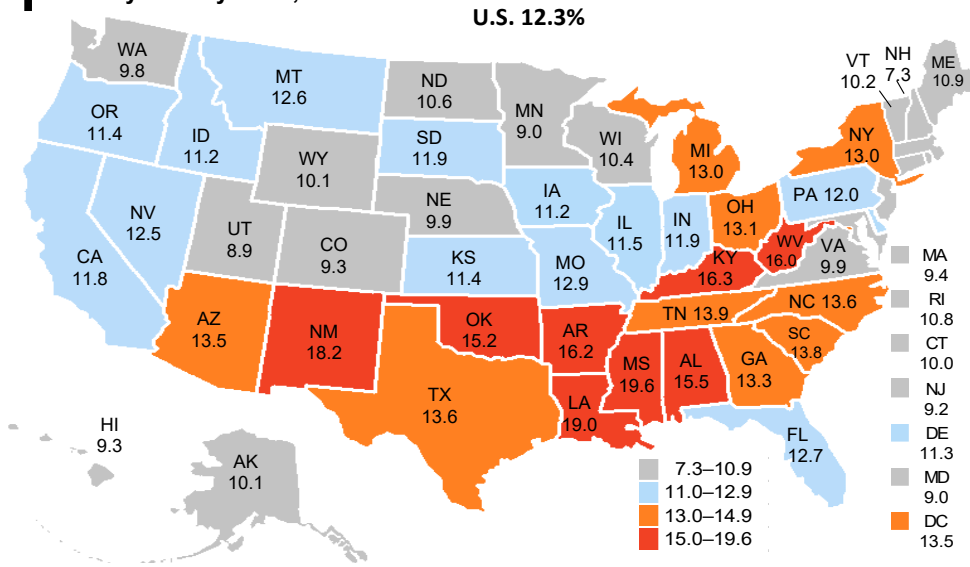


Poverty in New Mexico: 2019

Rachel Moskowitz, Economist

New Mexico's poverty rate in 2019 was 18.2 percent, a decline from 2018 when it was 19.5 percent, but still the third highest in the country. The national rate was 12.3 percent. As seen in Exhibit 1, Mississippi had the highest poverty rate of 19.6 percent in 2019, while New Hampshire, at 7.3 percent, had the lowest.

1 Poverty Rate by State, 2019



Nearly one in four New Mexican children under 18 years of age (24.9 percent, or about 115,997 children) lived in poverty in 2019 (Exhibit 2). Mississippi's poverty rate for children under 18 years of age, 28.1 percent, was the highest among all states, while the national average was 16.8 percent.

The poverty rate for New Mexicans 65 years and over was 13.5 percent, the highest in the country and 4.1 percentage points higher than the national average of 9.4 percent. In all states the poverty rate for persons 65 years and over was lower than for children and for the population in general because persons in this age group typically receive Social Security benefits, which counts as income.

Exhibit 3 shows the historical poverty rate by age group in New Mexico. Since 2015 the poverty rates for all ages and children under 18 years of age have fallen, but the rate for those 65 years and over has steadily increased. The national poverty rate for those 65 years and over increased as well, growing from 9.0 percent in 2015 to 9.4 percent in 2019. High medical expenses and the increased number of aged poor were found to be the causes of this increased rate.

The unemployed, as would be expected, had the highest rate (32.9 percent) of poverty among select characteristics in New Mexico in 2019 (Exhibit 4). People who did not work in the past 12 months had a poverty rate of 26.4 percent, nearly six and a half times that of people that worked full-time and year-round (4.1 percent). The poverty rate for people who worked part-time or part-year was 21.4 percent, only 5.0 percentage points lower than the rate of those that did not work.

