

# New York City Government Poverty Measure 2005–2016

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An Annual Report from  
the Office of the Mayor



**Mayor's Office of Operations**  
**The City of New York**  
**April 2018**

**NYC**<sup>®</sup>  
**Opportunity**

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# Preface

Every year, the Mayor's Office for Economic Opportunity is required by City Charter to release an update to its poverty measure and to survey the initiatives that reduce poverty in New York City. This year's report shows that the poverty rate has declined significantly in recent years. It also describes a wide array of new and expanded City programs that are working to combat poverty and increase opportunity.

The annual report uses the NYCgov poverty rate, a metric developed by the Poverty Research Unit of the Mayor's Office for Economic Opportunity, to capture poverty in the city more accurately than the federal measure. The report states that the NYCgov poverty rate in 2016 was 19.5 percent, down from 20.6 percent in 2013, a statistically significant decline, and down on a one-year basis from 19.9 percent in 2015. The near poverty rate, which encompasses those under 150 percent of the poverty rate, has also fallen with statistical significance from 45.9 percent in 2013 to 43.5 percent in 2016, and from 44.2 percent in 2015. The report also indicates that the City is making greater-than-projected progress toward its goal, announced in 2015, of lifting 800,000 New Yorkers out poverty or near poverty in ten years.

Progress in reducing poverty, this report shows, has been shared by a wide variety of groups across the five boroughs. From 2014 to 2016, poverty rates fell by significant amounts among Blacks, Asians, working adults, adults working less than full time, families with children under 18, citizens, and non-citizens, among others.

During these years, the City has deployed a large number of measures to combat poverty. The City lobbied strenuously for the state to raise the minimum wage that applies in New York City. The higher minimum wage, which is being phased in year by year until it reaches \$15 per hour in 2019 has played an important role in bringing down the poverty rate. In addition, the City has an expanded affordable housing program, with a goal of building or preserving 300,000 units of affordable housing; a Pre-K for All program that is providing free, high-quality pre-k to all 4-year-olds in the city; and many other initiatives.

This report keeps the City accountable on poverty, but it does more. It provides a snapshot of poverty rates and anti-poverty programs that the City uses to guide its efforts moving forward. This year's report shows that while considerable work remains to be done, encouraging progress is underway.

Matthew Klein  
Executive Director  
Mayor's Office for Economic Opportunity

New York City first released the alternative poverty measure in 2008. With this current report the NYCgov measure enters its second decade, providing a more accurate representation of poverty in New York City than previously available. The past ten years of research have been an insightful journey. Early editions of this report contained a chapter, titled “Policy Affects Poverty,” reporting on the degree to which anti-poverty policies were effective in lowering the poverty rate. Demographic characteristics and geographic information were used to identify subgroups of the New York City population in poverty – and how poverty rates differed across groups.

Last year we introduced the measure of the poverty gap, the amount of resources needed to move out of poverty, providing a guide for additional allocation of anti-poverty resources. This year’s report expands on this analysis by comparing the poverty gap across subpopulations and providing evidence of differences in the intensity of poverty across the population. We add to this a comparison of the different effects of anti-poverty programs across these populations. The result is a deeper understanding of disparity and of gaps in policy.

Over the past decade the data contained in this report has become a useful tool for policymakers. Looking ahead to the next decade we remain committed to further developing and improving the poverty model methodology. The mission of the Mayor’s Office for Economic Opportunity, our home base in City government, is to reduce poverty and increase equity. The NYCgov poverty measure will be a part of advancing these goals.

Christine D’Onofrio, Ph.D.  
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This report and its technical appendices can be found online at <http://www1.nyc.gov/site/opportunity/poverty-in-nyc/poverty-measure.page>

Chapter 1:

# Executive Summary

## Chapter 1: Executive Summary

This report provides the tenth annual release of the New York City Government (NYCgov) poverty measure by the Mayor’s Office for Economic Opportunity. The NYCgov poverty measure is officially issued by the City of New York, mandated by the City Charter, and incorporated into the work and thinking of the Mayor’s Office and many City agencies.<sup>1</sup> It offers policymakers and the public a more informed alternative to the U.S. official poverty measure and is adapted to the realities of the city’s economy, which includes housing costs that are higher than the national average. It also incorporates into family resources a range of after-tax and in-kind income benefits missed by the federal methodology that accounts for the important contributions of the social safety net. This report includes poverty rates, thresholds, and an examination of the state of poverty in New York City, as well as relevant policy remedies.

