

MASSACHUSETTS

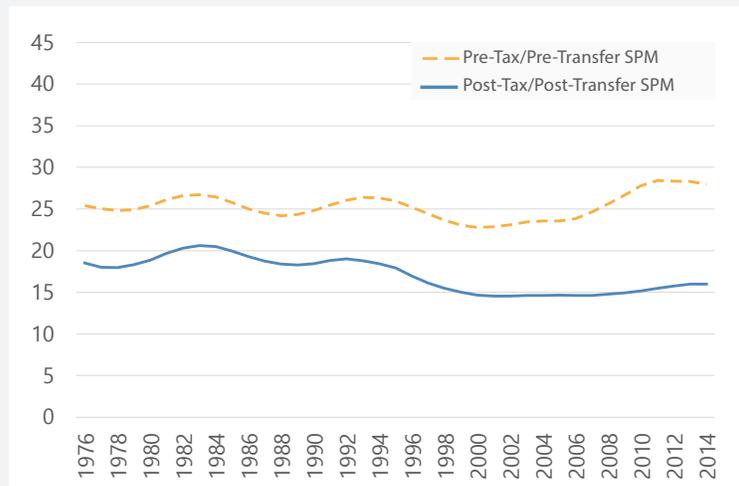
ANCHORED SPM POVERTY TRENDS 1976 - 2014

Using a new measure of poverty, the anchored Supplemental Poverty Measure (SPM), this fact sheet compares poverty rates in Massachusetts to national poverty rates, and shows the role that taxes and transfers play in reducing poverty in Massachusetts.

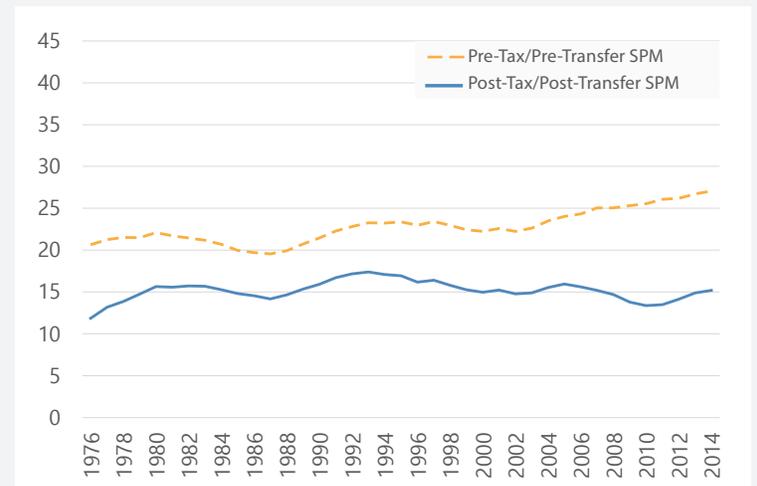
We find:

- The poverty rate in Massachusetts increased from 11.9% in 1976 to 15.2% in 2014. The national poverty rate declined from 18.5% to 16.0%.
- Taxes and transfers today reduce the national poverty rate by 12.0 percentage points. Taxes and transfers today reduce the Massachusetts poverty rate by 11.9 percentage points.
- The role of taxes and transfers in Massachusetts has grown from 8.8 percentage points in 1976 to 11.9 percentage points in 2014, which highlights the growing importance of government programs in reducing poverty in the state.
- The child poverty rate in Massachusetts would have been 10.9 percentage points higher in 2014 absent government programs, but with government programs stands at 15.7%.
- The working-age poverty rate in Massachusetts would have been 7.0 percentage points higher in 2014 absent government programs, but with government programs stands at 14.6%.
- The elderly poverty rate in Massachusetts would have been 34.5 percentage points higher in 2014 absent government programs, but with government programs stands at 16.8%.

ANCHORED SPM POVERTY RATE IN THE U.S.



ANCHORED SPM POVERTY RATE IN MASSACHUSETTS



The anchored SPM improves upon the official poverty measure by 1) adjusting poverty thresholds for costs of living and different housing situations, 2) taking into account post-tax income, tax payments, in-kind benefits, and non-discretionary expenses such as out-of-pocket medical expenditures and work/child care expenses, and 3) defining the household unit more broadly to include cohabiters and unrelated children living in the home. The Census Bureau and the Bureau of Labor Statistics developed the SPM and we use an anchored historical version here to track poverty trends since 1976, for Massachusetts and the nation.

Poverty rates in Massachusetts have generally increased over time, from 11.9% in 1976 to 15.2% in 2014. While most states are not individually identifiable prior 1976, at the national level, poverty

rates declined substantially between 1967 and 1976, from 24.1% to 18.5%. Since then, national poverty rates have decreased even further, from 18.5% in 1976 to 16.0% in 2014.

Nationally, the difference between pre-tax/pre-transfer poverty and post-tax/post-transfer poverty has increased over time, and today transfers reduce poverty by 12.0 percentage points, from 28.0% to 16.0%. In Massachusetts, the role of the safety net has also grown over time. In 2014, taxes and transfers reduced poverty in Massachusetts by 11.9 percentage points.

The next three graphs present the impact that taxes and transfers have on poverty for children (ages 0-17), working-age adults (ages 18-64) and the elderly (ages 65 and above).



