Office of the
Food Security Advocate

The State of Food Security in New Jersey:
A Data Chart Book

New Jersey Office of the Food Security Advocate

Summer 2024

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This data chart book was prepared by Dr. Jennifer Schrum of the New Jersey Office of the Food Security Advocate and Katie Jacobs of Hunger Solutions Consulting, with special assistance from Randy Rosso.

About OFSA

The New Jersey Office of the Food Security Advocate (OFSA) is the state's food security advocacy office, which is placed at the highest level of state government, the Governor's Office. Under the leadership of Governor Murphy and Speaker Coughlin, legislation was drafted to create OFSA in 2021, with the Office commencing its work in September 2022.

The mission and vision of OFSA is to create positive outcomes in food security in the state of New Jersey through collaborative efforts with multi-sector stakeholders that are driven by strong research, evaluation, and community-driven program design. OFSA will achieve this vision by supporting state agencies, advancing food security policy, creating consensus and collaboration in the philanthropic sector, and advocating for and supporting collaborative and community-driven actions and programming in the state.

This chartbook will be updated and evolved with new data and additional metrics regularly throughout the year.

INTRODUCTION

Food security is a complex social condition with continually changing and interacting factors with underlying causes. There are multiple ways to define food security. The New Jersey Office of the Food Security Advocate (OFSA) has adopted a definition from the United Nations' High Level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition found in the *Food Security and Nutrition: Building a Global Narrative Towards 2030 report*.

> ***"Food security exists when all people, at all times, have physical, social, and economic access to sufficient, safe, and nutritious food which meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life."***

This definition is based on six dimensions of food security: availability, access, utilization, stability, agency, and sustainability. Food insecurity may result from limitations in any of the six dimensions because each depends on and interacts with the others. Explore the fundamentals of the six dimensions of food security in the resource, Food Security in New Jersey: A Primer on the Six Dimensions of Food Security.

Purpose and Use

Focusing on a single metric of food security can give an incomplete (and potentially inaccurate) understanding of the issue. This data chartbook provides a guided summary of a select few food security metrics, including determinants, measures, and impacts, to provide a nuanced yet streamlined overview of the state of food security in New Jersey.

The metrics included in this chartbook are not an exhaustive representation of the issue. For a more comprehensive and localized snapshot of food security metrics in New Jersey, we recommend exploring the Rutgers New Jersey Food System Dashboard or searching for other food security-related information available in OFSA's Public Data Catalog.

Report Organization

We organized information into three overlapping categories: social determinants of food security, measures of food security, and impacts of food insecurity. Data for each metric is publicly available and regularly updated. For each metric, we provide a definition, methodology, a summary of the level and trends at the state level, a county-by-county comparison table, and charts or maps visually representing the data. Where available, we break down the data by characteristics like race, ethnicity, or age to show how the metric is experienced differently by various groups. We provide notes about the data's limits to clarify its context and highlight the necessity of using multiple metrics to understand the state of food security in New Jersey fully.

For measures of food security, we denote its associated food security dimensions. Each dimension has a corresponding icon as shown below.


Access


Availability


Utilization


Stability


Agency


Sustainability

Contents

SOCIAL DETERMINANTS IMPACTING FOOD SECURITY

Population

Metric Source: *U.S. Census Bureau*

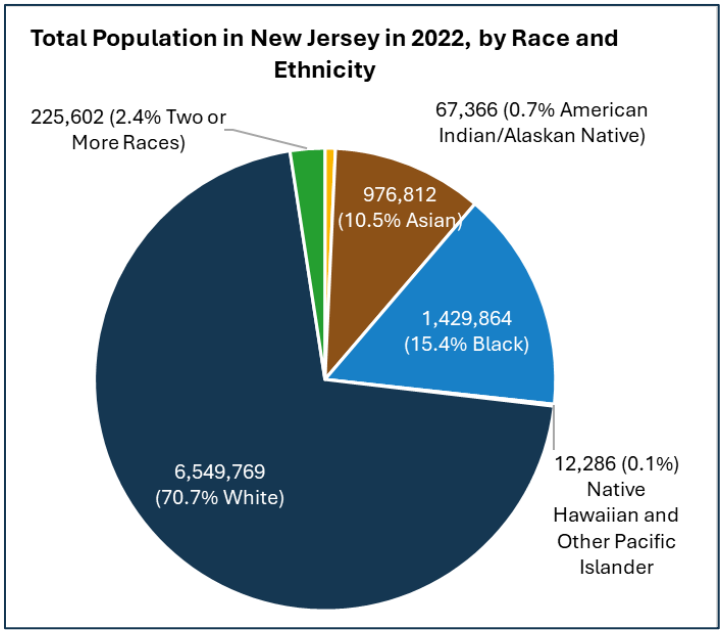
Total population is the number of individuals in a given geographic area. Population can often be reported by age, sex, race, and ethnicity. Population characteristics are an important factor to consider when analyzing and interpreting other metrics related to the issue because factors impacting food security are experienced differently across various communities, including distinctions based on demographic characteristics.

Quick Facts

Definition: Total number of individuals living in a specified geographic area
Status in New Jersey: 9.3 million
Latest Year of Data: 2023
Trends: *Increasing*. The total population in New Jersey has risen from 8.8 million in 2010 to 9.3 million in 2023, an increase of 5.6% which is less than the U.S. increase of 8.3%
Data source(s): U.S. Census Bureau County Population by Characteristics and County Population Totals and Components of Change: 2020-2023

Status in New Jersey

- In 2023, New Jersey's total population reached 9,290,841 people, an increase of approximately 30,000 people compared to 2022. This is the first time that New Jersey's population grew since 2020.
- From 2010 to 2020, New Jersey's population grew from 8.80 million to 9.27 million, an increase of 490,000 people or 5.4%. New Jersey's population growth is slower than that of the U.S. (7.2%) over this period.
- From 2020 to 2023, New Jersey 's total population remained about the same with just a 0.2% increase, compared to a 1.0% increase nationally.



- Multiple southern New Jersey counties (Cape May, Cumberland, and Salem) and Sussex County have experienced population loss comparing 2010 to 2023.
- New Jersey's population is more diverse than the U.S. average with greater percentages of Asian, Black, and Hispanic individuals.

County-Level Data

Total Population in New Jersey, by County, 2010, 2020, 2021-2023								
County	Total Population						Percent Change	
	2010	2020	2021	2022	2023		2010-2023	2020-2023
Atlantic	274,648	274,190	274,956	275,382	275,213		0.2%	0.4%
Bergen	906,284	953,690	955,383	953,540	957,736		5.7%	0.4%
Burlington	449,129	461,682	464,479	466,101	469,167		4.5%	1.6%
Camden	513,275	523,122	524,093	524,649	527,196		2.7%	0.8%
Cape May	97,212	95,044	95,706	95,405	94,610		-2.7%	-0.5%
Cumberland	156,699	153,719	152,083	151,347	152,326		-2.8%	-0.9%
Essex	784,037	859,974	854,233	849,724	851,117		8.6%	-1.0%
Gloucester	289,150	302,563	304,592	306,767	308,423		6.7%	1.9%
Hudson	635,652	721,879	703,448	702,381	705,472		11.0%	-2.3%
Hunterdon	127,322	128,786	129,671	129,805	130,183		2.2%	1.1%
Mercer	367,713	386,466	382,172	380,779	381,671		3.8%	-1.2%
Middlesex	810,758	861,408	862,364	861,094	863,623		6.5%	0.3%
Monmouth	630,461	642,836	646,517	644,228	642,799		2.0%	0.0%
Morris	492,617	508,439	510,613	511,219	514,423		4.4%	1.2%
Ocean	577,564	638,465	649,825	655,663	659,197		14.1%	3.2%
Passaic	502,023	523,439	518,376	513,634	513,395		2.3%	-1.9%
Salem	65,980	64,841	65,045	65,157	65,338		-1.0%	0.8%
Somerset	324,122	344,754	346,498	347,047	348,842		7.6%	1.2%
Sussex	148,855	143,915	145,721	145,575	146,132		-1.8%	1.5%
Union	537,369	573,660	572,833	570,417	572,726		6.6%	-0.2%
Warren	108,576	109,520	110,567	110,903	111,252		2.5%	1.6%
New Jersey	8,799,446	9,272,392	9,269,175	9,260,817	9,290,841		5.6%	0.2%
U.S.	309,321,666	331,526,933	332,048,977	333,271,411	334,914,895		8.3%	1.0%

Total Population in New Jersey in 2022, by Age, by County					
County	Total Population	65 and older		Under age 5	
		Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Atlantic	275,382	54,828	19.9%	14,313	5.2%
Bergen	953,540	174,718	18.3%	47,712	5.0%
Burlington	466,101	85,811	18.4%	23,514	5.0%
Camden	524,649	87,302	16.6%	31,023	5.9%
Cape May	95,405	28,254	**29.6%**	4,007	4.2%
Cumberland	151,347	24,685	16.3%	9,233	6.1%
Essex	849,724	122,609	14.4%	51,985	6.1%
Gloucester	306,767	52,035	17.0%	15,176	4.9%
Hudson	702,381	90,019	12.8%	44,067	**6.3%**
Hunterdon	129,805	27,387	**21.1%**	5,643	4.3%
Mercer	380,779	62,955	16.5%	20,828	5.5%
Middlesex	861,094	140,320	16.3%	45,821	5.3%
Monmouth	644,228	124,888	19.4%	31,584	4.9%
Morris	511,219	94,230	18.4%	25,247	4.9%
Ocean	655,663	149,822	**22.9%**	47,547	**7.3%**
Passaic	513,634	81,941	16.0%	32,102	**6.2%**
Salem	65,157	12,614	19.4%	3,455	5.3%
Somerset	347,047	59,999	17.3%	16,677	4.8%
Sussex	145,575	28,051	19.3%	6,904	4.7%
Union	570,417	87,296	15.3%	34,313	6.0%
Warren	110,903	22,003	19.8%	5,304	4.8%
New Jersey	9,260,817	1,611,767	17.4%	516,455	5.6%
U.S.	333,271,411	57,794,852	17.3%	18,538,353	5.6%

*Bolded percentages indicate the three counties with the highest proportions in each age category.

Total Population in New Jersey in 2022, by Race and Ethnicity, by County

County	American Indian/Alaskan Native alone		Asian alone		Black alone		Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone		White alone		Two or more races		Hispanic (any race)	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Atlantic	1,930	0.7%	22,217	8.1%	47,337	17.2%	308	0.1%	195,726	71.1%	8,120	**2.9%**	55,928	20.3%
Bergen	5,873	0.6%	167,504	**17.6%**	74,722	7.8%	1,063	0.1%	680,903	71.4%	22,932	2.4%	216,150	22.7%
Burlington	1,686	0.4%	28,093	6.0%	88,592	19.0%	509	0.1%	332,438	71.3%	14,785	**3.2%**	44,630	9.6%
Camden	3,817	0.7%	32,832	6.3%	117,083	22.3%	681	0.1%	355,142	67.7%	15,352	2.9%	99,929	19.0%
Cape May	418	0.4%	994	1.0%	4,592	4.8%	99	0.1%	87,619	**91.8%**	1,912	2.0%	8,192	8.6%
Cumberland	2,494	**1.6%**	2,385	1.6%	33,846	**22.4%**	272	**0.2%**	107,539	71.1%	4,820	**3.2%**	50,846	33.6%
Essex	7,626	0.9%	55,899	6.6%	351,568	**41.4%**	1,376	**0.2%**	411,648	48.4%	21,360	2.5%	208,649	24.6%
Gloucester	1,026	0.3%	10,169	3.3%	37,193	12.1%	324	0.1%	250,168	81.5%	7,721	2.5%	24,233	7.9%
Hudson	9,465	**1.3%**	119,668	17.0%	108,329	15.4%	1,546	**0.2%**	443,712	63.2%	20,646	**2.9%**	298,081	**42.4%**
Hunterdon	319	0.2%	6,519	5.0%	3,788	2.9%	228	**0.2%**	116,711	89.9%	2,212	1.7%	10,419	8.0%
Mercer	2,832	0.7%	49,674	13.0%	83,126	21.8%	953	**0.3%**	233,468	61.3%	10,635	2.8%	77,601	20.4%
Middlesex	6,979	0.8%	224,536	**26.1%**	110,693	12.9%	1,175	0.1%	497,604	57.8%	20,431	2.4%	199,633	23.2%
Monmouth	1,981	0.3%	37,290	5.8%	46,928	7.3%	390	0.1%	545,238	84.6%	12,271	1.9%	75,107	11.7%
Morris	1,848	0.4%	59,233	11.6%	21,238	4.2%	330	0.1%	418,010	81.8%	10,492	2.1%	76,016	14.9%
Ocean	1,906	0.3%	13,613	2.1%	25,646	3.9%	336	0.1%	604,454	**92.2%**	9,780	1.5%	66,601	10.2%
Passaic	8,749	**1.7%**	31,428	6.1%	77,757	15.1%	1,274	**0.2%**	380,446	74.1%	14,282	2.8%	227,839	**44.4%**
Salem	430	0.7%	716	1.1%	9,910	15.2%	43	0.1%	52,232	80.2%	1,786	2.7%	7,271	11.2%
Somerset	1,526	0.4%	71,704	**20.7%**	38,016	10.9%	353	0.1%	227,476	65.5%	7,800	2.2%	56,778	16.4%
Sussex	489	0.3%	3,416	2.3%	4,788	3.3%	79	0.1%	134,624	**92.5%**	2,688	1.8%	16,885	11.6%
Union	5,461	1.0%	35,369	6.2%	136,726	**24.0%**	845	0.1%	378,059	66.3%	13,355	2.3%	193,934	**34.0%**
Warren	511	0.5%	3,553	3.2%	7,986	7.2%	102	0.1%	96,552	87.1%	2,222	2.0%	13,749	12.4%
New Jersey	67,366	0.7%	976,812	10.5%	1,429,864	15.4%	12,286	0.1%	6,549,769	70.7%	225,602	2.4%	2,028,471	21.9%
U.S.		1.3%		6.3%		13.6%		0.3%		75.5%		3.0%		19.1%

*Bolded percentages indicate the three counties with the highest proportions in each race and ethnicity category.

Explore More Related Public Data

- New Jersey Census profile

Housing Cost Burden

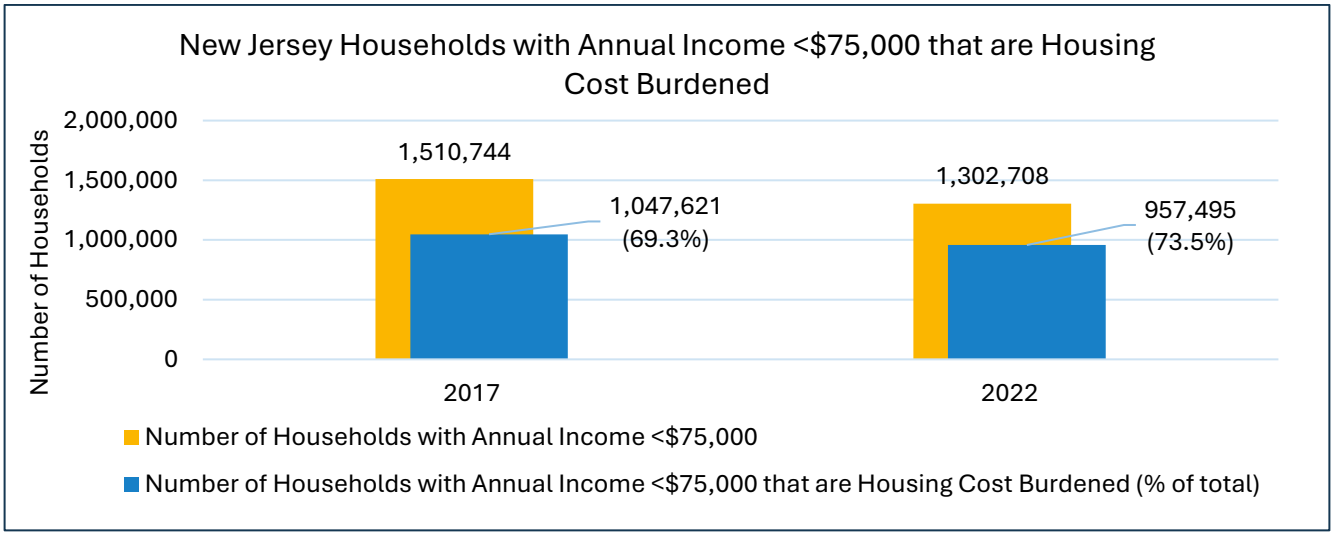
Metric Source: *U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey*

Households face a housing cost burden (HCB) when they earn under $75,000 per year and pay over 30% of their income on housing costs. HCB is presented as a percentage among households earning under the $75,000 per year threshold, not all households. Therefore, even if the number of households experiencing HCB decreases, there can be an increase in the proportion of households experiencing HCB. HCB is an important metric to explore as a driver of food insecurity because households may make tradeoffs or sacrifice food spending to ensure the rent or mortgage can be paid to stay housed.

Quick Facts

Definition: Having a household income less than $75,000 per year and spending over 30% of that income on housing.
Prevalence in New Jersey: 70.3% (67% of owner-occupied and 72% of renter-occupied housing units)
Latest Year of Data: 2022
Trends: *Getting worse*. The proportion of households facing housing cost burden increased from 69.3% in 2017 to 73.5% in 2022.

