



The Condition of Florida by the Numbers

Florida is expected to pass the 20 million mark during 2016, making it the third largest state in the country. Current estimates are that Florida's population will be 23.8 million in 2030,¹ an increase of 4.2 million people from 19.6 million in 2013.²

Today's Florida residents live in a state still recovering from the Great Recession. As expected in any recovery period, jobs are coming back, although too few to employ the same percentage of Floridians that had jobs before the recession. State revenues are increasing now and are expected to climb each year into the foreseeable future. But policymakers have used much of that growth money to provide new tax breaks each legislative session (see section below) instead of reinvesting in areas of the budget squeezed during the recession years. Telling points: Florida ranks 49th in the nation in per capita state and local spending for education, but corrections is funded well enough to rank 23rd among the states;³ and the state ranks 43rd in a recent survey of quality of services for the elderly, disabled and their caregivers.⁴

The state ranks very low in other measures of well-being affected by state expenditures, as the information below indicates.

Unemployment

- Florida's unemployment rate of 6.2 percent in June 2014 exceeded the national rate of 6.1 percent⁵ after 13 months in which the national rate was the same as Florida's or higher.⁶
- Prior to that, beginning when the loss of jobs accelerated with the onset of the Great Recession in early 2008, Florida's rate has generally been higher than the national rate.⁷
- An estimated 597,000 Floridians were jobless in June out of a labor force of 9,626,000.⁸
- Florida's June unemployment rate ranked 29th among the 50 states and the District of Columbia.⁹

- Florida's Department of Economic Opportunity reports that 37,400 jobs were added in Florida in June.¹⁰ However, state economists say the number of jobs in the state is still 291,000 fewer than at its peak. Recovering those lost jobs will take a long time, particularly since the prime working-age population is increasing by about 3,400 people per month.¹¹
- Furthermore, 750,000 new jobs would need to be created for the same percentage of the working population to be employed as at the state's pre-recession peak.¹²

Economic Growth

- In the January-March period, personal income growth in Florida increased by 0.8 percent, the same as the national rate and 23rd among the states. The state's growth rate in 2013 (2.9 percent) outpaced the nation's (2.6 percent) and ranked 13th.¹³

Wages and Income

- The average wage in Florida continues to trail the national rate, and declined further in 2013, to 87.6 percent of the U.S. average wage.¹⁴
- The median household income in Florida was \$46,071 in 2012, 39th in the nation and well below the \$51,017 median for the entire U.S.¹⁵

Housing Foreclosures

- The number of Floridians filing for foreclosure during the first half of 2014 was the highest of any state.¹⁶ In May, eight of the 10 metropolitan areas with the country's highest foreclosure filings were in Florida.¹⁷
- Florida now is third in the rate of non-current mortgages (delinquencies and foreclosures combined). For most of the recession and the months afterwards, Florida ranked first.¹⁸

Poverty

- Florida's poverty rate is exceeded by only 17 states, data from the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Service indicates. The number of people living in poverty, as well as those living in deep poverty, has increased since 2000. In 2012, 3,238,581 Floridians lived below the federal poverty level, an increase of 65,125 from 2011.¹⁹ The Florida poverty rate of 17.1 per cent exceeded the national rate of 15.9 percent.

- The poverty rate for children under 18 was 25.4 percent in 2012.²⁰
- From 2000 to 2012, the number of state residents in poverty grew by 1,251,929 as the poverty rate climbed from 12.8 percent in 2000 to 17.1 percent in 2012. Nationally, the poverty rate increased from 12.2 percent in 2000 to 15.9 percent in 2012.²¹ Florida's rate of growth in poverty was exceeded by only 15 states.
- 7.5 percent of Floridians – 1,418,025 people – lived in deep poverty in 2012, with household incomes of less than 50 percent of the poverty level. That's an increase from 5.5 percent in 2000. (In 2012, the federal poverty level was \$11,170 for a one-person household, \$19,090 for a family of three, and \$23,050 for a family of four.²² In 2014, the poverty level for a one-person household is \$11,670, \$19,790 for a family of three, and \$23,850 for a family of four.²³
- Florida is the nation's second most poverty-stricken state, at 19.5 percent, according to the U.S. Census Bureau's supplemental poverty measure in 2012.²⁴

