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# Advocate

February 2019

[Calendar](#)

[In the News](#)

[KIDS COUNT Facts](#)

[Research](#)

[TCCY Home](#)

[Upcoming Events](#)

[TCCY Newsroom](#)

[TCCY Regional Councils](#)

## Who Are We? Table of Contents

[Overview;](#)  
[Census;](#)  
[Student Loans;](#)  
[Inequality in Tennessee;](#)  
[Inequality/Prosperity;](#)  
[Children's Advocacy Days;](#)  
[TCCY Legislative Resources;](#)  
[Funding Opportunity;](#)  
[Update.](#)



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### Who Are We?

The United States is often identified by its view of itself, a unique set of democratic values and concept of freedom. It may be defined by its history or its geography. At our founding, the United States as a government was defined as white males who owned property. But, now who are we?

February is Black History Month, which is followed by Women's History Month in March. January was Poverty Awareness Month. These commemorations seek to fill in the gaps in our narrative and/or celebrate contributions of those often left out of the national narrative.

So now, nearly 20 years into the 21st century, what makes up the United States?

[Return to Table of Contents.](#)

## Census Asks and We Can Answer "Who We Are"

How do we know how many people live in the United States, where they live, how large their households are, etc.? The U.S. Census answers these questions and many more. This information was used by **132 programs to distribute \$675,000,000,000** (\$675 billion) in FY 2015. This allocation included the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention grant funding allocated by TCCY.

The federal government's many data collecting agencies create a library of information. Employers and job hunters rely on the monthly employment reports. Health reports guide our behavior. Census data – including both the detailed American Community Survey and the actual count taken every 10 years – are used by governments and private groups to plan. How many people who are going to be traveling the streets affects how many streets you need to build and how much it will cost to keep them repaired. It also affects whether a business wants to open a gas station in that area.

An accurate count is considered so important the law limits use of the data. Anyone who shares this information for other purposes, such as identifying individuals to law enforcement, can be fined up to \$250,000, imprisoned for up to five years or both.

Questions asked of every citizen are required to have a purpose to meet data needs. Beginning with the first census in 1790, all citizens have been asked for information, including sex (asked since 1790), race (1790), age (1800), family relationship (1880) and Hispanic origin (1970), and people are asked for a telephone number and list of people living in home. More detailed information is collected annually from randomly selected individuals to create a fuller picture of who we are, and specially focused enumerations collect information on issues, such as housing, etc., in more detail.

In March 2018, the Commerce Department, which oversees the Census Bureau, announced its intention to ask all residents their citizenship status. Critics point to census expert research showing that a census question on citizenship does not produce accurate results and causes a lower response rate. A low response rate triggers more costly work tracking down residents in an agency already facing budget constraints. (Potential judicial or legislative action may block this question.)

Advocates can help get the [word](#) out about the need for an accurate census.

The Opportunity Agenda, **Census Data: A Fair and Accurate Count**, <http://bit.ly/2DgQJyx>.

The Census Project, **Stakeholder Toolkit**, <http://bit.ly/2DyNZfZ>.

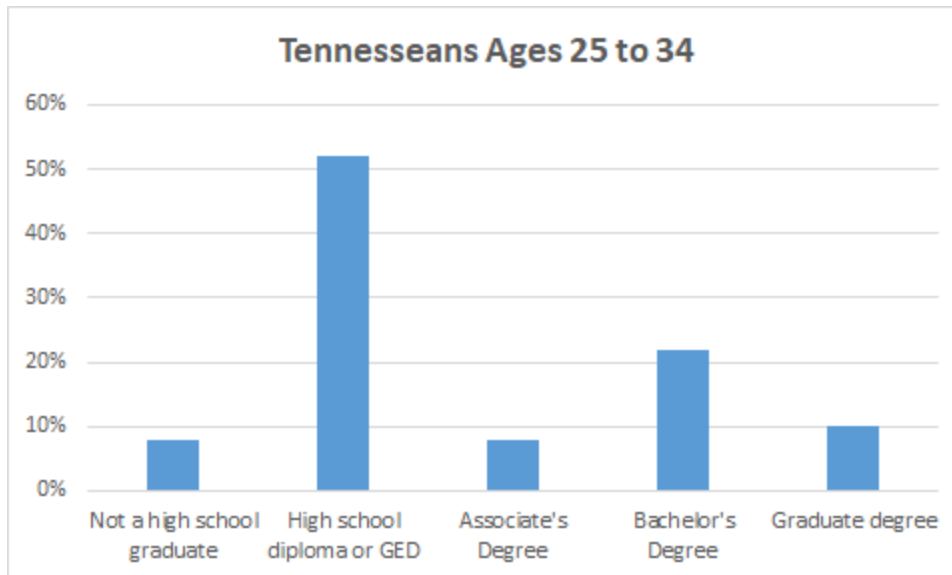
Partnership for America's Children, **Census 101 and the Young Child Undercount: Issues, Resources, Next Steps**, <http://bit.ly/2UnDWjo>.

