

[SLIDE 1]

POVERTY IN THE U.S. THE NATIONAL DATA

[SLIDE 2]

Do You Know...	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• How many people are living in poverty in the U.S.?• Where most Americans in poverty live?• How poverty differs by race?• How age or family structure relates to poverty? <p>In a series of short video clips, Dr. Stephen Pimpare will use 2010 poverty data to show you how the poverty rate in the U.S. varies by group and place. You will also learn where to find current poverty data. Total viewing time is approximately 20 minutes.</p>	

[SLIDE 3]

DR. STEPHEN PIMPARE	
<p>Dr. Stephen Pimpare teaches courses on social policy mostly to graduate social work students at Columbia University and the City University of New York. He also writes books and articles about poverty and inequality in the U.S. Before getting his Ph.D., Stephen worked for over a decade with community-based soup kitchens and food pantries.</p>	

[SLIDE 4]

NUMBERS TO KNOW	
<p>Stephen is going to lead you through a lot of data. Jot down the following numbers, and as you listen, try to identify the population to which they correspond.</p> <p>46%, 22%, 15%, 27%</p>	

[SLIDE 5]

POVERTY TRENDS, 1959 - 2010	
<p>The Census Bureau started officially collecting poverty data in 1959. Listen to Stephen talk about how US poverty rates have changed since then. He will also identify the poverty rate in 2010.</p> <p>Click the PLAY button when you are ready to begin.</p>	<p>Dr. Pimpare: "You're looking here, at two different sets of numbers at two different trends, right? That top chart is showing you the number of people in poverty from 1959 - that's that number all the way to the left at the bottom - all the way through to 2010.</p> <p>So, now look at that top, that number of poverty: in 2010 there were over 46 million Americans living in poverty. That's the most ever, and quite a bit more than that 39.5 million who were living in poverty in 1959, and 1959 is the first year for which we have data that are roughly consistent produced by the Census Bureau. But now, at some level that's not necessarily a fair comparison, because, sure, we have more people living in poverty today than we did in 1959, but we have more people in almost every category than we did in 1959 since we have so many more people overall, which is why, in most instances, when you're looking at poverty data, and other kinds of data for that matter, you're much more likely to be looking at percentages; what percentage of the population is living in poverty because that's a number that's comparable from year to year.</p>

	So, as you see here, that 15.1% of all Americans were living in poverty in 2010 is, when we look at the percentage, in fact, lower than the number was in 1959 at 22.4%; but also notice, higher than it was in 1973 - 1973 is the lowest poverty rate for any year for which we have official data - 11.1% in 1973, 15.1% in 2010."
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[SLIDE 6]

CHECK YOUR KNOWLEDGE	
Which number did you hear in this clip? Select the best option and then click the SUBMIT button. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 46%• 22%• 15%• 27% ANSWER: 15% of all Americans were living in poverty in 2010.	

[SLIDE 7]

CHECK YOUR KNOWLEDGE	
Stephen said, "when you're looking at poverty data, and other kinds of data for that matter, you're much more likely to be looking at percentages." Why is that? Select the best option and then click the SUBMIT button. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Percentages are smaller numbers• Percentages are easier to understand• Percentages provide a snapshot• Percentages are comparable across time	

ANSWER:

Stephen said percentages are comparable across time.

[SLIDE 8]

WHERE?

Where do you think the poverty rate in the US is the highest?

Listen to Stephen talk about how poverty rates vary from place to place.

Click the **PLAY** button when you are ready to begin.

Dr. Pimpare:

“Notice poverty is much more prevalent in the South than it is in the North with the exception of Michigan and Appalachia. Appalachia, a region that in many ways was the -- whose poverty jumpstarted the war on poverty itself under the Kennedy Administration and has historically been one of the poorest areas in the United States, and Michigan in large part thanks to the collapse of the larger economy and secondarily to the auto industry in Detroit. Too often poverty is thought of as a problem of the North and particularly of those large industrial cities or post-industrial cities of the Northeast. I think the first thing that you should know is that that's by and large not true. Poverty rates are deeper in the South.”

[SLIDE 9]

CHECK YOUR KNOWLEDGE

Where is in the U.S. is the poverty rate the highest?

Select the best option and then click the **SUBMIT** button.

- The North
- The Southwest
- The South
- The Midwest

ANSWER:

Poverty is much more prevalent in the South.

[SLIDE 10]

POVERTY AND RACE

Listen to Stephen talk about how the 15% poverty rate also obscures variation by race.

Click the **PLAY** button when you are ready to begin.

