

Public Assistance Receipt in the Past 12 Months for Households: 2009 and 2010

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INTRODUCTION

Public assistance income provides cash payments to poor families and includes General Assistance and Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF), which replaced Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) in 1997. Public assistance income does not include Supplemental Security Income (SSI), noncash benefits such as Food Stamps/SNAP, or separate payments received for hospital or other medical care. To qualify for public assistance benefits, the income and assets of an individual or family must fall below specified thresholds. However, unlike AFDC benefits, TANF benefits are time-limited, require most adult recipients to work, and give states increased flexibility in program design.

This report presents data on public assistance receipt at the national and state levels based on the 2009 and the 2010 American Community Surveys (ACS). The ACS questions on participation in public assistance were designed to identify households in which one or more current members received public assistance during the past 12 months. Data are for households, not individuals. If any person living at the sample address at the time of the interview received public assistance in the past 12 months, then the household is included in the estimate of public assistance participation.

PUBLIC ASSISTANCE RECEIPT

In the 2010 ACS, 3.3 million households received public assistance at some time in the previous 12 months, an increase of about 0.3 million from the 2009 ACS estimate. The states with the highest public assistance participation included Alaska, Maine, Vermont, and Washington, as well as the District of Columbia. The states with the lowest public assistance participation rates included Louisiana, Alabama, and Wyoming.

The public assistance participation rate for U.S. households was 2.9 percent in the 2010 ACS—a 0.2 percentage-point increase from the 2009 ACS. Fourteen states and the District of Columbia had a higher participation rate when compared to the national average in the 2010 ACS. These states were concentrated in the Northeast (Maine, Vermont, Pennsylvania, New York, and Connecticut) and West (Alaska, Washington, California, Oregon, and Hawaii). The remaining states included Michigan, Ohio, Minnesota, and Oklahoma.

Twenty-five states had lower participation rates when compared to the national average in the 2010 ACS. Thirteen of them were located in the South (Louisiana, Alabama, Arkansas, South Carolina, Texas, Georgia, Virginia, Florida, North Carolina, West Virginia, Mississippi, Kentucky, and Maryland). Seven of them were located in the Midwest (North Dakota, Wisconsin, Nebraska, Missouri, Kansas, Illinois, and Indiana). The remaining states included Wyoming, Colorado, Utah, Montana, and New Jersey.

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Public Assistance Receipt in the Past 12 Months for Households by State and Puerto Rico: 2009 and 2010

(For information on confidentiality protection, sampling error, nonsampling error, and definitions, see www.census.gov/acs/www)

