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A Profile of the Working Poor, 1997

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A Profile of the Working Poor, 1997

Abstract

[Excerpt] This report presents data on the relationships between labor force activity and poverty in 1997 for individual workers and their families. The data were collected in the March 1998 supplement to the Current Population Survey, a nationwide monthly survey of about 50,000 households conducted by the Bureau of the Census for the Bureau of Labor Statistics. 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 Note.

Keywords

poverty, United States, labor force activity, workers, families

Comments

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A Profile of the Working Poor, 1997



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In 1997, 35.6 million persons, 13.3 percent of the population, lived at or below the official poverty level. Although the Nation's poor were primarily children and adults who were not in the labor force, 21.0 percent, or 7.5 million persons were classified as "working poor." This level was about the same as in 1996. The working poor, as defined for this analysis, are individuals who spent at least 27 weeks in the labor force (working or looking for work), but whose income fell below the official poverty threshold. The poverty rate—the ratio of the working poor to all persons in the labor force for at least 27 weeks—was 5.7 percent, little changed from 1996. (See table A.)

A majority of the working poor (58.1 percent) usually worked full time (35 hours or more a week), although full-time work substantially lowers a person's probability of being poor. Among persons in the labor force for 27 weeks or more, the poverty rate for those usually employed full time was 4.0 percent compared with 11.9 percent for usual part-time workers. Only 6.8 percent of the working poor actively searched for a job for more than 6 months in 1997 but did not find work. (See table 1.)

This report presents data on the relationships between labor force activity and poverty in 1997 for individual workers and their families. The data were collected in the March 1998 supplement to the Current Population Survey, a nationwide monthly survey of about 50,000 households conducted by the Bureau of the Census for the Bureau of Labor Statistics. 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 Note.

Although employment status is a characteristic of an individual, poverty status is defined in terms of a family unit. Thus, earnings from someone's employment are only one factor in that person's poverty status; the earnings of others in the family and the presence of dependents are also important. For example, working wives were less likely than working husbands to be poor (in aggregate) because working wives were more likely to be in families with a second earner. On average in 1997, about 77 percent of married men worked for 27 weeks or more compared with approximately 60 per-

cent of married women. At the same earnings levels, women who headed families are more likely to be poor than other women, because of either limited earnings from others in the family, or because the presence of children raises the amount of income needed to live outside poverty.

Demographic characteristics

In 1997, the poverty rate continued to be higher for working women than men—6.7 versus 4.9 percent. Moreover, the proportion of working men living in poverty has edged down by 0.7 percentage point since 1995, while that for women has shown little change. (See table 2.)

Although nearly three-fourths of the working poor were white workers, black and Hispanic workers continued to experience poverty rates that were more than twice the rates of whites (11.5 and 12.5 percent versus 4.9 percent, respectively). Black working women had a poverty rate of 14.6 percent—almost twice the rate of black working men (7.9 percent). The differences in the rates by sex were much smaller among whites and Hispanics. The earnings differential between black women and men is small relative to whites, but black women are far more likely than white women to head families alone.

Younger workers were most vulnerable to being poor. Teenagers (16- to 19-year-olds) and persons age 20 to 24 had poverty rates about twice the overall rate. Among blacks and Hispanic workers, the poverty rates for teenagers were 23.2 and 20.1 percent, respectively.

Table A. Poverty status of persons and primary families in the labor force for 27 weeks or more, 1994-97

(Numbers in thousands)

Characteristic	1994	1995	1996	1997
Total persons ¹	124,303	126,020	128,320	130,047
In poverty	7,660	7,484	7,421	7,453
Poverty rate	6.2	5.9	5.8	5.7
Unrelated individuals ..	23,622	24,207	25,539	26,158
In poverty	2,322	2,312	2,423	2,534
Poverty rate	9.8	9.5	9.5	9.7
Primary families ²	56,789	57,262	58,087	58,815
In poverty	4,111	4,008	4,084	4,068
Poverty rate	7.2	7.0	7.0	6.9

¹ Includes persons in families, not shown separately.

² Primary families with at least one member in the labor force for more than half of the year.

Educational attainment

In general, the risk of living in poverty is lower for workers with more education. Of persons in the labor force for at least half of 1997, those with less than a high school education had a much higher poverty rate (15.8 percent) than high school graduates (6.5 percent). Workers with an associate degree or 4-year college degree reported the lowest poverty rates, 3.1 and 1.5 percent, respectively. (See table 3.)

