

# Nearly Half of New York Renting Families Are Rent-Burdened

April 2019

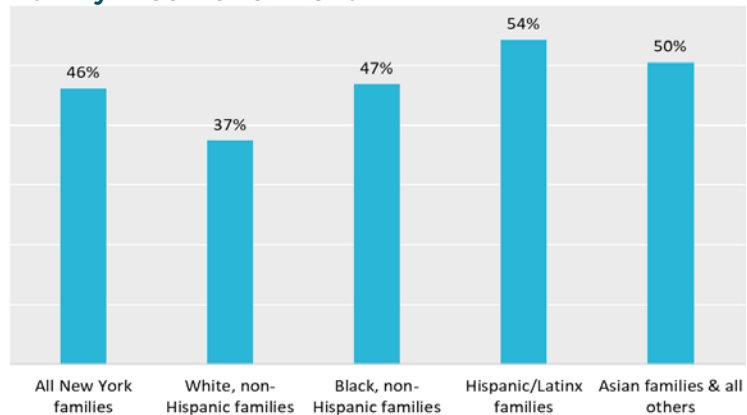
**FAMILIES SHOULD PAY NO MORE THAN 30 PERCENT OF THEIR INCOME FOR RENT** according to housing advocates. Many public agencies set their support levels to meet this standard. Unfortunately, we find that across New York State, and in some of its major cities, significant shares of families are paying more than 30 percent of their income in rent. This is especially true among families of color. Severe rent burdens can significantly reduce families' ability to pay for other important expenses, such as food or transportation, and can limit both adults' and children's opportunities for education and recreation.

Figure 1 shows the breakdown of rental share of income (or *rent burden*) for a sample of over 1.6 million families across the state who live in rental housing.<sup>1</sup> This includes urban, suburban, and rural areas. Note that close to half (46 percent)—over 750,000 families for whom we have data—spend over 30 percent of their incomes for rent. We also show the shares for families by race-ethnic groups.<sup>2</sup>

Families of color across the state spend, on average, substantially more of their income on rent than white families, and more than half of Hispanic families.

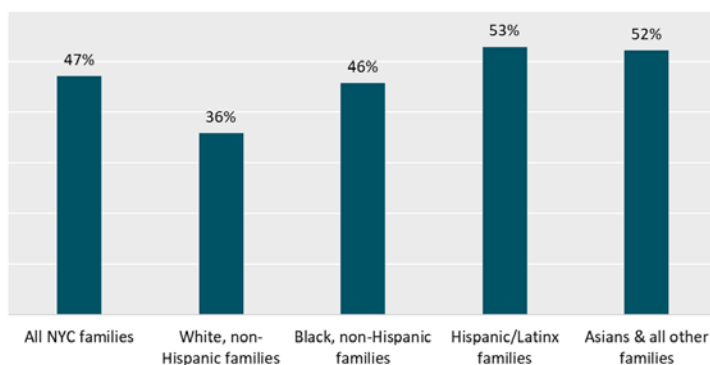
(Race/ethnicity of families is based on the self-reported race/ethnicity of the householder.) Over 280,000 families are spending over 30 percent of their family income on rent—and many are spending over 40%. Most renters and families of

**New York State: Renters Paying Over 30% of Family Income for Rent**



**FIG. 1** Source: Fiscal Policy Institute Analysis of 2017 American Community Survey 5-year data.

**New York City: Renters Paying Over 30% of Family Income for Rent**



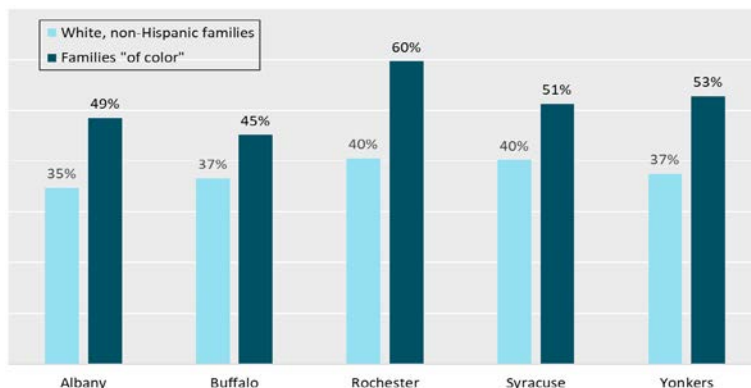
**FIG. 2** Source: Fiscal Policy Institute Analysis of 2017 American Community Survey 5-year data.

