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Counting the Poor with Competing Poverty Measures

By Diana M. Pearce

Poverty measurement is not just a technical or methodological issue, but reflects choices made in response to specific circumstances, opportunities and even politics. For both researchers and those working in applied settings, there are now three quite different measures and approaches for assessing the levels, character and trends in poverty. Why and how these came about reveals the underlying understanding of both what poverty is, and how best to alleviate it. By better understanding these differences, the sociologist can better understand both how and why a particular measure is employed by a given entity, but also what the implications are of such choices for the resulting understanding of poverty, its dynamics and its mitigation.

Origins of the Federal Poverty Measure

Almost a half-century ago, Mollie Orshansky (1965) developed what has become the official poverty measure. Because the measure being used by the President's Council of Economic Advisers did not take into account family size or composition, she felt that it underestimated the extent of poverty among children (Fisher, 1992). The measure she devised did so, using the available data and nutrition standards to set the level such that families could meet their needs adequately. This measure is still the official federal poverty measure, updated today only for inflation (more on that later).

Since its inception, the official federal poverty measure has been widely used in poverty research to track trends and analyze the characteristics of those in poverty (Iceland, 2006). Over Orshansky's objections, however, it also began to be used as a policy tool in government anti-poverty programs to determine eligibility and to allocate government resources to people

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and communities in need. Gabe (2007) estimates that it is used in 82 federal programs, not counting state or local programs, and most recently it was incorporated in the Affordable Care Act (where a range is defined in which families will be eligible for subsidies to meet their health care premiums.)

At the same time, over the decades, it became the subject of many critiques (Ruggles, 1990; Blank, 2008). The first and major critique was that the “line” (meaning the thresholds) over time has become too low. Even Orshansky herself tried to raise the line by changing the food multiplier, reflecting more recent consumer expenditure data that showed that food had fallen to 28% of the average family expenditures, rather than 33%, but this change was rejected (Fisher, 1992), leaving the multiplier of food times three unchanged (except for inflation). As a result, the poverty line, as a percentage of median income, gradually fell from 50% of median family/household income in 1965 to 28% by 2009.

Besides being too low, there were other problems as well that revealed the flaws of the “frozen” methodology. First, the federal measure did not incorporate other needs, as family demographics and labor force pattern changed, as costs increased or emerged (health care, child care, taxes, and so forth) (Ruggles, 1990). Second, the measure was the same no matter where one lived, thus ignoring that the cost of living varied substantially, and these differences widened over time. Finally, the resource measure did not take account of near cash or in kind benefits, such as food stamps or housing assistance, that improved well-being, but were not reflected in the poverty count that resulted.

Not just academics and researchers critiqued the poverty measure, but those using it to as a policy tool to determine eligibility or allocate program resources found it was inadequate.

Thus programs developed a number of “workarounds”. These included:

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1. Using multiples of the federal poverty line, to make up for it being too low. These multiples range from SNAP (food stamps) (using 130% of the federal poverty measure (commonly called the Federal Poverty Line, or FPL, by programs), WIC using 185%, to 200% of the FPL used by the foundation-funded Working Poor Families Project.¹
2. To incorporate geographic differences in prices, programs allow states to use different multiples of the FPL in determining eligibility; for example, for the State CHIP (Child Health Insurance Program), with eligibility rising to 400% of the FPL. That is, in some states, states determined that prices are high enough that families have insufficient resources, once they have secured the basics (food, housing, etc.) to be able to pay market rate for health insurance for their children with incomes less than up to 400% of the FPL.
3. Other programs simply gave up on using the FPL as a measure of need, and instead used a percentage of state median income (child care in some states) or percentages of area median income (for federal housing assistance, on the assumption that incomes are a proxy measure of variation in local prices).

Nevertheless, these work-arounds were and are crude and at best an awkward approach to measuring or assessing poverty, even in multiples or with geographically-based adjustments. Whether one is qualifying households for assistance, or assessing the extent of “working poverty”, there is a conceptual difficulty in categorizing people as poor, as in need, when their income is well above the poverty line, as happens when using 200%, 300% or even 400% of the poverty measure.

