

This brief overview of poverty in Delaware provides a basic understanding of the complex problem of poverty in our state.

The official poverty rate is calculated by the U.S. Census Bureau based on income thresholds and family structure and size. There are 48 different poverty thresholds. A family or individual making below their respective threshold is counted as living in poverty.

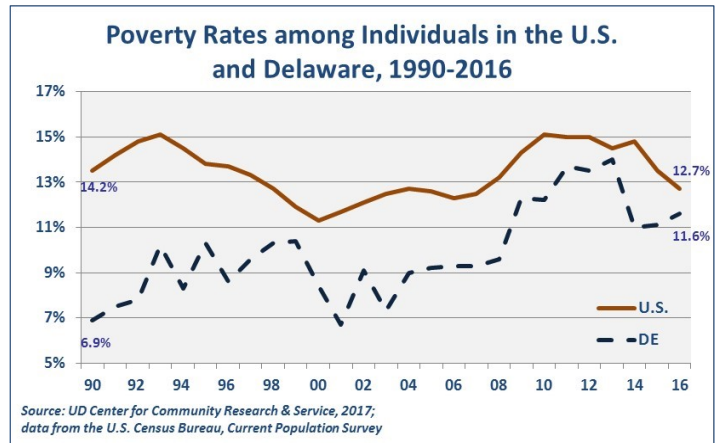
For example, in 2016 an individual under 65 years old living alone had a poverty threshold of \$12,486. A family of three with one child under 18 years old had a threshold of \$19,318. Countable income includes: earnings, unemployment compensation, workers' compensation, Social Security, Supplemental Security Income, and public assistance. Noncash benefits such as food assistance are not included.

Poverty guidelines are simplified versions of the poverty thresholds and are often used by social service programs to determine eligibility and benefits.

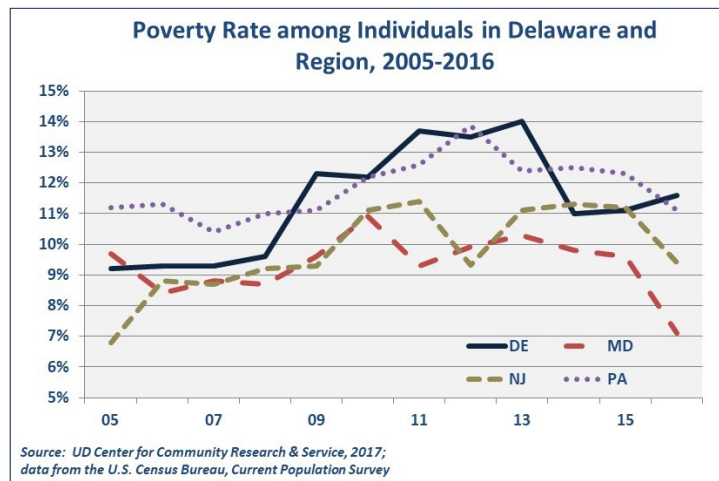
The official poverty rate for individuals in Delaware was 11.6% in 2016. Historically, Delaware's individual poverty rate has been lower than the national rate. In 2013, Delaware's rate was only slightly below the national rate but dropped well below in 2014.

Technical Note: In this document state level poverty data is from the U.S. Census Bureau's Current Population Survey. Sub-state poverty data is derived from the American Community Survey three- or five-year estimates. Importantly, poverty rates are estimates and are therefore best used as indications of trends.

For more information on how poverty rates are calculated go to: <https://www.census.gov/topics/income-poverty/poverty/guidance/poverty->



The trend of the poverty rate for individuals in Delaware has roughly resembled the rates found in the surrounding states of Maryland, Pennsylvania, and New Jersey. From the beginning of the Great Recession in 2008 until 2012, the rates in Delaware and Pennsylvania both had had an upward trend. While the poverty rate in Maryland, Pennsylvania and New Jersey has decreased since 2015, Delaware's poverty rate has increased.



This report was produced by the University of Delaware Center for Community Research & Service (CCRS). It was made possible by a special budget allocation provided by the State of Delaware to support public service activities conducted by the University for the benefit of the citizens of the First State.