color live in New York's biggest cities: Albany, Buffalo, New York City, Rochester, Syracuse, and Yonkers. Of the 1.1 million renter families of color for whom data is available, 840,000 live in New York City. Of these families, 51 percent are "rent-burdened," and 28 percent (235,000) pay more than half of their income for rent.<sup>3</sup>

In each of the other five large cities, we see that rents fall harder on families of color than on white, non-Hispanic families.<sup>4</sup> In Rochester, three fifths (60 percent) of families of color spend more than 30 percent of their incomes on rent, and that share is 51 percent in Syracuse and 53 percent in Yonkers. While it is lower in Albany and Buffalo, the burden in those cities is still substantially higher among families of color than for white, non-Hispanic families. In total, 22,000 families of color in the five largest cities outside of New York City pay over half of their income in rent. The high proportions of rent-burdened households in these cities can be attributed to markedly lower incomes, fewer economic opportunities, and a smaller number of affordable housing options compared to New York City.

Many low-income families in New York are rent burdened or severely rent burdened and may be only one or two paychecks away from homelessness. Tens of thousands of New Yorkers are challenged by rents that take up unsustainably outsized portions of their incomes. State and local policies must begin to address this long-standing challenge.

### Five Large New York Cities: Renters Paying Over 30% of Their Income for Rent



**FIG. 3** Fiscal Policy Institute analysis of 2017 American Community Survey 5-year data.

#### Policy Recommendations

- Explore meaningful rent regulation reform options with a view to strengthening tenants rights and eviction protections throughout the state.
- Stimulate an accelerated production of affordable housing around the state.
- Pass and fully fund Home Stability Support (S02375/A01620) to provide rent supplements to families at risk of eviction.

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The Fiscal Policy Institute 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. FPI's Immigration Research Initiative looks at immigration issues in New York State, and around the country.

## Appendix

Figure A1

### New York State: Share of Family Income Spent on Rent

Share of Family Income	All New York families	White, non-Hispanic families	Black, non-Hispanic families	Hispanic/Latino families	Asian families & all others
Less than 20%	33%	41%	31%	24%	29%
20% to 30%	21%	21%	22%	21%	21%
30.1% to 49.9%	21%	18%	21%	23%	21%
50% and over	25%	19%	26%	31%	29%
Total over 30%	46%	37%	47%	54%	50%

Source: Fiscal Policy Institute Analysis of 2017 American Community Survey 5-year data.

Figure A2

### New York City Share of Family Income Spent on Rent

Share of family income	All NYC families	White, non-Hispanic families	Black, non-Hispanic families	Hispanic/Latino families	Asians & all other families
Less than 20%	32%	44%	32%	26%	28%
20% to 30%	21%	20%	23%	21%	19%
30.1% to 49.9%	21%	17%	21%	23%	23%
50% and up	26%	18%	25%	30%	30%
Total over 30%	47%	36%	46%	53%	52%

Source: Fiscal Policy Institute Analysis of 2017 American Community Survey 5-year data.

Figure A3

### Five Major New York Cities: Shares of Family Income Spent on Rent

		Albany	Buffalo	Rochester	Syracuse	Yonkers
Less than 20%	White non-Hispanic	43%	45%	39%	38%	44%
	Families "of color"	31%	37%	22%	31%	27%
20% to 30%	White non-Hispanic	22%	18%	21%	21%	18%
	Families "of color"	21%	18%	18%	18%	20%
30.1% to 49.9%	White non-Hispanic	12%	20%	20%	23%	19%
	Families "of color"	22%	18%	21%	21%	23%
50% and up	White non-Hispanic	23%	16%	21%	18%	19%
	Families "of color"	27%	27%	38%	31%	30%

Source: Fiscal Policy Institute Analysis of 2017 American Community Survey 5-year data.

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<sup>1</sup> The data in the ACS sample suggest that there are around 3.8 million renter households in New York. After limiting the study to *families* (households with two or more related individuals), the number of renters is reduced to a subset of 1.7 million. Accounting for 34,500 families that do not report their income, and thus for whom we cannot estimate a rental share of income, our report covers 1.66 million family households in New York State.

<sup>2</sup> In this analysis, the family race-ethnic group is determined by the self-report of the survey respondent, frequently known as the householder. This study does not distinguish families in which individual family members are of different races. Rent reported is contract rent.

<sup>3</sup> The American Community Survey provides publicly available microdatabased on geographic areas that do not necessarily coincide with city boundaries. Of the six cities we study here, three exactly match ACS study areas, and the other three are extremely closely matched.

<sup>4</sup> The survey sample sizes in each of these cities are too small to make valid separate estimates of rent shares by particular race-ethnic groups, so we analyze those shares by combining all the non-white groups into families of color.