A profile of the working poor, 2016

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In 2016, according to the U.S. Census Bureau, about 40.6 million people, or 12.7 percent of the nation's population, lived below the poverty level.[1] (See the technical notes section for examples of poverty levels.) Although the poor were primarily children and adults who had not participated in the labor force during the year, 7.6 million individuals were among the "working poor" in 2016, according to data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics; this measure was down from 2015. The working poor are people who spent at least 27 weeks in the labor force (that is, working or looking for work) but whose incomes still fell below the poverty level. In 2016, the working-poor rate—the ratio of the working poor to all individuals in the labor force for at least 27 weeks—was 4.9 percent, down 0.7 percentage point from the previous year. (See table A, chart 1, and table 1.)

Highlights from the 2016 data

- Full-time workers continued to be much less likely to be among the working poor than were part-time workers. Among people in the labor force for 27 weeks or more, 3.1 percent of those usually employed full time were classified as working poor, compared with 12.2 percent of part-time workers (table 1).
- Women were more likely than men to be among the working poor. In addition, Blacks or African Americans and Hispanics or Latinos[2] continued to be about twice as likely as Whites and Asians to be among the working poor. (See table 2 and chart 2.)
- The likelihood of being classified as working poor diminishes as workers attain higher levels of education. Among those with less than a high school diploma, 13.7 percent of those who were in the labor force for at least 27 weeks were classified as working poor, compared with 1.4 percent of college graduates. (See table 3.)
- Individuals who were employed in service occupations continued to be more likely to be among the working poor than those employed in other major occupational groups. (See table 4.)
- Among families with at least one member in the labor force for 27 weeks or more, those with children under 18 years old were about 5 times as likely as those without children to live in poverty. Families maintained by women were twice as likely as families maintained by men to be living below the poverty level. (See table 5.)

Table A. Poverty status of people and primary families in the labor force for 27 weeks or more, 2007–16 (numbers in thousands)

Characteristic	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
See footnotes at end of table.										
Total in the labor force[1]	146,567	147,838	147,902	146,859	147,475	148,735	149,483	150,319	152,230	153,364
In poverty	7,521	8,883	10,391	10,512	10,382	10,612	10,450	9,487	8,560	7,572
Working-poor rate	5.1	6.0	7.0	7.2	7.0	7.1	7.0	6.3	5.6	4.9

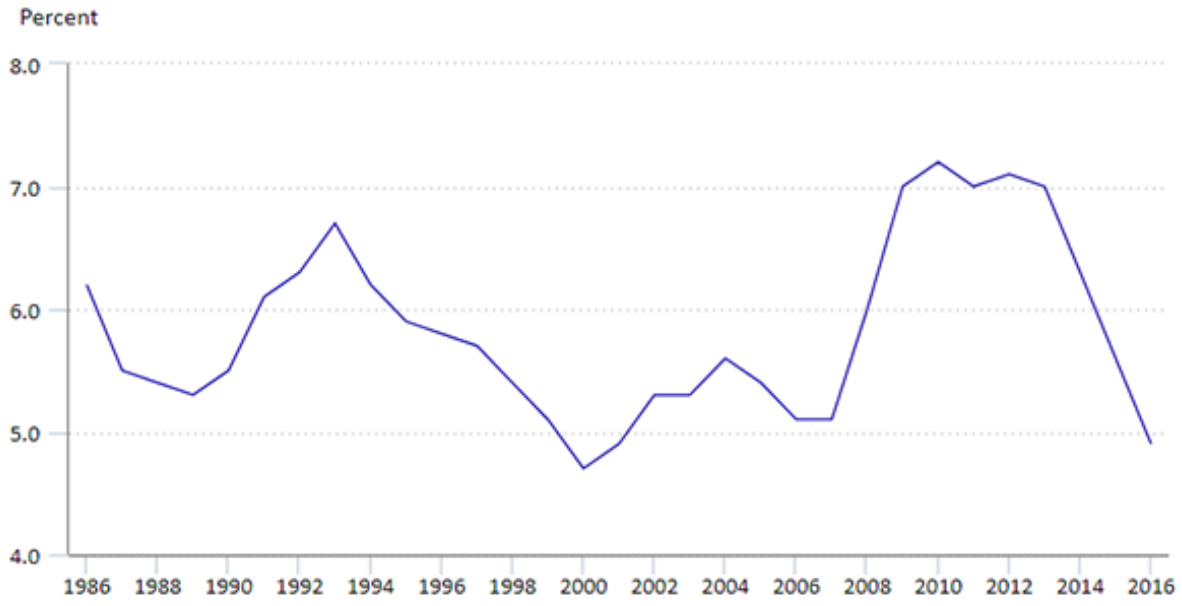
Table A. Poverty status of people and primary families in the labor force for 27 weeks or more, 2007–16 (numbers in thousands)

Characteristic	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Unrelated individuals	33,226	32,785	33,798	34,099	33,731	34,810	35,061	35,018	35,953	35,789
In poverty	2,558	3,275	3,947	3,947	3,621	3,851	4,141	3,395	3,137	2,792
Working-poor rate	7.7	10.0	11.7	11.6	10.7	11.1	11.8	9.7	8.7	7.8
Primary families[2]	65,158	65,907	65,467	64,931	66,225	66,541	66,462	66,732	67,193	67,628
In poverty	4,169	4,538	5,193	5,269	5,469	5,478	5,137	5,108	4,607	4,082
Working-poor rate	6.4	6.9	7.9	8.1	8.3	8.2	7.7	7.7	6.9	6.0

[1] Includes individuals in families, not shown separately.
[2] Primary families with at least one member in the labor force for more than half the year.
Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey (CPS), Annual Social and Economic Supplement (ASEC).

This report presents data on the relationship between labor force activity and poverty status in 2016 for workers and their families. These data were collected in the 2017 Annual Social and Economic Supplement to the Current Population Survey. (For a detailed description of the source of the data and an explanation of the concepts and definitions used in this report, see the technical notes.) The specific income thresholds used to determine people's poverty status vary, depending on whether the individuals are living with family members or are living alone or with nonrelatives. For family members, the poverty threshold is determined by their family's total income; for individuals not living in families, their personal income is used as the determinant.

Chart 1. Working-poor rate of people in the labor force for 27 weeks or more, 1986–2016



Click legend items to change data display. Hover over chart to view data.
Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey (CPS), Annual Social and Economic Supplement (ASEC).

