

# Demographics



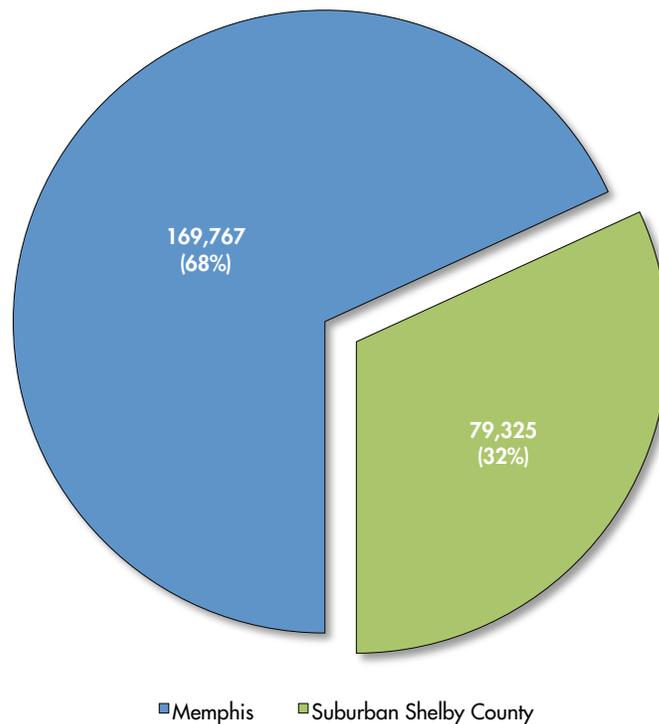
## Shelby County and Memphis maintain a steady population.

Between 2000 and 2007 there remained a stable population in Shelby County with no significant increase or decrease from year to year. With more than 900,000 residents in Shelby County, 70 percent of whom lived in the City of Memphis, the county is the largest in Tennessee.

Shelby County and Memphis consistently report that approximately one in four residents is a child under 18.

There were a quarter of a million children living in Shelby County in 2007, two in three of whom lived in Memphis (Figure 1).

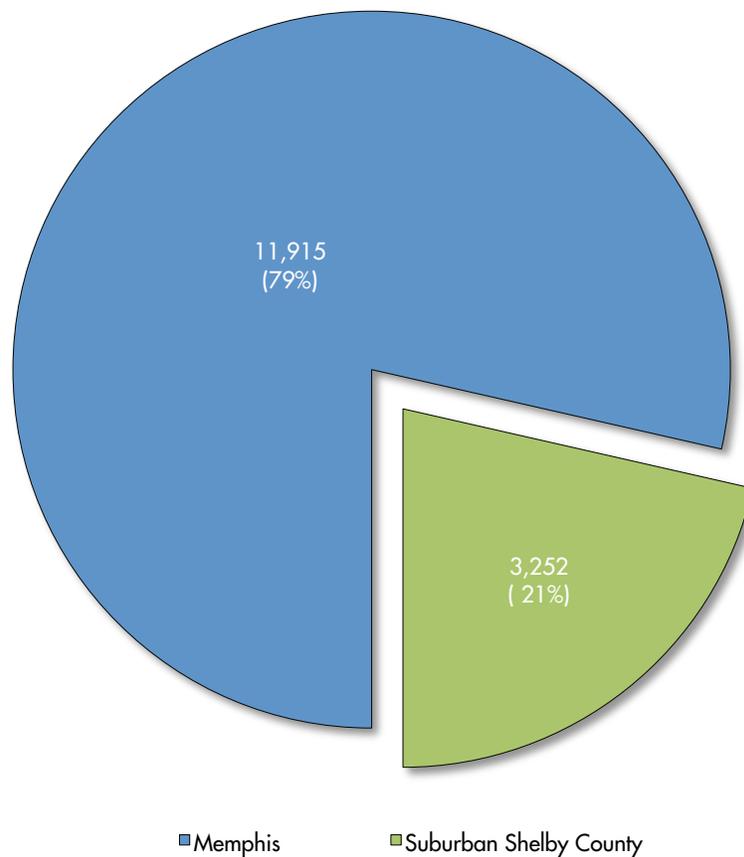
**Figure 1: Number and Percentage of Children in Memphis and Suburban Shelby County, 2007**



Source: American Community Survey, 2007, B01001

Each year the number of babies born in Shelby County is nearly equal to the number of enrolled undergraduates at The University of Memphis.

