

DATA BRIEF: Single Mothers Living in Poverty

As Pittsburgh's economy improves and investment in struggling neighborhoods increases, it is important to consider the demographics of the city as resources are allocated. This data brief focuses on the vulnerable and sometimes overlooked population of female-headed families living in poverty in order to better identify the needs of those families as well as potential service gaps in key locations. This brief is an accompaniment to research that was conducted in conjunction with the Women and Girls Foundation (WGF); the WGF report can be accessed [here](#).

¹ Data was pulled from Table B17012: Poverty Status in the Past 12 Months of Families by Household Type by Number of Related Children Under 18 Years - Universe: Families.

² The census defines a household as consisting of a "householder and one or more other people living in the same household who are related to the householder by birth, marriage or adoption." <https://www.census.gov/newsroom/blogs/random-samplings/2015/01/statistical-definition-of-family-unchanged-since-1930.html>

³ In 2014, the threshold for a two-parent household with one child was \$19,055. The poverty thresholds as defined by the census are detailed here: <http://www.census.gov/data/tables/time-series/demo/income-poverty/historical-poverty-thresholds.html>

This brief uses census data from the 2010–2014 American Community Survey (ACS)¹ to identify the numbers and locations of female-headed (single-mother) households² with children living in poverty in Allegheny County and the city of Pittsburgh. In 2014, the poverty threshold as defined by the U.S. Census was a yearly income of less than \$16,317³ for a single parent with one or more children.

Key findings:

- Households headed by single mothers in Allegheny County and Pittsburgh were more likely than other types of households to experience poverty.
- McKeesport, Penn Hills and Duquesne had the largest number of female-headed households in poverty.
- Northview Heights, Braddock and East Hills had single mothers living in poverty making up over 70 percent of all families with children in those communities.
- Over 60 percent of single mothers living in poverty in Allegheny County lived in one of 10 communities.

PREVALENCE OF SINGLE MOTHERS LIVING IN POVERTY

Of the approximately 130,000 families with children living in Allegheny County, 28 percent were headed by single mothers (Table 1). Of families with children experiencing poverty, 72 percent were headed by single mothers. In the City of Pittsburgh, families headed by single mothers made up 42 percent of all families, but they made up 78 percent of the families experiencing poverty.

TABLE 1: All Families and Single Mothers in Poverty in Allegheny County and the City of Pittsburgh, ACS 2010–2014

	FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN	FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN IN POVERTY	SINGLE MOTHERS IN POVERTY	% SINGLE MOTHERS (OF ALL FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN)	% SINGLE MOTHERS IN POVERTY (OF ALL FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN IN POVERTY)
Allegheny County	132,031	20,607	14,909	28%	72%
City of Pittsburgh	27,669	7,825	6,067	42%	78%

Families headed by single mothers in Allegheny County were more likely than other types of households to live in poverty. Of all single-mother households, 41 percent were living below the poverty line, compared to 25 percent of single-father households and 4 percent of married-couple households.

FIGURE 1: Families Living Above and Below the Poverty Line in Allegheny County

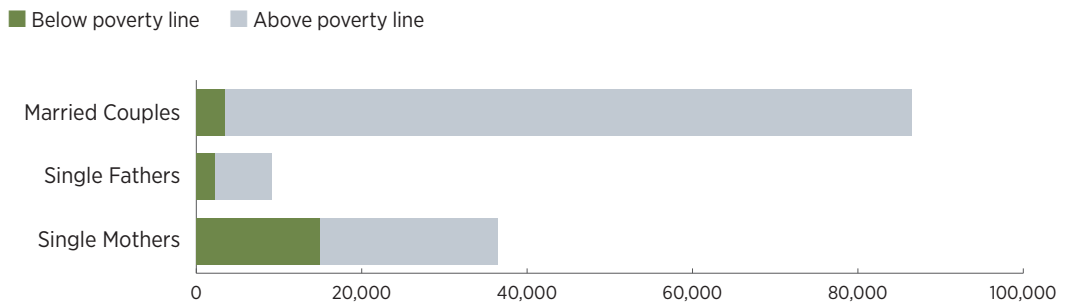


TABLE 2: Families Living Above and Below the Poverty Line in Allegheny County, ACS 2010–2014

	BELOW POVERTY LINE		ABOVE POVERTY LINE		TOTAL	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Married Couples	3,453	4%	83,020	96%	86,473	100%
Single Fathers	2,245	25%	6,844	75%	9,089	100%
Single Mothers	14,909	41%	21,560	59%	36,469	100%
Total	20,607	16%	111,424	84%	132,031	100%

In the City of Pittsburgh, 52 percent of single-mother households were living below the poverty line, compared to 27 percent of single-father households and just 8 percent of married-couple households.

