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Report 1099

A profile of the working poor, 2020

In 2020, 37.2 million people, or 11.4 percent of the nation's population, lived below the official poverty level, according to the U.S. Census Bureau.¹ (See the [technical notes](#) section for examples of poverty levels.) Although the poor were primarily adults who had not participated in the labor force during the year and children, 6.3 million individuals were among the "working poor" in 2020, according to data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS); this measure was essentially unchanged from 2019. The *working poor* are people who spent at least 27 weeks in the labor force (that is, working or looking for work) but whose incomes still fell below the official poverty level. In 2020, the working-poor rate—the ratio of the working poor to all individuals in the labor force for at least 27 weeks—was 4.1 percent, little different from the previous year's figure (4.0 percent). (See [table A](#), [chart 1](#), and [table 1](#).)

Highlights from the 2020 data:

- In 2020, the working-poor rate of people in the labor force for 27 weeks or more was 4.1 percent and was little changed from a year earlier, when it reached a series low (4.0 percent). (See [chart 1](#).)
- Full-time workers remained much less likely to be among the working poor than part-time workers. Among people in the labor force for 27 weeks or more, 2.6 percent of those usually employed full time were classified as working poor, compared with 10.2 percent of part-time workers. (See [table 1](#).)
- Women were more likely than men to be among the working poor (4.6 percent and 3.6 percent, respectively). In addition, Hispanics or Latinos (7.4 percent) and Blacks or African Americans (6.7 percent) continued to be much more likely than Whites (3.7 percent) and Asians (2.6 percent) to be among the working poor.² (See [table 2](#).)
- The likelihood of being classified as working poor diminishes as workers attain higher levels of education. Among those with less than a high school diploma, 13.0 percent of those who were in the labor force for at least 27 weeks were classified as working poor, compared with 1.3 percent of those with a bachelor's degree and higher. (See [table 3](#).)
- Individuals who were employed in service occupations remained more likely to be among the working poor than those employed in other major occupational groups. (See [table 4](#).)
- Among families with at least one member in the labor force for 27 weeks or more, those with children under 18 years old (7.9 percent) were about four times as likely as those without children (1.9 percent) to live in poverty. Families maintained by women (13.1 percent) were more than twice as likely as families maintained by men (5.9 percent) to be living below the poverty level. (See [table 5](#).)



Table A. Poverty status of people and primary families in the labor force for 27 weeks or more, 2008–20
(Numbers in thousands)

Characteristic	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Total in the labor force¹	147,838	147,902	146,859	147,475	148,735	149,483	150,319	152,230	153,364	154,762	156,454	157,769	153,201
In poverty	8,883	10,391	10,512	10,382	10,612	10,450	9,487	8,560	7,572	6,946	6,964	6,318	6,306
Working poor rate	6.0	7.0	7.2	7.0	7.1	7.0	6.3	5.6	4.9	4.5	4.5	4.0	4.1
Unrelated individuals	32,785	33,798	34,099	33,731	34,810	35,061	35,018	35,953	35,789	36,959	37,082	36,805	37,080
In poverty	3,275	3,947	3,947	3,621	3,851	4,141	3,395	3,137	2,792	2,524	2,684	2,445	2,424
Working poor rate	10.0	11.7	11.6	10.7	11.1	11.8	9.7	8.7	7.8	6.8	7.2	6.6	6.5
Primary families²	65,907	65,467	64,931	66,225	66,541	66,462	66,732	67,193	67,628	67,588	68,099	68,318	66,781
In poverty	4,538	5,193	5,269	5,469	5,478	5,137	5,108	4,607	4,082	3,854	3,628	3,232	3,260
Working poor rate	6.9	7.9	8.1	8.3	8.2	7.7	7.7	6.9	6.0	5.7	5.3	4.7	4.9

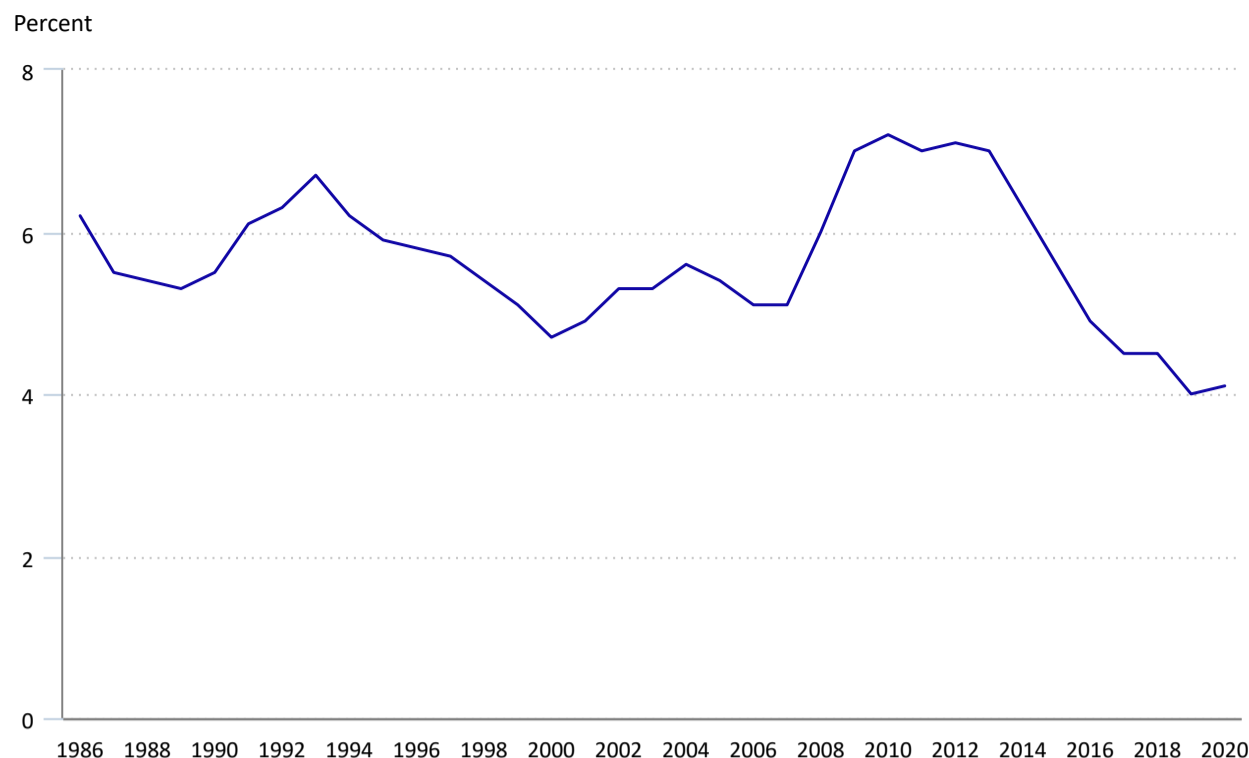
¹ Includes individuals in families, not shown separately.

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

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey (CPS), Annual Social and Economic Supplement (ASEC).

This report presents data on the relationship between labor force activity and poverty status in 2020 for workers and their families. These data were collected in the 2021 Annual Social and Economic Supplement to the Current Population Survey. (For a detailed description of the source of the data and an explanation of the concepts and definitions used in the report, see the [technical notes](#).) Data in this report reflect the impact of the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic on the labor market. The specific income thresholds used to determine people's poverty status vary depending on whether the individuals are living with family members, living alone, or living with nonrelatives. For people living with family members, the poverty threshold is determined by the family's total income; for individuals not living in families, personal income is used as the determinant.

Chart. 1 Working-poor rate of people in the labor force for 27 weeks or more, 1986–2020



Hover over chart to view data.
 Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Annual Social and Economic Supplement (ASEC) of the Current Population Survey (CPS).