Advocates have also developed alternatives to the FPL. One example is that of the “housing wage”. Created in 1989 by Cushing Dolbeare, the “housing wage” uses the formula, based on housing assistance policy, that households should not pay more than 30% of their

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income for housing (DeCrappeo et al, 2010). If the cost of their housing exceeded that percentage, their ability to meet their other needs would be compromised. Although this sounds like the “single cost” approach of the FPL, because it is based on the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)’s Fair Market Rents (FMRs), it is varied geographically as well as by family size. Usually set at the 40th percentile, the FMRs are calculated for over 400 housing market areas. By determining what percentage of renters cannot afford a modest housing unit without exceeding 30% of their income, this metric determines how many renter households find housing “Out of Reach”, the title of the report using this metric issued annually by the National Low Income Housing Coalition. Joassart-Marcelli (2005) used the NLIHC as well as variations on the FPL, the SPM, and other approaches to analyze working poverty in southern California.

The National Academy of Sciences (NAS)/Supplemental Poverty Measure (SPM)

These critiques and problems with the FPL culminated in the Congressionally mandated report from the National Academy of Sciences entitled *Measuring Poverty* (Citro and Michael, 1995) which summarized research and made a series of recommendations for revising the federal poverty measure (Focus, 1995). These recommendations were applied by Census Bureau researchers (e.g., Garner and Short, 2008) as “experimental” measures and by others as well (often as the “National Academy of Sciences” measure, e.g., see Mayor’s Office [NYC], 2008), and were also the subject of proposed legislation, e.g., the Measuring American Poverty Act of 2009. Most recently, in 2010, the Obama Administration by Executive Order implemented the Supplemental Poverty Measure, based largely on the recommendations of the National Academy of Sciences 1995 report (Interagency Technical Working Group, 2010).

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The first official statistics using the new measure and methodology were released in the fall of 2011 (US Census Bureau, 2011).

The Supplemental Poverty Measure (SPM) addresses many of the critiques of the official measure. Rather than being based on a single budget component (food) and assuming an unchanging ratio to other items, as with the current federal poverty measure, it is based on the prices of four “core essentials”: housing, utilities, and clothing as well as food – the essentials for survival (plus a little extra for miscellaneous). These prices are calculated based on expenditures of the modal household at the 33rd percentile, based on a moving average over the last five years (thus smoothing year to year spikes in particular prices). By basing it on expenditures, the SPM will rise (or fall) as living standards rise (or fall), thus making the SPM a relative (rather than absolute) measure, and preventing it from falling further and further behind as has happened with the federal poverty measure. In addition, it is varied by geography in part (for the housing portion of the measure). And, perhaps most important for policymakers, it uses a broadened resource measure to assess the impact of receiving cash (such as tax credits) and near cash assistance (such as “food stamps”, now called Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, or SNAP).

The SPM also attempts to assess the impact of other items not anticipated in the original measure, such as health care, as well as “new” or greatly expanded costs associated with employment, including child care, transportation, and taxes. However, rather than being included in the threshold, *actual* expenditures in these areas (except taxes) are deducted from the resource side of the equation. This assumes that the amount of actual expenditure is an accurate indicator of the amount required to meet the need. However, less outlay up front on these items may reflect *inadequate resources* rather than less *need*. As a result, this privileges

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some needs (those in the threshold, such as housing) over others, such as child care.

Moreover, this reveals an underlying assumption about what SPM-defined “poverty” is, i.e., that is one focuses on survival needs, rather than a broader definition that would consider other needs equally important. Put another way, employing this approach misses the poverty of those who are able to meet core essentials such as housing but who must forgo health care or child care because of limited resources.

Many have applauded the SPM as having created a more accurate and nuanced measure of poverty. Without question, counting resources more comprehensively, including the value of tax credits, non-cash assistance, and homeownership without a mortgage, and at the same time allowing for the deduction of necessary expenses, results in a more accurate counting of the poor. In addition, one of the most important impacts of the SPM is that it has broken the logjam of two decades of debate, proposals, reports and research by introducing at the federal level an alternative approach to measuring poverty. This has opened up for debate the methodology and measures used to assess poverty.

At the same time, there are still two unresolved issues not addressed by the SPM: it is still “too low”, and it does not yield a usable tool to measure individual or household poverty, i.e., usable thresholds.

The SPM, overall, results in a count of the poor that is only slightly above the numbers produced by the official poverty measure. This is not an accident: the original report intended that the initial count of the poor using the SPM be roughly similar to that of the federal poverty measure for the same year. By doing so, analysis would reveal how the changes in the methodology, such as broadening the resource measure, would change *who* is counted as poor.

