

October 2, 2009

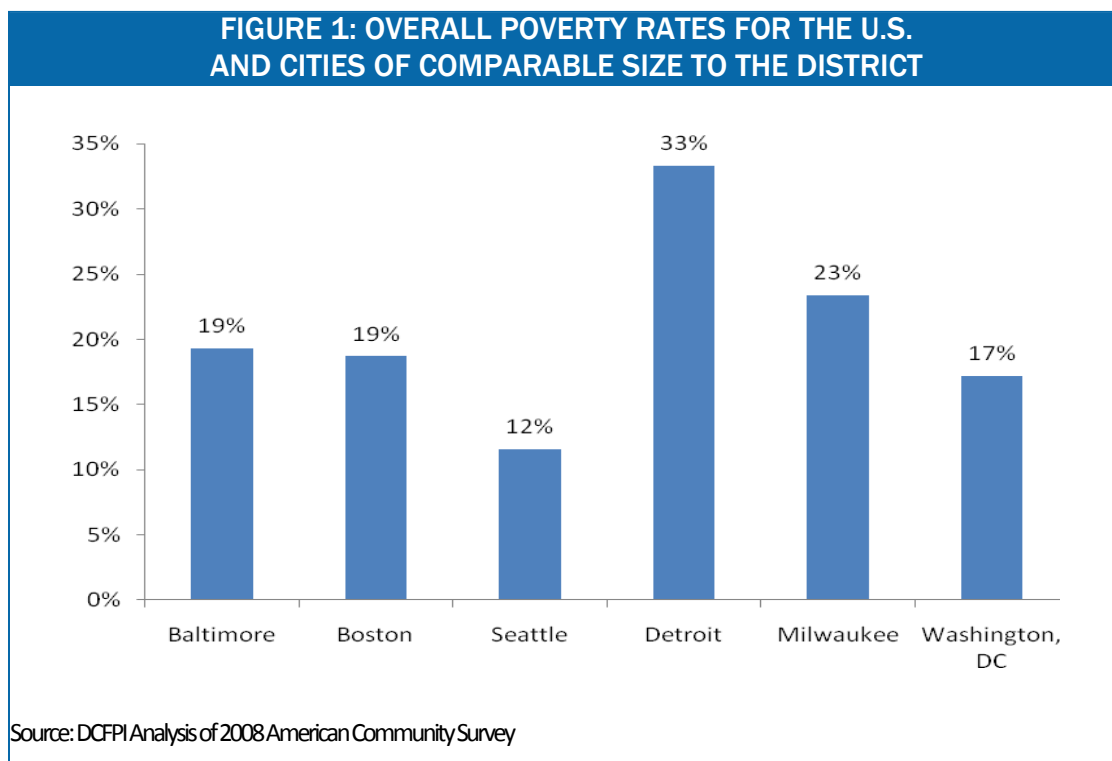
**CENSUS DATA SHOW NO MAJOR CHANGES IN DC POVERTY IN 2008**  
**Yet Figures Reveal Large Disparities in Poverty between Different Population Groups**

Poverty rates remained steady in the District from 2007 to 2008, according to annual U.S. Census data released on September 29.

The overall poverty rate among District residents rose slightly, from 16.4 percent in 2007 to 17.2 percent in 2008, according to the Census Bureau’s annual American Community Survey. However, the increase is not statistically significant due to the survey’s margin of error. According to the data, between 89,000 and 104,000 District residents lived under the federal poverty line in 2008, which was \$21,200 for a four-person family with two children.

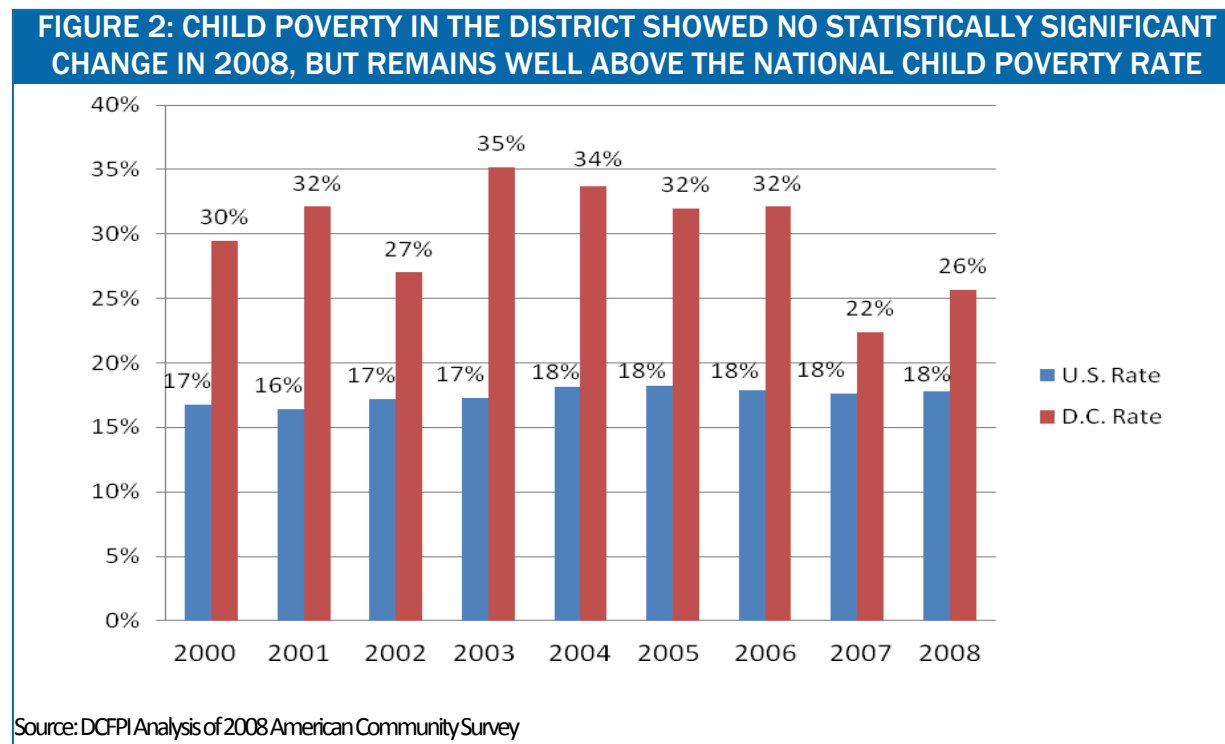
The new survey ended in December 2008, reflecting only the initial months of the national economic downturn. Given the steep increase in unemployment and in public assistance rolls in DC since January, it is likely that poverty has worsened in 2009.