Although higher education lowers poverty rates among both blacks and whites, rates were about two times higher for black workers than for white workers at almost all educational levels. Among black men and women, there were marked disparities at most levels of education. The poverty rate for black women workers with less than a high school education was 30.0 percent compared to 19.3 percent for black men. Among high school graduates, the poverty rate of black women (17.6 percent) was more than twice that of black men (7.8 percent).

Occupation

During 1997, service and farm workers had the highest poverty rates, 12.1 and 16.0 percent, respectively. Persons employed in managerial and professional specialty occupations had the lowest probability of being poor (1.8 percent). (See table 4.)

Household service workers (that is, housekeepers, child-care workers, and cooks), almost all of whom were women, had a poverty rate of 22.3 percent. Protective service providers, such as firefighters, police officers, and guards, reported a poverty rate of only 3.1 percent. The poverty rate among service providers other than private household or protective—which includes occupations such as bartenders, waiters and waitresses, dental assistants, janitors, and hairdressers—was 13.0 percent.

For persons employed in executive, administrative, and managerial occupations, managers of properties and real estate, and food serving and lodging establishments had the highest poverty rates (5.3 and 4.2 percent, respectively). Although 2.5 percentage points less than in 1996, pre-kindergarten and kindergarten teachers still had a relatively high poverty rate (5.4 percent) among professional specialty occupations.

Among the other major occupational groups, sales workers and handlers, equipment cleaners, helpers, and laborers also had relatively high poverty rates.

Family structure

In 1997, nearly 4.1 million families lived below the poverty level despite having at least one member in the labor market for 27 weeks or more. Nearly half of these were families maintained by women. The poverty rate for families—the ratio of poor families with workers to all families with workers—was 6.9 percent in 1997, little changed from 1996. (See tables 5 and 6.)

The poverty rate for families with just one member in the labor force was over seven times higher than that of families with two or more members in the workforce (14.4 versus 1.9 percent). Families maintained by women with only one member in the labor force were nearly two times more likely to be poor than were such families maintained by men (25.8 versus 13.6 percent). Married-couple families with one member in the labor force had lower poverty rates than families maintained by either women or men. This was true regardless of which member of the married-couple family was in the labor force.

Working families with children, regardless of type of family, had higher poverty rates than families without children. The difference was greatest among families maintained by women. Among these families, 27.0 percent of those with children were poor compared to 4.9 percent of those without children.

Unrelated individuals

In 1997, 2.5 million unrelated individuals who were in the labor force for more than half the year lived below the poverty level. Unrelated individuals are those persons who live by themselves or with others not related to them. Their poverty rate was 9.7 percent in 1997, relatively unchanged from 1996. Among unrelated individuals, teenagers were the most vulnerable to being poor. Nearly half of the working teenagers living on their own or with others not related to them lived below the poverty level. (See table 7.)

Of the 2.5 million unrelated workers who lived below the poverty level, 63.6 percent lived with others. These individuals reported a poverty rate two times higher than that of individuals who lived alone. Many unrelated individuals in poverty may live with others out of necessity. Conversely, many of those who live alone do so because they have sufficient incomes to support themselves. However, each person's resources determine unrelated individuals' poverty status. The pooling of resources and sharing of expenses may allow some individuals in this category, who are technically classified as poor, to live above the poverty level.

Labor market problems

The primary labor market problems associated with workers whose incomes fall below the poverty threshold include unemployment, low earnings, and involuntary part-time employment, that is, wanting full-time work but having to settle for part-time work. (See definitions in the Technical Note.) Among those who participated in the labor force for more than half the year in 1997 and usually worked in full-time wage and salary positions, 3.7 million, or 3.7 percent, lived in poverty. (See table 8.) The following analysis of labor market problems is restricted to these full-time wage and salary workers.

Low earnings continued to be the most common problem; about 7 in 10 poor workers were subject to low earnings alone, or in combination with other labor market problems. Over 35 percent of the working poor experienced unemployment, either alone or in combination with other problems. Only 6.2 percent of the working poor experienced all three problems—low earnings, unemployment, and some involuntary part-time work.

