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# New Local Poverty Estimates for Coles County: Decreasing Incomes, Rising Poverty

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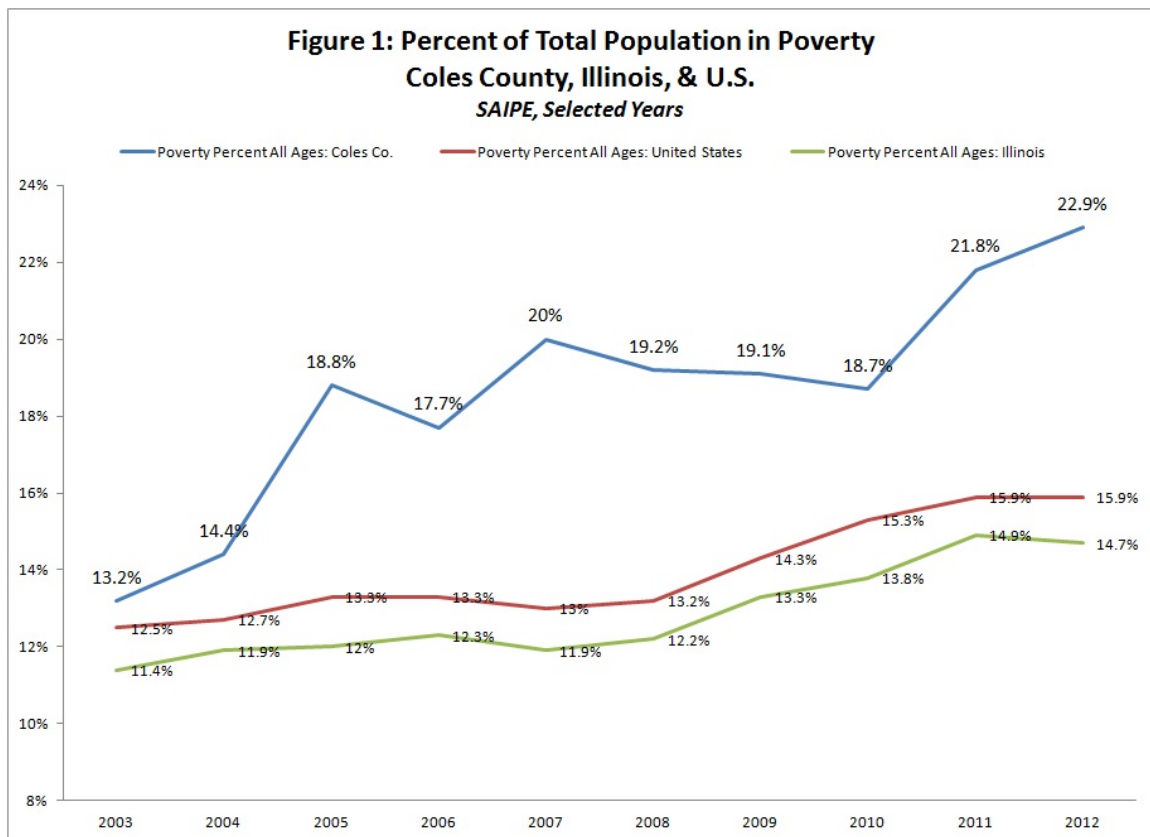
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## New Local Poverty Estimates for Coles County: Decreasing Incomes, Rising Poverty

Recently, the [US Census Bureau](#) released the current Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates (SAIPE) which are reported annually for the administration of federal programs and the allocation of federal funds to local jurisdictions. Each year these data estimate the income and poverty at the state, county, and school district level, and outline the incidence of poverty for the population, all children, and school-aged children in poor families.