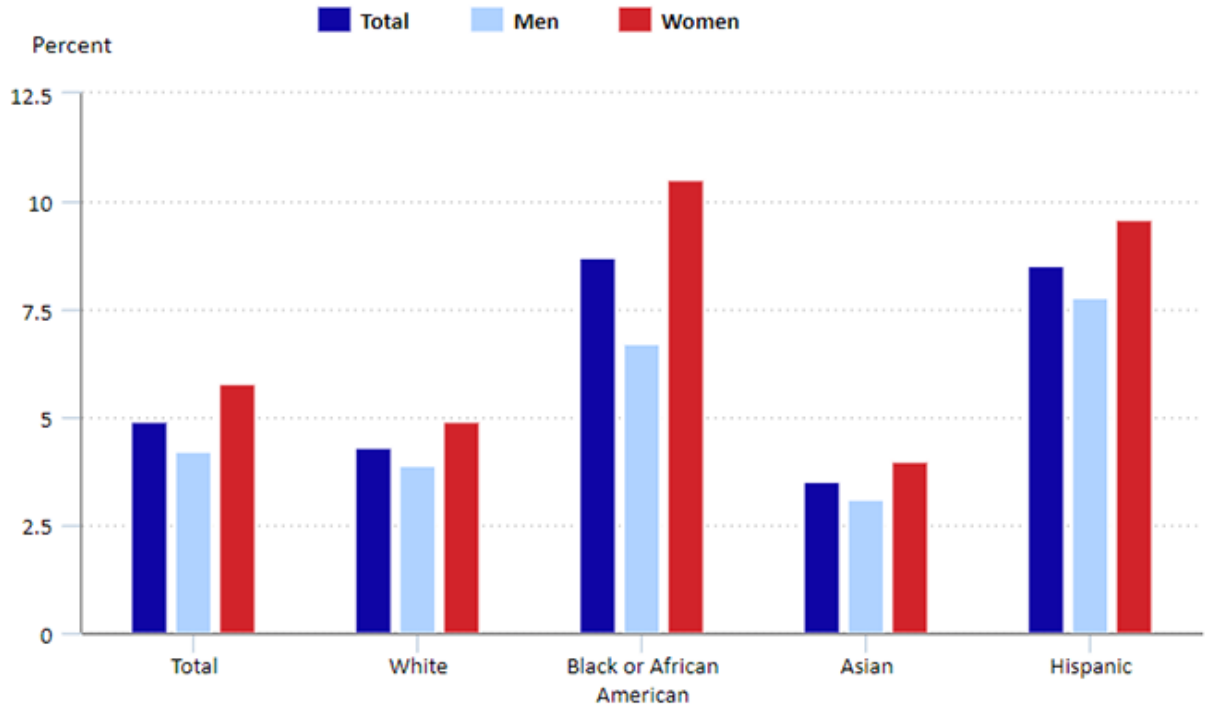
Demographic characteristics

Among those who were in the labor force for 27 weeks or more in 2016, the number of women classified as working poor (4.1 million) was higher than that of men (3.4 million). The working-poor rate also continued to be higher for women, at 5.8 percent, than for men, at 4.2 percent, (table 2). The working-poor rates for both women and men were down from a year earlier.

Blacks and Hispanics were about twice as likely as Whites and Asians to be among the working poor. In 2016, the working-poor rates of Blacks and Hispanics were 8.7 percent and 8.5 percent, respectively, compared with 4.3 percent for Whites and 3.5 percent for Asians (table 2).

Among Whites, Blacks, and Hispanics, the working-poor rate was higher for women than for men. The rates for White women and men who spent at least 27 weeks in the labor force were 4.9 percent and 3.9 percent, respectively. The rate for Black women was 10.5 percent, compared with 6.7 percent for Black men. The working-poor rate for Hispanic women was 9.6 percent, while that of Hispanic men stood at 7.8 percent. Among Asians, the rates for women and men were little different from each other: 4.0 percent and 3.1 percent, respectively (table 2 and chart 2).

Chart 2. Working-poor rates by gender, race, and Hispanic or Latino ethnicity, 2016



Click legend items to change data display. Hover over chart to view data.
Note: People whose ethnicity is identified as Hispanic or Latino may be of any race.
Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey (CPS). Annual Social and Economic Supplement (ASEC).

Young workers are more likely to be below the poverty level than are workers in older age groups, in part because earnings are lower for young workers and the unemployment rate for young workers is higher. The working-poor rate of

employed youths 20 to 24 years old was 8.7 percent in 2016, considerably higher than the rates for workers ages 35 to 44 (5.6 percent) and 55 to 64 (2.8 percent). Workers age 65 and older had a working-poor rate of 1.5 percent (table 2).

Educational attainment

Achieving higher levels of education reduces the incidence of living in poverty. Individuals who complete more years of education usually have greater access to higher paying jobs—such as management, professional, and related occupations—than those with fewer years of education. Of all the people in the labor force for 27 weeks or more in 2016, those with less than a high school diploma had a working-poor rate (13.7 percent) nearly twice that of high school graduates with no college (6.9 percent). Workers with some college or an associate's degree and those with a bachelor's degree or higher had the lowest working-poor rates (5.1 percent and 1.4 percent, respectively). In 2016, at all levels of educational attainment, women were more likely than men to be among the working poor. Blacks and Hispanics with a bachelor's degree or higher were about twice as likely as Whites and Asians with the same educational attainment to be among the working poor (table 3).

Occupation

The likelihood of being among the working poor varies widely by occupation. Workers in occupations requiring higher education and characterized by relatively high earnings—such as management, professional, and related occupations—were least likely to be classified as working poor, at 1.6 percent in 2016. By contrast, individuals employed in service occupations, which typically do not require high levels of education and are characterized by relatively low earnings, were more likely to be among the working poor, at 10.7 percent. Individuals employed in service occupations, with 2.8 million working poor, accounted for 39 percent of all those classified as workers below the poverty level (7.1 million). Among those employed in natural resources, construction, and maintenance occupations, 5.7 percent were classified as working poor (table 4).

Families

In 2016, 4.1 million families were living below the poverty level despite having at least one member in the labor force for half the year or more. This figure is down from 4.6 million in 2015. Married-couple families with only one member in the labor force in 2016 were less likely to be living below the poverty level, at 7.7 percent, than were families maintained by men, at 11.6 percent, and maintained by women, at 21.5 percent (table 5).

Among families, those with children in the household were much more likely to live below the poverty level, (9.7 percent) than those without children (2.2 percent). Families maintained by women with children had a working-poor rate of 22.8 percent, more than double that of families maintained by men with children, at 11.2 percent. Both of these rates were higher than that for married-couple families with children (5.3 percent).

Unrelated individuals

The "unrelated individuals" category includes individuals who live by themselves or with others not related to them. Of the 35.8 million unrelated individuals who were in the labor force for 27 weeks or more, 2.8 million lived below the poverty level in 2016, down from 3.1 million a year earlier. The working-poor rate for unrelated individuals was 7.8 percent, a decrease of 0.9 percentage point from last year's figure. (See table 6.)