Some 502,000 of these working poor, or 13.6 percent, did not experience any of the three labor market problems in 1997. Their poverty status may be associated with other factors, including short-term employment, some weeks of voluntary part-time work, or a family structure that increases the risk of poverty.

Technical Note

Source of data

The primary source of data in this report is the work experience and income supplement (called the Annual Demographic Survey) to the March 1998 Current Population Survey (CPS). The CPS is a monthly survey of about 50,000 households conducted by the Bureau of the Census for the Bureau of Labor Statistics to collect demographic, social, and economic information about persons 16 years of age and over. The work experience and income information collected in the March supplement refers to activity in the entire prior calendar year.

Because the estimates are based on a sample, they may differ from the figures that would have been obtained from a complete census using the same questionnaire and procedures. Sampling variability may be relatively large in cases where the numbers are small. Thus, small estimates, or small differences between estimates, should be interpreted with caution. For a detailed explanation of the March supplement to the Current Population Survey, its sampling variability, and more complete definitions than those provided below, see *Poverty in the United States: 1997*, Current Population Reports, Series P-60, No. 201 (Bureau of the Census, September 1998). This publication also is available on the Bureau of the Census web site (<http://www.census.gov>).

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For more information on the data provided in this report, write to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, Division of Labor Force Statistics, Room 4675, 2 Massachusetts Avenue, NE., Washington, DC 20212, E-mail: cpsinfo@bls.gov or telephone (202) 606-6378.

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 were originally based on the Department of Agriculture's Economy Food Plan and reflected the different consumption requirements of families based on factors such as family size and the number of children under 18 years of age.

The actual poverty thresholds vary in accordance with the makeup of the family. In 1997, the average poverty threshold for a family of four was \$16,400; for a family of nine or more persons, the threshold was \$32,566; and for an unrelated individual aged 65 and over, it was \$7,698. The poverty thresholds are updated each year to reflect changes in the Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U). The thresholds do not vary geographically. For more information,

see *Poverty in the United States: 1997*, cited above.

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 week. The base year of 1967 was chosen because that was the first year in which minimum-wage legislation covered essentially the same broad group of workers who are currently covered. The low earnings level has subsequently been adjusted each year using the CPI-U so that the measure maintains the same real value it held in 1987. In 1997, the low earnings threshold was \$236.23 per week. For a more complete definition, see Bruce W. Klein and Philip L. Rones, "A Profile of the Working Poor," *Monthly Labor Review*, October 1989, pp. 3-13.

Income. Data on income are limited to money income received in the calendar year preceding the March survey date before personal income taxes and payroll deductions. It does not include the value of noncash benefits such as food stamps, medicare, medicaid, public housing, and employer-provided benefits. For a complete definition of the income concept, see *Poverty in the United States: 1997*, cited above.

In the labor force. Persons in the labor force are those who worked or looked for work sometime during the calendar year preceding the March survey date. The number of weeks in the labor force is accumulated over the entire year. The focus in this report is on persons in the labor force for 27 weeks or more.

Involuntary part-time workers. These are persons who, in 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. Refers to the occupation in which a person worked the most weeks during the calendar year.

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

Family. A family is defined as a group of two or more persons residing together who are related by birth, marriage, or adoption. Persons in related subfamilies—married couples, or parent-child groups sharing the living quarters of another family member—are included as members of that family and are not distinct family units. The count of families used in this report does not include unrelated subfamilies, such as lodgers, guests, or resident employees living in a household

but not related to the householder (the person in whose name the housing unit is owned or rented). Families are classified either as married-couple families or as those maintained by men or women without spouses present. Family status is determined at the time of the March interview and thus may be different from that of the previous year.

Unrelated individuals. These are persons who are not living with any relatives. Such individuals may be living alone, reside in a non-related family household, or live in group quarters with other unrelated individuals.

Related children. Data on related children refer to own children (including sons, daughters, and step or adopted children) of the husband, wife, or person maintaining the family and all

other children related to the householder by blood, marriage, or adoption.

Race. White, black, and other are terms used to describe the race of workers. Included in the “other” group are American Indians, Alaskan Natives, and Asians and Pacific Islanders; because of their relatively small sample size, data for this group are not separately tabulated or published.

Hispanic origin. This term refers to persons who identify themselves in the CPS enumeration process as Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Central or South American, or of some other Hispanic origin or descent. Persons of Hispanic origin may be of any race; thus, they also are included in both the white and black population groups.