**The NYCgov poverty rate for 2016 (most recent available data) was 19.5 percent, down from 19.9 percent in 2015.**<sup>2</sup> This rate does not represent a statistically significant change from the prior year. However, incremental year-over-year declines in the poverty rate resulted in a statistically significant decline in poverty over the five-year period 2012 to 2016. Moreover, significant declines in the poverty rate over that five-year period have occurred among many subgroups in the city population, whether measured by family type, ethnicity, or work experience.

**The NYCgov near poverty rate—the share of the population living under 150 percent of the NYCgov threshold—was 43.5 percent, down from 44.2 percent in 2015.** The near poverty rate shows a pattern similar to the poverty rate—small year-over-year declines that result in significant change over the 2012 to 2016 time period, with these declines shared by many of the same subpopulations that saw a decline in their poverty rate.

**Poverty rates and near poverty rates under the current mayoral administration, beginning in 2014, show statistically significant declines.** Poverty fell by 1.1 percentage points and near poverty fell by 1.6 percentage points.

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<sup>1</sup> Prior to 2017, the poverty measure was released under the name “CEO poverty measure”—a publication of the Center for Economic Opportunity, now the Mayor’s Office for Economic Opportunity.

<sup>2</sup> The primary data source for the NYCgov poverty rate is the U.S. Census Bureau’s American Community Survey Public Use Micro Sample for New York City. The most recent data available is for 2016.

Table 1.1  
**NYCgov and U.S. Official Poverty Rates and Thresholds,  
 2014–2016**

	2014	2015	2016
<b>Poverty Rates (%)</b>			
NYCgov Poverty	20.6	19.9	19.5*
NYCgov Near Poverty	45.1	<b>44.2</b>	43.5*
U.S. Official Poverty	19.1	18.4	<b>17.6*</b>
<b>Thresholds (\$)</b>			
NYCgov Poverty	31,581	31,756	32,402
U.S. Official Poverty	24,008	24,036	24,339

Sources: American Community Survey Public Use Micro Sample as augmented by NYC Opportunity. U.S. official threshold from U.S. Bureau of the Census.

Notes: Numbers in **bold** indicate a statistically significant change from the prior year.

\* indicates a statistically significant change from 2014. U.S. official poverty rates are based on the NYC Opportunity poverty universe and unit of analysis. See Chapter 4 for details.

**The NYCgov poverty threshold for a two-adult, two-child family in 2016 was \$32,402, an increase of \$646, or 2 percent, from 2015.**

This steady decline in poverty and near poverty is occurring against a backdrop of steady growth in the city economy. Median family earned income<sup>3</sup> increased 12 percent in the five-year period from 2012 to 2016, although it remained below pre-recession levels. During this same time period the minimum wage increased from \$7.25 in 2012 to \$9 in 2016. The city also added 536,000 jobs from 2012 to 2016,<sup>4</sup> reflected in a 3 percentage point increase in the employment/population ratio.

Table 1.1 shows New York City poverty rates, near poverty rates, and NYCgov thresholds for 2014 to 2016. It also includes comparable data from the official U.S. poverty rate for New York City.

The first section of this chapter provides a context for our findings, beginning with a brief overview of why we originally developed an alternative poverty measure and how it differs from the official U.S. poverty measure. Because trends in poverty are tied to economic conditions, trend data for the New York City labor market are provided, followed by key findings from the year's data and additional analysis to deepen our understanding of safety net benefits and disparities across subgroups.

<sup>3</sup> Earned income is the sum of wages and self-employment income as reported in the American Community Survey.

<sup>4</sup> Source: NYC Opportunity calculations of Current Employment Survey data available from the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

## 1.1 Measuring Poverty

All measures of income poverty include two components: a definition of income that represents resources available to the family<sup>5</sup> and a definition of a poverty threshold—the minimal socially acceptable measure of well-being adjusted for family size. If a family’s income measure is less than their assigned threshold, they are in poverty. The share of people living below their assigned poverty threshold constitutes the poverty rate. The NYCgov poverty measure and the U.S. official poverty measure differ in their definitions of both income and threshold.