Area	Public assistance receipt in 2009				Public assistance receipt in 2010				Change in public assistance receipt (2010 less 2009)			
	Estimate	Margin of error ¹ (+/-)	Percent	Margin of error ¹ (+/-)	Estimate	Margin of error ¹ (+/-)	Percent	Margin of error ¹ (+/-)	Estimate	Margin of error ¹ (+/-)	Percent	Margin of error ¹ (+/-)
United States..	3,009,319	28,071	2.6	0.1	3,276,261	34,703	2.9	0.1	*266,942	44,635	*0.2	0.1
Alabama	29,804	2,639	1.6	0.1	29,713	2,476	1.6	0.1	-91	3,619	-	0.2
Alaska	14,993	2,262	6.3	0.9	16,963	1,764	6.7	0.7	1,970	2,869	0.3	1.2
Arizona	57,416	4,182	2.5	0.2	64,339	3,611	2.8	0.2	*6,923	5,525	0.2	0.2
Arkansas	23,257	2,627	2.1	0.2	20,082	2,190	1.8	0.2	-3,175	3,420	-0.3	0.3
California	449,059	10,015	3.7	0.1	500,432	13,142	4.0	0.1	*51,373	16,524	*0.4	0.1
Colorado	37,466	3,057	2.0	0.2	42,931	3,243	2.2	0.2	*5,465	4,457	0.2	0.2
Connecticut	38,919	3,025	2.9	0.2	42,376	3,157	3.1	0.2	3,457	4,373	0.2	0.3
Delaware	8,567	1,542	2.6	0.5	8,431	1,193	2.6	0.4	-136	1,950	-0.1	0.6
District of Columbia	13,308	1,984	5.3	0.8	11,758	1,839	4.7	0.7	-1,550	2,705	-0.7	1.1
Florida	115,630	5,168	1.7	0.1	140,643	5,704	2.0	0.1	*25,013	7,697	*0.3	0.1
Georgia	57,584	3,608	1.7	0.1	66,956	3,985	1.9	0.1	*9,372	5,376	*0.3	0.2
Hawaii	16,443	2,130	3.7	0.5	14,784	1,752	3.3	0.4	-1,659	2,758	-0.4	0.6
Idaho	15,193	1,672	2.7	0.3	15,459	1,774	2.7	0.3	266	2,438	-	0.4
Illinois	111,669	5,728	2.3	0.1	119,391	5,403	2.5	0.1	7,722	7,874	0.2	0.2
Indiana	68,643	4,151	2.8	0.2	65,548	3,904	2.7	0.2	-3,095	5,698	-0.1	0.2
Iowa	29,483	2,907	2.4	0.2	33,537	2,858	2.7	0.2	4,054	4,076	*0.3	0.3
Kansas	28,182	2,637	2.6	0.2	27,337	2,911	2.5	0.3	-845	3,927	-0.1	0.4
Kentucky	42,486	3,497	2.5	0.2	41,160	3,461	2.4	0.2	-1,326	4,921	-0.1	0.3
Louisiana	22,468	2,138	1.3	0.1	24,390	2,241	1.4	0.1	1,922	3,097	0.1	0.2
Maine	26,669	2,406	4.9	0.4	28,213	2,176	5.2	0.4	1,544	3,244	0.3	0.6
Maryland	41,470	3,352	2.0	0.2	52,814	3,822	2.5	0.2	*11,344	5,084	*0.5	0.2
Massachusetts	70,320	4,365	2.8	0.2	76,037	4,683	3.0	0.2	5,717	6,402	0.2	0.3
Michigan	147,919	6,773	3.9	0.2	155,354	4,862	4.1	0.1	7,435	8,337	0.2	0.2