In addition, setting it at approximately the current level would avoid having to explain how

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suddenly the number of “poor” increased, opening up the question of whether the resulting sudden increase reflected changed methodology, or a change in the “definition” of poverty.

Given this reality, the SPM does not close the gap that developed over the last half century between what people *mean* by poverty and what is now being *measured*. Indeed, it may be most accurate to describe the SPM (as well as the current FPL) as measuring “deprivation”, not poverty. That is, those who are designated as “in poverty” by the SPM lack sufficient resources to meet the core essentials for survival – food on the table, a roof over one’s head, lights and heat, and clothing on one’s back. However, for most people, being poor means something like “not having enough to make ends meet”, to meet one’s basic needs, and the latter include not just survival needs, but also health care, and the means to earn one’s income – transportation, child care, etc.

The other issue unresolved by the SPM is that, unlike the FPL, it does not yield usable thresholds for use in applied settings (such as eligibility determination and resource allocation). The NAS report and subsequent work on the development of the SPM has focused on improving the “macro” measure of poverty that will result in an improved poverty measure that yields a more accurate count of the poor, and data that allows analysis which reveals the extent, characteristics, and trends of poverty. For the practitioner or policymaker however, the desire for an improved “poverty measure” is for a policy tool that measures poverty of an individual or household, and refers primarily to thresholds. For the latter group, poverty measures or measurement is a “micro” problem as it is about assessing who is poor, or what programs, occupations, or policies move persons above or out of poverty.

The SPM addresses the need for a better “macro” measure of poverty, but leaves untouched the need for an improved “micro” measure as wellⁱⁱ. While the SPM does have

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thresholds, they are not equivalent to the FPL thresholds, for the methodology is different. To measure poverty with the FPL, gross income of the individual or household is compared to the appropriate threshold. With the SPM, one needs to know not only gross income, but also certain expenses, housing tenure status, etc., before being able to determine poverty status; thus the SPM thresholds are only an intermediate step in determining poverty status, and thus cannot be used in the same way as the FPL thresholds. In particular, they cannot be used to determine allocation of resources in anti-poverty programs, for one cannot both measure poverty that includes the impact of anti-poverty programs at the same time as determining the need extant in that population.

Basic Needs Budgets: Focus on the Self-Sufficiency Standard

A substantially different approach to addressing the issues raised by critiques of the FPL in the 21st century sought to address its limitations, not by using multiples or surrogates or workarounds, but by starting from scratch and building thresholds “from the ground up”. Of course, building budgets based on a list of basic needs, sometimes long and sometimes short, has a long history (Johnson, Rogers & Tan, 2001; Bergman and Renwick, 1993). More recent versions, however, are able to take advantage of the much more extensive data not available even two decades ago, and that is moreover, timely, geographically (and where appropriate, age) specific.

The most extensive and developed of these is the Self-Sufficiency Standard. Although there have been other budgets calculated by individuals, organizations (such as the Economic Policy Institute, see www.epi.org) or states, there are more similarities than differences between these budgets, as noted by Bernstein in his early survey of these budgets (based on a conference; see Brocht, Bernstein and Spade-Aguilar, 2000).

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The Self-Sufficiency Standard has been in continuous existence for over 15 years, and has the most extensive set of thresholds in terms of family types and is the most geographically detailed. Unlike the FPL or the SPM, it was not developed as a measure of poverty, however, but rather as a workforce program performance measure for federal job training programs. At the time, programs were evaluated on the basis of a performance measure of “self-sufficiency” that consisted of wages averaged across all participants. This resulted in reinforcing gender and race-based inequities as the higher wages of white males resulted in “creaming” in order to meet program performance thresholds. The Self-Sufficiency Standard was developed as an individualized metric, reflecting what was required for each participant, given his/her household composition and place of residence, to achieve self-sufficiency.

