



# Upholding New York’s Commitment to Reduce Child Poverty

## The Promise

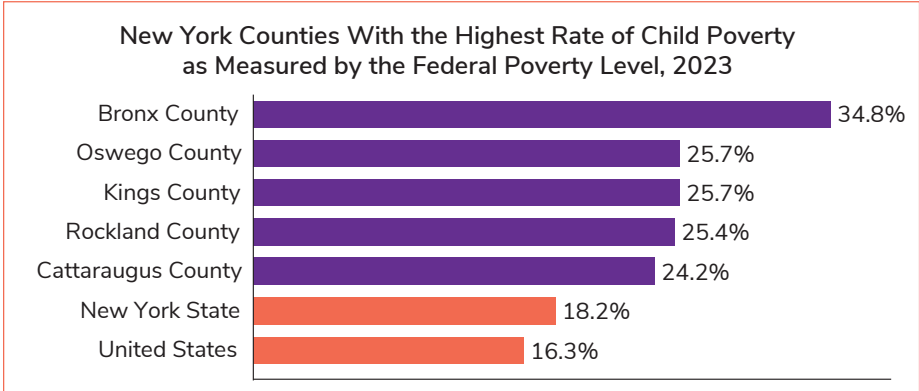
All children in New York State should grow up free from the hardships of poverty. Recognizing this, New York leaders enacted the landmark Child Poverty Reduction Act (CPRA), committing in statute to halve child poverty by 2031. At the end of 2024, the Child Poverty Reduction Advisory Council released policy recommendations to drive the State toward its statutory goal. Now is the time for New York leaders to implement these recommendations and meet the state’s child poverty reduction commitment.

## The Challenge

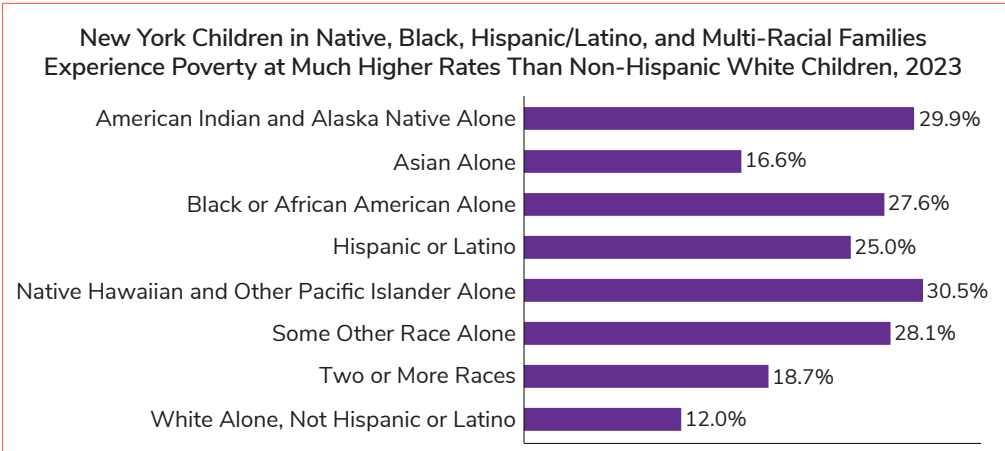
As the federal government acts to eliminate support for low-income families, New York’s leaders must ensure every family has access to the resources they need to thrive. The New York State 2025-26 budget included significant investments to reduce child poverty. These steps toward economic security for all New York families must be followed by further intentional investments focused on low-income children. In 2026, those investments will be crucial to protect New York’s children from the harms of federal actions while making New York State the best place to raise a child.

## What We Know

Child poverty in New York State continues to exceed the national rate, as it has for more than a decade. In 2023, approximately 731,672 New York children, over 18%, experienced poverty.<sup>1</sup> Those rates are significantly higher in many areas around the state—some urban, some rural, some suburban. Nearly 35% of children in Bronx County and more than 25% in Oswego County live in poverty.<sup>2</sup> Child poverty rates in many New York cities far exceed the state average rate, with the highest child poverty rates among large and moderate-sized cities reaching 46% in Syracuse, 42% in Binghamton, and 41% in both Troy and Rochester.<sup>3</sup> Due to systemic, historic, and ongoing racism embedded in public systems, Black and brown children experience poverty at much higher rates than children who are white.