FIGURE 2. Families Living Above and Below the Poverty Line in Pittsburgh, ACS 2010–2014

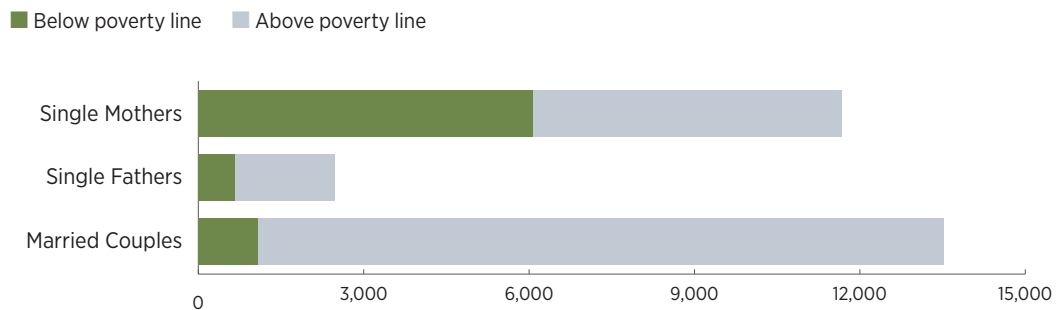


TABLE 3: Families Living Above and Below the Poverty Line in Pittsburgh, ACS 2010–2014

	BELOW POVERTY LINE		ABOVE POVERTY LINE		TOTAL	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Married Couples	1,088	8%	12,432	92%	13,520	100%
Single Fathers	670	27%	1,811	73%	2,481	100%
Single Mothers	6,067	52%	5,601	48%	11,668	100%
Total	7,825	28%	19,844	72%	27,669	100%

LOCATIONS OF SINGLE MOTHERS IN POVERTY

Table 4 shows the 10 Allegheny County municipalities and Pittsburgh neighborhoods with the highest numbers of single mothers living in poverty. These 3,884 single-mother households in these 10 locales make up 64 percent of all single mothers living in poverty. **Over 60 percent of single mothers living in poverty in Allegheny County live in 10 communities.** Almost 30 percent (28%) live in just three places — McKeesport, Penn Hills and Duquesne.

TABLE 4: Allegheny County Neighborhoods and Municipalities with Largest Number of Single Mothers Living in Poverty, ACS 2010–2014

TYPE	NAME	FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN	FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN IN POVERTY	SINGLE MOTHERS IN POVERTY	% SINGLE MOTHERS IN POVERTY (OF ALL FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN)
Municipality	McKeesport City	2,199	978	704	32%
Municipality	Penn Hills Township	4,431	708	590	13%
Municipality	Duquesne City	779	469	379	49%
Municipality	Wilkinsburg Borough	1,684	540	375	22%
Municipality	North Versailles Township	1,347	477	318	24%
Municipality	West Mifflin Borough	2,086	404	312	15%
Municipality	McKees Rocks Borough	825	357	308	37%
Neighborhood	East Hills	433	301	301	70%
Neighborhood	Knoxville	695	327	300	43%
Municipality	Carnegie Borough	873	342	297	34%
County	<i>Allegheny County</i>	<i>132,031</i>	<i>20,607</i>	14,909	11%
City	<i>Pittsburgh</i>	<i>27,669</i>	<i>7,825</i>	6,067	22%

Figure 3 shows the number of single-mother households living in poverty by County census tract. Many of the census tracts with the highest counts are clustered near the western and eastern edges of the City of Pittsburgh as well as in the Mon Valley, where both McKeesport City and Duquesne City are located.

