

# A State Commitment to Reducing Child Poverty

## The Promise

No child in New York State should grow up enduring the hardships of poverty. Recognizing this, New York leaders passed the landmark Child Poverty Reduction Act, committing in statute to cutting child poverty in half by 2032. Now it is time to make good on this promise and fight child poverty, support the economic stability of families, and set up all the state's children to thrive.

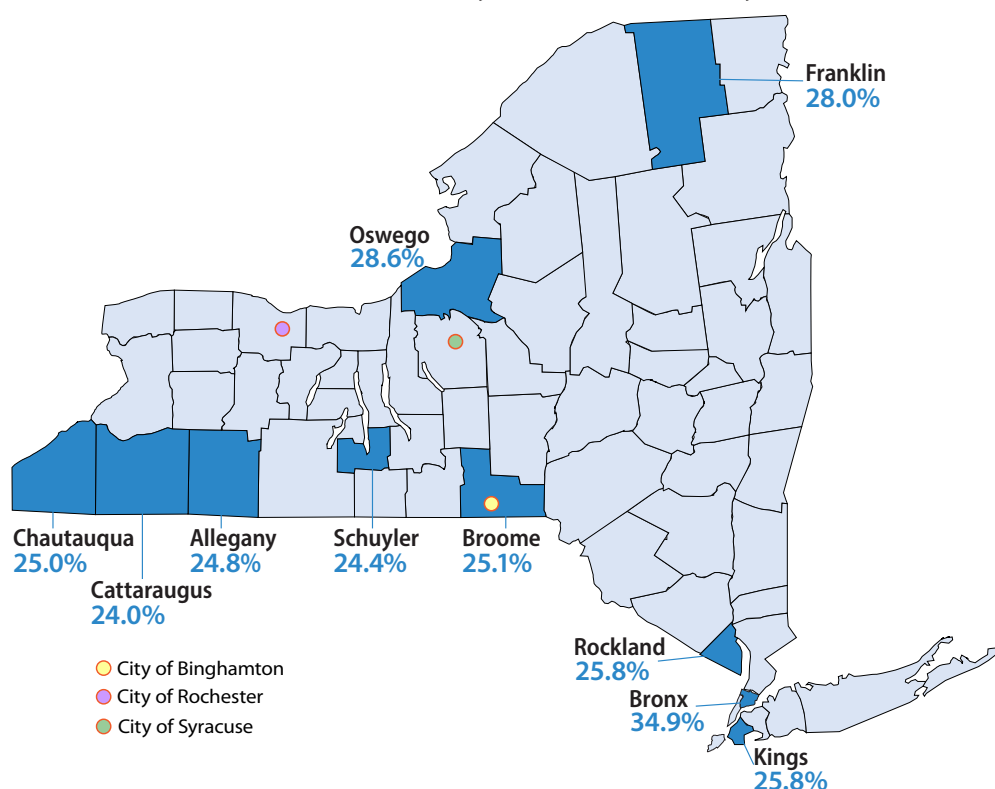
## The Challenge

New York State has repeatedly, over time, made the policy choice to allow hundreds of thousands of children to experience poverty. There are serious consequences to this choice: evidence shows a lack of economic resources for families compromises children's ability to grow and achieve adult success, hurting them and our communities.

## What We Know

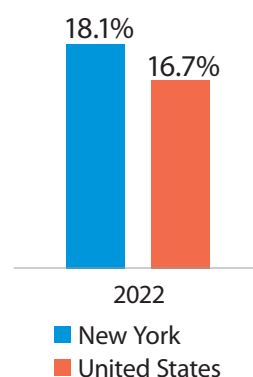
Child poverty in New York State exceeds the national rate, as it has for more than a decade. In 2022, approximately 734,756 children, over 18%, experienced poverty, as measured by the Federal Poverty Level.<sup>1</sup> Those rates are significantly higher in many areas around the state—some urban, some rural, some suburban. For instance, nearly 35% of children in Bronx County and more than 28% in Oswego County live in poverty.<sup>2</sup> Among the large New York cities with the highest child poverty rates in New York are Syracuse (46%), Rochester (42%), and Binghamton (41%).<sup>3</sup>

**The Ten New York Counties With the Highest Rate of Child Poverty in the Past 12 Months as Measured by the Federal Poverty Level, 2022<sup>4</sup>**



**Source:** U.S. Census Bureau. Poverty Status in the Past 12 Months American Community Survey, ACS 5-Year Estimates Subject Tables, Table S1701.