[View Chart Data](#)

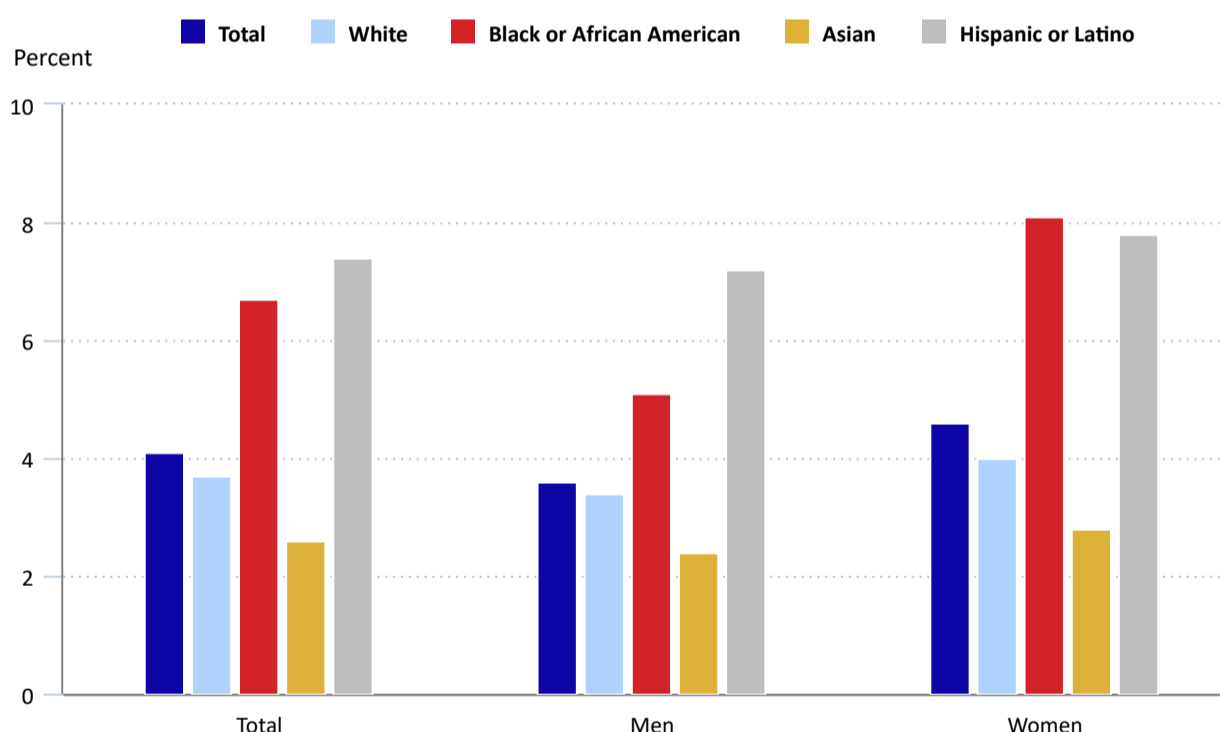


Demographic characteristics

Among those who were in the labor force for 27 weeks or more in 2020, the number of women classified as working poor (3.4 million) was higher than that of men (3.0 million). The working-poor rate also continued to be higher for women (4.6 percent) than for men (3.6 percent). The working-poor rates for both women and men were little different from a year earlier. (See [table 2.](#))

Hispanics and Blacks were much more likely than Whites and Asians to be among the working poor. In 2020, the working-poor rates for Hispanics and Blacks were 7.4 percent and 6.7 percent, respectively, compared with 3.7 percent for Whites and 2.6 percent for Asians. (See [table 2](#) and [chart 2.](#))

Chart 2. Working-poor rates by gender, race, and Hispanic or Latino ethnicity, 2020



Click legend items to change data display. Hover over chart to view data.
 Note: People whose ethnicity is identified as Hispanic or Latino may be of any race.
 Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Annual Social and Economic Supplement (ASEC) of the Current Population Survey (CPS).

[View Chart Data](#)



Among Whites and Blacks, the working-poor rate was higher for women than for men in 2020. The rates for White women and White men who spent at least 27 weeks in the labor force were 4.0 percent and 3.4 percent, respectively. The rate for Black women was 8.1 percent, compared with 5.1 percent for Black men. For Asians and Hispanics, the working-poor rates for women varied slightly from those of men. The working-poor rate for Asian women was 2.8 percent and the rate for men was 2.4 percent. Among Hispanics, the rate for women was 7.8 percent, and the rate for men was 7.2 percent. (See [table 2.](#))

There are disparities in the distribution of poverty among the different race groups by age. Even though the working-poor rate for women overall was little different from the previous year, women ages 20 to 24 saw their rate increase significantly—by 1.4 percentage points to 9.7 percent—over the year. Among race and ethnicity groups, White women ages 20 to 24 saw an increase to 8.8 percent in 2020. Black women ages 25 to 34 experienced a decrease to 12.1 percent over the year. The working-poor rate for Hispanic women ages 25 to 34 saw an increase to 8.8 percent, and Hispanic women ages 35 to 44 saw an increase to 9.6 percent over the year. (See [table 2.](#)) The increase in working-poor rates in some of these age groups coincided with the 2020 recession associated with the COVID-19 pandemic. (More information about the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on the labor market is available at <https://www.bls.gov/cps/effects-of-the-coronavirus-covid-19-pandemic.htm>.)

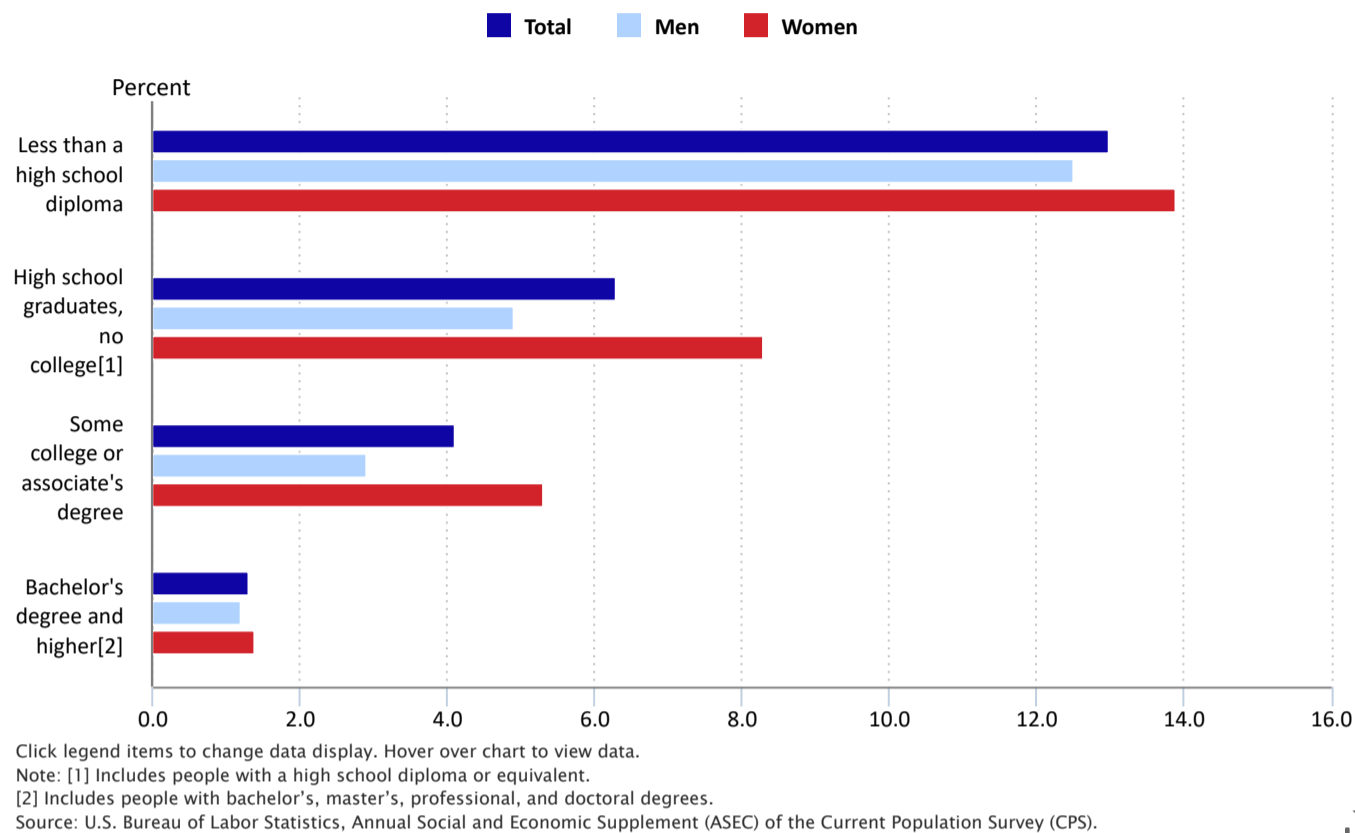
Young workers are more likely to have higher working-poor rates than are workers in older age groups, in part because earnings are lower for young workers and the unemployment rate for young workers is higher. Among youths who were in the labor force for 27 weeks or more, 7.8 percent of 16- to 19-year-olds and 7.9 percent of 20- to 24-year-olds had incomes that fell below the official poverty level in 2020. Those rates were higher than the rates for workers ages 25 to 34 (5.0 percent) and those ages 35 to 44 (4.6 percent). Workers ages 45 to 54, 55 to 64, and 65 and older had lower working-poor rates—3.0 percent, 2.5 percent, and 1.5 percent, respectively—than did those in younger age groups. Younger workers are more likely than older workers to be employed in service occupations, an occupational group hit particularly hard by the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2020, employment declined more sharply among part-time workers because of the

