

Participation in public housing is determined by two factors: program eligibility and the availability of housing. Income standards for initial and continuing occupancy vary by local housing authority, although the limits are constrained by Federal guidelines. Rental charges, which, in turn, define net benefits, are set by a Federal statute not to exceed 25 percent of net monthly money income. A recipient unit can either be a family of two or more related persons or an individual who is handicapped, elderly, or displaced by urban renewal or natural disaster.

Federal law mandates that, as a total among all assisted housing programs, at most 25 percent of units that are re-rented and 5 percent of units that become available can be rented to households with incomes between 50 and 80 percent of the area median.³ All other units are to be reserved for families at or below 50 percent of the area median.

Sipp survey respondents were asked whether their residence is owned by a local housing authority or whether the Federal, State or local government is paying part of the rent. A "yes" to either question identified the respondent and others living at the same residence as participants in a public or subsidized rental housing program.

Food stamps. The Food Stamp Act of 1977 defines this Federally funded program as one intended to "permit low-income households to obtain a more nutritious diet."⁴ Food purchasing power is increased by providing eligible households with coupons which can be used to purchase food.

The Food and Nutrition Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) administers the Food Stamp Program through State and local welfare offices. The Food Stamp Program is the major national income support program which provides benefits to all low-income and low-resource households regardless of household characteristics (e.g., sex, age, and disability).

²From P.L. 75-412, "The United States Housing Act of 1937," declaration of policy.

³See P.L. 100-242 of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1987.

⁴For title XIII of P.L. 95-113, "The Food Stamp Act of 1977," declaration of policy.

The questions on participation in the Food Stamp Program in SIPP were designed to identify households in which one or more of the current members received food stamps. Once a food stamp household was identified, a question was asked to determine the number of current household members covered by food stamps. Questions also were asked about the number of months food stamps were received and the total face value of all food stamps received during the period.

Medicaid. The Medicaid Program is designed "to furnish medical assistance on behalf of needy families with dependent children, and of aged, blind, or permanently and totally disabled individuals whose incomes and resources are insufficient to meet the costs of necessary medical services."⁵ The program is administered by State agencies through grants from the Health Care Financing Administration of the Department of Health and Human Services. Funding for medical assistance payments consists of a combination of Federal, State, and in some cases, local resources.

Medicaid is for the most part a categorical program with complex eligibility rules which vary from State to State. There are two basic groups of eligible individuals: the categorically eligible and the medically needy. The major categorically eligible groups are all Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) recipients and most Supplemental Security Income (SSI) recipients. Other categorically eligible groups are those who meet basic State cash assistance eligibility rules (the aged, blind, or disabled; needy single parents with children; and, in some States, needy unemployed parents with children who are not currently receiving money payments), and needy persons who meet categorical eligibility standards but are institutionalized for medical reasons (e.g., low-income elderly persons in nursing homes). However, such institutionalized persons are not included in the SIPP universe and, therefore, are not reflected in these statistics.

In roughly one-half of the States, coverage is extended to the medically needy: persons meeting categorical age, sex, or disability criteria whose money incomes and assets exceed eligibility levels for cash assistance but are not sufficient to meet the cost of medical care. In such States, qualifying income and asset levels are usually above those set for cash assistance. Families with large medical expenses relative to their incomes and assets may also meet medically needy eligibility standards in these States.

The Medicaid question in SIPP attempted to identify all adults who were covered by Medicaid. The term "covered" means that persons were enrolled in the Medicaid program, e.g. had a Medicaid medical

⁵From title XIX of the 1965 Amendments to P.L. 89-97, The Social Security Act, "Grants to States for Medical Assistance Programs," declaration of policy.

assistance card or incurred medical bills which were paid for by Medicaid. In order to be counted, the person did not have to receive medical care paid for by Medicaid. Coverage was assigned in situations where it was not reported but should have been, i.e. where persons were categorically eligible through their reported participation in other cash transfer programs.

Railroad Retirement benefits. Railroad Retirement benefits are based on a person's long-term employment (10 years or more) in the railroad industry. Railroad Retirement disability payments are received by severely disabled workers who worked long enough in "covered employment" prior to their disability to be entitled to payments. Children of retired or disabled workers and jointly covered spouses are also counted as participants.

Social Security. In the context of this report, Social Security refers to the Old-Age, Survivors, and Disability Insurance (OASDI) Program.⁶ The Old-Age Program provides benefits for the workers who retire in old age, the Survivors Program provides benefits to families of workers who died, and the Disability Program grants assistance to persons whose disabilities do not permit a continuation of the work effort. Persons are participants in Social Security if they worked in covered employment and are now disabled or retired. In addition, participants include spouses or dependent children of retired or disabled workers, and widowed spouses and surviving children.

Supplemental Security Income. Authorized as Title XVI of the Social Security Act by the Social Security Amendments of 1972 and implemented in 1974, the SSI program provides cash benefits, paid monthly, to aged, blind, and disabled persons who are financially needy according to criteria governing both income and assets. The program is allied with optional State Supplementation Programs (SSPs), which raise the levels of payments to amounts desired by individual states. SSI/SSP, which covers people of all ages, replaced federal grants to the states for old-age assistance and aid to blind and permanently and totally disabled adults. A person is considered a participant in the SSI program during a given month, if he/she received payments from the U.S. Government or from a State or local welfare office during that month.

