



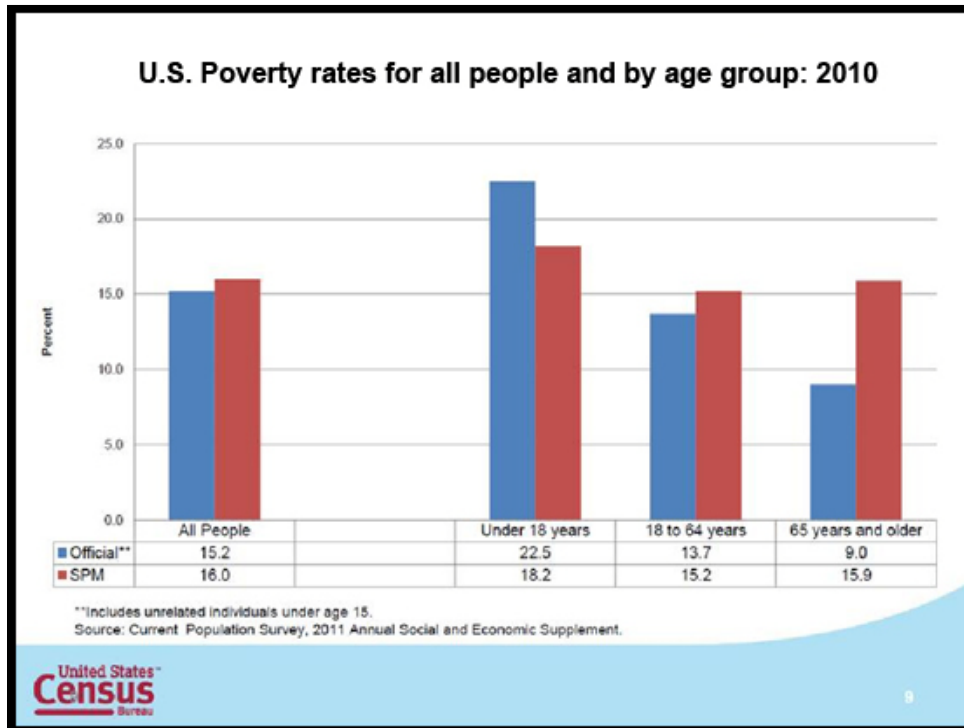
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The Census Bureau Releases Supplemental Poverty Measure for U.S.

(AUSTIN, Texas) — The Census Bureau released new national-level poverty data today. The [Supplemental Poverty Measure \(SPM\)](#) is a “work in progress” experimental measure intended to provide a more complete picture of what contributes to poverty by attempting to correct for long-argued limitations of the Official Poverty Measure. The Supplemental Poverty Measure differs from the Official Poverty Measure in many ways, such as including a broader range of expenses necessary to make ends meet (e.g., food, shelter, medical expenses, payroll taxes) and accounting for a broader range of resources such as income from tax credits and federal in-kind benefits (e.g., food stamps and housing subsidies).

The 2010 Supplemental Poverty Measure puts poverty at 16 percent compared to 15.2 percent for the Official Measure. Although the rates across ages may not seem that far apart, the Supplemental Poverty Measure adds about three million people to the poverty ranks compared to the official measure. The official poverty measure doesn’t take into account some things that help kids, nor does it take in to account other expenses that significantly impact seniors. When adjusting for these factors, the new measure shows poverty among the elderly to be more of a problem, primarily due to expenses such as rising out-of-pocket medical costs. In contrast, Supplemental Poverty Measure’s rate for children is lower, largely due to the success of nutrition, EITC, and child care subsidy programs that protect children from poverty.



The benefit of including the supplemental measure in the national poverty conversation is that it shows both the impact of rising costs such as medical out of pocket expenses (particularly for seniors) and the success of our safety net programs (e.g., food stamps and housing subsidies) in helping lift families out of poverty (particularly for children). For more information, see Figure 3 in the [Census Bureau's report](#).

As policymakers debate how to reduce the federal deficit and close Texas' budget gap, it is essential that they keep in mind how many people depend on these programs to protect them from poverty.

It is important to note, however, that the supplemental measure is considered an “experimental measure” and will not replace the official poverty measure and will not be used to determine eligibility for federal programs. For now, it is a tool that provides context to the national conversation about family deprivation.

Although today's release does not include data for states or smaller geographies, you can visit www.cppp.org/fbe to view our research on what it takes to get by in each of Texas' 25 Metro Areas. For more on the Official Poverty Measure, see:

- CPPP's analysis of Current Population Survey for National and State data:
<http://www.cppp.org/research.php?aid=1134&cid=8>
- CPPP analysis of American Community Survey for State and Metro data at:
<http://www.cppp.org/research.php?aid=1137&cid=2>
- The differences between the ACS and CPS at: http://www.cppp.org/files/CPS_ACS_2011.pdf

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About CPPP 

The Center for Public Policy Priorities (CPPPP) is a nonpartisan, nonprofit policy institute committed to improving public policies to better the economic and social conditions of low- and moderate-income Texans. You can learn more about CPPP at www.cppp.org.

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