



# ***Statement from the*** **Fiscal Policy Institute**

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## ***New Census Data Show Improvement in Poverty and Incomes in New York State Some Gains Realized but Still Historically High Poverty Compared to Pre-Recession Levels***

New York has reason to be optimistic as poverty is declining and incomes are on the upswing, according to new data from the U.S. Census Bureau.

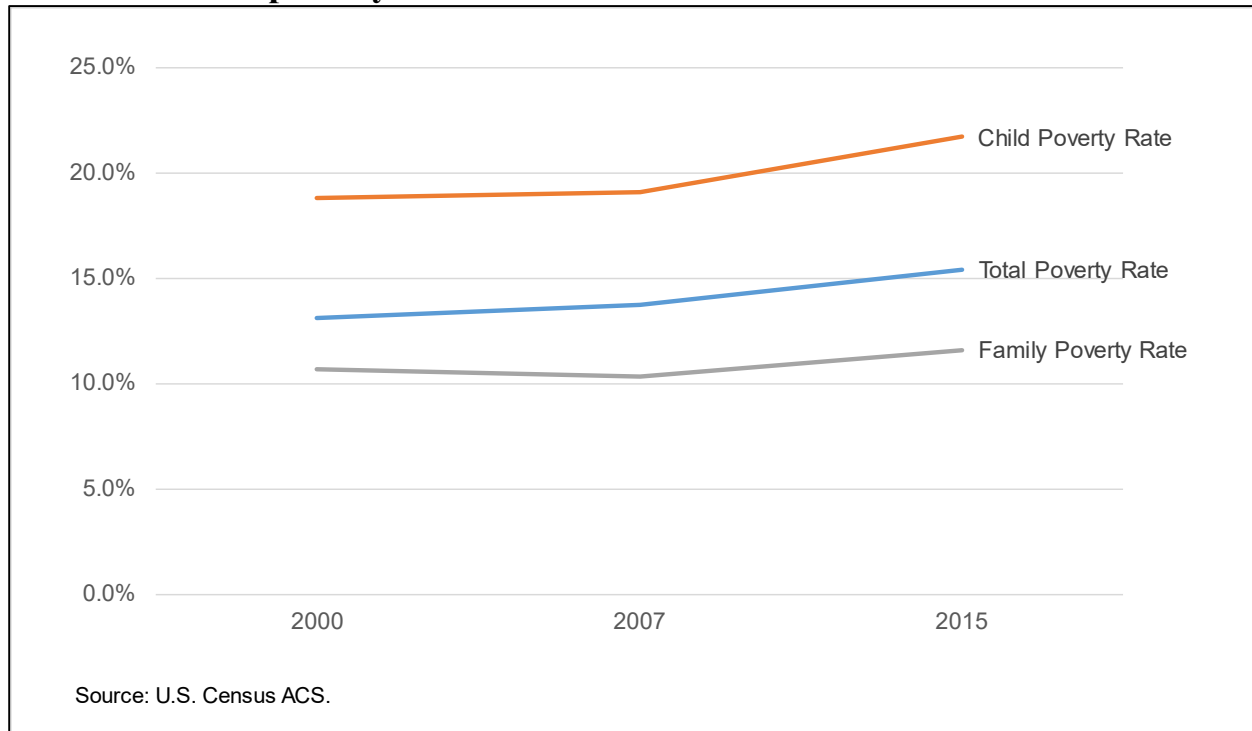
FPI notes that there were significant declines in the overall poverty rates for New York State and New York City in 2015 from 2014 (but no other significant year-over-year changes).

The New York State poverty rate for 2015 was 15.4%, down 0.5% from 2014 (15.9%) resulting in approximately 90,000 fewer New Yorkers living in poverty. New York City saw a statistically significant decrease in poverty over the course of the last year as well with poverty rates falling 0.9% from 20.9% (2014) to 20% (2015).

While we have seen an improvement in the past year there is still much work to be done. Looking back over the past 15 years it is clear that poverty has been growing in New York State. Despite the improvement in this year's numbers, we can see from the following chart that over the past 15 years poverty had been trending upward and has yet to fall to the level that prevailed in the early 2000s.

Child poverty rates also remain persistently high; the state's child poverty rate fell from 22.6% in 2014 to 22% in 2015, but that change is not considered statistically significant. Child poverty was 28.6 percent in New York City in 2015, and even higher in many upstate cities.

## New York State poverty rates 2000-2015



According to Ron Deutsch, executive director of the Fiscal Policy Institute, “While there is cause for optimism based on the most recent census data examining poverty, there are still nearly 3 million New Yorkers (and over 900,000 children) living below the federal poverty level. In one of the richest states in the nation these numbers should be completely unacceptable.”

New York’s median family income rose by an inflation-adjusted 3.7% in 2015 to \$73,854. While the 2015 level is down slightly from the pre-recession high reached in 2008, the difference between the two years is not statistically significant according to Census Bureau methods. In New York City, median family incomes rose 4.4% to \$61,413. Census Bureau sampling methods do not lend themselves to reliably reporting one-year changes for upstate cities.

“The historically weak national economic recovery is finally starting to deliver real wage and income gains for New York’s working families,” stated James Parrott, FPI’s chief economist. Parrott added, “State action this year to raise the minimum wage in the months and years ahead will help to keep this momentum going.”

*The Fiscal Policy Institute ([www.fiscalpolicy.org](http://www.fiscalpolicy.org)) is an independent, nonpartisan, nonprofit research and education organization committed to improving public policies and private practices to better the economic and social conditions of all New Yorkers.*