



United States: Impact of Covid-19 Pandemic on People in Poverty Human Rights Watch Methodology, 2020 – 2021

Early in the Covid-19 pandemic, on March 19, 2020, [Human Rights Watch called on the United States government](#) to consider existing economic vulnerabilities and inequalities, as well as gender and racial inequality, in its response to the virus outbreak. This included building a stronger social safety net, investing in long-neglected communities, and ensuring an adequate standard of living for everyone.

About one year later, Human Rights Watch analyzed [public-use microdata from the Census Bureau Household Pulse Survey](#) to assess people's economic experiences during the pandemic. The Household Pulse Survey is based on weekly national household probability samples that the Census Bureau started collecting at regular intervals at the end of April 2020. The survey asks people about their employment status, spending patterns, physical and mental health, access to health care, food security, housing, and educational disruption. Human Rights Watch analyzed many of the questions to understand trends over time and to establish that results from recent data are not outliers. For clarity, many of the graphs and figures included in our [publication](#) describe the estimates derived from publicly-available microdata, dating from January 6 – 18, 2021.