Within the group of unrelated individuals, teenagers (those ages 16 to 19) continued to be the most likely to be among the working poor, at 38.2 percent, followed by those ages 20 to 24, at 15.6 percent, in 2016. Overall, the working-poor rate for men living alone or with nonrelatives was 6.8 percent, and the rate for women was 9.0 percent. The working-poor rates for unrelated individuals were higher for Blacks and Hispanics (11.4 percent and 10.8 percent, respectively) than for Whites (7.1 percent) and Asians (5.6 percent). (See table 7.)

Of the 2.8 million unrelated individuals considered to be among the working poor in 2016, 3 out of 5 lived with others. These individuals had a much higher working-poor rate, at 9.6 percent, than individuals who lived alone (6.1 percent). Many unrelated individuals living below the poverty level may live with others out of necessity. Conversely, many of those who live alone may do so because they have sufficient income to support themselves. Unrelated individuals' poverty status, however, is determined by each person's resources. The pooling of resources and sharing of living expenses may permit some individuals in this category—who are technically classified as poor—to live at a higher standard than they would have if they lived alone.

Labor market problems

Even though people who usually work full time are less likely to live in poverty, there were still 3.4 million (or 2.9 percent) full-time wage and salary workers who were classified as working poor in 2016—down from 3.8 million a year earlier. (See table 8.)

There are three major labor market problems that can hinder a worker's ability to earn an income above the poverty threshold: periods of unemployment, involuntary part-time employment, and low earnings. (See the technical notes for detailed definitions.)

In 2016, 81 percent of the working poor who usually work full time experienced at least one of the major labor market problems mentioned above. Low earnings continued to be the most common problem among workers experiencing only one labor market problem, at 77 percent, followed by unemployment (21 percent). Among workers experiencing multiple labor market problems, those who experienced unemployment and low earnings had the highest rate below poverty level, at 35.7 percent (table 8).

Some 659,000, or 19 percent, of the working poor who usually worked full time did not experience any of the three primary labor market problems in 2016. Their classification as working poor may be explained by other factors, including short-term employment, some weeks of voluntary part-time work, or a family structure that increases the risk of poverty.

Notes

[1] *Income and Poverty in the United States: 2016*, Current Population Reports, P60-259 (U.S. Census Bureau, September 2017), table 3, https://www.census.gov/content/dam/Census/library/publications/2017/demo/P60-259.pdf

[2] People of Hispanic or Latino ethnicity may be of any race.

Statistical Tables

Table 1. People in the labor force: poverty status and work experience, by weeks in the labor force, 2016 (numbers in thousands)

Poverty status and work experience	Total in labor force	27 weeks or more in labor force	
		Total	50 to 52 weeks
See footnotes at end of table.			
Total			
Total in the labor force	166,221	153,364	140,137
Did not work during the year	2,583	1,199	983
Worked during the year	163,638	152,165	139,153
Usual full-time workers	130,560	126,083	118,837
Usual part-time workers	33,078	26,082	20,317
Involuntary part-time workers	7,240	6,321	5,242
Voluntary part-time workers	25,838	19,761	15,075
At or above poverty level			
Total in the labor force	156,199	145,792	133,857
Did not work during the year	1,663	732	582
Worked during the year	154,536	145,060	133,275
Usual full-time workers	125,793	122,157	115,476
Usual part-time workers	28,743	22,903	17,799
Involuntary part-time workers	5,648	4,990	4,121
Voluntary part-time workers	23,096	17,913	13,677
Below poverty level			
Total in the labor force	10,021	7,572	6,280
Did not work during the year	920	466	401
Worked during the year	9,101	7,105	5,878
Usual full-time workers	4,767	3,926	3,361
Usual part-time workers	4,335	3,179	2,518
Involuntary part-time workers	1,592	1,331	1,120
Voluntary part-time workers	2,742	1,848	1,397
Rate[1]			
Total in the labor force	6.0	4.9	4.5
Did not work during the year	35.6	38.9	40.8
Worked during the year	5.6	4.7	4.2

Table 1. People in the labor force: poverty status and work experience, by weeks in the labor force, 2016 (numbers in thousands)

Poverty status and work experience	Total in labor force	27 weeks or more in labor force	
		Total	50 to 52 weeks
Usual full-time workers	3.7	3.1	2.8
Usual part-time workers	13.1	12.2	12.4
Involuntary part-time workers	22.0	21.1	21.4
Voluntary part-time workers	10.6	9.4	9.3

[1] Number below the poverty level as a percentage of the total in the labor force.

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey (CPS), Annual Social and Economic Supplement (ASEC).

Table 2. People in the labor force for 27 weeks or more: poverty status by age, gender, race, and Hispanic or Latino ethnicity, 2016 (numbers in thousands)

Age and gender	Total					Below poverty level					Rate[1]				
	Total	White	Black or African American	Asian	Hispanic or Latino	Total	White	Black or African American	Asian	Hispanic or Latino	Total	White	Black or African American	Asian	Hispanic or Latino
See footnotes at end of table.															
Total, 16 years and older	153,364	120,202	18,864	9,418	25,673	7,572	5,222	1,649	330	2,192	4.9	4.3	8.7	3.5	8.5
16 to 19 years	3,471	2,704	431	108	673	355	249	76	10	98	10.2	9.2	17.6	9.1	14.5
20 to 24 years	13,310	10,145	1,901	582	2,989	1,156	779	247	43	272	8.7	7.7	13.0	7.5	9.1
25 to 34 years	34,828	26,280	4,779	2,374	6,907	2,204	1,441	540	91	669	6.3	5.5	11.3	3.8	9.7
35 to 44 years	31,930	24,345	4,136	2,373	6,290	1,783	1,257	391	62	651	5.6	5.2	9.4	2.6	10.4
45 to 54 years	33,012	26,115	3,967	2,128	5,126	1,180	847	207	85	334	3.6	3.2	5.2	4.0	6.5
55 to 64 years	26,862	22,125	2,757	1,445	2,895	745	547	152	31	137	2.8	2.5	5.5	2.1	4.7
65 years and older	9,951	8,488	894	407	791	149	102	37	9	30	1.5	1.2	4.1	2.3	3.8
Men, 16 years and older	81,679	65,240	8,893	5,018	14,682	3,431	2,516	599	156	1,139	4.2	3.9	6.7	3.1	7.8
16 to 19 years	1,659	1,303	201	49	337	168	121	38	4	51	10.1	9.3	19.1	-	15.1
20 to 24 years	6,916	5,356	910	280	1,630	458	331	81	13	133	6.6	6.2	8.9	4.8	8.2
25 to 34 years	18,766	14,347	2,352	1,326	4,046	998	698	187	50	345	5.3	4.9	7.9	3.7	8.5
35 to 44 years	17,349	13,602	1,894	1,288	3,715	839	621	153	33	344	4.8	4.6	8.1	2.6	9.3