### The U.S. Official Poverty Measure

The income measure used in the U.S. official poverty rate is limited to pre-tax cash. This does not include the value of tax credits such as the earned income credit, an important addition to family resources. Nor does it measure non-cash income supports such as SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, formerly known as Food Stamps) benefits or housing subsidies. On the expense side, it does not consider nondiscretionary spending on items such as health care or the transportation and childcare costs required of many working adults.

The U.S. official threshold is based on the cost of a minimal nutritional standard that is unchanged for over 50 years, save for inflation adjustments. It does not reflect changes in the standard of living that have occurred in the last half century or geographic differences in the cost of living, housing costs in particular. For these reasons the U.S. official poverty measure has inadequate definitions of both income and threshold, resulting in an inadequate measure of poverty.

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<sup>5</sup> See Appendix A, “The Poverty Universe and Unit of Analysis,” for a detailed definition of family. In short, we define a family as a poverty unit: those people in a household who, by virtue of their relationship to each other, share resources and expenses. A family can be as small as one person or as large as an extended, multigenerational unit including blood relatives, unmarried partners and their children, and unrelated children. A household may include more than one poverty unit.

## Poverty Thresholds

**Official:** The official threshold was developed in the early 1960s and was based on the cost of a minimum diet at that time. It is updated each year by the change in consumer prices. It is uniform across the United States.

**NYCgov:** The NYCgov poverty threshold is a New York City-specific threshold derived from the U.S.-wide threshold developed for the Federal Supplemental Poverty Measure. The threshold is based on what families spend on basic necessities: food, clothing, shelter, and utilities. It is adjusted to reflect the variation in housing costs across the United States.



## Measuring Income

**Official Income:** The official poverty measure’s definition of family resources is pre-tax cash. This includes income from sources such as wages and salaries, as well as government transfer payments, provided that they take the form of cash. Thus, Social Security benefits are included in this measure but the value of in-kind benefits, like SNAP (Food Stamps) or tax credits such as the Earned Income Tax Credit, are not counted.

**NYCgov Income:** Based on NAS recommendations, NYCgov income includes all the elements of pre-tax cash plus the effect of income and payroll taxes, as well as the value of in-kind nutritional and housing assistance. Nondiscretionary spending for commuting to work, childcare, and out-of-pocket medical care are deductions from income.

Figure 1.1

### Comparison of Poverty Measures

	Official	NYCgov
<b>Threshold</b>	Established in early 1960s at three times the cost of “Economy Food Plan.”	Equal to the 33rd percentile of family expenditures on food, clothing, shelter, and utilities, plus 20 percent more for miscellaneous needs.
	Updated by change in Consumer Price Index.	Updated by the change in expenditures for the items in the threshold.
	No geographic adjustment.	Inter-area adjustment based on differences in housing costs.
<b>Resources</b>	Total family <i>pre-tax</i> cash income. Includes earned income and transfer payments, if they take the form of cash.	Total family after-tax income.
		Includes value of near-cash, in-kind benefits such as SNAP.
		Housing status adjustment.
		Subtract work-related expenses such as childcare and transportation costs.
		Subtract medical out-of-pocket expenditures.

## The NYCgov Poverty Measure

The NYCgov poverty measure was developed in response to the shortfalls of the U.S. official measure. On the income side, the NYCgov measure better accounts for the true resources available to a family—earnings plus the value of benefits such as tax credits, housing subsidies, and nutritional assistance. It allows us to measure the effect of those benefits in lowering poverty. Expenses that lower resources available to families are also acknowledged; medical spending and costs associated with work (childcare and transportation) are deducted from income.