Count All Kids: **Census 2020**, <http://bit.ly/2UtTphY>.

[Return to Table of Contents.](#)

## Higher Education Is Critical, But Paying for It May Negate Gains

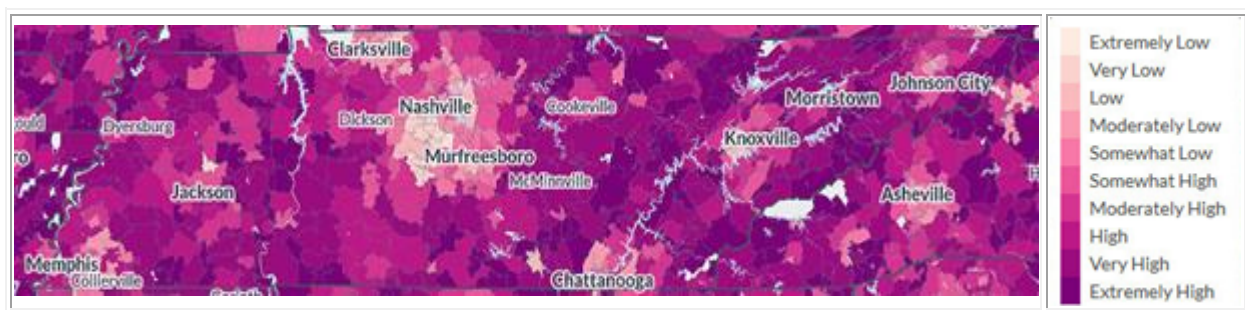
Education level describes individuals and communities. Tennessee has been a leader in opening higher education to new high school graduates and returning learners. However, paying off student loans continues to be a problem for Tennessee students.



Source: KIDS COUNT Data Center

Education can be a tool for overcoming inequality. However, for many students, especially those from lower income communities, higher education debt has had the opposite effect. In the United States, 44 million people owe more than \$1.4 trillion in student debt. Nationally, much of this debt is held by students living in urban, low-income minority neighborhoods. In Tennessee, many rural areas have high levels of student loan delinquency.

The Federal Reserve Board identified a relationship between high levels of student debt and the drop in home ownership from 2005 to 2014 for adults ages 24 to 32.



Student Loan Delinquencies - Citylab

Annie E. Casey Foundation, KIDS COUNT Data Center, **More Young Adults Earning Postsecondary Degrees in the United States**, <http://bit.ly/2DwW5pj>.

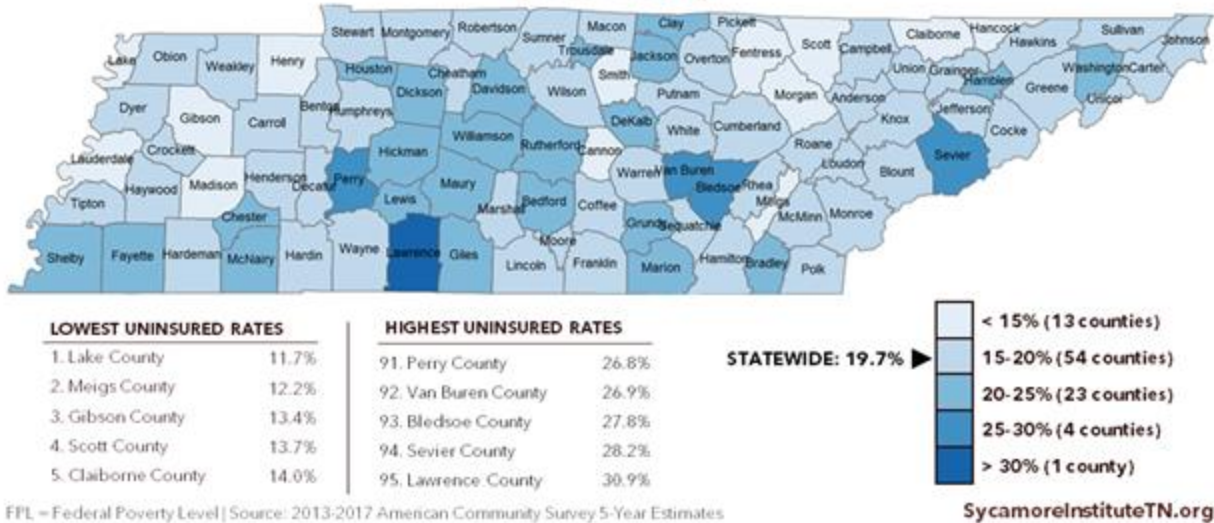
Tran, C., Citylab, **The Neighborhoods Mired in Student Debt**, Oct. 19, 2018, <http://bit.ly/2VVe2Fn>.

