

Poverty & Equity Brief

October 2024

SAMOA

The latest Household Income and Expenditure Survey (HIES) used to estimate poverty in Samoa was conducted in 2018. A new 2023 HIES dataset has been collected, but poverty estimates are not yet available. By World Bank definitions for data deprivation, Samoa is classified as meeting the minimum data needs. In the past ten years, Samoa has conducted a HIES on two occasions, with a maximum of five years separating the two (2018 and 2023).

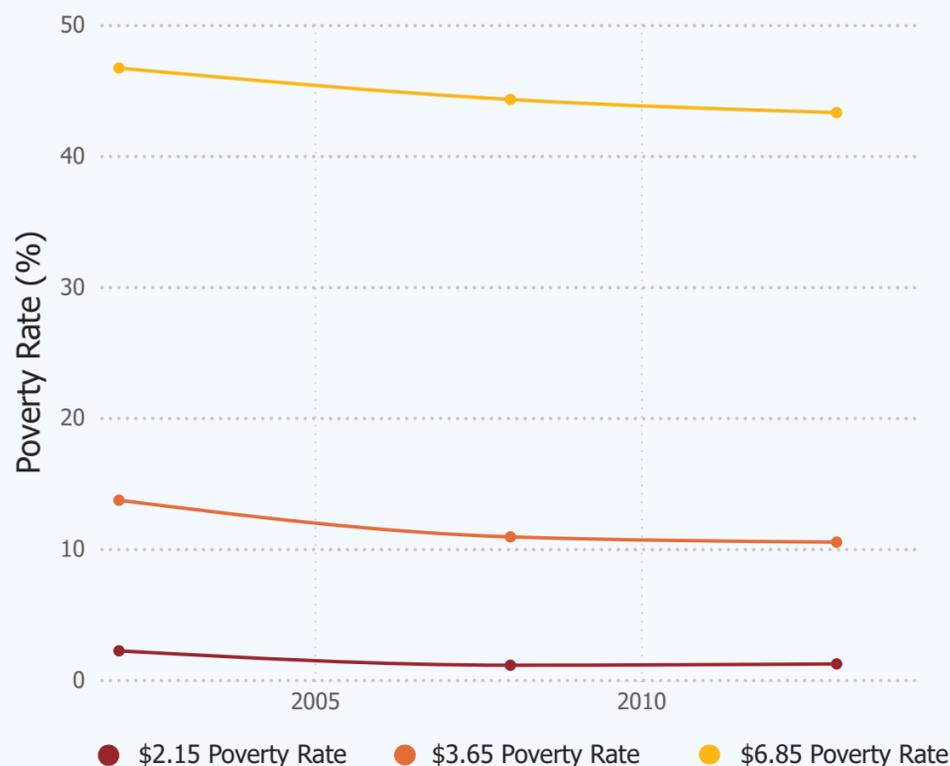
As reported in the Samoa Poverty and Hardship Report published in 2023, 21.9 percent of the population lived below the basic-needs poverty line in 2018, 3 percentage points higher than the poverty rate in 2013/14 (18.8 percent). Poverty was higher in the rural divisions of Savaii and "Rest of Upolu" than in the Apia Urban Area and Northwest Upolu. Productive age individuals (aged 15-60) working as employers and public sector employees were much less likely to be in poverty than private sector workers or those working in subsistence agriculture.

Measured against the international poverty line of \$2.15 (2017 PPP USD per person per day), the poverty rate in 2013 was estimated at 1.2 percent. However, measured against the \$6.85 upper middle-income poverty line, 43.3 percent of Samoa's population could not meet the average standard of living of upper middle-income countries. Inequality, as measured by the Gini index, was estimated at 38.7. The Prosperity Gap, a new measure of shared prosperity introduced by the World Bank, shows that in 2013, average incomes in Samoa needed to grow by 3.8 times in order to bring everyone in the country to an income of at least \$25 per day. Samoa does well on most non-monetary dimensions of poverty, with access to basic infrastructure such as safe water, safe sanitation, and electricity nearly universal. However, in 2013 an estimated 12.8 percent of households had at least one school-aged child who was not enrolled in school.