Figure 2: Number and Percentage of Births in Memphis and Suburban Shelby County, 2006



Source: Tennessee Department of Health, Office of Policy, Planning and Assessment, Division of Health Statistics, Birth Certificate Data, 2006

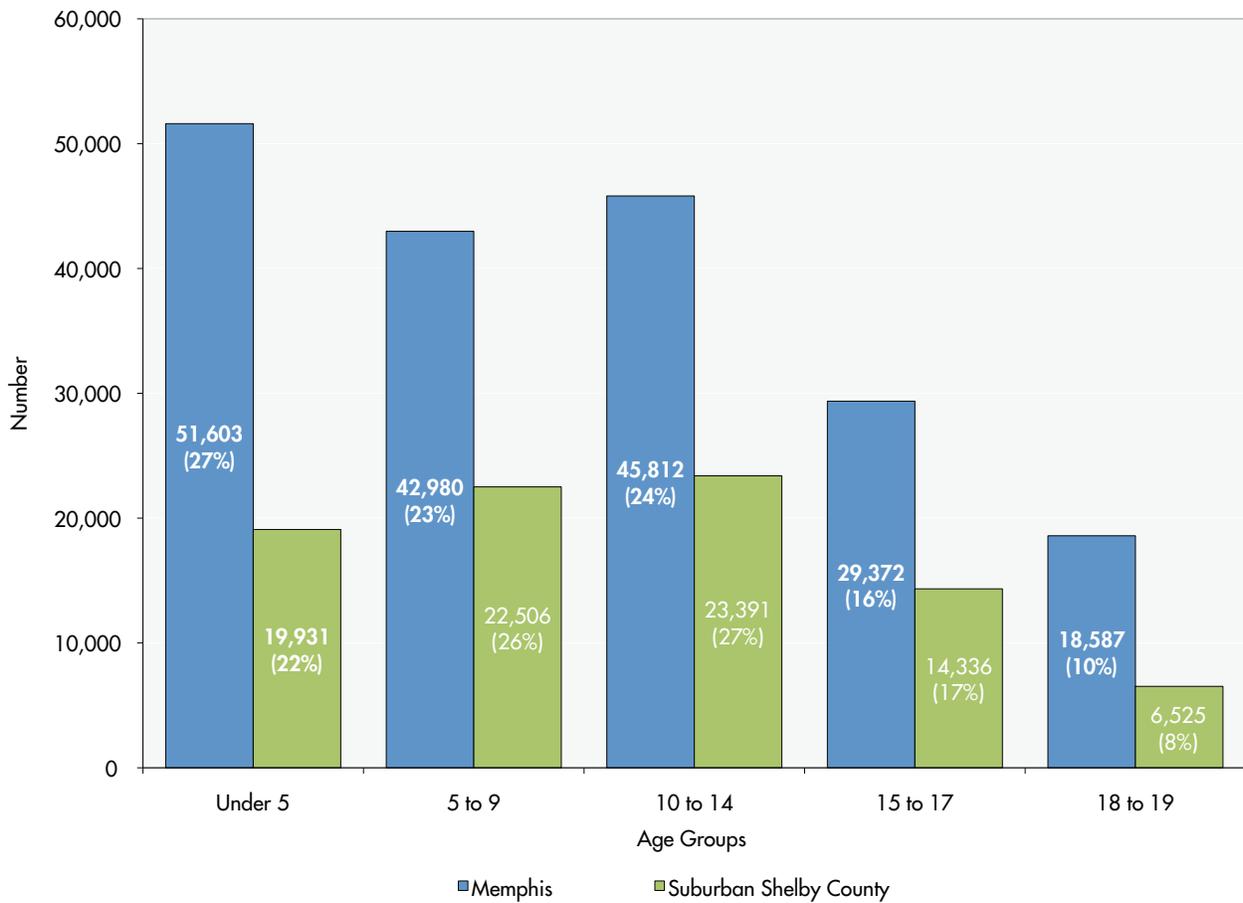
Since 1999 there have been approximately 15,000 births per year in Shelby County. Four of every five babies born in Shelby County reside within Memphis city limits (Figure 2).