pandemic and younger workers are more likely to be employed part time. (More information about how the pandemic affected people working part time is available at <https://www.bls.gov/covid19/effects-of-covid-19-pandemic-and-response-on-the-employment-situation-news-release.htm#ques17>.) (See [table 2](#).)

Educational attainment

Achieving higher levels of education reduces the incidence of living in poverty. People who complete more years of education usually have greater access to higher paying jobs—such as management, professional, and related occupations—than those with fewer years of education. Among people in the labor force for 27 weeks or more in 2020, those with less than a high school diploma had the highest working-poor rate, at 13.0 percent, while those with a bachelor’s degree and higher had the lowest, at 1.3 percent. For high school graduates and those with some college or associate’s degree, women were more likely than men to be among the working poor. The working-poor rates were little different for men and women with a bachelor’s degree and higher and for those with less than a high school diploma. (See [table 3](#) and [chart 3](#).)

Chart 3. Working-poor rates by gender and educational attainment, 2020



[View Chart Data](#)

For people with a bachelor’s degree and higher, all race and ethnicity groups had similar working-poor rates, ranging from 1.1 percent to 2.1 percent. For those with less than a high school diploma, the working poor rate for Asians (8.7 percent) was lower than the rates for Whites (12.1 percent), Hispanics (14.8 percent), and Blacks (19.4 percent) in 2020.

Occupation

The likelihood of being among the working poor varies widely by occupation. Workers in occupations requiring higher education and characterized by relatively high earnings—such as management, professional, and related occupations—were least likely to be classified as working poor. For example, 1.4 percent of those in management, professional, and related occupations were among the working poor in 2020. By contrast, individuals employed in occupations that typically do not require high levels of education and that are characterized by relatively low earnings were more likely to be among the working poor. For instance, 8.4 percent of workers in service occupations who were in the labor force for at least 27 weeks were classified as working poor in 2020. The 2.0 million working poor employed in service occupations accounted for about one-third of all those classified as working poor. (See [table 4](#).)

For most occupational groups, women had higher working-poor rates than men. However, the rates for men and women were little different in management, professional, and related occupations (1.2 percent and 1.5 percent, respectively). For both men and women, working-poor rates were lowest in this occupational group. The working-poor rate for women in service occupations was 10.1 percent while the rate for men was 6.2 percent.

Families

In 2020, 3.3 million families were living below the poverty level despite having at least one member in the labor force for half the year or more. This figure was little different from the prior year. Among families with only one member in the labor force for at least 27 weeks in 2020, married-couple families were less likely to be living below the poverty level, at 6.3 percent, than were families maintained by women, at 17.5 percent, and families maintained by men, at 8.6 percent. (See [table 5](#).)

Among families with at least one member in the labor force for more than half the year, those with children in the household were much more likely, at 7.9 percent, to live below the poverty level than those without children at 1.9 percent. However, those without children experienced a 0.3-percentage-point increase in their working-poor rate while the rate for those with children changed little over the year. Among families with children under 18, the working-poor rate for those maintained by women (18.9 percent) was higher than the rate for those maintained by men (8.3 percent). Married-couple families with children under 18 had a working-poor rate of 4.4 percent.

Unrelated individuals

The “unrelated individuals” category includes individuals who live by themselves or with others not related to them. Of the 37.1 million unrelated individuals who were in the labor force for half the year or longer, 2.4 million lived below the poverty level in 2020. This measure was essentially unchanged from a year earlier. The working-poor rate for unrelated individuals who were in the labor force for 27 weeks or more was 6.5 percent, little different from last year’s figure. (See [table 6](#).)

Within the group of unrelated individuals, teenagers continued to be most likely to be among the working poor. In 2020, 36.5 percent of teens (ages 16 to 19) who were in the labor force for 27 weeks or more and who lived on their own or with others not related to them lived below the poverty level, little changed from the prior year. In 2020, the working-poor rates for men and women living alone or with nonrelatives were 5.9 percent and 7.3 percent, respectively. The rates for unrelated individuals were higher for Hispanics (10.2 percent) and Blacks (7.9 percent) than for Whites (6.1 percent) and Asians (5.5 percent). (See [table 7](#).)

Of the 2.4 million unrelated individuals considered to be among the working poor in 2020, about 3 out of 5 lived with others. These individuals had a higher working-poor rate (8.3 percent) than individuals who lived alone (4.8 percent). Many unrelated individuals living below the poverty level may live with others out of necessity. By contrast, many of those who live alone do so because they have sufficient income to support themselves. Unrelated individuals’ poverty status,

however, is determined by each person's resources. The pooling of resources and sharing of living expenses may permit some individuals in this category—who are technically classified as poor—to live at a higher standard than they would have if they lived alone.

Labor market problems

As noted earlier, people who usually work full time are less likely to live in poverty than are those who work part time, yet there remains a sizable group of full-time workers who live below the poverty threshold. Among those who participated in the labor force for 27 weeks or more and usually worked in full-time wage and salary jobs, 2.9 million, or 2.4 percent, were classified as working poor in 2020—little different than the 3.0-million figure a year earlier. (See [table 8](#).)

There are three major labor market problems that can hinder a worker's ability to earn an income that is above the poverty threshold: low earnings, periods of unemployment, and involuntary part-time employment.

In 2020, 83 percent of the working poor who usually work full time experienced at least one of the major labor market problems. Low earnings continued to be the most common problem, with 61 percent subject to low earnings, either as the only problem or in combination with other labor market problems. Forty-three percent experienced unemployment as the main labor market problem or in conjunction with other problems, an increase of 16.6 percentage points from the prior year, an effect of the COVID-19 pandemic. Five percent of the working poor experienced all three problems: low earnings, unemployment, and involuntary part-time employment. (See [table 8](#).)

Some 490,000, or 17 percent, of the working poor who usually worked full time did not experience any of the three primary labor market problems, a decline of 114,000 in 2020. Their classification as working poor may be explained by other factors, including short-term employment, some weeks of voluntary part-time work, or a family structure that increases the risk of poverty.