Guerin, J., Housing Wire, **Federal Reserve Says Student Debt Has Hampered Housing Market**, <http://bit.ly/2TYcf0n>.

[Return to Table of Contents.](#)

## New Report Looks at Inequities Among TN Counties

### UNINSURED TENNESSEANS WITH INCOMES AT OR BELOW 138% FPL (2013-2017)

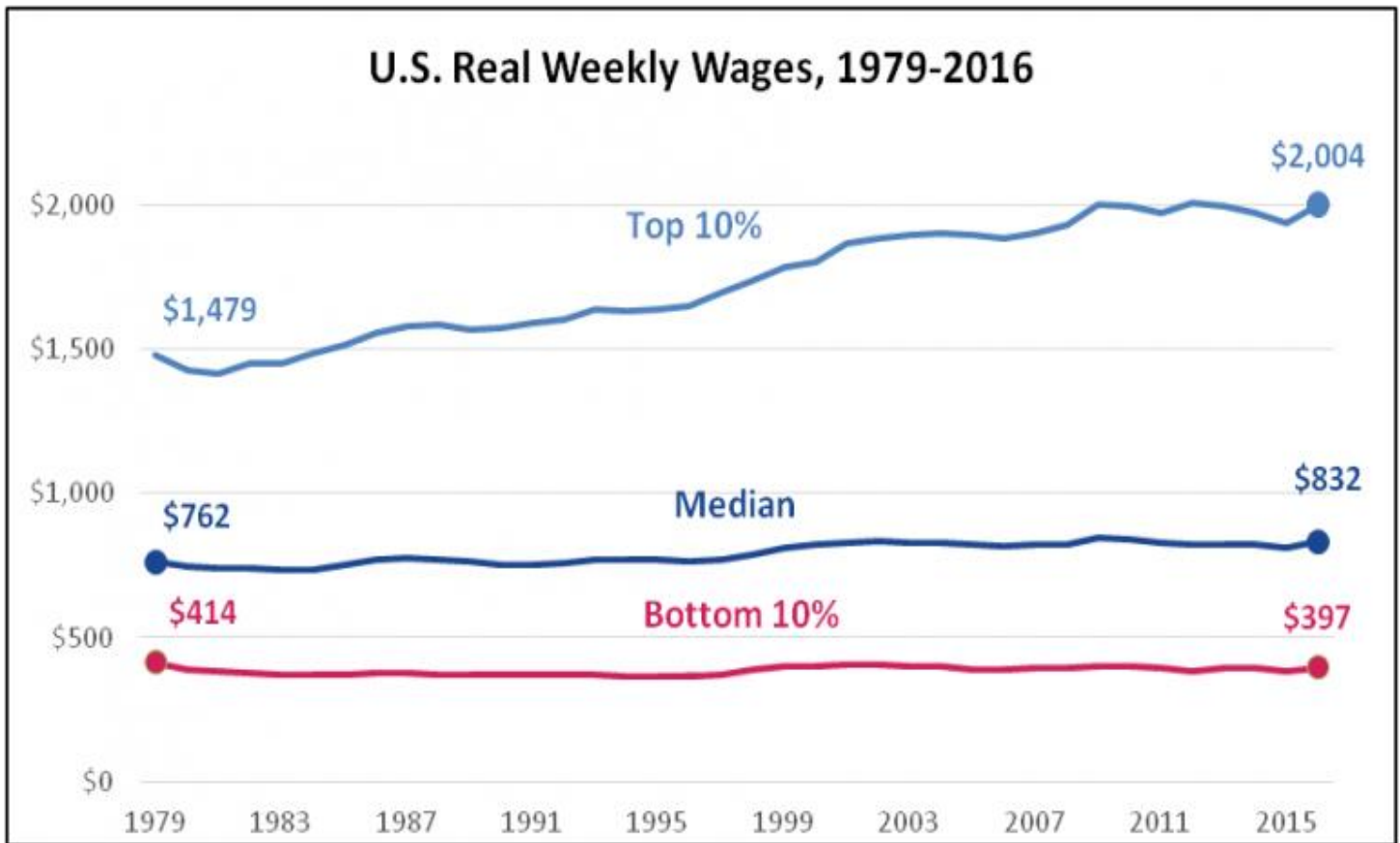


Urban-rural differences that identify us have existed since before 500 BCE when people were telling the Aesop Fable of the town mouse and country mouse. Tennessee's new governor announced his first focus is on helping rural Tennessee. A new report by the Sycamore Institute is subtitled, *95 Counties Show Large Rural-Urban Differences*. The report summarizes its conclusions: More densely populated counties have, on average, higher incomes, less poverty and lower rates of citizens lacking health care coverage, and Middle Tennessee counties fare generally better than those in other regions.

Melton, C., Sycamore Institute, **Income, Poverty, Education & Insurance Coverage in Tennessee: 95 Counties Show Large Rural-Urban Differences**, Dec. 18, 2018, <http://bit.ly/2QUtTA6>

[Return to Table of Contents.](#)

## Income Inequity



Source: Inequality.org

“Rich man, poor man.” “Keeping up with the Joneses.” Income is one of the more frequent ways people are identified and separated. Income inequity has grown since it fell to a low in the mid-1970s. [Inequality.org](http://inequality.org), which tracks information on inequality, reports the strong rise in U.S. productivity during the same period has not been paired with an increase in workers' earnings.

Information on states and areas as small as Fairview, TN, can be searched for on a new [Scorecard](#) by Prosperity Now. The report ranks Tennessee at 38th in the nation. This is composite rank combines an Outcome Rank of 40 and a Racial Disparity Rank of 18. The organization also grades states on policies to help families maintain financial security. Information for each city, county, congressional district and Census metropolitan area includes:

- Financial assets and income;
- Businesses and jobs;
- Homeownership and housing;
- Health care; and
- Education.

Prosperity Now, **Scorecard**, Jan. 29, 2019, <http://bit.ly/2UlnhwM>.

Inequality.org, **Income Inequality**, <http://bit.ly/2UoG8Hs>.

[Return to Table of Contents.](#)

## Children's Advocacy Days: Registration Open



Registration for the 2019 Children's Advocacy Days is now open. Join other child advocates for facts, fun and networking.

[Return to Table of Contents.](#)

## TCCY Legislative Advocacy Information

The 111th General Assembly is in session. Steve Petty has begun reporting on bills being filed related to children, youth and families.

The Tennessee Electric Cooperative Association, which has printed directories of the Tennessee legislature for many years, has created an [app](#) for phones and tablets. Search on your smartphone [Apple App Store](#) or [Google PLAY Marketplace](#) for "Tennessee General Assembly."

Tennessee General Assembly tool: Find Your Legislator: <http://bit.ly/2Qm77WM>.

The TCCY Legislative Report is available at <https://www.tn.gov/content/dam/tn/tccy/documents/leg/legislat.pdf>.

Sign up to receive TCCY Tennessee **legislative updates** and the **Advocate** at <https://www.tn.gov/tccy/advocate-collaborate/tccy-ac-advlegis/tccy-ac-advocacy/leg-listserv.html>.

Sign up to receive TCCY **federal policy information** by following the instructions at <https://www.tn.gov/content/tn/tccy/advocacy-policy/federal-advocacy-issues/leg-listserv.html>.

TCCY's [Budget Recommendations](#) are also available.

[Return to Table of Contents.](#)

## FY20 Building Strong Brains Tennessee Funding

An Announcement of Funds has been posted for FY20 *Building Strong Brains Tennessee* proposals. The Announcement can be found at <https://www.tn.gov/dcs/for-providers/procurement.html>. Two accompanying documents, the Budget template and the Face Sheet, are also posted in Microsoft Word for use in submitting proposals.