Table 2. People in the labor force for 27 weeks or more: poverty status by age, gender, race, and Hispanic or Latino ethnicity, 2016 (numbers in thousands)

Age and gender	Total					Below poverty level					Rate[1]				
	Total	White	Black or African American	Asian	Hispanic or Latino	Total	White	Black or African American	Asian	Hispanic or Latino	Total	White	Black or African American	Asian	Hispanic or Latino
45 to 54 years	17,427	14,132	1,809	1,102	2,907	544	420	70	36	178	3.1	3.0	3.8	3.2	6.1
55 to 64 years	13,945	11,613	1,303	752	1,606	341	260	56	15	69	2.4	2.2	4.3	2.0	4.3
65 years and older	5,617	4,886	425	222	442	83	65	13	5	19	1.5	1.3	3.0	2.3	4.2
Women, 16 years and older	71,685	54,962	9,971	4,400	10,991	4,140	2,707	1,050	175	1,053	5.8	4.9	10.5	4.0	9.6
16 to 19 years	1,812	1,400	229	59	336	187	127	37	6	47	10.3	9.1	16.3	-	14.0
20 to 24 years	6,394	4,789	991	302	1,360	698	449	165	30	139	10.9	9.4	16.7	9.9	10.2
25 to 34 years	16,062	11,932	2,427	1,049	2,862	1,206	743	353	41	324	7.5	6.2	14.5	3.9	11.3
35 to 44 years	14,581	10,743	2,242	1,085	2,575	943	636	237	28	307	6.5	5.9	10.6	2.6	11.9
45 to 54 years	15,585	11,983	2,158	1,026	2,219	636	427	137	49	156	4.1	3.6	6.4	4.8	7.0
55 to 64 years	12,917	10,511	1,454	693	1,289	404	288	95	16	69	3.1	2.7	6.6	2.3	5.3
65 years and older	4,334	3,602	469	185	349	66	37	24	4	11	1.5	1.0	5.1	2.3	3.2

[1] Number below the poverty level as a percentage of the total in the labor force for 27 weeks or more.

Note: Estimates for the race groups shown (White, Black or African American, and Asian) do not sum to totals because data are not presented for all races. People whose ethnicity is identified as Hispanic or Latino may be of any race. Dash represents zero, rounds to zero, or indicates that base is less than 80,000.

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey (CPS), Annual Social and Economic Supplement (ASEC).

Table 3. People in the labor force for 27 weeks or more: poverty status, by educational attainment, race, Hispanic or Latino ethnicity, and gender, 2016 (numbers in thousands)

Educational attainment, race, and Hispanic or Latino ethnicity	Total	Men	Women	Below poverty level			Rate[1]		
				Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women
Total, 16 years and older	153,364	81,679	71,685	7,572	3,431	4,140	4.9	4.2	5.8
Less than a high school diploma	12,094	7,586	4,507	1,651	875	777	13.7	11.5	17.2
Less than 1 year of high school	3,895	2,613	1,282	532	310	222	13.6	11.8	17.3
1–3 years of high school	6,366	3,849	2,516	923	481	442	14.5	12.5	17.6
4 years of high school, no diploma	1,833	1,124	710	196	84	113	10.7	7.5	15.9

Table 3. People in the labor force for 27 weeks or more: poverty status, by educational attainment, race, Hispanic or Latino ethnicity, and gender, 2016 (numbers in thousands)

Educational attainment, race, and Hispanic or Latino ethnicity	Total	Men	Women	Below poverty level			Rate[1]		
				Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women
High school graduates, no college[2]	40,857	23,963	16,894	2,831	1,380	1,451	6.9	5.8	8.6
Some college or associate's degree	44,263	22,032	22,231	2,276	879	1,398	5.1	4.0	6.3
Some college, no degree	27,817	14,322	13,495	1,658	657	1,000	6.0	4.6	7.4
Associate's degree	16,446	7,710	8,736	619	221	397	3.8	2.9	4.5
Bachelor's degree and higher[3]	56,150	28,098	28,052	813	298	515	1.4	1.1	1.8
White, 16 years and older	120,202	65,240	54,962	5,222	2,516	2,707	4.3	3.9	4.9
Less than a high school diploma	9,464	6,178	3,286	1,238	712	527	13.1	11.5	16.0
Less than 1 year of high school	3,216	2,225	992	454	283	171	14.1	12.7	17.2
1–3 years of high school	4,910	3,095	1,815	645	370	275	13.1	12.0	15.1
4 years of high school, no diploma	1,338	858	480	139	58	81	10.4	6.8	16.8
High school graduates, no college[2]	31,809	19,142	12,667	1,923	997	926	6.0	5.2	7.3
Some college or associate's degree	34,511	17,485	17,026	1,477	585	892	4.3	3.3	5.2
Some college, no degree	21,238	11,158	10,080	1,077	427	650	5.1	3.8	6.4
Associate's degree	13,273	6,327	6,946	400	158	242	3.0	2.5	3.5
Bachelor's degree and higher[3]	44,418	22,435	21,982	585	222	362	1.3	1.0	1.6
Black or African American, 16 years and older	18,864	8,893	9,971	1,649	599	1,050	8.7	6.7	10.5
Less than a high school diploma	1,487	765	722	282	100	182	19.0	13.1	25.2
Less than 1 year of high school	291	159	132	31	6	25	10.7	4.0	18.9
1–3 years of high school	898	442	456	209	77	132	23.3	17.5	28.9
4 years of high school, no diploma	298	163	135	42	16	26	14.1	9.9	19.3
High school graduates, no college[2]	5,934	3,159	2,775	662	256	406	11.2	8.1	14.6
Some college or associate's degree	6,393	2,837	3,556	576	197	379	9.0	6.9	10.7
Some college, no degree	4,313	1,950	2,364	418	153	265	9.7	7.8	11.2
Associate's degree	2,080	888	1,192	158	44	114	7.6	5.0	9.5
Bachelor's degree and higher[3]	5,049	2,132	2,917	129	46	83	2.5	2.1	2.8
Asian, 16 years and older	9,418	5,018	4,400	330	156	175	3.5	3.1	4.0
Less than a high school diploma	525	267	259	43	21	22	8.2	7.8	8.5
Less than 1 year of high school	211	103	108	16	4	11	7.4	4.1	10.6
1–3 years of high school	207	110	96	17	10	7	8.3	9.1	7.4
4 years of high school, no diploma	108	53	55	10	7	3	9.3	-	-

Table 3. People in the labor force for 27 weeks or more: poverty status, by educational attainment, race, Hispanic or Latino ethnicity, and gender, 2016 (numbers in thousands)