FIGURE 3: Single Mothers Living in Poverty in Allegheny County by Census Tract, 2010–2014

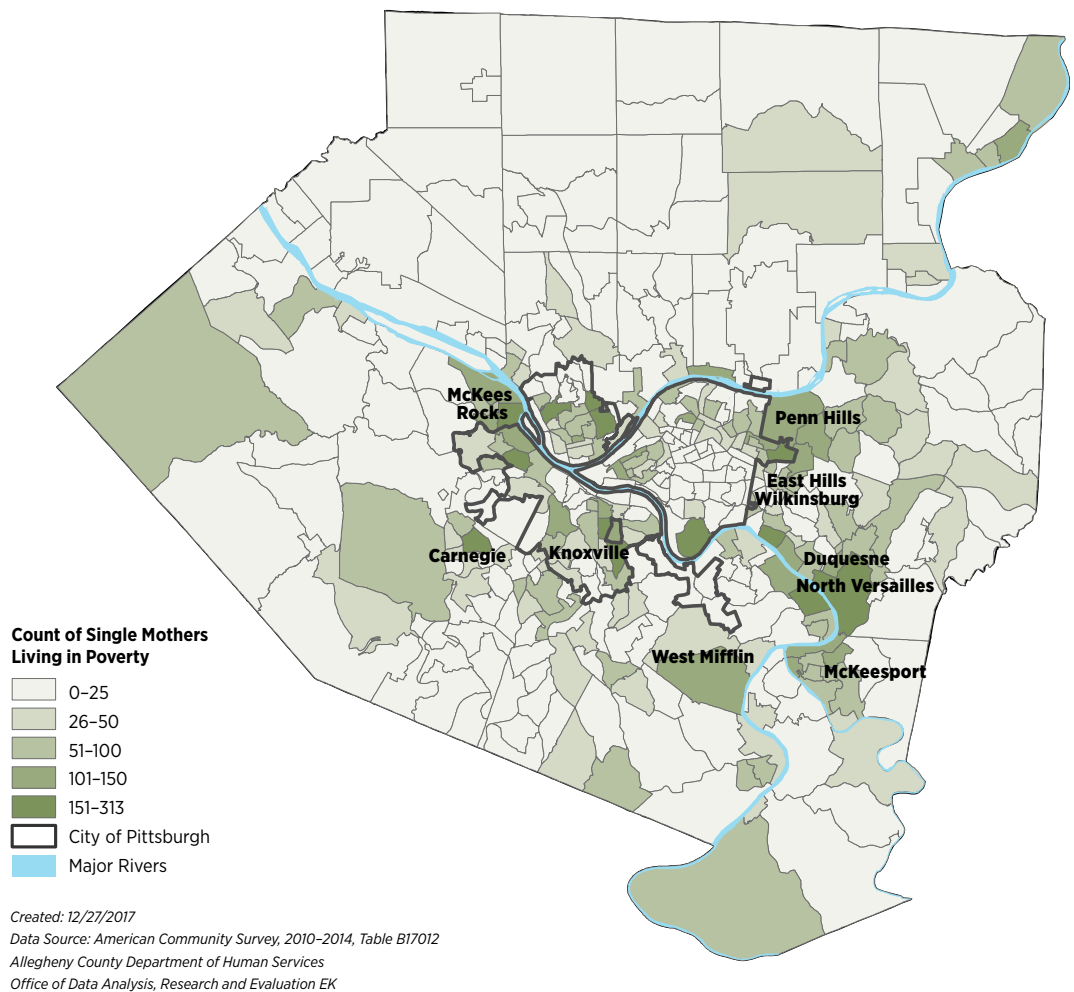
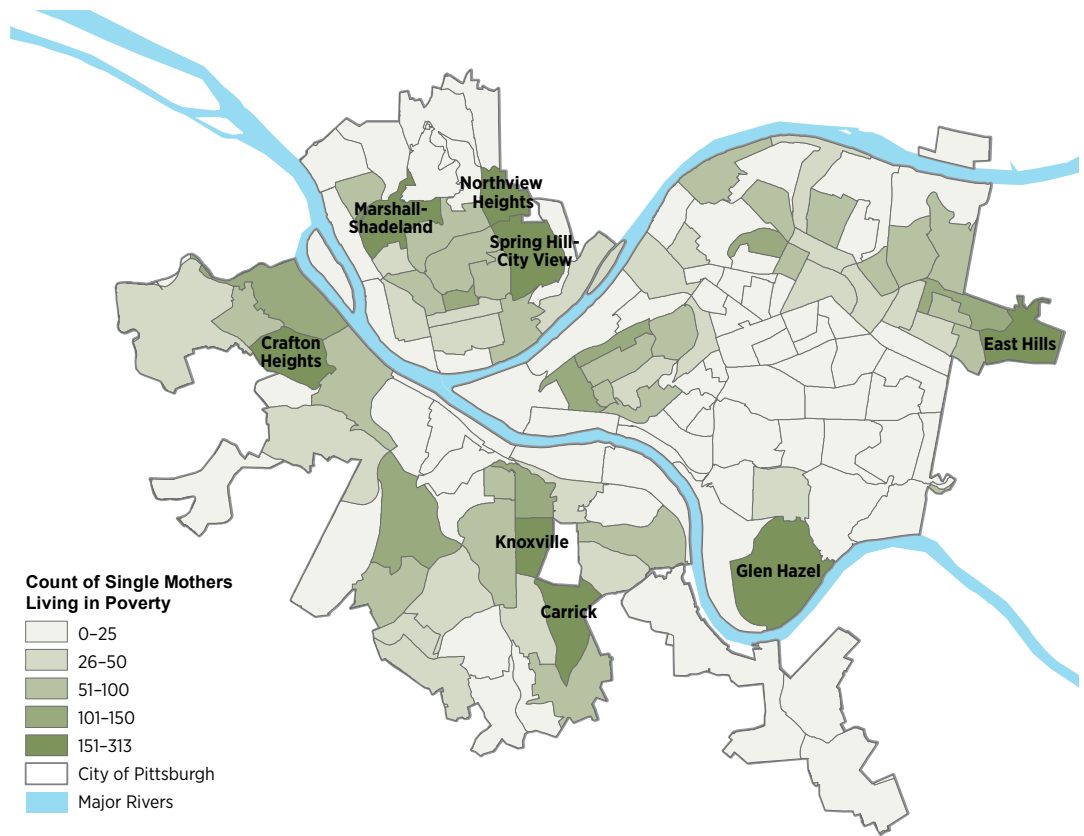


