



2023 Census Data on Income & Poverty in Tennessee

October 31, 2024

Key Takeaways

- After accounting for inflation, Tennesseans' 2023 median household income remained relatively unchanged, while the poverty rate grew.
 - Compared to white Tennesseans, the difference in poverty rates shrank for both black and Hispanic Tennesseans between 2010 and 2023, but the income gap narrowed only for Hispanics.
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The U.S. Census Bureau released new data in September 2024 on income, poverty, education, and health insurance coverage from 2023. These metrics paint a picture of the social and economic circumstances across America. Here's what stands out from Tennessee's 2023 income and poverty estimates.*

Income and Poverty in Tennessee

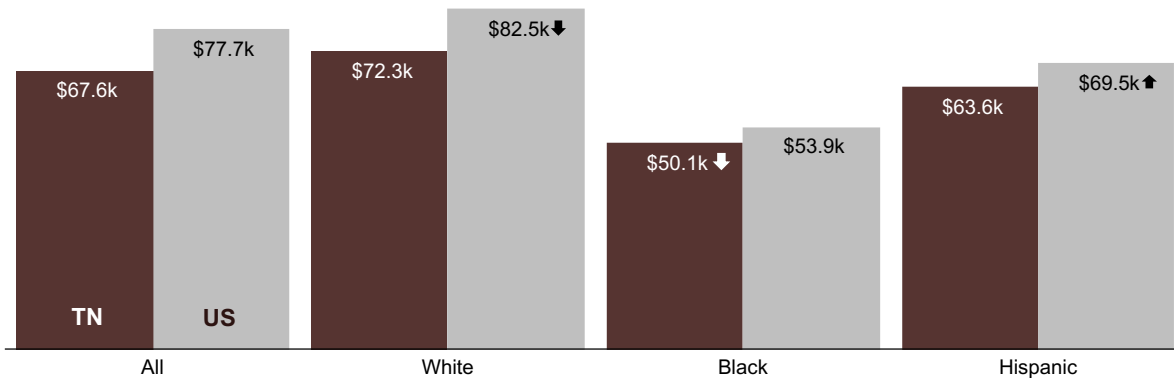
After accounting for inflation, Tennesseans' 2023 median household income remained relatively unchanged, while the poverty rate grew. Tennessee's median household income reached \$67,631 last year, meaning half of households had less income and half had more (**Figure 1**). (1) After adjusting for inflation, this amount was not statistically significantly different from the 2022 amount (**Figure 2**). (1) Compared to 2022, [official poverty rates](#) rose 0.7 percentage points to 14.0% among all Tennesseans and 2.1 percentage points to 19.7% among children (**Figure 3**). (1)

Tennessee has higher poverty rates and lower income levels than the U.S., but those gaps narrowed over the last decade. In 2010, the official poverty rate was 2.4 percentage points higher in Tennessee than nationwide, and the child poverty rate was 4.1 points higher. In 2023, those gaps had narrowed to 1.5 and 3.7 points, respectively (**Figure 4**). Meanwhile, Tennessee's median household income in 2010 was about \$12,000 lower than the national amount after adjusting for inflation and narrowed to about \$10,000 in 2023.

*Due to the margins of error, the difference in some 2022 and 2023 estimates is not statistically significant. The Census Bureau's American Community Survey generates estimates based on a sample of the total population. The margin of error measures the likely range of the true value if every person were surveyed. When the error margins for two values overlap, the difference may simply be due to sampling or estimation issues. To learn more about the importance of samples, [read our tips for interpreting statistics](#).

Figure 1. White, Black, and Hispanic Tennesseans All Have Lower Median Incomes than Their Counterparts Nationwide

Median Household Income by Race/Ethnicity (2023)

