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## Poverty and Income Trends in the Kansas City Area 2009 Johnson and Wyandotte Counties in KS and Cass, Clay, Jackson and Platte in MO

The release of the 2009 American Community Survey is the first look at the impact of the recession at the local level on such indicators as poverty, income and health insurance coverage.

### Key 2009 Findings for the 6-County Area

- Over 210,500 people in the 6-county area lived in poverty - about 35,000 more than the previous year
- Children have the area's highest poverty rate and their rate had the steepest one-year increase
- More than 487,500 people lived at incomes twice the federal poverty level or below
- Median household income declined and nearly 3 in 10 full-time workers earned less than \$30,000
- Nearly 250,000 people lacked health insurance

### Poverty

**Over 210,500 people in the 6-county area lived in poverty - about 35,000 more than the previous year**

The federal poverty rate in the Kansas City Area (6 counties) increased from 10.1% of the population in 2008 to 11.7% in 2009. The local poverty rate was lower than the U.S. rate of 14.3%, but while the U.S. rate went up by 1 percentage point, the local poverty rate climbed 1.6 percentage points.

More than 210,560 people lived below the 2009 federal poverty threshold which was \$17,102 per year for a family of three and \$21,947 for a family of four. This represents an increase of 20%, or nearly 35,000 people; almost one-half of them children.

	2009	2009	2008	2008	2008-2009 Change	
Poverty	Number	Rate	Number	Rate	People Increase	% Increase
All Ages	210,600	11.7%	175,900	10.1%	34,600	20 %
Children (0-17)	77,700	17.2%	62,300	14.0%	15,500	25 %
Ages 18-64	118,200	10.3%	99,400	9.0%	18,800	19 %
Seniors	14,600	7.2%	14,200	7.5%	400	3 %

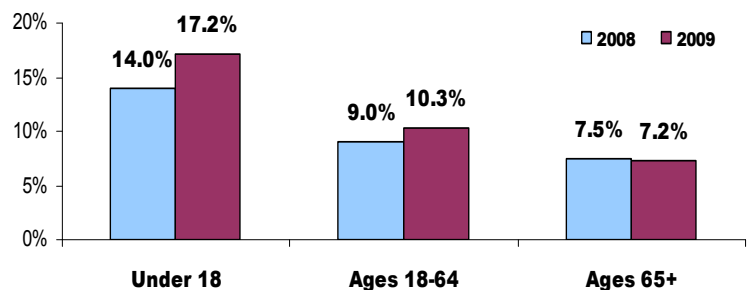
Numbers rounded to the nearest 100

### Poverty by Age

**Children have the area's highest poverty rate and their rate had the steepest one-year increase**

Children and youth continue to be the area's poorest residents. For those under age 18, more than 1 in 6 is poor (17.2%). The poverty rate went up more than 3 percentage points between 2008 and 2009. While the U.S. child poverty rate is higher (20%), the one year increase was less than 2 percentage points. Children living with a single mother are at higher risk for poverty; four in 10 families headed by a single mother have income below poverty.

Poverty Rate by Age



Working age adults had a 10.3% poverty rate, which is 1.3 percentage points higher than in 2008. Senior adults had the lowest rate at 7.2%; the poverty rate for this age group declined slightly.

**Low Income**

**More than 487,500 people lived at incomes twice the federal poverty level or below**

More than 27% of the population in the Kansas City area lived in economic hardship (low income) in 2009. Living at twice the federal poverty threshold is a measure of not having adequate income for basic needs such as housing, childcare, transportation, health care and food. The 2009 rate of 27.1% was up from 25.1% in 2008.

At the 200% of poverty threshold, the 2009 count was 487,500 people compared to 435,750 in 2008. This represents a 12% increase. During this same period the area’s population grew by only 4%.

**Income and Work**

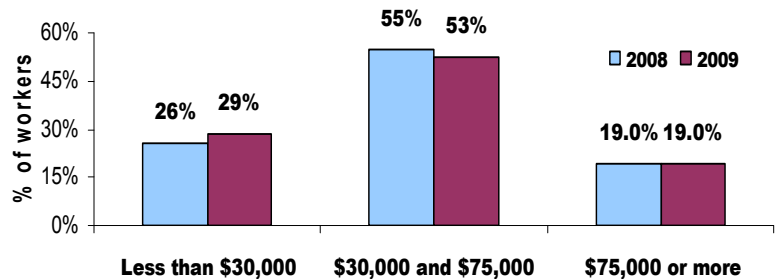
**Median household income declined and nearly 3 in 10 full-time workers earned less than \$30,000**

Median household income declined in the Kansas City, MO-KS MSA and each of the six counties. For the full KCMO-KS MSA the decline was about \$1,500 from 2008 to 2009 (\$56,018 to \$54,521). Census data for individual counties show Johnson County, KS and Cass County, MO with declines in median household income of more than \$4,000. These two counties also experienced the largest increase in number of people in poverty.

Many full-time workers do not earn enough to make ends meet. Nearly 3 in 10 (29%) full-time, year round workers in the 6-county area earned less than \$30,000 in 2009. In 2008, the number was 26%.

Of full-time, year round workers, 53% earned between \$30,000 and \$75,000. This percentage was 55% in 2008. At the top of earnings level, about 2 in 10 (19%) earned more than \$75,000 in 2009, the same percentage as in 2008.

**Earnings for Full-Time, Year Round Workers**



**Health Insurance**

**Nearly 250,000 people lacked health insurance**

The percentage of the population without health insurance increased from 11.9% in 2008 to 13.5% in 2009. Nearly 250,000 6-county residents lacked health insurance coverage in 2009. Most of the uninsured (83%) were working age adults. The U.S. uninsured rate was 15.1% in 2009.

Working age adults are more likely to be uninsured; 18% of 18-64 year olds were uninsured in 2009. For children (age 0-17) 7.7%, or nearly 36,000, were uninsured. Less than 1% of adults over age 65 lacked health insurance coverage.

## Geographic Differences

County-by-county poverty levels range from a high of 21.7% in Wyandotte County to a low of 6.2% in Platte County. Poverty rates for the other counties are: Johnson, 7.1%, Cass, 9.3%, Clay, 7.8% and Jackson 15.4%.

While poverty levels in the urban counties are higher overall, suburban poverty is growing at a dramatic pace. The suburban counties accounted for 62% of the increase in the number of poor (21,600 out of 34,600). Johnson County alone accounted for 43% of the growth.

The one-year increase in people in poverty was greatest in Johnson County (+14,800), followed by Jackson County (+11,300). The Johnson County increase was in large part due to a significant increase in child poverty; the Johnson County child poverty rate doubled from 5.1% in 2008 to 10.1% in 2009.

Poverty rates for Cass and Johnson Counties increased significantly more than other counties. Cass went from 5.0% to 9.3%, representing a 90% increase in people in poverty. Johnson County poverty rate went from 4.4% to 7.1%, for a corresponding 64% increase in people.

Children and youth are the poorest residents of every county. In the urban counties of Wyandotte and Jackson, the number is 1 in 3 and 1 in 4, respectively.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 Decennial Census; 2008 and 2009 American Community Survey. Some calculations by UCS.

For more information go to [www.census.gov/acs](http://www.census.gov/acs) The American Community Survey is an annual data product based on a sample of the population and is therefore most useful when considered as a portrait of characteristics of a geographic area.

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