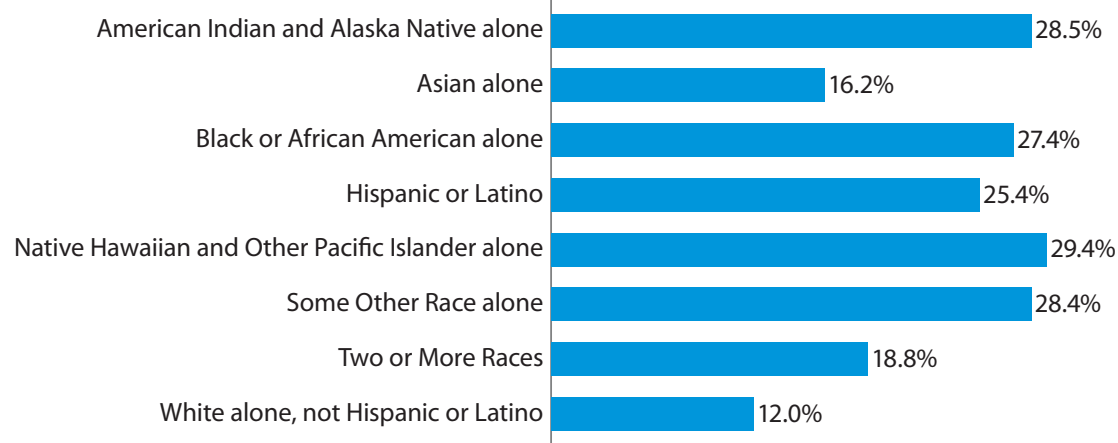
**Children Under 18 Living in Poverty (Federal Poverty Level)**



**Source:** U.S. Census Bureau. Poverty Status in the Past 12 Months American Community Survey, ACS 5-Year Estimates Subject Tables, Table S1701.

The impact of systemic, historic, and ongoing racism embedded in housing, education, employment, and other systems is reflected in the relative rates at which children experience poverty based on their race. Public policy solutions must be shaped with intention to address the root causes of these disparities and bring an end to poverty for all children.

### New York Children in Black, Hispanic/Latino, and Multi-Racial Families Experience Poverty at Much Higher Rates Than Non-Hispanic White Children—Results of Longstanding Racial Inequities, 2022



Source: Computations by Schuyler Center based on U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey, ACS 5-Year Estimates Detailed Tables.

## Policy Solutions

Government has the capacity to quickly and sharply reduce the number of children experiencing poverty. This was made particularly clear when a 2021 temporary expansion of the federal Child Tax Credit resulted in a nearly 50% reduction in child poverty nationwide, and in New York State.<sup>5</sup> The federal government allowed the CTC expansion to expire, resulting in a steep tax hike for middle and low-income working New York families with children, coming just as food, gas, and housing costs had skyrocketed, leaving many families struggling to pay household bills.<sup>6</sup>

In the absence of federal action, New York State must take the lead to become a family-friendly state by supporting families and meeting its child poverty reduction goals.

Proven solutions to support families and combat child poverty include providing:

- ▶ Child care assistance to *all* families that need it, regardless of immigration status, and free from unnecessary administrative burdens;
- ▶ Robust, refundable tax credits and cash assistance;
- ▶ Continuous Medicaid coverage for children 0-6 years old; and
- ▶ Housing and nutritional supports for all families, no matter where they were born.

<sup>1</sup> U.S. Census Bureau. (2022). *Poverty Status in the Past 12 Months. American Community Survey, ACS 5-Year Estimates Subject Tables, Table S1701.*

<sup>2</sup> U.S. Census Bureau. (2022). *Poverty Status in the Past 12 Months. American Community Survey, ACS 5-Year Estimates Subject Tables, Table S1701.*

<sup>3</sup> U.S. Census Bureau. (2022). *Poverty Status in the Past 12 Months. American Community Survey, ACS 5-Year Estimates Subject Tables, Table S1701.*

<sup>4</sup> The U.S. Census Bureau measures poverty two ways. The Federal Poverty Level (FPL) is the "official" measure. It looks solely at income, without regard to other incoming measures. The Supplemental Poverty Measure (SPM)—considered more accurate by many—takes into account family resources and expenses in addition to income, including geographic variation and the value of benefits like refundable tax credits. United States Census Bureau. 2017. *Measuring America: How the U.S. Census Bureau Measures Poverty.*

<sup>5</sup> Wilson, D., Collyer, S., Hardy, B., and Wimer, C. (2023). *State-Level Poverty Impacts of the Child Tax Credit in 2021. Poverty and Social Policy Fact Sheet.*

<sup>6</sup> Coalition of Human Needs. (2022). *Household Pulse October 5 – 17, 2022 (Week 50) Food, Household Expenses, Rent, And Utilities Hardship Data For All States.*

\* For all sources and computations, go to <https://bit.ly/NYSchildren>