

Income Inequality, Poverty, and Discrimination

Evidence suggesting wide income disparity in the United States is easy to find. In 2012, former talk-show host Oprah Winfrey earned \$175 million. Transformers director Michael Bay earned \$160 million, and singer Brittany Spears earned \$58 million. In contrast, the salary of the president of the United States is \$400,000, and the typical schoolteacher earns \$56,000. A full-time minimum-wage worker makes about \$15,000. Cash welfare payments to a mother with two children average \$5,150 per year.

In 2011 about 46.2 million Americans—or 15.0 percent of the population—lived in poverty. An estimated 636,000 people were homeless that year.