



U.S. Census Data Show Improvements in Johnson County, but Challenges Remain

Johnson County, KS. - Yesterday, the U.S. Census Bureau released county-level data as a follow-up to the national data released this past Tuesday. The new one-year data for 2015 show that, similar to the national statistics, poverty and unemployment rates are down across Johnson County and the state. Additionally, median household income is up, along with real wage growth. The number of individuals without health insurance has improved as well in Johnson County and the state, but on the whole, states like Kansas who have not approved Medicaid expansion lag behind those states in which expansion has been approved.

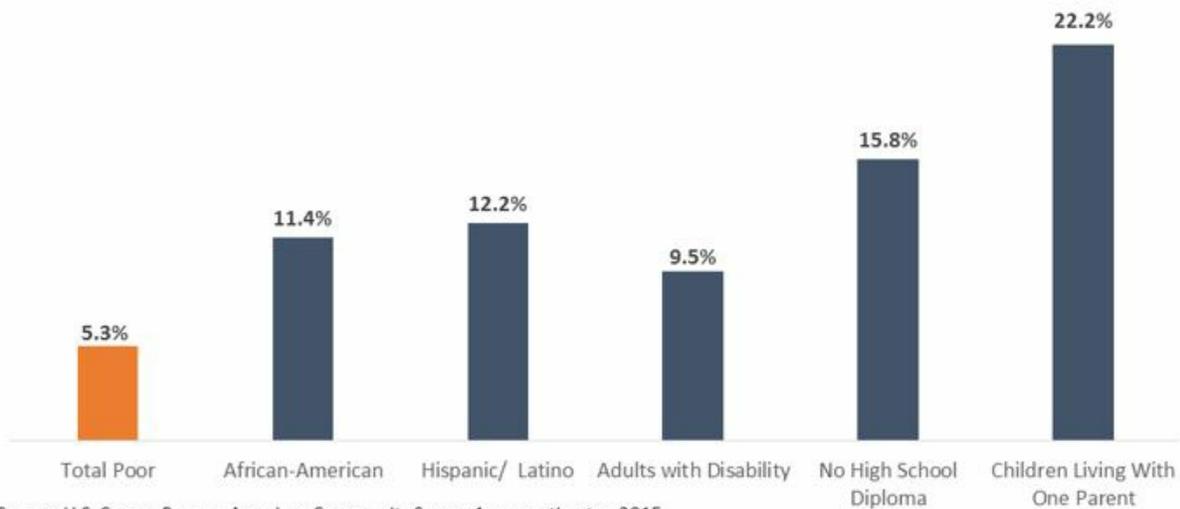
In 2015, the most recent year for which data is available, Johnson County's population experienced positive changes in economic well-being:

- The county's official poverty rate in 2015 was 5.3 percent, with 30,399 people in poverty - 6,565 fewer than in 2014. The 1.2 percentage point decrease in the poverty rate from 2014 to 2015 represents the largest annual percentage point drop in since poverty began increasing after the Great Recession.
- Median household income in Johnson County increased by \$7,213, from \$75,679 in 2014 to \$82,892 in 2015. Median household income for some groups was significantly lower. Female-headed families had a median household income of \$52,365, and African-American households had a median household income of \$49,333.
- The rate of people without health insurance coverage decreased by 1.8 percentage points between 2014 and 2015. The uninsured rate in 2015 was 4.8 percent, down from 6.6 percent in 2014.
- Unemployment in the county decreased from 3.8 percent in 2014 to 3.4 percent in 2015.

United Community Services of Johnson County (UCS) welcomed the new statistics, noting that the data indicate a positive economic outlook. However, some residents in Johnson County continue to struggle to meet basic household needs and find sustainable employment. The poverty rate for certain groups, including single-parent families, people of color, and disabled citizens remains higher than overall poverty rates.

"The newest one-year numbers are moving in a promising direction for the economic health of our community and hopefully will be the beginning of a positive trend," said Julie Brewer, Executive Director of UCS. "However, there are still vulnerable populations in Johnson County. Access to adequate health and human services has to remain a priority so that we can continue to reduce poverty and create opportunity for all citizens."

Some Groups Experience Poverty at Higher Rates



In 2015, UCS developed a Framework to Reduce Poverty and Create Opportunity that focuses on actions that can be taken in the areas of work, education, and the safety net to improve outcomes for Johnson County residents.

"Local action, collaborative efforts, and public policy changes all play a critical role in creating a healthy, thriving Johnson County community," said Brewer. "We recognize the role health and human services have in moving people out of poverty. We will continue to plan and advocate for coordinated human service delivery and system improvements until all Johnson County residents have a path out of poverty."

Our mission: Provide data analysis, lead collaborative planning and mobilize resources to enhance the availability and delivery of health and human services.

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