Center for Community Research & Service
School of Public Policy and Administration
College of Arts & Sciences, University of Delaware
297 Graham Hall ▪ Newark, DE 19716 ▪ USA ▪ (302) 831-6780
www.ccrs.udel.edu

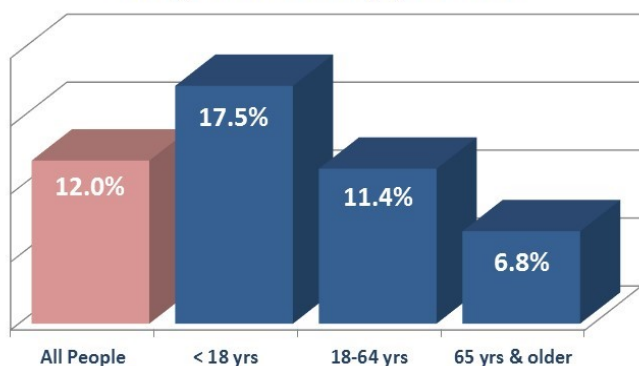
An Overview of Poverty in Delaware

University of Delaware Center for Community Research & Service

January 2018

Examining the poverty rate for individuals by age groups reveals that Delaware's children (under 18 years old) are by far the poorest group, followed by people in their working years (18-64), and then seniors (65 and older). The differences in rates across the groups are substantial.

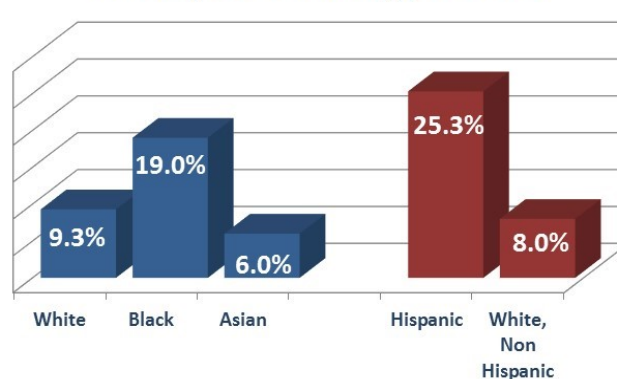
Poverty Rate among Delawareans by Age Group, Five Year Average, 2011-2015



Source: UD Center for Community Research & Service, 2017; data from U.S. Census Bureau, 2011-2015 American Community Survey

Poverty rates by race and ethnic background also show disparities. When compared to whites, individuals who are black are more than twice as likely to live in poverty. Hispanics are about three times more likely to be poor compared to white, non-Hispanic Delawareans.

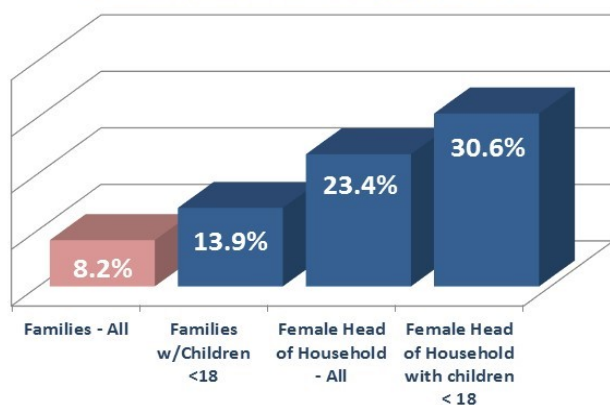
Poverty Rate among Delawareans by Race and Ethnicity, Five Year Average, 2011-2015



Source: UD Center for Community Research & Service, 2017; data from U.S. Census Bureau, 2011-2015 American Community Survey

Households with children under age 18 have a higher rate of poverty than households without children. The highest rate of poverty, slightly over 30%, is found among families with children under 18 headed by a female.

Poverty Rate among Delawareans by Family Structure, Five Year Average, 2011-2015



Source: UD Center for Community Research & Service, 2017; data from U.S. Census Bureau, 2011-2015 American Community Survey

Poverty rates vary by geographic regions. Rates for individuals are slightly higher in Kent and Sussex counties compared to New Castle County. Urban areas experience higher rates, with Dover at 20% and Wilmington at 24.5%, which is twice the statewide poverty rate.

Poverty Rate among Delawareans by County & Select Cities, Five Year Average, 2011-2015



Source: UD Center for Community Research & Service, 2017; data from U.S. Census Bureau, 2011-2015 American Community Survey