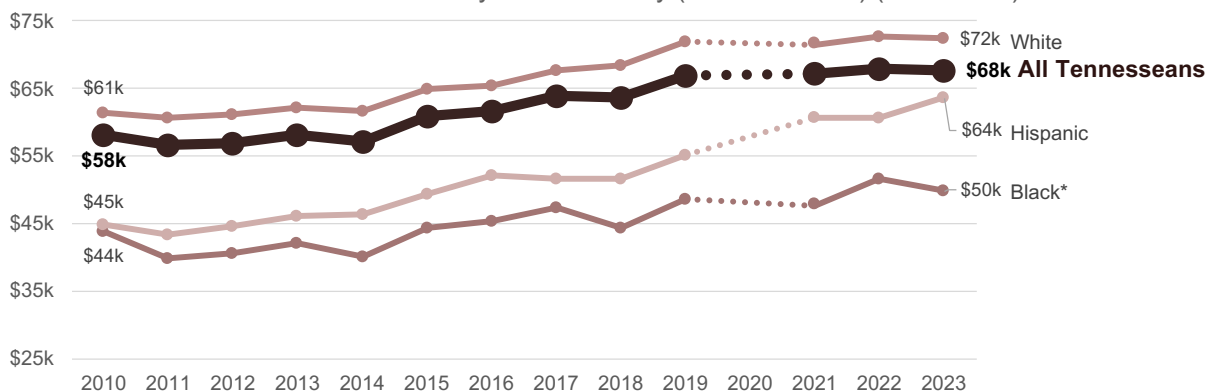


↓↑ Denotes a statistically significant change from 2022 after adjusting for inflation. Due to the margins of error, the difference in other 2022 and 2023 estimates is not statistically significant. Note: Reflects the race/ethnicity of the homeowner or lease/mortgage holder (or one of them if multiple exist). Some Hispanic individuals also appear in the categories for black and white residents.

Source: 2022-2023 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates (1)

Figure 2. Tennesseans' Median Household Income Remained Relatively Unchanged in 2023 After Adjusting for Inflation

Median Household Income in Tennessee by Race/Ethnicity (in 2023 dollars) (2010-2023)

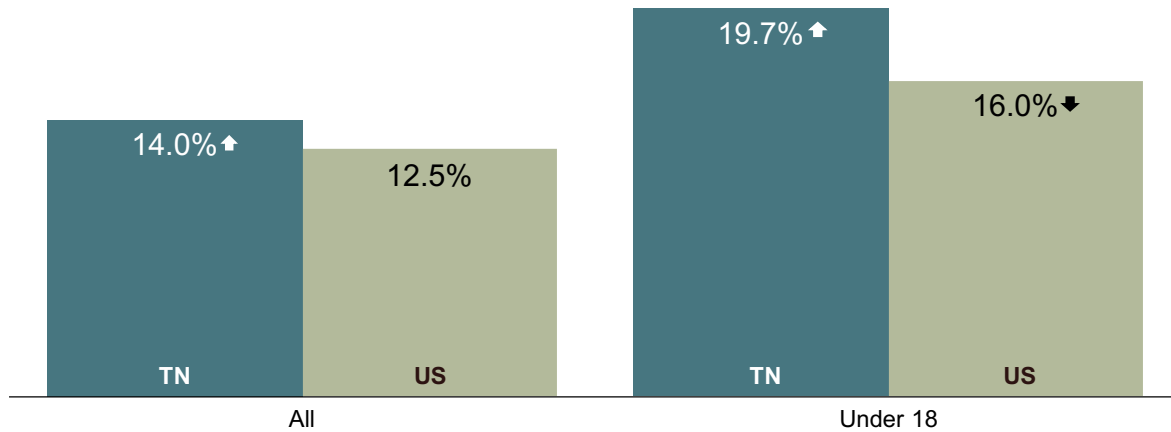


*Denotes a statistically significant change from 2022 after adjusting for inflation. Due to the margins of error, the difference in all other 2022 and 2023 estimates is not statistically significant. Notes: Reflects the race/ethnicity of the homeowner or lease/mortgage holder (or one of them if multiple exist). Inflation-adjusted median incomes are shown in 2023 dollars using the CPI-U. Some Hispanic individuals also appear in the categories for black and white residents. Due to pandemic-related disruptions, detailed ACS 1-year estimates are unavailable for 2020.

