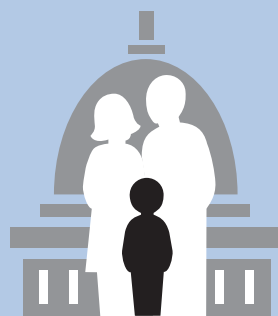


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ARKANSAS
CHILD POVERTY UPDATE
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**ARKANSAS
ADVOCATES**
FOR CHILDREN & FAMILIES

2012 ARKANSAS CHILD POVERTY UPDATE

March 2012

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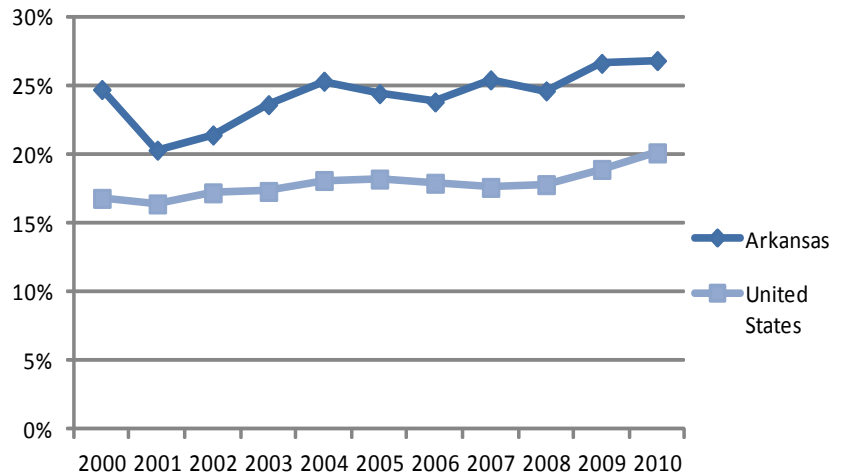
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CHILD POVERTY IN ARKANSAS

The child poverty rate in Arkansas, now at 26.8 percent, is higher than the national average and shows a disturbing upward trend that’s likely to continue as the state experiences the effects of the recession. Over the last ten years for which data is available, the poverty rate has increased by just over two percent. The economic well-being of our children is an important issue for obvious reasons, but child poverty has both short- and long-term impacts that are less apparent (i.e. it can create significant costs to our health and criminal justice systems and negatively impact the economy).

CHILD POVERTY RATE



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 American Community Survey, 5-year rolling average

This brief is an update to two 2010 reports: the Arkansas Advocates for Children and Families report titled “Child Poverty in Arkansas 2010: A Deepening Problem” and the final report from the Arkansas Legislative Taskforce on Reducing Poverty and Promoting Economic Opportunity. The data included in this report is based on five year (2005-2010) rolling estimates from the American Community Survey, an ongoing survey from the U.S. Census Bureau aimed at giving local communities the information needed for fiscal planning. Data is collected from every county and, as such, presents an accurate representation of child poverty in the state that reflects the realities of the recent recession.

The data show minority children are much more likely to live in poverty, as are children from single-parent households. Children whose parents have a lower level of education are also at risk. The recession has also increased the number of children living in poverty.

Poverty has both short- and long-term effects on children. Those who grow up in low-income families tend to be less healthy and also have a higher likelihood of experiencing chronic health problems as adults. These same children usually do not have the same level of educational success as their higher-income peers. Finally, poverty is not something children are likely to outgrow. Kids who live in poverty are more likely to be poor as adults.

Population Below Poverty 2010	Arkansas	United States
Under 18	26.8% (186,729)	20.10%
Related Children Under 18	26.5% (183,316)	19.70%
18 to 64 years	16.6% (285,959)	13.10%
65+ years	11.5% (45,543)	9.40%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 5-year rolling average (2005-2010)

State budgets can suffer as a result of child poverty. It affects not only our families, but the amount of taxes we pay for government services, the quality of our workforce, and our future economic productivity. Children who grow up in pov-

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2012 ARKANSAS CHILD POVERTY UPDATE

