

# ECONOMIC DISTRESS CLUSTERS

The 1998 Oklahoma Kids Count Factbook again divides Oklahoma's 77 counties into five clusters with similar conditions based on four economic factors:

**Child Poverty Rates** (1993 Census Estimates): the best measure of the presence of very poor children in a community

**Per Capita Personal Income** (1995): the most current measure of income levels of people in a community

**Percent of Children on Welfare** (FY 1996): the most current measure of children required to survive on inadequate resources

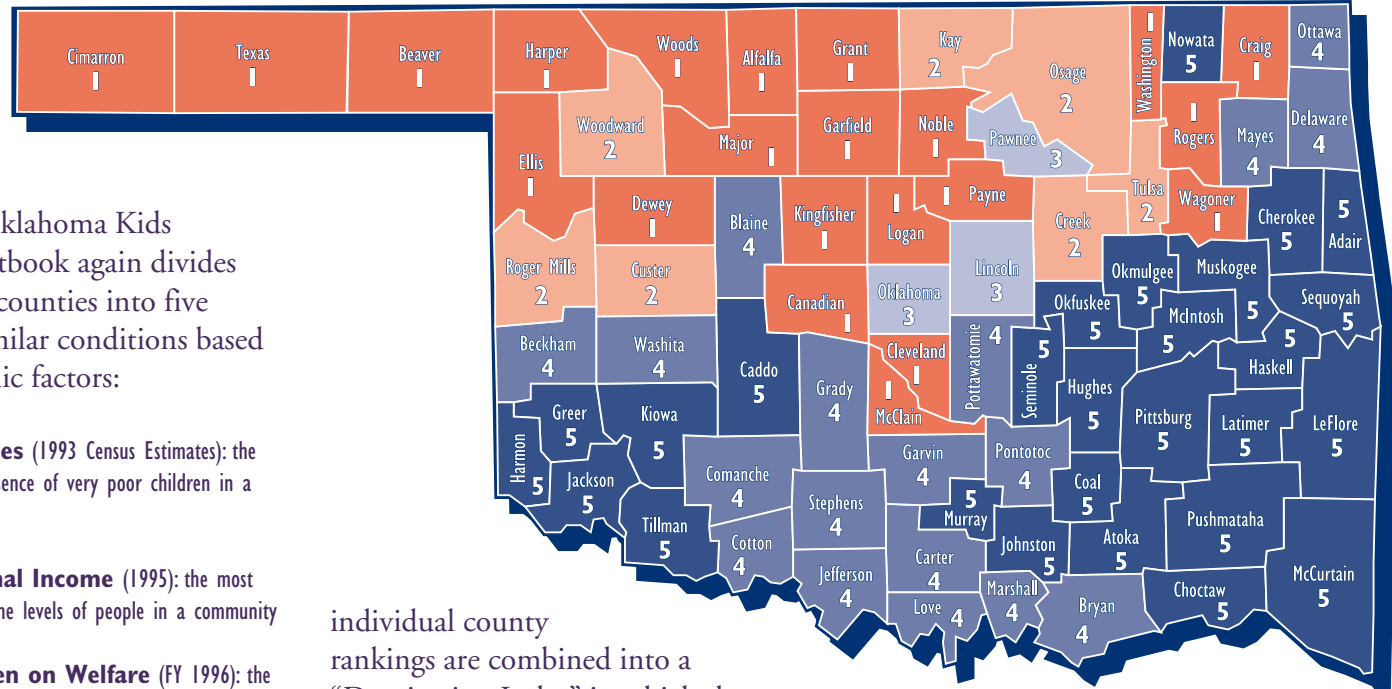
**Unemployment Rates** (1995): the best measure of people's ability to improve economic conditions through work.

Taken together, these factors provide a comprehensive picture of a county's economic status in a manner which can be ranked, grouped into clusters, updated and tracked from year to year. Each county is ranked on each of the four factors. The four

individual county rankings are combined into a "Deprivation Index" in which the lower the number, the wealthier the county. Each county was ranked again according to its "Deprivation Index" and grouped into one of five economic clusters: wealthiest, wealthier, middle, poorer or poorest. Each cluster is composed of approximately twenty percent (20%) of the state's population.

