NEWS RELEASE

30.06.2026

Rates of economic poverty risk in Poland in 2025

(based on the results of the Household Budget Survey)

5.3%
Extreme at-risk-of-poverty rate among persons in households in 2025

In 2025, the estimated extreme at-risk-of-poverty rate was 5.3% of persons in households and was close to the estimate for 2024 (5.2%). The estimated relative at-risk-of-poverty rate was 13.5% compared with 13.3% in 2024.

In 2025, the income thresholds entitling persons to apply for social assistance benefits were indexed[1]. The estimated legal at-risk-of-poverty rate, based on these thresholds, was markedly higher (8.1%, compared with 2.6% in 2024). This indicator should be interpreted as a measure of the potential population coverage of social assistance instruments, not as a diagnosis of the scale of economic poverty.

Thresholds and extent of economic poverty risk[2]

In 2025, following the indexation of thresholds entitling persons to apply for social assistance benefits, the estimated legal at-risk-of-poverty rate increased markedly.

Statistics Poland (GUS) annually calculates and publishes indicators of the extent of economic poverty risk in Poland using the results of the Household Budget Survey. These are annual average indicators showing the percentage of persons in households whose expenditure was below the adopted at-risk-of-poverty threshold. This release covers three poverty risk thresholds: extreme, relative and legal.

- The extreme poverty risk threshold is based on the subsistence minimum set by the Institute of Labour and Social Studies (IPiSS). The subsistence minimum defines a very low level of needs satisfaction. Consumption below this level hampers survival and threatens human psychophysical development. In 2025, the estimated extreme at-risk-of-poverty rate was 5.3%, compared with 5.2% in 2024.[3][4]
- The relative poverty risk threshold is set at 50% of average monthly household expenditure in Poland. It identifies persons living in households whose consumption level is substantially below the average. In 2025, the estimated relative at-risk-of-poverty rate was 13.5% and was close to the 2024 value.[5]
- The legal poverty risk threshold corresponds to the amounts which, under the applicable regulations, entitle persons to apply for cash social assistance benefits. In 2025, after the indexation of income thresholds, the estimated legal at-risk-of-poverty rate was 8.1%, compared with 2.6% a year earlier. As the estimated extreme and relative at-risk-of-poverty rates were close to the previous year's values, the increase in the statutory at-risk-of-poverty rate should be linked primarily to the change in the income thresholds.

[1] For a single-person household, the legal poverty risk threshold stood at 776 zł from January 2022 until the end of 2024. For a person in a multi-person household, the legal poverty risk threshold from January 2022 to the end of 2024 was 600 zł. From January 2025, the 'legal' poverty risk threshold is 1,010 zł for single-person households and 823 zł per person for multi-person households.

[2] In this news release, as in the previous year and following the terminology used by Eurostat, including in the European Union Statistics on Income and Living Conditions (EU-SILC), the terms extreme poverty rate, relative poverty rate, legal poverty rate and deprivation sphere rate were replaced by, respectively, extreme at-risk-of-poverty rate, relative at-risk-of-poverty rate, legal at-risk-of-poverty rate and risk-of-privation rate. Despite the change in terminology, these are the same indicators.

[3] Rounded to full zlotys, the extreme poverty risk threshold for a one-person household (monthly average) was PLN 1,011 in Q1 2025, PLN 1,023 in Q2, PLN 1,032 in Q3 and PLN 1,037 in Q4.

[4] Information on the subsistence minimum is available on the website of the Institute of Labour and Social Studies: On the social minimum and subsistence minimum — Institute of Labour and Social Studies (ipiss.com.pl), and Amount of the subsistence minimum — Institute of Labour and Social Studies (ipiss.com.pl).

[5] Rounded to full zlotys, the relative poverty risk threshold for a one-person household (monthly average) was PLN 1225 in Q1 2025, PLN 1271 in Q2, PLN 1322 in Q3 and PLN 1332 in Q4.

Changes in the extent of economic poverty risk in 2010–2025[6]

In 2010–2025, the estimated values of economic poverty risk indicators followed different patterns, depending on the adopted definition of the poverty risk threshold (Chart 1).

For extreme poverty, the estimated at-risk rate in 2010–2015 was around 6–7%. From 2016 onwards, the indicator generally remained at a lower level, most often around 4–5%. Against this background, the estimate for 2023 was clearly higher (6.6%), but this was not continued in the following two years: in 2024 and 2025 the indicator stood at 5.2% and 5.3%, respectively. Given that the survey is based on a random sample, the one-year higher estimate should be interpreted with caution, especially against the more stable pattern observed over a longer period.