	Total Children in Poverty		White Children in Poverty		African American Children in Poverty		Latino Children in Poverty		Children under 5 in Poverty		Percent Change in Poverty Between 2000 and 2010
	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	
STATE TOTAL	182,019	26.3%	98,562	19.9%	62,022	46.4%	26,006	39.0%	59,140	30.9%	22.7%
Arkansas	914	21.5%	386	13.6%	501	38.4%	27	100.0%	322	31.2%	-28.8%
Ashley	1,424	25.9%	532	15.5%	746	47.1%	149	38.9%	426	30.2%	-15.2%
Baxter	2,083	29.2%	1,956	28.7%	N/A	N/A	97	38.3%	598	32.4%	92.3%
Benton	9,388	16.3%	6,194	13.6%	276	41.2%	3,951	30.8%	3,031	18.4%	63.6%
Boone	1,821	21.8%	1,661	21.2%	0	0.0%	110	41.8%	547	24.7%	17.0%
Bradley	1,111	40.4%	315	21.6%	568	65.4%	301	58.1%	422	55.3%	12.4%
Calhoun	120	9.7%	87	10.5%	30	10.2%	8	7.9%	53	19.9%	-57.9%
Carroll	1,410	24.1%	1,128	22.5%	26	74.3%	436	32.8%	484	29.7%	12.5%
Chicot	1,440	50.1%	213	23.7%	1,187	63.8%	100	52.6%	578	71.6%	-1.4%
Clark	1,275	27.7%	688	22.7%	509	38.7%	195	54.2%	397	31.0%	18.7%
Clay	1,013	27.6%	917	25.8%	N/A	N/A	15	26.3%	473	50.6%	18.5%
Cleburne	1,405	27.4%	1,345	27.1%	0	0.0%	128	64.0%	145	11.6%	51.9%
Cleveland	594	27.0%	345	19.3%	249	67.3%	34	68.0%	212	36.4%	20.0%
Columbia	1,929	34.4%	434	14.7%	1,468	57.3%	75	43.4%	595	40.0%	3.0%
Conway	1,008	19.8%	713	17.0%	198	31.0%	61	23.4%	427	31.0%	-12.7%
Craighead	6,541	28.7%	3,539	20.3%	2,564	59.9%	841	56.3%	2,297	35.2%	69.1%
Crawford	4,674	28.9%	3,734	26.4%	212	70.2%	604	41.3%	1,477	35.5%	60.6%
Crittenden	6,226	41.7%	826	14.8%	5,019	57.8%	67	11.5%	1,836	43.1%	12.9%
Cross	939	20.1%	451	13.8%	488	39.2%	0	0.0%	258	21.8%	-38.1%
Dallas	375	27.0%	159	27.1%	148	21.1%	68	49.6%	124	26.4%	-34.2%
Desha	1,398	39.4%	146	10.8%	1,006	53.7%	146	65.2%	496	48.6%	-19.6%
Drew	1,603	36.8%	572	20.8%	1,025	67.9%	60	36.8%	337	30.0%	52.7%
Faulkner	4,395	16.9%	3,093	14.5%	824	25.9%	417	31.8%	1,304	17.9%	54.1%
Franklin	1,100	24.9%	989	23.6%	7	100.0%	71	50.7%	304	28.3%	32.5%
Fulton	814	30.5%	746	29.9%	N/A	N/A	38	100.0%	282	43.2%	53.0%
Garland	5,507	28.1%	3,726	24.3%	1,116	51.2%	534	33.0%	1,657	31.1%	28.3%
Grant	509	11.8%	378	9.3%	107	67.7%	0	0.0%	59	5.7%	-8.0%
Greene	2,221	22.0%	2,020	20.8%	122	100.0%	62	18.3%	901	33.7%	50.1%
Hempstead	2,073	35.2%	793	23.4%	1,187	58.9%	299	26.9%	692	40.5%	11.0%
Hot Spring	986	13.0%	818	12.8%	137	18.1%	163	46.0%	217	10.9%	-32.5%
Howard	1,161	32.2%	537	24.2%	346	40.0%	284	55.6%	330	32.9%	49.6%
Independence	2,630	31.3%	2,497	32.0%	99	37.2%	509	74.6%	981	40.8%	91.8%
Izard	655	25.0%	601	24.2%	18	100.0%	12	44.4%	169	25.5%	3.6%
Jackson	1,530	41.3%	949	34.3%	458	58.7%	80	69.6%	450	43.5%	49.9%
Jefferson	6,310	33.4%	1,002	16.5%	4,928	41.7%	97	22.1%	1,996	39.0%	-2.7%
Johnson	1,735	28.4%	1,643	28.3%	0	0.0%	390	35.9%	680	37.7%	50.6%
Lafayette	499	29.5%	162	16.9%	329	46.7%	8	27.6%	129	34.7%	-24.8%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2005-2010

