



**Citizens' Committee
for Children** of NEW YORK

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New Data Reveals Economic Crisis Facing New York Families With Children in Counties Across State, Underscores Urgent Need for Targeted Investments

One in Five Children Live in Households Below the Poverty Level in 20 New York Counties; in 50 Counties, More Than 20% of Renter Households Spend at Least Half of Income on Rent

NEW YORK – Today, [Citizens' Committee for Children of New York](#) (CCC) released its new "The Road to Equity: Child & Family Well-being in New York State" index, a comprehensive report examining county-level data on economic security, housing stability, health care, education, youth, and communities. The biennial report found that families across New York's 62 counties continue to face financial hardships and need more support in order to thrive. Approximately 731,000 children live below the poverty line in New York, and 20% of renter households spend at least half of income on rent in 50 counties. This report analyzes well-being using administrative data to identify regional disparities and highlights opportunity areas for building healthier, more equitable communities statewide.

Download the full [report here](#).

"Our *Child and Family Well-being in New York State* index is a comprehensive analysis that underscores the urgency of making investments that help children and families learn, work, grow, and thrive without the threats of poverty and economic insecurity," said **Alice Bufkin, Associate Executive Director For Policy and Advocacy at CCC**. "As the Legislature and Governor negotiate the Fiscal Year 2026 state budget, we will continue to work with partners and state leaders to ensure that the budget increases economic security, provides access to affordable housing, enhances access to behavioral and developmental services, strengthens our Early Care and Education system, and invests in the community resources that reduce involvement in the child welfare and youth justice systems."

The analysis examines county-level data across six domains of well-being and ranks each county's overall risk to child and family well-being, identifying regional disparities and highlighting opportunity areas to build healthier, more equitable communities statewide.

Key Economic Security Findings:

- In 20 counties, more than 20% of children live in households below the poverty level.
- The statewide median income among families with children was just over \$97,000, but given New York's high cost of living, a family with two working parents and two children would need about \$138,000 to cover their typical expenses annually.
- The top eight counties facing economic barriers had median family incomes between \$46,000 and \$75,000.
- In nearly all counties with above average economic barriers to well-being, most families are working or looking for work (85% to 92%).

Additional Key Findings:

- **Housing:** In 50 counties, more than 20% of renter households spend at least half of income on rent.
- **Health:** In 36 counties, more than four infants out of every 1,000 live births do not survive past their first year of life. In 15 counties, the share of low birthweight babies exceeds the statewide average of over 8%.
 - Yates County's rate of uninsured children (32%) far surpasses all other New York counties, while Montgomery County has the highest infant mortality rate (13.8 per 1,000 live births).
- **Education:** In 40 counties, less than 50% of 3- and 4-year-olds are enrolled in early education.
- **Youth:** In 32 counties, the youth unemployment rate is 10% or higher, and as high as 21% in the Bronx and 21.5% in Hamilton County outside of New York City.
- **Community:** In 41 counties, more than 10% of households have no broadband internet.

"Across New York, far too many families are already struggling with economic and housing insecurity, and the growing economic uncertainty at the national level threatens to worsen these challenges," said **Rimsha Khan, author of the report and Senior Research Specialist of Data Systems at CCC**. "Our *Child and Family Well-being in New York State* index not only highlights the regional disparities preventing family well-being, but also emphasizes the critical need for strengthening safety nets and investing in solutions that promote long-term equitable economic security for all families."

In particular, the report reinforces the urgency of addressing New York's high child poverty rate, homelessness and housing instability, and food insecurity. CCC applauds several key priorities included in Gov. Hochul's Executive Budget proposal as well as the Senate and Assembly One House Budget Resolutions, including funding for universal school meals and significant enhancements to the state's child tax credit program. We join partners in the New York Can End Child Poverty Coalition in urging Gov. Hochul and the Legislature to ensure several key anti-poverty priorities are included in the adopted Fiscal Year 2026 New York State Budget, including:

- Expanding the Child Tax Credit to ensure it is fully refundable, inclusive of all families, and increased to \$1,500 per child;
- Establishing a statewide rental assistance program to ensure stable and affordable housing;
- Increasing public assistance benefits to meet families' basic needs and indexing them to inflation;
- Reintroducing state food assistance programs to fill gaps in federal SNAP coverage for children.

CCC will also continue to work with state leaders to address a host of investments needed to ensure our state's children are healthy, housed, educated, and safe, including:

- Providing urgently-needed investments in the children's behavioral health outpatient system;
- Funding to increase Early Intervention (EI rates) by 5% and conducting a comprehensive assessment of the program;
- Permanent investments in the child care workforce and equitable funding for K-12 education;
- Funding to support communities and reduce systems involvement through a Youth Justice Innovation Fund and a Child and Family Wellbeing Fund.

View CCC's full list of state [budget priorities here](#).

"Our colleagues at Citizens' Committee for Children have clearly documented the great challenges New York State families face as they raise children and made the case for public policy to address child poverty, homelessness and housing instability, and food insecurity," said **Kate Breslin, President and CEO, Schuyler Center for Analysis and Advocacy (SCAA)**.

"While there is no easy fix, this data shines light on a path to better futures for our children and our state and it is consistent with the Child Poverty Reduction Advisory Council's recommendations to strengthen refundable tax credits; expand rental assistance; significantly increase public assistance; enhance food assistance; and advance universal child care."

"New York's unacceptably high rate of child poverty is the result of policy choices – not personal failures. As this report shows, among the most pressing challenges families face is the cost of meeting basic needs, including access to affordable, quality child care," said **Larry Marx, CEO, The Children's Agenda**. "While our elected representatives in Albany now debate the state budget, one of the most important ways to reduce child poverty statewide and make New York affordable for all families is to supplement families' incomes with expanded tax credits. That tool has been proven effective, and children's needs can't wait for action; they are the definition of now."

"Making ends meet is becoming harder for families in Westchester and throughout New York State. We have heard again and again of the burden of finding affordable housing," said **Allison Lake, Executive Director Westchester Children's Association**. "As the report shows, in 50

counties, more than 20% of renter households spend at least half of income on rent. It is time for the housing voucher program and other evidenced-based remedies that fight poverty as recommended by the Child Poverty Reduction Advisory Council, be passed into law.”

CCC is an independent, nonpartisan child advocacy organization that leverages data on the well-being of children and families to inform budgetary, legislative and programmatic decisions made at the federal, state, and local level. By measuring indicators across six domains of well-being (economic security, housing, health, education, youth, and family and community) on an annual basis, CCC's *Child and Family Well-being in New York State* index is designed to illustrate where risk factors cluster and draw attention to community districts across the city where barriers to child and family well-being must be addressed.

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About CCC

Citizens' Committee for Children of New York (CCC) educates and mobilizes New Yorkers to make the city a better place for children. CCC's advocacy combines public policy research and data analysis with citizen action. CCC casts light on the issues, educates the public, engages allies and identifies and promotes practical solutions to ensure that every New York City child is healthy, housed, educated and safe. For more information about CCC, visit www.cccnewyork.org.