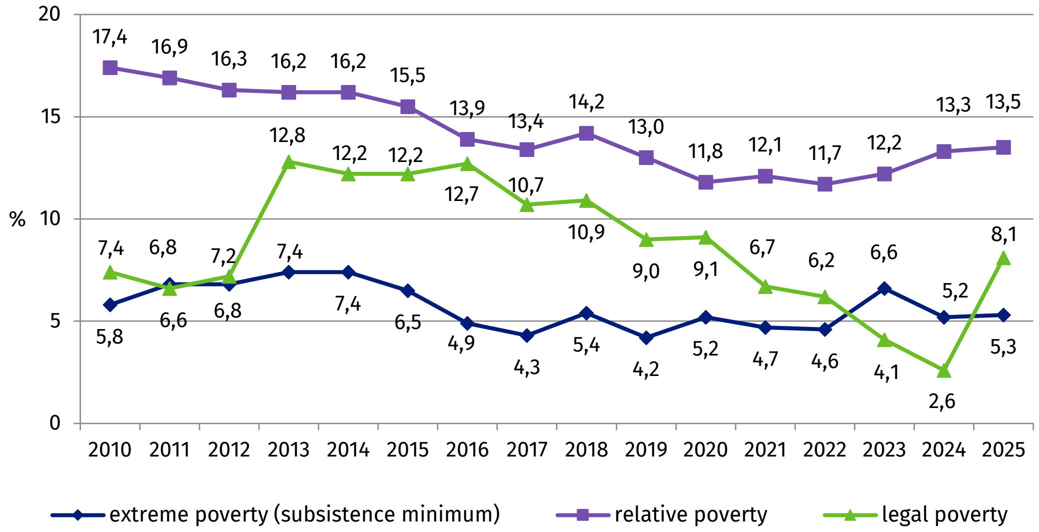
For relative poverty risk, the timing of the decline in the indicator was similar to that observed for extreme poverty. In 2010–2015, the estimated relative at-risk-of-poverty rate was around 16–17%, while from 2016 it was lower and ranged roughly between 12% and 14%. In recent years, the estimated values of the indicator have gradually increased: from 11.7% in 2022 to 12.2% in 2023, 13.3% in 2024 and 13.5% in 2025. Since the relative poverty threshold depends on average household expenditure, a higher value of this indicator means a greater distance of some households from the average level of consumption, but does not necessarily simply a deterioration in their material situation in absolute terms.

In 2025, the estimated extreme and relative at-risk-of-poverty rates remained at levels similar to the 2024 estimates.

The legal at-risk-of-poverty rate should be read differently. Unlike extreme and relative poverty, its value depends directly on the level of the income thresholds entitling persons to apply for social assistance benefits. The indicator therefore primarily shows the potential population coverage of social assistance instruments, rather than serving as a standalone diagnosis of the scale of economic poverty. In years when legal thresholds were raised (Charts 2 and 3), the estimated value of the indicator rose markedly or remained at a similar level. By contrast, in periods when thresholds remained unchanged, the value of the indicator gradually declined, due, among other factors, to inflation and growth in nominal household incomes in the absence of current adjustment of the income criteria. Changes in estimates of this indicator should therefore be interpreted mainly in the context of changes in the parameters of the social assistance system.

[6] The presented data on the extent of poverty risk are based on the results of the Household Budget Survey conducted using a representative method. As in any other representative survey, these data are subject to both non-sampling and sampling errors. Therefore, when interpreting the data, including the dynamics of economic poverty risk, caution should be exercised and standard errors should be taken into account when drawing conclusions. In particular, in the case of small differences between the values of poverty-rate indicators in the analysed years, it cannot be determined unequivocally whether they reflect actual change or measurement error. Standard errors are provided in the Annex to this News Release.

Chart 1. At-risk-of-poverty rate in Poland in 2010–2025 by poverty risk thresholds adopted in a given year (% of persons in households)

