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Local households still worse off than a decade ago

By most measures of economic wellbeing, individuals and households in Cochise County were worse off in 2016 than in 2015, and remained worse off than in 2007—the year before the nationwide Great Recession began.

According to the most recent American Community Survey conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau, median family income countywide was \$50,853 in 2016, down 8.3 percent from 2015. Adjusting for inflation, median family income in 2016 was down 18 percent from 2007.

Per capita income in Cochise County in 2016 was \$23,220, down 3.8 percent from 2015 (and down 8.4 percent from 2007, with the inflation adjustment).

Of Cochise County households, 18.2 percent received food stamp assistance in 2016 (up from 16.1 percent in 2015 and nearly double the rate of 9.3 percent in 2007).

In 2016, 2.8 percent of Cochise County households received cash public assistance income (down from 4.1 percent in 2015, but up from 2 percent in 2007).

One measure of income that improved in Cochise County from 2015 to 2016 was median household income, which was \$45,508 in 2016 (up 5.1 percent from 2015). The county's median household income in 2016, however, was still down 12 percent from 2007 (after taking inflation into account).

In 2016, 22.6 percent of Cochise County's population lived below the poverty line. That was up from 17 percent in 2015 and 15.5 percent back in 2007.

The poverty rate for the elderly in Cochise County was 9.8 percent in 2016 (up from 9.3 percent in 2015 and 7.6 percent in 2007). The elderly population is generally less likely to live in poverty due to programs such as Social Security and Medicare.

Children, on the other hand, are more likely to live in poverty. For children in Cochise County, the poverty rate in 2016 was 38.3 percent (up dramatically from 21.9 percent in 2015 and 26.2 percent in 2007).

High childhood poverty rates are largely driven by single-parent homes, which have the highest rates of poverty. In 2016, 50.3 percent of households in Cochise County that were led by single moms lived below the poverty line (up from 49.1 percent in 2015, but down from 61.1 percent in 2007).

For married-couple families with children, the poverty rate in 2016 was 15 percent (up from 9.8 percent in 2015 and 8.3 percent back in 2007).

In Cochise County, 7.8 percent of the population was without health insurance in 2016. That was up from 6.4 percent in 2015, but down from 9.9 percent in 2009 (the first year that data were published).

The uninsured rate for children in Cochise County was 4.6 percent in 2016, up from 3.7 percent in 2015 but down from 6.3 percent in 2009.

The home ownership rate countywide in 2016 was 66.2 percent (down from 67.6 percent in 2015 and 69.8 percent in 2007).

The median value of owner-occupied homes in Cochise County in 2016 was \$130,100 (down from \$146,900 in 2015 and \$156,100 in 2007—before the housing market crash).

Housing that costs more than 30 percent of gross household income is generally regarded as unaffordable. A full one-third of homeowners with a mortgage in Cochise County paid 30 percent or more of their income toward housing costs in 2016 (up from 26.2 percent of homeowners in 2015).

Housing costs impact renters even more, with 44.3 percent of renters countywide paying 30 percent or more of their income toward housing costs in 2016 (that was down from 47.5 percent in 2015). The median monthly rent in Cochise County in 2016 was \$772, which includes utilities (up from \$746 in 2015).

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