Poverty and Income in the City of San Diego

San Diegans Left Behind

Most families still worse off than before the recession

Flat Household Income: Despite local improvements in the prior year, and much hailed increases in household median income at the national level, San Diego households’ median incomes were stuck at $67,871 for 2015.

Persistent Poverty: For the third year in a row, 15.6% of all City of San Diego residents (212,994) lived below the federal poverty threshold. Poverty rates remain higher than the pre-recession rate of 12.1% in 2007.

Children in Poverty: Nearly one in every five children (19.7%) in San Diego were living below the federal poverty line. This translates to 55,482 children in 2015, over 10,000 more than in pre-recession 2007.

Change in Median Household Income and Regional Gross Domestic Product, 2007-2015 (Inflation Adjusted)

Nationally, median household incomes grew significantly in 2015. While household income in the City of San Diego grew in the prior year, the 2015 data shows local household incomes were unchanged at $67,871. Both national and San Diego median household incomes are still approximately 4% below the pre-recession levels of 2007. Meanwhile, the value of all goods and products produced in the San Diego region (Regional Gross Domestic Product) exceeded the 2007 level by 3% in 2014. Based on state level GDP growth, we project San Diego GDP was 9% higher in 2015 than the pre-recession level.
Especially in high cost areas, the federal poverty level fails to capture the full picture of poverty and minimizes the number of people struggling to make ends meet. The Census Bureau provides data on household incomes below 200 percent of the federal poverty level. This measure better reflects the level of economic hardship in San Diego. Almost 1 in 3 San Diegans (31.7%) live below this threshold of economic hardship.

San Diego households living below the federal poverty line would be struggling even if they lived in the poorest areas of the US, like Mississippi or Alabama.
Black and Latino children are 3 times as likely to live in poverty as White children. Approximately a third of Black children (33.9%) and Latino children (31.2%) live in poverty, compared to 8% of White children and 6.7% of Asian children.

Nearly 40% of all children live in economic hardship.

San Diego: Children, Poverty & Economic Hardship

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<thead>
<tr>
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<th>2007 Pre-recession</th>
<th>2015</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>% of total</td>
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<tr>
<td>Children in Poverty</td>
<td>45,410</td>
<td>15.9%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Children in Economic Hardship*</td>
<td>100,897</td>
<td>36.8%</td>
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*Below 200% of the federal poverty level. This includes only children living in households headed by their parents.

Deep inequality persists in San Diego. More than half of all income in the city went to the top 20% of the City's households, while the bottom fifth of households received only 3% of the income. The very top 5% of households received 21.6% of all income.

Poverty Rates in the Cities of San Diego County

The overall poverty rate for the County of San Diego in 2015 was 13.8%. The Census Bureau reports poverty data for all cities with populations larger than 65,000. The three cities with the highest poverty rates were El Cajon, Vista, and Escondido, all located in inland areas of San Diego County.
Can You Make It In San Diego?

1. Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting
   - Median earnings for this industry: $24,890/yr
   - Income needed to rent a 2 bedroom apartment: $29,328/yr
   - Income needed to afford the median home price in San Diego: $102,776

2. Accommodation and Food Services
   - Median earnings for this industry: $25,579/yr
   - Income needed to rent a 2 bedroom apartment: $55,600
   - Income needed to afford the median home price in San Diego: $102,776

3. Administrative, Support, and Waste Management
   - Median earnings for this industry: $29,328/yr
   - Income needed to rent a 2 bedroom apartment: $30,764/yr
   - Income needed to afford the median home price in San Diego: $102,776

4. Other Services
   - Median earnings for this industry: $30,764/yr
   - Income needed to rent a 2 bedroom apartment: $35,238/yr
   - Income needed to afford the median home price in San Diego: $102,776

5. Retail Trade
   - Median earnings for this industry: $35,238/yr
   - Income needed to rent a 2 bedroom apartment: $42,475/yr
   - Income needed to afford the median home price in San Diego: $102,776

6. Transportation and warehousing
   - Median earnings for this industry: $42,475/yr
   - Income needed to rent a 2 bedroom apartment: $55,600
   - Income needed to afford the median home price in San Diego: $102,776

6 lowest paying industries in the City of San Diego

Sources: 2015 American Community Survey, HSH Associates, US Department of Housing and Urban Development