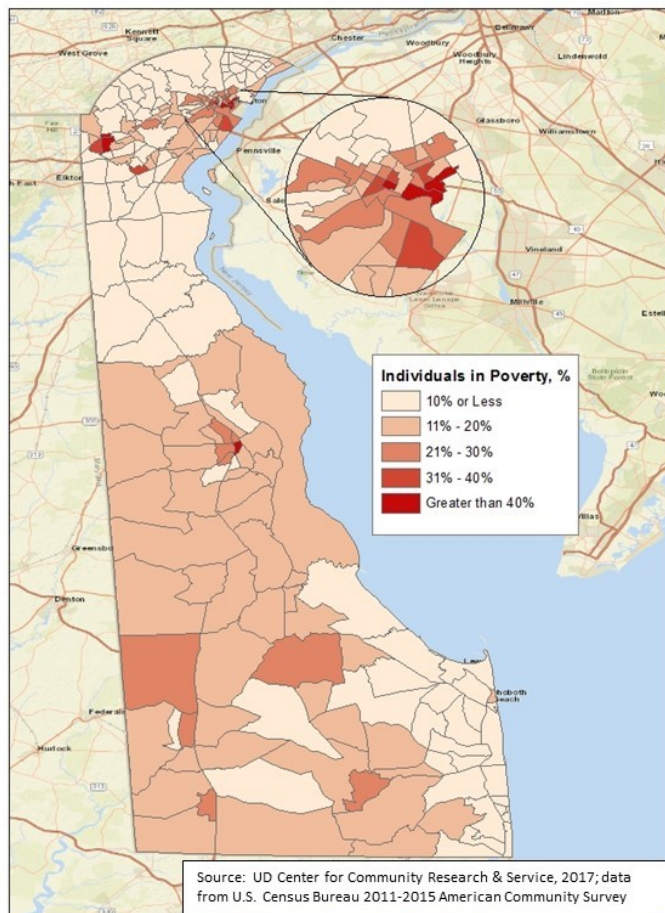
Poverty rates by family structure and race, and other economic indicators can also be found for census tracts at: factfinder2.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/index.xhtml

An Overview of Poverty in Delaware

University of Delaware Center for Community Research & Service

January 2018

Poverty rates for individuals are particularly high within census tracts in Wilmington, reaching up to 59.8%. Pockets of high poverty are also found in urban and rural areas of Kent and Sussex Counties.

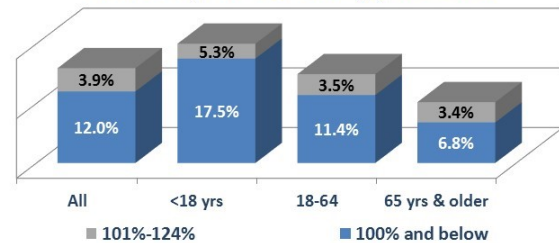


OTHER INDICATORS OF ECONOMIC WELL-BEING

Poverty rates for individuals by themselves do not tell the whole story about the economic situation of Delawareans. Individuals living in near-poverty (101% - 124% of the poverty level) also experience serious economic hardships. Supplemental Poverty measures and enrollment in social programs are indicators of the people in or near poverty that hold employment.

For more information on the supplemental poverty measure, see: <https://www.census.gov/topics/income-poverty/supplemental-poverty-measure.html>

Poverty and Near-Poverty Rates among Delaware Individuals, Five Year Average, 2011-2015



Source: UD Center for Community Research & Service, 2017; from U.S. Census Bureau, 2011-2015 American Community Survey

In 2011, the Supplemental Poverty Measure (SPM) was introduced. The SPM goes beyond the official poverty measure and considers other variables that impact financial well-being including tax payments, work and health care expenses, transfers from government programs, and geographic differences. This new measure gives more in-depth information about the economic conditions of families and individuals.

A comparison of the 2014-2016 supplemental poverty measure and official poverty rate for Delaware individuals reveals slight differences overall. Notably, when health care expenses are considered, older individuals have a higher rate of poverty. The supplemental rate for children is lower than the official poverty rate, reflecting benefits such as health insurance provided by government programs.

Official vs. Supplemental Poverty Rates

U.S.	Official	Supplemental
All individuals	12.7	14.0
Under 18 years old	18.0	15.2
18 - 64 years old	11.6	13.3
65 years and older	9.3	14.5
Married couple	5.9	8.6
Female run household	27.2	27.3
Non-Hispanic whites	8.9	9.9
Black	22.0	21.6
Hispanic	19.4	22.0
Delaware	Official	Supplemental
All individuals	11.2	11.6

National is for 2016; State is based on average of 2014-2016.

Source: UD Center for Community Research & Service; from U.S. Census Bureau, 2017.

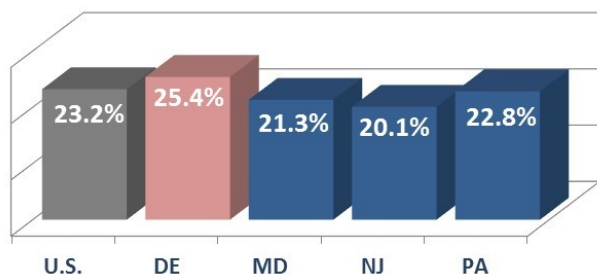
An Overview of Poverty in Delaware

University of Delaware Center for Community Research & Service

January 2018

Enrollment in Medicaid and the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) is also an indicator of the economic health of a state. The Delaware Medicaid program provides coverage to individuals up to 138% of the federal poverty line. CHIP covers children below 200% of the poverty level not covered by Medicaid. Approximately one-fourth of Delawareans in 2016 were enrolled in the Medicaid and CHIP programs. Compared to neighboring states and the U.S., Delaware has a higher percentage of enrollment. It is important to note that eligibility criteria for Medicaid coverage varies from state to state.

