READ ME FILE

Researchers using the SPM Research files will not be able to exactly replicate the estimates in the published Research SPM reports (e.g P60-254, P60-251, P60-241, P60-244, P60-247, P60-258, P60-261, P60-265). The SPM Research files are built using the public use version of the CPS ASEC while the reports use the internal CPS ASEC file. The public use CPS ASEC file top codes some income (and expenditure) items and does not disclose some geographic identifiers. Therefore, a person’s poverty status when estimated using the public use file may not be the same as his/her poverty status using the internal file.

In order to facilitate the use of the SPM Research files, the following table shows total poverty counts (weighted and unweighted) using the SPM Research files.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Research File Year | Current Version Number[[1]](#endnote-1) | Unweighted | Weighted (in thousands) |
| 2017 | 20180904 | 24,238 | 44,942 |
| 2016[[2]](#endnote-2) | 20170915 | 25,246 | 44,672 |
| 2015[[3]](#endnote-3), [[4]](#endnote-4) | 20170907 | 26,070 | 46,270 |
| 2014iii | 20170907 | 29,657 | 49,150 |
| 2013 (Using redesigned income questions) iii, [[5]](#endnote-5) | 20170914 | 8,857 | 49,837 |
| 2013 (Using traditional income questions)[[6]](#endnote-6) | n/a | 21,215 | 48,731 |
| 2012 | n/a | 30,760 | 49,785 |
| 2011[[7]](#endnote-7) | n/a | 30,698 | 49,675 |
| 2010vii | n/a | 30,743 | 48,934 |
| 2009vii | n/a | 30,217 | 46,145 |

1. All files created after January 18, 2017 are assigned version numbers in YYYYMMDD format. Files created prior to this date do not have a version number. [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. On September 18, 2017 the 2016 SPM Research File was updated with a corrected threshold for renters. The correction changes SPMu\_Poor status for 109 unweighted observations and affects five variables on the SPM Research File (BLSResearchThreshRenters, SPMu\_Poor, SPMu\_PovThreshold, SPMu\_Resources and SPMu\_CapHouseSub). [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. In September 2017, the 2013 (redesigned sample), 2014 and 2015 SPM Research Files were updated to reflect changes made in the 2016 file, see details in the appendix of “The Supplemental Poverty Measure: 2016,” P60-261, <www.census.gov/content/dam/Census/library/publications/2017/demo/p60-261.pdf>. Data files for old SPM reports can be found in the data archive at: <www2.census.gov/programs-surveys/supplemental-poverty-measure/datasets/spm/> [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. In January 2017, the 2015 SPM Research File was replaced with a file that includes corrected tax variables. The 2015 tax model (2016 ASEC) required a correction to the determination of eligibility for the earned income tax credit among tax units without any children in the unit. This modification to the model affects six tax-related variables on the 2016 ASEC public use file and five tax-related variables on the SPM Research File (SPMu\_FedTax SPMu\_FedTaxBC, SPMu\_EITC, SPMu\_stTax), as well as the aggregate variables SPMu\_Resources and SPMu\_Poor. Without this modification, 3,512 tax units in the file were given an erroneous earned income tax credit. Of the 3,512 erroneous units, 2,922 tax units were erroneously determined to be eligible for the credit when they should not have been eligible, and 590 tax units were erroneously determined to be ineligible for the credit when they should have been eligible. As of September 2017, the January 2017 file has been moved to the archive. [↑](#endnote-ref-4)
5. The file using the redesigned questions replaces the file that was posted in January 2015 and removed in March 2015. This file has the corrected tax variable and revised estimates for medical out-of-pocket (MOOP) expenditures. The previous version of the file with the redesigned income questions (posted in January 2015 and removed in March 2015) had incorrect values for MOOP and STATETAX\_A, STATETAX\_B, and TAX\_INC for some records. As of September 2017, the March 2015 file has been moved to the archive. [↑](#endnote-ref-5)
6. In April 2015, the 2013 Research File using the traditional income questions was replaced with a file that includes corrected tax variables. The 2013 tax model (2014 ASEC) required a modification to accommodate an additional tax bracket.  This modification to the model affects five tax-related variables on the 2014 ASEC public use file. Without this modification, 302 tax units in the file (about 0.6% of all tax units from the model) are erroneously assigned zero federal taxes before and after credits, along with a small number (8 or less tax units) having erroneous values in STATETAX\_A, STATETAX\_B, and TAX\_INC. [↑](#endnote-ref-6)
7. Note: These estimates use the WIC extracts to recalculate poverty using the revised values for WIC benefits found on these extract files. [↑](#endnote-ref-7)