The resulting performance measure, the Self-Sufficiency Standard, thus calculated what was minimally required for households in which all the adults were employed to meet their basic needs, including employment-related costs, such as transportation, taxes, and child care. To set the minimally adequate level of costs, unlike earlier budgets that used “experts”, for major costs, the Standard is able to use government-determined price estimates, either in terms of standards such as nutrition (USDA food budgets), or what is deemed adequate for assistance (FMRs for housing; child care subsidy levels for child care costs). When publically determined levels of adequacy are not available, as with transportation, then expenditure data is used. Data is as geographically detailed as possible, as well as age specific as appropriate (child care, food, and health care). Only data that is calculated consistently across time and place is used, although as improved data becomes available, these are incorporated into the methodology.ⁱⁱⁱ

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The extent of the need for a basic needs budget approach can be gauged by the widespread adoption and institutionalization of this approach to poverty measurement. The Self-Sufficiency Standard is found in 37 states and the District of Columbia, and almost all the remaining states have a similar (usually simpler, less extensive/detailed in terms of family types and/or geography) basic needs budget/wage standard. Originally designed for use as a performance standard in workforce/welfare settings, the Self-Sufficiency Standard is used by these types of agencies to determine eligibility for services and to allocate training and education resources towards occupations/industries that have self-sufficiency level wages. Moreover, the Standard has become the basis for online calculators which help clients (and policymakers) strategize how to combine benefits, training, and work to move towards self-sufficiency while at the same time stabilizing family's housing, child care, food and other basic needs. As an analytic tool in applied settings, the Standard helps guide client choices and at the same time enables the evaluation of various strategies (training, soft skills, transportation, child care and other services) in terms of their anti-poverty effectiveness.

Like other reforms, including Unemployment Insurance and more recently, welfare reform, the use of the Standard and other basic needs budgets has been primarily at the state level. Even without federal recognition or support, it has become institutionalized, in that states, workforce councils at the state or local level, and other public agencies have built into their budgets ongoing updating and application of the Standard.

How Basic Needs Budgets Challenge Common Understandings of Poverty Rates & Trends

The basic needs budget approach, exemplified by the most extensive of these, the Self-Sufficiency Standard, has found its most widespread use as a policy tool, but like the SPM and the original federal poverty measure (the FPL), it also has begun to be employed as a measure

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of income adequacy. As such, it reveals trends and disparities that challenge commonly held assumptions about the nature and distribution of poverty in the United States. However, because the term “poverty” is associated with the official federal poverty measure (as well as the SPM), and because both of these measures have become lower and lower relative to American living standards over the last half century, in the minds of many “poverty” has become the equivalent of “deprivation”. For this reason, discussion in this section will use more neutral language, i.e., referring to households with incomes which are adequate versus inadequate, sufficient versus insufficient, or most simply, are above or below the threshold, their particular Standard.

Because it is by far the most widespread, most detailed, and been calculated over the longest period of time consistently, we will use the Self-Sufficiency Standard to illustrate the impact on poverty (in its broadest sense, not just deprivation) measurement of using a basic needs budget approach. Below we present findings based on the Standard, using it as a measure of income adequacy (or poverty). As with the common use of the FPL and the SPM, to do so, we have used datasets from the 2000 Census, CPS or ACS data, coding households with their appropriate Standard, given household composition and place of residence, as well as with the FPL, to provide a comparison. Because the Standard is not intended to apply to households headed by elderly or those with work-limiting disabilities, only households headed by non-disabled adults 18-65 are included. (This paper summarizes data analysis found in individual state level reports, where details of methodology and further findings can be found ^{iv}, as well as the basic thresholds themselves; the latter data is publically available at the website, www.selfsufficiencystandard.org .) To anticipate, this analysis will show that (1) Low-income

American households are experiencing a largely hidden “crunch” (Bernstein, 2008) as living

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costs rise faster than not only wages, but faster than official inflation (as measured by the CPI, the Consumer Price Index); (2) Taking into account variations in the cost of living across the United States changes the geographical incidence of inadequate income; (3) The demographics of the incidence of income inadequacy changes: while the burden of income inadequacy, as with the FPL and SPM, falls disproportionately on people of color and/or households maintained by women alone, most households with inadequate income have at least one worker, many of them with substantial work effort, and many with children.

#1. The “crunch”: Charts 1 and 2 depict the gap between the Standard as it changes over time, and what the official CPI-updated Standard would be. That is, the first time the Standard is calculated, there is by definition no gap; when it is updated, the difference between the actual Increase (or decrease) in the Standard and what a CPI-based estimate of price increases is shown (note that taxes and tax credits have been removed from the SSS here). As can be seen, in all but one of the urban counties (Chart 1) and all but one of the rural counties (Chart 2), over the decade a gap between actual expenses and CPI-measured inflation has increased, to as much as \$10,000 (King County). This means that on average, the SSS increases 4.78% more than the regional CPI in the urban counties per year, and 4.55% more per year in the rural counties. There are several possible explanations: prices of basic needs (rent, food, health care) are rising faster than other goods and services included in the CPI but not the SSS, or that the data sources used by the SSS better track living costs than the CPI (Renwick, 1998). Whatever the cause, the Standard documents that the devastating impact of stagnating wages on low-income families is being exacerbated by the hidden costs of fast rising prices.