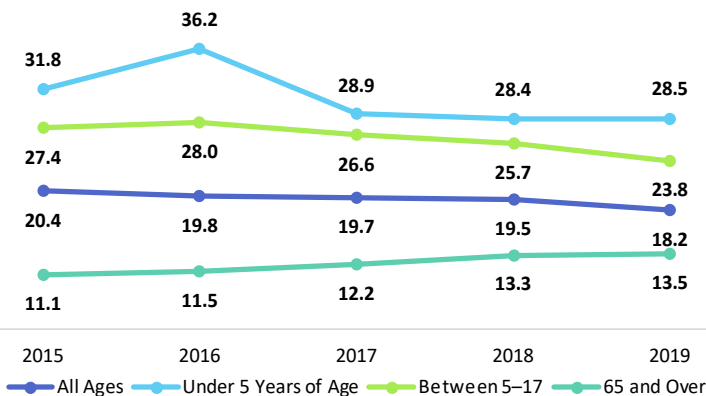
The poverty rate for those New Mexicans 25 years and over with less than a high school degree was 33.0 percent, over five times that of persons with a bachelor's degree or higher (5.9 percent). The poverty rate of American Indians/Alaskan Natives (30.0 percent) was almost twice that of persons who were White alone (16.1 percent), while persons who identified as having a Hispanic or Latino origin had a poverty rate nearly twice that of persons who did not (21.3 percent and 11.5 percent, respectively).

The U.S. Census Bureau also recently released poverty rates by county using data from the Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates (SAIPE) Program. As seen in Exhibit 5, Los Alamos County had the lowest overall poverty rate in the state (3.5 percent) and the

2 Poverty Rate by Age Group & State, 2019

	Under 18 Years	65 Years +
MS	28.1	13.2
LA	27.0	13.2
NM	24.9	13.5
AR	22.1	10.5
KY	21.7	11.6
AL	21.4	10.5
WV	20.1	9.3
OK	19.9	9.7
SC	19.7	10.1
TN	19.7	9.7
NC	19.5	9.1
TX	19.2	10.6
AZ	19.1	9.0
DC	18.9	13.3
GA	18.7	10.4
OH	18.4	8.3
NY	18.1	12.0
FL	17.7	10.7
MI	17.6	8.4
MO	17.1	8.9
NV	16.9	9.5
PA	16.9	8.3
US	16.8	9.4
DE	16.4	7.3
IL	15.7	8.6
CA	15.6	10.5
IN	15.2	7.7
SD	15.0	7.7
MT	14.9	8.6
KS	14.7	7.2
CT	14.1	7.3
RI	14.0	8.9
ME	13.8	8.5
WI	13.5	7.4
VA	13.4	7.1
ID	13.2	6.9
OR	13.1	8.1
AK	13.0	6.9
IA	13.0	7.4
HI	12.4	8.7
NJ	12.3	8.8
MD	12.0	7.8
WA	12.0	7.5
MA	11.6	9.1
WY	11.6	7.4
MN	11.2	7.4
NE	11.0	8.1
CO	10.9	7.2
ND	10.2	8.0
VT	10.2	6.1
UT	9.9	6.2
NH	7.1	6.2

3 New Mexico Poverty Rate by Age Group, 2015–2019



lowest poverty rate for children less than 18 years of age (3.2 percent). At 30.1 percent, McKinley County had the highest rate of poverty in the state. Although the rate decreased from last year's rate of 37.8 percent, both rates were within each other's margin of error. McKinley County also had the highest rate of school-age children living in poverty (39.0 percent).

Official poverty rates showing the impact of the COVID-19 recession will not be available until 2021. Although researchers have found that the increase in unemployment insurance benefits and distribution of federal stimulus funds provided temporary and much needed help, over the long term the number of people in poverty is expected to increase.

Data Sources

Poverty data by state are from the American Community Survey (ACS) 1-year estimates, while county data are from the Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates Program (SAIPE). Both estimates are produced by the U.S. Census Bureau, but they differ in some ways, including survey questions asked and methodology used. For more information about the different types of poverty estimates available, please see <https://www.census.gov/topics/income-poverty/poverty/guidance.html>. For more information on the SAIPE program, please see <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/saipe.html>.ⁱ