Status of Housing Cost Burden in New Jersey



- As wages nominally increase, 200,000 fewer households in New Jersey had annual income below $75,000 in 2022 (1.3 million) than in 2017 (1.5 million), a drop of 13.8%.
- However, the number of such households facing a housing cost burden fell by only 8.6%, a decrease of 90,000 (from 1.05 million to 957,000).
- Consequently, a larger share of households with incomes below $75,000 were housing cost burdened in 2022 (73.5%) than in 2017 (69.3%).
- New Jersey and every individual county has a higher proportion of households experiencing HCB compared to the U.S. (55.4%) among households with incomes below $75,000.

- Households who rent are more likely to be housing cost burdened than households who own their home. In 2022, 77.1% of households with incomes below $75,000 who rented their home were housing cost burdened, compared to 69.2% of households with similar incomes who own the home they live in.
- Atlantic County is the only New Jersey county that saw a decline in the proportion of households with annual income below $75,000 experiencing housing cost burden between 2017 and 2022.
- Ocean, Salem, and Cape May counties have the lowest proportion of housing cost burden in 2022 among households making <$75,000 per year. Whereas, Essex, Passaic, and Bergen have this highest proportion.

County-Level Data

Housing Cost Burden (HCB) Among Households with Income Below $75,000 in New Jersey, by County, 2013-2017 and 2018-2022

County	Households with Income Below $75,000, 2017 (2013-2017 data)			Households with Income Below $75,000, 2022 (2018-2022 data)			Percent Change, 2017 to 2022		Percentage Point Change in Percent HCB, 2017 to 2022 Percent HCB	Ranking 2022 Percent HCB [Best (1) to Worst]
	Households with Income < $75,000	Number HCB	Percent HCB	Households with Income < $75,000	Number HCB	Percent HCB	Households with Income < $75,000	Number HCB		
Atlantic	59,952	41,609	69.4%	52,421	36,055	68.8%	-12.6%	-13.3%	-0.6%	7
Bergen	134,061	100,106	74.7%	109,059	87,383	80.1%	-18.6%	-12.7%	5.5%	21
Burlington	72,563	47,043	64.8%	59,796	41,285	69.0%	-17.6%	-12.2%	4.2%	8
Camden	100,598	64,707	64.3%	87,975	62,606	71.2%	-12.5%	-3.2%	6.8%	11
Cape May	22,355	13,882	62.1%	18,583	12,112	65.2%	-16.9%	-12.8%	3.1%	3
Cumberland	32,935	20,287	61.6%	28,909	19,002	65.7%	-12.2%	-6.3%	4.1%	5
Essex	161,023	114,660	71.2%	150,736	113,078	75.0%	-6.4%	-1.4%	3.8%	13
Gloucester	46,642	29,912	64.1%	40,495	26,903	66.4%	-13.2%	-10.1%	2.3%	6
Hudson	136,777	97,239	71.1%	122,230	93,105	76.2%	-10.6%	-4.3%	5.1%	14
Hunterdon	15,225	10,717	70.4%	12,451	8,819	70.8%	-18.2%	-17.7%	0.4%	10
Mercer	60,432	39,578	65.5%	54,242	38,383	70.8%	-10.2%	-3.0%	5.3%	9
Middlesex	124,274	87,668	70.5%	102,328	78,739	76.9%	-17.7%	-10.2%	6.4%	18
Monmouth	93,631	67,187	71.8%	75,676	57,647	76.2%	-19.2%	-14.2%	4.4%	15
Morris	59,075	41,181	69.7%	49,628	37,910	76.4%	-16.0%	-7.9%	6.7%	17
Ocean	120,611	75,741	62.8%	106,035	68,572	64.7%	-12.1%	-9.5%	1.9%	2
Passaic	85,345	65,471	76.7%	76,953	60,918	79.2%	-9.8%	-7.0%	2.4%	20
Salem	13,312	7,861	59.1%	12,142	7,815	64.4%	-8.8%	-0.6%	5.3%	1
Somerset	38,854	28,316	72.9%	32,599	25,464	78.1%	-16.1%	-10.1%	5.2%	19
Sussex	21,502	14,668	68.2%	16,905	12,160	71.9%	-21.4%	-17.1%	3.7%	12
Union	91,960	67,757	73.7%	76,316	58,279	76.4%	-17.0%	-14.0%	2.7%	16
Warren	19,617	12,031	61.3%	17,229	11,260	65.4%	-12.2%	-6.4%	4.0%	4
New Jersey	1,510,744	1,047,621	69.3%	1,302,708	957,495	73.5%	-13.8%	-8.6%	4.2%	
U.S.	69,577,370	34,812,426	50.0%	59,512,590	32,965,757	55.4%	-14.5%	-5.3%	5.4%	

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2013-2017 and 2018-2022

Households that are Housing Cost Burden in New Jersey, by Owner/Renter Status, by County, 2018-2022

County	Owner-Households (2018-2022)			Renter-Households (2018-2022)		
	Households with Income < $75,000	Number Housing-Cost Burdened	Percent Housing-Cost Burdened	Households with Income < $75,000	Number Housing-Cost Burdened	Percent Housing-Cost Burdened
Atlantic	28,259	17,983	63.6%	24,162	18,072	74.8%
Bergen	49,106	38,203	**77.8%**	59,953	49,180	**82.0%**
Burlington	36,270	23,218	64.0%	23,526	18,067	76.8%
Camden	40,243	27,122	67.4%	47,732	35,484	74.3%
Cape May	12,327	7,327	59.4%	6,256	4,785	76.5%
Cumberland	14,819	9,170	61.9%	14,090	9,832	69.8%
Essex	34,592	27,820	**80.4%**	116,144	85,258	73.4%
Gloucester	25,883	16,232	62.7%	14,612	10,671	73.0%
Hudson	24,478	18,571	75.9%	97,752	74,534	76.2%
Hunterdon	8,578	5,924	69.1%	3,873	2,895	74.7%
Mercer	22,917	15,068	65.8%	31,325	23,315	74.4%
Middlesex	49,287	35,422	71.9%	53,041	43,317	81.7%
Monmouth	42,078	30,682	72.9%	33,598	26,965	80.3%
Morris	27,299	20,646	75.6%	22,329	17,264	77.3%
Ocean	76,019	43,766	57.6%	30,016	24,806	**82.6%**
Passaic	24,510	19,436	**79.3%**	52,443	41,482	79.1%
Salem	6,686	3,866	57.8%	5,456	3,949	72.4%
Somerset	18,230	13,403	73.5%	14,369	12,061	**83.9%**
Sussex	12,147	8,295	68.3%	4,758	3,865	81.2%
Union	25,749	19,781	76.8%	50,567	38,498	76.1%
Warren	10,105	6,059	60.0%	7,124	5,201	73.0%
New Jersey	589,582	407,994	69.2%	713,126	549,501	77.1%
U.S.	31,710,570	13,850,932	43.7%	27,802,020	19,114,825	68.8%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2018-2022

* Bolded percentages indicate the three counties with the highest proportion HCB in each category.

Methodology

Methodology: Housing cost burden is calculated from the annual U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey (ACS) data.

Numerator: Number of households with less than $75,000 in annual income that pay 30% or more of their income on housing costs

Denominator: Number of households with less than $75,000 in annual income

Data source: American Community Survey Table S2503

Limitations and Gaps in the Public Data

- Housing cost burden is assessed only for households with income below $75,000; however, in high cost of living areas, including much of New Jersey, households with higher incomes may also have their budgets, including food budgets, constrained by housing costs.
- To help increase the reliability of the data, county-level measures for housing cost burden are based on five years of American Community Survey responses, spanning periods with significant flux in the economy and housing market. Therefore, even the newest year of data is an average of the past 5 years and may not fully represent the state of the issue in the present moment.
    - For example, when estimates are reported for 2017, they are based on responses from 2013-2017, when the economy and housing market were recovering from the housing crash of 2008 and the Great Recession. 2022 estimates are averages of responses from 2018-2022, a span that includes the substantial COVID-19 pandemic disruption and subsequent economic upheaval, alongside massive expansion (and then withdrawal) of federal government assistance.

Explore More Related Public Data

- National Low Income Housing Coalition Out of Reach High Cost of Housing Annual Report
- Economic Policy Institute Family Budget Map
- Massachusetts Institute of Technology Living Wage Calculator

Unemployment Rate

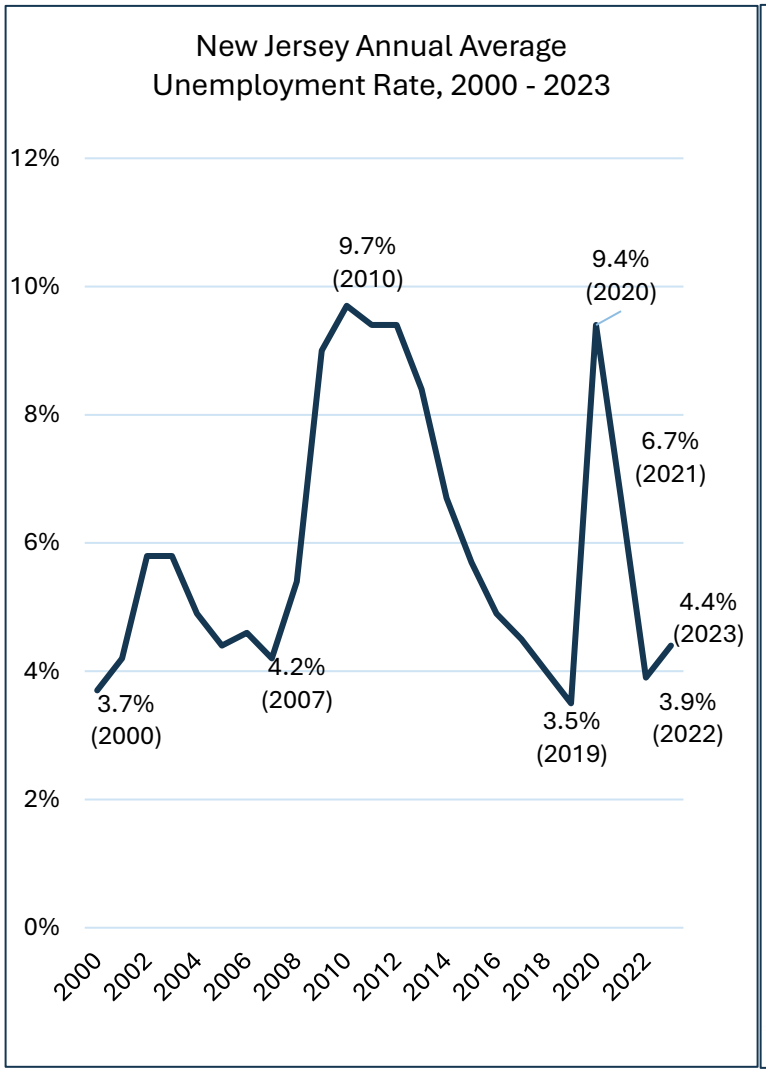
Metric Source: *New Jersey Department of Labor*

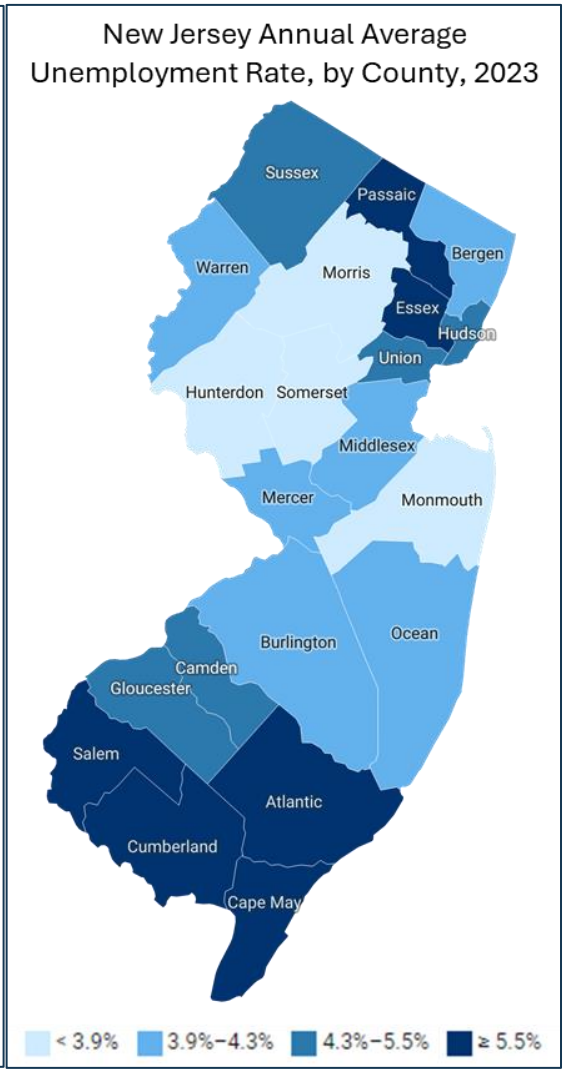
The unemployment rate (UR) is the share of the labor force that is unemployed and looking for work. The labor force consists of people aged 16 or older who have actively looked for work in the past 4 weeks. Unemployment is an important factor in assessing food insecurity as it can be a driver of inadequate resources necessary to access adequate food.

Quick Facts

Definition: The percentage of working-age individuals who are not employed.
Prevalence in New Jersey: 4.4%
Latest Year of Data: 2023
Trends: *Getting worse*. The unemployment rate fell in New Jersey from 2020 to 2022 but increased from 2022 to 2023 and has not returned to the lower benchmark pre-pandemic levels (~3.5%).

Status of Unemployment in New Jersey





- The unemployment rate in New Jersey in 2023 was 4.4%, ranging from 3.5% in Hunterdon County to 7.6% in Cape May County.
- Every county experienced a sharp spike in unemployment from 2019 to 2020 related to the COVID-induced economic shutdown.
- Unemployment fell from 2020 to 2022 in all counties, but from 2022 to 2023, the unemployment rate increased by 12.8% (from 3.9% to 4.4%).
- No New Jersey county has yet to return to pre-pandemic unemployment levels.

County-Level Data

Unemployment Rate (UR) in New Jersey, by County, 2019-2023

County	Unemployment Rate (%)						Change in Unemployment Rate (%)	
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	Ranking 2023 UR [Best (1) to Worst]	1-year Change, 2022 to 2023	5-year Change 2019 to 2023
Atlantic	4.9%	17.1%	9.9%	5.4%	5.9%	19	9.3%	20.4%
Bergen	2.8%	9.2%	6.3%	3.5%	3.9%	6	11.4%	39.3%
Burlington	3.2%	7.9%	5.7%	3.5%	3.9%	5	11.4%	21.9%
Camden	4.0%	9.7%	7.1%	4.2%	4.8%	15	14.3%	20.0%
Cape May	7.0%	13.7%	9.3%	6.8%	7.6%	21	11.8%	8.6%
Cumberland	5.3%	10.4%	8.1%	5.3%	6.5%	20	22.6%	22.6%
Essex	4.3%	11.2%	8.3%	4.7%	5.5%	17	17.0%	27.9%
Gloucester	3.6%	8.9%	6.4%	3.8%	4.3%	12	13.2%	19.4%
Hudson	3.2%	10.2%	7.1%	3.8%	4.4%	13	15.8%	37.5%
Hunterdon	2.7%	6.9%	4.9%	3.0%	3.5%	1	16.7%	29.6%
Mercer	3.1%	7.2%	5.5%	3.3%	3.9%	7	18.2%	25.8%
Middlesex	3.0%	8.5%	6.1%	3.5%	4.1%	9	17.1%	36.7%
Monmouth	3.1%	8.5%	5.9%	3.5%	3.8%	4	8.6%	22.6%
Morris	2.7%	7.5%	5.3%	3.2%	3.7%	2	15.6%	37.0%
Ocean	3.6%	9.1%	6.3%	3.9%	4.2%	10	7.7%	16.7%
Passaic	4.2%	12.1%	8.7%	4.8%	5.5%	18	14.6%	31.0%
Salem	4.7%	9.2%	7.7%	4.8%	5.5%	16	14.6%	17.0%
Somerset	2.9%	7.5%	5.4%	3.2%	3.8%	3	18.8%	31.0%
Sussex	3.3%	9.0%	6.3%	3.9%	4.3%	11	10.3%	30.3%
Union	3.6%	9.5%	7.0%	4.0%	4.7%	14	17.5%	30.6%
Warren	3.3%	8.2%	5.9%	3.6%	4.0%	8	11.1%	21.2%
New Jersey	3.5%	9.4%	6.7%	3.9%	4.4%		12.8%	25.7%

Source: New Jersey Department of Labor, Office of Research and Information, New Jersey Annual Average Unemployment Rate by County: 1990-2023, May 1, 2024

Methodology

Methodology: Unemployment rate is calculated as a ratio using unemployment insurance claims and Census employment-population
Numerator: Number of people in the labor force who are unemployed as measured by unemployment insurance claims
Denominator: Number of people in the labor force as estimated by the U.S. Census
Data source: New Jersey Department of Labor

Limitations and Gaps in the Public Data

- The unemployment rate does not account for underemployed people, meaning those working in low-paid or part-time jobs.
- The unemployment rate is measured using unemployment insurance applications. Therefore, it does not account for individuals who are looking for work but haven't applied for unemployment insurance, either because they are not eligible for or do not know they are eligible for unemployment insurance.