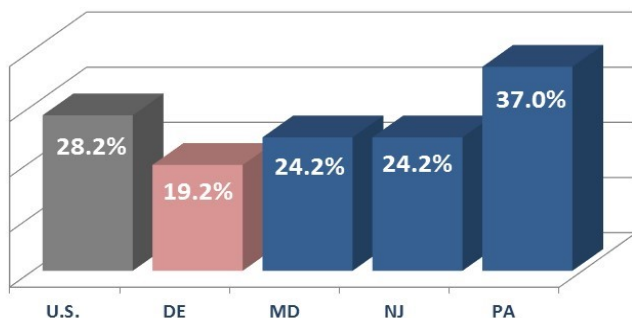
Medicaid/CHIP Enrollment as a % of Total Population: U.S., DE, and Region, 2016



Source: UD Center for Community Research & Service, 2017; Calculations based on data from CMS's "Medicaid & CHIP December 2016 Applications, Eligibility and Enrollment Data", and the U.S. Census Bureau's 2016 Population Estimates

Medicaid expenditures by Delaware were \$1.88 billion in fiscal year 2015, of which the federal government contributed \$1.19 billion. Approximately 19.2% of total state expenditures went to the Medicaid program in Delaware — a lower percentage of total expenditures in comparison to neighboring states and the nation.

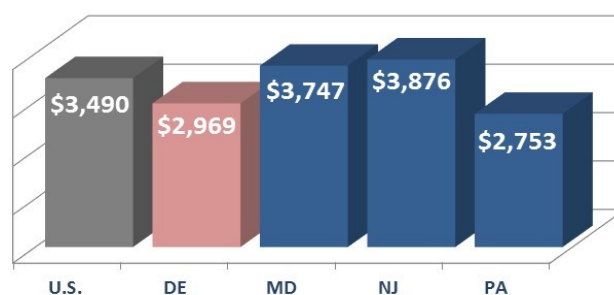
Medicaid Expenditures as a % of Total Expenditures: U.S., DE, and Region, FY 2015



Total expenditures include both state and federal funds.
Source: UD Center for Community Research & Service, 2017; data from National Association of State Budget Officers, State Expenditure Report, 2016

Cash public assistance to the poor and near poor includes Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) and General Assistance (GA) funds. Based on a five-year average, the percentage of individuals receiving cash public assistance in 2015 was 2.5% in Delaware, 2.6% in Maryland, 2.8% in New Jersey, and in Pennsylvania slightly higher at 3.5%. The average annual cash assistance per state ranged from \$2,040 to \$4,727 in 2015. Delaware ranked as the 14th lowest, below the U.S. average and Maryland and New Jersey, but above Pennsylvania.

Average Annual Cash Assistance: U.S., DE, and Region, Five Year Average, 2011-2015



Source: UD Center for Community Research & Service, 2017; from U.S. Census Bureau, 2011-2015 American Community Survey

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) provided food assistance to approximately 148,000 Delawareans in 2016. Since peaking in 2013, participation has been decreasing. SNAP participation soared in both Delaware and the U.S. during and following the 2008 financial crisis.

Average % of Population Receiving SNAP in the U.S. and DE, 2005-2016



Source: UD Center for Community Research & Service, 2017; from U.S. Department of Agriculture, SNAP, National and State Monthly Data