## One third of children in Shelby County are very young.

In 2007, almost one in three children under 18 in Shelby County was less than five years old. In Memphis and Suburban Shelby County

approximately 50 percent of children had not yet celebrated their ninth birthday (Figure 3).

Figure 3: Number and Percentage of Children by Age, Memphis and Suburban Shelby County, 2007



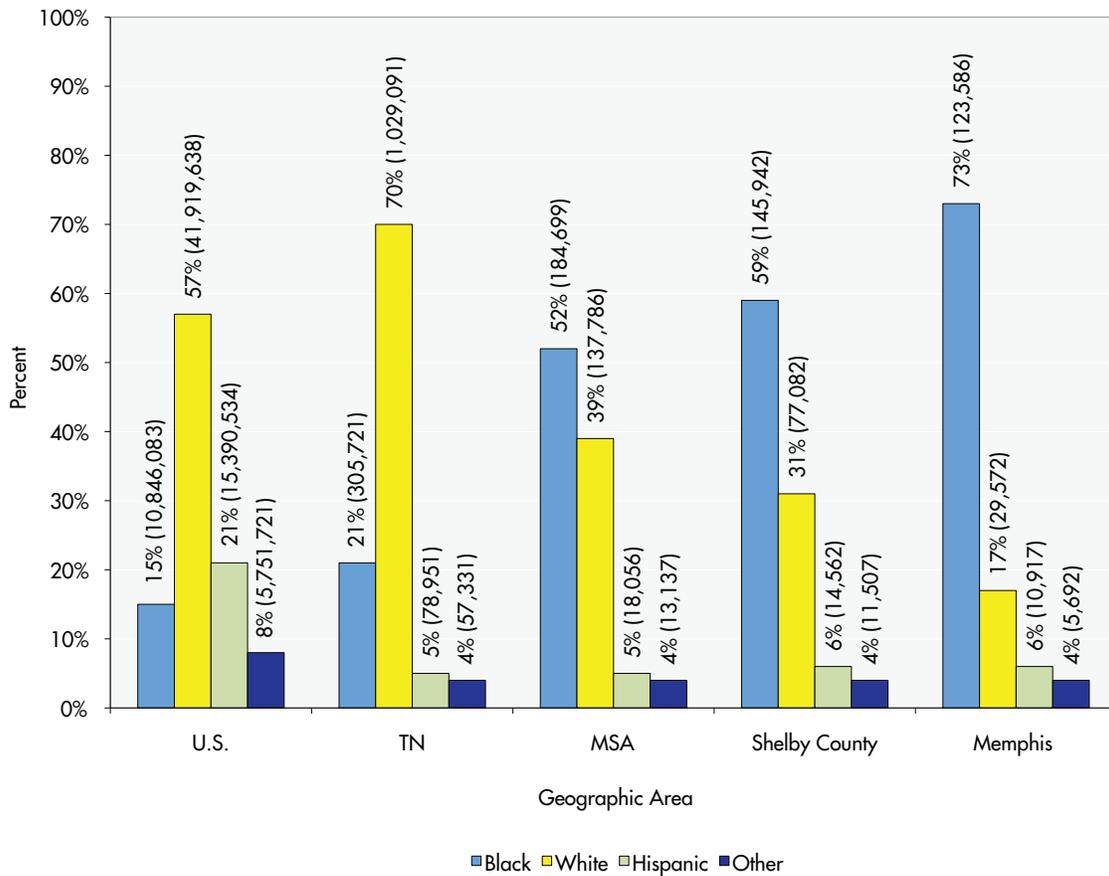
Source: American Community Survey, 2007, B01001

## The population of Memphis is different than Shelby County and Tennessee.

The racial composition of Shelby County and the Memphis Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) is largely influenced by that of Memphis. In 2007 Memphis reported that 73 percent of children were black, 17 percent were white, six percent were Hispanic, and four percent were other.

The demographics of Shelby County and the Memphis MSA are more similar to Memphis than to Tennessee and the U.S. However, if Memphis is excluded, the county and the MSA are more similar to the state than to the city (Figure 4).