Table 1. Persons in the labor force: Poverty status and work experience by weeks in the labor force, 1997

(Numbers in thousands)

Poverty status and work experience	Total in the labor force	27 weeks or more in the labor force	
		Total	50 to 52 weeks
TOTAL			
Total in labor force	145,323	130,047	115,757
Did not work during the year	2,129	903	740
Worked during the year	143,193	129,144	115,017
Usual full-time workers	113,128	107,169	99,066
Usual part-time workers	30,066	21,975	15,951
Involuntary part-time workers	4,927	3,926	3,064
Voluntary part-time workers	25,139	18,049	12,887
At or above poverty level			
Total in labor force	134,905	122,594	110,083
Did not work during the year	1,135	394	315
Worked during the year	133,771	122,200	109,768
Usual full-time workers	107,738	102,842	95,670
Usual part-time workers	26,033	19,358	14,098
Involuntary part-time workers	3,654	2,984	2,332
Voluntary part-time workers	22,379	16,374	11,765
Below poverty level			
Total in labor force	10,417	7,453	5,675
Did not work during the year	994	509	425
Worked during the year	9,423	6,944	5,249
Usual full-time workers	5,390	4,327	3,396
Usual part-time workers	4,033	2,618	1,853
Involuntary part-time workers	1,273	942	732
Voluntary part-time workers	2,760	1,675	1,121
Poverty rate¹			
Total in labor force	7.2	5.7	4.9
Did not work during the year	46.7	56.4	57.5
Worked during the year	6.6	5.4	4.6
Usual full-time workers	4.8	4.0	3.4
Usual part-time workers	13.4	11.9	11.6
Involuntary part-time workers	25.8	24.0	23.9
Voluntary part-time workers	11.0	9.3	8.7

¹ Number below the poverty level as a percent of the total in the labor force.

NOTE: Data refer to persons 16 years and over.

Table 2. Persons in the labor force for 27 weeks or more: Poverty status by age, sex, race, and Hispanic origin, 1997

(Numbers in thousands)

Age and sex	Total	White	Black	Hispanic origin	Below poverty level				Poverty rate ¹			
					Total	White	Black	Hispanic origin	Total	White	Black	Hispanic origin
Total, 16 years and older	130,047	109,198	14,848	12,901	7,453	5,381	1,709	1,609	5.7	4.9	11.5	12.5
16 to 19 years	4,855	4,186	532	532	566	422	124	107	11.6	10.1	23.2	20.1
20 to 24 years	12,152	10,033	1,623	1,723	1,394	967	372	232	11.5	9.6	22.9	13.5
25 to 34 years	31,812	25,916	4,189	4,096	2,150	1,532	507	535	6.8	5.9	12.1	13.1
35 to 44 years	36,420	30,385	4,248	3,482	1,874	1,303	462	473	5.1	4.3	10.9	13.6
45 to 54 years	27,679	23,697	2,784	2,001	894	696	155	180	3.2	2.9	5.6	9.0
55 to 64 years	13,296	11,569	1,194	885	474	381	74	76	3.6	3.3	6.2	8.6
65 years and older	3,834	3,412	278	183	102	81	16	6	2.7	2.4	5.7	3.5
Men, 16 years and older	70,310	60,108	6,887	7,835	3,468	2,697	547	970	4.9	4.5	7.9	12.4
16 to 19 years	2,397	2,107	220	303	254	201	46	58	10.6	9.5	20.7	19.1
20 to 24 years	6,465	5,428	763	1,110	603	449	133	148	9.3	8.3	17.4	13.4
25 to 34 years	17,536	14,561	1,993	2,628	1,005	781	144	345	5.7	5.4	7.2	13.1
35 to 44 years	19,722	16,790	1,952	2,042	830	625	129	266	4.2	3.7	6.6	13.0
45 to 54 years	14,764	12,869	1,281	1,127	476	400	54	103	3.2	3.1	4.2	9.1
55 to 64 years	7,269	6,415	549	514	239	196	30	44	3.3	3.1	5.5	8.6
65 years and older	2,156	1,939	129	111	60	44	11	5	2.8	2.3	8.5	4.9
Women, 16 years and older	59,738	49,090	7,961	5,066	3,985	2,684	1,162	639	6.7	5.5	14.6	12.6
16 to 19 years	2,458	2,079	312	229	312	221	78	49	12.7	10.6	25.0	21.3
20 to 24 years	5,687	4,605	860	613	791	518	239	84	13.9	11.2	27.8	13.6
25 to 34 years	14,276	11,355	2,196	1,467	1,144	750	363	190	8.0	6.6	16.5	12.9
35 to 44 years	16,698	13,595	2,296	1,441	1,043	678	333	207	6.2	5.0	14.5	14.3
45 to 54 years	12,915	10,828	1,503	873	418	295	101	77	3.2	2.7	6.7	8.8
55 to 64 years	6,027	5,155	645	371	235	185	44	32	3.9	3.6	6.8	8.6
65 years and older	1,677	1,474	149	72	42	37	5	1	2.5	2.5	3.2	(²)

