



NEWS from the Fiscal Policy Institute

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*New York has the highest poverty rate of all the northern states
No progress on poverty and family incomes since the 2001 recession
Fewer New Yorkers are now uninsured but 2.5 million New Yorkers still
lack health insurance coverage*

Despite several years of moderate economic growth, New York did not gain any ground in key areas of poverty and family incomes. New Yorkers were just as likely to be poor in 2007 as they were when the last recession in 2001, according to Census Bureau data released today. Also, the income of the typical New York working-age household was no higher in 2007 than in 2001, after adjusting for inflation. The number and percentage of New Yorkers lacking health insurance decreased significantly from 2000 to 2007. Now that the economy is weakening, incomes are likely to fall further before they improve, according to analysts at the Fiscal Policy Institute.

On both measures of poverty emphasized by the Census Bureau (3-year average and 2-year average), New York had a higher poverty rate (14.4 percent and 14.3 percent) than the nation as a whole (12.4 percent and 12.5 percent) and the highest poverty rate of all the northern states. Ohio had the second highest poverty rate among northeastern states but its poverty rate (12.4 percent and 12.5 percent) was significantly lower than New York's. Only Southern and Southwestern states had higher poverty rates than New York.

Poverty rates in upstate cities far exceeded the poverty rates in New York City and the rest of the state. In Syracuse, almost 40,000 people (31 percent of the population) lived in families with incomes below the official poverty thresholds. Poverty rates for Rochester and Buffalo were just below 30 percent.

	Number of People Below Poverty: 2007	Percent of Population Below Poverty: 2007
Syracuse	39,926	31.0%
Rochester	56,289	29.1%
Buffalo	72,269	28.7%
Albany	20,702	24.4%
New York City	1,507,696	18.5%

- The poverty rate for New York State as a whole declined from 14.8 percent in 2004-05 to 14.3 percent in 2006-07 but remained above its 2000-01 level of 14.0 percent. However, none of these differences were statistically significant. In 2007, 2,757,000 New Yorkers lived in households with incomes below the federal poverty thresholds.

- Median income for working-age households (those headed by someone under 65) decreased slightly from \$49,558 in 2004-05 to \$49,267 in 2006-07 but this difference was not statistically significant. The 2006-07 level of median income for New Yorkers was not statistically significantly different than its 2000-01 level. The median income for non-elderly New York households in 2007 was \$48,944, slightly less than the U.S. median income of \$50,233.
- The percentage of New Yorkers without health insurance decreased from 14 percent in 2006 to 13.2 percent in 2007. Since 2000, the percent of New Yorkers without health insurance coverage has fallen from 16 percent to 13.2 percent. The number of New Yorkers without coverage has fallen from 3 million to 2.5 million over this same period. The decrease in the number of uninsured occurred despite a continuing decline in employer-provided health care because the percent of New Yorkers insured by government programs grew.

“The lack of a substantial increase in income over the course of this past recovery, and our failure to reduce poverty, show that the benefits of economic growth haven’t been broadly shared,” said Trudi Renwick, senior economist at the Fiscal Policy Institute. “A lot of New York families are struggling harder and harder just to stay in place. Basic purchases like food and gasoline are getting much more expensive, and family incomes just aren’t keeping up. These figures illustrate that many New Yorkers are struggling to make ends meet.”

As Congress heads back to Washington, the new data show that American families including New York families face a number of challenges. Our leaders can take immediate steps to begin addressing these problems by (1) giving states fiscal relief so they don’t have to cut back on critical programs (and weaken their economies at the same time), (2) strengthening the Child Tax Credit and other federal programs that assist low-income families, and (3) enacting a second economic stimulus bill that includes (among other things) an increase in the federal share of Medicaid, energy assistance for low-income families this winter.

New York’s policymakers can take important steps to improve economic opportunity for those struggling to make ends meet, such as raising the state minimum wage and indexing it for inflation, strengthening the state’s unemployment insurance system, increasing the welfare grant which has not been increased for 19 years and continuing to expand health insurance and food stamps for working families. As New York policymakers take steps to address the budget gaps being projected for next year by the New York State Division of the Budget, they should avoid taking steps that make it even harder for struggling families to get by.

The Fiscal Policy Institute (FPI) is a nonpartisan research and education organization that focuses on the tax, budget, and economic public policy issues that affect the quality of life and the economic well being of New York State residents.