Educational attainment, race, and Hispanic or Latino ethnicity	Total	Men	Women	Below poverty level			Rate[1]		
				Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women
High school graduates, no college[2]	1,701	893	808	111	58	52	6.5	6.5	6.5
Some college or associate's degree	1,774	910	864	102	49	53	5.8	5.4	6.2
Some college, no degree	1,160	625	535	77	38	39	6.7	6.1	7.4
Associate's degree	613	285	329	25	11	14	4.1	3.9	4.2
Bachelor's degree and higher[3]	5,418	2,948	2,470	74	27	47	1.4	0.9	1.9
Hispanic or Latino ethnicity, 16 years and older	25,673	14,682	10,991	2,192	1,139	1,053	8.5	7.8	9.6
Less than a high school diploma	6,044	4,028	2,016	889	516	374	14.7	12.8	18.5
Less than 1 year of high school	2,933	2,030	903	439	262	176	15.0	12.9	19.5
1–3 years of high school	2,396	1,529	867	382	221	161	15.9	14.5	18.5
4 years of high school, no diploma	714	469	245	69	32	36	9.6	6.9	14.9
High school graduates, no college[2]	8,162	5,016	3,145	786	421	365	9.6	8.4	11.6
Some college or associate's degree	6,890	3,440	3,450	391	152	239	5.7	4.4	6.9
Some college, no degree	4,742	2,417	2,324	308	127	180	6.5	5.3	7.8
Associate's degree	2,148	1,022	1,126	84	25	59	3.9	2.5	5.2
Bachelor's degree and higher[3]	4,577	2,198	2,379	126	50	76	2.8	2.3	3.2

[1] Number below the poverty level as a percentage of the total in the labor force for 27 weeks or more.
[2] Includes people with a high school diploma or equivalent.
[3] Includes people with bachelor's, master's, professional, and doctoral degrees.
Note: Estimates for the race groups shown (White, Black or African American, and Asian) do not sum to totals because data are not presented for all races. People whose ethnicity is identified as Hispanic or Latino may be of any race. Dash represents zero, rounds to zero, or indicates that base is less than 80,000.
Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey (CPS), Annual Social and Economic Supplement (ASEC).

Table 4. People in the labor force for 27 weeks or more who worked during the year: poverty status, by occupation of longest job held, race, Hispanic or Latino ethnicity, and gender, 2016 (numbers in thousands)

Occupation, race, and Hispanic or Latino ethnicity	Total	Men	Women	Below poverty level			Rate[1]		
				Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women
See footnotes at end of table.									
Total, 16 years and older[2]	152,165	81,000	71,166	7,105	3,169	3,936	4.7	3.9	5.5
Management, professional, and related occupations	60,375	29,110	31,264	943	368	575	1.6	1.3	1.8
Management, business, and financial operations occupations	25,619	14,181	11,438	402	211	191	1.6	1.5	1.7

Table 4. People in the labor force for 27 weeks or more who worked during the year: poverty status, by occupation of longest job held, race, Hispanic or Latino ethnicity, and gender, 2016 (numbers in thousands)

Occupation, race, and Hispanic or Latino ethnicity	Total	Men	Women	Below poverty level			Rate[1]		
				Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women
Professional and related occupations	34,756	14,930	19,826	541	157	384	1.6	1.1	1.9
Service occupations	26,177	11,437	14,741	2,800	1,000	1,800	10.7	8.7	12.2
Sales and office occupations	33,203	12,770	20,433	1,615	458	1,156	4.9	3.6	5.7
Sales and related occupations	15,553	7,739	7,814	892	247	645	5.7	3.2	8.3
Office and administrative support occupations	17,650	5,031	12,619	723	211	511	4.1	4.2	4.1
Natural resources, construction, and maintenance occupations	14,277	13,568	709	814	741	73	5.7	5.5	10.3
Farming, fishing, and forestry occupations	1,195	896	299	117	83	35	9.8	9.2	11.6
Construction and extraction occupations	8,052	7,816	235	570	544	26	7.1	7.0	11.0
Installation, maintenance, and repair occupations	5,030	4,855	174	127	115	12	2.5	2.4	7.0
Production, transportation, and material-moving occupations	18,063	14,053	4,010	931	598	332	5.2	4.3	8.3
Production occupations	8,630	6,187	2,443	391	228	163	4.5	3.7	6.7
Transportation and material-moving occupations	9,433	7,866	1,567	540	371	169	5.7	4.7	10.8
White, 16 years and older[2]	119,494	64,844	54,649	4,951	2,353	2,598	4.1	3.6	4.8
Management, professional, and related occupations	48,478	23,647	24,831	698	299	399	1.4	1.3	1.6
Management, business, and financial operations occupations	21,368	12,055	9,313	330	183	147	1.5	1.5	1.6
Professional and related occupations	27,110	11,592	15,518	369	117	252	1.4	1.0	1.6
Service occupations	18,957	8,474	10,483	1,854	677	1,177	9.8	8.0	11.2
Sales and office occupations	26,020	10,142	15,878	1,063	331	733	4.1	3.3	4.6
Sales and related occupations	12,466	6,481	5,985	590	193	397	4.7	3.0	6.6
Office and administrative support occupations	13,554	3,661	9,893	473	137	335	3.5	3.8	3.4
Natural resources, construction, and maintenance occupations	12,410	11,796	614	702	642	60	5.7	5.4	9.8
Farming, fishing, and forestry occupations	1,086	815	272	112	81	31	10.3	9.9	11.4
Construction and extraction occupations	7,037	6,838	200	483	461	21	6.9	6.7	10.7
Installation, maintenance, and repair occupations	4,286	4,144	143	108	100	8	2.5	2.4	5.5
Production, transportation, and material-moving occupations	13,581	10,745	2,836	631	400	230	4.6	3.7	8.1
Production occupations	6,652	4,903	1,749	278	159	119	4.2	3.2	6.8
Transportation and material-moving occupations	6,930	5,842	1,087	353	242	112	5.1	4.1	10.3
Black or African American, 16 years and older[2]	18,515	8,698	9,817	1,494	517	977	8.1	5.9	10.0
Management, professional, and related occupations	5,601	2,150	3,451	139	38	101	2.5	1.8	2.9
Management, business, and financial operations occupations	2,015	927	1,088	42	14	28	2.1	1.5	2.6

Table 4. People in the labor force for 27 weeks or more who worked during the year: poverty status, by occupation of longest job held, race, Hispanic or Latino ethnicity, and gender, 2016 (numbers in thousands)

