

Executive Summary

Poverty Report 2009

New York State Community Action Association + <http://www.nyscaaonline.org>

New York State continues to be confronted with poverty - increasing numbers of individuals and families are struggling in the face of our nation's current economic downturn. With a poverty rate of 14%, New York has the 16th highest poverty rate in the nation, exceeding the national poverty rate of 13.3% and the rates of all Northeastern and Midwestern states.

The New York State Community Action Association (NYSCAA) is pleased to present the 2009 *New York State Poverty Report*, a comprehensive resource providing a statewide look at poverty. The report is designed to be a resource for New York's CAAs, community-based organizations, policy makers, advocates, community coalitions and the general public, containing statistical information on a variety of poverty indicators at the state and county levels. A new addition to this year's report is the section devoted to upstate cities, denoting the stark realities of poverty in the urban areas of Upstate New York. While New York City data is available on an annual basis, upstate cities traditionally only receive updated poverty statistics every ten years as part of the decennial Census. The three-year American Community Survey estimates recently released by the Census Bureau make this new section of our report possible. As you will note, this report does not offer a set of policy recommendations. Rather it is intended to be a source of information for others to use in their work, adding value to the larger dialogue on how to address poverty in communities across our state. We hope that you find the report useful and encourage you to share your recommendations for improvements to our next edition.

PLEASE NOTE: While this report contains the most recent statistics available at the time of the report's publication, the data is still too old to reflect the current economic conditions facing New Yorkers and the rest of the nation. As a result, we recommend that the data be considered conservative estimates of the status of New York's individuals and families.

Major Findings

- ✦ More than 2.6 million New Yorkers struggle in households with incomes below the federal poverty line - just \$18,310 for a family of three
- ✦ More than 860,000 children live in poor households
- ✦ Upstate cities have astonishingly high child poverty rates - more than 40% of children in Buffalo, Rochester, Syracuse, and Utica are living below the poverty line
- ✦ Preliminary December '08 data estimates New York State's unemployment rate to be 6.8%
- ✦ Poverty disproportionately impacts people of color - While 1 of every 10 Whites live in poverty, more than 1 in 5 African Americans and 1 in 4 Latino New Yorkers are poor
- ✦ Nearly 2.5 million individuals under the age of 65 do not have health insurance