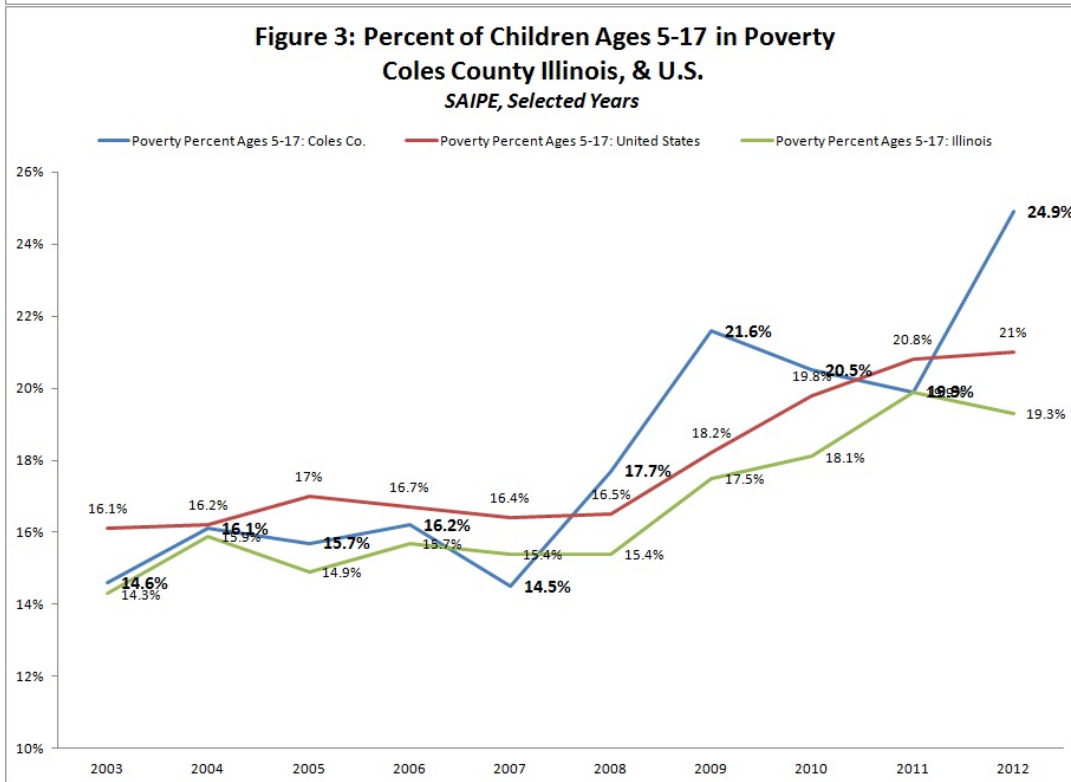
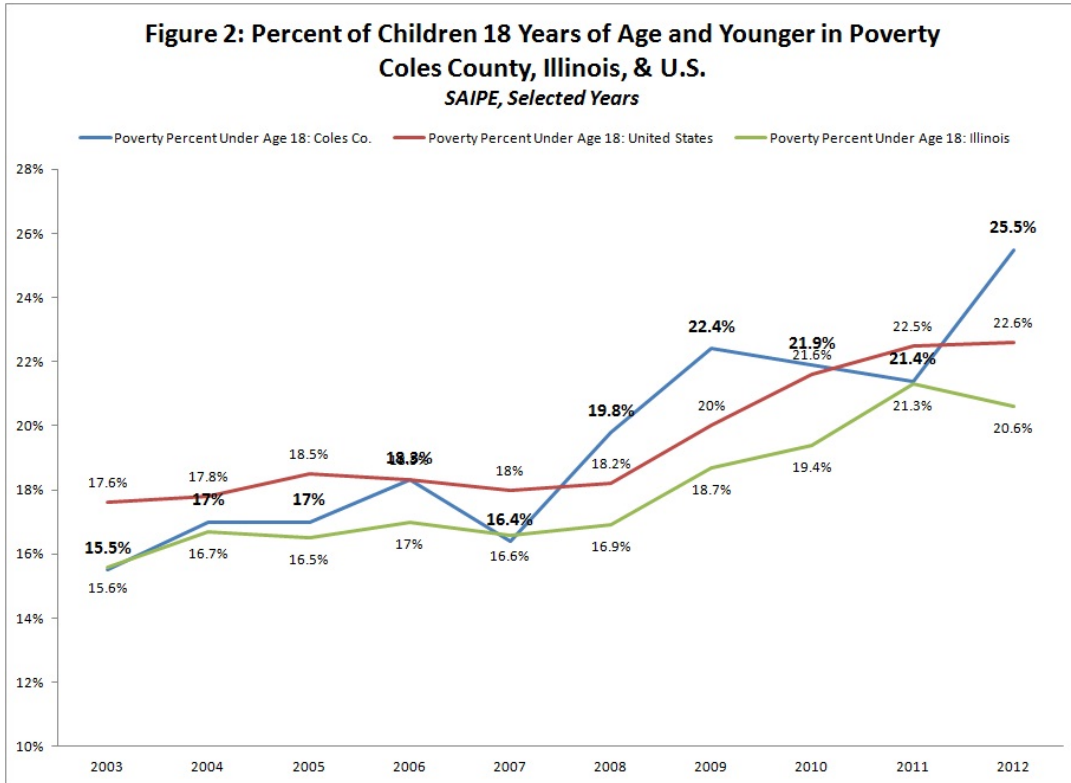
SAIPE data are important for two predominant reasons: they are used by federal, state, and local policy makers and analysts because they represent 'official' administrative data; second, for places such as Coles County, Illinois, which have population counts lower than 50,000, they are the most efficient annual measurements of poverty *and* include school district level data on the level of poverty for children aged 5 through 17.

Based on the current SAIPE data for Coles County, 11,309 persons, 22.9 percent of all individuals of all ages are living in poverty; from 2003 through 2012, there is a 78.4% increase in the number of individuals who are poor. Compared to data for Illinois and the U.S. as a whole, as shown in Figure 1 below, over the past decade Coles County's rising poverty level is outpacing the state and country.



The percent of children 18 years of age and younger in poverty in Coles County stands at 25.5%, or 2436 persons, which has increased 58.8% from 2003 and 56.9% from 2007. For school-aged children 5 through 17 years old, 1703 or 24.9% are poor, showing an increase in number of poor students of 70.6% from 2003 and 71.7% from 2007. Figures 2 and 3 show these trends compared

with the State of Illinois and the United States, which like Figure 1, are comparatively lower than Coles County.



It is clear that incomes for families, remaining relatively flat over the past decade, are impacting the ability of individuals and families to prosper. Moreover, with one-quarter of all school-aged children living in poverty, future generations may continue to experience the struggle to make ends meet.

[Research](#) has consistently shown that growing up in a household that lacks an adequate income and stable set of resources translates into lasting impacts on a child's social, emotional, physiological, and economic development. Because food and nutrition are essential to the ability to thrive, let alone survive, social programs such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) can [alleviate](#) some of these insecurities. Yet even if with the security and stability of even a subsistence diet, the incidence of poverty, for example, increases parental stress which in turn impacts their [decision-making](#) capacities and their ability to foster the development of their children. In turn, for [children](#), poverty increases the chance they will develop behavioral problems and impact their academic achievement, decreases their chances of upward mobility in adulthood, and increases the likelihood of future economic struggles.

Poverty is increasing in Coles County. The economic stability of families is falling. Given that the typical household income has not grown over the past decade, these trends do not promise to show improvement any time soon.