Occupation, race, and Hispanic or Latino ethnicity	Total	Men	Women	Below poverty level			Rate[1]		
				Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women
Professional and related occupations	3,587	1,223	2,364	96	24	72	2.7	1.9	3.1
Service occupations	4,591	1,862	2,728	660	194	466	14.4	10.4	17.1
Sales and office occupations	4,276	1,452	2,824	405	81	324	9.5	5.6	11.5
Sales and related occupations	1,741	633	1,109	208	26	182	12.0	4.1	16.5
Office and administrative support occupations	2,535	820	1,716	196	55	141	7.8	6.7	8.2
Natural resources, construction, and maintenance occupations	1,076	1,023	53	71	65	5	6.6	6.4	-
Farming, fishing, and forestry occupations	63	50	13	1	1	-	-	-	-
Construction and extraction occupations	603	579	25	64	60	5	10.6	10.3	-
Installation, maintenance, and repair occupations	410	395	15	5	4	1	1.2	1.1	-
Production, transportation, and material-moving occupations	2,958	2,198	760	220	139	81	7.4	6.3	10.7
Production occupations	1,176	784	392	80	47	33	6.8	6.0	8.5
Transportation and material-moving occupations	1,782	1,413	368	140	92	48	7.9	6.5	13.0
Asian, 16 years and older[2]	9,330	4,966	4,364	313	150	162	3.4	3.0	3.7
Management, professional, and related occupations	4,828	2,648	2,180	67	23	44	1.4	0.9	2.0
Management, business, and financial operations occupations	1,655	927	729	19	11	8	1.1	1.2	1.0
Professional and related occupations	3,173	1,721	1,451	48	12	36	1.5	0.7	2.5
Service occupations	1,516	608	908	135	58	76	8.9	9.6	8.4
Sales and office occupations	1,783	789	994	64	38	26	3.6	4.8	2.6
Sales and related occupations	887	444	443	47	25	21	5.3	5.7	4.8
Office and administrative support occupations	896	345	551	17	13	4	1.9	3.7	0.8
Natural resources, construction, and maintenance occupations	329	312	18	11	8	3	3.4	2.4	-
Farming, fishing, and forestry occupations	9	1	8	-	-	-	-	-	-
Construction and extraction occupations	157	155	2	3	3	-	1.9	2.0	-
Installation, maintenance, and repair occupations	164	156	8	8	5	3	4.9	2.9	-
Production, transportation, and material-moving occupations	870	606	264	36	23	13	4.2	3.9	4.9
Production occupations	507	307	200	15	7	8	2.9	2.4	3.8
Transportation and material-moving occupations	363	299	64	22	16	6	5.9	5.4	-
Hispanic or Latino ethnicity, 16 years and older[2]	25,446	14,558	10,888	2,100	1,097	1,003	8.3	7.5	9.2
Management, professional, and related occupations	5,569	2,569	3,000	174	71	103	3.1	2.8	3.4
Management, business, and financial operations occupations	2,429	1,285	1,143	97	54	42	4.0	4.2	3.7

Table 4. People in the labor force for 27 weeks or more who worked during the year: poverty status, by occupation of longest job held, race, Hispanic or Latino ethnicity, and gender, 2016 (numbers in thousands)

Occupation, race, and Hispanic or Latino ethnicity	Total	Men	Women	Below poverty level			Rate[1]		
				Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women
Professional and related occupations	3,141	1,284	1,857	77	16	61	2.5	1.3	3.3
Service occupations	6,264	2,928	3,336	845	343	501	13.5	11.7	15.0
Sales and office occupations	5,333	2,090	3,243	352	113	238	6.6	5.4	7.4
Sales and related occupations	2,467	1,183	1,283	195	72	124	7.9	6.1	9.6
Office and administrative support occupations	2,866	907	1,960	156	41	115	5.5	4.6	5.9
Natural resources, construction, and maintenance occupations	4,308	4,047	261	409	373	35	9.5	9.2	13.6
Farming, fishing, and forestry occupations	535	382	153	65	43	22	12.1	11.2	14.5
Construction and extraction occupations	2,770	2,706	64	279	271	8	10.1	10.0	-
Installation, maintenance, and repair occupations	1,004	959	44	65	60	5	6.4	6.2	-
Production, transportation, and material-moving occupations	3,963	2,917	1,046	320	196	125	8.1	6.7	11.9
Production occupations	1,970	1,280	689	158	90	68	8.0	7.0	9.9
Transportation and material-moving occupations	1,993	1,636	357	162	106	56	8.1	6.5	15.8

[1] Number below the poverty level as a percentage of the total in the labor force for 27 weeks or more who worked during the year.

[2] Estimates for the occupational groups do not sum to totals because data include the long-term unemployed with no previous work experience and a small number of people whose last job was in the Armed Forces.

Note: Estimates for the race groups shown (White, Black or African American, and Asian) do not sum to totals because data are not presented for all races. People whose ethnicity is identified as Hispanic or Latino may be of any race. Dash represents zero, rounds to zero, or indicates that base is less than 80,000.

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey (CPS), Annual Social and Economic Supplement (ASEC).

Table 5. Primary families: poverty status, presence of related children, and work experience of family members in the labor force for 27 weeks or more, 2016 (numbers in thousands)

Characteristic	Total families	At or above poverty level	Below poverty level	Rate[1]
See footnotes at end of table.				
Total primary families	67,628	63,546	4,082	6.0
With related children under 18 years	34,681	31,333	3,347	9.7
Without children	32,947	32,213	734	2.2
With one member in the labor force	29,090	25,547	3,542	12.2
With two or more members in the labor force	38,538	37,999	539	1.4
With two members	32,140	31,645	495	1.5
With three or more members	6,399	6,355	44	0.7

Table 5. Primary families: poverty status, presence of related children, and work experience of family members in the labor force for 27 weeks or more, 2016 (numbers in thousands)

Characteristic	Total families	At or above poverty level	Below poverty level	Rate[1]
Married-couple families[2]	49,798	48,156	1,642	3.3
With related children under 18 years	24,224	22,941	1,283	5.3
Without children	25,574	25,215	359	1.4
With one member in the labor force	17,231	15,903	1,328	7.7
Husband	12,160	11,176	985	8.1
Wife	4,303	4,030	272	6.3
Relative	768	696	72	9.3
With two or more members in the labor force	32,567	32,253	313	1.0
With two members	27,537	27,246	290	1.1
With three or more members	5,030	5,007	23	0.5
Families maintained by women[3]	12,253	10,262	1,991	16.2
With related children under 18 years	7,701	5,945	1,756	22.8
Without children	4,552	4,317	235	5.2
With one member in the labor force	8,497	6,674	1,823	21.5
Householder	6,779	5,202	1,577	23.3
Relative	1,718	1,472	246	14.3
With two or more members in the labor force	3,756	3,588	168	4.5
Families maintained by men[3]	5,577	5,129	449	8.0
With related children under 18 years	2,756	2,447	309	11.2
Without children	2,821	2,681	140	5.0
With one member in the labor force	3,362	2,971	391	11.6
Householder	2,684	2,403	280	10.5
Relative	678	568	111	16.3
With two or more members in the labor force	2,216	2,158	58	2.6

[1] Number below the poverty level as a percentage of the total in the labor force for 27 weeks or more who worked during the year.
[2] Opposite-sex married-couple families only.
[3] No opposite-sex spouse present.
Note: Data relate to primary families with at least one member in the labor force for 27 weeks or more.

