

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE THURSDAY, SEPT. 19, 2013
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Income Down, Poverty Up Since '07 *Iowans in slow recovery from Great Recession*

IOWA CITY, Iowa (Sept. 19, 2013) — More Iowans remained in poverty three years after the recession, new data from the Census Bureau showed Thursday.

The American Community Survey (ACS) indicated 12.7 percent of Iowans — about 377,500 people — were in poverty in 2012, up from 11 percent in 2007, the year the last recession started.

“These are the signs we have been seeing across the board in our research,” said David Osterberg, founding director of the Iowa Policy Project, part of the Iowa Fiscal Partnership. “Whether you’re looking at jobs, or income, or poverty, or food insecurity, we simply have not caught up with where we were before the Great Recession.”

Other key points for Iowa from the release of 2012 ACS data:

- **Iowa’s poverty rate** of 12.7 percent compared with 11 percent in 2007 and 9.7 percent in 2001. The change from 2011 — a drop of 0.1 of a percentage point — was not statistically significant.
- **Child poverty** was 15.6 percent in 2012 (about 110,200 children), up from 13.1 percent in 2007 and 12 percent in 2001.
- **Median income** was \$50,957 in 2012, changing little from 2001 in inflation-adjusted dollars, but it dropped from \$52,371 in 2007.

“Public policy needs to give people the tools to lift themselves out of poverty, and at the same time boost the economy,” said Charles Bruner, executive director of the Child & Family Policy Center, also part of the Iowa Fiscal Partnership. “We have those kinds of tools in place — such as SNAP, or Food Stamps — but many of those same tools are under assault in Congress.”

In the U.S. House, lawmakers Thursday debated legislation that would cut SNAP benefits to an estimate 3.8 million beneficiaries.

“Look at these numbers today,” Osterberg said. “How can we see over 100,000 kids in Iowa in poverty and not realize this is a problem that needs to be addressed?”

Reports from the Iowa Fiscal Partnership are at www.iowafiscal.org.

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The Census today released 2012 estimates from the **American Community Survey (ACS)**, the largest U.S. household survey, with about 3 million addresses surveyed each year.

On Tuesday, Census released 2012 estimates from the **Current Population Survey (CPS)**, the nation’s primary source of statistics on labor force characteristics. It annually surveys about 100,000 addresses.

Both surveys produce data about poverty, income and health insurance. Comparisons can be apples vs. oranges. As the surveys are conducted differently, it is important not to compare data from one with the other — for example, it would be a mistake to compare health coverage from 2011 using CPS, to 2012 using ACS.

In general terms, Census recommends use of ACS data for single-year estimates of poverty and income at the state level and for smaller geographical areas. CPS data, on the other hand, can be good for long-term trends because CPS has been conducted by Census and the Bureau of Labor Statistics for more than 50 years. However, at the state level and below, CPS sample sizes are not considered large enough for single-year estimates.