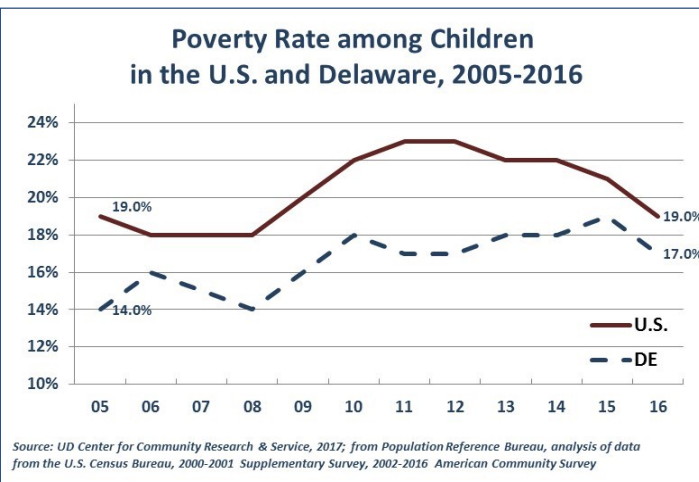
An Overview of Poverty in Delaware

University of Delaware Center for Community Research & Service

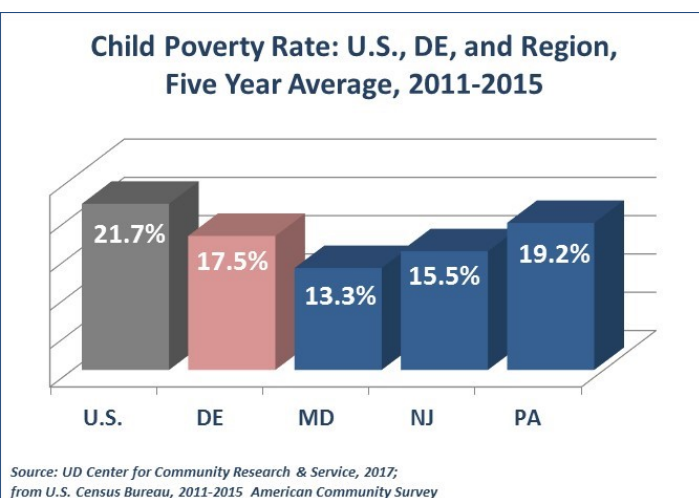
January 2018

CHILD POVERTY

Children experience higher individual rates of poverty than other age groups. From 2005 through 2016, the Delaware child poverty rate rose from 14% to 17%, though it remained below the national average. The U.S. rate increased at the start of the current decade, but returned in 2016 to the same level it was in 2005, at 19%. Both the U.S. and Delaware rate decreased between 2015 and 2016 reflecting post-recession economic growth.



Regionally, the Delaware estimated poverty rate (2011-2015) for individual children was higher than in Maryland and New Jersey, but lower than that of Pennsylvania.

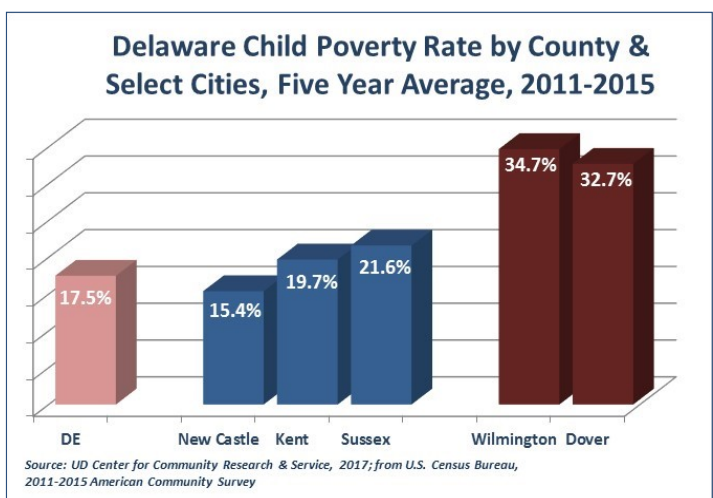


Younger children in Delaware (ages 5 and under), children living with one parent, and Black/African American children have the greatest risk of living in or near poverty.

Selected Delaware Child Poverty Indicators	
Poverty Rate	
0 - 5 years (2014-2016)	19.3%
6 - 18 years (2014-2016)	18.5%
Black/African American (2015)	31%
Poverty Rate by Household Structure	
One parent (2014-2016)	39.1%
Two parents (2014-2016)	9.7%
Below 200% poverty level	
All Children (2016)	36%
Ages 0 - 8 years (2015)	43%
Black/African American (2012)	56%

Source: UD Center for Community Research & Service, 2017; from U.S. Census Bureau, ACS 1-year and 3-year averages via Kids Count Data Center, Annie E. Casey Foundation (year of estimate in parentheses)

Geographic analysis illustrates that Kent and Sussex have a higher overall rate of poverty for individual children than New Castle County, while rates in Dover and Wilmington are nearly twice the state average.