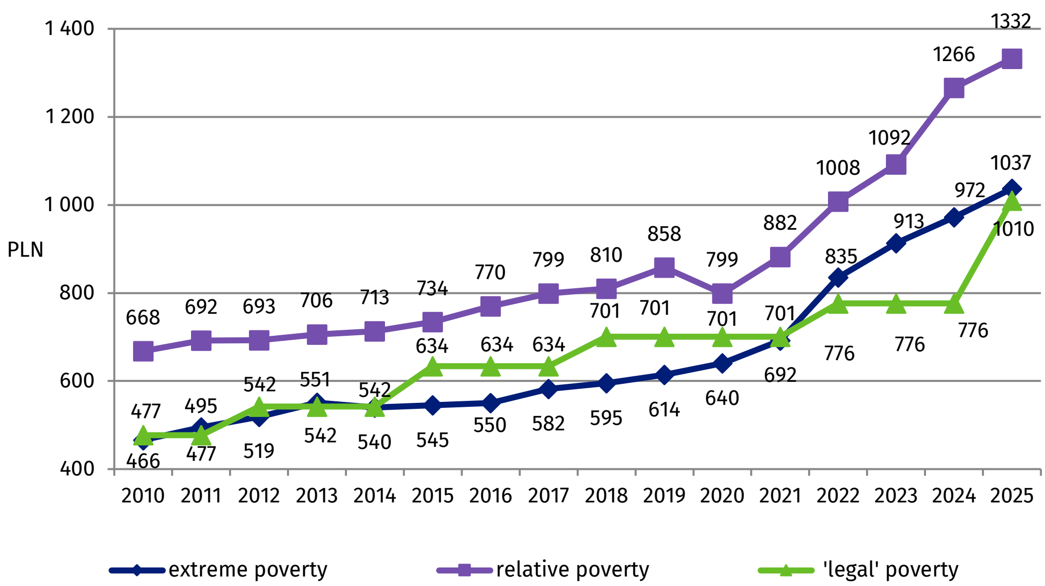


Extreme and relative poverty indicators followed a similar path over time, while legal poverty responded mainly to changes in social assistance thresholds.

Changes in the estimated values of economic poverty risk indicators depend both on the material situation of households, measured by their level of expenditure, and on the level of the poverty thresholds used (Charts 2 and 3).

The extreme poverty risk threshold is linked to the subsistence minimum estimated by IPiSS and therefore depends on the prices of goods and services included in the subsistence minimum basket. The relative poverty risk threshold, in turn, depends on the estimated average level of household expenditure in the country (also based on the Household Budget Survey) and corresponds to 50% of that expenditure.

Chart 2. Poverty risk thresholds for one-person households in 2010–2025a



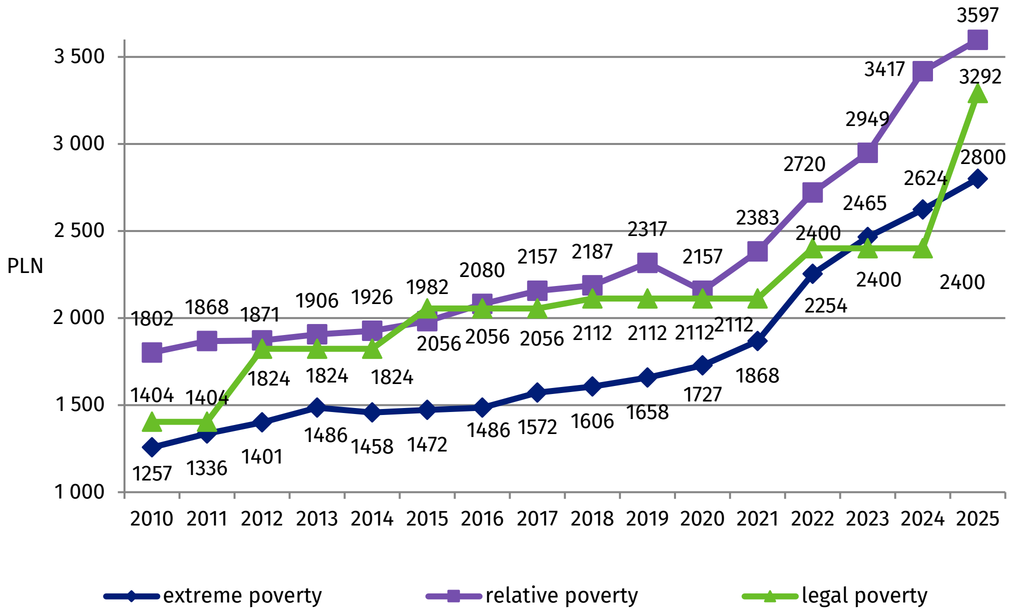
a Average monthly value in Q4.

In 2025, after three years of unchanged criteria, the income thresholds entitling persons to apply for social assistance benefits were raised. This was reflected in a markedly higher estimated legal at risk of poverty rate.

The legal poverty risk threshold is of a different nature. Its level results from decisions on the income thresholds entitling persons to apply for cash social assistance benefits. These thresholds are changed periodically, at intervals of several years. Until the end of September 2012, the thresholds set back in 2006 remained in force. Subsequently, the same thresholds applied from October 2012 to September 2015, from October 2015 to September 2018, and from October 2018 to December 2021. In 2022–2024, the thresholds set as of 1 January 2022 were applied.

In 2025, the income thresholds were indexed again, and the scale of this indexation was larger than in previous threshold changes. This directly translated into a sharply higher estimated statutory at-risk-of-poverty rate. For this reason, changes in this indicator should be interpreted primarily in the context of changes in the parameters of the social assistance system, and not only as reflecting changes in the material situation of households.