Notes

¹ "Income and Poverty in the United States: 2020," *Current Population Reports*, P60-273 (U.S. Census Bureau, September 2021),

<https://www.census.gov/content/dam/Census/library/publications/2021/demo/p60-273.pdf>.

² People of Hispanic or Latino ethnicity may be of any race.

Statistical Tables

Table 1. People ages 16 and older in the labor force: poverty status and work experience by weeks in the labor force, 2020 (Numbers in thousands)

Poverty status and work experience	Total in labor force	27 weeks or more in labor force	
		Total	50 to 52 weeks
Total			
Total in the labor force	168,591	153,201	136,403
Did not work during the year	2,925	1,554	1,185
Worked during the year	165,666	151,647	135,218
Usual full-time workers	134,019	127,596	116,776
Usual part-time workers	31,648	24,051	18,442
Involuntary part-time workers	7,337	6,035	4,825
Voluntary part-time workers	24,311	18,016	13,617
At or above poverty level			
Total in the labor force	159,699	146,895	131,393
Did not work during the year	1,957	1,061	787
Worked during the year	157,742	145,834	130,606
Usual full-time workers	129,702	124,230	114,004
Usual part-time workers	28,040	21,605	16,601
Involuntary part-time workers	6,103	5,081	4,060
Voluntary part-time workers	21,938	16,524	12,542
Below poverty level			
Total in the labor force	8,892	6,306	5,010
Did not work during the year	968	494	398
Worked during the year	7,924	5,812	4,613
Usual full-time workers	4,317	3,366	2,772
Usual part-time workers	3,607	2,446	1,841
Involuntary part-time workers	1,234	954	765
Voluntary part-time workers	2,373	1,493	1,076
Rate¹			
Total in the labor force	5.3	4.1	3.7

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

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Annual Social and Economic Supplement (ASEC) of the Current Population Survey (CPS).

Poverty status and work experience	Total in labor force	27 weeks or more in labor force	
		Total	50 to 52 weeks
Did not work during the year	33.1	31.8	33.6
Worked during the year	4.8	3.8	3.4
Usual full-time workers	3.2	2.6	2.4
Usual part-time workers	11.4	10.2	10.0
Involuntary part-time workers	16.8	15.8	15.9
Voluntary part-time workers	9.8	8.3	7.9

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

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Annual Social and Economic Supplement (ASEC) of the Current Population Survey (CPS).

Table 2. People in the labor force for 27 weeks or more: poverty status by age, gender, race, and Hispanic or Latino Ethnicity, 2020 (Numbers in thousands)

Age and gender	Total					Below poverty level					Rate ¹				
	Total	White	Black or African American	Asian	Hispanic or Latino	Total	White	Black or African American	Asian	Hispanic or Latino	Total	White	Black or African American	Asian	Hispanic or Latino
Total, 16 years and older	153,201	118,627	19,362	9,793	27,126	6,306	4,398	1,300	253	2,020	4.1	3.7	6.7	2.6	7.4
16 to 19 years	3,498	2,680	527	103	753	274	189	66	-	95	7.8	7.1	12.6	-	12.6
20 to 24 years	12,396	9,327	1,761	586	2,988	982	656	197	59	238	7.9	7.0	11.2	10.1	8.0
25 to 34 years	35,399	26,327	4,992	2,456	7,084	1,778	1,185	436	61	548	5.0	4.5	8.7	2.5	7.7
35 to 44 years	33,189	25,075	4,386	2,532	6,537	1,513	1,098	298	49	614	4.6	4.4	6.8	2.0	9.4
45 to 54 years	31,105	24,284	3,782	2,135	5,459	939	667	173	42	330	3.0	2.7	4.6	2.0	6.0
55 to 64 years	26,987	21,932	2,944	1,508	3,362	663	496	98	30	158	2.5	2.3	3.3	2.0	4.7
65 years and older	10,627	9,002	968	474	943	157	107	30	12	37	1.5	1.2	3.1	2.5	3.9
Men, 16 years and older	81,010	63,979	9,097	5,186	15,514	2,954	2,204	467	124	1,119	3.6	3.4	5.1	2.4	7.2
16 to 19 years	1,662	1,301	204	51	411	122	82	25	-	59	7.3	6.3	12.5	-	14.4
20 to 24 years	6,298	4,795	846	284	1,599	388	258	86	22	103	6.2	5.4	10.1	7.9	6.4
25 to 34 years	18,833	14,230	2,467	1,310	4,081	746	554	130	29	284	4.0	3.9	5.3	2.2	7.0
35 to 44 years	18,016	14,011	2,022	1,372	3,865	770	613	92	32	356	4.3	4.4	4.5	2.3	9.2
45 to 54 years	16,277	12,994	1,705	1,140	3,094	529	388	86	21	206	3.2	3.0	5.0	1.9	6.7
55 to 64 years	13,989	11,487	1,418	787	1,899	324	251	34	17	91	2.3	2.2	2.4	2.2	4.8
65 years and older	5,934	5,162	435	244	565	75	58	14	2	20	1.3	1.1	3.2	0.9	3.6
Women, 16 years and older	72,191	54,648	10,264	4,608	11,613	3,352	2,194	833	129	901	4.6	4.0	8.1	2.8	7.8
16 to 19 years	1,837	1,380	323	52	342	152	107	41	-	36	8.3	7.8	12.6	-	10.5
20 to 24 years	6,098	4,532	915	302	1,389	593	398	111	37	136	9.7	8.8	12.1	12.1	9.8

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

Note: Estimates for the race groups shown (White, Black or African American, and Asian) do not sum to totals because data are not presented for all races. People whose ethnicity is identified as Hispanic or Latino may be of any race. Dash indicates no data or data that do not meet publication criteria (values not shown where base is less than 75,000).
Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey (CPS), Annual Social and Economic Supplement (ASEC).

Age and gender	Total					Below poverty level					Rate ¹				
	Total	White	Black or African American	Asian	Hispanic or Latino	Total	White	Black or African American	Asian	Hispanic or Latino	Total	White	Black or African American	Asian	Hispanic or Latino
25 to 34 years	16,566	12,096	2,525	1,146	3,003	1,033	631	306	32	263	6.2	5.2	12.1	2.8	8.8
35 to 44 years	15,172	11,065	2,364	1,160	2,672	743	485	207	18	258	4.9	4.4	8.7	1.5	9.6
45 to 54 years	14,828	11,290	2,077	995	2,365	411	280	88	21	124	2.8	2.5	4.2	2.1	5.2
55 to 64 years	12,998	10,445	1,526	722	1,463	339	245	64	13	68	2.6	2.4	4.2	1.7	4.6
65 years and older	4,693	3,840	533	230	378	82	49	16	10	17	1.7	1.3	3.1	4.2	4.4

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

Note: Estimates for the race groups shown (White, Black or African American, and Asian) do not sum to totals because data are not presented for all races. People whose ethnicity is identified as Hispanic or Latino may be of any race. Dash indicates no data or data that do not meet publication criteria (values not shown where base is less than 75,000).
Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey (CPS), Annual Social and Economic Supplement (ASEC).