Explore More Related Public Data

- New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development, Unemployment Rates and Labor Force Estimates webpage
- U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics New Jersey Economy At A Glance table

Poverty

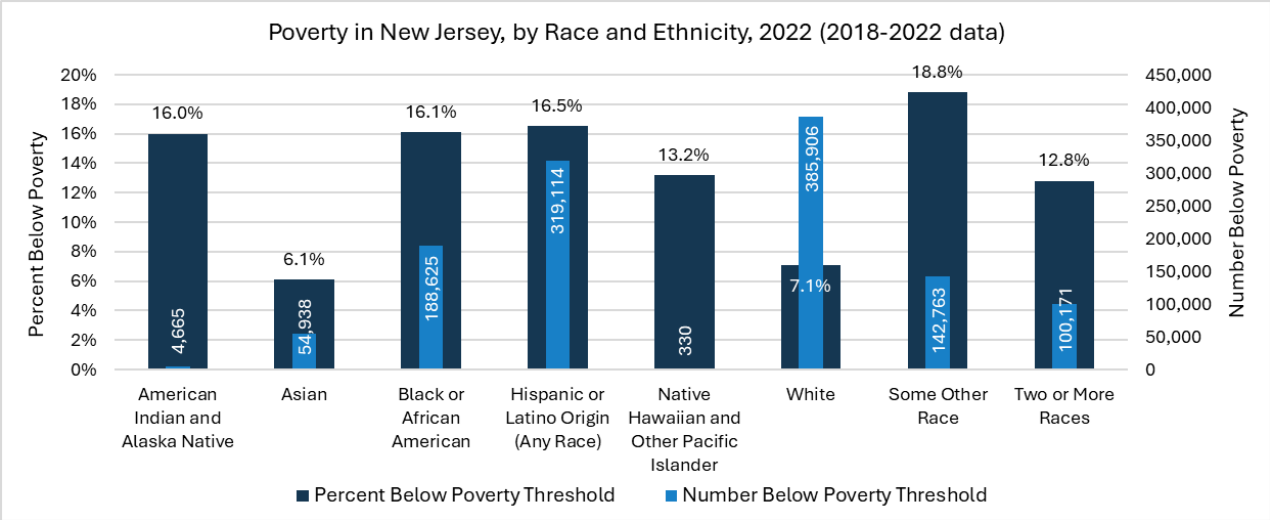
Metric Source: *U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey*

The Official Poverty Measure is defined as having a pre-tax cash household income below the U.S. federal poverty threshold. The federal poverty threshold was set at three times the cost of a minimum food diet in 1963 and is adjusted for family size and composition (e.g. presence of children and age of the head-of-households). The threshold is adjusted annually for inflation using the Consumer Price Index. In 2024, the federal poverty limit for a family of four was $31,200.

Quick Facts

Definition: Having a household income below the federal poverty threshold
Prevalence in New Jersey: 9.7%
Latest Year of Data: 2022
Trends: *Stable.* New Jersey's poverty rate has hovered at approximately 10% since 2010.

Status of Poverty in New Jersey



- The proportion of individuals with income under the poverty threshold in New Jersey decreased from 10.7% in 2017 to 9.7% in 2022, a 9.3% decline.
- Hunterdon County had the lowest poverty rate (3.7%) in New Jersey in 2022, while Cumberland County had the highest (15.5%).
- The poverty rate fell in 17 counties between 2017 and 2022, rising in the remaining four counties: Burlington (6.4% to 6.6%), Morris (4.6% to 5.0%), Somerset (4.8% to 5.3%), and Sussex (5.3% to 5.5%).
- Passaic County experienced the largest drop in poverty over this period, falling from 17.0% over 2013-2017 to 13.5% over 2018-2022, a 20.6% decline in the poverty rate.
- The poverty rate among Black (16.1%), Hispanic or Latino (16.5%), and American Indian or Alaska Native (16.0%) individuals in New Jersey is more than double the poverty rate among white individuals (7.1%).

County-Level Data

Poverty in New Jersey, by County, 2013-2017, 2018-2022								
	2017 (2013-2017 data)			2022 (2018-2022 data)				
County	Persons for Whom Poverty Is Defined	Number of Persons with Income Below Poverty	Percent with Income Below Poverty	Persons for Whom Poverty Is Defined	Number of Persons with Income Below Poverty	Percent with Income Below Poverty	Percent Change (2017-2022)	Ranking 2022 Percent Poverty [Best (1) to Worst]
Atlantic	267,153	40,750	15.3%	268,551	34,989	13.0%	-15.0	16
Bergen	927,026	66,918	7.2%	942,790	63,825	6.8%	-5.6	7
Burlington	436,937	28,066	6.4%	451,399	29,718	6.6%	3.1	6
Camden	504,013	65,858	13.1%	516,195	64,050	12.4%	-5.3	15
Cape May	92,226	9,796	10.6%	94,207	8,443	9.0%	-15.1	12
Cumberland	142,679	26,781	18.8%	143,658	22,292	15.5%	-17.6	21
Essex	781,279	130,583	16.7%	832,973	125,228	15.0%	-10.2	20
Gloucester	287,292	22,815	7.9%	297,505	22,231	7.5%	-5.1	8
Hudson	672,241	115,254	17.1%	703,117	99,546	14.2%	-17.0	19
Hunterdon	121,269	5,403	4.5%	126,809	4,685	3.7%	-17.8	1
Mercer	356,513	40,450	11.3%	365,993	41,079	11.2%	-0.9	14
Middlesex	807,450	69,297	8.6%	833,382	69,626	8.4%	-2.3	10
Monmouth	621,400	47,055	7.6%	636,657	40,595	6.4%	-15.8	5
Morris	491,300	22,800	4.6%	500,925	24,800	5.0%	8.7	2
Ocean	582,096	63,181	10.9%	631,808	66,258	10.5%	-3.7	13
Passaic	502,606	85,639	17.0%	512,486	68,995	13.5%	-20.6	18
Salem	62,517	8,860	14.2%	63,462	8,271	13.0%	-8.5	17
Somerset	329,859	15,745	4.8%	341,965	18,097	5.3%	10.4	3
Sussex	142,214	7,573	5.3%	143,434	7,948	5.5%	3.8	4
Union	550,581	56,826	10.3%	565,679	50,130	8.9%	-13.6	11
Warren	105,338	8,602	8.2%	108,117	8,373	7.7%	-6.1	9
New Jersey	8,783,989	938,252	10.7%	9,081,112	879,179	9.7%	-9.3	
U.S.	313,048,563	45,650,345	14.6%	323,275,448	40,521,584	12.5%	-14.4	

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2013-2017 and 2018-2022.

Poverty in New Jersey, by County, by Race and Ethnicity**												
County	White		Black or African American		Asian		Another Race		Two or More Races		Hispanic or Latino Origin (Any Race)	
	Number Below Poverty	Percent	Number Below Poverty	Percent	Number Below Poverty	Percent	Number Below Poverty	Percent	Number Below Poverty	Percent	Number Below Poverty	Percent
Atlantic	13,418	8.3%	7,231	**20.2%**	2,684	**12.7%**	6,791	**27.7%**	4,519	**18.5%**	12,257	**23.1%**
Bergen	36,421	6.2%	4,800	9.0%	7,565	4.8%	7,236	13.1%	7,364	8.5%	23,776	11.7%
Burlington	15,038	4.9%	6,708	9.3%	1,862	7.4%	2,464	16.9%	3,533	11.2%	4,596	11.7%
Camden	21,964	7.3%	18,116	18.4%	3,257	**10.6%**	14,107	**28.8%**	6,128	17.1%	23,361	**24.8%**
Cape May	6,344	7.7%	577	16.9%	*	*	*	*	947	**19.9%**	1,497	19.1%
Cumberland	9,293	**11.1%**	6,141	**25.0%**	*	*	3,744	**26.6%**	2,662	15.1%	9,593	20.2%
Essex	24,835	8.4%	63,241	**20.2%**	3,433	7.3%	21,002	21.4%	12,454	16.3%	41,713	20.7%
Gloucester	14,060	6.0%	4,938	16.0%	*	*	1,366	15.4%	1,204	8.8%	2,907	13.9%
Hudson	35,704	**12.3%**	15,810	18.8%	9,848	8.7%	21,443	20.7%	15,598	14.5%	54,428	18.2%
Hunterdon	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Mercer	14,546	7.4%	14,368	19.9%	2,988	6.8%	5,050	19.1%	4,042	15.7%	12,010	16.9%
Middlesex	29,206	7.4%	7,640	9.1%	10,963	5.2%	13,797	18.6%	7,341	11.4%	29,859	15.9%
Monmouth	27,498	5.5%	5,545	13.4%	1,352	3.9%	3,317	16.3%	2,799	7.4%	9,065	12.6%
Morris	15,528	4.2%	1,514	9.3%	1,519	2.8%	2,885	14.0%	3,143	8.0%	8,048	11.4%
Ocean	57,781	**10.5%**	2,424	12.7%	*	*	2,021	10.6%	3,255	10.9%	6,613	10.8%
Passaic	23,041	8.9%	10,503	19.4%	2,600	**9.3%**	15,717	17.4%	16,846	**21.2%**	43,667	19.6%
Salem	4,948	10.3%	2,428	**26.6%**	*	*	*	*	498	15.9%	1,411	**21.5%**
Somerset	7,869	4.0%	2,156	6.6%	3,021	4.6%	3,531	16.6%	1,365	5.6%	5,054	9.5%
Sussex	7,151	5.7%	263	8.7%	*	*	*	*	371	4.2%	951	6.7%
Union	13,893	5.5%	12,910	11.1%	1,696	5.3%	16,560	15.7%	4,926	8.6%	25,647	13.7%
Warren	6,247	7.0%	750	13.9%	*	*	*	*	805	11.0%	1,485	12.6%
New Jersey	385,906	7.1%	188,625	16.1%	54,938	6.1%	142,763	18.8%	100,171	12.8%	319,114	16.5%
U.S.		12.3%		21.3%		10.1%		17.9%		14.8%		16.8%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2013-2017 and 2018-2022.

* Indicates that the value is not reported because of a large margin of error relative to the estimate.

** Poverty among American Indian and Alaska Native individuals in New Jersey is 16.0% (4,665 individuals) compared to 21.7% in the U.S. Poverty among Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander individuals in New Jersey is 13.2% (330 individuals) compared to 17.6% in the U.S. Neither of these race categories are included in the table because the county-level estimates have too large a margin of error relative to the estimate.

Note: Bolded percentages indicate the three counties with the highest proportion of poverty among each race and ethnicity category.

Methodology

Methodology: Poverty is calculated from data collected in the annual U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey (ACS).
Numerator: Number of people with income below the poverty threshold
Denominator: Number of people for whom poverty status is defined
Data source: American Community Survey Table S1701

Limitations and Gaps in the Public Data

- The poverty measure identifies individuals under the poverty threshold but does not give us an understanding of the depth of economic need. The Census Bureau indicates that the poverty threshold is to be interpreted as a statistical yardstick and that the poverty threshold is not a complete measure of what people and families need to live.
- Poverty thresholds do not account for geographic variations in the cost of living.
- The way that the Official Poverty Measure defines a family —"family"—as persons living in the same household who are related by birth, marriage, or adoption does not reflect the nature of many households today, including those made up of cohabitors, unmarried partners with children from previous relationships, and foster children.
- Income used to assess poverty status does not account for government benefits (like SNAP, WIC, or housing subsidies) or necessary expenses like taxes, childcare, or medical expenses. The Supplemental Poverty Measure (SPM) extends the official poverty measure by taking into account these factors. Learn more about how the U.S. Census Measures Poverty.
- Poverty status is not defined for people in institutional group quarters (such as prisons or nursing homes, college dormitories, military barracks, and living situations without conventional housing (and who are not in shelters); therefore, the denominator of the measure of poverty does not take into account people in these housing situations.
- To help increase the reliability of the data, county-level measures for poverty are based on five years of American Community Survey responses; therefore, even the newest year of data is an average of the past 5 years and may not fully represent the state of poverty in the present moment.

Explore More Related Public Data

- U.S. Census Bureau's New Jersey QuickFacts
- Measuring America: How the U.S. Census Bureau Measures Poverty
- ALICE (Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed) data measures households that earn more than the Federal Poverty Level, but not enough to afford the basics where they live, taking into account geographic variations in the cost of living.
- Economic Policy Institute (EPI) Family Budget Calculator
- Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) Living Wage Calculator
- Supplemental Poverty Measure (SPM)

Average Meal Costs

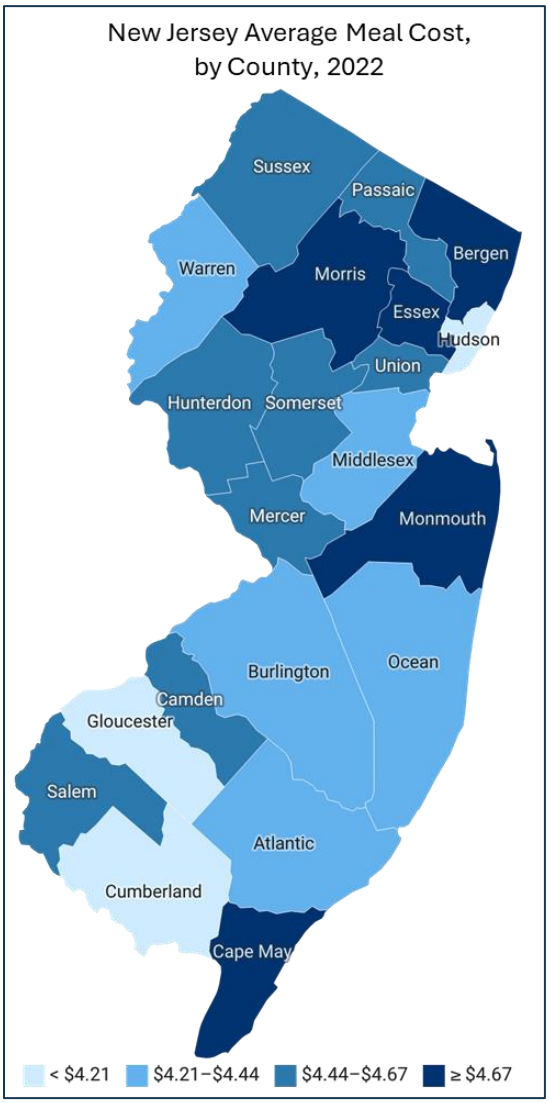
Metric Source: *Map the Meal Gap*

Average meal cost is the dollar amount a food secure household spends on a meal. This metric is estimated by Feeding America's *Map the Meal Gap* using food-secure households' responses to a question in the Current Population Survey that asks how much the household usually spends on food in a week, including purchases made with SNAP benefits. Average meals cost is calculated by taking the average weekly dollar amount food-secure households report spending on food, dividing it by 21 (assuming three meals per day, seven days a week), and adjusting to a per-person basis (versus the whole households). The national average meal cost amount is adjusted to reflect local food prices (using a "cost-of-food index" estimated by Map the Meal Gap) and relevant taxes to get county estimates of average meal cost. Reported food expenditures by food-secure individuals are used to ensure that the result best reflects the cost of an adequate diet.

Quick Facts

Definition: The average cost of one meal
Amount in New Jersey: $4.19
Latest Year of Data: 2024 (2022 Data)
Trends: *Increasing*. The average meal cost in New Jersey increased 23% from 2019 ($3.41) to 2022 ($4.19).

Status of Meal Costs in New Jersey



- The average meal cost in New Jersey in 2022 was $4.19, 20% higher than the national average meal cost ($3.99). Every New Jersey county (except Cumberland County) has higher meal costs than the national average.
- This average meal cost equates to $4,588 in meal costs per year (assuming three meals per day, 365 days a year).
- The 2022 average meal cost in New Jersey ranges from $3.98 in Cumberland County to $4.90 in Essex County.
- From 2019 to 2022, the average meal cost in New Jersey rose $0.78 per meal from $3.41 to $4.19, a 23% increase (an increase of $854 increase per year).
- The change in average meal cost from 2019 to 2022 varied greatly in New Jersey counties. The average meal cost rose by over a dollar per meal in Cape May ($1.10) and Monmouth ($1.04) counties over this time period.

County-Level Data

Average Meal Cost in New Jersey, by County, 2019, 2022

County	2019	2022	Ranking 2022 Cost [Highest (1) to Lowest]	Dollar Change	Percent Change	Ranking Percent Change [Largest change (1) to Smallest]
Atlantic	$3.43	$4.30	17	$0.87	25.4%	10
Bergen	$4.00	$4.72	5	$0.72	18.0%	19
Burlington	$3.49	$4.38	15	$0.89	25.5%	9
Camden	$3.58	$4.54	10	$0.96	26.8%	5
Cape May	$3.71	$4.81	2	$1.10	29.6%	1
Cumberland	$3.15	$3.98	21	$0.83	26.3%	7
Essex	$4.07	$4.90	1	$0.83	20.4%	18
Gloucester	$3.44	$4.19	19	$0.75	21.8%	15
Hudson	$3.32	$4.17	20	$0.85	25.6%	8
Hunterdon	$3.59	$4.47	12	$0.88	24.5%	13
Mercer	$3.59	$4.54	9	$0.95	26.5%	6
Middlesex	$3.32	$4.24	18	$0.92	27.7%	3
Monmouth	$3.68	$4.72	4	$1.04	28.3%	2
Morris	$3.94	$4.77	3	$0.83	21.1%	17
Ocean	$3.53	$4.40	14	$0.87	24.6%	12
Passaic	$3.51	$4.48	11	$0.97	27.6%	4
Salem	$3.78	$4.60	7	$0.82	21.7%	16
Somerset	$3.80	$4.65	6	$0.85	22.4%	14
Sussex	$3.99	$4.46	13	$0.47	11.8%	21
Union	$3.66	$4.57	8	$0.91	24.9%	11
Warren	$3.68	$4.33	16	$0.65	17.7%	20
New Jersey	$3.41	$4.19		$0.78	22.9%	
U.S.	$3.13	$3.99		$0.86	27.5%	

Methodology

Methodology: Average meal cost is a rate dollar amount per meal. It is calculated by taking the average weekly dollar amount food-secure individuals report spending on food, as estimated by the Current Population Survey, divided by 21 (assuming three meals per day, seven days a week).
Numerator: The average dollar amount spent on food in a week by food-secure individuals
Denominator: 21 meals (this assumes three meals per day, seven days a week)
Data source: *Map the Meal Gap* analysis of Current Population Survey data

Limitations and Gaps in the Public Data

- The methodology used to estimate average meal cost involves assumptions about the composition of a meal and the cost of those components. These assumptions might not

align with the actual dietary habits or needs of specific populations, particularly those with dietary restrictions (e.g., food allergies or intolerances) or cultural preferences.