Minnesota	66,091	4,162	3.2	0.2	71,147	3,947	3.4	0.2	5,056	5,736	0.2	0.3
Mississippi	27,666	2,392	2.5	0.2	26,205	2,590	2.4	0.2	-1,461	3,525	-0.1	0.3
Missouri	55,963	3,627	2.4	0.2	55,617	3,211	2.4	0.1	-346	4,844	-	0.2
Montana	8,728	1,203	2.3	0.3	9,851	1,302	2.4	0.3	1,123	1,773	0.1	0.5
Nebraska	15,482	1,818	2.2	0.3	16,109	1,664	2.2	0.2	627	2,464	0.1	0.3
Nevada	26,176	2,707	2.7	0.3	29,976	3,088	3.0	0.3	3,800	4,106	0.3	0.4
New Hampshire	14,663	2,163	2.9	0.4	16,416	1,992	3.2	0.4	1,753	2,940	0.3	0.6
New Jersey	76,828	4,092	2.4	0.1	84,598	4,931	2.7	0.2	*7,770	6,408	*0.2	0.2
New Mexico	18,027	2,108	2.4	0.3	21,680	2,299	2.8	0.3	*3,653	3,120	0.4	0.4
New York	224,674	7,769	3.1	0.1	243,430	7,549	3.4	0.1	*18,756	10,832	*0.3	0.2
North Carolina	64,936	4,165	1.8	0.1	78,705	4,099	2.1	0.1	*13,769	5,844	*0.4	0.2
North Dakota	6,155	1,211	2.2	0.4	5,880	1,065	2.1	0.4	-275	1,613	-0.1	0.6
Ohio	150,463	5,757	3.3	0.1	161,210	6,099	3.6	0.1	*10,747	8,387	*0.2	0.2
Oklahoma	47,863	2,797	3.3	0.2	46,968	3,180	3.3	0.2	-895	4,235	-0.1	0.3
Oregon	51,179	4,011	3.4	0.3	54,915	3,084	3.6	0.2	3,736	5,060	0.2	0.3
Pennsylvania	161,311	5,903	3.3	0.1	180,404	7,731	3.7	0.2	*19,093	9,727	*0.4	0.2
Rhode Island	9,218	1,396	2.3	0.3	11,464	1,712	2.8	0.4	*2,246	2,209	*0.6	0.5
South Carolina	29,891	2,906	1.7	0.2	32,255	2,648	1.8	0.1	2,364	3,932	0.1	0.2
South Dakota	7,520	1,091	2.4	0.3	9,158	1,502	2.9	0.5	1,638	1,856	0.5	0.6
Tennessee	65,543	3,673	2.7	0.2	71,984	4,061	2.9	0.2	*6,441	5,476	*0.3	0.2
Texas	155,207	6,067	1.8	0.1	167,089	6,873	1.9	0.1	*11,882	9,168	0.1	0.1
Utah	19,194	1,908	2.2	0.2	21,472	1,873	2.4	0.2	2,278	2,673	0.2	0.3
Vermont	9,121	1,475	3.6	0.6	12,609	1,527	4.9	0.6	*3,488	2,123	*1.3	0.8
Virginia	60,292	3,952	2.0	0.1	58,333	3,920	1.9	0.1	-1,959	5,567	-0.1	0.2
Washington	103,993	5,106	4.1	0.2	118,766	4,800	4.6	0.2	*14,773	7,008	*0.5	0.3
West Virginia	19,865	2,044	2.7	0.3	16,912	2,147	2.3	0.3	-2,953	2,964	-0.4	0.4
Wisconsin	43,101	3,002	1.9	0.1	50,608	3,303	2.2	0.1	*7,507	4,463	*0.3	0.2
Wyoming	3,221	837	1.5	0.4	3,852	902	1.7	0.4	631	1,230	0.2	0.6
Puerto Rico	70,263	3,446	5.9	0.3	72,684	3,473	5.5	0.3	2,421	4,893	*-0.4	0.4