Table 3. People in the labor force for 27 weeks or more: poverty status by educational attainment, race, Hispanic or Latino ethnicity, and gender, 2020 (Numbers in thousands)

Educational attainment, race, and Hispanic or Latino ethnicity	Total	Men	Women	Below poverty level			Rate ¹		
				Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women
Total, 16 years and older	153,201	81,010	72,191	6,306	2,954	3,352	4.1	3.6	4.6
Less than a high school diploma	10,584	6,620	3,964	1,375	826	550	13.0	12.5	13.9
Less than 1 year of high school	3,594	2,433	1,161	518	355	163	14.4	14.6	14.0
1–3 years of high school	5,407	3,196	2,211	639	333	306	11.8	10.4	13.8
4 years of high school, no diploma	1,583	991	592	219	138	81	13.8	13.9	13.7
High school graduates, no college²	38,935	23,291	15,644	2,448	1,147	1,301	6.3	4.9	8.3
Some college or associate's degree	40,673	20,471	20,202	1,664	603	1,061	4.1	2.9	5.3
Some college, no degree	24,157	12,584	11,572	1,094	422	672	4.5	3.4	5.8
Associate's degree	16,516	7,886	8,630	570	181	389	3.5	2.3	4.5
Bachelor's degree and higher³	63,009	30,628	32,381	819	378	441	1.3	1.2	1.4
White, 16 years and older	118,627	63,979	54,648	4,398	2,204	2,194	3.7	3.4	4.0
Less than a high school diploma	8,465	5,411	3,054	1,025	630	395	12.1	11.6	12.9
Less than 1 year of high school	3,048	2,105	942	436	297	138	14.3	14.1	14.7
1–3 years of high school	4,256	2,568	1,688	455	245	210	10.7	9.6	12.4
4 years of high school, no diploma	1,162	738	424	134	87	46	11.5	11.8	10.9
High school graduates, no college²	29,974	18,326	11,649	1,677	852	825	5.6	4.7	7.1
Some college or associate's degree	31,509	16,272	15,237	1,158	454	704	3.7	2.8	4.6
Some college, no degree	18,412	9,831	8,581	744	319	425	4.0	3.2	5.0
Associate's degree	13,097	6,441	6,656	414	135	279	3.2	2.1	4.2
Bachelor's degree and higher³	48,678	23,970	24,708	538	268	270	1.1	1.1	1.1
Black or African American, 16 years and older	19,362	9,097	10,264	1,300	467	833	6.7	5.1	8.1
Less than a high school diploma	1,192	660	532	232	123	109	19.4	18.6	20.5
Less than 1 year of high school	198	113	85	34	21	13	17.1	18.3	15.5
1–3 years of high school	711	375	335	133	59	74	18.8	15.7	22.2
4 years of high school, no diploma	283	172	111	65	43	21	22.8	25.2	19.2
High school graduates, no college²	6,061	3,341	2,721	599	214	385	9.9	6.4	14.2
Some college or associate's degree	5,983	2,661	3,322	342	90	252	5.7	3.4	7.6
Some college, no degree	3,838	1,784	2,054	231	62	169	6.0	3.5	8.2

¹Number below the poverty level as a percent of the total in the labor force for 27 weeks or more.
²Includes people with a high school diploma or equivalent.
³Includes people with bachelor's, master's, professional, and doctoral degrees.

Note: Estimates for the race groups shown (White, Black or African American, and Asian) do not sum to totals because data are not presented for all races. People whose ethnicity is identified as Hispanic or Latino may be of any race. Dash indicates no data or data that do not meet publication criteria (values not shown where base is less than 75,000).
Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey (CPS), Annual Social and Economic Supplement (ASEC).

Educational attainment, race, and Hispanic or Latino ethnicity	Total	Men	Women	Below poverty level			Rate ¹		
				Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women
Associate's degree	2,145	877	1,268	111	28	83	5.2	3.2	6.5
Bachelor's degree and higher ³	6,126	2,435	3,690	126	40	86	2.1	1.6	2.3
Asian, 16 years and older	9,793	5,186	4,608	253	124	129	2.6	2.4	2.8
Less than a high school diploma	378	201	177	33	20	12	8.7	10.2	7.1
Less than 1 year of high school	170	89	81	14	12	2	8.3	13.6	2.3
1–3 years of high school	159	83	76	16	8	8	10.0	10.0	10.0
4 years of high school, no diploma	49	29	20	3	-	3	-	-	-
High school graduates, no college ²	1,369	741	628	42	21	21	3.1	2.8	3.4
Some college or associate's degree	1,459	718	741	62	18	44	4.2	2.5	5.9
Some college, no degree	824	433	391	56	15	42	6.8	3.4	10.7
Associate's degree	635	285	350	5	3	2	0.8	1.2	0.5
Bachelor's degree and higher ³	6,588	3,526	3,062	116	64	52	1.8	1.8	1.7
Hispanic or Latino ethnicity, 16 years and older	27,126	15,514	11,613	2,020	1,119	901	7.4	7.2	7.8
Less than a high school diploma	5,545	3,736	1,809	820	525	295	14.8	14.1	16.3
Less than 1 year of high school	2,697	1,884	813	406	281	125	15.1	14.9	15.4
1–3 years of high school	2,142	1,365	777	302	171	132	14.1	12.5	16.9
4 years of high school, no diploma	707	487	219	112	73	39	15.9	15.0	17.7
High school graduates, no college ²	8,785	5,437	3,348	722	398	323	8.2	7.3	9.7
Some college or associate's degree	6,893	3,474	3,420	359	135	224	5.2	3.9	6.5
Some college, no degree	4,252	2,190	2,062	232	102	130	5.4	4.6	6.3
Associate's degree	2,641	1,283	1,358	127	34	94	4.8	2.6	6.9
Bachelor's degree and higher ³	5,903	2,867	3,036	118	60	58	2.0	2.1	1.9

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

²Includes people with a high school diploma or equivalent.

³Includes people with bachelor's, master's, professional, and doctoral degrees.

Note: Estimates for the race groups shown (White, Black or African American, and Asian) do not sum to totals because data are not presented for all races. People whose ethnicity is identified as Hispanic or Latino may be of any race. Dash indicates no data or data that do not meet publication criteria (values not shown where base is less than 75,000).
Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey (CPS), Annual Social and Economic Supplement (ASEC).

Table 4. People in the labor force for 27 weeks or more who worked during the year: poverty status by occupation of longest job held, race, Hispanic or Latino ethnicity, and gender, 2020 (Numbers in thousands)

Occupation, race, and Hispanic or Latino ethnicity	Total	Men	Women	Below poverty level			Rate ¹		
				Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women
Total, 16 years and older ²	151,647	80,120	71,527	5,812	2,684	3,129	3.8	3.3	4.4
Management, professional, and related occupations	64,727	31,005	33,723	902	384	517	1.4	1.2	1.5
Management, business, and financial operations occupations	28,104	15,278	12,825	376	202	175	1.3	1.3	1.4
Professional and related occupations	36,624	15,726	20,897	525	182	343	1.4	1.2	1.6
Service occupations	23,693	10,146	13,547	1,989	626	1,363	8.4	6.2	10.1
Sales and office occupations	30,245	11,453	18,793	1,203	349	855	4.0	3.0	4.5
Sales and related occupations	14,077	7,146	6,931	687	227	460	4.9	3.2	6.6
Office and administrative support occupations	16,168	4,306	11,862	516	121	395	3.2	2.8	3.3
Natural resources, construction, and maintenance occupations	13,888	13,112	776	803	733	69	5.8	5.6	8.9
Farming, fishing, and forestry occupations	1,080	827	253	111	87	24	10.3	10.5	9.7
Construction and extraction occupations	7,941	7,595	346	540	500	40	6.8	6.6	11.6
Installation, maintenance, and repair occupations	4,866	4,690	176	151	147	5	3.1	3.1	2.6
Production, transportation, and material-moving occupations	18,956	14,291	4,664	916	591	325	4.8	4.1	7.0

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

²Estimates for the occupational groups do not sum to totals because data includes the long-term unemployed with no previous work experience and a small number of people whose last job was in the Armed Forces.

Note: Estimates for the race groups shown (White, Black or African American, and Asian) do not sum to totals because data are not presented for all races. People whose ethnicity is identified as Hispanic or Latino may be of any race. Dash indicates no data or data that do not meet publication criteria (values not shown where base is less than 75,000).
Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey (CPS), Annual Social and Economic Supplement (ASEC).