- The average meal cost typically reflects the cost of ingredients to prepare a meal at home, but it may not account for the full cost of that meal, such as transportation costs to acquire food or the time and resources needed for meal preparation.
- Average meal cost estimates released in 2024 utilize 2022 data for the calculation, and therefore, the current data does not account for the most recent changes in food prices to-date related to factors like inflation, supply chain disruptions, or local economic conditions. This lag can mean that the average meal cost may be underestimated and should be accounted for in current decision-making.
- This metric provides an average meal cost at the county level, which might not reflect the wide variability in meal costs within that county. For example, urban areas may have higher meal costs than rural areas, but county-wide averages might mask these differences.

Explore More Related Public Data

- Economic Policy Institute (EPI) Family Budget Calculator
- USDA Economic Research Service Fruit and Vegetable Prices

MEASURES OF FOOD SECURITY

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) releases an annual report of Household Food Security in the United States. OFSA analysis of the 2023 report data provides the following key takeaways.

- New Jersey (9.8%) has a lower rate of food insecurity than the U.S. (12.2%), averaging 2021-2023 data.
- Throughout the state, one in every 10 households (9.8%) experienced food insecurity on average from 2021-2023 in New Jersey.
- Over 347,000 New Jersey households experienced food insecurity each year from 2021-2023 on average.
- The rate of food insecurity is increasing in New Jersey. Food insecurity increased from 8.4% of households in 2018-2020 to 9.8% in 2021-2023, an increase of 16.7%.

Food insecurity is defined by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) as a household having a lack of access, at times, to enough food for an active, healthy life for all members of a given household and limited or uncertain availability of nutritionally adequate foods. Under the USDA definition of food insecurity, households that experience food insecurity have difficulty, at some time during the year, providing enough food for all their members because of a lack of money or other resources. This USDA annual measure provides valuable national- and state-level information on households' food security status related to their economic access to food. However, this data only tells part of New Jersey's food security story, as there are many ways to define and measure food security. The following food security measures offer additional insights into the state of food security in New Jersey, giving a more holistic view of the issue.

Map the Meal Gap Food Insecurity Estimates

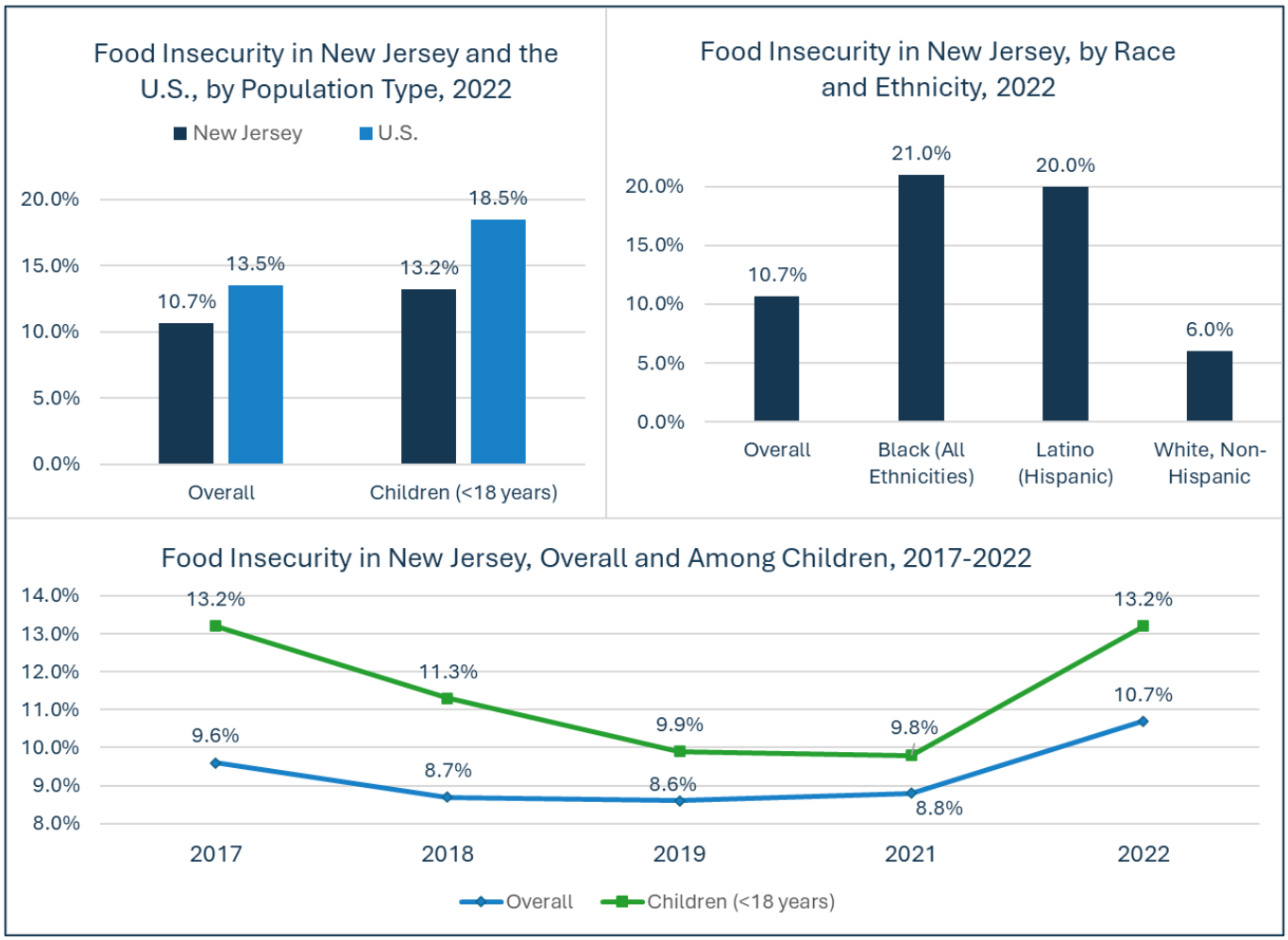
Metric Source: *Map the Meal Gap*

USDA measures food insecurity in the U.S. and each state at the household level. Feeding America's Map the Meal Gap uses USDA's state-level household data to generate county-level estimates based on associations with closely linked indicators, including poverty, unemployment, homeownership, and disability prevalence. Estimates for 2020 are not comparable to other years' estimates.

Quick Facts

Definition: A lack of access, at times, to enough food for an active, healthy life
Prevalence in New Jersey: 10.7%
Latest Year of Data: 2022
Trends: *Getting Worse.* Food insecurity has risen from 8.6% overall in 2019 to 10.7% in 2022 in New Jersey
Associated Food Security Dimensions: Access

The State of Map the Meal Gap's Food Insecurity Estimates in New Jersey



*Data for 2020 is omitted as estimates for 2020 are not comparable to other years' estimates

- In 2022, over 994,000 individuals experienced food insecurity in New Jersey. The food insecurity rate was 10.7% in New Jersey compared to 13.5% in the U.S.
- The rate of food insecurity is higher among children (<18 years), with over 263,000 (13.2%) experiencing food insecurity in New Jersey in 2022.
- Black (all ethnicities) (21.0%) and Latino (Hispanic) (20.0%) individuals experience food insecurity at higher rates than white (6.0%) individuals across New Jersey.
- From 2019 to 2022, food insecurity in New Jersey has worsened, changing from 8.6% overall and 9.9% among children to 10.7% overall and 13.2% among children.

County-Level Data

Map the Meal Gap's Estimates of Food Insecurity Rate, by New Jersey County, by Population, 2022 compared to 2019

County	All People			Children (< age 18)		
	2022	2019	Percent Change	2022	2019	Percent Change
Atlantic	12.2%	10.6%	15.1%	17.4%	15.2%	14.5%
Bergen	8.9%	6.7%	32.8%	7.0%	5.1%	37.3%
Burlington	7.9%	6.6%	19.7%	11.1%	8.8%	26.1%
Camden	11.3%	9.5%	18.9%	17.0%	13.0%	30.8%
Cape May	11.9%	11.3%	5.3%	15.0%	15.2%	-1.3%
Cumberland	13.1%	11.3%	15.9%	20.8%	16.7%	24.6%
Essex	11.6%	10.7%	8.4%	21.4%	15.5%	38.1%
Gloucester	8.9%	7.5%	18.7%	9.9%	8.9%	11.2%
Hudson	13.0%	11.1%	17.1%	17.2%	12.0%	43.3%
Hunterdon	6.8%	5.5%	23.6%	3.3%	4.0%	-17.5%
Mercer	9.7%	8.2%	18.3%	13.3%	10.1%	31.7%
Middlesex	9.3%	7.4%	25.7%	10.3%	7.6%	35.5%
Monmouth	8.4%	7.1%	18.3%	6.6%	6.8%	-2.9%
Morris	7.8%	5.8%	34.5%	4.5%	3.9%	15.4%
Ocean	10.6%	9.0%	17.8%	12.8%	11.7%	9.4%
Passaic	12.4%	10.1%	22.8%	16.2%	13.0%	24.6%
Salem	12.1%	10.7%	13.1%	19.3%	15.5%	24.5%
Somerset	7.2%	5.2%	38.5%	5.5%	4.3%	27.9%
Sussex	8.4%	6.5%	29.2%	7.1%	7.0%	1.4%
Union	9.4%	7.3%	28.8%	13.0%	9.2%	41.3%
Warren	9.7%	8.6%	12.8%	10.1%	9.5%	6.3%
New Jersey	10.7%	8.6%	24.4%	13.2%	9.9%	33.3%
U.S.	13.5%	*	*	18.5%	14.6%	26.7%

*Data unavailable from Map the Meal Gap

Map the Meal Gap's Estimates of Food Insecurity Rate, by New Jersey County, by Race and Ethnicity, 2022 compared to 2019											
County	Black Population			Hispanic Population			White Population			Disparity in rate of 2022 food insecurity*	
	2022	2019	Percent Change	2022	2019	Percent Change	2022	2019	Percent Change	Black/ White Disparity	Hispanic/ White Disparity
Atlantic	24%	21%	14.3%	24%	20%	20.0%	8%	7%	14.3%	3.0	3.0
Bergen	16%	10%	60.0%	17%	13%	30.8%	6%	5%	20.0%	2.7	2.8
Burlington	13%	10%	30.0%	18%	14%	28.6%	6%	5%	20.0%	2.2	3.0
Camden	22%	17%	29.4%	25%	21%	19.0%	7%	6%	16.7%	3.1	3.6
Cape May	25%	20%	25.0%	22%	20%	10.0%	8%	7%	14.3%	3.1	2.8
Cumberland	25%	20%	25.0%	23%	20%	15.0%	9%	8%	12.5%	2.8	2.6
Essex	26%	21%	23.8%	23%	19%	21.1%	7%	5%	40.0%	3.7	3.3
Gloucester	18%	13%	38.5%	19%	16%	18.8%	6%	5%	20.0%	3.0	3.2
Hudson	24%	19%	26.3%	22%	18%	22.2%	9%	9%	0.0%	2.7	2.4
Hunterdon	6%	11%	-45.5%	13%	13%	0.0%	4%	3%	33.3%	1.5	3.3
Mercer	23%	18%	27.8%	19%	18%	5.6%	7%	5%	40.0%	3.3	2.7
Middlesex	17%	11%	54.5%	20%	16%	25.0%	7%	6%	16.7%	2.4	2.9
Monmouth	20%	16%	25.0%	17%	15%	13.3%	5%	4%	25.0%	4.0	3.4
Morris	16%	10%	60.0%	17%	12%	41.7%	5%	3%	66.7%	3.2	3.4
Ocean	18%	11%	63.6%	18%	15%	20.0%	8%	7%	14.3%	2.3	2.3
Passaic	26%	19%	36.8%	22%	18%	22.2%	7%	6%	16.7%	3.7	3.1
Salem	27%	21%	28.6%	25%	22%	13.6%	9%	7%	28.6%	3.0	2.8
Somerset	12%	8%	50.0%	16%	13%	23.1%	4%	3%	33.3%	3.0	4.0
Sussex	9%	3%	200.0%	14%	12%	16.7%	6%	4%	50.0%	1.5	2.3
Union	18%	13%	38.5%	19%	16%	18.8%	5%	5%	0.0%	3.6	3.8
Warren	17%	11%	54.5%	17%	16%	6.3%	7%	7%	0.0%	2.4	2.4
New Jersey	21%	16%	31.3%	20%	17%	17.6%	6%	5%	20.0%	3.5	3.3

*This is the number of times that the food insecurity rate is for the Black and Hispanic populations compared to white populations in the same geography. E.g. 'The rate of food insecurity for Black individuals in New Jersey is 3.5 times the rate for white individuals. This number is calculated by dividing the food insecurity rate for Black and Hispanic populations by the food insecurity rate for white populations.

Methodology

Methodology: Map the Meal Gap's Estimates of Food Insecurity is a percentage – it is an analysis of a household level survey using associations with closely linked social determinants of health
Numerator: Population with a lack of access, at times, to enough food for an active, healthy life or with uncertain availability of nutritionally adequate foods
Denominator: Total population
Data source: *Map the Meal Gap*

Limitations and Gaps in the Public Data

- Estimates for 2020 are not comparable to other years' estimates. This is because, due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on data collection in 2020, the Census Bureau released 5-year (2016-2020) American Community Survey (ACS) data instead of the traditional 1-year estimates that have been historically used to estimate food insecurity.

Explore More Related Public Data

- USDA Food Security Key Statistics & Graphics
- Household Food Security in the United States in 2022
- Map the Meal Gap New Jersey 2022

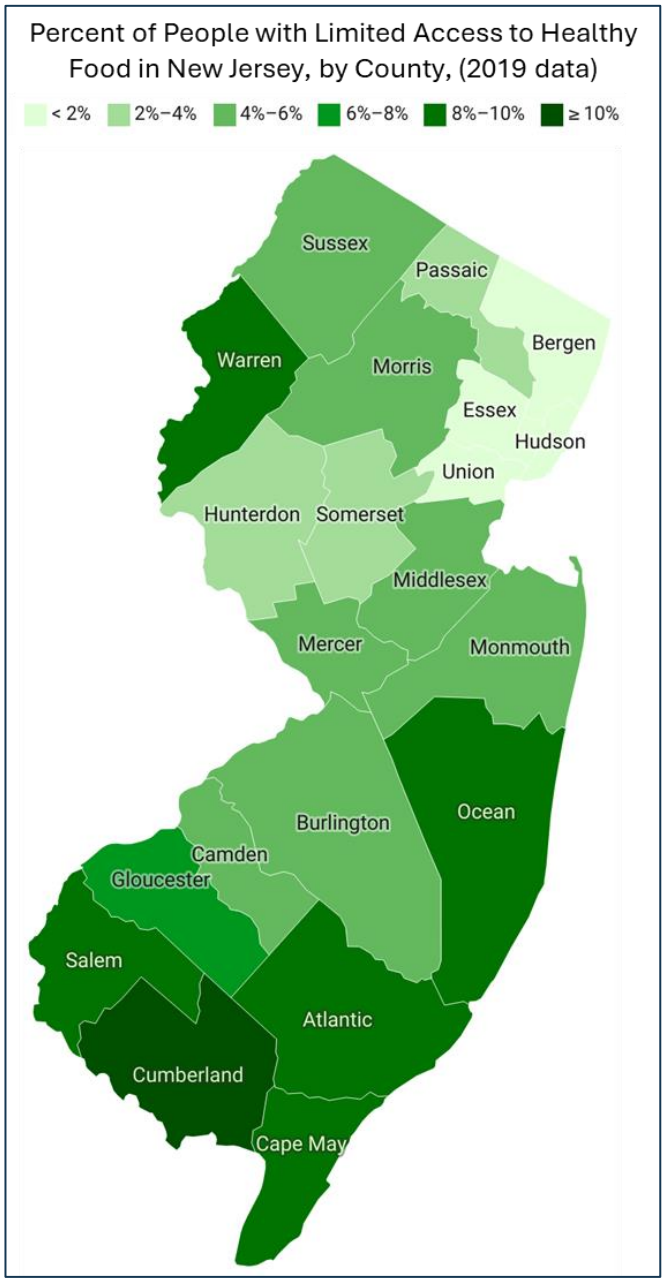
Limited Access to Healthy Foods

Metric Source: *U.S. Department of Agriculture Food Access Research Atlas*

Limited access to healthy food is defined as having a low income and not living near a grocery store. Living close to a grocery store is defined differently in rural and nonrural areas; in rural areas, it means living less than 10 miles from a grocery store; in nonrural areas, less than one mile. Low income is defined as having an annual family income of less than or equal to 200 percent of the federal poverty threshold for the family size. This measure is defined at the individual level, and data are combined to provide a percentage of the population experiencing this at the county or state levels.