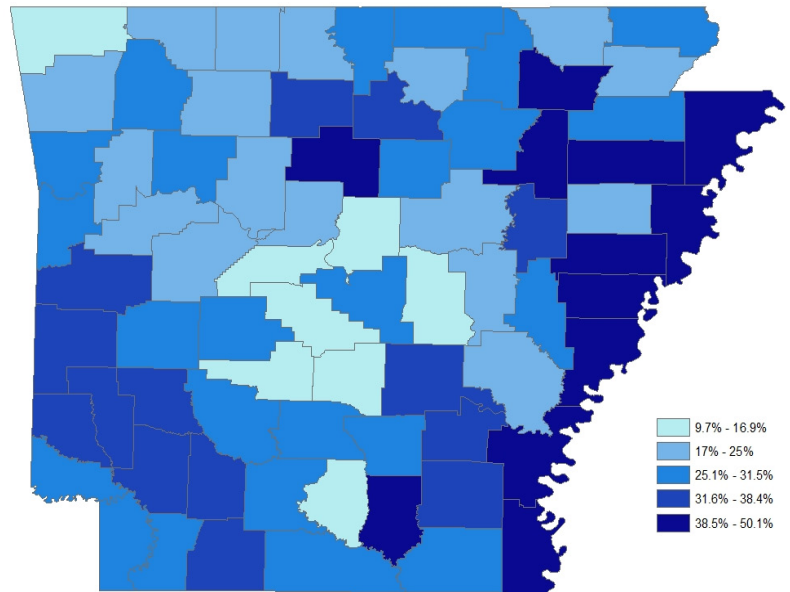
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	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	
STATE TOTAL	182,019	26.3%	98,562	19.9%	62,022	46.4%	26,006	39.0%	59,140	30.9%	22.7%
Lawrence	1,668	41.4%	1,611	41.5%	23	100.0%	74	64.9%	429	41.1%	55.5%
Lee	1,048	45.3%	177	25.5%	806	52.4%	66	100.0%	407	67.6%	-17.9%
Lincoln	1,048	38.4%	360	20.4%	495	66.1%	123	100.0%	286	42.8%	22.4%
Little River	885	28.4%	647	31.5%	238	31.2%	0	0.0%	303	41.8%	34.9%
Logan	1,144	20.4%	1,077	21.5%	0	0.0%	81	37.0%	423	31.8%	6.4%
Lonoke	3,007	16.6%	2,143	13.6%	630	45.7%	232	27.6%	1,149	24.9%	53.7%
Madison	1,027	27.4%	869	24.8%	0	0.0%	78	30.4%	246	26.7%	9.1%
Marion	651	20.6%	569	19.1%	N/A	N/A	62	38.0%	169	22.7%	-22.4%
Miller	3,065	29.1%	1,200	17.7%	1,696	52.3%	118	30.3%	1,032	34.5%	3.4%
Mississippi	5,159	39.3%	1,448	20.6%	3,662	64.6%	140	23.3%	1,530	42.3%	7.8%
Monroe	561	27.6%	158	17.2%	403	37.1%	62	77.5%	213	41.6%	-47.9%
Montgomery	608	29.1%	442	24.1%	N/A	N/A	164	92.1%	241	46.9%	22.8%
Nevada	790	36.2%	360	29.2%	418	48.1%	0	0.0%	252	40.9%	11.9%
Newton	388	22.3%	352	21.5%	0	0.0%	21	100.0%	72	17.7%	-34.9%
Ouachita	1,746	28.3%	501	16.7%	1,157	39.6%	81	52.9%	594	33.4%	-9.7%
Perry	354	15.0%	348	15.5%	0	0.0%	6	7.9%	162	29.9%	-19.5%
Phillips	3,124	48.3%	151	10.1%	2,940	60.0%	0	0.0%	999	57.8%	-18.8%
Pike	984	33.4%	638	26.6%	5	4.7%	285	70.0%	407	50.1%	68.2%
Poinsett	2,386	40.6%	1,736	34.2%	495	89.4%	137	58.8%	565	36.8%	26.4%
Polk	1,652	33.7%	1,452	33.6%	0	0.0%	264	55.6%	521	41.4%	36.2%
Pope	3,431	24.5%	2,784	22.7%	352	62.7%	688	48.5%	1,115	28.0%	29.7%
Prairie	354	19.1%	175	11.9%	162	47.2%	13	59.1%	88	20.9%	-26.1%
Pulaski	22,979	25.6%	5,627	12.9%	15,608	39.1%	2,647	40.5%	7,199	27.4%	26.6%
Randolph	957	23.6%	861	22.2%	43	100.0%	0	0.0%	185	17.0%	10.9%
St. Francis	3,101	44.7%	825	35.5%	2,276	49.7%	70	50.0%	1,088	56.5%	-1.4%
Saline	3,284	13.5%	2,708	12.7%	248	17.9%	269	20.4%	1,098	17.4%	76.5%
Scott	959	35.4%	816	34.3%	N/A	N/A	148	43.3%	349	54.0%	50.1%
Searcy	627	36.7%	551	33.9%	N/A	N/A	0	0.0%	137	32.5%	7.7%
Sebastian	8,854	28.8%	5,909	24.9%	785	39.7%	3,045	52.1%	3,117	35.1%	56.5%
Sevier	1,540	33.2%	612	24.0%	108	58.7%	1,037	48.5%	611	42.2%	28.3%
Sharp	1,147	31.2%	1,023	29.4%	14	46.7%	13	14.4%	285	30.9%	19.4%
Stone	901	35.7%	892	35.9%	N/A	N/A	36	63.2%	440	67.6%	35.7%
Union	3,238	31.5%	844	14.9%	2,224	54.5%	273	54.5%	1,049	37.4%	6.6%
Van Buren	1,439	41.0%	1,304	39.6%	135	100.0%	64	45.7%	489	50.2%	88.1%
Washington	11,563	23.5%	6,882	19.4%	766	39.6%	4,191	36.0%	4,316	28.9%	73.1%
White	3,566	20.3%	2,890	18.5%	93	11.4%	452	45.5%	1,071	22.3%	19.0%
Woodruff	596	35.1%	241	22.9%	334	55.5%	0	0.0%	223	51.7%	-31.1%
Yell	1,372	24.2%	1,084	22.3%	8	100.0%	629	38.5%	594	38.4%	23.2%