Source: 2010-2023 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates (1)

Figure 3. Tennessee’s Official Poverty Rates Remain Higher than National Rates

Individuals with Household Incomes Below the Federal Poverty Level (2023)

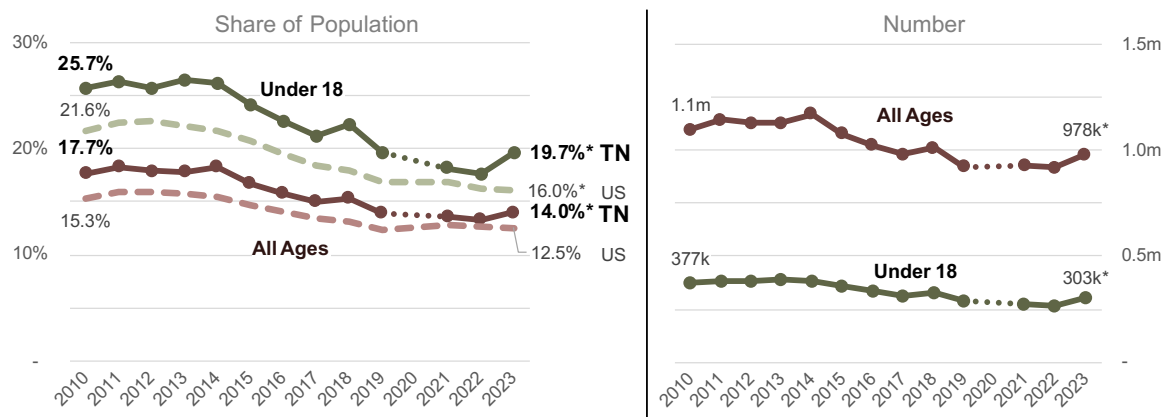


↑↓ Denotes a statistically significant change from 2022. Due to the margins of error, the difference in all other 2022 and 2023 estimates is not statistically significant.

Source: 2022-2023 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates (1)

Figure 4. Both the Share and Number of Tennesseans in Poverty Rose 2023

Individuals with Household Incomes Below the Federal Poverty Level (2010-2023)



*Denotes a statistically significant change from 2022. Due to the margins of error, the difference in all other 2022 and 2023 estimates is not statistically significant. Note: Due to pandemic-related disruptions, detailed ACS 1-year estimates are unavailable for 2020.

Source: 2010-2023 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates (1)

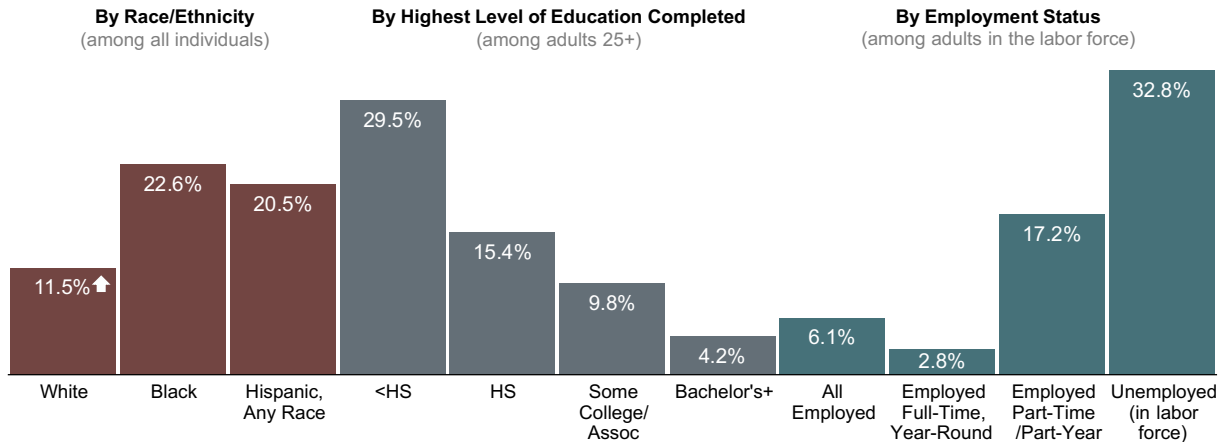
Demographic Variation

Tennessee’s poverty rate and median income vary across race, ethnicity, education level, employment, and household type. In 2023, black Tennesseans, adults without a high school diploma, and unemployed adults had the highest poverty rates. White residents, college graduates, and full-time workers had the lowest (Figure 5). Across household types, poverty rates were lowest for married couples without children and highest for households headed by an unmarried mother (Figure 6). The

poverty rate grew for white Tennesseans, every type of married household, and single mother households. It shrank slightly for female-headed households without children. (1)

Figure 5. Poverty Rates in Tennessee Vary by Race/Ethnicity, Education, and Employment

Poverty Rates in Tennessee by Individual Characteristics (2023)