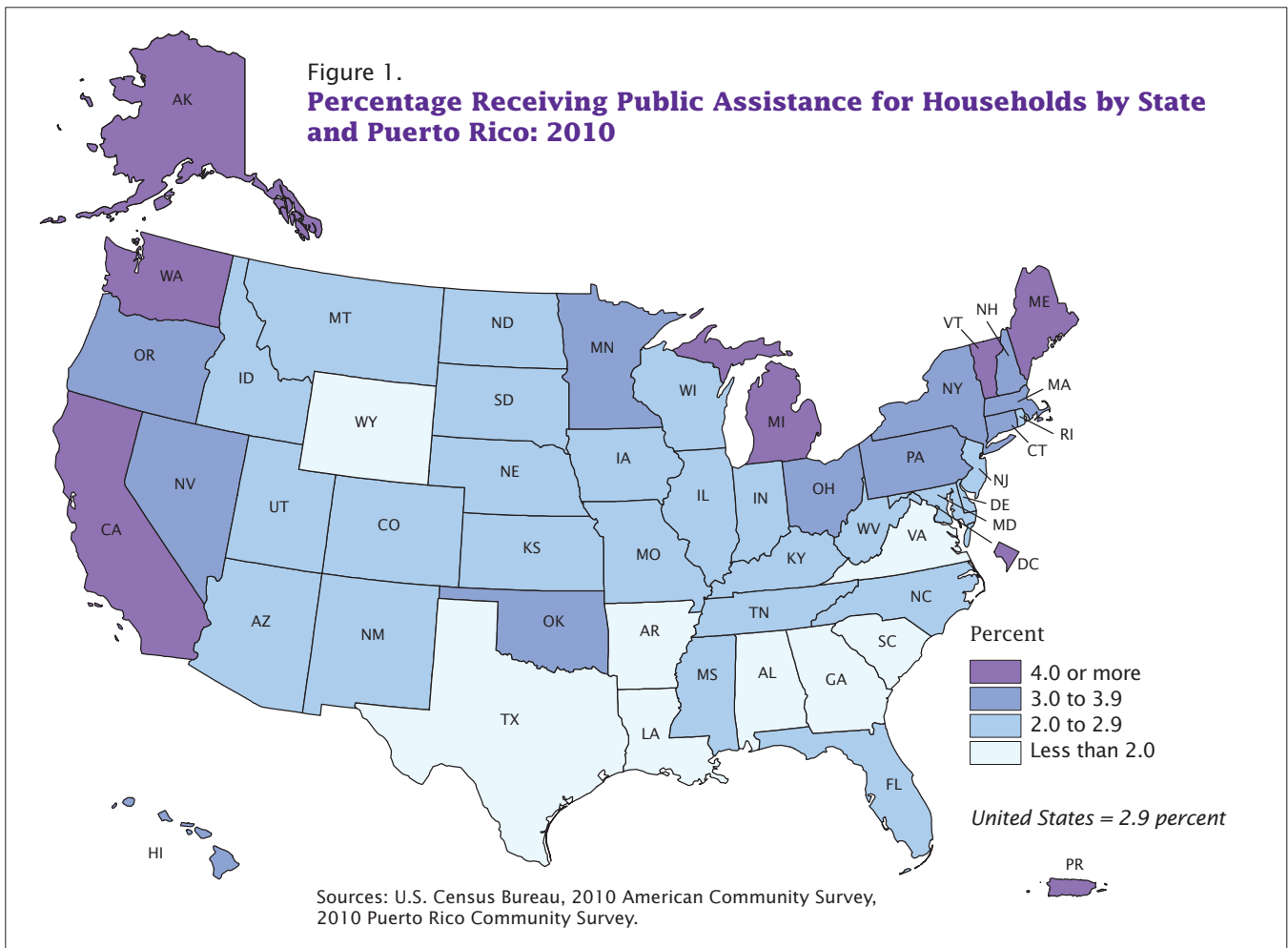
* Statistically different from zero at the 90 percent confidence level.