Chart 3. Poverty risk thresholds for four-person households (2 adults + 2 children aged under 14) in 2010–2025a



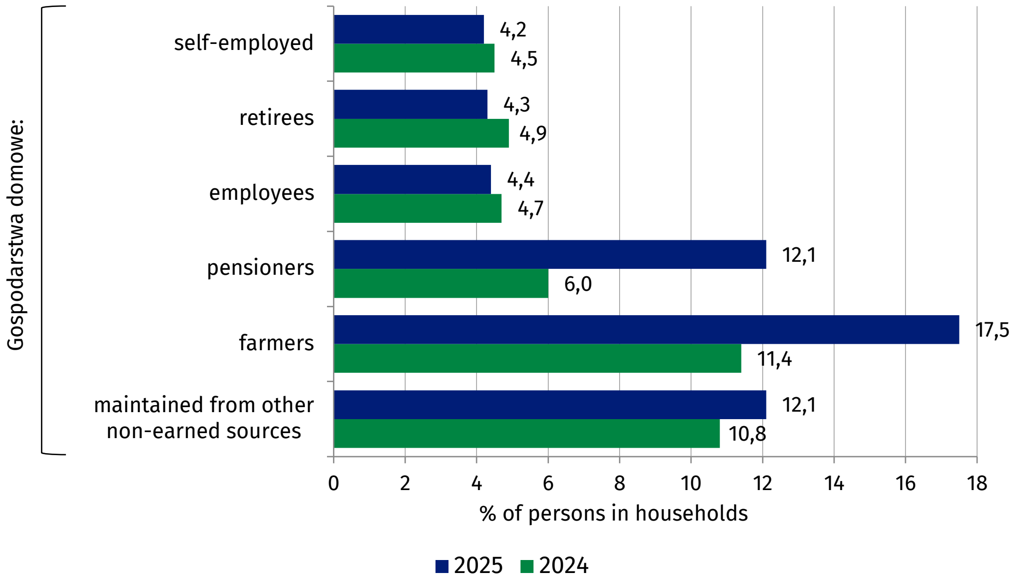
a Average monthly value in Q4.

Differences in the extent of extreme poverty risk in 2025

In 2025, as in the previous year, the estimated extreme at-risk-of-poverty rate varied by socio-economic group of household (Chart 4). The highest values of the indicator were estimated for persons in farmers' households (17.5%), pensioners' households (12.1%) and households maintained mainly from other non-earned sources (12.1%). Considerably lower values were recorded for persons in employees' households (4.4%), retirees' households (4.3%) and self-employed households (4.2%).

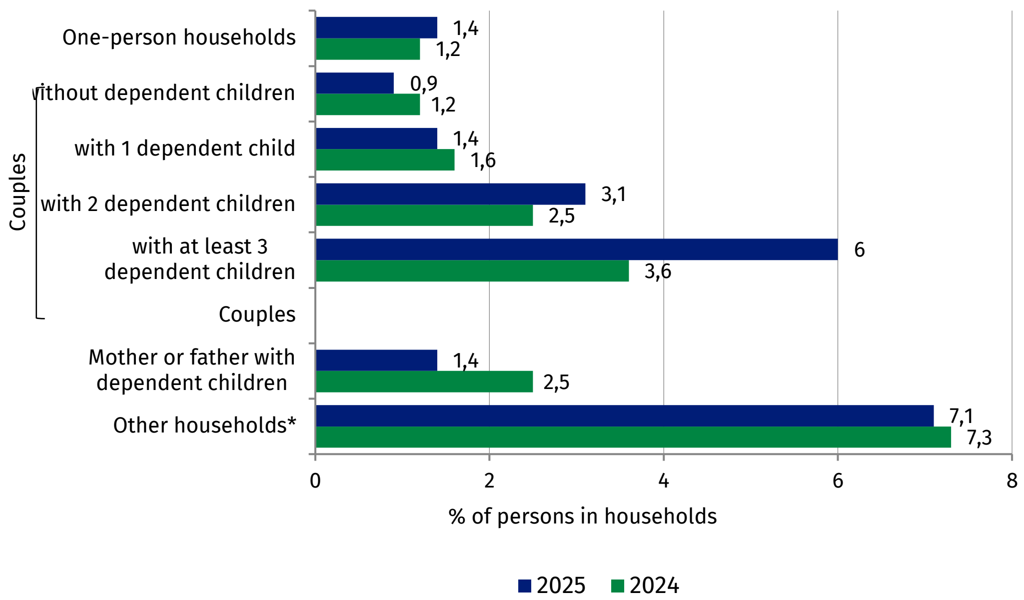
Compared with the 2024 survey, the largest differences between estimates concerned farmers' households, pensioners' households and households maintained from other non-earned sources. In the remaining groups, the values of the indicator were close to those estimated a year earlier. Due to the sample-based nature of the survey, particularly large changes in cross-sectional estimates should be interpreted with caution.

Chart 4. Extreme at-risk-of-poverty rate in 2024 and 2025 by socio-economic group (% of persons in households)



In 2025, the estimates for farmers' and pensioners' households differed most from the previous year's values.