Occupation, race, and Hispanic or Latino ethnicity	Total	Men	Women	Below poverty level			Rate ¹		
				Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women
Production occupations	7,871	5,576	2,295	303	160	143	3.9	2.9	6.2
Transportation and material-moving occupations	11,085	8,715	2,370	613	431	182	5.5	4.9	7.7
White, 16 years and older²	117,627	63,387	54,240	4,083	2,007	2,076	3.5	3.2	3.8
Management, professional, and related occupations	50,576	24,762	25,813	613	289	325	1.2	1.2	1.3
Management, business, and financial operations occupations	22,724	12,860	9,864	274	159	115	1.2	1.2	1.2
Professional and related occupations	27,851	11,902	15,949	339	130	210	1.2	1.1	1.3
Service occupations	17,186	7,419	9,767	1,350	471	879	7.9	6.3	9.0
Sales and office occupations	23,683	8,965	14,717	836	237	598	3.5	2.6	4.1
Sales and related occupations	11,259	5,787	5,472	484	145	339	4.3	2.5	6.2
Office and administrative support occupations	12,424	3,179	9,245	352	92	259	2.8	2.9	2.8
Natural resources, construction, and maintenance occupations	12,038	11,349	689	671	603	68	5.6	5.3	9.8
Farming, fishing, and forestry occupations	963	726	237	100	75	24	10.4	10.4	10.3
Construction and extraction occupations	6,900	6,592	308	458	420	38	6.6	6.4	12.5
Installation, maintenance, and repair occupations	4,174	4,030	144	113	108	5	2.7	2.7	3.2
Production, transportation, and material-moving occupations	14,044	10,809	3,234	614	408	206	4.4	3.8	6.4
Production occupations	6,090	4,449	1,642	221	123	98	3.6	2.8	6.0
Transportation and material-moving occupations	7,953	6,360	1,593	393	285	109	4.9	4.5	6.8
Black or African American, 16 years and older²	18,972	8,873	10,099	1,160	410	749	6.1	4.6	7.4
Management, professional, and related occupations	6,558	2,372	4,186	159	40	119	2.4	1.7	2.8
Management, business, and financial operations occupations	2,612	1,005	1,607	55	19	36	2.1	1.9	2.2
Professional and related occupations	3,946	1,367	2,580	104	20	83	2.6	1.5	3.2
Service occupations	4,133	1,654	2,479	457	95	362	11.1	5.8	14.6
Sales and office occupations	3,905	1,452	2,453	240	63	176	6.1	4.4	7.2
Sales and related occupations	1,577	725	852	138	46	92	8.7	6.3	10.8
Office and administrative support occupations	2,328	727	1,601	102	17	85	4.4	2.4	5.3
Natural resources, construction, and maintenance occupations	1,006	958	48	79	78	1	7.9	8.2	-
Farming, fishing, and forestry occupations	49	43	5	8	8	-	-	-	-
Construction and extraction occupations	576	554	22	51	50	1	8.9	9.0	-
Installation, maintenance, and repair occupations	382	361	21	20	20	-	5.3	5.6	-
Production, transportation, and material-moving occupations	3,347	2,420	927	225	134	91	6.7	5.5	9.8
Production occupations	1,098	722	376	64	26	38	5.8	3.6	10.1
Transportation and material-moving occupations	2,249	1,698	550	161	108	53	7.2	6.4	9.7
Asian, 16 years and older²	9,677	5,134	4,543	237	118	118	2.4	2.3	2.6
Management, professional, and related occupations	5,670	3,065	2,606	86	42	44	1.5	1.4	1.7
Management, business, and financial operations occupations	1,917	998	918	31	17	13	1.6	1.7	1.4
Professional and related occupations	3,754	2,066	1,687	55	25	30	1.5	1.2	1.8
Service occupations	1,296	546	750	62	17	45	4.8	3.1	6.0
Sales and office occupations	1,544	661	883	59	33	26	3.8	5.0	3.0
Sales and related occupations	757	407	350	29	22	8	3.9	5.4	2.2
Office and administrative support occupations	788	255	533	30	11	19	3.8	4.3	3.5
Natural resources, construction, and maintenance occupations	290	277	12	8	8	-	2.8	2.9	-
Farming, fishing, and forestry occupations	20	16	4	1	1	-	-	-	-
Construction and extraction occupations	137	134	3	5	5	-	3.5	3.6	-
Installation, maintenance, and repair occupations	132	127	5	2	2	-	1.6	1.7	-
Production, transportation, and material-moving occupations	875	583	291	21	18	3	2.4	3.1	1.0

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

²Estimates for the occupational groups do not sum to totals because data includes the long-term unemployed with no previous work experience and a small number of people whose last job was in the Armed Forces.

Note: Estimates for the race groups shown (White, Black or African American, and Asian) do not sum to totals because data are not presented for all races. People whose ethnicity is identified as Hispanic or Latino may be of any race. Dash indicates no data or data that do not meet publication criteria (values not shown where base is less than 75,000).

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey (CPS), Annual Social and Economic Supplement (ASEC).

Occupation, race, and Hispanic or Latino ethnicity	Total	Men	Women	Below poverty level			Rate ¹		
				Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women
Production occupations	427	251	176	5	5	-	1.1	2.0	-
Transportation and material-moving occupations	447	333	115	16	13	3	3.6	4.0	2.4
Hispanic or Latino ethnicity, 16 years and older ²	26,746	15,297	11,449	1,876	1,046	830	7.0	6.8	7.2
Management, professional, and related occupations	6,353	2,967	3,386	145	67	77	2.3	2.3	2.3
Management, business, and financial operations occupations	2,762	1,470	1,292	57	29	28	2.1	2.0	2.2
Professional and related occupations	3,591	1,497	2,094	87	38	50	2.4	2.5	2.4
Service occupations	5,916	2,668	3,248	705	291	415	11.9	10.9	12.8
Sales and office occupations	5,299	1,984	3,316	281	86	195	5.3	4.3	5.9
Sales and related occupations	2,374	1,116	1,258	157	52	105	6.6	4.7	8.3
Office and administrative support occupations	2,926	868	2,058	124	34	90	4.2	3.9	4.4
Natural resources, construction, and maintenance occupations	4,601	4,327	274	444	401	43	9.6	9.3	15.6
Farming, fishing, and forestry occupations	457	324	133	47	33	14	10.3	10.2	10.5
Construction and extraction occupations	3,035	2,920	115	329	302	28	10.8	10.3	23.9
Installation, maintenance, and repair occupations	1,109	1,083	25	67	66	1	6.1	6.1	-
Production, transportation, and material-moving occupations	4,540	3,318	1,222	302	201	100	6.6	6.1	8.2
Production occupations	1,873	1,231	642	117	68	49	6.2	5.5	7.6
Transportation and material-moving occupations	2,667	2,087	580	185	133	52	6.9	6.4	8.9

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

²Estimates for the occupational groups do not sum to totals because data includes the long-term unemployed with no previous work experience and a small number of people whose last job was in the Armed Forces.

Note: Estimates for the race groups shown (White, Black or African American, and Asian) do not sum to totals because data are not presented for all races. People whose ethnicity is identified as Hispanic or Latino may be of any race. Dash indicates no data or data that do not meet publication criteria (values not shown where base is less than 75,000).
Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey (CPS), Annual Social and Economic Supplement (ASEC).