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

² Data not shown where base is less than 75,000.

NOTE: Detail for race and Hispanic-origin groups will not sum to totals because data for the "other races" group are not presented and Hispanics are included in both the white and black population groups.

Table 3. Persons in the labor force for 27 weeks or more: Poverty status by educational attainment, race, and sex, 1997

(Numbers in thousands)

Educational attainment and race	Total	Men	Women	Below poverty level			Poverty rate ¹		
				Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women
Total, 16 years and older	130,047	70,310	59,738	7,453	3,468	3,985	5.7	4.9	6.7
Less than a high school diploma	16,351	10,145	6,206	2,587	1,461	1,125	15.8	14.4	18.1
Less than 1 year of high school	4,631	3,093	1,537	870	583	287	18.8	18.9	18.7
1-3 years of high school	10,069	6,029	4,040	1,550	779	771	15.4	12.9	19.1
4 years of high school, no diploma	1,652	1,023	629	167	99	67	10.1	9.7	10.7
High school graduates, no college	42,629	22,891	19,738	2,755	1,170	1,585	6.5	5.1	8.0
Some college, no degree	25,922	13,326	12,596	1,258	458	800	4.9	3.4	6.3
Associate degree	10,861	5,227	5,634	337	122	215	3.1	2.3	3.8
College graduates	34,285	18,720	15,564	517	257	261	1.5	1.4	1.7
White, 16 years and older	109,198	60,108	49,090	5,381	2,697	2,684	4.9	4.5	5.5
Less than a high school diploma	13,279	8,506	4,773	1,894	1,147	747	14.3	13.5	15.7
Less than 1 year of high school	3,980	2,731	1,249	772	521	251	19.4	19.1	20.1
1-3 years of high school	8,077	4,976	3,101	1,026	570	457	12.7	11.4	14.7
4 years of high school, no diploma	1,222	798	423	96	56	40	7.9	7.0	9.4
High school graduates, no college	35,572	19,359	16,213	1,913	887	1,026	5.4	4.6	6.3
Some college, no degree	21,490	11,300	10,190	910	370	540	4.2	3.3	5.3
Associate degree	9,341	4,601	4,740	265	96	169	2.8	2.1	3.6
College graduates	29,517	16,342	13,175	399	197	202	1.4	1.2	1.5
Black, 16 years and older	14,848	6,887	7,961	1,709	547	1,162	11.5	7.9	14.6
Less than a high school diploma	2,367	1,265	1,102	575	244	331	24.3	19.3	30.0
Less than 1 year of high school	394	230	164	61	32	29	15.5	13.9	17.7
1-3 years of high school	1,657	867	790	458	176	282	27.6	20.3	35.6
4 years of high school, no diploma	315	168	148	56	36	20	17.8	21.3	13.8
High school graduates, no college	5,568	2,694	2,874	716	210	505	12.9	7.8	17.6
Some college, no degree	3,432	1,498	1,934	298	60	238	8.7	4.0	12.3
Associate degree	1,069	394	675	61	16	45	5.7	4.0	6.7
College graduates	2,412	1,035	1,377	60	17	43	2.5	1.6	3.1

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

Table 4. Persons in the labor force for 27 weeks or more who worked during the year: Poverty status by occupation of the longest job held, race, and sex, 1997

(Numbers in thousands)