erty are more likely to: be underemployed or unemployed as adults; be the victims or perpetrators of crimes; and have health problems they cannot address without support from government programs. As a result, the Human Service Policy Center at the University of Washington estimates that child poverty costs the state of Arkansas approximately \$6.2 billion per year (\$2.11 billion in lost income and productivity, \$2.11 billion in costs to the criminal justice system and \$1.98 billion in healthcare costs).¹

Child poverty is a complex issue and there is no single solution. A more comprehensive discussion on programs and policies that lower the poverty rate and lessen its negative impacts is available in AACF’s 2010 child poverty report and the 2010 report issued by the Legislative Taskforce on Reducing Poverty and Promoting Economic Opportunities. The following programs and policies have been effective in fighting poverty.

- Promoting the healthy development of young children
 - o Greater access to ARKids First, a “medical home,” and well-child check ups
 - o Expanded use of coordinated school health and wellness programs
 - o Improving child nutrition through summer meal, SNAP, and innovative anti-hunger programs
- Improving education outcomes by ensuring every child has an equal opportunity to learn (OTL)
 - o Ensuring every child reads at grade level by end of the 3rd grade
 - o Reducing class sizes in the early grades
 - o Promoting parental involvement in schools and their child’s education
 - o Expanding access to quality out-of-school programs, including after school and summer programs
 - o Expanding access to quality early childhood programs for children birth to age five
- Making work pay for parents
 - o Greater utilization of the federal Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC)
 - o Creating a State EITC



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 5-year rolling average (Table B17001)

- o Ensuring access to quality child care that meets the needs of parents
- Promoting adult education and job preparation for low income adults through programs such as Career Pathways

By ensuring that we work to lower the number of children living in poverty, now and into the future, Arkansas will have a brighter tomorrow. For more information on child poverty and the programs mentioned above, visit:

“Child Poverty in Arkansas 2010: A Deepening Problem” www.aradvocates.org/assets/PDFs/Child-Poverty-2010.pdf

Kids Count Data Center <http://datacenter.kidscount.org/>

National Center for Children in Poverty (NCCP) www.nccp.org

“The Long Reach of Early Childhood Poverty” www.stanford.edu/group/scspi/_media/pdf/pathways/winter_2011/PathwaysWinter11_Duncan.pdf

¹Lori Pflugst, “The Cost of Childhood Poverty State by State.”http://www.2020wi.org/pdf/poverty_statecosts.pdf

The mission of Arkansas Advocates for Children and Families is to ensure that all children and their families have the resources and opportunities to lead healthy and productive lives and to realize their full potential. We serve as a voice for children at the Arkansas State Capitol and in Washington, D.C., gather and analyze data to support public policy that serves all children and families, and organize coalitions of diverse groups to drive change.



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