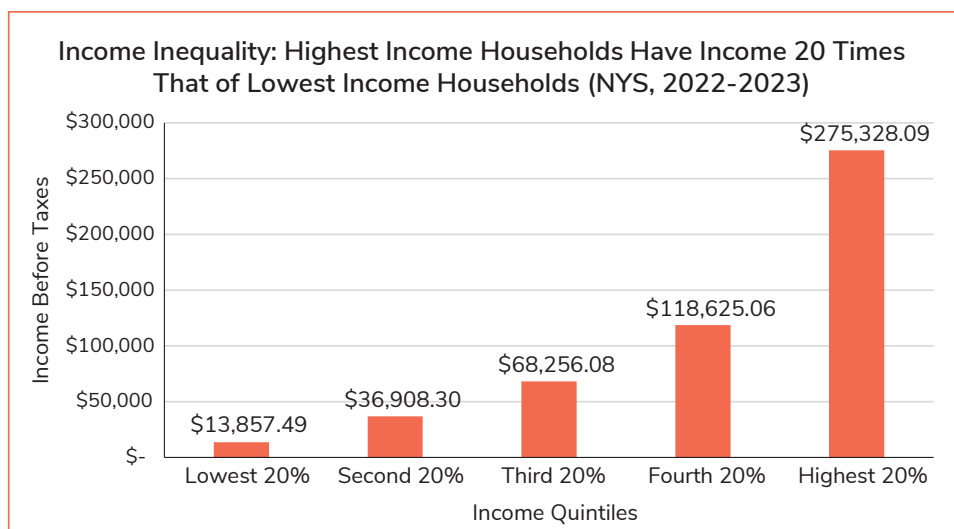
Source: U.S. Census Bureau. (n.d). Poverty Status in the Past 12 Months. American Community Survey, ACS 5-Year Estimates Subject Tables, Table S1701.



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

Income inequality in the state has continued to increase, with wages increasing by the highest percentage for the highest income earners and the lowest percentage for the lowest income New Yorkers from 2023 to 2024.<sup>4</sup> Households in the highest-income quintile (top 20%) have income that is 20 times higher than the lowest-income quintile (bottom 20%).<sup>5</sup> Income inequality in New York, as measured by the Gini coefficient, ties with Washington, D.C. for worst in the nation.<sup>6</sup>

Income inequality has real impacts on children and families and has been shown to result in poorer health outcomes for low-income individuals, and increased stress and anxiety.<sup>7</sup>



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. (2025). New York: Quintiles of income before taxes, 2022–2023.

## State Policy Solutions

In 2026, federal program and funding changes will disproportionately hurt low-income children, families, and communities. That means it is more important than ever for New York State to proactively address systemic inequities and invest in initiatives that support healthy and thriving children, resourced families, and safe and welcoming communities. All New York children should grow up free from the stress and strains of poverty.

Solutions proven to support families and combat child poverty include providing:

- ▶ Robust, refundable tax credits and cash assistance;
- ▶ Housing and nutritional supports for all families, no matter where they were born;
- ▶ Child care assistance for all families, regardless of immigration status, work hours, or minimum earnings, inclusive of children with disabilities; and
- ▶ Resources and services for families that are free from unnecessary, overly-intrusive administrative burdens. These should be structured to phase out gradually to minimize benefits cliffs that too often send families right back into economic insecurity upon receiving a modest income bump.

“

People are just struggling all around, no matter your background. So to me that speaks to a systemic issue more so than an individual choice.

—Parent, *Monroe County*

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<sup>1</sup> U.S. Census Bureau. (2023). [Poverty Status in the Past 12 Months](#). American Community Survey, ACS 5-Year Estimates Subject Tables, Table S1701 [data set].

**Note:** Due to a delay in the release of ACS 5-year estimates, originally scheduled to release in December 2025, this analysis uses the 2023 ACS 5-year Estimates.

<sup>2</sup> U.S. Census Bureau. (2023). [Poverty Status in the Past 12 Months](#). American Community Survey, ACS 5-Year Estimates Subject Tables, Table S1701 [data set].

<sup>3</sup> U.S. Census Bureau. (2023). [Poverty Status in the Past 12 Months](#). American Community Survey, ACS 5-Year Estimates Subject Tables, Table S1701 [data set].

<sup>4</sup> Gusdorf, N. (2025). [New Data Show Rising Inequality, Strong Wage Growth for Top Earners](#). Fiscal Policy Institute.

<sup>5</sup> U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. (2025). [Consumer Expenditure Surveys, New York: Quintiles of income before taxes, 2022-2023](#).

<sup>6</sup> SHADAC. (n.d.) [State Health Compare: Income Inequality \(Gini Coefficient\)](#).

<sup>7</sup> Avanceña, A. L. V., DeLuca, E. K., Iott, B., Mauri, A., Miller, N., Eisenberg, D., & Hutton, D. W. (2021). [Income and Income Inequality Are a Matter of Life and Death. What Can Policymakers Do About It?](#)

\*For all sources and computations go to: <https://scaany.org/sonyc-sources-2026/>