

Poverty Realities in Rapid City

Last Updated March 2026

\$32,150 FEDERAL POVERTY LINE
annual pre-tax income for a family of 2 adults and 2 children

IN RAPID CITY

1 OUT OF 8

Residents live in poverty

1 OUT OF 16

Residents live in extreme poverty

1 OUT OF 5

Children live in poverty

MONTHLY INCOME

\$7,836

Pre-tax income needed for 1 adult & 2 kids to meet basic needs

\$4,379

Median pre-tax income for full-time worker

\$2,062

Full-time minimum wage, pre-tax income (\$11.85/hr)

	Median Household Income	Single Mother Median Household Income	Single Mothers in Poverty	Single Mothers in Extreme Poverty
South Dakota	\$75,081	\$39,019	32.9%	17.5%
Rapid City	\$70,870	\$41,510	28.7%	16.1%

HOUSING

\$1,283

Rent for a 1-bedroom apartment in Rapid City

3,233

Number of families on Pennington County Housing Waitlist

+2 Years

Waitlist time for families on Pennington County Housing

CHILDCARE

69.9%

Pennington County children under 6 with all available parents in the workforce

\$600 - \$1,000

Average monthly cost of Childcare for one child in Pennington County

411

Number of families that access the Childcare Subsidy Program in Pennington County

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

- Rapid Ride runs **6:20am - 5:50pm M-F** and **9:50am - 4:40pm Saturday**.
- Rapid Ride allows school-aged youth to ride for free.
- Rapid Ride only provides rides within Rapid City limits – does not go to Rapid Valley, Box Elder, or many work locations.

COMBATING STEREOTYPES

Homelessness

- In 2025, SD Housing Point-In-Time (PIT) count reported **1,431 homeless in SD with 422 in Rapid City**.
 - **3%** of Rapid City's homeless population are children.
- Nationally, about **45%** of those experiencing homelessness are employed.

Affordability & Public Assistance

- **52%** of people in poverty in Rapid City are employed.
- In Pennington County, **9,823 people receive SNAP; 44% are children**.
- Average SNAP duration: **8.6 months**; adults without dependents have a **3-month limit** unless working/eligible.
- **43.6%** of Rapid City children qualify for free/reduced school lunches.
- **59,000 SD children** qualify for childcare assistance; **only 5% use it**, due to limited providers & stigma.
- Average TANF payment: **\$443/month**; **87%** of recipients are children.
- Average TANF duration: **4.6 months**; lifetime limit **60 months**.
- TANF recipients must work **30 hours/week** in SD.

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

-  **Examine your assumptions.**
Notice when you attribute poverty to individual choices instead of systemic barriers like access to livable wages, housing, childcare and transportation.
-  **Invest locally and ethically.**
Support agencies that practice research-based methods for helping those in the crisis of poverty.
-  **Never stop learning.**
Commit to promoting education and following those who are credible messengers and are dedicated to helping the poor.
-  **Keep the conversation going**
Inform others of the facts surrounding poverty and help others see poverty through a different lens.
-  **Shift from "fixing people" to removing barriers.**
 - Ask: "What systems are making this harder?" instead of "What is wrong with this person?"
 - Use your influence in workplaces, educational settings, and policy making.
 - Ask how policies may punish people in crisis.

SOURCES

The data in this document is from multiple sources, including the U.S. Census Bureau, Elevate Rapid City, SD Department of Social Services, and SD Housing for the Homeless Consortium. Visit <https://jtvf.org/what-we-do/engage/outreach> for the full source list or scan 



PRESENTED BY



Tracy Palecek LPC-MH, QMHP
Tracy@PaleycekTherapy.com
605.467.5847

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