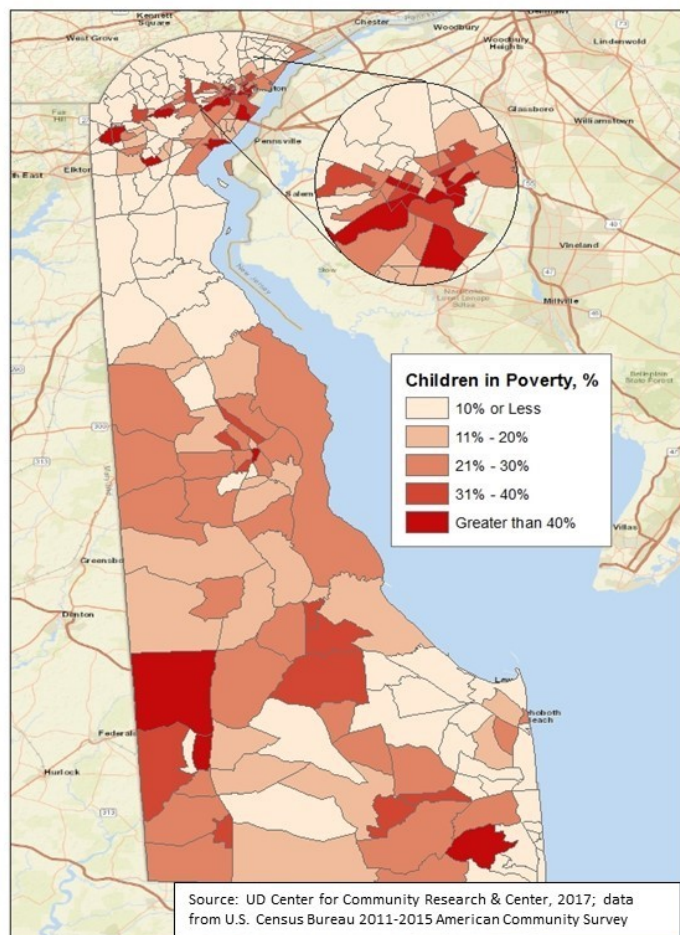
KIDS COUNT in Delaware is a program of CCRS funded by the Annie E. Casey Foundation and the State of Delaware. It provides high-quality data about the well-being of children, youth and families. For more information go to: www.ccrs.udel.edu/kids-count.

An Overview of Poverty in Delaware

University of Delaware Center for Community Research & Service

January 2018

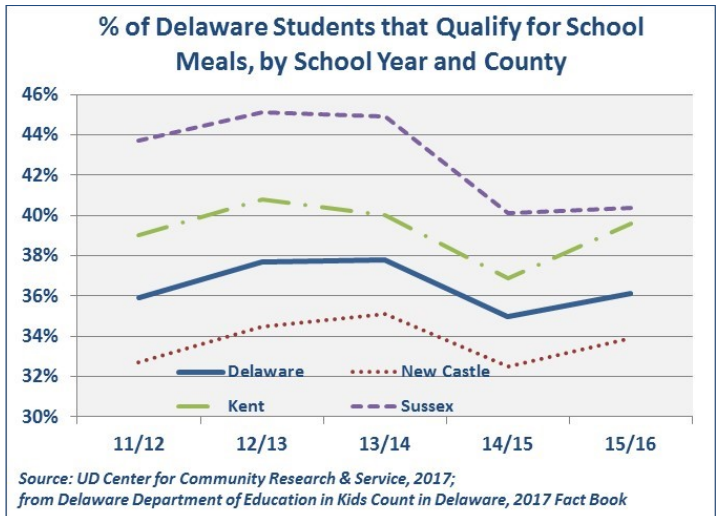
The map below of census tracts in Delaware further illustrates pockets of child poverty. In Wilmington, more than one in three children live in poverty, with the highest concentrations in downtown neighborhoods. The highest levels in Kent County are found in Dover and along the Kent County coast. In Sussex County, the highest rates are in the Georgetown area and inland in the more rural areas bordering Maryland.



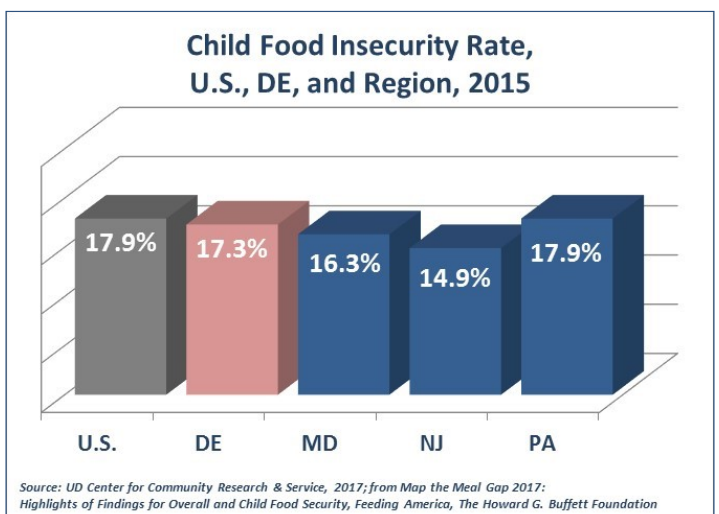
National and state data on the well-being of children is compiled by the Annie E. Casey Foundation which supports the National Kids Count data site and provides policy analysis of children issues.