- Represents or rounds to zero.

¹ Data are based on a sample and are subject to sampling variability. A margin of error is a measure of an estimate's variability. The larger the margin of error in relation to the size of the estimate, the less reliable the estimate. When added to and subtracted from the estimate, the margin of error forms the 90 percent confidence interval.

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, 2009 and 2010 American Community Surveys, 2009 and 2010 Puerto Rico Community Surveys.

Figure 1.
Percentage Receiving Public Assistance for Households by State and Puerto Rico: 2010



Fourteen states (California, Florida, Georgia, Maryland, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Tennessee, Vermont, Washington, and Wisconsin) had increases in the number and percentage of households receiving public assistance from the 2009 ACS to the 2010 ACS. In Arizona, Colorado, New Mexico, and Texas the number of households receiving public assistance grew, but the 2009 and 2010 rates were not significantly different. In Iowa, the percentage of households receiving public assistance increased, but the numbers were not significantly different. In all the remaining states, the rates and the number of households receiving

public assistance in the 2010 ACS were not statistically different from the 2009 ACS estimates.

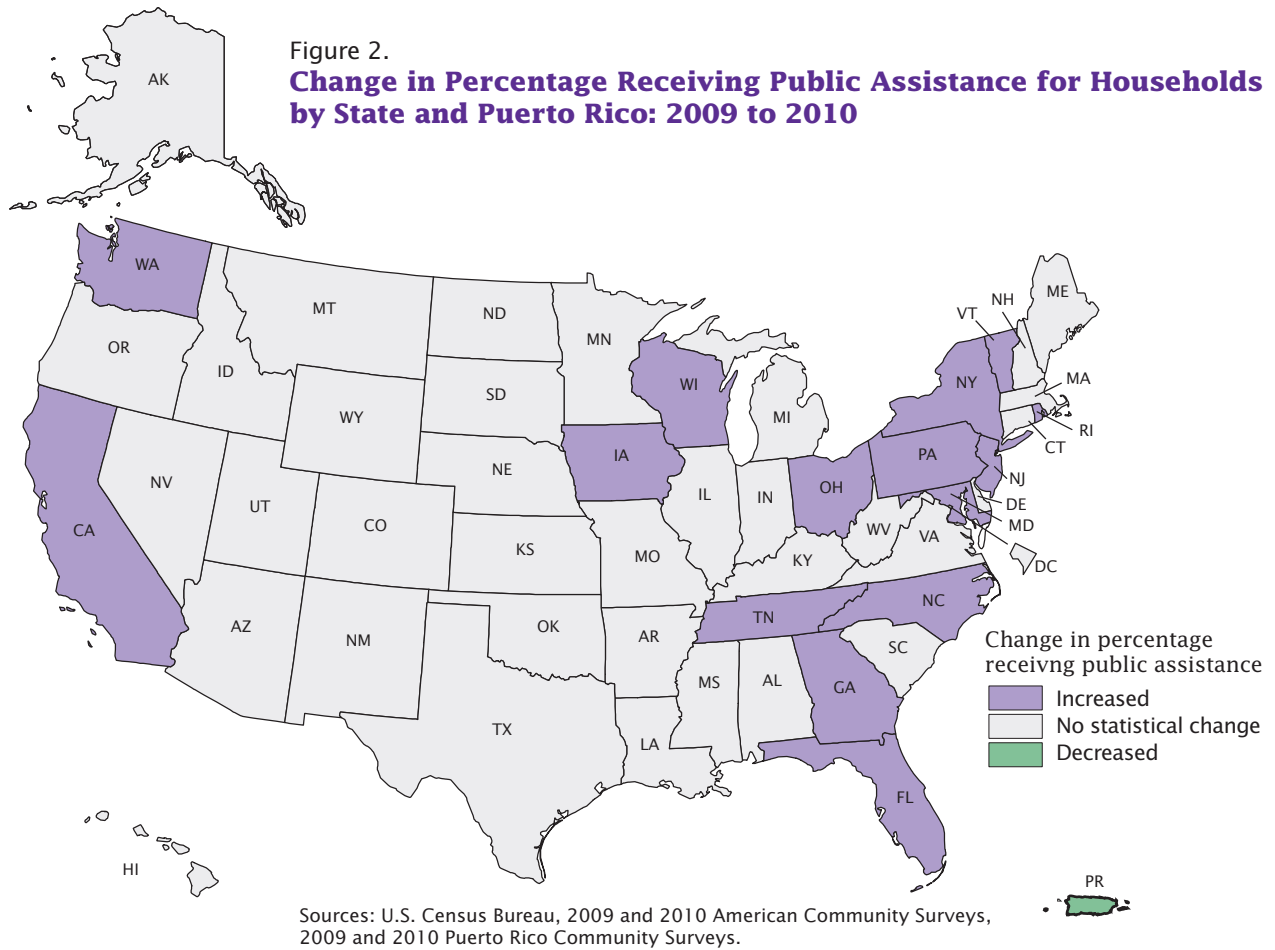
In the 2010 ACS, Puerto Rico had a higher public assistance participation rate when compared to the national average. However, Puerto Rico's public assistance participation rate in the 2010 ACS (5.5 percent) was statistically lower than the rate in the 2009 ACS (5.9 percent).

SOURCE AND ACCURACY

Data presented in this report are based on people and households that responded to the ACS in 2009 and 2010. The resulting estimates are representative of the entire population. All comparisons

presented in this report have taken sampling error into account and are significant at the 90 percent confidence level unless otherwise noted. Due to rounding, some details may not sum to totals. For information on sampling and estimation methods, confidentiality protection, and sampling and nonsampling errors, please see the "2010 ACS Accuracy of the Data" document located at www.census.gov/acs/www/Downloads/data_documentation/Accuracy/ACS_Accuracy_of_Data_2010.pdf.

Figure 2.
Change in Percentage Receiving Public Assistance for Households by State and Puerto Rico: 2009 to 2010



WHAT IS THE AMERICAN COMMUNITY SURVEY?

The American Community Survey (ACS) is a nationwide survey designed to provide communities with reliable and timely demographic, social, economic, and housing data for the nation, states, congressional districts, counties, places, and other localities every year. It has an annual sample size of about 3 million addresses across the United States and Puerto Rico and includes both housing units and group quarters (e.g., nursing facilities and prisons). The ACS is conducted in every county throughout the nation, and every municipio in Puerto Rico, where it is called the Puerto Rico Community Survey. Beginning in 2006, ACS data for 2005 were released for geographic areas with populations of 65,000 and greater. For information on the ACS sample design and other topics, visit <www.census.gov/acs/www>.