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey (CPS), Annual Social and Economic Supplement (ASEC).

Table 6. People in families and unrelated individuals: poverty status and work experience, 2016 (numbers in thousands)

Poverty status and work experience	Total	In married-couple families[1]				In families maintained by women[2]			In families maintained by men[2]			Unrelated individuals
		Husbands	Wives	Related children under 18 years	Other relatives	Householder	Related children under 18 years	Other relatives	Householder	Related children under 18 years	Other relatives	
See footnotes at end of table.												
Total												
All people	254,413	60,187	60,772	5,687	21,691	15,551	2,223	14,565	6,409	704	7,214	59,411
With labor force activity	166,221	45,407	37,550	1,501	13,519	10,816	497	8,969	4,875	163	4,665	38,258
1 to 26 weeks	12,857	1,539	2,626	860	2,478	786	267	1,086	229	104	415	2,468
27 weeks or more	153,364	43,868	34,924	641	11,041	10,030	230	7,883	4,647	60	4,250	35,789
With no labor force activity	88,193	14,780	23,222	4,186	8,172	4,735	1,726	5,595	1,534	541	2,549	21,153
At or above poverty level												
All people	225,760	57,112	57,678	5,380	20,808	11,416	1,492	12,406	5,565	569	6,479	46,856
With labor force activity	156,199	43,987	36,823	1,458	13,289	8,683	386	8,255	4,475	129	4,421	34,292
1 to 26 weeks	10,407	1,406	2,440	839	2,405	366	198	858	158	77	366	1,294
27 weeks or more	145,792	42,581	34,383	618	10,884	8,317	188	7,398	4,317	52	4,055	32,998
With no labor force activity	69,561	13,124	20,855	3,922	7,519	2,733	1,106	4,150	1,090	440	2,058	12,564
Below poverty level												
All people	28,653	3,076	3,094	307	883	4,134	731	2,159	844	135	735	12,555
With labor force activity	10,021	1,420	727	43	229	2,132	111	714	400	34	244	3,966
1 to 26 weeks	2,450	133	186	20	72	420	69	228	70	27	49	1,174
27 weeks or more	7,572	1,287	542	22	157	1,713	42	486	330	7	195	2,792
With no labor force activity	18,632	1,656	2,367	265	653	2,002	620	1,445	444	100	491	8,589

Table 6. People in families and unrelated individuals: poverty status and work experience, 2016 (numbers in thousands)

Poverty status and work experience	Total	In married-couple families[1]				In families maintained by women[2]			In families maintained by men[2]			Unrelated individuals
		Husbands	Wives	Related children under 18 years	Other relatives	Householder	Related children under 18 years	Other relatives	Householder	Related children under 18 years	Other relatives	
Rate[3]												
All people	11.3	5.1	5.1	5.4	4.1	26.6	32.9	14.8	13.2	19.1	10.2	21.1
With labor force activity	6.0	3.1	1.9	2.8	1.7	19.7	22.4	8.0	8.2	20.8	5.2	10.4
1 to 26 weeks	19.1	8.7	7.1	2.4	2.9	53.4	26.0	21.0	30.8	25.8	11.9	47.6
27 weeks or more	4.9	2.9	1.6	3.5	1.4	17.1	18.3	6.2	7.1	-	4.6	7.8
With no labor force activity	21.1	11.2	10.2	6.3	8.0	42.3	35.9	25.8	28.9	18.6	19.3	40.6

[1] Opposite-sex married-couple families only.
[2] No opposite-sex spouse present.
[3] Number below the poverty level as a percentage of the total.
Note: Dash represents zero, rounds to zero, or indicates that base is less than 80,000.
Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey (CPS), Annual Social and Economic Supplement (ASEC).

Table 7. Unrelated individuals in the labor force for 27 weeks or more: poverty status, by age, gender, race, Hispanic or Latino ethnicity, and living arrangement, 2016 (numbers in thousands)

Characteristic	Total	At or above poverty level	Below poverty level	Rate[1]
See footnotes at end of table.				
Age and gender				
Total unrelated individuals	35,789	32,998	2,792	7.8
16 to 19 years	375	232	143	38.2
20 to 24 years	4,248	3,584	664	15.6
25 to 64 years	28,458	26,542	1,916	6.7
65 years and older	2,708	2,639	68	2.5
Men	19,550	18,215	1,335	6.8
Women	16,239	14,783	1,456	9.0
Race and Hispanic or Latino ethnicity				
White	27,693	25,725	1,968	7.1
Men	15,286	14,331	954	6.2

Table 7. Unrelated individuals in the labor force for 27 weeks or more: poverty status, by age, gender, race, Hispanic or Latino ethnicity, and living arrangement, 2016 (numbers in thousands)

Characteristic	Total	At or above poverty level	Below poverty level	Rate[1]
Women	12,408	11,394	1,013	8.2
Black or African American	5,238	4,640	598	11.4
Men	2,732	2,439	293	10.7
Women	2,506	2,201	305	12.2
Asian	1,603	1,514	89	5.6
Men	838	810	28	3.4
Women	765	704	61	8.0
Hispanic or Latino ethnicity	4,735	4,225	510	10.8
Men	2,941	2,683	258	8.8
Women	1,794	1,542	252	14.1
Living arrangement				
Living alone	18,344	17,228	1,117	6.1
Living with others	17,445	15,770	1,675	9.6

[1] Number below the poverty level as percentage of total in the labor force for 27 weeks or more.

Note: Estimates for the race groups shown (White, Black or African American, and Asian) do not sum to totals because data are not presented for all races. People whose ethnicity is identified as Hispanic or Latino may be of any race.

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey (CPS), Annual Social and Economic Supplement (ASEC).

Table 8. People in the labor force for 27 weeks or more: poverty status and labor market problems of full-time wage and salary workers, 2016 (numbers in thousands)

Labor market problems	Total	At or above poverty level	Below poverty level	Rate[1]
See footnotes at end of table.				
Total, full-time wage and salary workers	119,915	116,480	3,435	2.9
No unemployment, involuntary part-time employment, or low earnings[2]	102,040	101,381	659	0.6
Workers experiencing one labor market problem				
Unemployment only	5,409	4,994	415	7.7
Involuntary part-time employment only	2,612	2,566	46	1.8
Low earnings only	6,900	5,389	1,510	21.9
Workers experiencing multiple labor market problems				
Unemployment and involuntary part-time employment	786	690	96	12.2

Table 8. People in the labor force for 27 weeks or more: poverty status and labor market problems of full-time wage and salary workers, 2016 (numbers in thousands)

Labor market problems	Total	At or above poverty level	Below poverty level	Rate[1]
Unemployment and low earnings	1,163	748	415	35.7
Involuntary part-time employment and low earnings	676	519	156	23.2
Unemployment, involuntary part-time employment, and low earnings	330	192	138	41.8
Workers experiencing each labor market problem				
Unemployment (alone or with other problems)	7,688	6,624	1,064	13.8
Involuntary part-time employment (alone or with other problems)	4,404	3,968	436	9.9
Low earnings (alone or with other problems)	9,069	6,849	2,220	24.5

[1] Number below the poverty level as a percentage of total in the labor force for 27 weeks or more.