**Figure 4: Number and Percentage of Children by Race and Ethnicity, United States, Tennessee, MSA, Shelby County & Memphis, 2007**



Source: American Community Survey, 2007, B01001

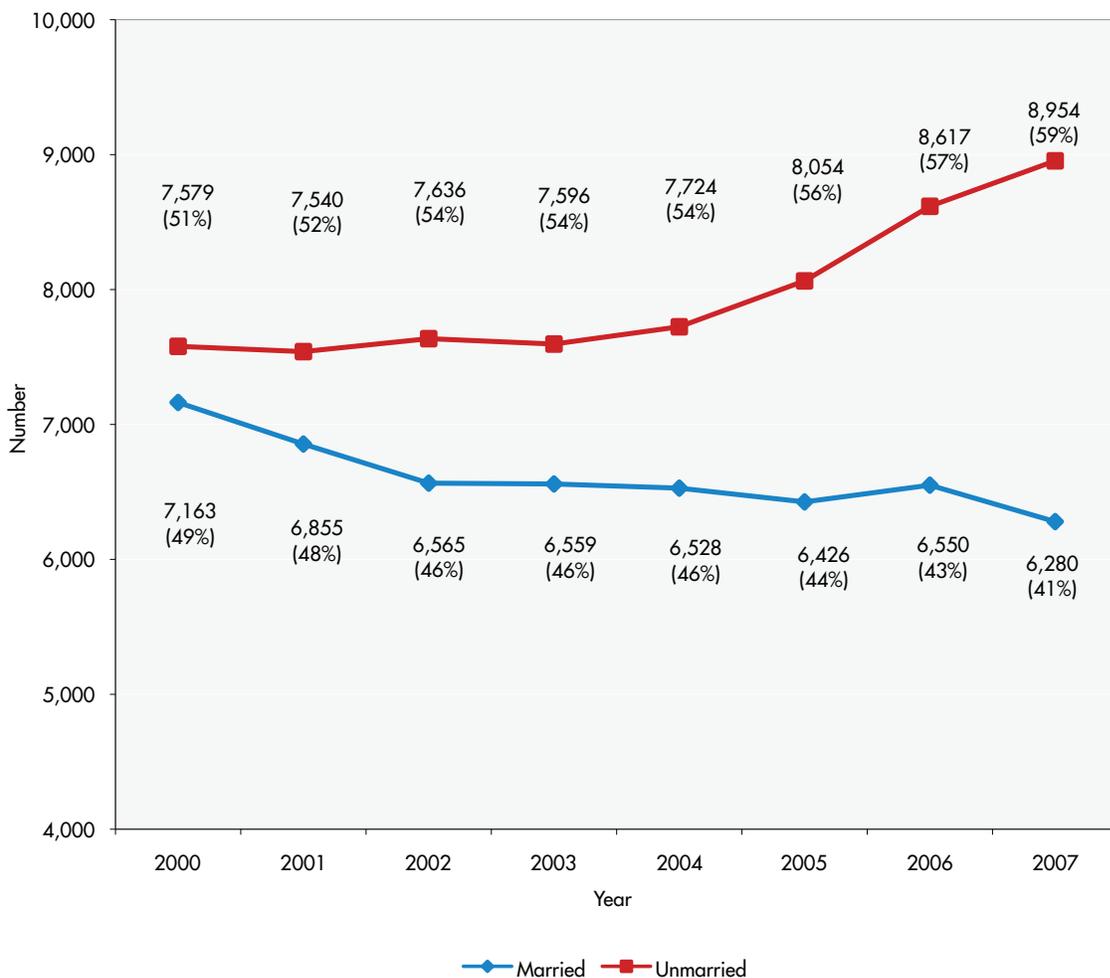
## Births to unmarried parents are on the rise in Shelby County.

In 2007, the U.S. Census Bureau reported 319,226 married Shelby County residents in the 15 and over age bracket. In 2007, there were 5,788 new marriages and 2,478 divorces. For every ten marriage certificates issued in 2007, there were four new divorces (Tennessee Department of Health, Vital Statistics, 2007).

The total number of births increased in Shelby County between 2000 and 2007.

Meanwhile, the percentages of births to unmarried mothers also increased from 51 percent to 59 percent during the same period (Figure 5).

