

Information about Urban and Rural Poverty Areas

The **Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act of 2000**, P.L.106-402, includes two references to “urban and rural poverty areas” in SUBTITLE B--FEDERAL ASSISTANCE TO STATE DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES COUNCILS. The references are:

42 USC 15024 SEC. 124(C)(5)(E) State Plan

(E) URBAN AND RURAL POVERTY AREAS. -The plan shall provide assurances that special financial and technical assistance will be given to organizations that provide community services, individualized supports, and other forms of assistance to individuals with developmental disabilities who live in areas designated as urban or rural poverty areas

42 USC 15026 SEC. 126. FEDERAL AND NON-FEDERAL SHARE

(a) AGGREGATE COST.

(2) URBAN OR RURAL POVERTY AREAS. -In the case of projects whose activities or products target individuals with developmental disabilities who live in urban or rural poverty areas, as determined by the Secretary, the Federal share of the cost of all such projects may not be more than 90 percent of the aggregate necessary cost of such projects, as determined by the Secretary.

Definition of Poverty

In August 1969, the U.S. Bureau of the Budget (the predecessor of the U.S. Office of Management and Budget) designated the Census Bureau poverty thresholds as the federal government’s official statistical definition of poverty. *

According to Bureau of the Census Statistical Brief/95-13, in 1990, more than 1 in 5 Americans – or 52 million – lived in a “poverty area.” Poverty areas are census tracts or block numbering areas (BNAs) where at least 20 percent of residents were poor in 1989. Census tracts are small, statistical subdivisions of a county (or statistically equivalent entity). They usually have between 2,500 and 8,000 residents and do not cross county boundaries. All metropolitan counties are subdivided into census tracts. Just over two-thirds of poverty area residents lived in a metropolitan area.

In many nonmetropolitan counties, however, local census committees have not established census tracts. Such counties are instead subdivided into block numbering areas (BNA’s), which are comparable to census tracts in population.

Most residents of poverty areas are not poor. Poverty areas have high concentrations of poor persons. But that does not mean that everyone living in them is poor. In fact, most the Nation’s poverty area residents (69 percent) were above the poverty line in 1989.

State Data Center Program

In addition, ADD Information Memorandum -93-6 issued 8/12/93 states, “For purposes of the Act, urban and rural poverty areas in a State are those that meet the definition of the United States Census Bureau for these areas. You may use the information provided by the data centers in your State to identify the location of these poverty areas. To assist you in contacting a data center, we have attached [linked to] the most current listing of the State Data Centers.”

The SDCs are official sources of demographic, economic, and social statistics produced by the Census Bureau. These data are made available by the Census Bureau to the SDCs at no charge (fees may be

charged for customized products). The SDCs make these data accessible to state, regional, local, and tribal governments, and non-governmental data users at no charge or on a cost-recovery or reimbursable basis as appropriate.

The SDCs also provide training and technical assistance in accessing and using Census Bureau data for research, administration, planning, and decision making by local governments, the business community, and other interested data users.

The link for the SDCs is: <https://www.census.gov/about/partners/sdc.html>

Census Bureau Information by County

The Census Bureau provides information on the percent of persons in poverty by county/state. Following is a step-by-step process to get that information.

1. Go to <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/saipe.html>
2. Click on “State and County Estimates for 2020’.
3. Download the excel file “US and All States and Counties”.

Column “H” **Percent** shows the percentage of all people in poverty by county. The Urban and Rural poverty threshold is 20% or greater to qualify as a urban or rural poverty area for reduced match purposes.

However, as stated earlier, please keep in mind that metropolitan counties are divided into census tracts – small, statistical subdivisions of a county; and many non-metropolitan counties, are subdivided into block numbering areas (BNA’s), which are comparable to census tracts in population. Specific information about these tracts can be obtained from the SDCs (see above), or from the Bureau of the Census publication, “The Poverty Areas in the United States, Subject Summary Tape File (SSTF 17).” SSTF 17 provides statistics for the entire Nation, as well as each region, division, state, county, metro area, and metro area central city. The file also allows one to identify which census tracts in each of these geographic entities were poverty areas (i.e., at least 20 percent of resident’s poor), which were extreme poverty areas (i.e., 40 percent or more poor), and which were neither.

****The Official Federal Statistical Definition of Poverty***

In August 1969, the U.S. Bureau of the Budget (the predecessor of the U.S. Office of Management and Budget) designated the Census Bureau poverty thresholds as the federal government’s official statistical definition of poverty. The latest version of the document embodying this designation is Statistical Policy Directive No. 14 (“Definition of Poverty for Statistical Purposes”). The text of this directive may be found on p. 35 of the Commerce Department’s *Statistical Policy Handbook* (1978); in the *Federal Register*, Vol. 43, No. 87, May 4, 1978, p. 19269; and on the [Census Bureau’s Poverty Measurement Website](#).

Source: iTACC (Information and Technical Assistance Center for Councils on Developmental Disabilities): Financial Information for Councils on Developmental Disabilities, Revised June 2023; pages 40-43