FPI reports are available at <http://www.fiscalpolicy.org>.

Two Year Average Poverty Rates: 2006-2007 from the Current Population Survey	
United States	12.4
Mississippi	21.6
Texas	16.5
Louisiana	16.5
Kentucky	16.2
Arkansas	15.8
New Mexico	15.5
West Virginia	15
Tennessee	14.8
North Carolina	14.7
Arizona	14.4
Alabama	14.4
New York	14.3
Oklahoma	14.3
Montana	13.2
Georgia	13.1
South Carolina	12.7
Ohio	12.5
California	12.5

Three Year Average Poverty Rates: 2005-2007 from the Current Population Survey	
United States	12.5
Mississippi	21.1
Louisiana	17.1
Texas	16.4
New Mexico	16.3
Kentucky	15.7
Alabama	15.2
West Virginia	15.2
Arkansas	15.1
Tennessee	14.8
Arizona	14.7
Oklahoma	14.7
New York	14.4
North Carolina	14.1
Georgia	13.5
Montana	13.4
South Carolina	13.4
California	12.7
Ohio	12.4

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Source: Current Population Survey

2007 Poverty Rates in New York Counties covered by the American Community Survey (ACS)

Bronx County	362,062	27.1%
Kings County	550,169	21.9%
Tompkins County	18,883	21.2%
New York County	279,522	17.6%
Chemung County	13,631	16.6%
Cattaraugus County	12,683	16.5%
Steuben County	14,742	15.4%
St. Lawrence County	14,593	15.1%
Chautauqua County	18,712	14.9%
Jefferson County	16,663	14.7%
Oneida County	31,721	14.5%
Broome County	27,050	14.5%
Erie County	122,338	13.8%
Sullivan County	9,909	13.8%
Monroe County	93,812	13.4%
Oswego County	15,142	13.1%
Onondaga County	56,602	12.9%
Wayne County	11,218	12.6%
Cayuga County	9,283	12.6%
Clinton County	9,136	12.3%
Queens County	270,066	12.0%
Niagara County	24,840	11.9%
Albany County	33,643	11.7%
Ulster County	18,965	10.9%
Schenectady County	15,648	10.6%
Rensselaer County	15,854	10.5%
Orange County	37,606	10.4%
Madison County	6,637	10.4%
Ontario County	9,970	9.8%
Richmond County	45,877	9.8%
Dutchess County	24,848	9.1%
Warren County	5,626	8.7%
Putnam County	8,283	8.4%
Rockland County	22,814	7.9%
Westchester County	68,618	7.4%
Saratoga County	14,635	6.9%
Suffolk County	71,369	5.0%
Nassau County	56,308	4.4%

Source: American Community Survey, 2007. Only covers counties with populations of 65,000 or more.

**2007 Poverty Rates
in New York cities and towns covered by the
American Community Survey (ACS)**

	Number of People Below Poverty: 2007	Percent of Population Below Poverty: 2007
Syracuse city, Onondaga County	39,926	31.0%
Rochester city, Monroe County	56,289	29.1%
Buffalo city, Erie County	72,269	28.7%
Albany city, Albany County	20,702	24.4%
New York City	1,507,696	18.5%
Yonkers city, Westchester County	24,552	12.7%
Tonawanda town, Erie County	9,065	12.2%
Ramapo town, Rockland County	13,150	11.7%
Mount Vernon city, Westchester County	6,957	11.0%
Greece town, Monroe County	9,833	10.0%
Amherst town, Erie County	10,326	9.6%
New Rochelle city, Westchester County	5,577	8.6%
Cheektowaga town, Erie County	6,632	7.4%
Brookhaven town, Suffolk County	25,909	5.7%
Clarkstown town, Rockland County	4,563	5.7%
Babylon town, Suffolk County	11,188	5.6%
North Hempstead town, Nassau County	11,886	5.5%
Islip town, Suffolk County	16,764	4.9%
Hempstead town, Nassau County	32,190	4.3%
Colonie town, Albany County	3,157	4.3%
Huntington town, Suffolk County	7,788	3.9%
Smithtown town, Suffolk County	4,209	3.7%
Greenburgh town, Westchester County	2,904	3.1%
Oyster Bay town, Nassau County	7,931	2.8%

Source: American Community Survey, 2007. Only covers areas with populations of 65,000 or more.