**Figure 5: Number and Percentage of Births by Marital Status, Shelby County, 2000-2007**



Source: Tennessee Department of Health, Office of Policy, Planning and Assessment, Division of Health Statistics, Birth Certificate Data, 2000-2006, and Tennessee Department of Health Vital Statistics, 2007

## Children born to unwed mothers confront more problems than children who are born to married parents.

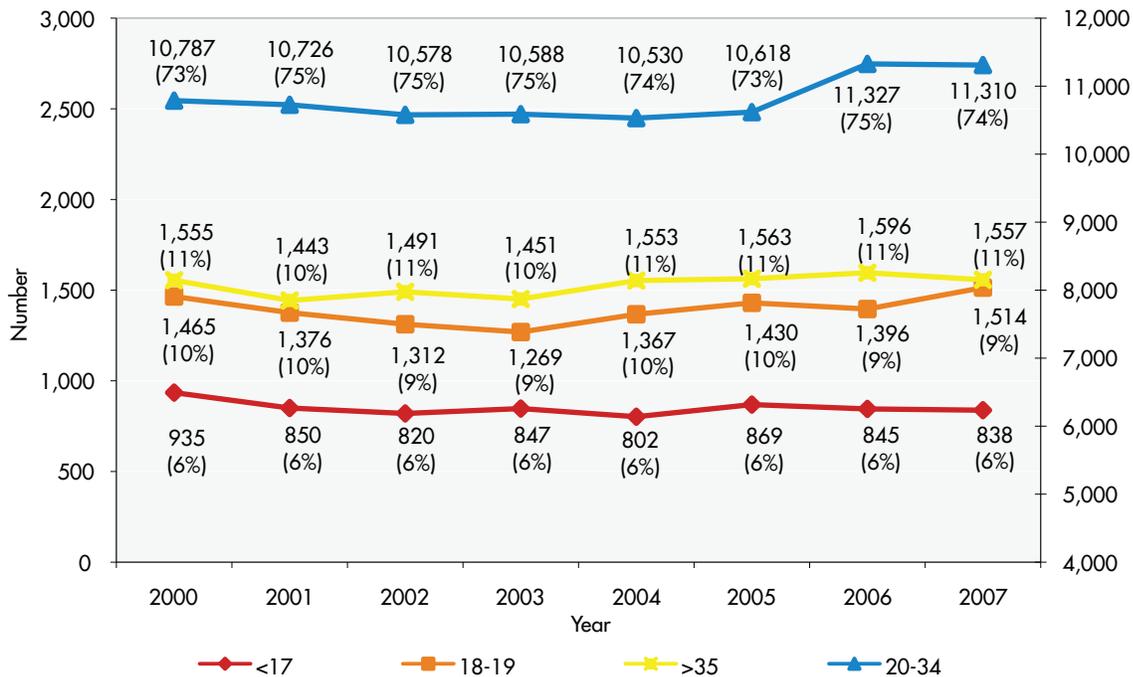
Children born to unwed parents confront more problems, such as lower educational success and increased behavioral risks, than their counterparts who are born to wed parents (Raley *et al.*, 2005; Osborn, 2007). Single parent families are much more likely than married parent families to face obstacles associated with socioeconomic distress (McLanahan & Sandefur, 1994). Poverty and reduced amounts of free time can translate into less supervision and quality time shared between parent and child (McLanahan & Booth, 1989; Thomson *et al.*, 1994).

Risks associated with unwed childbearing are heightened when the mother is young; teen and adolescent parents traditionally live in the most fragile conditions. Younger mothers are likely to earn less due to lower educational attainment and to be psychologically and emotionally immature compared to older mothers (ChildTrends, 2008).

In Shelby County fewer than 1,000 children were born to mothers younger than 17 (Figure 6). While that number accounted for only six percent of total county births, it is twice the national average (CDC, 2008).

High-risk pregnancies are not isolated to young mothers. Women who give birth at 35 and older are more likely to deliver pre-term than mothers between the ages of 20 and 34 (Behram & Butler, 2006). Additionally, diabetes and hypertension are more prevalent among older women, and infants born to mothers with these conditions are more likely to exhibit “growth restriction, pre-eclampsia and abruption” (*Ibid.*, p. 44). Fortunately, a relatively small cohort, approximately 1,500 infants (11%), was born to women 35 and older (Figure 6).

