

# DECADES

◀ WHAT THE TRENDS TELL US ▶

## Families Trends In Poverty



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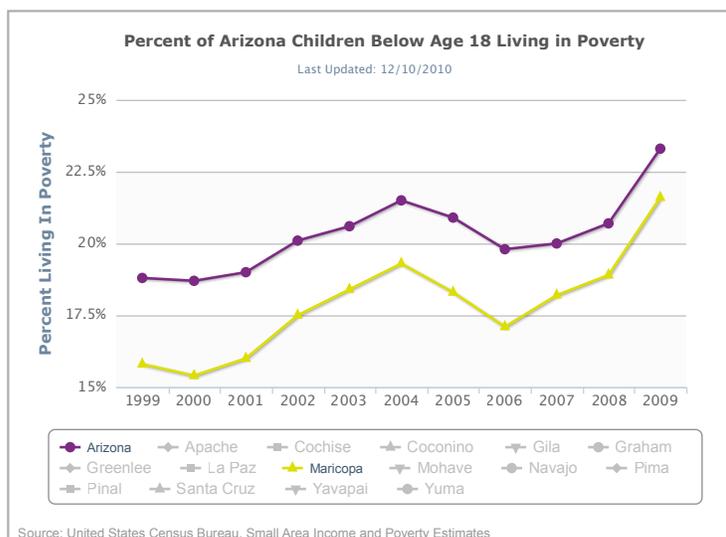
**Q:** What were the most interesting and important trends in Arizona families that occurred in the previous decade? What is the significance of these trends and what insights can we apply to the new decade?

**A:** Looking at the data trends for Arizona families, the question for me is not so much about where we've been, but in light of the Great Recession and state budget deficits, where are we going? We know Arizona has grown, with a large component of that growth in children ages 0-18 and adults 65 years and older. We also know that these can be the most vulnerable populations for food insecurity and poverty.

Arizona has seen positive trends in the areas of child welfare over the last decade. The number of licensed foster homes as well as the number of finalized adoptions has grown. This has all occurred during a time dominated by prosperity and increased financial resources to the Department of Economic Security (DES), who administers Child Protective Services. As DES absorbs substantial cuts and staff reductions, what will those numbers look like two, five, or ten years out? It is quite possible that simply sustaining will be considered success, at least in the short term.

One key measure we have seen no movement on since 2005 is the number of Arizona children living in poverty. Despite expeditious job growth and increased opportunity, 1 in 5 Arizona children still lives in poverty - \$22,050 in annual income for a family of four. Just as concerning, perhaps even more so, the number of Arizona adults 65 years and older in poverty has actually increased.

If we were unable to lift families out of poverty during their "hey day" of Arizona growth in the mid-2000s, how devastating could the impacts of the Recession be on Arizona families?



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