Figure 4 displays the count of female-headed households living in poverty in City of Pittsburgh census tracts. Census tracts with the highest counts were spread throughout the city with clusters in the South Hills (Knoxville, Carrick), the North Side (Spring Hill–City View, Northview Heights, Marshall–Shadeland), West Pittsburgh (Crafton Heights) and East Pittsburgh (East Hills, Homewood).

FIGURE 4: Single Mothers Living in Poverty in Pittsburgh by Census Tract, 2010–2014



Created: 12/27/2017
 Data Source: American Community Survey, 2010–2014, Table B17012
 Allegheny County Department of Human Services
 Office of Data Analysis, Research and Evaluation EK

Table 5 shows the neighborhoods and municipalities with the highest percentage of single mothers living in poverty out of all families with children. All 10 of the locales listed have single mothers living in poverty, making up over 50 percent of all families — in part because these communities are centers of public housing. In Northview Heights, single mothers living in poverty make up over 80 percent of all families. Other North Side communities, such as Spring Hill–City View and California–Kirkbride, are also on the list, and there are clusters in the Hill District (Bedford Dwellings, Terrace Village, Middle Hill) and in the inner-ring suburbs to the east of the city (Rankin, Braddock).

TABLE 5: Allegheny County Neighborhoods and Municipalities with the Highest Percentage of Single Mothers Living in Poverty, ACS 2010–2014

TYPE	NAME	FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN	FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN IN POVERTY	SINGLE MOTHERS IN POVERTY	% SINGLE MOTHERS IN POVERTY (OF ALL FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN)
Neighborhood	Northview Heights	238	203	201	84%
Municipality	Braddock Borough	203	154	146	72%
Neighborhood	East Hills	433	301	301	70%
Neighborhood	Bedford Dwellings	215	172	149	69%
Neighborhood	Larimer	171	110	101	59%
Neighborhood	Spring Hill–City View	359	210	210	58%
Neighborhood	California-Kirkbride	103	59	59	57%
Neighborhood	Middle Hill	133	82	72	54%
Neighborhood	Terrace Village	365	243	195	53%
Municipality	Rankin Borough	334	242	177	53%
County	<i>Allegheny County</i>	<i>132,031</i>	<i>20,607</i>	<i>14,909</i>	11%
City	<i>Pittsburgh</i>	<i>27,669</i>	<i>7,825</i>	<i>6,067</i>	22%

ANALYST

Ellen Kitzerow

REVIEWERS

Rochelle Jackson, Heather Arnet