Occupation and race	Total	Men	Women	Below poverty level			Poverty rate ¹		
				Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women
Total, 16 years and older ²	129,144	69,846	59,298	6,944	3,239	3,705	5.4	4.6	6.2
Managerial and professional specialty	37,767	19,253	18,514	691	312	379	1.8	1.6	2.0
Executive, administrative, and managerial	18,526	10,139	8,387	323	176	147	1.7	1.7	1.8
Professional specialty	19,241	9,114	10,127	368	136	232	1.9	1.5	2.3
Technical, sales, and administrative support	38,133	13,631	24,502	1,663	402	1,261	4.4	2.9	5.1
Technicians and related support	4,363	1,943	2,420	66	30	36	1.5	1.6	1.5
Sales occupations	15,408	7,863	7,545	994	281	713	6.5	3.6	9.5
Administrative support, including clerical	18,362	3,825	14,537	603	91	512	3.3	2.4	3.5
Service occupations	17,209	7,186	10,023	2,084	663	1,421	12.1	9.2	14.2
Private household	763	33	730	170	7	163	22.3	(³)	22.4
Protective service	2,286	1,911	374	70	47	23	3.1	2.5	6.2
Service, except private household and protective	14,161	5,242	8,919	1,844	609	1,235	13.0	11.6	13.8
Precision production, craft, and repair	14,612	13,396	1,216	676	596	81	4.6	4.4	6.6
Operators, fabricators, and laborers	18,177	13,719	4,458	1,335	855	480	7.3	6.2	10.8
Machine operators, assemblers, and inspectors	7,979	4,963	3,016	544	243	302	6.8	4.9	10.0
Transportation and material moving occupations	5,415	4,883	532	277	60	217	6.2	5.7	11.3
Handlers, equipment cleaners, helpers, and laborers	4,783	3,872	910	454	336	118	9.5	8.7	13.0
Farming, forestry, and fishing	3,089	2,539	550	495	412	82	16.0	16.2	15.0
White, 16 years and older ²	108,705	59,814	48,890	5,154	2,557	2,597	4.7	4.3	5.3
Managerial and professional specialty	33,068	17,105	15,963	556	259	298	1.7	1.5	1.9
Executive, administrative, and managerial	16,543	9,236	7,307	284	159	124	1.7	1.7	1.7
Professional specialty	16,525	7,869	8,656	273	99	173	1.6	1.3	2.0
Technical, sales, and administrative support	32,014	11,641	20,373	1,151	290	860	3.6	2.5	4.2
Technicians and related support	3,669	1,655	2,013	55	27	28	1.5	1.6	1.4
Sales occupations	13,327	6,950	6,377	709	194	515	5.3	2.8	8.1
Administrative support, including clerical	15,019	3,036	11,983	387	69	318	2.6	2.3	2.7
Service occupations	13,378	5,660	7,718	1,464	469	996	10.9	8.3	12.9
Private household	614	26	589	132	7	125	21.5	(³)	21.3
Protective service	1,779	1,552	226	47	35	12	2.6	2.3	5.1
Service, except private household and protective	10,984	4,082	6,903	1,286	427	859	11.7	10.5	12.4
Precision production, craft, and repair	12,891	11,990	902	572	521	51	4.4	4.3	5.6
Operators, fabricators, and laborers	14,370	10,964	3,406	962	645	317	6.7	5.9	9.3
Machine operators, assemblers, and inspectors	6,232	3,993	2,239	380	183	196	6.1	4.6	8.8
Transportation and material moving occupations	4,367	3,950	417	242	203	39	5.5	5.1	9.3
Handlers, equipment cleaners, helpers, and laborers	3,771	3,021	750	340	258	82	9.0	8.6	10.9
Farming, forestry, and fishing	2,866	2,360	506	449	373	76	15.7	15.8	15.0
Black, 16 years and older ²	14,489	6,750	7,739	1,462	481	982	10.1	7.1	12.7
Managerial and professional specialty	2,835	1,105	1,730	101	33	68	3.6	3.0	3.9
Executive, administrative, and managerial	1,183	481	703	19	6	13	1.6	1.3	1.9
Professional specialty	1,652	624	1,028	82	27	55	4.9	4.3	5.3
Technical, sales, and administrative support	4,354	1,250	3,104	424	64	360	9.7	5.1	11.6
Technicians and related support	446	162	283	3	-	3	0.6	-	0.9
Sales occupations	1,365	531	834	230	51	179	16.9	9.7	21.4
Administrative support, including clerical	2,543	557	1,986	191	13	178	7.5	2.3	9.0
Service occupations	2,942	1,082	1,859	510	135	375	17.3	12.5	20.1
Private household	120	4	116	34	-	34	28.5	-	29.5
Protective service	432	297	135	23	11	12	5.3	3.8	8.5
Service, except private household and protective	2,390	781	1,608	453	124	329	19.0	15.9	20.5
Precision production, craft, and repair	1,178	979	199	75	52	23	6.4	5.3	11.4
Operators, fabricators, and laborers	3,038	2,222	816	327	177	150	10.8	8.0	18.4
Machine operators, assemblers, and inspectors	1,310	727	583	146	50	96	11.2	6.9	16.5
Transportation and material moving occupations	877	774	103	86	64	21	9.8	8.3	20.7
Handlers, equipment cleaners, helpers, and laborers	851	721	130	95	62	33	11.2	8.6	25.4
Farming, forestry, and fishing	113	95	19	26	19	6	22.6	20.4	(³)

