



## Census Reports Record Low Poverty Rate — Minnesota Still “Above Average”

Data released by the U.S. Census Bureau finds that the percentage of Americans living in poverty rate dropped from 12.7% in 1998 to 11.8% in 1999 — the lowest poverty rate since 1979. Poverty rates among all major racial and ethnic groups except Whites were equal to or surpassed historic lows.

Nationally, the percentage of children living in poverty also declined, but at 16.9%, it remains significantly above the poverty rate for the general population. At the same time, inflation-adjusted median household income reached a record high of \$40,816 in 1999.

For states, the Census Bureau calculates poverty rates based on two-year averages. Minnesota’s poverty rate for 1998-1999 was 8.8%, down from 10% in 1997-1998, although this change is not statistically significant.

In fact, in most measures, Minnesota does considerably better than the national average, showing higher household income, lower unemployment, lower levels of poverty, and fewer people lacking health insurance. Interestingly, Minnesota also demonstrates a smaller decline in its welfare caseload than in the nation as a whole.

	<b>U.S.</b>	<b>Minnesota</b>
<b>Median Household Income, 1998-1999</b>	\$40,280	\$48,112
<b>Poverty Rate, 1998-1999</b>	12.3%	8.8%
<b>Unemployment Rate, 1998-1999</b>	4.4%	2.7%
<b>No Health Insurance Rate, 1998-1999</b>	15.9%	8.7%
<b>Welfare Caseload Reduction, 1998 to 1999</b>	17%	12.4%

For additional analysis of the national trends, see the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities’ analysis *Poverty Rate Hits Lowest Level Since 1979 As Unemployment Reaches a 30-Year Low* at [www.cbpp.org/9-26-00pov.htm](http://www.cbpp.org/9-26-00pov.htm).

For more in-depth information about poverty in Minnesota and income growth among Minnesota’s families, two reports are available online or by request from the Minnesota Budget Project: *Poverty Despite Work in Minnesota* ([www.mncn.org/bp/pdw.htm](http://www.mncn.org/bp/pdw.htm)) and *Making a Living? The State of Working Minnesota Labor Day 2000* ([www.mncn.org/bp/laborday.htm](http://www.mncn.org/bp/laborday.htm)).