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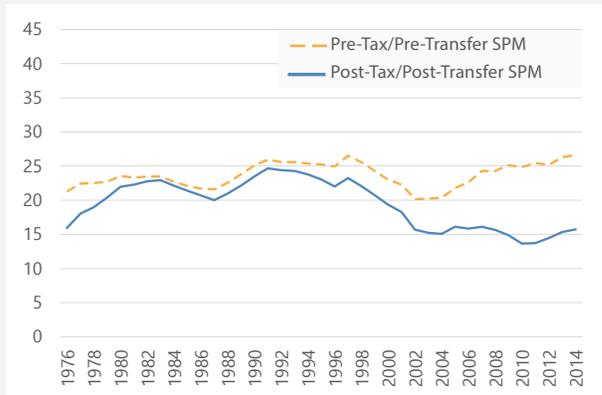


CENTER ON
POVERTY &
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at Columbia University

MASSACHUSETTS

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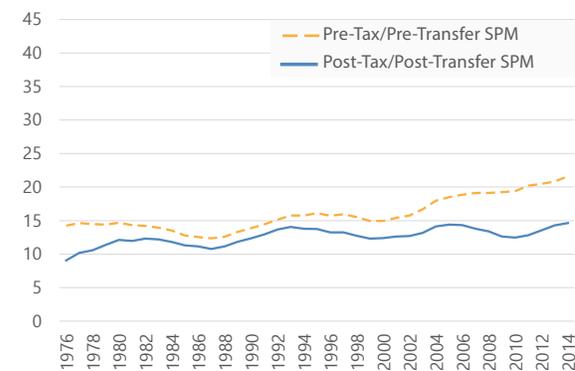
ANCHORED SPM POVERTY RATE OF CHILDREN (AGES 0-17) IN MASSACHUSETTS



In 1976, the child poverty rate in Massachusetts before counting taxes and transfers was 21.3%. Including taxes and transfers reduced the poverty rate for children in 1976 to 16.0%.

By 2014, taxes and transfers reduced child poverty substantially. Before counting taxes and transfers, the child poverty rate in Massachusetts was 26.6%. After counting taxes and transfers, the child poverty rate falls to 15.7% in Massachusetts.

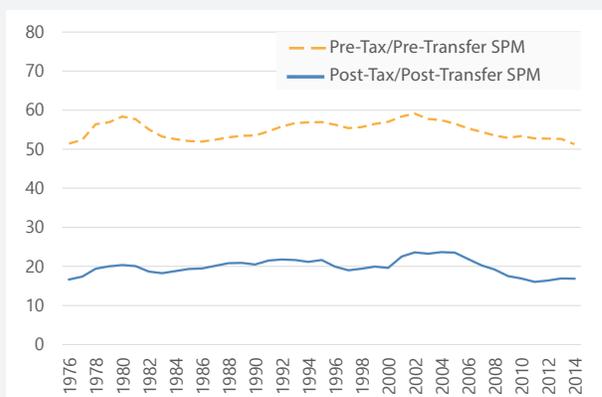
ANCHORED SPM POVERTY RATE OF WORKING-AGE ADULTS (AGES 18-64) IN MASSACHUSETTS



In 1976, the working-age adult poverty rate in Massachusetts before counting taxes and transfers was 14.3%. Including taxes and transfers reduced the poverty rate for working-age adults in 1976 to 9.1%.

By 2014, taxes and transfers reduced working-age adult poverty substantially. Before counting taxes and transfers, the working-age adult poverty rate in Massachusetts was 21.6%. After counting taxes and transfers, the working-age adult poverty rate falls to 14.6% in Massachusetts.

ANCHORED SPM POVERTY RATE OF ELDERLY (AGES 65+) IN MASSACHUSETTS



In 1976, the elderly poverty rate in Massachusetts before counting taxes and transfers was 51.4%. Including taxes and transfers reduced the poverty rate for elderly adults in 1976 to 16.6%.

By 2014, taxes and transfers reduced elderly poverty substantially. Before counting taxes and transfers, the elderly adult poverty rate in Massachusetts was 51.3%. After counting taxes and transfers, the elderly poverty rate falls to 16.8% in Massachusetts.

**The range of the y axis on this graph for the elderly is larger than it is on graphs for children and working-age adults; this reflects the exceedingly high levels of pre-tax/pre-transfer poverty in this age group*

NOTES

1. Geographic adjustments for cost of living differences are created using the highest quality data source available in each year (the 1980 and 1990 Decennial Censuses from 1976-1984, Department of Housing and Urban Development's Fair Market Rents from 1985-2008, and Census Bureau's SPM Public Use Research Files from 2009-2014).
2. The Current Population Survey is not state-representative prior to 1984. State poverty rates from those early years should be interpreted and cited with caution. All poverty rates are computed using appropriate survey weights.
3. National poverty rates from 1976-2012 are 5-year moving averages; the 2013 national rates are 3-year averages, and the 2014 national rates are 2-year averages. State poverty rates from 1978-2012 are 5-year moving averages; 1977 and 2013 state rates are 3-year averages, and 1976 and 2014 state rates are 2-year averages. These numbers thus differ slightly from previous estimates.
4. SPM poverty thresholds are "quasi-relative", increasing gradually over time with the consumption levels of families at the top of the bottom third of consumption expenditure. We use an anchored threshold that adjusts only for inflation.