Unemployment compensation. Cash benefits paid to unemployed workers through a State or local unemployment agencies. This includes all benefits paid under the Federal-State unemployment insurance program as established under the Social Security Act, as well as those benefits paid to State and local government employees, Federal civilian employees, and veterans.

⁶The term Social Security is often used in a broader context referring to all types of social insurance programs.

Veterans' benefits. Veterans can receive benefits from two major programs. The first grants benefits to veterans with service related disabilities, and the second pays benefits to veterans with nonservice-connected disabilities.

Compensation payments for a service-connected disability are made to veterans with a disability that was caused or aggravated by military service. Payment amounts are related to the extent of the disability which can range from 10 to 100 percent. Veterans with ratings of 50 percent or more receive additional benefits for wives, all children under 18, children aged 18 to 22 and attending school full-time, and for dependent parents. These benefits are not means-tested, that is they do not depend on the veteran's income or resources.

Nonservice-connected disability pensions are granted to veterans who have disabilities sustained outside of the service but who served on active duty in wartime and are in financial need. Payments vary depending on such factors as income, number of dependents, and need for the regular aid of another person. We refer to nonservice-connected disability pensions as means-tested Veterans pensions.

Persons are considered participants in a Veterans Administration compensation program if they are primary recipients of payments or if they are covered under other persons' allotment.

WIC. The Supplemental Food Program for Women, Infants and Children is a Federal nutrition program intended to improve the nourishment of pregnant and postpartum women, infants, and children under six years of age. Such persons are eligible to receive WIC if their household incomes fall between 100 and 185 percent of the poverty guidelines (varying by state), and they have a medical, nutritional, or dietary disorder. The program is administered by the Food and Nutrition Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture.

A person is a participant in the WIC program if the person is an expectant or postpartum female or a child under 5 years of age, who reports receiving benefits or is reported by a spouse or parent to be covered by payments.

Symbols. A dash (—) represents zero or rounds to zero, "B" means that the base for the derived figure is less than 200,000, and "X" means not applicable.

Rounding. Percentages are rounded to the nearest tenth of a percent; therefore, the percentages in a distribution do not always add to exactly 100.0 percent. The totals, however, are always shown as 100.0. Moreover, individual figures are rounded to the nearest thousand without being adjusted to group totals, which are independently rounded; percentages are based on the unrounded numbers.

Table C-1. Income Sources Included in Monthly Cash Income**Earnings from Employment**

- Wages and salary
- Nonfarm self-employment income
- Farm self-employment income

Income from Assets (Property Income)

- Regular/passbook savings accounts in a bank, savings and loan or credit union
- Money market deposit accounts
- Certificate of deposit
- NOW, Super NOW, or other interest-earning checking accounts
- Money market funds
- U.S. Government securities
- Municipal or corporate bonds
- Other interest-earning assets
- Stocks or mutual fund shares
- Rental property
- Mortgages
- Royalties
- Other financial investments

Other Income Sources

- Social Security
- U.S. Government Railroad Retirement
- Federal Supplemental Security Income
- State Administered Supplemental Security Income
- State unemployment compensation
- Supplemental Unemployment Benefits
- Black Lung payments
- Worker's compensation
- State temporary sickness or disability benefits
- Employer or union temporary sickness policy
- Payments from a sickness, accident, or disability insurance policy purchased on your own
- Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC), (ADC)
- General assistance or General relief
- Indian, Cuban, or Refugee assistance
- Foster child care payments
- Other welfare
- Child support payments
- Alimony payments
- Pensions from a company or union
- Federal Civil Service or other Federal civilian employee pensions
- U.S. Military retirement
- National Guard or Reserve Forces retirement
- State government pensions
- Local government pensions
- Income from paid-up life insurance policies or annuities
- Estates and trusts
- Other payments for retirement, disability or survivors, G.I. Bill/VEAP education benefits
- Income assistance from a charitable group
- Other unemployment compensation (Trade Adjustment Act benefits, strike pay, other)
- Veterans' compensation or pensions
- Money from relatives or friends
- Lump sum payments
- Income from roomers or boarders
- National Guard or Reserve pay
- Incidental or casual earnings
- Other cash income not included elsewhere

Table C-2. Weighted Average Poverty Thresholds in 1987 and 1988

Characteristics	Thresholds	
	1987	1988
One person (unrelated individual).....	\$5,778	\$6,024
15 to 64 years.....	5,909	6,155
65 years and over.....	5,447	5,674
Two persons.....	7,397	7,704
Householder 15 to 64 years.....	7,641	7,958
Householder 65 years and over.....	6,872	7,158
Three persons.....	9,056	9,435
Four persons.....	11,611	12,092
Five persons.....	13,737	14,305
Six persons.....	15,509	16,149
Seven persons.....	17,649	18,248
Eight persons.....	19,515	20,279
Nine persons or more.....	23,105	24,133