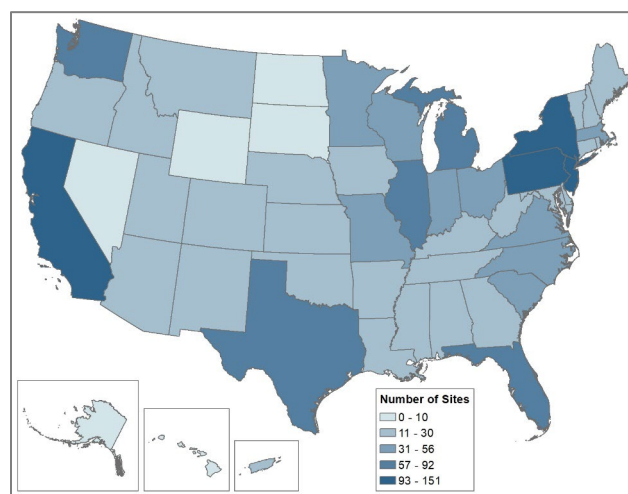# Population Surrounding 1,881 Superfund Sites

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 **2017-2021 American Community Survey populations data and FY 2022 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 23 million people live within 1 mile of a Superfund site (roughly 7% of the U.S. population) including approximately:

- 7% of all children in the U.S. under the age of 5
- 7% of all children in the U.S. under 18
- 7% of all blacks in the U.S.
- 9% of all Hispanics in the U.S.
- 9% of all minorities in the U.S.
- 8% of all households in the U.S. below the poverty level
- 9% 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 78 million people live within 3 miles of a Superfund site (roughly 23% of the U.S. population) including approximately:

- 24% of all children in the U.S. under the age of 5
- 23% of all children in the U.S. under 18
- 27% of all blacks in the U.S.
- 29% of all Hispanics in the U.S.
- 28% of all minorities in the U.S.
- 25% of all households in the U.S. below the poverty level
- 26% 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.

TABLE 1: Proportions of Key Demographics in the Total Near Site Population and the Total U.S. Population			
	Population within 1 mile of All Sites	**Population within 3 miles of All Sites**	**U.S. Population**
Minority	50.2%	50.0%	41.1%
Below poverty level	14.1%	13.8%	12.7%
Linguistically isolated	6.9%	6.7%	4.8%
Less than a High School Education	13.1%	12.5%	11.2%

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)	
Race	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number
White	*60.5%*	14,083,648	*60.3%*	46,849,598	68.0%	226,482,080
Black	*12.4%*	2,887,186	**14.6%**	11,338,015	12.5%	41,722,070
Asian	**8.6%**	1,996,730	**7.9%**	6,138,712	5.6%	18,789,170
Native American	0.8%	180,541	*0.7%*	517,275	0.8%	2,728,040
Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	**0.3%**	76,701	**0.3%**	205,581	0.2%	615,799
Other	**17.4%**	4,043,753	**16.2%**	12,603,676	12.8%	42,697,965
Ethnicity						
Hispanic (any race)	**25.4%**	5,903,516	**24.0%**	18,626,056	19.2%	64,076,906
Non-Hispanic (any race)	*74.6%*	17,365,044	*76.0%*	59,026,801	80.8%	268,958,218
Minority						
Minority	**50.2%**	11,689,402	**50.0%**	38,842,530	41.1%	136,996,867
Income						
Households below the poverty level	**14.1%**	1,235,647	**13.8%**	4,034,501	12.7%	15,909,129
Households with a ratio of income to poverty level of two and over	*68.0%*	15,368,743	*68.9%*	52,173,226	70.4%	228,790,916
Education						
Less than a high school education	**13.1%**	2,085,440	**12.5%**	6,644,128	11.2%	25,569,085
Linguistically isolated						
Linguistically isolated households	**6.9%**	606,124	**6.7%**	1,946,793	4.8%	6,055,968
Age						
Under 5 years of age	**6.1%**	1,409,065	**6.0%**	4,645,576	5.9%	19,545,536
Under 18 years of age	*21.7%*	5,050,346	*22.0%*	17,067,819	22.5%	74,831,323
Over 64 years of age	*14.1%*	3,286,070	*14.7%*	11,381,285	16.1%	53,592,470
Total		**23,268,560**		**77,652,857**		**333,035,124**

Note: This table indicates whether the percent of demographic characteristics near sites are above (bold) or below (italics) that of the US population.

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 2017-2021 population data was then identified for each block group with a centroid that fell within the 3- or 1- mile area. Population characteristic data was not available for census blocks but was available for block groups. To calculate the block population characteristics, the population percentage of the block within the block group was calculated and then that weight was applied to the respective block group characteristic of interest to estimate a value for the block.

Data used includes: (1) Superfund site information from SEMS as of the end of FY2022 and site boundary data from EPA Shared Enterprise Geodata Services (SEGS) 2023 and (2) American Community Survey 2017-2021 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 blocks to determine inclusion in the estimates. This may under-estimate the population in some cases, and over-estimate in others.

Footnote to Use When Citing Data:

U.S. EPA, Office of Land and Emergency Management 2023. Data collected includes: (1) Superfund site information from SEMS as of the end of FY2022 and site boundary data from EPA Shared Enterprise Geodata Services (SEGS) 2023 and (2) population data from the 2017-2021 American Community Survey.