[Return to Table of Contents.](#)

## Update



**Barnes**

Gov. Bill Lee has selected commissioners for state child-serving departments. Commissioners **Danielle Barnes**, *Human Services*, and **Marie Williams**, *Mental Health*, continue from the Haslam administration.



**Williams**



**Nichols**

**Jennifer Nichols**, chief homicide prosecutor in the Shelby County District Attorney's Office, has been appointed to lead the Department of *Children's Services*. **Penny Schwinn**, chief deputy commissioner at the Texas Education Agency, has been appointed for the Department of *Education*.



**Schwinn**



**Piercey**

**Dr. Lisa Piercey**, executive vice president of West Tennessee Healthcare and medical director for Madison County Child Advocacy Center, is the new commissioner of *Health*. The new commissioner of the Department of *Developmental and Intellectual Disabilities* is **Brad Turner**, director of client services at HealthStream, Inc. He has worked with the State Interagency Coordinating Council.



**Turner**

[Return to Table of Contents.](#)

## Mark Your Calendar

Feb. 12, 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. CST, **Disability Day on the Hill**, Cordell Hull Building, 425 5th Ave., N., Nashville. Theme is "LiveAble," making Tennessee "LiveAble" for people with disabilities and their families, including health care, employment, education, etc. Volunteers and advocates can contact the Tennessee Disability Coalition at [ddh@tndisability.org](mailto:ddh@tndisability.org) or 615-383-9442. **Disability Day on the Hill Community Reception**, Feb. 11, 5 p.m. to 7 p.m., Millennium Maxwell House, 2025 Rosa L. Parks Blvd., Nashville. Event is free but RSVP at <http://bit.ly/2TDGbPk> or 615-383-9442.

Feb. 12, 2 p.m. to 3 p.m. CST, **State Advocacy Efforts to Count All Kids: First Webinar**, <http://bit.ly/2Ux9Qdx>. Feb. 20, 1 p.m. to 2 p.m. CST, **Second Webinar**, <http://bit.ly/2UrHCKb>. Feb. 25, 1:30 p.m. to 2:30 p.m. CST, **Third Webinar**, <http://bit.ly/2Uv34F6>.

Feb. 21-22, **Tennessee Commission on Children and Youth** quarterly meeting, Tennessee Tower, 312 Rosa L Parks Blvd, Nashville. Contact: [Natasha.M.Smith@tn.gov](mailto:Natasha.M.Smith@tn.gov).

Feb. 23, 8 a.m. to 6 p.m., ARC of Tennessee, "**The Future of Disability: A Big Ideas Event**," The Inn at Opryland, 2401 Music Valley Dr., Nashville. Cost: \$65 for The Arc members; \$85 non-member fee includes one-year membership. Info: <http://bit.ly/2CgGTuB>. Register: <http://bit.ly/2D5fgXd>.

Feb. 25, 11 a.m. to 1 p.m., **Upper Cumberland Council on Children and Youth** presents a **Lunch and Learn** viewing and discussion of "Resilience: The Biology of Stress and the Science of Hope," 11 a.m. to 1 p.m., Regional Health Building 1100 England Drive, Cookeville. Register at <http://bit.ly/2DEFtXV>.

Feb. 28, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., **Council on Children's Mental Health Meeting**, Metropolitan Nashville North Police Station, 2231 26th Ave., N., Nashville. Contact: [Melissa.McGee@tn.gov](mailto:Melissa.McGee@tn.gov) 615-532-3073.

March 1, 9 a.m. to 11:30 a.m., **Southeast Council on Children and Youth Legislative Brunch**, Museum Center at 5 Points, 200 Inman St., E., Cleveland. Guest speakers: TN Sen. Todd Gardenhire; Michael Leach; Department of Children's Services Deputy Commissioner Joseph Combs, regional administrator for Tennessee Valley DCS; TCCY Deputy Executive Director Craig Hargrow. **Registration at <http://bit.ly/2UrzoZe> is required by Feb. 22.** Information: [Rosalyn.Leavell-Rice@tn.gov](mailto:Rosalyn.Leavell-Rice@tn.gov) or 423-634-6210.