Table 5. Primary families: poverty status, presence of related children, and work experience of family members in the labor force for 27 weeks or more, 2020 (Numbers in thousands)

Characteristic	Total families	At or above poverty level	Below poverty level	Rate ¹
Total primary families				
Total	66,781	63,521	3,260	4.9
With related children under 18 years	33,468	30,828	2,641	7.9
Without children	33,312	32,693	620	1.9
With one member in the labor force	28,739	25,922	2,817	9.8
With two or more members in the labor force	38,042	37,598	443	1.2
With two members	31,760	31,371	388	1.2
With three or more members	6,282	6,227	55	0.9
Married-couple families²				
Total	48,811	47,484	1,327	2.7
With related children under 18 years	23,270	22,243	1,028	4.4
Without children	25,541	25,241	300	1.2
With one member in the labor force	16,881	15,813	1,068	6.3
Husband	11,396	10,597	799	7.0
Wife	4,627	4,408	219	4.7
Relative	858	808	50	5.9
With two or more members in the labor force	31,931	31,671	260	0.8
With two members	26,953	26,727	226	0.8
With three or more members	4,978	4,944	34	0.7
Families maintained by women³				

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

²Beginning with data for 2018, includes both opposite-sex and same-sex married-couple families. Prior to 2018, included opposite-sex married-couple families only.

³Beginning with data for 2018, includes families with no spouse of either sex present. Prior to 2018, included only families with no opposite-sex spouse present.

Note: Data relate to primary families with at least one member in the labor force for 27 weeks or more.
Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Annual Social and Economic Supplement (ASEC) of the Current Population Survey (CPS).

Characteristic	Total families	At or above poverty level	Below poverty level	Rate ¹
Total	12,077	10,494	1,583	13.1
With related children under 18 years	7,244	5,878	1,367	18.9
Without children	4,833	4,617	216	4.5
With one member in the labor force	8,184	6,751	1,434	17.5
Householder	6,529	5,325	1,204	18.4
Relative	1,655	1,426	230	13.9
With two or more members in the labor force	3,893	3,744	149	3.8
Families maintained by men³				
Total	5,892	5,542	350	5.9
With related children under 18 years	2,954	2,708	246	8.3
Without children	2,938	2,835	103	3.5
With one member in the labor force	3,674	3,359	315	8.6
Householder	3,019	2,754	265	8.8
Relative	655	605	50	7.6
With two or more members in the labor force	2,218	2,183	35	1.6

¹Number below the poverty level as a percent of the total in the labor force for 27 weeks or more.
²Beginning with data for 2018, includes both opposite-sex and same-sex married-couple families. Prior to 2018, included opposite-sex married-couple families only.
³Beginning with data for 2018, includes families with no spouse of either sex present. Prior to 2018, included only families with no opposite-sex spouse present.

Note: Data relate to primary families with at least one member in the labor force for 27 weeks or more.
Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Annual Social and Economic Supplement (ASEC) of the Current Population Survey (CPS).

[-] **Table 6. People in families and unrelated individuals: poverty status and work experience, 2020 (Numbers in thousands)**

Poverty status and work experience	Total	In married-couple families ¹				In families maintained by women ²			In families maintained by men ²			Unrelated individuals
		Husbands	Wives	Related children under 18 years	Other relatives	Householder	Related children under 18 years	Other relatives	Householder	Related children under 18 years	Other relatives	
Total, 16 years and older												
All people	260,995	60,615	61,439	5,493	22,521	15,460	2,212	15,323	6,940	691	7,562	62,740
With labor force activity	168,591	44,345	37,535	1,384	14,021	10,955	438	9,428	5,371	184	4,675	40,254
1 to 26 weeks	15,390	2,045	2,927	751	2,734	1,032	230	1,434	370	97	596	3,174
27 weeks or more	153,201	42,300	34,608	632	11,287	9,923	209	7,994	5,001	87	4,078	37,080
With no labor force activity	92,405	16,270	23,903	4,110	8,500	4,505	1,774	5,895	1,569	507	2,887	22,486
At or above poverty level												
All people	234,235	57,774	58,567	5,157	21,691	11,831	1,619	13,235	6,147	599	6,924	50,691
With labor force activity	159,699	43,079	36,922	1,353	13,738	9,162	382	8,703	4,982	169	4,505	36,703
1 to 26 weeks	12,804	1,821	2,738	730	2,635	553	189	1,200	275	87	529	2,047
27 weeks or more	146,895	41,258	34,184	623	11,103	8,610	193	7,503	4,707	82	3,975	34,657
With no labor force activity	74,536	14,695	21,645	3,804	7,952	2,669	1,237	4,532	1,165	430	2,419	13,988
Below poverty level												
All people	26,760	2,840	2,871	336	830	3,628	593	2,088	794	92	638	12,049
With labor force activity	8,892	1,266	613	31	283	1,793	56	725	390	15	170	3,551

¹Beginning with data for 2018, includes people in both opposite-sex and same-sex married-couple families. Prior to 2018, included opposite-sex married-couple families only.
²Beginning with data for 2018, includes people in families with no spouse of either sex present. Prior to 2018, included only families with no opposite-sex spouse present.
³Number below the poverty level as a percentage of the total.

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Annual Social and Economic Supplement (ASEC) of the Current Population Survey (CPS).

Poverty status and work experience	Total	In married-couple families ¹				In families maintained by women ²			In families maintained by men ²			Unrelated individuals
		Husbands	Wives	Related children under 18 years	Other relatives	Householder	Related children under 18 years	Other relatives	Householder	Related children under 18 years	Other relatives	
1 to 26 weeks	2,586	223	189	21	99	479	41	234	95	10	67	1,127
27 weeks or more	6,306	1,042	424	10	184	1,313	15	491	294	5	103	2,424
With no labor force activity	17,868	1,574	2,258	306	547	1,836	537	1,363	404	76	468	8,498
Rate³												
All people	10.3	4.7	4.7	6.1	3.7	23.5	26.8	13.6	11.4	13.3	8.4	19.2
With labor force activity	5.3	2.9	1.6	2.2	2.0	16.4	12.8	7.7	7.3	8.4	3.6	8.8
1 to 26 weeks	16.8	10.9	6.4	2.8	3.6	46.4	17.8	16.3	25.7	10.6	11.2	35.5
27 weeks or more	4.1	2.5	1.2	1.5	1.6	13.2	7.4	6.1	5.9	5.9	2.5	6.5
With no labor force activity	19.3	9.7	9.4	7.4	6.4	40.7	30.3	23.1	25.8	15.1	16.2	37.8

¹Beginning with data for 2018, includes people in both opposite-sex and same-sex married-couple families. Prior to 2018, included opposite-sex married-couple families only.

²Beginning with data for 2018, includes people in families with no spouse of either sex present. Prior to 2018, included only families with no opposite-sex spouse present.

³Number below the poverty level as a percentage of the total.

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Annual Social and Economic Supplement (ASEC) of the Current Population Survey (CPS).

[-] Table 7. Unrelated individuals in the labor force for 27 weeks or more: poverty status by age, gender, race, Hispanic or Latino ethnicity, and living arrangement, 2020 (Numbers in thousands)

Characteristic	Total	At or above poverty level	Below poverty level	Rate ¹
Age and gender				
Total unrelated individuals	37,080	34,657	2,424	6.5
16 to 19 years	343	218	125	36.5
20 to 24 years	3,977	3,446	531	13.3
25 to 64 years	29,949	28,250	1,699	5.7
65 years and older	2,811	2,742	68	2.4
Men	20,128	18,945	1,183	5.9
Women	16,952	15,712	1,240	7.3
Race and Hispanic or Latino ethnicity				
White	28,534	26,798	1,736	6.1
Men	15,681	14,816	864	5.5
Women	12,853	11,981	872	6.8
Black or African American	5,292	4,871	421	7.9
Men	2,706	2,506	200	7.4
Women	2,586	2,365	221	8.5
Asian	1,823	1,722	101	5.5
Men	966	923	42	4.4
Women	857	799	59	6.8
Hispanic or Latino ethnicity	5,377	4,827	551	10.2
Men	3,351	3,020	331	9.9
Women	2,026	1,807	219	10.8
Living arrangement				
Living alone	18,560	17,675	885	4.8
Living with others	18,520	16,982	1,538	8.3

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

Note: Estimates for the race groups shown (White, Black or African American, and Asian) do not sum to totals because data are not presented for all races. People whose ethnicity is identified as Hispanic or Latino may be of any race.

