

**INCOME, POVERTY, AND HEALTH INSURANCE
IN THE UNITED STATES IN 2003¹**

Income

The median household income in the United States in 2003 was \$43,318. The inflation-adjusted median household income remained virtually unchanged between 2002 and 2003, following two consecutive years of decline (Table 1).

Householders age 15 to 24 and age 25 to 34 experienced a significant decrease in real median household income. For the age group 15-24, income declined from \$28,446 in 2002 to \$27,053 in 2003, a 5.0 percent decrease, the fourth consecutive year that real median income declined for this age group. Real median household income for the age group 25 to 34 declined to \$44,779 from \$46,368 in 2002, a 3.4 percent decrease. The decreases of median household income for both age groups are statistically significant (Table 1).

Poverty

There were 35.9 million persons in

poverty in 2003, 1.3 million more than in

2002. The overall poverty rate in 2003 was 12.5 percent, an increase of 0.3 percentage points from the 2002 level. This marks the third year in a row (since 2000) that the poverty rate increased, an increase that was statistically significant (Table 2).

The poverty rate increased for persons under age 18, age 25 to 34, age 35 to 44, and age 45 to 54 from 2002 to 2003. All these increases were statistically significant (Table 2).

In 2003, the poverty rate among those age 65 and older was 10.2 percent, 0.2 percentage points lower than the year before, but still 0.3 percentage points higher than in 2000. The poverty rate for older persons in 2000 was lower than the rate for all ages (12.5 percent). 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 2003 was \$8,825 for single persons age 65 and over and \$9,573

Age of Householder	Median Income in 2003 Dollars				Percent Change in Real Income
	2000	2001	2002	2003	2002-2003
All Ages	\$44,857	\$43,887	\$43,381	\$43,318	-0.1%
15 to 24 years	\$29,748	\$29,303	\$28,446	\$27,053	*-5.0%
25 to 34 years	\$47,447	\$46,850	\$46,368	\$44,779	*-3.4%
35 to 44 years	\$57,433	\$55,414	\$54,747	\$55,044	0.5%
45 to 54 years	\$61,578	\$60,324	\$60,373	\$60,242	-0.2%
55 to 64 years	\$47,916	\$47,665	\$48,284	\$49,215	*1.9%
65 years and older	\$24,659	\$24,026	\$23,682	\$23,787	0.4%

* Statistically significant change at 90 percent confidence level.
Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Money Income, Poverty, and Health Insurance Coverage in the United States: 2003*. August 2004.

¹ Data Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census's March 2004 Current Population Survey. The survey consists of about 78,000 households in the United States for the calendar year 2003. The survey does not include the institutionalized population or those under age 15.

Age	Percentage of Persons below Poverty				Percentage Point Changes
	2000	2001	2002	2003	2002-2003
All Ages	11.3%	11.7%	12.2%	12.5%	*0.3
Under 18	16.2%	16.3%	16.7%	17.6%	*0.9
18 to 24 years	15.2%	16.3%	16.5%	16.5%	0.0
25 to 34 years	10.5%	11.0%	11.9%	12.8%	*0.9
35 to 44 years	8.2%	8.6%	9.3%	9.6%	*0.3
45 to 54 years	6.6%	7.1%	7.5%	7.6%	*0.1
55 to 59 years	8.6%	8.7%	8.4%	8.2%	-0.2
60 to 64 years	10.4%	10.3%	10.6%	9.7%	-0.9
65 years and older	9.9%	10.1%	10.4%	10.2%	-0.2

* Statistically significant change at 90 percent confidence level.
Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Money Income, Poverty, and Health Insurance Coverage in the United States: 2003*. August 2004.

for single persons under age 65. For couples, the threshold was \$11,122 for those age 65 and older and \$12,321 for those under age 65.

In 2003, 6.7 percent of persons age 65 and older were “near poor,” defined as between 1.0 and 1.25 times the poverty line (Table 3). The near-poor rate for those persons is higher than for any other age group, and it would be higher still if the same poverty threshold were applied to both elderly and nonelderly persons.

Health Insurance Coverage

An estimated 45.0 million persons were without health insurance coverage during the entire 2003 calendar year (15.6 percent of the total population). This number was about 1.4 million higher than

in 2002 (0.4 percentage points higher), a statistically significant increase. The number of uninsured persons age 45 to 64 was about 9.7 million in 2002, representing 13.9 percent of all persons in this age group. The 45 to 64 years old uninsured population increased 0.4 percentage points from the 2002 level. The number of uninsured children under age 18 was 8.4 million in 2003, representing an approximate 0.1 million decline from year 2002 (-0.3 percentage points).

A majority of the nation’s total population (68.6 percent) was covered by a private insurance plan for some or all of 2003. Other sources of insurance included government coverage through Medicare (13.7 percent), Medicaid (12.4 percent), and military health care (3.5 percent).²

Age	Under 1.00	Under 1.25	Near Poor
All Ages	12.5%	16.5%	4.0%
Under 18	17.6%	23.0%	5.4%
18 to 24 years	16.5%	21.5%	5.0%
25 to 34 years	12.8%	17.0%	4.2%
35 to 44 years	9.6%	13.0%	3.4%
45 to 54 years	7.6%	10.3%	2.7%
55 to 59 years	8.2%	11.0%	2.8%
60 to 64 years	9.7%	13.4%	3.7%
65 years and older	10.2%	16.9%	6.7%
65 to 74 years	9.0%	14.5%	5.5%
75 years and older	11.6%	19.6%	8.0%

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Money Income, Poverty, and Health Insurance Coverage in the United States: 2003*. August 2004. Page 2

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