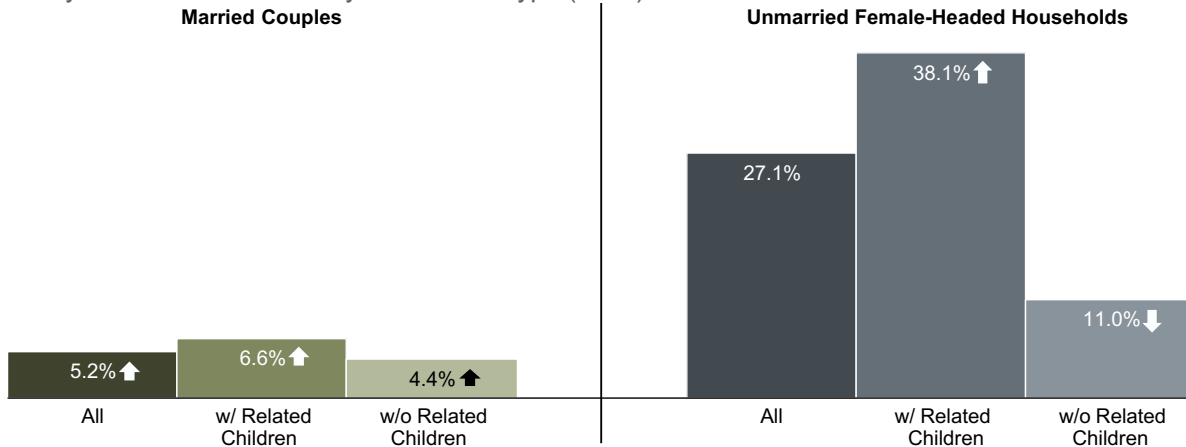


↓↑ Denotes a statistically significant change from 2022. Due to the margins of error, the difference in all other 2022 and 2023 estimates is not statistically significant. Note: Some Hispanic individuals also appear in the categories for black and white residents.

Source: 2022-2023 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates (1)

Figure 6. Single Mother Households Have the Highest Poverty Rates Among Tennessee Households

Poverty Rates in Tennessee by Household Type (2023)



↓↑ Denotes a statistically significant change from 2022. Due to the margins of error, the difference in all other 2022 and 2023 estimates is not statistically significant. The household head is the homeowner or lease/mortgage holder (or one of them if multiple exist).

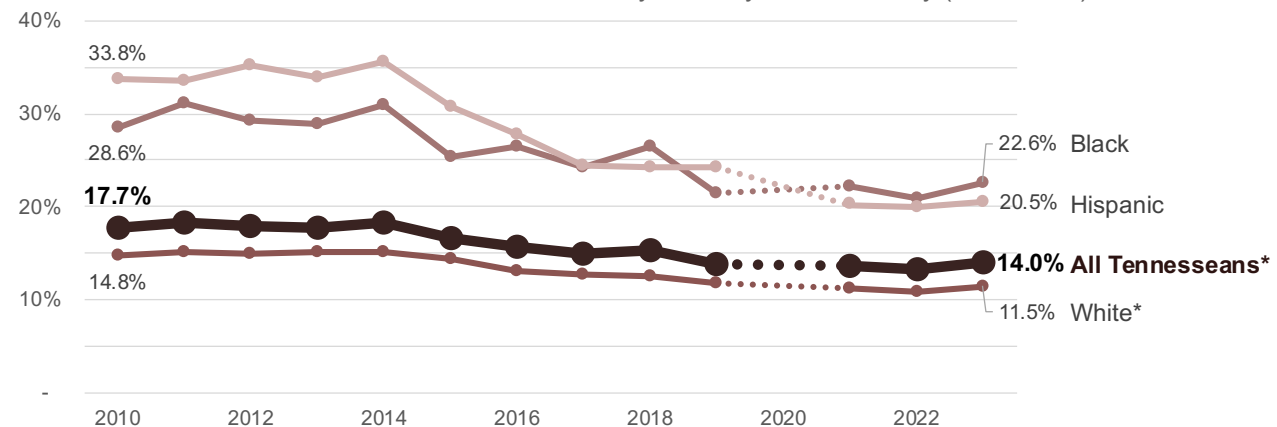
Source: 2023 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates (1)

Compared to white Tennesseans, the difference in poverty rates shrank for both black and Hispanic Tennesseans between 2010 and 2023, but the income gap narrowed only for Hispanics (Figures 2 and 7). (1) During that time, the difference in poverty rates in Hispanic and white Tennesseans

fell from 19 percentage points to 9. Meanwhile, the gap between black and white Tennesseans shrank from 14 points to 11. In 2010, the median income of Hispanic households was about \$16,600 less than white households after adjusting for inflation. This difference had shrunk to about \$8,800 by 2023. However, the difference for black households grew from about \$17,600 to \$22,300.