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

² Includes a small number of persons whose last job was in the Armed

Forces.

³ Data not shown where base is less than 75,000.

NOTE: Dash represents or rounds to zero.

Table 5. Persons in families and unrelated individuals: Poverty status and work experience, 1997

(Numbers in thousands)

Poverty status and work experience	Total persons	In married-couple families				In families maintained by women			In families maintained by men			Unrelated individuals
		Husbands	Wives	Related children under 18	Other relatives	Householder	Related children under 18	Other relatives	Householder	Related children under 18	Other relatives	
TOTAL												
All persons ¹	204,551	53,700	54,256	5,171	16,827	12,639	1,911	9,573	3,880	457	3,876	42,261
With labor force activity	145,323	43,010	36,001	2,509	12,756	9,188	787	6,531	3,177	174	2,712	28,477
1 to 26 weeks	15,275	1,617	3,775	1,484	2,889	983	485	1,094	177	112	341	2,319
27 weeks or more	130,047	41,393	32,226	1,025	9,868	8,206	303	5,437	2,999	62	2,371	26,158
With no labor force activity	59,228	10,689	18,255	2,662	4,071	3,451	1,123	3,042	704	283	1,164	13,784
At or above poverty level												
All persons ¹	181,822	50,908	51,435	4,855	16,059	8,644	1,249	8,003	3,380	386	3,562	33,342
With labor force activity	134,905	41,299	35,079	2,438	12,431	6,798	598	5,832	2,846	142	2,572	24,870
1 to 26 weeks	12,311	1,414	3,465	1,442	2,745	305	355	834	114	91	301	1,245
27 weeks or more	122,594	39,885	31,614	997	9,685	6,493	243	4,998	2,732	51	2,271	23,625
With no labor force activity	46,917	9,608	16,356	2,416	3,628	1,846	651	2,171	534	244	990	8,472
Below poverty level												
All persons ¹	22,728	2,792	2,820	316	769	3,995	662	1,570	501	71	313	8,919
With labor force activity	10,417	1,711	922	71	326	2,391	190	699	331	32	140	3,607
1 to 26 weeks	2,964	203	310	43	143	678	130	260	64	21	40	1,074
27 weeks or more	7,453	1,508	612	28	182	1,713	60	439	267	11	100	2,534
With no labor force activity	12,311	1,081	1,898	245	443	1,605	473	871	170	39	174	5,312
Poverty rate²												
All persons ¹	11.1	5.2	5.2	6.1	4.6	31.6	34.7	16.4	12.9	15.5	8.1	21.1
With labor force activity	7.2	4.0	2.6	2.8	2.6	26.0	24.1	10.7	10.4	18.2	5.1	12.7
1 to 26 weeks	19.4	12.5	8.2	2.9	5.0	69.0	26.8	23.7	35.9	18.8	11.7	46.3
27 weeks or more	5.7	3.6	1.9	2.7	1.8	20.9	19.8	8.1	8.9	(³)	4.2	9.7
With no labor force activity	20.8	10.1	10.4	9.2	10.9	46.5	42.1	28.6	24.1	13.9	14.9	38.5

¹ Data on families include persons in primary families and unrelated subfamilies.

² Number below the poverty level as a percent of the total.