#2. The geographic distribution of inadequate income. Although the Standard is everywhere, for all family types/composition, higher than the FPL, the ratio varies considerably.

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In Chart 1, the proportion of households with inadequate income (excluding elderly/disabled) is shown for 7 states, and compared with the proportion below the poverty level. As can be seen, the ratio ranges from the number below the Standard being not quite double the proportion below the FPL (1.8) in Mississippi to over three times the FPL percentage (3.3) in California. At the same time, as can be seen here, there is remarkable consistency among five of the states, with about one in five households lacking adequate income for states in the West and Northeast. However, the most striking result is that the rate of income inadequacy is nearly the same for Mississippi as for California. While most poverty analyses place Mississippi among the poorest, if not the poorest of the states, California is not usually seen as equally “poor”. Yet when one “controls” for the actual cost of living, the proportion of households lacking adequate income to minimally meet their basic needs is nearly identical in these two states.

#3. The demographics of inadequate income. In terms of race/ethnicity, as shown in Table 3, we find that rates of poverty/income inadequacy are higher for people of color, particular Hispanics and African Americans. But which measure used makes a difference: using the FPL, we see that the poverty rates of these two groups are very similar, within two percentage points, in four of the states, averaging 18.5% versus 18.8% overall. In contrast, using the Self-Sufficiency Standard, Latino households have rates of income inadequacy that are 8 to 12 percentages higher than African American households in every state except Mississippi. This is likely driven by the fact that Latino households are younger and more likely to have children in them. In addition, although one would expect that higher thresholds would dilute racial differences, the racial gap increases with the Standard: the Latino and African American poverty rate across these seven states average about 12 percentage points higher than the white poverty rate (5.8%), but African Americans have income inadequacy rates that are 21

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percentage points higher while for Latinos, the rate is 31 percentage points higher than whites.

In sum, almost 4 out of 10 African American, and almost half of Latino non-elderly non-disabled households lack adequate income to meet their basic needs in these seven states.

How much of this is due to lack of workers/inadequate employment? In Table 4, the incidence of poverty (FPL) and income inadequacy (SSS) is shown for households with children by household type (married couple and single father households versus single mother households) and by number of workers and presence of at least one full-time year-round worker. Overall, across all the states shown, almost one-third of households with children lack adequate income. Although having two (or more) workers lowers this rate, at least for married couple and single father households, even having a full-time year-round worker leaves over a third of these households with inadequate income, and among single mother households, having a full-time year-round worker leaves over half the households on average with inadequate income.

These trends are in spite of the fact that among all households with inadequate income, the vast majority have at least one worker, ranging from 80-85% in each state, about half of whom are full time workers (data not shown). Essentially, work effort does not differ substantially between those above and below the Standard. Wages, however, do differ substantially. That is, the burden of income insufficiency has shifted to those in the workforce, many full time and/or with more than one job. Thus, using a measure like the Self-Sufficiency Standard challenges the analyst to examine much more systematically the issue of wage rates and earnings play in explaining poverty/income inadequacy, that is, a more structural analysis (Cauthen and Hsien-Hen, 2003).

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Chart 1.
Annual Difference Between the Actual Self-Sufficiency Standard
and the CPI-Updated Standard Over Time, 1999-2012.
Select Metropolitan Areas
Two Adults, One Preschooler, and One School-age Child