Figure 7. Poverty Rates Trended Down for Hispanic, Black, and White Tennesseans, but at Different Rates

Percent of Individuals with Incomes Below the Poverty Level by Race/Ethnicity (2010-2023)



*Denotes a statistically significant change from 2022. Due to the margins of error, the difference in all other 2022 and 2023 estimates is not statistically significant. Due to pandemic-related disruptions, detailed ACS 1-year estimates are unavailable for 2020.

Source: 2010-2023 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates (1)

Geographic Variation

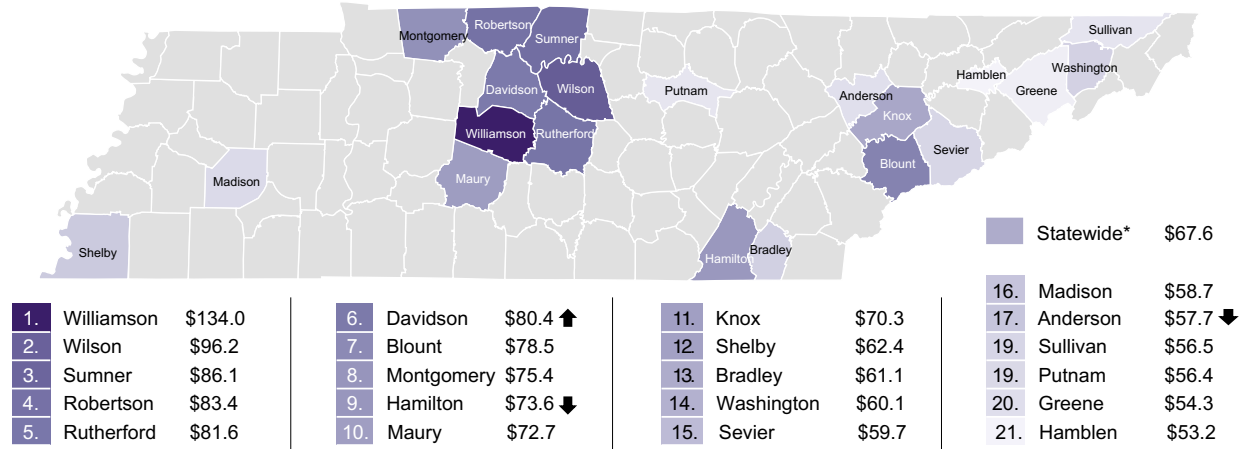
Income and poverty rates vary by geography in Tennessee. The Census Bureau's September 2023 data release includes 2023 estimates for counties over 65,000 people. (1) Among the 21 Tennessee counties with available data:

- Median Household Income** — Median household income ranged from over \$133,000 in Williamson County to about \$53,200 in Hamblen County (**Figure 8**). After adjusting for inflation, three counties experienced a statistically significant income change between 2022 and 2023. Due to the margins of error, the changes for the other 18 counties are not statistically significant.
- Poverty Rate** — The official poverty rate varied from 5.5% in Wilson County to 20.6% in Hamblen County (**Figure 9**). From 2022 to 2023, statistically significant changes occurred in Davidson (down 2.3 points), Knox (up 2.5 points), and Madison (up 7.0 points).
- Child Poverty** — Meanwhile, the poverty rate among residents younger than 18 ranged from 7.6% in Williamson County to 34.7% in Madison County (**Figure 10**). Statistically significant changes occurred in 5 counties—Davidson (down 6.0 points), Knox (up 6.9 points), Madison (up 19.5 points), Sumner (up 8.4 points), and Williamson (up 4.2 points).

See **Table A1** in the Appendix for county-specific data for 2022-2023.