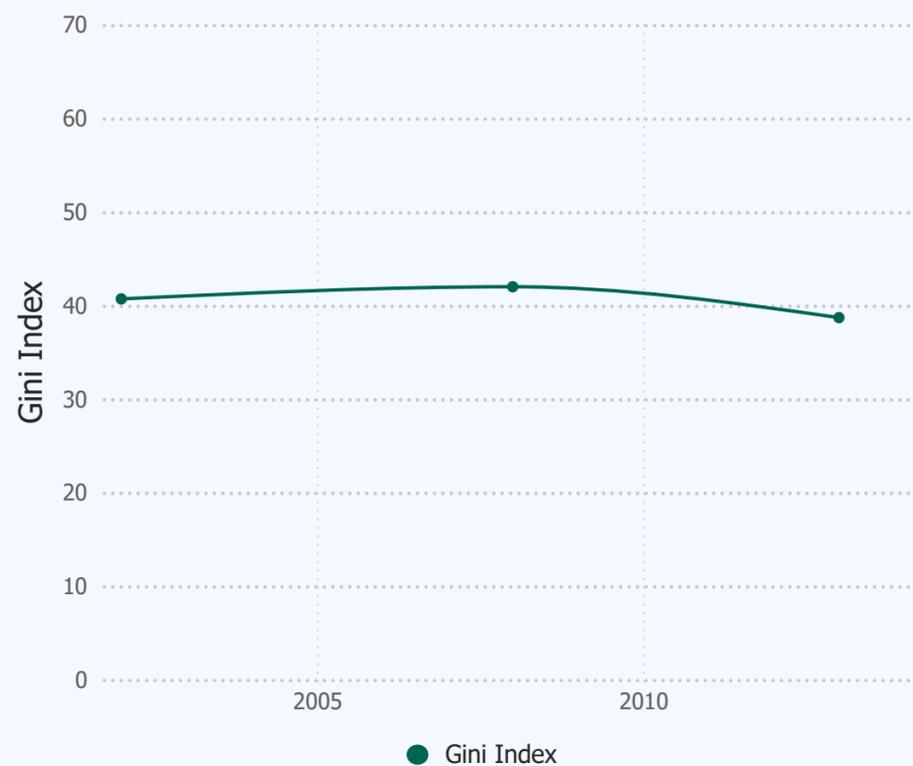
The Samoan economy was severely affected by the COVID-19 pandemic and economic recovery only started in 2023, with the easing of border restrictions and the return of tourism. Although poverty projections were not done for Samoa, regional peers whose economic recoveries started around the same time are not projected to return to pre-pandemic poverty levels until after 2024.



Poverty Rate



Inequality



Poverty at Different Lines

Poverty Line	Number of Poor (Thousands)	Rate (%)	Year
National Poverty Line	43.6	21.9	2018
International Poverty Line (\$2.15/day)	2.3	1.2	2013
Lower Middle Income Class Poverty Line (\$3.65/day)	21.0	10.5	2013
Upper Middle Income Class Poverty Line (\$6.85/day)	86.5	43.3	2013
Multidimensional Poverty Measure		1.4	2013

Group and Multidimensional Poverty

Poverty by Group	Poverty Rate (%)	Multidimensional Poverty Components	(% of Pop.)
Urban population	15.3	Daily income less than US\$2.15 per person	1.2
Rural population	9.4	At least one school-aged child is not enrolled in school	12.8
Males	10.3	No adult has completed primary education	0.6
Females	10.8	No access to limited-standard drinking water	0.5
0 to 14 years old	12.5	No access to limited-standard sanitation	0.9
15 to 64 years old	9.5	No access to electricity	2.0
65 and older	7.4		
Without education (16+)	N/A*		
Primary education (16+)	11.1		
Secondary education (16+)	9.7		
Tertiary/post-secondary education (16+)	3.3		

Note:

Data for the "Poverty by Group" table is derived from a 2013 survey and data for the "Multidimensional Poverty Components" table is derived from a 2013 survey. The rates in the "Poverty by Group" table above are shown at the \$3.65 lower-middle income line. "N/A" denotes a missing/removed value, while "N/A*" refers to a value which was removed due to having fewer than 30 observations.

Poverty Data & Methodology

The Samoa Bureau of Statistics used a cost-of-basic-needs approach to establish a welfare benchmark for the poverty line in 2018. A Food Poverty Line (FPL) estimated the required expenditure to achieve 2100 calories of consumption per capita, using a basket of the top 25 goods consumed by the bottom three deciles. Separate FPLs were estimated for each of four subregions: Apia Urban Area, Northwest Upolu, Rest of Upolu, and Savai'i. The Non-Food Poverty Line (NFPL) was estimated using the average nonfood consumption of the bottom three deciles in the distribution.

Harmonization

The numbers presented in this brief are based on the EAPPOV database. EAPPOV is a database of socio-economic statistics constructed using microdata from household surveys in the East Asia and the Pacific (EAP) region and is managed by the East Asia & Pacific Team for Statistical Development (EAPSTD). As of September 2024, the collection includes 21 countries and 127 surveys. Harmonized surveys in the EAPPOV database are compiled into 4 modules following Global Monitoring Database (GMD) Harmonization guidelines. A subset of the harmonized variables forms the basis of the GMD collection, including the welfare aggregate which is used for Global Poverty Monitoring. Terms of use of the data adhere to agreements with the original data producers.