



## Growing ND by the Numbers

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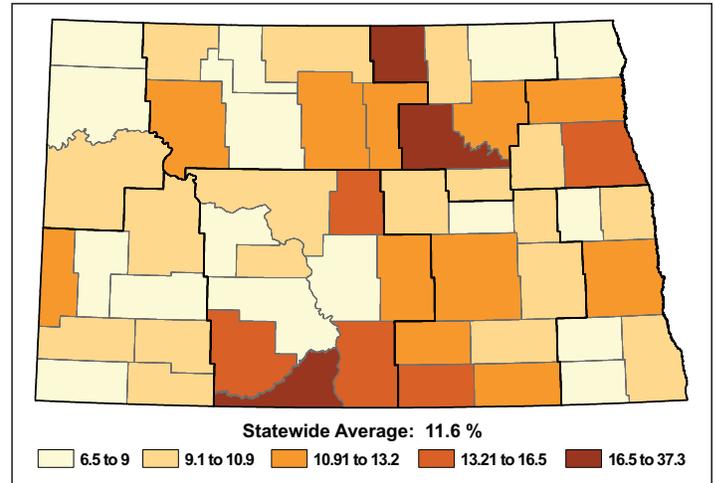
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*How is poverty measured in the United States? The Census Bureau uses set income thresholds that vary by family size and composition to determine who is in poverty. For instance a person under age 65, living alone in 2013 with an income of less than \$12,119, is determined to be in poverty. Non-financial assistance such as food stamps and housing subsidies or capital gains has no impact on this threshold.*

## North Dakota Poverty Rates See Bright Spots

In comparison to the nation, North Dakota's poverty rates are showing improvements. North Dakota's poverty rate was estimated to be 11.6 percent of the population according to 2013 U.S. Census Bureau's Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates (SAIPE) data. Nationally, that average was at 15.8 percent. Only eight states had a rate lower than North Dakota's. New Hampshire was estimated to have the lowest rate at 9 percent and Mississippi had the highest rate at 23.9 percent.

From 2007 to 2013, North Dakota was the only state to have seen a decrease in estimated poverty, although the change at 0.2 percent



Percent in Poverty by County 2013

was small. All other states saw an increase, with Florida showing the largest increase with their estimated rate of poverty growing from 12.1 in 2007 to 17.1 percent in 2013.

Families in the U. S. have a lower poverty rate than non-family households. The rate of poverty for families in North Dakota was 7 percent compared to 11.6 nationally.

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## Poverty Rates Impacted by Off Campus Students

If you look at North Dakota's four most populous counties, Grand Forks had the highest poverty rate in 2013 at 15.1; Cass was at 13.2 compared; Burleigh was at 8.3; and Ward was at 8.9. Why the dramatic

difference? The answer likely lays in the high density of college age population in both Cass and Grand Forks counties. According to a 2013 study on the impacts of off campus students on poverty estimations, Grand

Forks County's poverty estimate would likely be reduced by 6.4 percent and Cass County's would be reduced by 4.2 if off campus students were not calculated into the poverty estimates.

*Marital bonds appear to have a significant impact on the financial wellbeing of children. In 2013 the state's children under age 5 who residence in a two parent household had an estimate poverty rate of 4.8 percent, compared to 48.5 for similar aged children with only the mother present.*

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For married couples, the rate of poverty was dramatically lower at only 3.4 percent compared to 5.8 percent nationally.

Children age 0-17 in North Dakota were estimated to have 12,687 individuals in poverty or 13.5 percent.

This rate was among the lowest of any state except New Hampshire at 12 percent. Mississippi again had the highest rate at 34 percent in this age range. In the 18-64 age range, North Dakota's estimated poverty rate was 12.2 percent, the twelfth

lowest in the U.S. For those age 65 plus, North Dakota measurements of individuals in poverty is somewhat higher than most states at 9.4 percent, still slightly below the national average of 9.6 percent.

## Poverty in North Dakota by County

North Dakota was noted as being one of only five states where 80 percent of counties had rates lower than the national rate according to a 2014 report on poverty. These states were Connecticut, New Hampshire, North Dakota, Rhode Island and Wyoming.

Of North Dakota's 53 counties only 16 had poverty rates higher than the state's rate in 2013. Four counties had an estimated poverty rate higher than the U.S. average, including Benson, Sheridan, Rolette and Sioux counties. Three of these four counties are characterized by high American Indian

populations. Sioux had the highest rate of any county in the state at 37.3 percent, the 38th highest of the nation's 3,140 counties. Sioux County was also noted in 2012 as being among the top 10 counties in the U.S. for income inequality across its residents.

The county with the lowest estimated poverty rate was Sargent County in the southeastern region of the state at 6.5 percent. Other North Dakota counties with an estimated poverty rate under 8 percent include Mercer, Steele, Renville and Williams.

From 2007 to 2013, 40 of the state's counties saw a decrease, one was unchanged and the remaining 12 saw an increase in poverty rates. However, the changes tended to be small and most were within the margin of error, statistical randomness that occurs when less than a full census is taken. Nine counties, dominated by those in the oil patch, saw decreases that exceeded the margin of error. Billings, Divide, Dunn, McHenry McKenzie, Mountrail, Slope, Stark and Williams all experienced decreases.

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