March 1, 8 a.m. to 12:15 p.m., The Northwest Council on Children and Youth presents **Ethics: A Mosaic of Issues Social Work & Social Media; Confidentiality; LGBT Cultural Competency**, Boling University Center, Watkins Auditorium, U.T. Martin, 61 Mt. Pelia Rd. Presenter: Paula Foster, LCSW, executive director of the Tennessee Conference on Social Welfare. **Registration Deadline: Feb. 19.** Information and registration: [Dana.Cobb@tn.gov](mailto:Dana.Cobb@tn.gov) or 731-571-7271.

March 12-13, **Children's Advocacy Days, "CAD Tennessee: Ideas Worth Sharing,"** War Memorial Auditorium, Nashville. Contact: [John.Rust@tn.gov](mailto:John.Rust@tn.gov). Register: <https://cad2019.eventbrite.com>.

[Return to Top.](#)

## In the News

Wermund, B., *Politico*, **The Red State That Loves Free College**, Jan. 16, 2019, <https://politi.co/2VUoJbc>.

Bandlamudi, A., KCUR, **Youth Suicide Rates Are Higher in States with High Gun Ownership, According to a New Study**, Jan. 17, 2019, <http://bit.ly/2TU86um>.

Ollove, M., Pew Charitable Trust, *Stateline*, **Rural Hospitals in Greater Jeopardy in Non-Medicaid Expansion States**, Jan. 22, 2019, <http://bit.ly/2UFM9Q5>.

LoBue, V., *Psychology Today*, **The Science of Spanking**, Dec. 10, 2018, <http://bit.ly/2Un6UQn>.

[Return to Top.](#)

## Research Information

Tennessee Suicide Prevention Network, **Status of Suicide Prevention in Tennessee, 2019**, Jan. 16, 2019, <http://bit.ly/2APPNzv>.



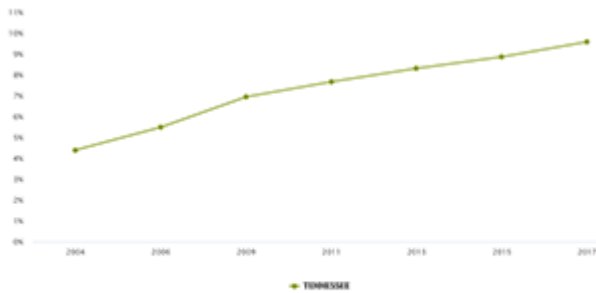
Education Week, **Quality Counts 2019: Chance for Success: A Report Card for States and the Nation on Success Indicators**, Jan. 16, 2019, <http://bit.ly/2DfVZ5B>. (Registration or subscription may be required.)

Aiker, J., Georgetown University Health Policy Institute: Center for Children and Families, **Say Ahhh!: Arkansas' Medicaid Work Reporting Rules Lead to Staggering Health Coverage Losses**, Jan. 18, 2019, <http://bit.ly/2DsiJz9>.

[Return to Top.](#)

## Tennessee KIDS COUNT Facts

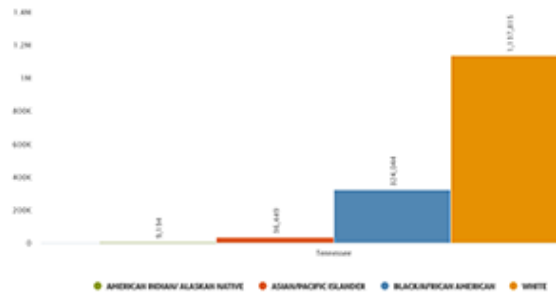
### Hispanic Population Under Age 18



Hispanic Population Under Age 18

Tennessee Commission on Children and Youth  
KIDS COUNT Data Center: [datacenter.kidscount.org](http://datacenter.kidscount.org)  
A project of the Annie E. Casey Foundation

### Population Under Age by Race-2017



Population Under Age 18 By Race

Tennessee Commission on Children and Youth  
KIDS COUNT Data Center: [datacenter.kidscount.org](http://datacenter.kidscount.org)  
A project of the Annie E. Casey Foundation

<http://bit.ly/2TU7Tr6>

<http://bit.ly/2TUDB7G>

More data on Tennessee child well-being are available at <http://bit.ly/15alkVu>.

No person shall, on the grounds of race, color, national origin, sex, age, religion, disability or ability to pay, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be otherwise subjected to discrimination under any program or activity operated, funded or overseen by the Tennessee Commission on Children and Youth (TCCY). It is the intent of TCCY to bind all agencies, organizations or governmental units operating under its jurisdiction and control to fully comply with and abide by the spirit and intent of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

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