Chart 5. Extreme at-risk-of-poverty rate in 2024 and 2025 by household type[a] (% of persons in households)



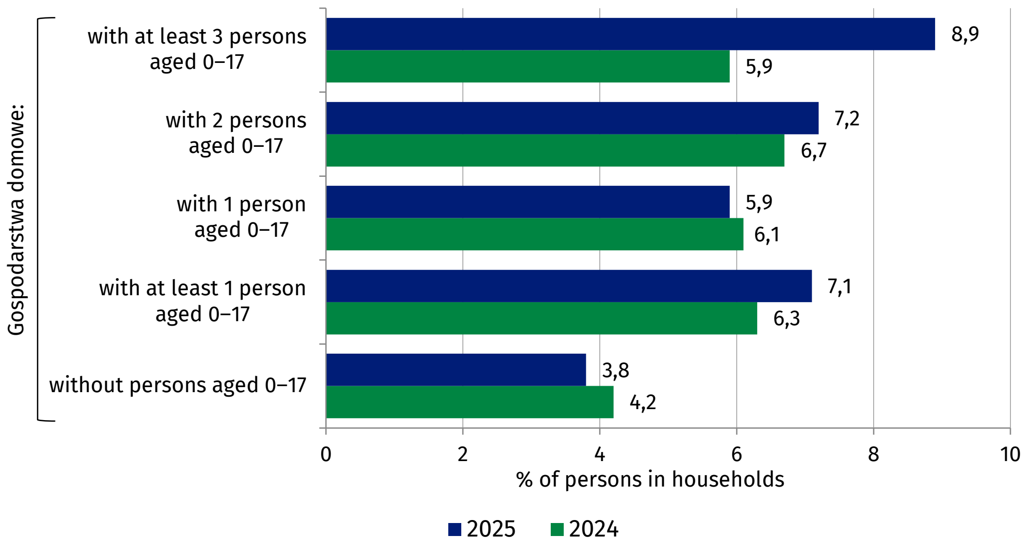
Among couples with children, the estimated extreme at-risk-of-poverty rate increased with the number of children.

a A dependent child is a person aged 0–14 who is a household member, or a person aged 15–25 who has no own source of income and is not married or in a consensual union. The group of married couples also includes consensual unions. * Other households may include, among others, couples with dependent children and other persons, a mother or father with dependent children and other persons, and other persons with dependent children.

Extreme poverty risk also varied by household type (Chart 5). Among couples, the estimated extreme at-risk-of-poverty rate increased with the number of dependent children: from 0.9% for persons in households without dependent children, through 1.4% with one child and 3.1% with two children, to 6.0% for persons in households with at least three dependent children. The highest value of the indicator, however, was recorded in the category of other households, which includes, among others, more complex family and multi-person arrangements (7.1%).

The values estimated for 2025 were higher than in 2024 mainly among couples with at least three and with two dependent children. For one-person households, couples without children, couples with one child and other households, the differences from 2024 were small. A lower value than a year earlier was recorded for persons in single-parent households with dependent children, although given the nature of this group and the possible greater variability of estimates, this result requires cautious interpretation.

Chart 6. Extreme at-risk-of-poverty rate in 2024 and 2025 in households with persons aged 0–17[a] (% of persons in households)

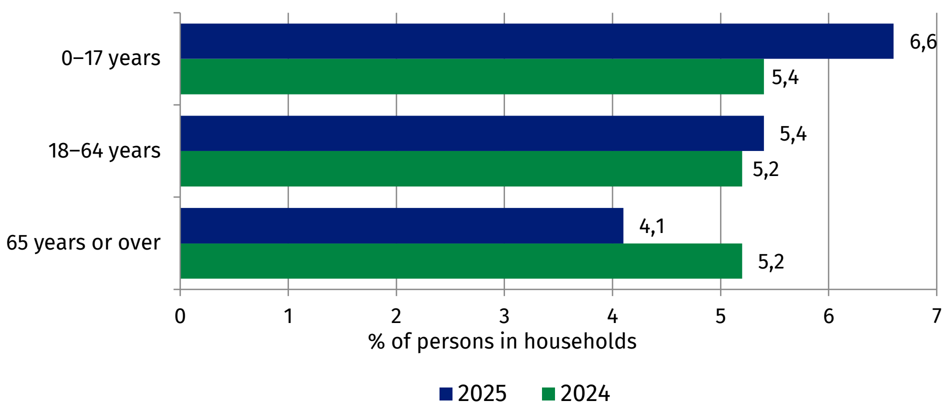


In 2025, unlike in 2024, persons living in households with more children were more exposed to extreme poverty.

a Data refer to households with persons (children) aged 0–17, regardless of whether they are maintained by their parents (or other household members) or have their own source of income, such as a survivor's pension or alimony. Apart from parents and children aged 0–17, these households may also include other persons, such as older siblings, grandparents, or a parent's brothers or sisters.