**Figure 6: Number and Percentage of Births by Age of Mother, Shelby County, 2000-2007**



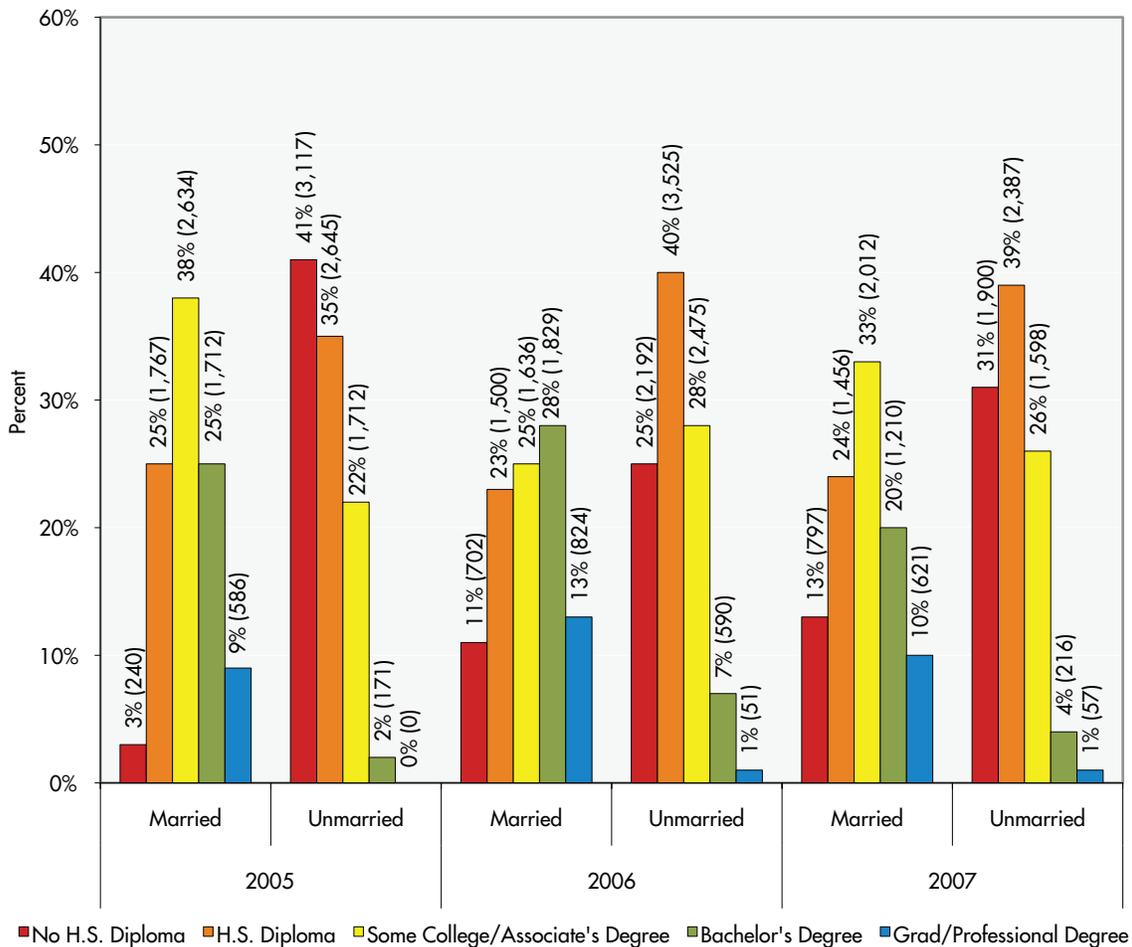
Source: Tennessee Department of Health, Office of Policy, Planning and Assessment, Division of Health Statistics, Birth Certificate Data, 2000-2006, and Tennessee Department of Health Vital Statistics, 2007

## Married mothers obtain more education than unmarried mothers.

Unmarried mothers are much less likely than married mothers to have a Bachelor's degree or higher. In 2007, 30 percent of married mothers had a Bachelor's degree or greater, compared to only five percent of unmarried mothers. This pattern is consistent between 2005 and 2007 (Figure 7).

Furthermore, 70 percent of single mothers who gave birth in Shelby County in 2007 had a high school diploma or less compared with only 37 percent of married mothers (Figure 7).