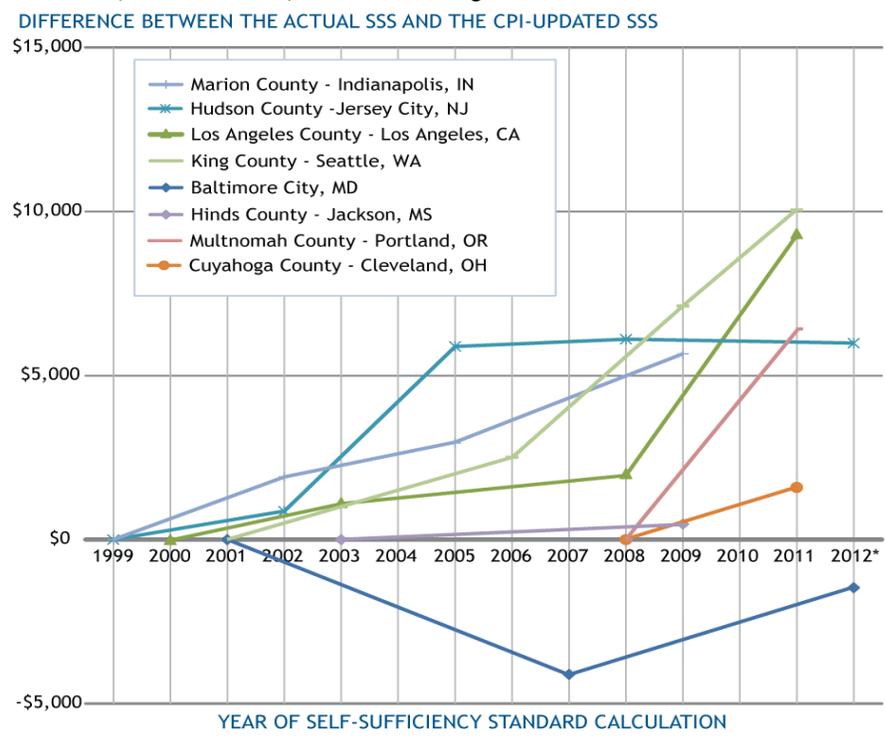
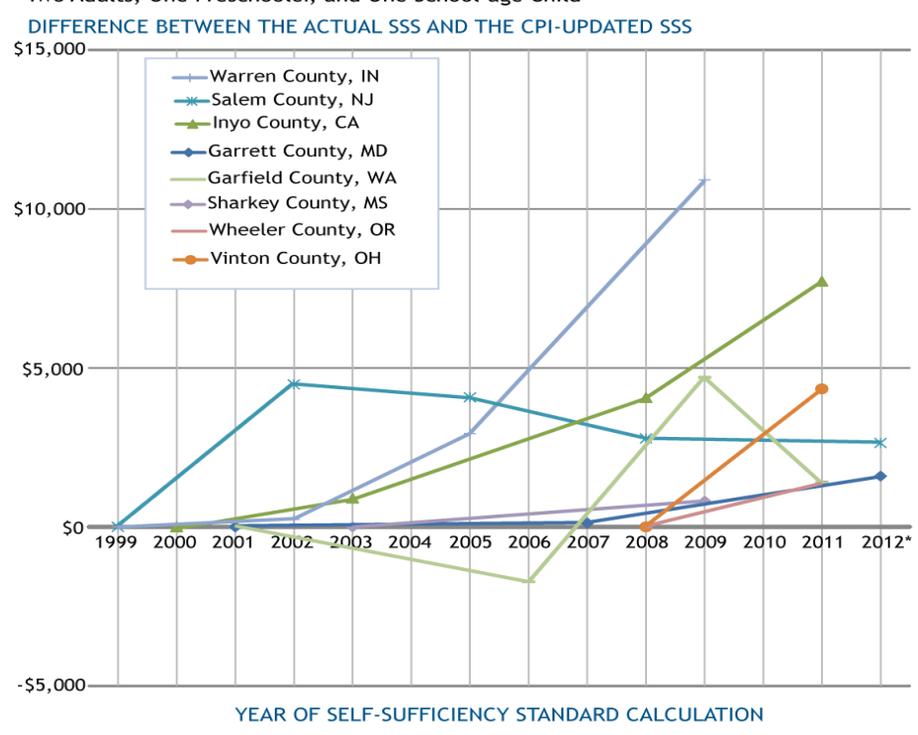


Chart 2.
Annual Difference Between the Actual Self-Sufficiency Standard
and the CPI-Updated Standard Over Time, 1999-2012.
Select Non-Metropolitan Areas
Two Adults, One Preschooler, and One School-age Child