Dr. Pimpare:

“Here, notice how much variation there is by race. Again, we're looking at the same kinds of trends over time: 1959 right up through 2010. Here's the rate for African Americans: 27.4% for African Americans; 26.6% - also, essentially 27% - for Hispanics; poverty rate of 12% for Asian Americans; and 9.9% - essentially 10% - for Whites. Notice, again, look at the long term trend. This dotted line, when you see a dotted line in data like this, it tells you that either they're data that come from a different source - because the Census Bureau wasn't tracking consistently by race in these earlier periods, so these data were pulled from another source -- it's a combination of other data and projections of data. But this is a good number. It's put together by people who are really thoughtful about these kinds of questions. The rate for African Americans, highest among all ethnic or racial groups in the United States today, has nonetheless declined by almost 50%, by half, from 55% to 28%. Nonetheless, poverty rate for African Americans and Hispanics is significantly higher than it is for Whites, and higher again for Asians. That, by the way, that's the 27 on your list: an overall poverty rate of 15%, but it's 27% for African Americans, it's 27% for Hispanics.

So, if someone tells you - and they're right - that poverty in the United States in 2010 was 15%, you know now to ask, “Well wait a minute, but how does that differ regionally and does it mean that it's 15% in my area?” And you also

	<p>now know that it varies enormously by things like race.</p> <p>But let's look at the next slide here. It doesn't just vary from racial group to racial group, but, in fact, poverty rates can vary enormously even within racial groups.</p> <p>So, for the moment I want to look at just the part of this chart that's below that red line that I've just drawn. We saw earlier in that previous slide that while poverty rates were 27% for African American and Hispanics, 10% for Whites, was 12% for Asian Americans, and you'll hear people refer to the relatively low poverty rates among Asian Americans. But, again, that 12% is also obscuring important variation: it was 23%, not 12%, among Cambodian, Hmong, and Laotian Americans, and yet only 7% among Filipinos. And while we're here, notice also how high the rate is for Native Americans: 25%. Again, how much lower for Whites -- and these are 2000 census data, which is why these numbers are slightly different than the one we've just seen. But, again, the lesson here: that 15% overall number obscures a lot, and even that 12% poverty rate from Asians obscures a lot. "</p>
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[SLIDE 11]

CHECK YOUR KNOWLEDGE	
<p>Which number did you hear in this clip?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 46%• 22%• 15%• 27% <p>Select the best option and then click the SUBMIT button.</p>	

ANSWER:

27% of both African Americans and Latinos were living in poverty in 2010.

[SLIDE 12]

CHECK YOUR KNOWLEDGE

Which Asian group has the lowest level of poverty?

- Cambodians
- Hmong
- Filipinos
- Laotians

Select the best option and then click the **SUBMIT** button.

ANSWER:

Filipinos.

[SLIDE 13]

POVERTY AND AGE

Which age group do you think currently has the highest poverty rate?

Listen to Stephen talk about how poverty rates vary for different age groups.

Click the **PLAY** button when you are ready to begin.

Dr. Pimpare:

“We've got 1959 as the first year over here. 2010 is the most recent year for which we have data. We're seeing trend lines, starting over here. Here's the child poverty rate today: 22%. More than one in five children in the United States of America today lives in poverty. By contrast, however, under 10% of the elderly, by official Census Bureau measures, live in poverty. Now, again, there are any number of things that are interesting in this chart that we might pay attention to. I want, for now, just to draw your attention to this trend, and that is -- notice that red line, that's the elderly poverty rate. 35% in 1959, higher than any other group -- even significantly higher than the poverty

	<p>rate for children. Look at the poverty rate now, today, 2010, for those over the age of 65: 9%; sharper decline than for any other group. Notice that for every other group in the current recession, this recessionary line, that poverty spiked up - and we expect to see that in periods of recession - except for the elderly. In fact, in this period of recession, the poverty rate for those over the age of 65 continued to decline; not as sharply as it had been in the 1950s and '60s, but nonetheless continued to decline. And that's only true for that group."</p>
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[SLIDE 14]

<p>CHECK YOUR KNOWLEDGE</p>	
<p>Which number did you hear in this clip?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 46% • 22% • 15% • 27% <p>Select the best option and then click the SUBMIT button.</p> <p>ANSWER: 22% was the child poverty rate in 2010.</p>	

[SLIDE 15]

<p>POVERTY AND FAMILY STRUCTURE</p>	
<p>Poverty among female-headed households is higher than for married families. What contributes to this number? Listen to Stephen talk about how poverty rates vary by family structure and type.</p>	<p>Dr. Pimpare: "Looking at how poverty rates vary now by family structure, by family type - here you can see that poverty among female-headed households is some 40%, 41% if we're rounding up. 9% for married couple families.</p>

Click the **PLAY** button when you are ready to begin.

Again, we've seen fairly significant declines over the period - and another one right here - but, nonetheless, a fairly consistent and very large difference. Why is it that female-headed households in particular have such high poverty rates?

Some of this is basic sort of income math. Any single-parent household, all else equal, is going to be poorer than a two-parent household because it increases the likelihood that there's only one adult working, and if there's only one adult working it means there's only one income coming into the household which means there's less money.