The District remained above the national poverty rate of 13.2 percent in 2008. DC’s 17 percent poverty rate is lower than in some other similarly-sized cities that have been hit hard by the downturn — such as Detroit and Milwaukee. Poverty in DC is similar to poverty in Boston and Baltimore, while higher than some other cities such as Seattle.



Other findings from the new Census Bureau data include:

- **More than one in four DC children lives in poverty.** The change in child poverty between 2007 and 2008 was not statistically significant. The data shows, however, that the child poverty rate in the District dropped by a statistically significant amount between 2006 and 2008, from 32 percent to 26 percent. Despite the decrease, the child poverty rate in the District continues to remain well above the national child poverty rate of 18 percent.



- **Poverty levels vary greatly across different areas of the District.** The U.S. Census Bureau divides DC into five different areas known as Public Use Microdata Areas or PUMAs. In 2008, poverty rates in the District ranged from a high of 27 percent in PUMA 4 (mostly Wards 7 and 8) to a low of 6 percent in PUMA 1 (mostly Ward 3 and some areas of Wards 2 and 4). None of the District’s PUMAs saw a significant increase or decrease in its poverty rate from 2007 to 2008. PUMA 1 was the only area to experience a significant decrease in its poverty rate between 2006 and 2008, from 9 percent in 2006 to 6 percent in 2008. (see Map)

**FIGURE 3: CHANGE IN POVERTY RATES BY AREA OF THE DISTRICT**

	Wards Included	Poverty Rate 2006	Poverty Rate 2008
PUMA 1	Mostly Ward 3, some Ward 2 & 4	9%	6%*
PUMA 2	Mostly Ward 4, some Ward 1	13%	12%
PUMA 3	Ward 5 and Ward 6	14%	16%
PUMA 4	Mostly Ward 7 and Ward 8	32%	27%
PUMA 5	Mostly Ward 2, some Ward 1 & 6	24%	20%

Source: DCFPI Analysis of 2008 and 2006 American Community Survey, \* 2006-2008 change significant at the 90% level or greater



- **Black residents are three times as likely as white residents to be poor:**—When poverty is examined by race and ethnicity, no group saw significant increases or decreases in the poverty rate from 2007-2008. Nevertheless, the variation in the poverty rate by race and ethnicity in the District in 2008 remains high. Poverty among Black residents is 24 percent, more than three times as high as for white, non-Hispanic households (7 percent), and the 18 percent poverty rate among Hispanic households is more than double the rate for white, non-Hispanic households.

The Census data show that poverty among Black DC households dropped by a statistically significant amount between 2006 and 2008, from 27 percent to 24 percent. Among white, non-Hispanic, households there was also a statistically significant drop in poverty of just over 1 percent, from 8 percent to 7 percent. Hispanic households have not seen a statistically significant change in poverty rates from 2006. When comparisons are made back to 2000, poverty has fallen by a statistically significant amount among white residents but not among Black or Hispanic residents.

- **One-third of DC's lowest-educated residents live in poverty.** The poverty rate among residents with different education levels also did not change significantly from 2007 to 2008 or from 2006 to 2008, yet large disparities in poverty levels remained in 2008. One-third of DC adults with less than a high school diploma lived below the poverty line in 2008, compared with 5 percent of residents with a Bachelors degree or higher.
- **One in 10 DC residents is extremely poor.** The number of residents who live in extreme poverty, or below 50 percent of the poverty line (\$10,600 for a four person family with two-children), totaled 54,900 — or nearly 10 percent of DC's population — in 2008. This figure represents an increase from 2007, but the change was not statistically significant.

# District of Columbia Public Use Microdata Areas (PUMA) (2000) and Wards (2002)



 Ward Boundaries  
 PUMA Boundaries

Source: NeighborhoodInfo DC  
Created: July 25, 2008