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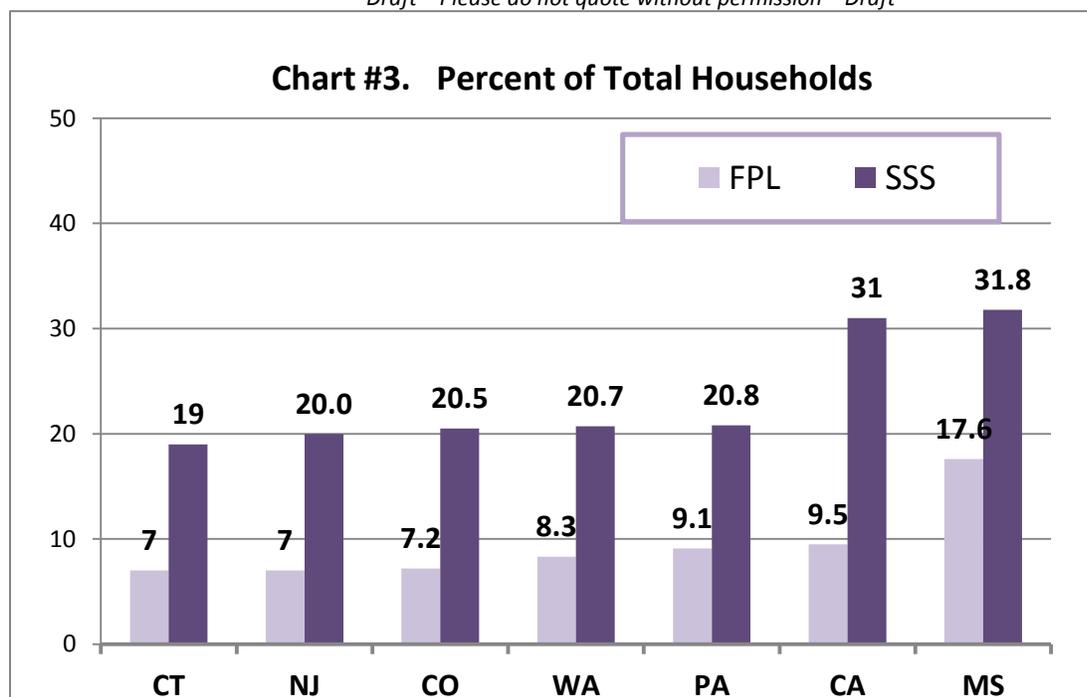


Table 2. Average Annual Percentage Difference of Median of Basic Needs between Standards at Point #1 and Point #2, by metro and non-metro counties across all family types.

		HOUSING	CHILD CARE	FOOD	TRANSPOR TATION	HEALTH CARE	MISC	TAXES	TAX CREDITS
		MED	MED	MED	MED	MED	MED	MED	MED
California (2003-2008)	Metro	4.1%	3.6%	9.2%	0.9%	6.6%	4.8%	9.4%	0.0%
	Non-metro	6.9%	6.1%	6.7%	0.8%	7.3%	6.0%	14.1%	-0.1%
Illinois (2000-2010)	Metro	1.7%	4.0%	2.7%	1.3%	4.6%	2.9%	0.8%	8.1%
	Non-metro	3.8%	2.5%	2.7%	1.4%	4.5%	2.9%	0.1%	10.2%
Montana (2002-2008)	Metro	2.7%	5.7%	5.2%	2.1%	0.8%	3.6%	-0.5%	8.7%
	Non-metro	4.3%	4.5%	4.7%	3.7%	0.8%	3.7%	-0.7%	11.2%
New York (2000-2010)	Metro	3.8%	4.6%	4.5%	4.1%	4.7%	4.2%	3.4%	10.3%
	Non-metro	4.8%	5.0%	4.5%	4.0%	4.6%	4.6%	4.1%	10.3%
Oklahoma (2002-2009)	Metro	1.4%	3.2%	2.7%	2.1%	4.9%	2.7%	-2.4%	13.3%
	Non-metro	5.4%	3.2%	2.8%	3.0%	5.2%	4.0%	-0.7%	12.7%
Pennsylvania (2008-2010)	Metro	3.0%	3.0%	4.1%	4.7%	8.7%	4.3%	4.3%	9.5%
	Non-metro	3.0%	4.0%	4.2%	4.8%	9.2%	4.5%	5.1%	9.5%
Average Metro		2.8%	4.0%	4.7%	2.5%	5.1%	3.8%	2.5%	8.3%
Average Non-Metro		4.7%	4.2%	4.3%	3.0%	5.3%	4.3%	3.7%	9.0%

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Table 3. Percent of Households Below the FPL and SSS in Select States by Race-Ethnicity