In 2025, the estimated extreme at-risk-of-poverty rate was higher among persons living in households with persons aged 0–17 than among persons in households without such persons (Chart 6). The highest value of the indicator was recorded among persons in households with at least three persons aged 0–17 (8.9%). Among persons in households with two persons of this age, the rate was 7.2%, and with one person — 5.9%. For persons in households without persons aged 0–17, the estimated value was lower, at 3.8%.

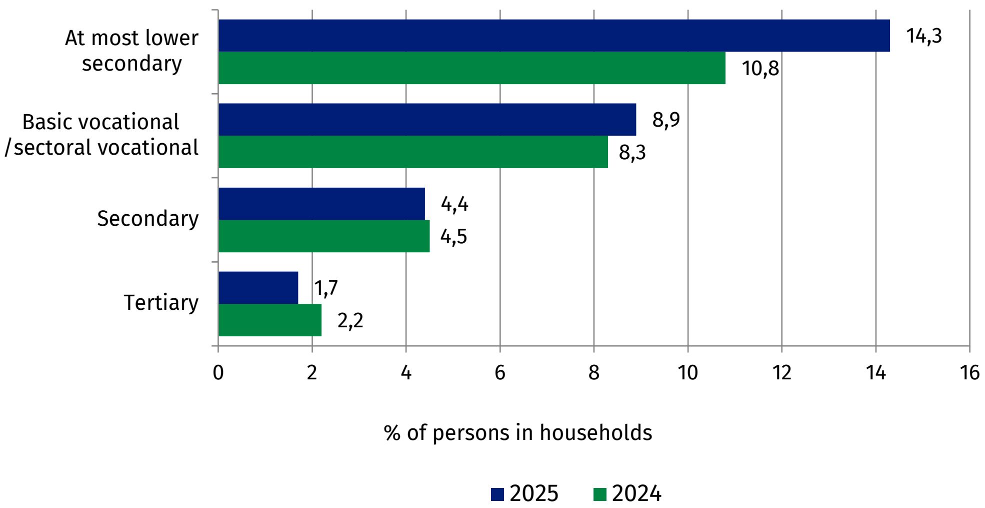
Chart 7. Extreme at-risk-of-poverty rate in 2024 and 2025 by age of persons (% of persons in households)



In 2025, extreme poverty was highest among children and lowest among persons aged 65 or over.

By age, the highest estimated value of the indicator was recorded among persons aged 0–17 (6.6%), and the lowest among persons aged 65 or over (4.1%). For persons aged 18–64, the rate was 5.4% (Chart 7). Compared with 2024, the most notable features are the higher estimate for children and the lower estimate for older persons.

Chart 8. Extreme at-risk-of-poverty rate in 2024 and 2025 by education level of the household reference person (% of persons in households)

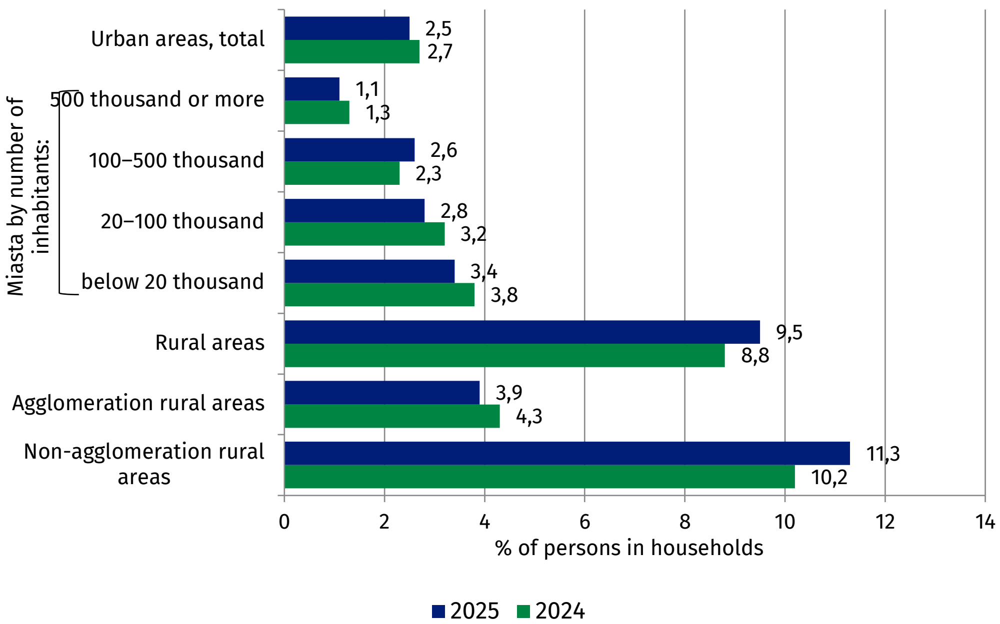


Extreme poverty remains strongly linked to the education level of the household head: the lower the education level, the higher the poverty risk.

The education level of the household reference person (head of household) clearly differentiated the estimated extreme at-risk-of-poverty rate (Chart 8). In 2025, the highest value of the indicator was recorded among persons living in households where the head had at most lower secondary education (14.3%). The value was clearly lower, although still above average, in households whose head had basic vocational/sectoral vocational education (8.9%). In households where the reference person had secondary or tertiary education, the estimated values were much lower, at 4.4% and 1.7%, respectively.

Compared with 2024, the higher estimated extreme poverty risk for persons in households whose head had at most lower secondary education stands out in particular. In households whose head had secondary or tertiary education, the values of the indicator were close to or lower than a year earlier.

Chart 9. Extreme at-risk-of-poverty rate in 2024 and 2025 by class of place of residence (% of persons in households)

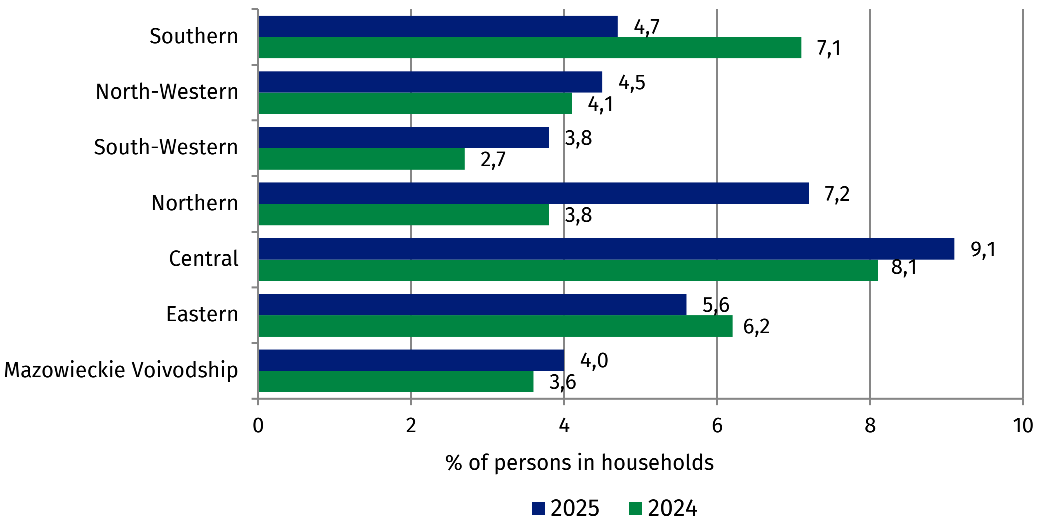


Extreme at-risk-of-poverty rates increased as the population size of the distinguished classes of localities decreased.

The class of place of residence continued to strongly differentiate the estimated extreme at-risk-of-poverty rate. In 2025, the value of the indicator was much higher among persons living in rural areas (9.5%) than among urban residents (2.5%). Within urban areas, a moderate gradient by city size was visible: the lowest value was recorded in cities with at least 500 thousand inhabitants (1.1%), and the highest in towns with fewer than 20 thousand inhabitants (3.4%).

The greatest differentiation was visible after distinguishing rural areas into agglomeration and non-agglomeration rural areas. Among persons living in agglomeration rural areas, the estimated extreme at-risk-of-poverty rate was 3.9%, while in non-agglomeration rural areas it was 11.3%. This means that the higher risk of extreme poverty in rural areas was concentrated primarily outside the zones of influence of large urban centres.

Chart 10. Extreme at-risk-of-poverty rate in 2024 and 2025 by macroregion (% of persons in households)



Differences were also visible by territory (Chart 10). In 2025, the highest estimated extreme at-risk-of-poverty rate was recorded in the Central macroregion (9.1%), followed by the Northern macroregion (7.2%). In the Eastern macroregion, the value of the indicator was close to the national average (5.6%). Lower values were estimated for the Southern macroregion (4.7%), the North-Western macroregion (4.5%), Mazowieckie Voivodship (4.0%) and the South-Western macroregion (3.8%).

Compared with 2024, the Northern and Southern macroregions stood out in particular, with estimated indicator values respectively higher and lower than a year earlier. In the Central macroregion, the indicator remained at a relatively high level.

Risk of privation[7]

In 2025, the risk-of-privation rate was 40.3%.

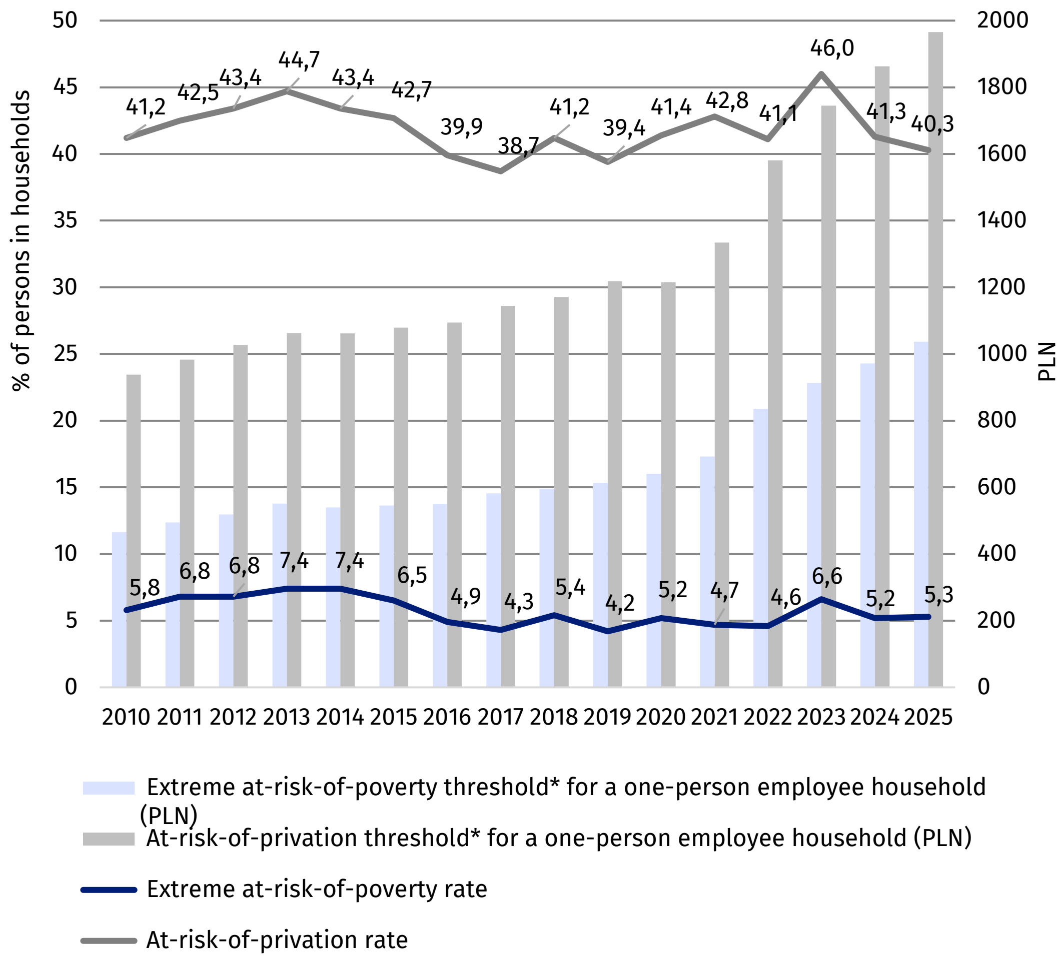
Privation, unlike extreme poverty, refers to a higher level of needs satisfaction. The risk-of-Privation threshold (previously referred to as the threshold of the deprivation sphere) is based on the social minimum calculated by IPiSS. It covers not only expenditure necessary for biological survival, but also costs enabling work, education, maintenance of social relations and modest participation in culture and social life. The risk-of-privation rate approximates the share of persons living below the level regarded as the minimum for social functioning.

In 2025, the estimated risk-of-privation rate was 40.3% and was close to the 2024 value (41.3%). In 2010–2025, the indicator remained within the range of 39–46%. The highest value in the analysed period was estimated in 2023 (46.0%), after which, in 2024–2025, estimates returned to levels close to those observed in earlier years.

The time pattern of the risk-of-privation rate was similar to that of extreme poverty, although it refers to a higher standard of needs satisfaction. In 2025, the thresholds for both extreme poverty and privation for a one-person employee household continued to increase, reflecting the rising costs of the subsistence minimum and social minimum baskets. Despite higher thresholds, the estimated values of both indicators remained close to the 2024 levels.

[7] Detailed data and methodological explanations concerning the risk of privation are included in the Annex to this News Release. When analysing differences in risk-of-privation rates, as in the case of data on poverty risk, standard errors of estimates should be taken into account. Standard errors are presented in the tables included in the Annex to this News Release.

Chart 11. Extreme at-risk-of-poverty rate and risk-of-privation rate in Poland in 2010–2025



* Average monthly value in Q4.

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On the social minimum and subsistence minimum — Institute of Labour and Social Studies (ipiss.com.pl)

Amount of the subsistence minimum

Amount of the social minimum

Topic available in databases

Local Data Bank

Knowledge Databases / Poverty by socio-economic group

Knowledge Databases / Poverty by urban-rural breakdown

Main terms available in the glossary

Extreme at-risk-of-poverty rate (extreme poverty rate)

Relative at-risk-of-poverty rate (relative poverty rate)

Legal at-risk-of-poverty rate (legal poverty rate)