For more information, go to:
www.aecf.org/work/kids-count/

The **National School Lunch Program (NSLP)** is a federally assisted program that provides nutritional meals at a low-cost or free to children in public and nonprofit schools, and in child care institutions each day. These programs help ensure that students are well nourished to promote learning and growth to their highest potential.



Food insecurity is caused by the inability to obtain sufficient food due to lack of money. Almost one in five (17.3%) of Delaware children in 2015 suffered from food insecurity. Delaware's rate places the state slightly below the national average and similar to rates in neighboring states, except for New Jersey where the rate of child food insecurity was lower at 14.9%.



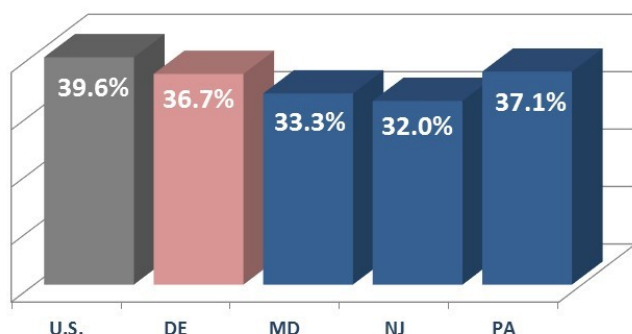
An Overview of Poverty in Delaware

University of Delaware Center for Community Research & Service

January 2018

Analyzing health insurance coverage provides additional insights regarding child poverty and access to health care. In 2016, Delaware provided public health insurance to 36.7% of children throughout the state. This rate is slightly less than the national rate, several percentage points higher than the rates found in Maryland and New Jersey, and comparable to the rate in Pennsylvania.

Children with Public Health Insurance,
U.S., DE, and Region, 2016



Source: UD Center for Community Research & Service, 2017;
from U.S. Census Bureau, 2016 American Community Survey

POVERTY AMONG AGING ADULTS

Delaware has a growing population 65 and over.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau 2011-2015 estimate, individuals 65 and over comprise 15.9% of the state's total population. In terms of poverty, this age group faces unique risks. The following section highlights several indicators of economic well-being of aging Delawareans.

The poverty rate for older individuals in Delaware has consistently been lower than the national rate, and below the rate for all Delawareans. However, as noted before, the official poverty measure does not account for health care expenditures. When these and other expenditures and transfers are taken into account, the actual poverty rate for older adults is estimated to be 1.5 times higher.

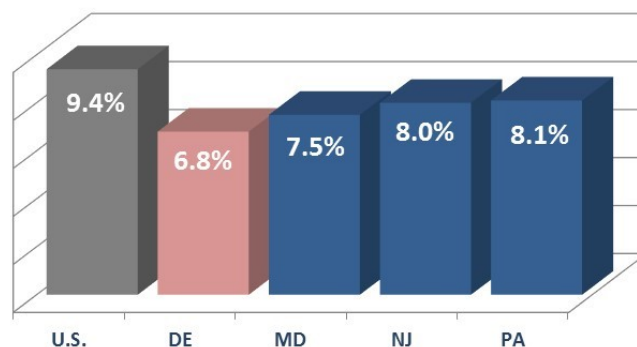
Poverty Rate among Adults 65+,
U.S. and DE, 2005-2016



Source: UD Center for Community Research & Service, 2017;
from U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, One Year Estimates, 2005-2016

Viewing the poverty rate for individuals by region, Delaware's aging population experiences a lower poverty rate than in neighboring states and the nation. Overall, 6.8% of elderly people in Delaware are living at or below the national poverty threshold.

Poverty Rate among Adults 65+, U.S., DE,
Region, Five Year Average, 2011-2015



Source: UD Center for Community Research & Service, 2017;
from U.S. Census Bureau, 2011-2015 American Community Survey

Important note: Poverty is a complex issue which cannot be adequately described and analyzed in a document this brief. The condition of poverty impacts many aspects of life. Individuals living in poverty have limited choices, poorer health, and shorter life-spans. Poverty statistics help federal, state and local public agencies and non-profit organizations identify and target geographic areas and demographic groups with the greatest need.

An Overview of Poverty in Delaware

University of Delaware Center for Community Research & Service

January 2018

Social Security and Medicare are important support systems that keep many older people out of poverty. Overall, 47,000 older residents were lifted out of poverty in Delaware in 2014-2015 by Social Security. The poverty rate of Delaware's elderly population would have risen from 8.8% to 38.9% without Social Security in 2014-2015.