Figure 8. In Tennessee's Most Populous Counties, Median Household Incomes Ranged from \$53,210 to \$133,990

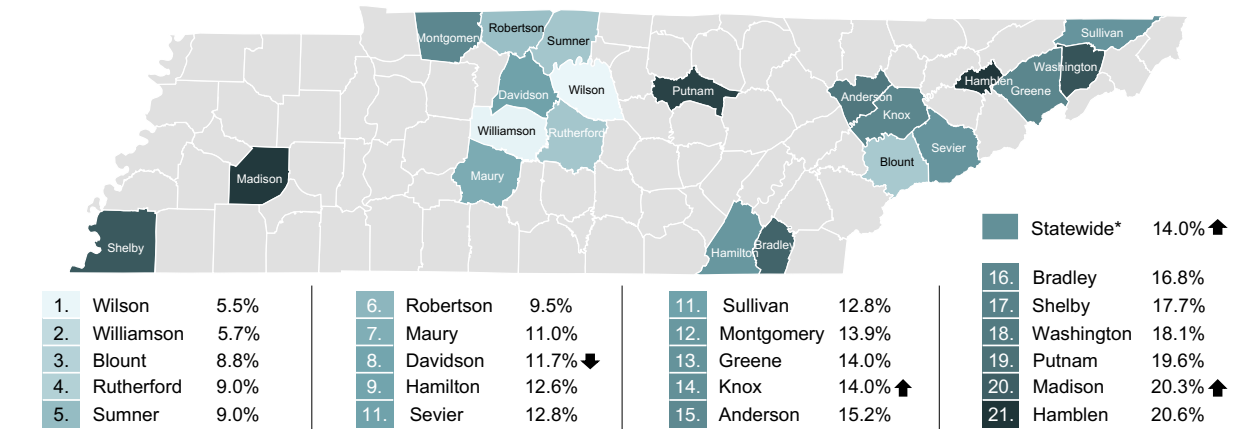
Median Household Income (in thousands) (2023)



↓↑ Denotes a statistically significant change from 2022 after adjusting for inflation. Due to the margins of error, the difference in all other 2022 and 2023 estimates is not statistically significant. *One-year estimates are unavailable for the 74 grey counties due to small sample sizes, but the statewide estimate includes every county.
Source: 2022-2023 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates (1)

Figure 9. In Tennessee's Most Populous Counties, Official Poverty Rates Ranged from 5.5% to 20.6%

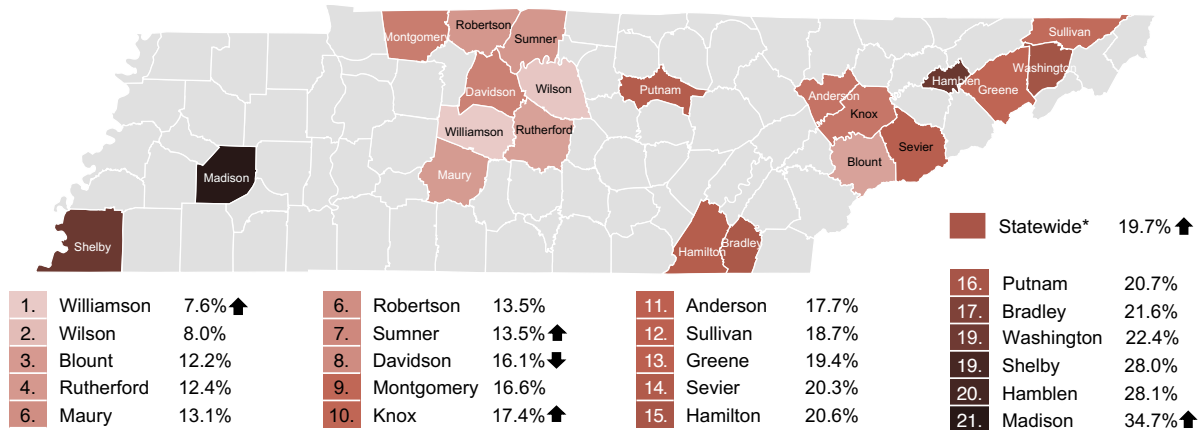
Percent of All Individuals with Household Incomes Below the Federal Poverty Line (2023)



↓↑ Denotes a statistically significant change from 2022. Due to the margins of error, the difference in all other 2022 and 2023 estimates is not statistically significant. *One-year estimates are unavailable for the 74 grey counties due to small sample sizes, but the statewide estimate includes every county.
Source: 2022-2023 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates (1)