Income Inequality

- In 2010, the U.S. Census found that Florida ranked as the fifth-worst state on the GINI Index, a measure of income inequality used by economists to measure the gap between those making most of the income and those making the least.²⁵
- Florida ranked third in 2011 in a study measuring the gap between the income of the top 1 percent of Floridians and the bottom 99 percent. In Florida, the top 1 percent earned on average 32.2 times as much as the bottom 99 percent.²⁶

Health Insurance Coverage

- About four million Floridians are without health insurance, many studies have found.²⁷
- Florida has not expanded Medicaid to 138 percent of the federal poverty level. Over 1 million people would qualify for Medicaid under expansion. Approximately 764,000 have incomes under 100 per cent of the poverty level and therefore fall into the "coverage gap" that makes them ineligible to apply through the health insurance marketplace. In Florida this means that adults below the poverty line with no children living in the household and parents with incomes above 30 percent of the federal poverty level are left out of accessing regular health insurance.
- 77 percent of those left out are adults without dependent children; 59 percent are working families; 46 percent are females; 58 percent of the gap are people of color; 42 percent are black

adults and 26 percent Hispanic adults.²⁸ Of nonelderly Latinos in Florida, 36 percent are uninsured, the third-highest rate of uninsured Latinos in the nation.²⁹

- As a consequence, Florida ranks 48th among the states in the percentage of uninsured residents, at about 20 percent. Only Louisiana, Texas and Mississippi have a higher percentage of residents without health coverage.³⁰
- Florida ranks 51st among the states and the District of Columbia in per capita funding received from the Affordable Care Act, forfeiting at least \$300 million in tax revenue (not including the loss of \$51 billion due to failure to expand Medicaid).³¹
- Florida also failed to spend \$400 million of its allotment for Children’s Health Insurance, which resulted in a loss of an additional \$220 million in revised funding allocations.³²
- Enrollment increases in the last few years have reduced Florida’s rate of uninsured children, but the states still has the largest percentage of uninsured children of the Southern states (excluding Texas). Despite having a higher per capita income than the other states in the South, 11.4 percent of Florida children remain uninsured.³³

Supports for Long-Term Services for Elderly, Disabled and Family Caregiver

- Florida ranked 43rd among the states in a report by the AARP examining services that assist older people, adults with disabilities, and their family caregivers. Florida ranked 35th in affordability and access to care, 41st in choice of setting and provider , 14th in effective transitions, 43rd in quality of life and quality of care and 40th in support of family caregivers.³⁴

Food Stamps

- In June 2014, 3,576,433 people in Florida were enrolled in the S.N.A.P. (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program), formerly known as food stamps. That number is down slightly from the all-time peak of 3,627,740 in August 2013. The number of S.N.A.P. clients was 1,406,030 in January 2008.³⁵

Criminal Justice

- Florida leads the nation in incarceration of young people for misdemeanor offenses due to zero tolerance policies.³⁶

- Florida transfers more children out of the juvenile system and into adult court than any other state. A recent study shows that more than 60 percent of the children were charged with non-violent offenses.³⁷

Medicaid

- Medicaid clients totaled 3,093,979 in June 2014, an all-time high. The total was 2,835,663 in June 2013.³⁸

Fairness of Tax System

- Florida's tax system is the second-most regressive in the nation, hitting low- and middle-income Floridians harder than upper-income residents.³⁹

State Tax Revenue

- Florida ranked 50th in state tax revenue per capita in 2013 and 48th in state tax revenue as a percentage of personal income.⁴⁰ These rankings continued a decline from 47th and 48th in 2012 and 42nd and 46th in 2011.⁴¹
- In combined state and local tax revenue per capita, Florida ranked 38th in 2011.⁴²

Education Expenditures

Regardless of the measurements and sources used, spending devoted to education in Florida ranks near the bottom of the states.

- 50th in percent change in total educational revenue per FTE, 2008-2013.⁴³
- 49th in percent change in K-12 education appropriations per FTE, 2008-13.⁴⁴
- The average salary of public school teachers in Florida in 2011-12 was \$46,504, well below the \$55,389 national average, ranking Florida, 42nd.⁴⁵
- Florida's average teacher salary slipped even lower in 2012-13, to 45th in the nation. Florida's average was 84 percent of the national average.⁴⁶
- Florida ranked 48th in the percentage increase in teacher salaries from 2003-03 to 2012-13.⁴⁷

- The state ranked 50th in per capita state government expenditures for all education (K-12 and higher ed), 2010-11.⁴⁸
- 46th in state government expenditures for all education per \$1,000 of personal income, 2010-11.⁴⁹
- Florida ranked 49th among the states in per capita expenditures of state and local government for all education in 2010-11.⁵⁰ (In comparison, in 2010-11 Florida spent enough on other government responsibilities to rank the state 8th in per capita state and local expenditures for fire and police protection, 23rd for corrections, and 38th for highways.)⁵¹

State Employees⁵²

- Florida had the lowest ratio of all states in 2012 in the ratio of state government employees to population in 2012.
- Florida spent the least of all other states on state government employee payrolls per resident in 2012.