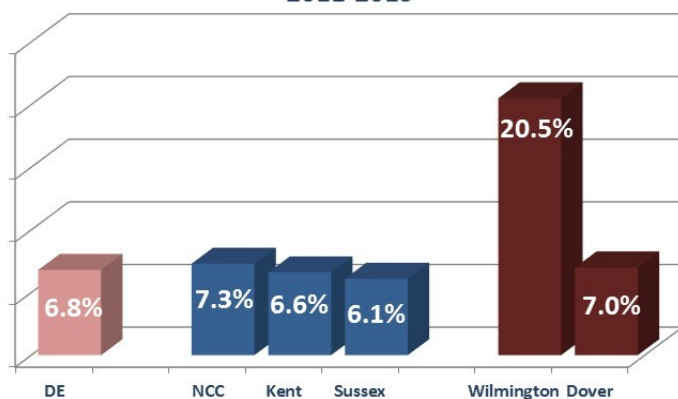
Selected Indicators for Social Security and Medicare in Delaware

Percent over 65 with Social Security, 2016	90.5%
Average Social Security annual benefit, 2016	\$17,465
Over 65 poverty rate with Social Security, 2014-2015	8.8%
Over 65 poverty rate if Social Security had not been received, 2014-2015	38.9%
Over 65 lifted out of poverty by Social Security, 2014-2015	47,000
Percent over 65 with Medicare, 2015	98.2%

Sources: UD Center for Community Research & Service, 2017; from Social Security Administration, "OASDI Beneficiaries by State and County, 2016"; Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, "Social Security Keeps 22 Million Americans Out of Poverty"; Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, "2015 Medicare Enrollment Section".

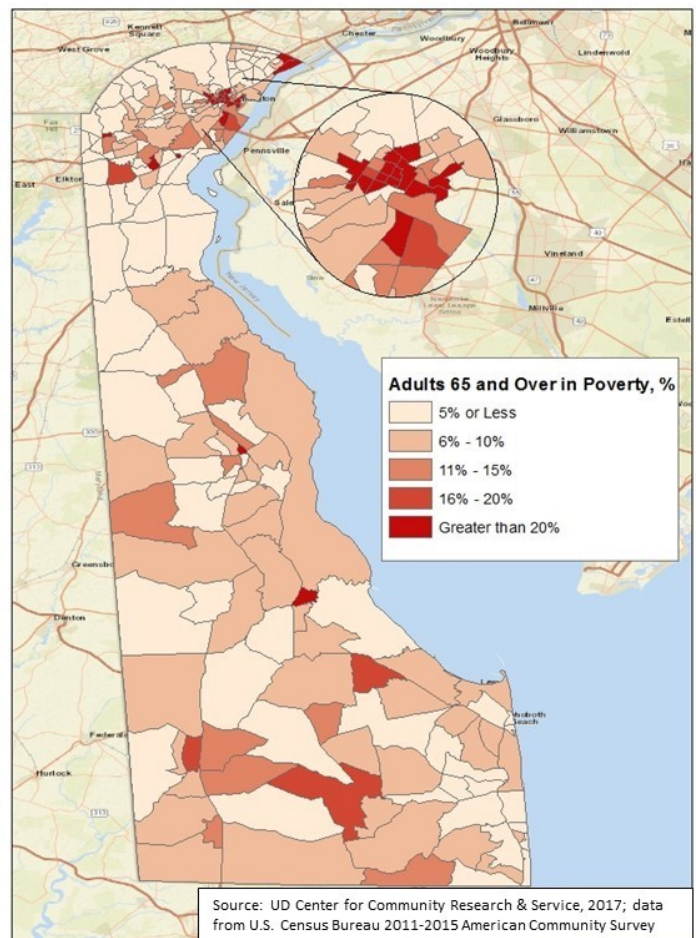
Looking at poverty by place, New Castle County has the highest rate of poverty for older Delawareans, an effect driven by a poverty rate in Wilmington that is more than twice as high as that of Dover and the state overall. About one in five older residents in Wilmington is living in poverty.

Poverty Rates among Adults Aged 65+, by County and Select Cities, Five Year Average, 2011-2015



Source: UD Center for Community Research & Services, 2017; data from U.S. Census Bureau, 2011-2013 American Community Survey

Further geographical analysis by census tract shows pockets of higher poverty for older Delawareans in the urban areas of Wilmington and Dover, on the coast of Kent County and in rural areas of Sussex County along the Maryland-Delaware border. Low levels of poverty are shown along the coast of Sussex reflecting the high number of wealthier older people choosing to retire near the beach.



Center for Community Research & Service Research Team:

- Dr. Steven W. Peuquet, Director
- Mary Joan McDuffie, Policy Scientist
- Max Holdsworth, Graduate Research Assistant
- Sonya Sedegui, Graduate Research Assistant

Thanks to the following CCRS policy scientists for their comments and edits: Dr. Kathryn Gifford, Kimberly Lowman, and Janice Barlow.

This report may be reproduced and distributed broadly in printed or electronic form by others without permission or charge.