³ Data not shown where base is less than 75,000.

NOTE: Data refer to persons 16 years and over.

Table 6. Primary families: Poverty status, presence of related children, and work experience of family members in the labor force for 27 weeks or more, 1997

(Numbers in thousands)

Characteristic	Total families	At or above poverty level	Below poverty level	Poverty rate ¹
Total primary families	58,815	54,747	4,068	6.9
With related children under 18	34,140	30,610	3,531	10.3
Without children	24,674	24,137	537	2.2
With one member in the labor force	23,637	20,234	3,402	14.4
With two or more members in the labor force	35,178	34,512	666	1.9
With two members	29,452	28,843	609	2.1
With three or more members	5,726	5,669	57	1.0
Married-couple families:				
With related children under 18	25,536	24,086	1,450	5.7
Without children	20,155	19,810	345	1.7
With one member in the labor force	14,585	13,256	1,330	9.1
Husband	11,004	9,934	1,070	9.7
Wife	2,918	2,697	221	7.6
Relative	663	624	39	5.9
With two or more members in the labor force	31,105	30,641	464	1.5
With two members	26,142	25,709	432	1.7
With three or more members	4,964	4,931	32	0.7
Families maintained by women:				
With related children under 18	6,655	4,856	1,800	27.0
Without children	3,030	2,883	147	4.9
With one member in the labor force	6,904	5,123	1,781	25.8
Householder	5,667	4,103	1,565	27.6
Relative	1,237	1,021	216	17.5
With two or more members in the labor force	2,782	2,615	166	6.0
Families maintained by men:				
With related children under 18	1,949	1,668	281	14.4
Without children	1,489	1,444	45	3.0
With one member in the labor force	2,147	1,856	292	13.6
Householder	1,826	1,581	245	13.4
Relative	321	274	47	14.6
With two or more members in the labor force	1,291	1,256	35	2.7

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

NOTE: Data relate to primary families with at least one member in the labor force for 27 weeks or more.

Table 7. Unrelated individuals in the labor force for 27 weeks or more: Poverty status by age, sex, race, Hispanic origin, and living arrangement, 1997

(Numbers in thousands)

Characteristic	Total	At or above poverty level	Below poverty level	Poverty rate ¹
Age and sex				
Total unrelated individuals	26,158	23,625	2,534	9.7
16 to 19 years	561	286	275	49.1
20 to 24 years	3,457	2,780	677	19.6
25 to 64 years	21,053	19,537	1,516	7.2
65 years and older	1,087	1,022	65	6.0
Men	14,519	13,285	1,234	8.5
Women	11,639	10,340	1,299	11.2
Race and Hispanic origin				
White	21,893	19,884	2,009	9.2
Men	12,113	11,184	929	7.7
Women	9,780	8,700	1,079	11.0
Black	3,292	2,877	416	12.6
Men	1,849	1,609	239	13.0
Women	1,444	1,268	176	12.2
Hispanic origin	2,031	1,696	335	16.5
Men	1,349	1,157	192	14.2
Women	682	539	143	21.0
Living arrangement				
Living alone	14,014	13,091	923	6.6
Living with others	12,144	10,534	1,611	13.3

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

NOTE: Detail for race and Hispanic-origin groups will not sum to totals

because data for the "other races" group are not presented and Hispanics are included in both the white and black population groups.

Table 8. Persons in the labor force for 27 weeks or more: Poverty status and labor market problems of full-time wage and salary workers, 1997

(Numbers in thousands)

Poverty status and labor market problems	Total	At or above poverty level	Below poverty level	Poverty rate ¹
Total, full-time wage and salary workers	100,313	96,617	3,696	3.7
No unemployment, involuntary part-time employment, or low earnings ²	80,453	79,950	502	0.6
Unemployment only	5,626	5,246	380	6.8
Involuntary part-time employment only	2,317	2,260	58	2.5
Low earnings only	7,933	6,295	1,638	20.7
Unemployment and involuntary part-time employment	1,020	936	84	8.2
Unemployment and low earnings	1,624	994	630	38.8
Involuntary part-time employment and low earnings	764	589	176	23.0
Unemployment, involuntary part-time employment, and low earnings	576	348	228	39.6

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

² The low earnings threshold in 1997 was \$236.23 per week.
NOTE: Data refer to persons 16 years and over.