Unemployment Insurance

- Over the 12-month period ending March 31, 2014, Florida’s unemployment insurance program paid an average weekly benefit of \$228.51 – which ranked 52nd, the lowest among all the states plus the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico. That payment replaced 27.6 percent of workers’ average weekly wage, 44th in the nation. Florida’s “exhaustion rate” – the percentage of recipients who drew their final unemployment payment – was 66.2 percent, the highest in the U.S.⁵³
- Florida’s maximum weekly unemployment insurance payment, \$275, is lower than all but four other states.⁵⁴
- Because of restrictive unemployment insurance laws enacted by the Florida Legislature in 2011, only 17 percent of new unemployed insurance applicants actually received benefit payments – 52nd, behind every state, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico.⁵⁵
- In 2011 the legislature adopted a formula that reduces the maximum number of weeks that benefits can be received from an automatic 26 to 23 with a loss of a week for each .5 percent that statewide unemployment drops. The maximum number of weeks currently is 19, ranking the state 50th among the states and the District of Columbia.⁵⁶

Population

- Florida's estimated population was 19,552,860 in 2013, up from 18,082,690 in the 2010 Census.⁵⁷
- Florida's minority population, including Hispanics, is 42.1 percent, greater than the national percentage of 36.3 percent and New York's 41.7.⁵⁸
- Current estimates are that Florida's population will be 23.8 million in 2030,⁵⁹ an increase of 4.2 million people from 19.6 million in 2013.⁶⁰ Those who are 60 years or older will account for 55.5 percent of the growth, and the youngest group (0-17) 14.2 percent.⁶¹
- 51.1 percent of Floridians are female, 78 percent are white (including Hispanic/Latino); and 17 percent African-American/Black. Of the white population, 78 percent identify as Hispanic or Latino. Asian, American Indian and other ethnicities comprise the remainder of the population.⁶²
- In 2011 Florida had the second-largest black population in the country, after New York. However, 10 states have a higher percentage of blacks. Almost a third of blacks in Florida claim a foreign ancestry, mostly Haitian, Jamaican, Bahamian, Dominicans and others of African descent from the Caribbean.⁶³
- Florida has the second-largest migrant (foreign-born) population in the U.S.⁶⁴
- Seven of Florida's 67 counties account for 51.9 percent of the state population. 33 Florida counties have less than 100,000 people.⁶⁵
- Florida's working age population (25-54) comprised 41.5 percent of the total population. Currently it is at 39.1 percent and is projected to drop to 36.1 percent as the baby boom generation ages and retires. Florida's over 65 populations is estimated to be 24.1 percent in 2030.⁶⁶
- State economists say that "the ability to create new jobs will be constrained by the qualified workers....The increased cost of government services (due to higher prices and larger caseloads) and suppressed economic growth will make budget gaps worsen."⁶⁷ This will be exacerbated by the fact that retirees tend to spend more on services than they do on taxable goods."

Tax Cuts and Other Revenue Reductions

- The 2014 legislature reduced state revenues in the current fiscal year by \$558 million with tax and fee cuts and other bills affecting revenue. About \$307 million of that total is the result of rolling back motor vehicle fees. Sales tax holidays for back-to-school, hurricane preparedness and energy efficiency accounted for another \$36 million in reduction of revenue and sales tax exemptions another \$19 million.⁶⁸ These revenues could have been spent to recoup some of the reductions in programs and services that the legislature made during the recession.
- In its 2013 session, the legislature reduced recurring state revenues by \$466 million. Among the cuts were \$28 million for sales tax holidays, \$18 million in sales tax exemptions for manufacturing machinery and equipment, and reductions in state revenues for clerk s of court fees.⁶⁹
- These revenues could have been spent to recoup some of the reductions in programs and services that the legislature made during the recession.

This Issue Brief was researched and written by Alan Stonecipher, analyst. Karen Woodall, executive director.

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