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Annual Social and Economic Supplement (ASEC) of the Current Population Survey (CPS).

[-] Table 8. People in the labor force for 27 weeks or more: poverty status and labor market problems of full-time wage and salary workers, 2020 (Numbers in thousands)

Labor market problems	Total	At or above poverty level	Below poverty level	Rate ¹
Total, full-time wage and salary workers	121,911	119,046	2,865	2.4
No unemployment, involuntary part-time employment, or low earnings²	99,347	98,858	490	0.5
Workers experiencing one labor market problem				
Unemployment only	10,817	10,329	488	4.5
Involuntary part-time employment only	3,042	2,993	49	1.6
Low earnings only	4,637	3,635	1,002	21.6
Workers experiencing multiple labor market problems				
Unemployment and involuntary part-time employment	1,702	1,614	88	5.2
Unemployment and low earnings	1,554	1,037	517	33.3
Involuntary part-time employment and low earnings	426	339	87	20.5
Unemployment, involuntary part-time employment, and low earnings	385	240	145	37.7
Workers experiencing each labor market problem				
Unemployment (alone or with other problems)	14,458	13,220	1,238	8.6
Involuntary part-time employment (alone or with other problems)	5,556	5,186	369	6.7
Low earnings (alone or with other problems)	7,002	5,252	1,751	25.0
¹ Number below the poverty level as percent of total in the labor force for 27 weeks or more. ² The low-earnings threshold in 2020 was \$380.93 per week.				
Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Annual Social and Economic Supplement (ASEC) of the Current Population Survey (CPS).				

Technical Notes

The data presented in this report were collected in the Annual Social and Economic Supplement (ASEC) to the Current Population Survey (CPS). Conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau for the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the CPS is a monthly sample survey of about 60,000 eligible households. Data from the CPS are used to obtain monthly estimates of the nation's employment and unemployment levels. The ASEC, conducted in the months of February through April, includes questions about work activity and income during the previous calendar year. For instance, data collected in 2021 are for the 2020 calendar year. The 2020 data in this report are based on fewer sample responses than in recent years. The collection period for these data occurred a year after the onset of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic; in-person interviews were only conducted when telephone interviews could not be done. In March 2021, the response rate for the CPS basic household survey improved to about 76 percent from 73 percent a year earlier, though not quite returning to the prepandemic trend. For more information about the impact of the pandemic on ASEC data collection, see "Income and poverty in the United States: 2020," *Current Population Reports*, P60-273 (U.S. Census Bureau, September 2021), www.census.gov/content/dam/Census/library/publications/2021/demo/p60-273.pdf.

Estimates in this report are based on a sample and, consequently, may differ from estimates that would have been obtained from a complete count using the same questionnaire and procedures. Sampling variability may be relatively large in cases where the numbers are small. Thus, both small estimates and small differences between estimates should be interpreted with caution. For a detailed explanation of the ASEC supplement to the CPS, its sampling variability, more extensive definitions than those provided here, and additional information about income and poverty measures, see "Income and poverty in the United States: 2020," *Current Population Reports*, P60-273 (U.S. Census Bureau, September 2021), www.census.gov/content/dam/Census/library/publications/2021/demo/p60-273.pdf.

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For more information on the data provided in this report, contact the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Division of Labor Force Statistics. Email: cpsinfo@bls.gov; Telephone: (202) 691-6378. This article is in the public domain and may be reproduced without permission.

Concepts and definitions

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

The actual poverty thresholds vary with the makeup of the family. In 2020, the weighted average poverty threshold for a family of four was \$26,496; for a family of nine or more people, the threshold was \$53,905; and for one person (unrelated individual), it was \$13,171. Poverty thresholds are updated each year to reflect changes in the Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U). Thresholds do not vary geographically. For more information, see "Income and Poverty in the United States: 2020," www.census.gov/content/dam/Census/library/publications/2021/demo/p60-273.pdf.

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 workweek. The year 1967 was chosen as the base year because that was the first year in which minimum-wage legislation covered essentially the same broad group of workers that currently is covered. The low-earnings level has been adjusted each year since then in accordance with the CPI-U, so the measure maintains the same real value that it held in 1987. In 2020, the low-earnings threshold was \$380.93 per week. For a complete definition, see Bruce W. Klein and Philip L. Roness, "A profile of the working poor," *Monthly Labor Review*, October 1989, pp. 3–11, www.bls.gov/opub/mlr/1989/10/art1full.pdf.

Data on *income* are limited to money income—before personal income taxes and payroll deductions—received in the calendar year preceding the CPS supplement. Data on income do not include the value of noncash benefits, such as food stamps, Medicare, Medicaid, public housing, and employer-provided benefits. For a complete definition of income, see "Income and Poverty in the United States: 2020," www.census.gov/content/dam/Census/library/publications/2021/demo/p60-273.pdf.

The *labor force* refers to people who worked or looked for work sometime during the calendar year. The number of weeks in the labor force is accumulated over the entire year. The focus in this report is on people who were in the labor force for 27 weeks or more.

The *working poor* are people who spent at least 27 weeks in the labor force (that is, working or looking for work) but whose incomes still fell below the official poverty level.

The *working-poor rate* is the number of individuals in the labor force for at least 27 weeks whose incomes still fell below the official poverty level, as a percentage of all people who were in the labor force for at least 27 weeks during the calendar year.

Involuntary part-time workers are people who, during at least 1 week of the year, worked fewer than 35 hours because of slack work, unfavorable 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 job in which a person worked the most weeks during the calendar year.

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

The *householder* is the family reference person. This is the person, or one of the people, in whose name the housing unit is owned or rented. The relationships of the other individuals in the household are defined in terms of their relationships to the householder. The race or Hispanic ethnicity of the family is determined by that of the householder.

A *family* is a group of two or more people residing together who are related by birth, marriage, or adoption; all such people are considered members of one family. Families include those with or without children under 18 years old. The count of families is for "primary" families only. A primary family consists of a householder and all other people related to and residing with the householder. Sub-families are excluded from the count of families. A sub-family is a family that does not maintain its own household, but lives in the home of someone else. Family status is determined at the time of the survey interview and, thus, may be different from that of the previous year. Families are further categorized as follows:

- Married-couple families refer to opposite-sex and same-sex married couples residing together and any of their family members residing in the household.
- Families maintained by men or women are made up of householders residing with one or more family members, but with no spouse of either sex present. Unmarried domestic partners of either sex may or may not be present in the household.

Beginning in 2018, the definition of married couples in this report includes both opposite-sex and same-sex married couples. Prior to 2018, married-couple families included opposite-sex married-couple families only. Therefore, beginning in 2018, estimates for married-couple families and families maintained by men or women may not be comparable to those from prior years because of the change in the definition of marital status.

Unrelated individuals are people who are not living with anyone related to them by birth, marriage, or adoption. Such individuals may live alone or live with other individuals to whom they may not be related. Beginning in 2018, estimates for unrelated individuals may not be comparable to those from prior years because of the change in the definition of marital status.

Related children refer to children under age 18 who are living in the household and are related to the householder. Included are own children (sons, daughters, stepchildren, and adopted children) of the husband, wife, or person maintaining the family, as well as other children related to the householder by birth, marriage, or adoption. Beginning in 2018, estimates for related children may not be comparable to those from prior years because of the change in the definition of marital status.

Race is reported by the household respondent. White, Black or African American, and Asian are categories used to describe the race of people. People in these categories are those who selected that race group only. Data for the two remaining race categories—American Indian and Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander—and for people who selected more than one race category are included in totals, but are not shown separately because the number of survey respondents is too small to develop estimates of sufficient quality for publication.

Hispanic or Latino ethnicity refers to people who identified themselves in the survey as being of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish ethnicity. People whose ethnicity is identified as Hispanic or Latino may be of any race.

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