Figure 10. In Tennessee’s Most Populous Counties, Child Poverty Rates Ranged from 3.4% to 30.9%

Percent of All Individuals Under 18 with Household Incomes Below the Federal Poverty Line (2023)



↓↑ Denotes a statistically significant change from 2022. Due to the margins of error, the difference in all other 2022 and 2023 estimates is not statistically significant. *One-year estimates are unavailable for the 74 grey counties due to small sample sizes, but the statewide estimate includes every county.
 Source: 2022-2023 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates (1)

References

1. **U.S. Census Bureau.** 2010-2023 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates. [Online] September 2024. Available via <http://data.census.gov>.

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Table A1. Tennessee 2022-2023 Income and Poverty Data

American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates (2022-2023)

	Total Population		Median Household Income			Poverty Rate		Under 18 Poverty Rate	
	2022	2023	2022	2022** (in 2023 \$)	2023	2022	2023	2022	2023
Tennessee	7,051,339	7,033,220	\$65,254	\$67,946	\$67,631	13.3%	14.0%	17.6%	19.7%
Anderson	78,913	79,409	\$67,746	\$70,456	\$57,652*	12.5%	15.2%	10.7%	17.7%
Blount	139,958	140,324	\$69,756	\$72,546	\$78,504	9.1%	8.8%	9.4%	12.2%
Bradley	110,616	110,524	\$63,659	\$66,205	\$61,107	13.0%	16.8%	18.1%	21.6%
Davidson	708,144	707,932	\$72,473	\$75,372	\$80,379*	14.0%	11.7%*	22.1%	16.1%*
Greene	71,405	71,877	\$48,918	\$50,875	\$54,261	18.4%	14.0%	28.1%	19.4%
Hamblen	65,168	65,851	\$59,418	\$61,795	\$53,210	14.8%	20.6%	16.0%	28.1%
Hamilton	374,682	376,482	\$76,219	\$79,268	\$73,611*	11.3%	12.6%	17.1%	20.6%
Knox	494,574	497,092	\$69,999	\$72,799	\$70,265	11.5%	14.0%*	10.5%	17.4%*
Madison	99,245	97,399	\$55,666	\$57,893	\$58,702	13.3%	20.3%*	15.2%	34.7%*
Maury	108,159	109,620	\$68,157	\$70,883	\$72,651	10.4%	11.0%	15.9%	13.1%
Montgomery	235,201	225,695	\$67,264	\$69,955	\$75,361	11.5%	13.9%	16.0%	16.6%
Putnam	82,382	83,178	\$54,373	\$56,548	\$56,368	22.5%	19.6%	30.9%	20.7%
Robertson	75,470	76,055	\$79,171	\$82,338	\$83,355	7.2%	9.5%	10.5%	13.5%
Rutherford	360,619	365,642	\$76,857	\$79,931	\$81,628	9.6%	9.0%	11.2%	12.4%
Sevier	98,789	98,880	\$59,315	\$61,688	\$59,665	11.2%	12.8%	15.1%	20.3%
Shelby	916,371	898,922	\$61,516	\$63,977	\$62,413	16.5%	17.7%	23.7%	28.0%
Sullivan	160,820	160,390	\$53,585	\$55,728	\$56,481	15.6%	12.8%	27.8%	18.7%
Sumner	203,858	206,344	\$88,764	\$92,315	\$86,081	6.4%	9.0%	5.1%	13.5%*
Washington	136,172	136,951	\$64,899	\$67,495	\$60,729	14.2%	18.1%	18.2%	22.4%
Williamson	260,815	263,489	\$129,275	\$134,446	\$133,990	3.8%	5.7%	3.4%	7.6%*
Wilson	158,555	162,311	\$87,003	\$90,483	\$96,171	7.1%	5.5%	9.2%	8.0%

*Denotes a statistically significant change from 2022 after adjusting for inflation. Due to the margins of error, the difference in all other 2022 and 2023 estimates is not statistically significant.

**Inflation-adjusted median incomes are shown in 2023 dollars using the CPI-U.

Notes: Because of the small sample size, 1-year estimates are unavailable for the 74 TN counties with populations below 65,000. However, statewide estimates include residents of every county.

Source: 2022-2023 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates