

Population Surrounding 1,866 Superfund Sites

Superfund sites exist in thousands of communities across the U.S. ranging from remote to large urban settings. Many of these sites are in economically distressed communities. To help describe who benefits from EPA’s Superfund Program, the Agency used **2015-2019 American Community Survey populations data and FY 2020 Superfund** to summarize the population living within 3 and 1 miles of sites. These sites include Superfund and Federal Facilities final, deleted, and proposed National Priorities List (NPL) sites, non-NPL Superfund Alternative Agreement sites.

Population within 1 Mile of Sites:

Approximately 21 million people live within 1 mile of a Superfund site (roughly 6% of the U.S. population) including approximately:

- 7% of all children in the U.S. under the age of 5
- 6% of all children in the U.S. under 18
- 6% of all blacks in the U.S.
- 9% of all Hispanics in the U.S.
- 8% of all minorities in the U.S.
- 7% of all households in the U.S. below the poverty level
- 8% of all people with less than a high school education in the U.S.
- 10% of the linguistically isolated people in the U.S.



Population within 3 Miles of Sites:

Approximately 73 million people live within 3 miles of a Superfund site (roughly 22% of the U.S. population) including approximately:

- 23% of all children in the U.S. under the age of 5
- 22% of all children in the U.S. under 18
- 26% of all blacks in the U.S.
- 29% of all Hispanics in the U.S.
- 28% of all minorities in the U.S.
- 24% of all households in the U.S. below the poverty level
- 25% of all people with less than a high school education in the U.S.
- 32% of the linguistically isolated people in the U.S.

Demographics of Near-Site Populations:

While there is no single way to characterize communities located near our sites, this population is *more minority, low income, linguistically isolated, and less likely to have a high school education* than the U.S. population as a whole.

	Population within 1 mile of All Sites	Population within 3 miles of All Sites	U.S. Population
Minority	50.0%	49.6%	39.9%
Below poverty level	14.8%	14.5%	13.2%
Linguistically isolated	7.7%	7.2%	5.0%
Less than a High School Education	14.5%	13.7%	12.1%

TABLE 2: Detailed Data on the Population within 1 and 3 miles of Superfund sites

Below are data on the demographic characteristics of the population surrounding Superfund sites. The table indicates whether certain population demographics near sites are above (in bold) or below (in italics) the U.S. average.

Demographics	Population Within 1 Mile Of Sites (Approximate)		Population Within 3 Miles Of Sites (Approximate)		US Population (Approximate)	
	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number
Race						
White	<i>65.0%</i>	13,478,996	<i>64.8%</i>	47,401,369	72.4%	237,565,676
Black	<i>12.6%</i>	2,607,577	14.8%	10,837,147	12.7%	41,621,318
Asian	8.6%	1,786,970	7.8%	5,727,893	5.5%	17,930,446
Native American	<i>0.7%</i>	146,941	<i>0.6%</i>	459,141	0.8%	2,756,981
Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	0.4%	74,629	0.3%	195,170	0.2%	600,137
Other	12.7%	2,630,872	11.6%	8,493,423	8.4%	27,541,684
Ethnicity						
Hispanic (any race)	25.7%	5,317,832	24.3%	17,770,699	18.8%	61,755,289
Non-Hispanic (any race)	<i>74.3%</i>	15,408,153	<i>75.7%</i>	55,343,444	81.2%	266,260,953
Minority						
Minority	50.0%	10,352,987	49.6%	36,300,513	39.9%	130,884,146
Income						
Households below the poverty level	14.8%	1,135,815	14.5%	3,925,366	13.2%	16,145,344
Households with a ratio of income to poverty level of two and over	<i>66.0%</i>	13,299,160	<i>66.8%</i>	47,594,535	68.7%	219,873,618
Education						
Less than a high school education	14.5%	2,031,552	13.7%	6,774,181	12.1%	27,022,443
Linguistically isolated						
Linguistically isolated households	7.7%	592,876	7.2%	1,942,996	5.0%	6,120,519
Age						
Under 5 years of age	6.3%	1,315,777	6.2%	4,566,308	6.1%	19,911,293
Under 18 years of age	<i>22.0%</i>	4,553,878	<i>22.2%</i>	16,218,045	22.6%	74,077,738
Over 64 years of age	<i>13.7%</i>	2,833,586	<i>14.2%</i>	10,361,817	15.7%	51,437,532
Total		20,725,985		73,114,143		328,016,242

Methodology:

For sites with boundary data, a 3- or 1- mile buffer ring was placed around each site boundary. For those sites without boundary data, a circular site boundary, equal to the site acreage, was modeled around the latitude/longitude for each site and then a **3- or 1- mile** buffer ring was placed around the site boundary. American Community Survey 2015-2019 population data was then identified for each block group with a centroid that fell within the **3- or 1- mile** area.

Data used includes: (1) Superfund site information from SEMS as of the end of FY2020 and site boundary data from FY 2014 FOIA Request; and (2) American Community Survey 2015-2019 population data.

IMPORTANT Caveats:

- Data collected represent a national look at the characteristics of the population in communities surrounding our sites. While some of the data point to possible environmental justice characteristics of the population, this is not a full environmental justice analysis.
- Proximity to a site does not necessarily represent risk of adverse health effects. The risk of exposure to contamination varies significantly across all sites.
- Data are a snapshot in time only, the site and population information will change over time (can be updated every year when new census data comes out and compared over time in 5-year intervals).
- Used best available information, but data collected are estimates only, for the following reasons:
 - ❖ Used a single latitude/longitude location to model site boundaries based on acreage, not the actual site boundaries.
 - ❖ Used centroid points of the census block groups which under-estimates the population in some cases, and over-estimates in others.

Footnote to Use When Citing Data:

U.S. EPA, Office of Land and Emergency Management 2021. Data collected includes: (1) Superfund site information from SEMS as of the end of FY2020 and site boundary data from FY 2014 FOIA Request; and (2) population data from the 2015-2019 American Community Survey.