Quick Facts

Definition: The percentage of the population that has low income and does not live close to a grocery store.
Prevalence in New Jersey: 4% (321,000 individuals)
Latest Year of Data: 2019
Trends: *Stable*. Limited access to healthy food in New Jersey remained at 4% from 2015 to 2019.
Associated Food Security Dimensions: Access, Availability



The State of Limited Access to Health Foods in New Jersey

- Over 320,000 individuals have limited access to healthy food as of 2019; this represents 4% of the New Jersey population.
- The percentage of individuals with limited access to healthy food ranges from 0% in Hudson County to 12% in Cumberland County.
- From 2015 to 2019, the number of individuals with limited access to healthy foods got worse in ten New Jersey counties, with the most severe increases in limited access to healthy food in Cumberland (19% increase), Somerset (19% increase), Hunterdon (25% increase), Warren (38% increase), and Salem (157% increase) counties.

County-Level Data

Limited Access to Healthy Food in New Jersey, by County, 2015 and 2019						
County	2015*		2019**		Change from 2015 to 2019	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Atlantic	23,210	8%	21,480	8%	-1730	-7%
Bergen	8,557	1%	8,099	1%	-458	-5%
Burlington	25,339	6%	22,582	5%	-2757	-11%
Camden	23,759	5%	22,869	4%	-890	-4%
Cape May	8,545	9%	8,505	9%	-40	0%
Cumberland	15,469	10%	18,332	12%	2863	19%
Essex	5,536	1%	5,869	1%	333	6%
Gloucester	25,221	9%	18,649	6%	-6572	-26%
Hudson	765	0%	754	0%	-11	-1%
Hunterdon	2,700	2%	3,379	3%	679	25%
Mercer	13,386	4%	13,450	4%	64	0%
Middlesex	30,235	4%	31,605	4%	1370	5%
Monmouth	28,888	5%	29,628	5%	740	3%
Morris	17,369	4%	18,135	4%	766	4%
Ocean	51,964	9%	51,113	9%	-851	-2%
Passaic	8,692	2%	9,151	2%	459	5%
Salem	2,164	3%	5,569	8%	3405	157%
Somerset	8,710	3%	10,364	3%	1654	19%
Sussex	8,252	6%	7,979	5%	-273	-3%
Union	5,591	1%	5,062	1%	-529	-9%
Warren	6,154	6%	8,499	8%	2345	38%
New Jersey	320,505	4%	321,074	4%	569	0%

*2015 data reported in 2019
**2019 data reported in 2024

Methodology

Methodology: Limited access to healthy food is a percentage.
Numerator: The numerator is the number of people who are low income and do not live close to a grocery store.
Denominator: Total population as measured by the 2010 U.S. census.
Data source: County Health Ranking's analysis of U.S. Department of Agriculture Food Access Research Atlas data

Limitations and Gaps in the Public Data

- The data for this measure are not updated annually, and the latest year of available data is 2019; therefore, data may not fully reflect the current state of the issue.
- Many factors not accounted for in this measure impact a household's access to healthy food, including vehicle access and access to adequate public transportation. Additionally, the measure does not account for access to culturally relevant and preferred foods.

Explore More Related Public Data

- Food Access Research Atlas
- Food Environment Atlas
- County Health Ranking's Limited Access to Healthy Foods
- Rutgers Food System Dashboard, Food Deserts and US Department of Agriculture (USDA) Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Retail Locations

Fruit and Vegetable Consumption

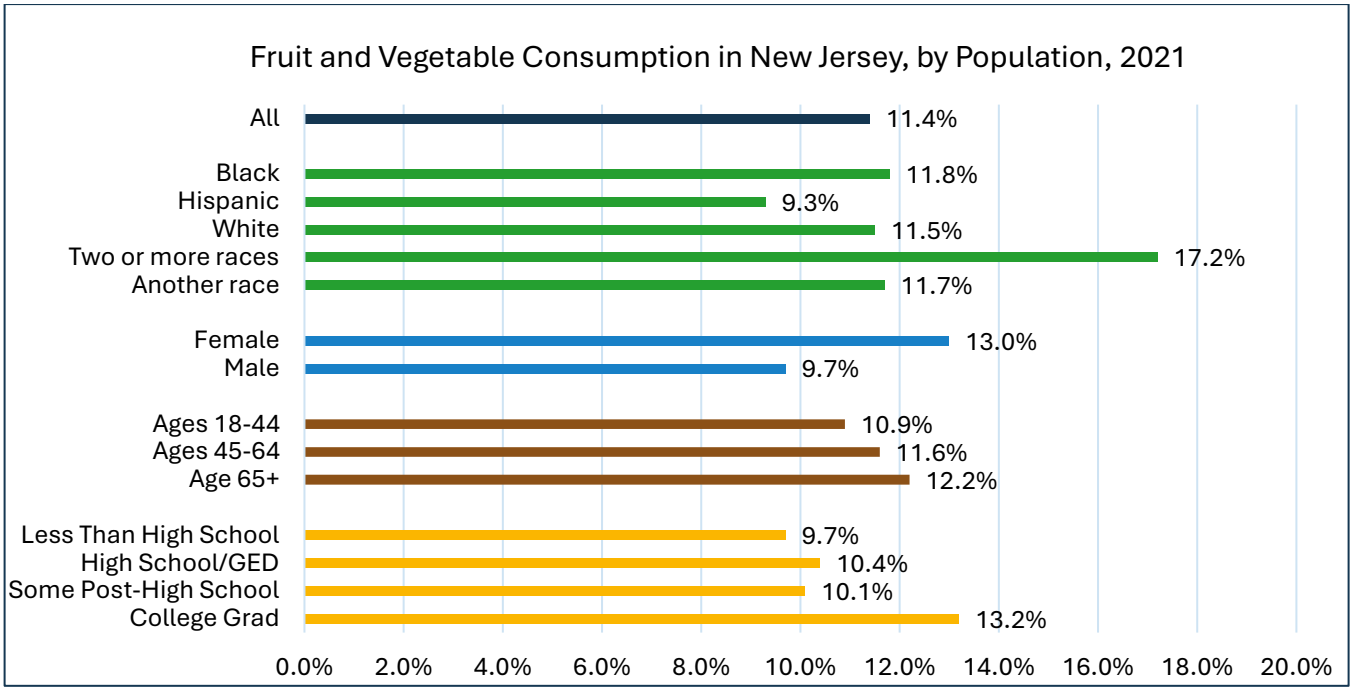
Metric Source: *Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System survey*

The fruit and vegetable consumption metric measures the percentage of adults (aged ≥18 years) who consume two or more fruits and three or more vegetables daily, as reported by the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS). The BRFSS is a telephone survey that asks respondents health related questions. To assess fruit and vegetable consumption, the survey asks respondents about how many times per day, week, or month they consume the following fruits and vegetables: 1) 100% pure fruit juices; 2) fruit; 3) green salad; 4) fried potatoes; 5) other potatoes; and 6) other vegetables. Total daily fruit consumption is calculated based on responses to questions 1 and 2, and total daily vegetable consumption is calculated based on questions 3-6.

Quick Facts

Definition: Percentage of adults who reported consuming two or more fruits and three or more vegetables daily
Prevalence in New Jersey: 11.4%
Latest Year of Data: 2021
Trends: *Improving*. The proportion of adults eating two or more fruits and three or more vegetables daily increased from 8.9% in 2017 to 11.4% in 2021
Associated Food Security Dimensions: Utilization

The State of Fruit and Vegetable Consumption in New Jersey



- 11.4% of New Jersey adults eat two or more fruits and three or more vegetables daily compared to just 7.4% of adults in the U.S. overall.
- New Jersey has the third highest fruit and vegetable consumption (11.4%) among all states, only behind New York (12.0%) and Vermont (12.9%).
- Fruit and vegetable consumption increased from 8.9% in 2017 to 11.4% in 2021, a 28% increase.
- Women have significantly higher fruit and vegetable consumption than men in the U.S. and in New Jersey.

Population-Level Data

Fruit and Vegetable Consumption in New Jersey, 2017 and 2021
(Percentage of adults who reported consuming two or more fruits and three or more vegetables daily)

Population	2017	2021	Change from 2017 to 2021
All	8.9%	11.4%	28.1%
Race and Ethnicity*			
Black	9.8%	11.8%	20%
Hispanic	8.4%	9.3%	11%
White	8.7%	11.5%	32%
Two or more races	**	17.2%	-
Another race	**	11.7%	-
Gender			
Female	10.2%	13.0%	27%
Male	7.5%	9.7%	29%
Education (among adults age 25+)			
Less Than High School	8.8%	9.7%	10%
High School/GED	7.1%	10.4%	46%
Some Post-High School	9.1%	10.1%	11%
College Grad	11.4%	13.2%	16%
Age			
Ages 18-44	8.6%	10.9%	27%
Ages 45-64	9.5%	11.6%	22%
Age 65+	8.5%	12.2%	44%

*Data is not reported for American Indian/Alask Native, Asian, and Hawaiian/Pacific Islander populations in New Jersey because of a large margin of error relative to the estimate.
**Data is not available from America's Health Rankings

Methodology

Methodology: Fruit and vegetable consumption is a percentage
Numerator: The percentage of survey respondents aged 18 and older who reported consuming two or more fruits and three or more vegetables daily.
Denominator: Total number of survey respondents
Data source: America's Health Rankings' analysis of CDC, 2021 Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System survey data

Limitations and Gaps in the Public Data

- Data for fruit and vegetable consumption is not publicly available at the county level.
- The BRFSS survey relies on self-reported data, which can introduce bias, resulting in inaccuracies. Respondents may overestimate their consumption of fruits and vegetables or may not accurately recall their intake.
- The BRFSS survey questions on fruit and vegetable consumption do not capture detailed information about portion sizes, types of fruits and vegetables consumed, or preparation methods.
- The response rate to the BRFSS survey can vary. Individuals who do not participate in the survey may differ in important ways from those who do, potentially leading to non-response bias. For example, people with lower incomes or education levels who may have different dietary behaviors might be underrepresented.
- Data is not stratified by income nor participation in public benefit nutrition programs like SNAP or WIC.
- The fruit and vegetable metric does not assess underlying reasons why an individual is or is not consuming two or more fruits and three or more vegetables daily. There is a need for data assessing food utilization barriers to better understand the causes behind the metric's estimate.

Explore More Related Public Data

- America's Health Rankings Fruit and Vegetable Consumption measure
- Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Fruit and Vegetables Data, Trends and Maps
- CDC New Jersey Action Guide on Fruits and Vegetables

Number of Farms

Metric Source: *Census of Agriculture*

The Census of Agriculture is a complete count of U.S. farms and ranches. All rural and urban plots of land count in the census if $1,000 or more of agricultural products were produced and sold during the census year. The Census of Agriculture is conducted every 5 years, and the most recent census took place in 2022, with data released in 2024. The Census provides agriculture data for every state and county in the U.S. The data collected is self-reported by each agricultural operation.

Quick Facts

Definition: The number of farms in the state, including all rural and urban operations, that produced and sold $1,000 or more of agricultural products
Number in New Jersey: 30,674 acres of land over 9,998 farms
Latest Year of Data: 2022
Trends: The total number of farms in New Jersey grew 1.2% from 2017 (9,883 farms) to 2022 (9,998 farms); however, the land in farms decreased by 3.1%, a loss of 22,500 acres during this same period.
Associated Food Security Dimensions: Availability, Sustainability

The State of Farms in New Jersey

- In 2022, New Jersey was home to 9,998 farms with 30,674 acres of land.
- While the number of farms increased by 115 (1.2%) from 2017 to 2022, the acres of land across these farms decreased by 3.1%, a loss of 22,500 acres during this same period.

County-Level Data

Farms in New Jersey, by County, 2017 and 2022	Atlantic	Bergen	Burlington	Camden	Cape May	Cumberland	Essex	New Jersey
Number of Farms								
Total Number of Farms (2017)	450	74	915	197	164	560	22	9,883
Total Number of Farms (2022)	483	73	925	149	171	539	32	9,998
Number Change from 2017 to 2022	33	-1	10	-48	7	-21	10	115
Percent Change from 2017 to 2022	7.3%	-1.4%	1.1%	-24.4%	4.3%	-3.8%	45.5%	1.2%
Land in Farms (acres)								
Land in farms (2017)	29,016	1,051	96,256	9,298	8,135	66,256	191	734,084
Land in Farms (2022)	30,674	771	93,594	7,431	7,821	68,491	(D)	711,502
Number Change from 2017 to 2022	1658	-280	-2662	-1867	-314	2235	-	-22582
Percent Change from 2017 to 2022	5.7%	-26.6%	-2.8%	-20.1%	-3.9%	3.4%	-	-3.1%
Number of farms by acres (2022)								
Average size of farm (acres)	64	11	101	50	46	127	(D)	71
Median size of farm (acres)	17	5	19	16	16	28	1	16
Cropland and market value (2022)								
Total acres of cropland	18,865	230	50,776	5,051	3,638	50,465	(D)	449,717
Average market value of agricultural products sold per farm ($)	$310,268	$145,342	$146,189	$229,410	$103,165	$565,867	$130,277	$148,805
Percent of state agriculture sales	10%	1%	9%	2%	1%	21%	-	100%
Land use practices (2022) (% of farms)								
No till	10%	14%	15%	7%	16%	21%	-	
Reduced till	9%	12%	11%	9%	5%	14%	-	
Intensive till	22%	3%	18%	21%	22%	27%	19%	
Cover crop	19%	4%	14	13	25	19	6	
Percent of Farms that:								
Farm organically	2%	1%	-	1%	1%	2%	-	1%
Sell directly to consumers	19%	32%	17%	17%	29%	13%	22%	19%
Are family farms	94%	84%	92%	92%	89%	92%	78%	94%

Note: (D) Withheld to avoid disclosing data for individual farms. - = No value

Farms in New Jersey, by County, 2017 and 2022 (continued)	Gloucester	Hudson	Hunterdon	Mercer	Middlesex	Monmouth	Morris	New Jersey
Number of Farms								
Total Number of Farms (2017)	580	4	1,604	323	217	838	418	9,883
Total Number of Farms (2022)	546	3	1,623	298	193	931	471	9,998
Number Change from 2017 to 2022	-34	-1	19	-25	-24	93	53	115
Percent Change from 2017 to 2022	-5.9%	-25.0%	1.2%	-7.7%	-11.1%	11.1%	12.7%	1.2%
Land in Farms (acres)								
Land in farms (2017)	49,381	26	101,290	25,230	16,023	39,198	14,514	734,084
Land in Farms (2022)	42,076	(D)	91,588	19,030	12,302	44,226	14,552	711,502
Number Change from 2017 to 2022	-7305	-	-9702	-6200	-3721	5028	38	-22582
Percent Change from 2017 to 2022	-14.8%	-	-9.6%	-24.6%	-23.2%	12.8%	0.3%	-3.1%
Number of farms by acres (2022)								
Average size of farm (acres)	77	(D)	56	64	64	48	31	71
Median size of farm (acres)	16	2	16	20	14	11	12	16
Cropland and market value (2022)								
Total acres of cropland	32,012	(D)	53,916	13,302	8,576	27,235	6,831	449,717
Average market value of agricultural products sold per farm ($)	$250,153	$3,262	$70,975	$93,149	$215,609	$128,391	$72,031	$148,805
Percent of state agriculture sales	%	-	8%	2%	3%	8%	2%	100%
Land use practices (2022) (% of farms)								
No till	24%	-	15%	17%	17%	13%	8%	
Reduced till	9%	-	7%	13%	10%	6%	5%	
Intensive till	26%	-	7%	19%	24%	9%	13%	
Cover crop	20	-	8	10	17	8	7	
Percent of Farms that:								
Farm organically	1%	-	1%	2%	1%	1%	2%	1%
Sell directly to consumers	20%	100%	18%	23%	21%	15%	23%	19%
Are family farms	98%	-	95%	93%	92%	93%	95%	94%

Note: (D) Withheld to avoid disclosing data for individual farms. - = No value

Farms in New Jersey, by County, 2017 and 2022 (continued)	Ocean	Passaic	Salem	Somerset	Sussex	Union	Warren	New Jersey
Number of Farms								
Total Number of Farms (2017)	260	89	781	452	1,008	9	918	9,883
Total Number of Farms (2022)	224	99	779	469	1,052	15	923	9,998
Number Change from 2017 to 2022	-36	10	-2	17	44	6	5	115
Percent Change from 2017 to 2022	-13.8%	11.2%	-0.3%	3.8%	4.4%	66.7%	0.5%	1.2%
Land in Farms (acres)								
Land in farms (2017)	8,510	1,893	98,239	35,862	59,766	75	73,874	734,084
Land in Farms (2022)	6,961	1,830	97,465	30,015	71,688	139	70,747	711,502
Number Change from 2017 to 2022	-1549	-63	-774	-5847	11922	64	-3127	-22582
Percent Change from 2017 to 2022	-18.2%	-3.3%	-0.8%	-16.3%	19.9%	85.3%	-4.2%	-3.1%
Number of farms by acres (2022)								
Average size of farm (acres)	31	18	125	64	68	9	77	71
Median size of farm (acres)	10	9	23	18	20	1	20	16
Cropland and market value (2022)								
Total acres of cropland	2,721	412	79,218	17,425	35,048	67	43,894	449,717
Average market value of agricultural products sold per farm ($)	$137,969	$47,301	$177,253	$49,551	$29,435	$20,974	$138,959	$148,805
Percent of state agriculture sales	2%	-	9%	2%	2%	-	9%	100%
Land use practices (2022) (% of farms)								
No till	8%	18%	26%	14%	8%	-	14%	
Reduced till	4%	1%	14%	7%	7%	-	10%	
Intensive till	13%	5%	23%	9%	10%	13%	12%	
Cover crop	7	4	20	7	8	53	9	
Percent of Farms that:								
Farm organically	-	1%	-	2%	1%	-	1%	1%
Sell directly to consumers	32%	27%	10%	21%	20%	7%	20%	19%
Are family farms	93%	94%	96%	92%	95%	53%	95%	94%

Note: (D) Withheld to avoid disclosing data for individual farms. - = No value

Limitations and Gaps in the Public Data

- The Census relies on self-reported information from farmers and agricultural producers. Self-reporting can introduce biases, inaccuracies, or inconsistencies, particularly for smaller operations.
- Some farmers or operations may not respond to the census, leading to gaps or underrepresentation of certain types of farms or farming practices.
- The Census of Agriculture is conducted every five years, meaning that the data may not capture real-time changes in agriculture. Rapid developments, such as technological advancements, economic shifts, or climate-related impacts, may occur between censuses.
- While the Census tracks farm-related income, it may not provide a comprehensive picture of the overall financial well-being of farmers, including off-farm income, access to healthcare, retirement savings, and other socioeconomic factors.
- The Census provides an overview of farms and the food they produce, but it does not capture the amount or proportion of those foods that stay local to New Jersey.

Explore More Related Public Data

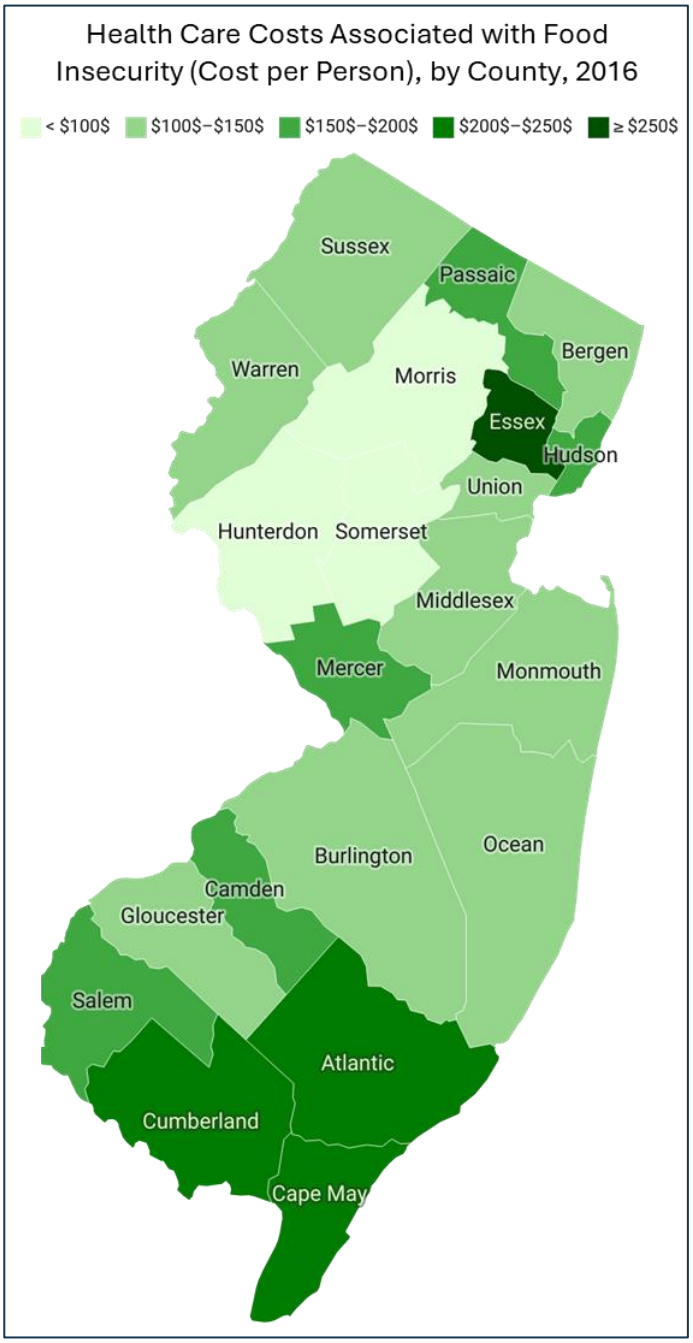
- Rutgers Food System Dashboard: Agriculture/Land Use data
- 2022 Full Census of Agriculture Report and 2022 State and County Profiles
- NJ Office of Information Technology Open Data Center - Agriculture

IMPACTS OF FOOD INSECURITY

Health Care Costs Associated with Food Insecurity

Metric Source: *Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) research*

Health care costs associated with food insecurity is the total dollar amount of excess health expenditures that individuals experiencing food insecurity have in one year for a given geographic area. The metric includes all health care costs (e.g., inpatient admissions, outpatient visits, medication costs). Researchers calculated this metric by comparing the average health care costs of individuals experiencing food insecurity and those with food security to estimate the national average healthcare cost per person ($1,834/adult). This national average is then adjusted for local (state or county) costs and health care utilization and multiplied by the number of adults and children experiencing food insecurity to get a total estimated health care cost associated with food insecurity. This metric can also be represented as a cost per person by dividing the total estimated cost by the total population.



Quick Facts

Definition: The total amount of health care costs that are associated with food insecurity
Amount in New Jersey: $1.3 billion in 2016, or $150 per New Jerseyan
Latest Year of Data: 2016

Status of Healthcare Costs of Food Insecurity in New Jersey

- Health care costs associated with food insecurity total over $1.3 billion in New Jersey
- This translates to $150 in additional healthcare costs per person across the state.
- Per person health care costs associated with food insecurity vary widely across New Jersey counties, ranging from $82/person in Hunterdon County to $262/person in Essex County.

County-Level Data

Health Care Costs Associated with Food Insecurity, 2016

	Cost Factor*	Estimated Cost ($)	Total Population	Cost Per Person ($)[a]	Rank Cost Per Capita [Lowest (1) to Highest]
Atlantic	1.17	54,910,466	274,026	200	18
Bergen	1.18	114,256,246	930,310	123	5
Burlington	1.05	61,230,357	450,236	136	11
Camden	1.15	92,976,949	511,145	182	16
Cape May	1.12	19,280,909	95,404	202	19
Cumberland	1.17	31,647,213	155,744	203	20
Essex	1.21	207,941,388	792,586	262	21
Gloucester	1.15	43,328,533	291,286	149	12
Hudson	1.27	122,068,853	668,526	183	17
Hunterdon	0.97	10,307,226	125,708	82	1
Mercer	1.10	59,548,414	371,101	160	14
Middlesex	1.14	109,453,686	831,852	132	7
Monmouth	1.13	80,995,291	627,532	129	6
Morris	1.06	44,308,774	498,215	89	2
Ocean	1.14	79,282,566	586,166	135	9
Passaic	1.23	80,076,301	507,204	158	13
Salem	1.08	11,607,913	64,504	180	15
Somerset	1.05	32,007,899	331,686	97	3
Sussex	1.03	14,450,551	144,694	100	4
Union	1.03	72,898,707	550,436	132	8
Warren	1.13	14,448,274	107,095	135	10
New Jersey	1.14	1,339,957,000	8,915,456	150	
U.S.	1.00	56,202,921,998	318,558,162	176	

*The estimate of health care costs associated with food insecurity in adults is $1,834/adult in the U.S. The 'Cost Factor' adjusts this national estimate to state and county prices and intensity of care. The resulting cost factor is greater than 1 for areas with higher-than-average costs and less than 1 for areas with lower-than-average costs.

a. Per person refers to entire population, not only to the food insecure population within the geographic area.

b. state total and county sum is not equivalent due to rounding and variation in methodology.

Methodology

Methodology: Complex methodology based on multiple data sources representing different years, analyzed through econometric modeling to estimate healthcare costs.[1]

Data source: Original research published on the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC): State-Level and County-Level Estimates of Health Care Costs Associated with Food Insecurity, by Seth A. Berkowitz, MD, MPH; Sanjay Basu, MD, PhD; Craig Gundersen, PhD; and Hilary K. Seligman, MD, MAS

[1] The researchers linked 2011–2013 National Health Interview Survey/Medical Expenditure Panel Survey data (NHIS/MEPS) data to estimate average health care costs associated with food insecurity, Map the Meal Gap data to estimate state-level and county-level food insecurity prevalence (2016), and Dartmouth Atlas of Health Care data to account for local variation in health care prices and intensity of use. They used targeted maximum likelihood estimation to estimate health care costs associated with food insecurity, separately for adults and children, adjusting for sociodemographic characteristics.

Citation: Berkowitz SA, Basu S, Gundersen C, Seligman HK. State-Level and County-Level Estimates of Health Care Costs Associated with Food Insecurity. Prev Chronic Dis 2019;16:180549. DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.5888/pcd16.180549

Limitations and Gaps in the Public Data

- This data was published in 2019 using data from 2011-2016. Health care costs have increased since this time, meaning this metric may underestimate the current health care costs associated with food insecurity.
- The researchers that published this data specify that the cost estimates are likely conservative because there is evidence that the Medical Expenditure Panel Survey data they used in their calculation underestimates health care expenditures, and they did not consider indirect costs (like lost productivity owing to illness).
- The researchers combined data from different surveys and years to calculate this metric, which can make the data less reliable. County estimates of food insecurity are from Feeding America's Map the Meal Gap and are based on econometric modeling of data from the Current Population Survey (CPS), which is meant for state and national estimates and applied to county-level data from the American Community Survey.

Explore More Related Public Data

- Feeding America Research's The Healthcare Costs of Food Insecurity dashboard and data brief
- USDA Economic Research Service Food Security in the US report series
- Household Pulse Survey
- Map the Meal Gap

Low Birth Weight

Metric Source: *National Center for Health Statistics, National Vital Statistics System (NVSS)*

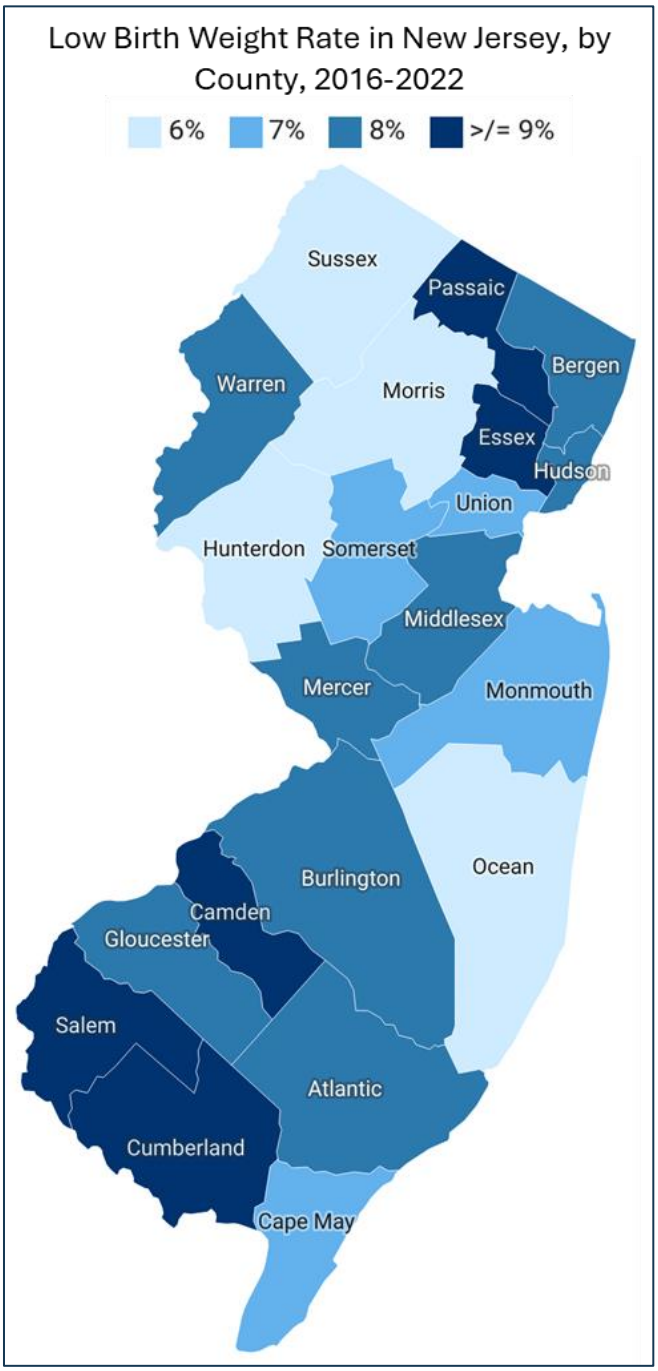
Proper nutrition in early life is critical for growth and development. Food insecurity is associated with pregnancy complications like low birth weight. Low birth weight is an important metric to assess because it increases the risk for infant mortality and other health risks, including more intensive care needed at birth and a higher risk of developmental disabilities and chronic illnesses throughout life. The low-birth-weight rate is the percentage of live births where the infant weighed under 2,500 grams (approximately 5 pounds, 8 ounces), classified as 'low weight'. The data for this metric are obtained by County Health Rankings from the National Center for Health Statistics' National Vital Statistics System.

Quick Facts

Definition: Percent of infants born with low birth weight
Prevalence in New Jersey: 8%
Latest Year of Data: 2024 (using an average of 2016-2022 data)
Trends: *Stable*. The percentage of live births with low birth weight has been at about 8% since 2011.

Status of Low-Birth-Weight Rate in New Jersey

- The overall rate of low birth weight in New Jersey has remained around 8% since 2011.
- Cumberland County has the highest rate in the state (10%), and four counties share the lowest rate (6%): Hunterdon, Morris, Ocean, and Sussex (2016-2022).
- Most counties' low birth weight rates have changed only slightly from 2001 to 2022, with only Essex County experiencing more than a one percentage point drop in the rate (from 11% in 2001-2007 to 9% in 2016-2022).
- Low birth weight rates among Black infants are higher than the rate among white infants in New Jersey.
    - While the low-birth-weight rate for white infants ranges from 6% to 9%, the rate ranges from 9% to 15% for Black infants.



  - This disparity is widest in Ocean County: 14% for Black infants compared to 6% for white infants. The Black rate is 2.3 times as high.
  - The smallest gap is in Sussex County, where the rate of low birth weight for Black infants (9%) is still 1.5 times as high as the rate for white infants (6%).
- Likewise, the rate of low-birth-weight among Hispanic infants is as high or higher than the rate among white infants in all New Jersey counties except Cumberland County. The highest disparity in rates of low-birth-weight rate between Hispanic and white infants is in Salem County, where the rate for Hispanic infants is 1.4 times as high as the rate for white infants.

County-Level Data

Low Birth Weight Rate in New Jersey, by County, seven-year averages 2001-2022

	2001-2007	2008-2014	2016-2022*	Percent point change from 2001-2007 to 2016-2022
Atlantic	9%	8%	8%	-1
Bergen	7%	8%	8%	+1
Burlington	8%	8%	8%	0
Camden	9%	9%	**9%**	0
Cape May	7%	7%	7%	0
Cumberland	10%	10%	**10%**	0
Essex	11%	10%	**9%**	-2
Gloucester	8%	8%	8%	0
Hudson	8%	9%	8%	0
Hunterdon	6%	7%	6%	0
Mercer	9%	9%	8%	-1
Middlesex	8%	8%	8%	0
Monmouth	8%	8%	7%	-1
Morris	7%	7%	6%	-1
Ocean	7%	6%	6%	-1
Passaic	9%	9%	**9%**	0
Salem	8%	8%	**9%**	+1
Somerset	8%	8%	7%	-1
Sussex	6%	7%	6%	0
Union	8%	8%	7%	-1
Warren	8%	7%	8%	0
New Jersey	8%	8%	8%	0

*Bolded county percentages indicate the rate is higher than the state average rate

Low Birth Weight Rate (%) in New Jersey, by County, seven-year averages 2010-2016 and 2014-2020

	Black			Hispanic			White			Disparity in Low Birth Weight Rate (2014-2020)*	
	2010-2016	2014-2020	Percentage Point Change	2010-2016	2014-2020	Percentage Point Change	2010-2016	2014-2020	Percentage Point Change	Black/ White Disparity	Hispanic/ White Disparity
Atlantic	11	12	**1**	7	7	0	7	7	0	1.7	1.0
Bergen	12	13	**1**	8	8	0	7	7	0	1.9	1.1
Burlington	12	12	0	8	8	0	7	7	0	1.7	1.1
Camden	13	14	**1**	9	9	0	7	7	0	2.0	1.3
Cape May	15	13	-2	8	7	-1	6	7	**1**	1.9	1.0
Cumberland	15	15	0	8	8	0	9	9	0	1.7	0.9
Essex	13	13	0	8	7	-1	7	6	-1	2.2	1.2
Gloucester	13	13	0	8	8	0	8	7	-1	1.9	1.1
Hudson	13	13	0	7	8	**1**	8	7	-1	1.9	1.1
Hunterdon	10	13	**3**	7	8	**1**	7	6	-1	2.2	1.3
Mercer	13	13	0	7	7	0	7	6	-1	2.2	1.2
Middlesex	11	11	0	7	7	0	8	7	-1	1.6	1.0
Monmouth	13	13	0	7	7	0	7	6	-1	2.2	1.2
Morris	11	11	0	6	6	0	7	6	-1	1.8	1.0
Ocean	12	14	**2**	7	7	0	6	6	0	2.3	1.2
Passaic	13	14	**1**	8	8	0	7	7	0	2.0	1.1
Salem	12	12	0	7	10	**3**	7	7	0	1.7	1.4
Somerset	11	11	0	7	7	0	7	6	-1	1.8	1.2
Sussex	9	9	0	6	6	0	6	6	0	1.5	1.0
Union	12	12	0	7	7	0	7	6	-1	2.0	1.2
Warren	11	12	**1**	7	9	**2**	7	7	0	1.7	1.3

Note: Bolded percentage point changes indicate that the rate is trending worse over time

*This is the number of times that the low birth weight rate is for the Black and Hispanic populations compared to white populations in the same geography. E.g. 'The rate of low birth weight for Black infants in Ocean County is 2.3 times the rate for white infants. This number is calculated by dividing the low birth weight rate for Black and Hispanic populations by the rate for white populations.

Methodology

Methodology: Low Birthweight is the percentage of live births where the infant weighed less than 2,500 grams (approximately 5 lbs., 8 oz.).
Numerator: Number of live births for which the infants weighed less than 2,500 grams (approximately 5 lbs., 8 oz.)
Denominator: Total number of live births for which weight was recorded
Data source: County Health Rankings, Low Birthweight analysis of National Center for Health Statistics, National Vital Statistics System (NVSS) data

Limitations and Gaps in the Public Data

- To obtain county-level data by race and ethnicity, multiple years of data are combined to create large enough samples for an accurate estimate. This means the measure is reflective of the average of those multiple years and may be below or above the current state of the issue, depending on how it is trending. Single year estimates by county alone are publicly available (see NJ State Health Assessment Data), but not by county and race/ethnicity.
- Updates to race categories in the 2024 County Health Rankings Annual Data Release mean that comparisons with previous years should be made with caution. The 2024 release uses 2016-2022 average data.
- Data is not publicly available for other race and ethnicity populations.
- Low-birth-weight rates are not available at the state level for race and ethnicity groups in the County Health Rankings public data tool.

Explore More Related Public Data

- New Jersey State Health Assessment Data for Low Birth Weight and Birth, Infants, and Maternal Health
- CDC WONDER database and Stats of the States

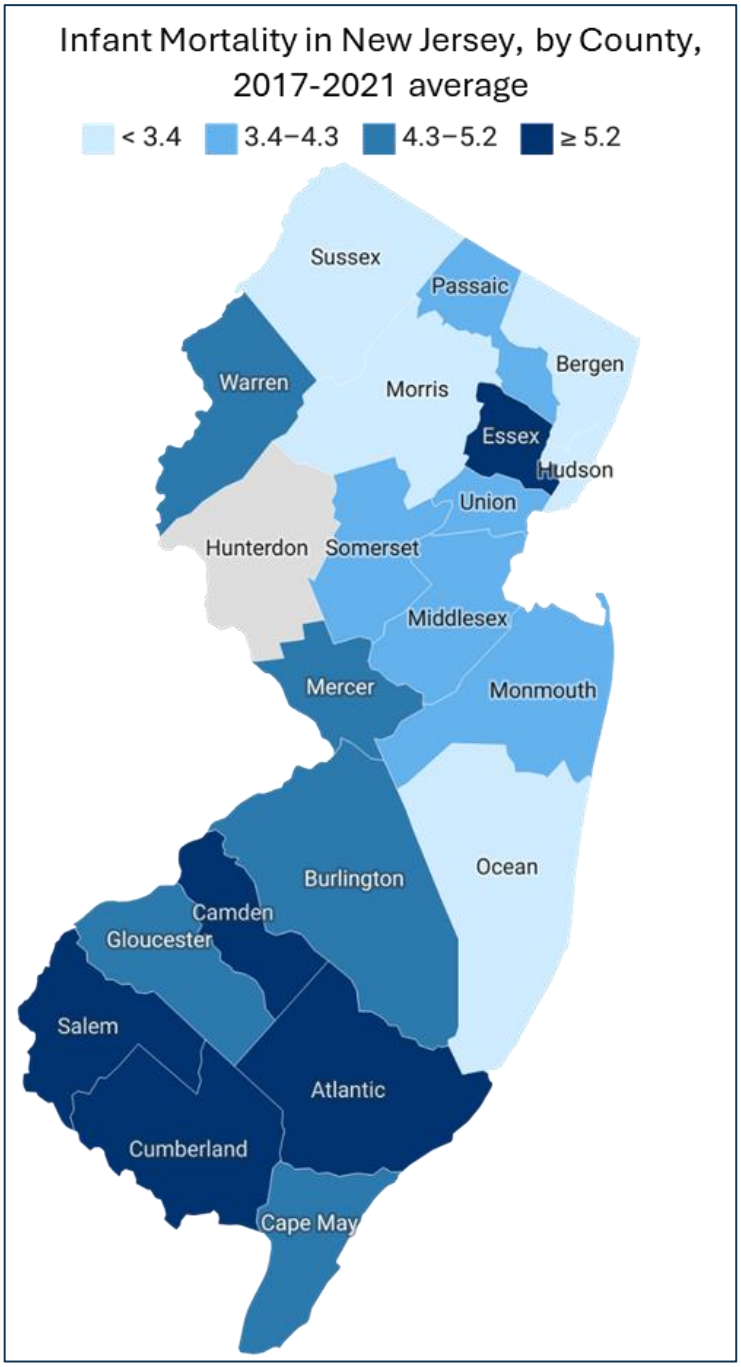
Infant Mortality

Metric Source: *New Jersey Department of Health, State Health Assessment Data*

Infant mortality is the death of an infant before their first birthday. The infant mortality rate is the number of infant deaths for every 1,000 live births. The leading causes of infant death are congenital anomalies, short gestation/low birth weight, and Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS). Deaths are counted in the county of residence, regardless of where the death occurred.

Quick Facts

Definition: Number of infant deaths per 1,000 live births
Prevalence in New Jersey: 3.5 per 1,000
Latest Year of Data: 2021
Trends: *Improving*. Infant mortality in New Jersey has steadily declined from 6.4 in 2001 to 3.5 in 2021
Source: New Jersey Department of Health (NJSHAD)

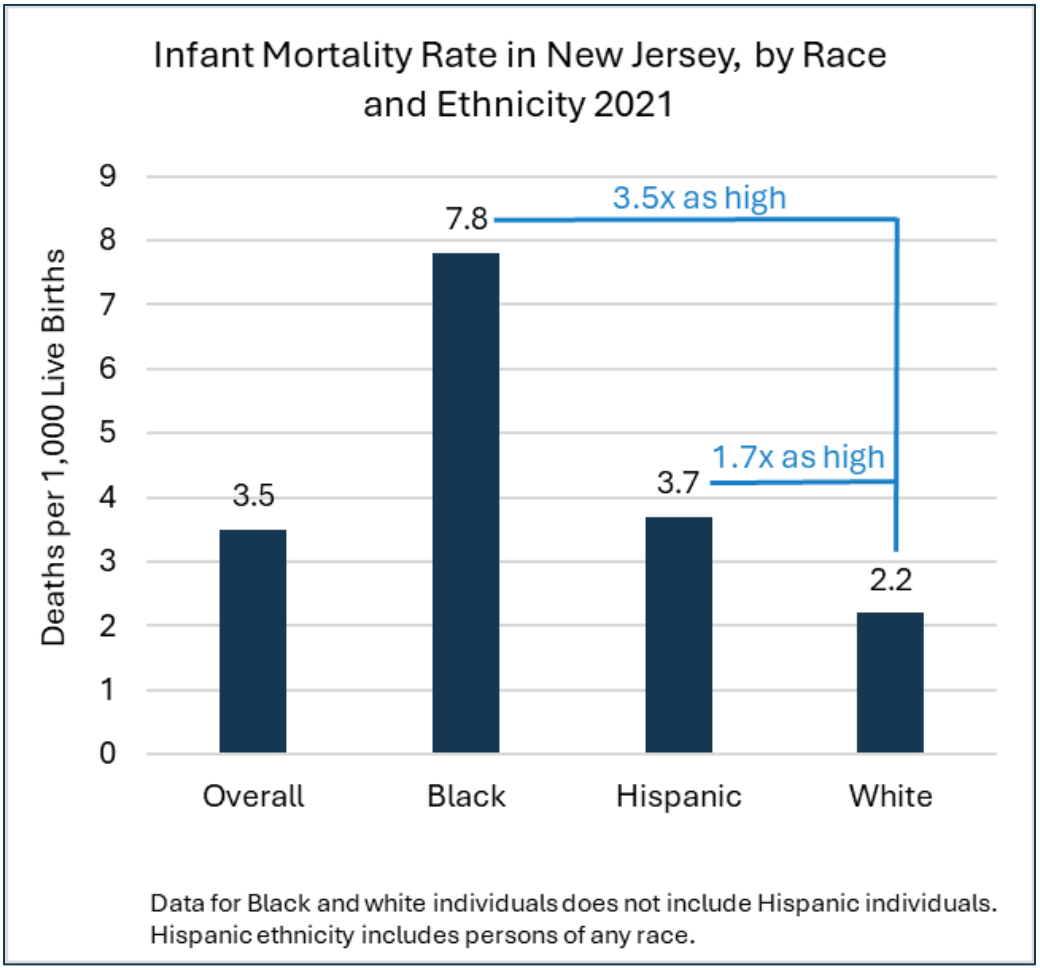


Status of Infant Mortality in New Jersey

- The infant mortality rate in New Jersey is lower than the U.S. rate. In 2021, the infant mortality rate was 5.4 deaths per 1,000 births nationally, compared to 3.5 deaths per 1,000 births in New Jersey. This places New Jersey at the fourth-lowest rate in the nation.
- In 2021, New Jersey had the second-lowest infant mortality rate across states for both Hispanic and white populations and the fourth-lowest state rate for the Black populations.[2]
- The infant mortality rate in New Jersey has declined over the past two decades, from 6.4 per 1,000 live births in 2001 to 3.5 in 2021, a 45% decrease. However, the infant mortality rate varies widely by county and by race and ethnicity.

[2] Calculated among states with 20 or more infant deaths in these race and ethnicity categories.

- The infant mortality rate ranges from 2.8 in Hudson County to 7.0 in Cumberland County.
- Four counties have statistically significantly higher rates of infant mortality than the state average: Essex (5.3), Atlantic (6.5), Camden (6.6), and Cumberland (7.0).
- Although New Jersey's infant mortality rates are low compared to the U.S. overall, New Jersey has the second-largest disparity between Black and white infant mortality rates. Disparity is calculated as the ratio of one group's rate to another's. The infant mortality rate for Black populations (7.8) is 3.5 times as high as the rate for white populations (2.2), and the rate for Hispanic populations (3.7) is 1.7 times as high as the rate for white populations (2.2).



County-Level Data

Infant Mortality in New Jersey, by Mother's County of Residence, 2017-2021 average				
	Deaths per 1,000 Live Births	**95% Confidence Interval, Lower Limit**	**95% Confidence Interval, Upper Limit**	**Ranking Deaths per 1,000 Live Births** [Best (1) to Worst]
Atlantic	**6.5**	5.2	7.9	17
Bergen	3.1	2.6	3.6	4
Burlington	4.5	3.6	5.4	12
Camden	**6.6**	5.7	7.5	19
Cape May	5.2	2.9	7.5	15
Cumberland	**7.0**	5.2	8.7	20
Essex	**5.3**	4.6	5.9	16
Gloucester	4.6	3.5	5.8	13
Hudson	2.8	2.3	3.2	1
Hunterdon	*	*	*	*
Mercer	5.1	4.1	6	14
Middlesex	3.6	3.1	4.2	7
Monmouth	3.4	2.8	4.1	6
Morris	2.8	2.2	3.5	2
Ocean	2.9	2.4	3.4	3
Passaic	3.6	2.9	4.2	8
Salem	6.5	3.8	9.3	18
Somerset	3.6	2.6	4.5	9
Sussex	3.2	1.8	4.6	5
Union	4.1	3.4	4.8	10
Warren	4.4	2.5	6.3	11
New Jersey**	4.0	3.9	4.2	
U.S.	5.6			

Note: Bolded numbers in the Deaths per 1,000 Live Births column indicate that the county rate is statistically significantly higher than the state rate, meaning the range of the county confidence interval is fully above the state confidence interval.

* The rate for Hunterdon County is not displayed because it does not meet National Center for Health Statistics standards of statistical reliability.

**The New Jersey rate in this table is different from the "Status of Infant Mortality in New Jersey" section and bar chart because it is a five-year average (versus a 1-year measure) to make it comparable with the counties' 5-year averages. 5-year averages are necessary at the county level to help ensure an accurate estimate.

Methodology

Methodology: Infant mortality is a rate.
Numerator: Total number of infant deaths
Denominator: Total number of live births
Data source: New Jersey Department of Health, State Health Assessment Data, Complete Health Indicator Report of Infant Mortality

Limitations and Gaps in the Public Data

- Infant death is relatively rare. In counties with smaller populations, the rates of infant death can fluctuate significantly from year to year. These fluctuations are often due to normal variations and do not necessarily indicate a real change in the underlying risk of infant death in the county. Therefore, to obtain county-level data, multiple years of data are combined to create large enough samples for an accurate estimate. This means the measure reflects the average of those years and may be below or above the current state of the issue, depending on how it is trending.
- Data is not publicly available for other race and ethnicity populations.
- Infant mortality rates by county or race/ethnicity are publicly available in the NJ State Health Assessment Data, but not by county and race/ethnicity, likely due to small sample sizes.

Explore More Related Public Data

- The NJ State Health Assessment Data Infant Death Data Query allows users to create tables, graphs, and maps of New Jersey infant deaths by maternal age, race/ethnicity, birthplace, marital status, education, and other characteristics
- County Health Rankings & Roadmaps Infant Mortality
- CDC WONDER database and Stats of the States

Diabetes Prevalence

Metric Source: *Behavioral Risk Factor Survey, Center for Health Statistics, New Jersey Department of Health (NJ DoH)*

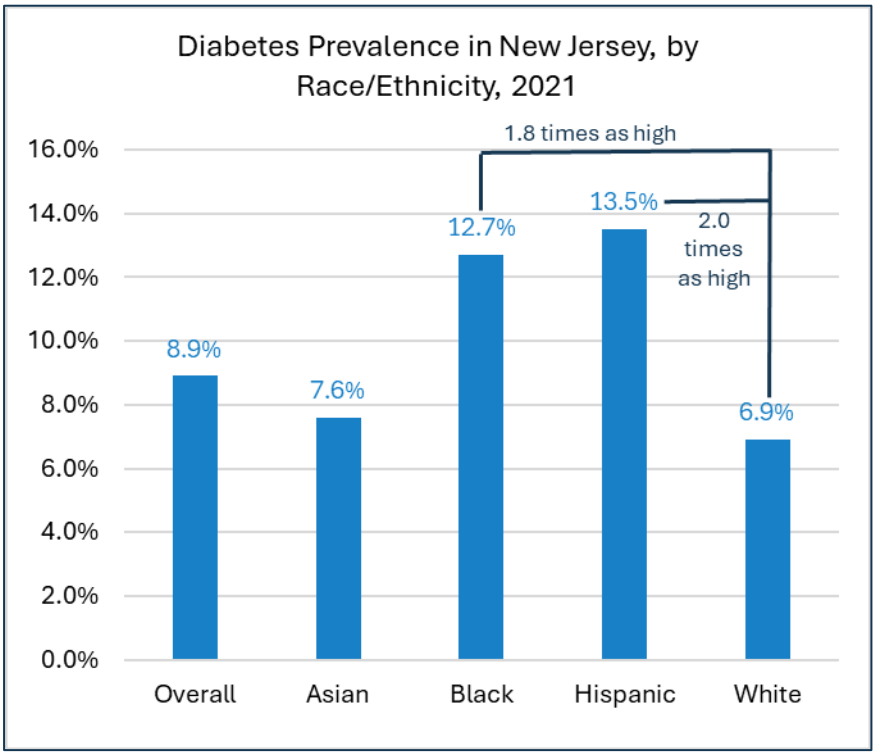
Diabetes prevalence is defined as an estimate of the percentage of adults aged 18 and above with diagnosed diabetes of any kind. This prevalence is then age-adjusted to fairly compare counties with differing age structures. Data to calculate diabetes prevalence is obtained from the New Jersey Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) survey, an annual telephone survey conducted in all states. The survey asks respondents to answer the question, "Has a doctor ever told you that you have diabetes?"

Quick Facts

Definition: Percent of adults diagnosed with diabetes
Prevalence in New Jersey: 8.9%
Latest Year of Data: 2021
Trends: *Stable*. From 2011 to 2021, the percent of adults diagnosed with diabetes has fluctuated from year to year but hovers around 8-9%

Status of Diabetes in New Jersey

- 8.9% of individuals aged 18 and above in New Jersey have been diagnosed with diabetes, compared to 10.3% in the U.S. overall.
- Diabetes prevalence varies widely by geography in New Jersey, with some counties having 2 to 3 times the rate of other counties. Diabetes prevalence ranges from 5.4% in Hunterdon County to 15.2% in Salem County.
- Diabetes prevalence also varies greatly by race and ethnicity in the state. In 2021, Hispanic adults (13.5%) and Black adults (12.7%) have a higher prevalence of diagnosed diabetes compared to white adults (6.9%) and Asian adults (7.6%).
- The prevalence of diabetes for Black adults is 1.8 times as high as the prevalence for white adults, and the prevalence for Hispanic adults is twice as high as the prevalence for white adults.



County-Level Data

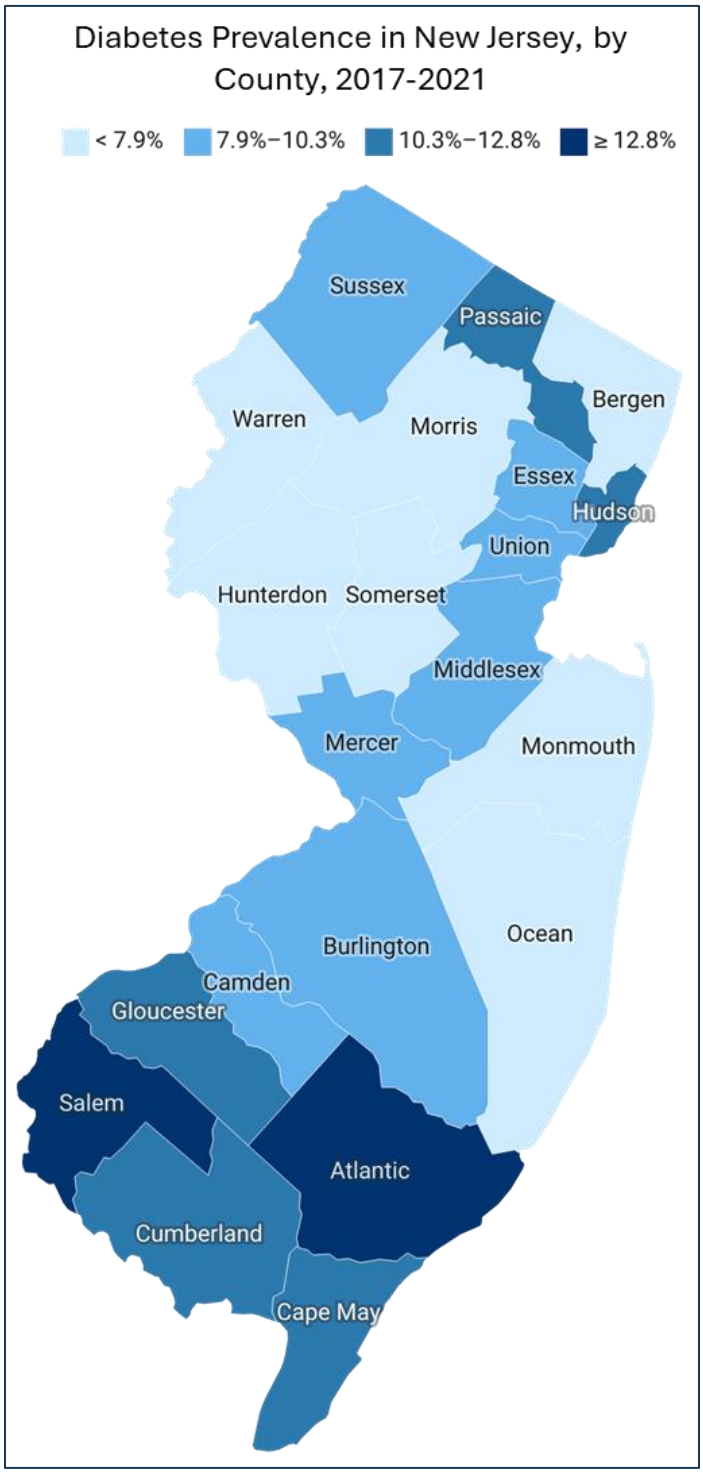
Diabetes Prevalence in New Jersey, by County, 2018-2021* average		
	Percentage of Adults (Age-adjusted)	**Ranking** [Best (1) to Worst]
Atlantic	**13.0%**	20
Bergen	6.0%	2
Burlington	**9.8%**	13
Camden	**10.2%**	14
Cape May	**10.9%**	16
Cumberland	**11.2%**	18
Essex	9.2%	10
Gloucester	**11.1%**	17
Hudson	**11.8%**	19
Hunterdon*	5.4%	1
Mercer	9.1%	9
Middlesex	9.3%	11
Monmouth	7.0%	6
Morris	6.7%	3
Ocean	7.4%	7
Passaic	**10.7%**	15
Salem	**15.2%**	21
Somerset	6.7%	4
Sussex	9.3%	12
Union	8.6%	8
Warren	6.7%	5
New Jersey**	8.8%	

Source: Behavioral Risk Factor Survey, Center for Health Statistics, New Jersey Department of Health, visualized within the NJSHAD Complete Health Indicator Report of Diabetes (Diagnosed) Prevalence

Note: Bolded numbers in the Percentage of Adults column indicate that the county rate is statistically significantly higher than the state rate, meaning the range of the county confidence interval is fully above the state confidence interval.

* 2019 data is not included in the average estimated prevalence. No data were collected in 2019

**The New Jersey rate in this table is different from the "Status of Diabetes in New Jersey" section, because it is a three-year average to make it comparable with the counties' 3-year averages. 3-year averages are necessary at the county level to help ensure an accurate measure.



Methodology

Methodology: Diabetes prevalence is a percentage.
Numerator: Number of adult (18 and older) New Jersey respondents who responded "yes" (within the survey year) to the BRFSS question: "Has a doctor, nurse, or other health professional ever told you that you have diabetes?".
Denominator: Number of New Jersey adults (18 and older) who responded to the BRFSS within the survey year.
Data source: Behavioral Risk Factor Survey, Center for Health Statistics, New Jersey Department of Health, visualized within the NJSHAD Complete Health Indicator Report of Diabetes (Diagnosed) Prevalence

Limitations and Gaps in the Public Data

- Comparing rates between different states can be challenging because the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) survey is conducted separately in each state. This means that the sampling and statistical methods used may vary from state to state.
- The New Jersey Behavioral Risk Factor Survey aims to represent all non-institutionalized adult residents of the state. However, due to resource limitations, the survey does not include adults who have limited access to phone service or who are not fluent in English or Spanish.
- Like all surveys, the data from the BRFSS may contain errors due to nonresponse (e.g., people refusing to participate or answer certain questions) and inaccurate responses (e.g., responses influenced by social desirability or memory errors).
- Data is not publicly available at the county level by race/ethnicity.
- Many people with diabetes don't know that they have it. Data for this metric are only about diagnosed diabetes.

Explore More Related Public Data

- CDC's National Diabetes Statistics Report
- CDC's United States Diabetes Surveillance System
- County Health Rankings & Roadmaps' Diabetes Prevalence indicator

Adult Obesity Prevalence

Metric Source: *Behavioral Risk Factor Survey, Center for Health Statistics, NJ DoH*

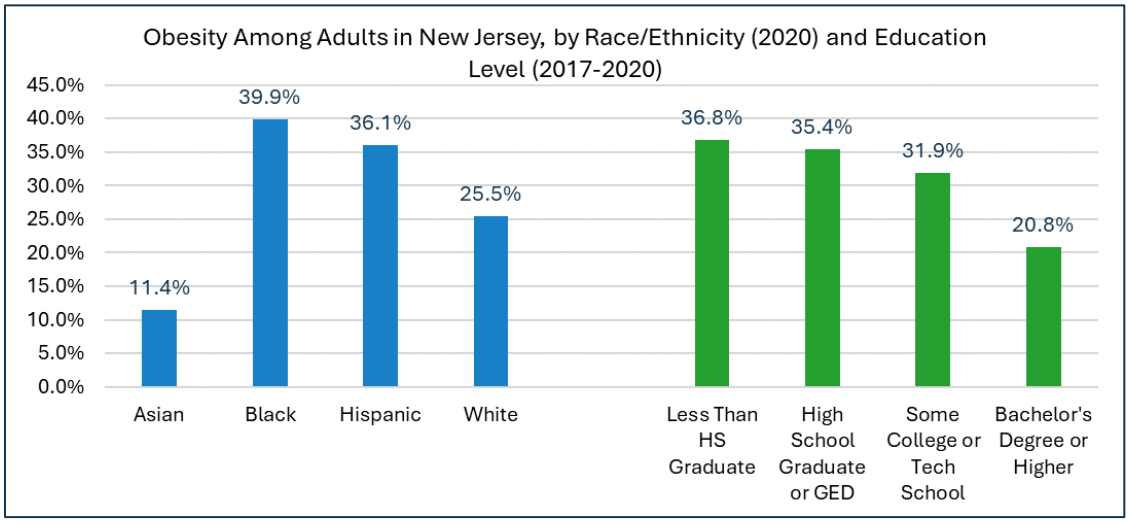
Adult Obesity is estimated from responses to the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) survey. It is the percentage of the adult population (ages 20 and older) that reports a body mass index (BMI) greater than or equal to 30 kilograms (weight) divided by the meters squared (height) ($30kg/m^2$). Participants are asked to self-report their height and weight; BMIs are calculated from these reported values.

Quick Facts

Definition: Percent of adults with obesity
Prevalence in New Jersey: 28.6%
Latest Year of Data: 2020
Trends: *Getting Worse*. The prevalence of obesity among adults increased from 23.8% in 2011 to 28.6% in 2020

Status of Adult Obesity in New Jersey

- The prevalence of adult obesity is slightly lower in New Jersey than in the U.S. overall. In 2020, the prevalence of obesity among adults in New Jersey was 28.6% compared to 32.2% in the U.S.
- Adult obesity prevalence varies widely by geography in New Jersey, ranging from 20.2% in Bergen County to 49.5% in Salem County.
- Adult obesity prevalence also varies greatly by race and ethnicity in the state. In 2020, Hispanic adults (36.1%), and Black adults (39.9%) had a higher prevalence of obesity compared to white adults (25.5%) and Asian adults (11.4%).
- Adult obesity prevalence is also broken down by education level. The higher the education level, the lower the prevalence of adult obesity. In 2017-2020, adults with less than a high school education (36.8%), high-school graduates or GED (35.4%), and some college or technical school (31.9%) all had statistically significantly higher prevalence of obesity than adults with a bachelor's degree or higher (20.8%).



County-Level Data

Adult Obesity Prevalence in New Jersey, by County, 2017-2020* average

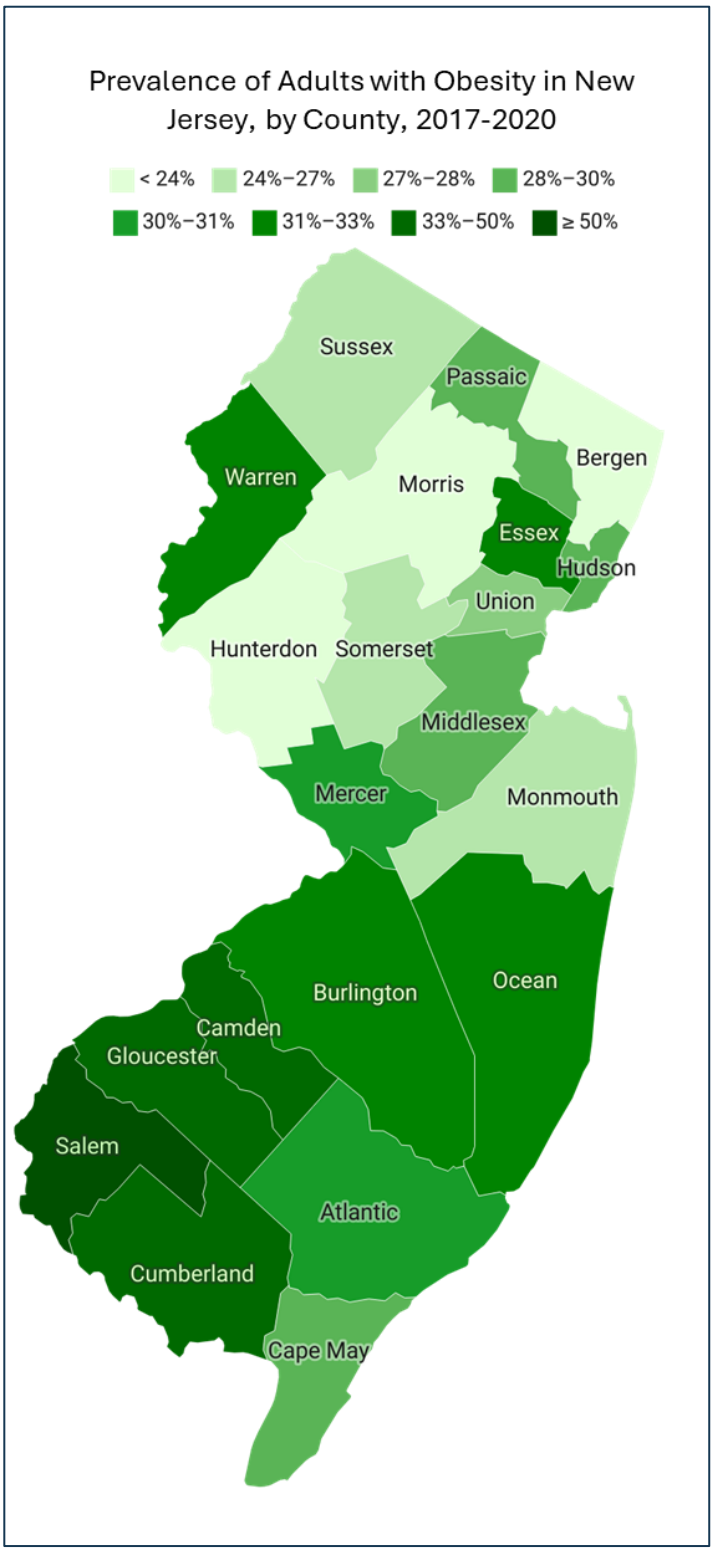
	Percentage of Adults (Age-adjusted)	**Ranking** [Best (1) to Worst]
Atlantic	**29.9%**	13
Bergen	20.2%	1
Burlington	**30.5%**	14
Camden	**33.2%**	18
Cape May	28.1%	8
Cumberland	**35.1%**	19
Essex	**31.4%**	17
Gloucester	**36.4%**	20
Hudson	28.8%	11
Hunterdon*	21.7%	3
Mercer	**29.6%**	12
Middlesex	28.4%	10
Monmouth	23.5%	4
Morris	20.4%	2
Ocean	**30.7%**	15
Passaic	28.2%	9
Salem	**49.5%**	21
Somerset	24.8%	5
Sussex	25.1%	6
Union	27.0%	7
Warren	**30.7%**	16
New Jersey**	27.9%	

Source: Behavioral Risk Factor Survey, Center for Health Statistics, New Jersey Department of Health, visualized within the NJSHAD Complete Health Indicator Report of Obesity Among Adults

Note: Bolded numbers in the Percentage of Adults column indicate that the county rate is statistically significantly higher than the state rate, meaning the range of the county confidence interval is fully above the state confidence interval.

* 2019 data is not included in the average estimated prevalence. No data were collected in 2019

**The New Jersey rate in this table is different from the "Status of Adult Obesity in New Jersey" section, because it is a three-year average to make it comparable with the counties' 3-year averages. 3-year averages are necessary at the county level to help ensure an accurate measure.



Methodology

Methodology: Adult Obesity Prevalence is a percentage.
Numerator: Number of respondents who have a body mass index (BMI) greater than or equal to 30.0 kg/m2 calculated from self-reported weight and height
Denominator: Number of adult respondents for whom BMI can be calculated from their self-reported weight and height (excludes unknowns or refusals for weight and height)
Data source: Behavioral Risk Factor Survey, Center for Health Statistics, New Jersey Department of Health, visualized within the NJSHAD Complete Health Indicator Report of Obesity Among Adults

Limitations and Gaps in the Public Data

- Comparing rates between different states can be challenging because the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) survey is conducted separately in each state. This means that the sampling and statistical methods used may vary from state to state.
- The New Jersey Behavioral Risk Factor Survey aims to represent all non-institutionalized adult residents of the state. However, due to resource limitations, the survey does not include adults who have limited access to phone service or who are not fluent in English or Spanish.
- Like all surveys, the data from the BRFSS may contain errors due to nonresponse (e.g., people refusing to participate or answer certain questions) and faulty measurements (e.g., responses influenced by social desirability or memory errors).
- Data is not publicly available at the county level by race/ethnicity.
- BMI as a measure of obesity is valuable as a population-level indicator. For individuals, BMI does not differentiate between fat and muscle, nor does it account for differences in age or sex and should be considered with other factors, such as blood pressure, cholesterol levels, and physical examination.[3]

Explore More Related Public Data

- County Health Rankings & Roadmaps Adult Obesity Indicator
- CDC Adult Obesity Prevalence Maps
- NJSHAD Obesity among High School Students Indicator Report
- CDC Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System (YRBSS) New Jersey Results

[3] https://www.cdc.gov/bmi/about/index.html