Some of this is just basic. Two adults in a household, all else equal, is likely to lead to two incomes, that's going to reduce the likelihood that you're going to be poor. But there's something else that factors into a single-parent household, and that is: you don't have another adult in the household with whom you can share childcare responsibilities.

So, you might have to work less, which is going to reduce the income in your household, in order to make yourself available to stay home with a sick child or to pick a child up from school or to stay home when the babysitter doesn't show. And then lastly, not only do you have one less income in a single-parent household, you don't have anyone with whom you can share child-giving responsibilities, but if that's a female-headed household, still to this day, women in the United States doing exactly the same jobs as men, on average, earn \$0.77 for every dollar that men are paid.

So, they've got less money coming into the household, potentially fewer hours worked because they've got no one to share care-giving responsibilities -- oh, and here's the other thing

	I forgot about: childcare. Childcare is expensive. So, not only do you have to stay home more and lose income from work to care for a child, but you're spending money on childcare that you might otherwise not spend because you've got a spouse or a partner who's taking care of that.”
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[SLIDE 16]

<p>CHECK YOUR KNOWLEDGE</p>	
<p>Which reasons did Stephen give for why female-headed households have such a high poverty rate?</p> <p>Select all of the options that apply, and then click the SUBMIT button.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women get paid \$.77 for each dollar men make. • Childcare is expensive. • Mothers often work fewer hours, to take care of their children. • With only one adult working there is only one income coming into the family. <p>ANSWER: All of these reasons contribute to why female-headed households have such a high rate of poverty.</p>	

[SLIDE 17]

<p>POVERTY IN THE U.S. IS COMMON</p>	
<p>Many Americans hold an assumption that poverty is generally confined to a small minority that lives in big cities. Listen to Stephen talk about how common poverty is in the U.S.</p> <p>Click the PLAY button when you are ready to</p>	<p>Dr. Pimpare: “So, the assumption, I think, is often that poverty - while it may fluctuate over time - poverty in the United States is generally confined to a relatively small minority, and many think of that minority as being in the</p>

begin.

inner cities. Well we've seen that people in the South are actually poorer, but here we can see that many, many Americans experience poverty over time.

That normal measure, the data that we've been looking at, those census data from 2010, give us data in what people call a snapshot. It tells us how many people were poor at the moment that that survey was conducted. What you're looking at here, by contrast, is a three-year period. You can see over here it says "percent of people" - "percent of spells in interval, 2004 to 2007" - it's just saying that it's telling us we're not just looking at this sort of snapshot moment in time in 2010, but we're looking here at a three-year period over the course of 2004 to 2007. Remember, that snapshot number in 2010 was 15%. If we look here we can see that from 2004 to 2007, 46% of Americans were poor at least once for two to four months. 46% of Americans were poor at least once over a three-year period for two to four months. And you can see 20% poor for five to eight months, 9% poor for 9 to 12 months. I want to especially draw your attention to these numbers over here: this is what you might think of as long term poverty, which some people refer to as "permanent poverty" or "intractable poverty" or "cyclical poverty." We've got all sorts of names for it. You can see that over that three-year period, fewer than 7% were actually poor the entire time.

Poverty in the United States is common. Over this three-year period, almost half of all Americans were poor at least once. Long-term poverty in the United States is relatively uncommon. The line between poor, working poor, working class, and middle class in the United States is thin. It's permeable. Over time, people move in and out of poverty - sometimes poor one month, not poor for the next six

	<p>months, poor again for three months, not poor again, et cetera - which is, I think, hugely important and something that we very often miss when we think about poverty because we're focusing so much of our attention on those snapshot numbers, that 15% in 2010."</p>
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[SLIDE 18]

<p>THE NUMBERS</p>	
<p>Match the numbers to the populations, all from 2010 Census data.</p> <p>Drag and drop each option to the correct answer, and then click the SUBMIT button.</p> <p>ANSWER:</p> <p>46% -- Americans living in poverty at least once over a three-year period</p> <p>22% -- Child poverty rate</p> <p>15% -- Overall poverty rate</p> <p>27% -- African Americans and Hispanics in poverty</p>	

[SLIDE 19]

<p>THE NUMBERS, THEY VARY</p>	
<p>The national poverty rate is only a snapshot of poverty in the U.S. The number of people living in poverty varies by group and by place. The bottom line is that poverty is common in the U.S. – more common than most of us think.</p>	

[SLIDE 20]

REFLECTION	
Write or think about the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What stood out for you in the videos?• Was anything surprising?• How can this knowledge make you more effective as a VISTA?	

[SLIDE 21]

US CENSUS DATA	
Visit the following pages of the U.S. Census Bureau to learn more about national poverty data. How the Census Bureau Measures Poverty Poverty in the U.S. Poverty Thresholds	

[SLIDE 22]

FURTHER LEARNING	
If you are new to U.S. poverty data, download this overview of how the government measures and collects poverty data. If you want to dig deeper, download this list of further readings.	