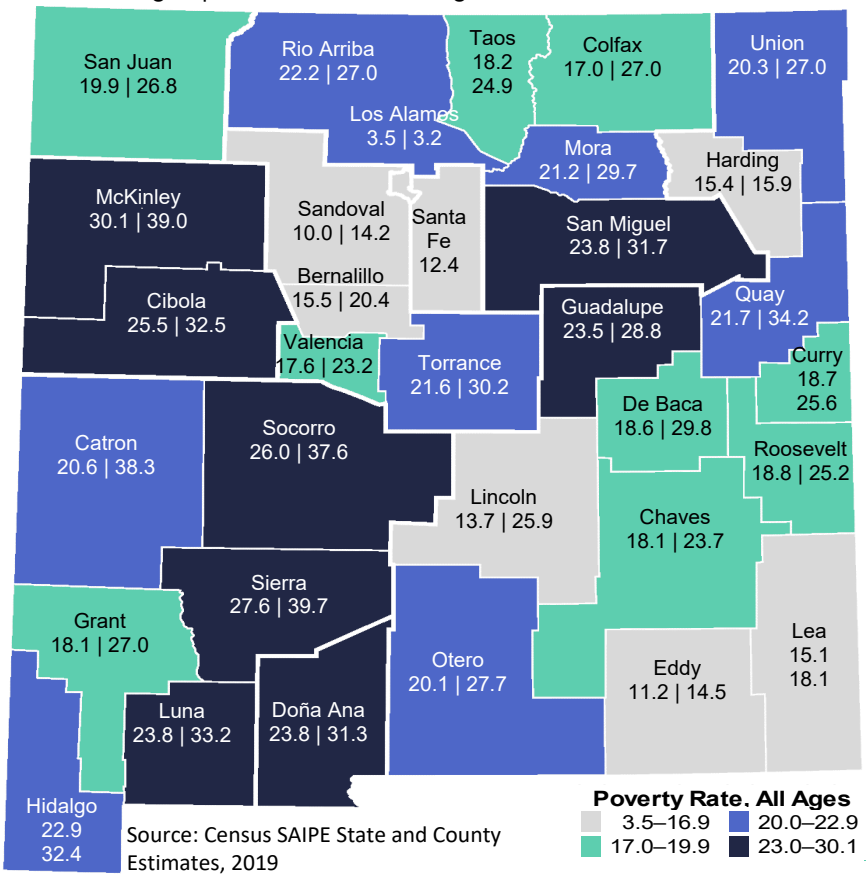
ⁱ Zachary Parolin, et al, *Monthly Poverty Rates in the United States during the COVID-19 Pandemic*, Center on Poverty & Social Policy at Columbia University, October 15, 2020, [Center on Poverty and Social Policy \(columbia.edu\)](https://www.columbia.edu/~zparolin/), (March 17, 2021).

Jeehoon Han, et al, *Income and Poverty in the COVID-19 Pandemic*, NBER Working Paper Series, August 2020, [Microsoft Word - Brookings Paper 3.9 \(nber.org\)](https://www.nber.org/papers/w27000), (March 17, 2021)

4 Poverty Rate for Select Characteristics New Mexico and U.S., 2019

	U.S.	N.M.
Sex		
Male	11.1	16.2
Female	13.5	20.1
Race		
White Alone	10.3	16.1
Black/African American Alone	21.2	22.2
American Indian/Alaskan Native Alone	23.0	30.0
Hispanic or Latino Origin		
Hispanic or Latino Origin (of Any Race)	17.2	21.3
White Alone, not Hispanic or Latino	9.0	11.5
Educational Attainment (25 Years and Over)		
Less Than High School Graduate	23.4	33.0
High School Graduate (Includes Eqv.)	13.1	18.2
Some College, Associate's Degree	9.1	13.1
Bachelor's Degree or Higher	4.1	5.9
Employment Status (16 Years and Over)		
Employed	5.7	8.9
Unemployed	28.3	32.9
Work Experience in Past 12 Mos. (16 Years and Over)		
Worked Full-Time, Year-Round	2.5	4.1
Worked Part-Time or Part-Year	14.9	21.4
Did Not Work	20.4	26.4

5 Poverty Rate by County, 2019 All Ages | Under 18 Years of Age



Source: Census SAIPE State and County Estimates, 2019

