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Who is Poor in Kent County?

Community Research Institute-Johnson Center

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Who is Poor in Kent County?

It is...

- a family of four with an annual income of **\$17,650** or less.
- a family of three with an annual income of **\$14,630** or less.
- a family of two with an annual income of **\$11,610** or less.
- an individual with an income of **\$8,590** or less.

These are the official federal poverty thresholds in 2001. Most experts agree that it takes twice this annual income to be economically self-sufficient.

It is...

- a family of four with one full-time wage earner making \$8.49 an hour.
- a full-time working single mother of one child with an hourly wage of \$5.58.

Most low-wage working parents are employed in retail (30%) or service (41%) jobs.

It is...

- 1 in 8 school children in Kent County.
- 1 in 4 school children in Grand Rapids.

Two-thirds of all children in Grand Rapids Public Schools qualify for "free and reduced price" lunches. That means their family incomes are at or below 185% of the federal poverty guidelines (shown above).

What does it mean to be poor?

For a low-wage working family, a monthly budget has to stretch to cover basic needs...

- \$566 Rent (*fair market cost of a 2-bedroom apartment*)
- \$416 Child Care (*one child*)
- \$343 Food (*does not include nonfood household items*)
- \$ 30 Transportation (*one-month bus pass*)
- \$ 99 Electric and Gas (*based on low usage*)
- \$ 25 Telephone (*basic service*)

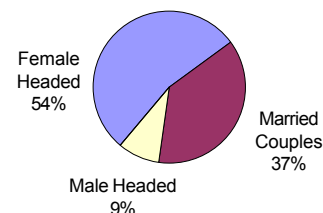
\$1,479 (\$17,748 per year)

- ??? Everything else (*health care, clothing, haircuts, gifts/toys/recreation, school supplies, savings for a house or car...*)

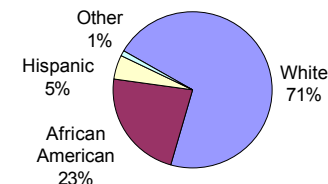
Budget is based on average costs in Kent County. The Family Independence Agency helps with the cost of rent, childcare, food, transportation, and other services for those who qualify.

Who are the Working Poor Families in Michigan? Mid-1990s

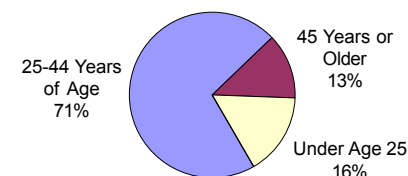
Family Type



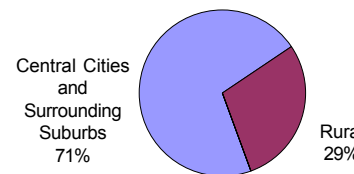
Race/Ethnicity



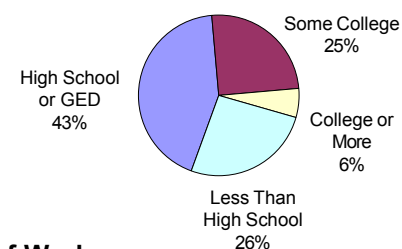
Age of Family Head



Location/Residence



Education (Family Head)



Place of Work

