

## INCOME, POVERTY, AND HEALTH INSURANCE IN THE UNITED STATES IN 2001

### Income

The median household income in the United States in 2001 was \$42,228, a decline from \$43,162 in 2000 (Table 1). The decrease was statistically significant, and this was the second consecutive year that real (inflation-adjusted) income declined.

Householders age 15 to 24 and 65 and older experienced a significant decrease in real median household income. For the age group 15-24, income declined from \$28,624 in 2000 to \$28,196 in 2001, a 1.5 percent decrease. Real median household income for those age 65 and older declined from \$23,727 in 2000 to \$23,118 in 2001, a 2.2 percent decrease, the second consecutive year that real median income declined for this age group (Table 1).

The poverty rate increased for all age groups from 2000 to 2001, except for persons age 60 to 64. The increases were statistically significant among persons age 18 to 24, 25 to 34, 35 to 44, and 45 to 54 (Table 2).

In 2001, the poverty rate among those age 65 and older was 10.1 percent, 0.2 percentage points higher than the year before (9.9 percent) but still lower than the rate for all ages (11.7 percent).<sup>1</sup> However, the threshold used to establish poverty status for older persons is about 10 percent lower than for other age groups. The poverty threshold in 2001 was \$8,494 for a single person age 65 and older and \$9,214 for single persons under age 65. For couples, the threshold was \$10,705 for

**Table 1**  
**Median Income of Householders by Age (1998, 1999, 2000, and 2001)**

Age of Householder	Median Income in 2001 Dollars				Percent Change in Real Income
	1998	1999	2000	2001	2000-2001
All Ages	\$42,175	\$43,387	\$43,162	\$42,228	*-2.2%
15 to 24 years	\$25,558	\$26,757	\$28,624	\$28,196	*-1.5%
25 to 34 years	\$43,459	\$44,831	\$45,654	\$45,080	-1.5%
35 to 44 years	\$52,550	\$54,078	\$55,263	\$53,320	1.3%
45 to 54 years	\$58,729	\$60,503	\$59,251	\$58,045	-1.0%
55 to 64 years	\$46,819	\$47,407	\$46,105	\$45,864	-2.4%
65 years and older	\$23,567	\$24,249	\$23,727	\$23,118	*-2.2%

\* Statistically significant change at 90 percent confidence level.  
Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census. *Money Income in the United States: 2001*. September 2002.

### Poverty

There were 32.9 million persons in poverty in 2001, 1.4 million more than in 2000. The overall poverty rate in 2001, 11.7 percent, increased 0.4 percentage points from the 2000 level, a statistically significant increase (Table 2).

<sup>1</sup> The poverty rate for older persons in 2000 was 10.2 percent in the Census Bureau 2001 report, but was 9.9 percent in 2000 in the Census Bureau 2002 report, due to differences in the samples for the March 2001 and 2002 Current Population Surveys (CPS). The March 2001 CPS contained 50,000 households (based on Census 1990), whereas the March 2002 CPS used a new sample with 78,000 households (based on 2000 Census).

Age	Percent of Persons below Poverty				Changes in Poverty Rate
	1998	1999	2000	2001	2000 to 2001
All Ages	12.7%	11.8%	11.3%	11.7%	*0.4
Under 18	18.9%	16.9%	16.2%	16.3%	0.1
18 to 24 years	16.6%	17.3%	15.2%	16.3%	*1.2
25 to 34 years	11.9%	10.5%	10.5%	11.0%	*0.5
35 to 44 years	9.1%	8.3%	8.2%	8.6%	*0.4
45 to 54 years	6.9%	6.7%	6.6%	7.1%	*0.5
55 to 59 years	9.2%	9.2%	8.6%	8.7%	0.1
60 to 64 years	10.1%	9.8%	10.4%	10.3%	-0.1
65 years and older	10.5%	9.7%	9.9%	10.1%	0.2

\* Statistically significant change at 90 percent confidence level.  
Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census *Poverty in the United States: 2001*. September 2002.

those age 65 and older and \$11,859 for those under age 65.

In 2001, 6.5 percent of older persons were “near poor,” defined as between 1.0 and 1.25 times the poverty line (Table 3). The near-poor rate for older persons is higher than for any other age, and it would be higher still if the same poverty threshold were applied to both elderly and non-elderly persons.

### Health Insurance Coverage

An estimated 41.2 million persons were without health insurance coverage during the entire 2001 calendar year (14.6

percent of the total population). This number was about 1.4 million higher than in 2000 (0.4 percentage points higher), a statistically significant increase. The number of uninsured persons age 45 to 64 was about 8.6 million in 2001, representing 13.1 percent of all persons in this age group. The number of uninsured children under age 18 was 8.5 million in 2001, slightly lower than in 2000 (-0.2 percentage points).

A majority of the nation’s population (70.9 percent) was covered by a private insurance plan for some or all of 2001. Other sources of insurance included government coverage through Medicare (13.5 percent), Medicaid (11.2 percent), and military health care (3.4 percent).<sup>2</sup>

	Percent under 1.00	Percent under 1.25	Near Poor
	All Persons	11.7%	16.1%
Under 18	16.3%	21.9%	5.6%
18 to 24 years	16.3%	21.3%	5.0%
25 to 34 years	11.0%	15.1%	4.1%
35 to 44 years	8.6%	11.7%	3.1%
45 to 54 years	7.1%	9.7%	2.6%
55 to 59 years	8.7%	11.5%	2.8%
60 to 64 years	10.3%	14.2%	3.9%
65 years and older	10.1%	16.6%	6.5%
65 to 74 years	9.2%	14.7%	5.5%
74 years and older	11.2%	18.8%	7.6%

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Poverty in the United States: 2001*. September 2002.

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<sup>2</sup> Health insurance coverage percentages and uninsured percentages do not add up to 100 percent because some individuals have more than one type of coverage.