

Oklahoma's Economic Distress Clusters

For the third year, the 1999 Oklahoma KIDS COUNT Factbook divides Oklahoma's 77 counties into five clusters with similar conditions based on four economic factors:

Child Poverty Rates (1993 Census Estimates, revised)—the best measure of the presence of very poor children in a community

Per Capita Personal Income (1996)—the most current measure of income levels of people in a community

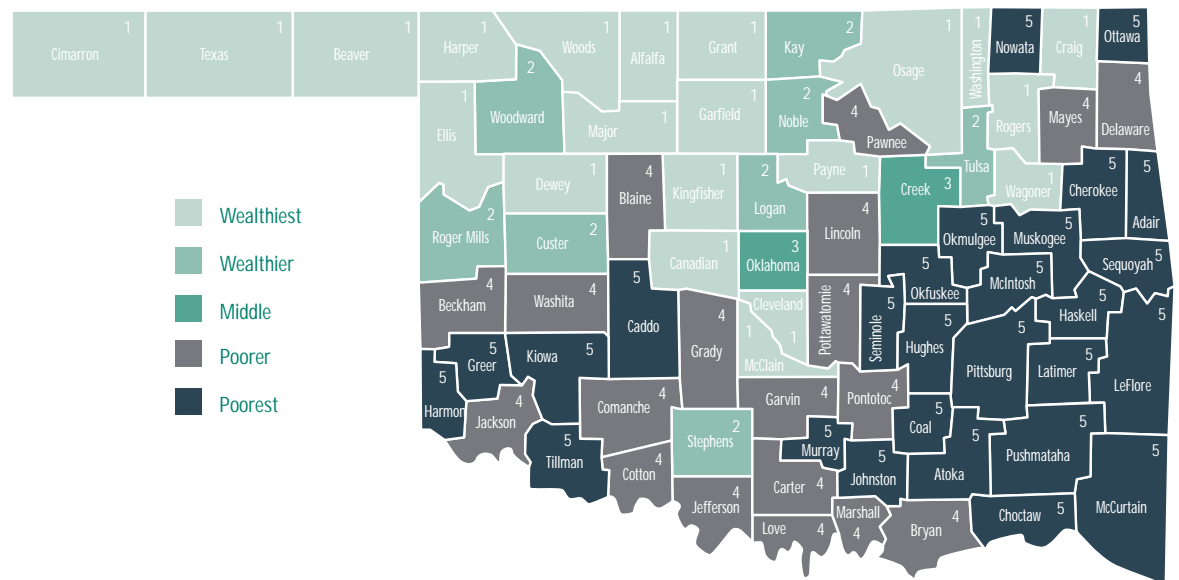
Percent of Children Receiving Public Assistance (FY 1997)—the most current measure of children required to survive on inadequate resources

Unemployment Rates (1997)—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 continue to illustrate the diverse economic environments in which Oklahoma children live. When compared to the prior year investigated, fewer Oklahoma counties moved from one cluster to another. There was very little change among the very wealthy and the very poor. Oklahoma's wealthiest counties remain primarily concentrated in the northwestern corner of the state. The poorest counties remain primarily concentrated in the southeastern corner with substantial numbers found in the southwest.

Similar to past years, the profiles of the five clusters reveal clear patterns in Oklahoma's economic landscape. Children in Oklahoma's 27 poorest counties are twice as likely to be poor and twice as likely to be on welfare than children in the state's 21 wealthiest counties. Incomes are the lowest, unemployment rates are the worst, and economic distress is entrenched in these poorest counties.



The cluster of Oklahoma's 27 *poorest* counties has the worst indicators in four of the eight benchmark areas investigated by Oklahoma KIDS COUNT. Taken together these counties have the highest rates of births to young teens, child abuse & neglect confirmations, child death and child poverty.

The cluster of Oklahoma's 21 *wealthiest* counties has the best indicators in seven 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 young teens, child death, high school dropouts, child poverty and juvenile violent crime arrests.

Comparing Profiles *Oklahoma Economic Clusters*

	State of Oklahoma	Number 1 / Wealthiest	Number 2 / Wealthier	Number 3 / Middle	Number 4 / Poorer	Number 5 / Poorest
Total Population (1997)	3,317,091	733,823	716,245	696,517	583,134	587,372
Child Population (1997)	878,305	196,725	187,796	183,500	156,118	154,166
Number of Poor Children (1993 Revised)	226,841	33,738	45,923	38,380	43,009	53,827
Percent of Children Living in Poverty (1993 Revised)	25.4%	17.1%	24.5%	27.4%	27.5%	34.9%
Number of Children Receiving Public Assistance (FY1997)	62,599	6,691	11,569	17,988	11,999	14,352
Percent of Children Receiving Public Assistance (FY1997)	7.1%	3.4%	6.2%	9.8%	7.7%	9.3%
Per Capita Income (1996)	\$19,574	\$18,773	\$24,022	\$22,065	\$16,624	\$15,158
Unemployment Rate (1997)	4.1	2.8	3.7	3.6	4.7	7.0
Percent of Low Birthweight Babies (1992-1996)	6.9%	6.0%	6.9%	7.7%	7.0%	6.7%
Rate of Infant Mortality (1992-1996)	8.5 per 1,000 births	6.5 per 1,000 births	9.2 per 1,000 births	9.4 per 1,000 births	8.6 per 1,000 births	8.3 per 1,000 births
Rate of Births to Teen Girls ages 15 through 17 (1992-1996)	38.3 per 1,000 teen girls	25.9 per 1,000 teen girls	39.3 per 1,000 teen girls	43.7 per 1,000 teen girls	38.5 per 1,000 teen girls	46.0 per 1,000 teen girls
Rate of Child Abuse/Neglect Confirmations (FY1997)	15.5 per 1,000 children	12.9 per 1,000 children	12.1 per 1,000 children	14.8 per 1,000 children	18.8 per 1,000 children	20.5 per 1,000 children
Death Rate among Children ages 1 through 14 (1992-1996)	33.5 per 100,000 children	26.7 per 100,000 children	30.3 per 100,000 children	36.3 per 100,000 children	37.0 per 100,000 children	38.7 per 100,000 children
High School Dropout Rate (School year 1996-1997)	5.6%	4.8%	5.9%	7.6%	4.8%	5.2%
Violent Crime Arrests of Children ages 10 through 17 (1997)	283.7 per 100,000 children	124.9 per 100,000 children	504.3 per 100,000 children	417.7 per 100,000 children	202.7 per 100,000 children	170.6 per 100,000 children