	California		Colorado		Connecticut		Mississippi		New Jersey		Pennsylvania		Washington		Total	
	FPL	SSS	FPL	SSS	FPL	SSS	FPL	SSS	FPL	SSS	FPL	SSS	FPL	SSS	FPL	SSS
Total Households	9.5	31	7.2	20.5	7	19	17.6	31.8	7	20	9.1	20.8	8.3	20.7	9.4	23.4
Asian & Pacific Islander	8.7	26	9.6	27.1	11	26	18.6	39.1	6	17	12.4	26.1	12.7	27.8	11.3	27.0
African-American/Black	16	39.2	14.5	34.2	16	39	30.2	49	15	34	22.8	41.2	14.9	34.8	18.5	38.8
Latino/Hispanic	14.5	51.9	16.6	42.7	23	51	20.6	48.2	13	42	24	50.3	19.6	45.9	18.8	47.4
White	5.8	18.4	5.3	16.1	4	14	10.3	21.3	4	13	6.6	16.8	6.8	17.6	6.1	16.7
Native American			13.1	32.9	9	27							16.7	35.4		
Other							12.1	29.7	7	34						
Data Source:	ACS 2007		Census 2000		Census 2000		ACS 2007		ACS 2005		ACS 2007		Census 2000			

Table 4. Percent of Households Below the FPL and SSS in Select States by Household Type and Number of Workers

	California		Colorado		Connecticut		Mississippi		New Jersey		Pennsylvania		Washington		Total	
	FPL	SSS	FPL	SSS	FPL	SSS	FPL	SSS	FPL	SSS	FPL	SSS	FPL	SSS	FPL	SSS
TOTAL HOUSEHOLDS	9.5	31.0	7.2	20.5	6.9	19.0	17.6	31.8	6.8	20.4	9.1	20.8	8.3	20.7	9.3	23.5
HOUSEHOLDS WITH CHILDREN	12.1	42.8	8.2	29.2	7.8	27.4	22.2	38.3	8.0	27.4	11.0	29.1	9.5	28.9	11.3	31.9
Married Couple and Single Father Households	8.2	37.1	5.3	23.9	3.5	19.3	10.3	24.3	3.3	17.9	5.0	20.5	6.2	23.6	6.0	23.8
<i>Two or more workers</i>	3.5	29.7	1.8	16.7	1.0	13.1	4.7	15.9	1.9	12.9	2.2	13.9	2.5	16.1	2.5	16.9
<i>One FTYR worker</i>	12.5	49.7	5.4	32.5	2.5	28.9	16.3	39.9	3.1	27.8	6.1	34.0	4.8	30.9	7.2	34.8
Single Mother Households	26.5	63.5	22	54.1	24.4	58.9	46.8	67.8	23.9	57.3	31.1	58.1	24.2	52.0	28.4	58.8
<i>Two or more workers</i>	10.3	50.0	5.5	32.5	7.1	35.6	21.7	45.8	4.8	36.8	9.2	32.3	5.9	31.2	9.2	37.7
<i>One FTYR worker</i>	14.9	58.3	7.5	47.6	6.3	51.0	31.4	60.0	13.4	54.7	14.5	54.5	6.3	38.6	13.5	52.1
Data Source:	ACS 2007		Census 2000		Census 2000		ACS 2007		ACS 2005		ACS 2007		Census 2000			

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ⁱ Funded by Casey, Charles Steward Mott, Joyce, and Ford foundations, see <http://www.workingpoorfamilies.org/about.html>. For description of indicators used, see http://www.workingpoorfamilies.org/pdfs/Framework_of_Indicators.pdf

ⁱⁱ This is not an accident, but rather reflects the perspective of those who conducted the NAS studies and wrote the report and subsequent papers. Indeed, Rebecca Blank (personal communication) has stated that thresholds were not of concern to her or the committees, and that the focus is on getting an accurate count/measure of the poor.

ⁱⁱⁱ Details of methodology and data sources can be found in the reports for each state, available at www.selfsufficiencystandard.org.

^{iv} Most reports are entitled "Overlooked and Undercounted..." and all can be found at www.selfsufficiencystandard.org; Pearce, 2007a [CO]; Pearce, 2007b [WA]; Pearce, 2007c [CT], Pearce; 2008 [NJ]; Pearce, 2009a [PA]; Pearce, 2009b [MS], Pearce, 2009b [CA].