[2] The low-earnings threshold in 2016 was $353.25 per week.

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey (CPS), Annual Social and Economic Supplement (ASEC).

Technical Notes

The data presented in this report were collected in the Annual Social and Economic Supplement (ASEC) to the Current Population Survey (CPS). The CPS is a monthly sample survey of about 60,000 eligible households, conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau for the Bureau of Labor Statistics. Data from the CPS are used to obtain the monthly estimates of the nation's employment and unemployment levels. The ASEC, conducted in the months of February through April, includes questions about work activity and income during the previous calendar year. For instance, data collected in 2017 refer to the 2016 calendar year.

Estimates in this report are based on a sample and, consequently, may differ from figures that would have been obtained from a complete count using the same questionnaire and procedures. Sampling variability may be relatively large in cases where the numbers are small. Thus, both small estimates and small differences between estimates should be interpreted with caution. For a detailed explanation of the ASEC, its sampling variability, more extensive definitions than those provided here, and additional information about income and poverty measures, see "Income and Poverty in the United States: 2016," *Current Population Reports*, p60-259 (U.S. Census Bureau, September 2017), https://www.census.gov/content/dam/Census/library/publications/2017/demo/P60-259.pdf.

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For more information on the data provided in this report, contact the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Division of Labor Force Statistics. Email: cpsinfo@bls.gov; Telephone: (202) 691-6378.

Concepts and definitions

Poverty classification. Poverty statistics presented in this report are based on definitions developed by the Social Security Administration in 1964 and revised by federal interagency committees in 1969 and 1981. These definitions originally were based on the Department of Agriculture's Economy Food Plan and reflected the different consumption requirements of families, predicated on the basis of factors such as family size and the number of children under 18 years of age.

The actual poverty thresholds vary because of the makeup of the family. In 2016, the weighted average poverty threshold for a family of four was $24,563; for a family of nine or more people, the threshold was $49,721; and for one person (unrelated individual), it was $12,228. Poverty thresholds are updated each year to reflect changes in the Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U). Thresholds do not vary geographically. (For more information, see "Income and Poverty in the United States: 2016," https://www.census.gov/content/dam/Census/library/publications/2017/demo/P60-259.pdf.)

Low earnings. The low-earnings level, as first developed in 1987, represented the average of the real value of the minimum wage between 1967 and 1987 for a 40-hour workweek. The year 1967 was chosen as the base year because that was the first year in which minimum-wage legislation covered essentially the same broad group of workers that currently is covered. The low-earnings level has been adjusted each year since then in accordance with the CPI-U, so the measure maintains the same real value that it held in 1987. In 2016, the low-earnings threshold was $353.25 per

week. For a complete definition, see Bruce W. Klein and Philip L. Rones, “A profile of the working poor,” *Monthly Labor Review*, October 1989, pp. 3–11, https://www.bls.gov/opub/mlr/1989/10/art1full.pdf.

Income. Data on income are limited to money income—before personal income taxes and payroll deductions—received in the calendar year preceding the CPS supplement. Data on income do not include the value of noncash benefits such as food stamps, Medicare, Medicaid, public housing, and employer-provided benefits. For a complete definition of income, see “Income and Poverty in the United States: 2016,” https://www.census.gov/content/dam/Census/library/publications/2017/demo/P60-259.pdf.

Labor force. People in the labor force are those who worked or looked for work sometime during the calendar year. The number of weeks in the labor force is accumulated over the entire year. The focus in this report is on people who were in the labor force for 27 weeks or more.

Working poor. The working poor are people who spent at least 27 weeks in the labor force (that is, working or looking for work) but whose incomes still fell below the official poverty level.

Working-poor rate. This rate is the number of individuals in the labor force for at least 27 weeks whose incomes still fell below the official poverty level, as a percentage of all people who were in the labor force for at least 27 weeks during the calendar year.

Involuntary part-time workers. These are people who, during at least 1 week of the year, worked fewer than 35 hours because of slack work or business conditions or because they could not find full-time work. The number of weeks of involuntary part-time work is accumulated over the year.

Occupation. This term refers to the job in which a person worked the most weeks during the calendar year.

Unemployed. Unemployed people are those who looked for work while not employed or those who were on layoff from a job and were expecting to be recalled to that job. The number of weeks unemployed is accumulated over the entire year.

Householder. The householder is the family reference person. This is the person, or one of the persons, in whose name the housing unit is owned or rented. The relationships of the other individuals in the household are defined in terms of their relationships to the householder. The race or ethnicity of the family is determined by that of the householder.

Family. A family is a group of two or more people residing together who are related by birth, marriage, or adoption; all such people are considered members of one family. The count of families is for “primary” families only. A primary family consists of a householder and all other people related to and residing with the householder. A subfamily is a family that does not maintain its own household, for example, a married couple living in the home of a friend and their family. Families include those with or without children under 18 years old. Families are classified either as married-couple families, which refers to opposite-sex married couples only, or as those maintained by men or women without opposite-sex spouses present. The household may or may not include a same-sex spouse or an unmarried domestic partner of either sex. Family status is determined at the time of the survey interview and, thus, may be different from that of the previous year.

Unrelated individuals. These are people who are not living with anyone related to them by birth, marriage, or adoption. Such individuals may live alone, reside in a nonrelated family household, or live in group quarters with other unrelated individuals.

Related children. These are children under age 18 that live in the household. Included are sons, daughters, stepchildren, and adopted children of the husband, wife, or person maintaining the family. Not included are nieces, nephews, grandchildren, other related children, and all unrelated children living in the household.

Race. White, Black or African American, Asian, American Indian and Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander are terms used to describe the race of people. Beginning in 2003, people in these categories are those who selected that race group only. Those who identify multiple race groups are categorized as people of Two or More Races. Estimates for American Indians and Alaska Natives, Native Hawaiians and Other Pacific Islanders, and people of Two or More Races are included in totals, but are not shown separately because the number of survey respondents is too small to develop estimates of publication quality. In the enumeration process, race is determined by the household respondent.

Hispanic or Latino ethnicity. This term refers to people who identified themselves in the CPS enumeration process as being of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish ethnicity. People whose ethnicity is identified as Hispanic or Latino may be of any race.