These five clusters illustrate the diverse economic environments in which Oklahoma children live. While

many Oklahoma counties moved from one cluster to another during the most recent year investigated, Oklahoma's wealthiest counties are still primarily concentrated in the northwestern corner of the state. The poorest counties are still primarily concentrated in the southeastern



1	Wealthiest
2	Wealthier
3	Middle
4	Poorer
5	Poorest



COMPARING PROFILES: Oklahoma Economic Clusters		Number 1	Number 2	Number 3	Number 4	Number 5
	State of Oklahoma	WEALTHIEST	WEALTHIER	MIDDLE	POORER	POOREST
Total population (1994)	3,258,100	708,990	728,060	669,650	575,250	576,210
Child population (1994)	866,950	189,460	192,850	175,730	152,960	156,210
Number of Poor Children (1993)	195,915	27,843	39,591	41,718	37,070	48,292
Percent of Children Living in Poverty (1993)	23.7%	15.6%	21.5%	25.1%	25.4%	32.0%
Per Capita Income (1995)	\$18,601	\$18,012	\$22,128	\$21,213	\$16,159	\$14,318
Number of Children receiving Public Assistance (FY1996)	78,021	8,684	15,139	21,660	14,192	18,346
Percent of Children receiving Public Assistance (FY1996)	9.0%	4.6%	7.9%	12.3%	9.3%	11.7%
Average County Unemployment Rate (1995)	4.7	3.3	4.5	5.4	5.3	7.3
Percent of Low Birthweight Births (1991-1995)	6.8%	5.9%	6.6%	7.5%	6.9%	6.8%
Rate of Infant Mortality (1991-1995)	8.7 per 1,000 births	6.8 per 1,000 births	9.1 per 1,000 births	10.0 per 1,000 births	8.5 per 1,000 births	8.5 per 1,000 births
Rate of Births to Teens ages 15 through 17 (1991-1995)	41.0 per 1,000 girls	28.7 per 1,000 girls	41.7 per 1,000 girls	48.2 per 1,000 girls	42.0 per 1,000 girls	47.4 per 1,000 girls
Rate of Child Abuse/Neglect Confirmations (FY1996)	13.4 per 1,000 children	13.2 per 1,000 children	10.0 per 1,000 children	15.1 per 1,000 children	13.9 per 1,000 children	15.5 per 1,000 children
Death Rate among Children ages 1 through 14 (1991-1995)	33.2 per 100,000 children	27.5 per 100,000 children	30.0 per 100,000 children	34.2 per 100,000 children	38.1 per 100,000 children	38.2 per 100,000 children
High School Dropout Rate (School year 1995-1996)	5.3%	4.7%	5.6%	7.3%	5.1%	4.3%
Violent Crime Arrests of Children ages 10 through 17 (1996)	341.5 per 100,000 children	149.9 per 100,000 children	511.2 per 100,000 children	549.3 per 100,000 children	260.6 per 100,000 children	240.0 per 100,000 children

corner but are now also frequently found in the southwestern region of the state.

Similar to last year, the profiles of the five clusters continue to reveal clear patterns in Oklahoma's economic landscape. Children in Oklahoma's poorest counties are more than twice as likely to be poor, and almost three times as likely to be on welfare as children in the state's wealthiest

counties. In these poorest counties incomes plummet and unemployment rates more than double. Poverty is harder to escape.

The cluster of Oklahoma's 22 wealthiest counties has the best indicators in six of the eight benchmark areas investigated by Oklahoma Kids Count. Taken together these counties have the lowest rates of **low birthweight infants, infant mortality, births to**

**teens, child death and juvenile violent crime arrests.**

The state's lowest rate of **child abuse & neglect** confirmations is found in the cluster of Oklahoma's seven counties comprising the state's wealthiest areas.

Surprisingly, the **high school dropout** rate is the lowest in the 27 counties making up Oklahoma's most economically deprived area.