**Figure 7: Number and Percentage of Women 15 to 50 Giving Birth in the Past 12 Months by Marital Status and Educational Attainment, Shelby County, 2005-2007**



Source: American Community Survey, 2005-2007, B13014

## Economic hardship increased for both married and unmarried families with children each year between 2005 and 2007.

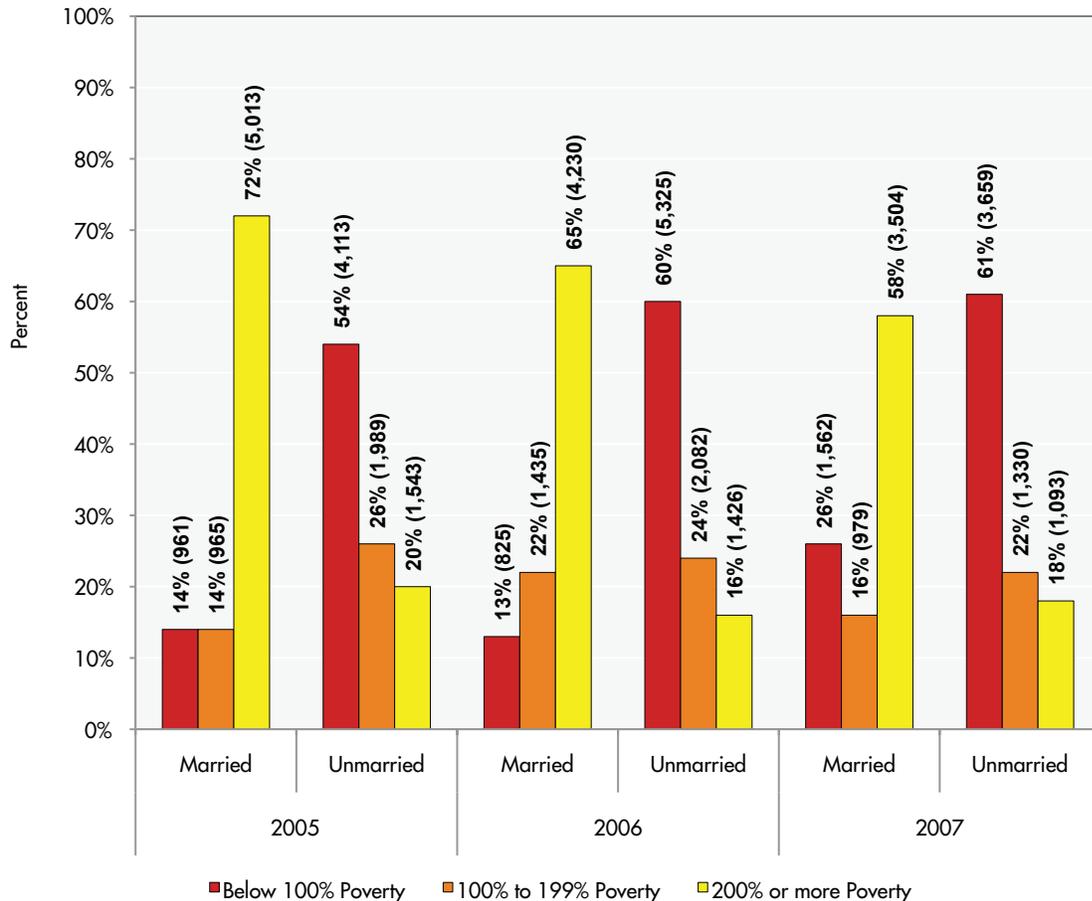
Low income families are those with incomes between 100 and 200 percent of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL). The percentage of married families who were above the low income threshold decreased each year from 2005 to 2007. Meanwhile the percentage of unmarried families above low income decreased from 20 percent in 2005 to 16 percent in 2006, then increased slightly to 18 percent in 2007.

Poor families are those with incomes less than 100 percent of FPL. A larger share of unmarried

families with children were living in poverty in 2007 than in 2005 and 2006 (Figure 8). Poverty also increased for married families; the percentage of married families in poverty doubled between 2006 and 2007.

Unmarried parents are more likely than their married counterparts to be poor or low income. In fact, the 2007 percentage of married families living above 200 percent of FPL was nearly the same as the percentage of unmarried families living in poverty.

**Figure 8: Number and Percentage of Women 15 to 50 Years Old Giving Birth in the Past 12 Months by Marital Status and Poverty, Shelby County, 2005-2007**



Source: American Community Survey, 2005-2007, B13010

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## Data

Chart data can be downloaded at <http://theurbanchildinstitute.org/databook>