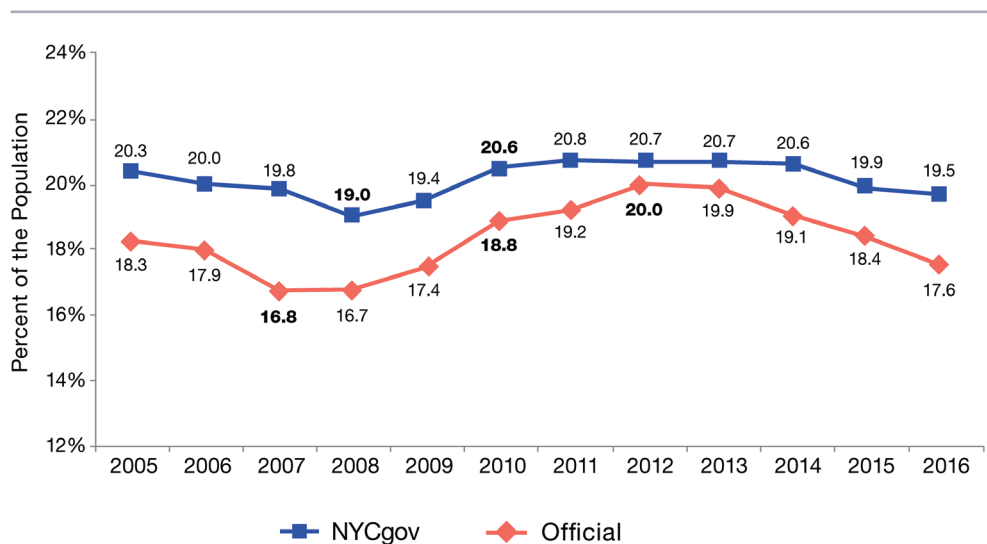
The NYCgov poverty threshold does not solely rely on the cost of basic nutritional needs. It is based on a reasonable share of U.S. spending on necessities (food, clothing, shelter, and utilities), plus an additional amount for other basic expenditures. It is then adjusted to cover higher housing costs in New York City. The threshold is annually adjusted to reflect changes in both national spending and local housing costs. The result is a unique, locally specific poverty measure that is closer to an adequate measure of both income and need.<sup>6</sup>

Figure 1.1 summarizes and contrasts the differences in the official measure and the NYCgov measure.

The NYCgov poverty measure includes a higher income level and a higher threshold than the U.S. official poverty measure. The result is a higher poverty

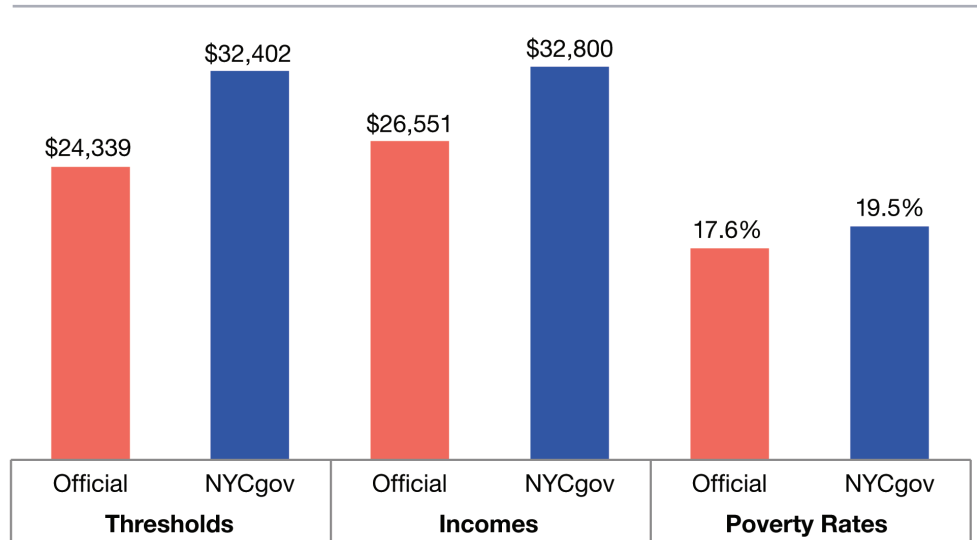
<sup>6</sup> Chapter 4 explains the U.S. official and NYCgov poverty measures in more detail and compares their respective components. Both measures are also contrasted with the U.S. Supplemental Poverty Measure.

Figure 1.2  
**Official and NYCgov Poverty Rates, 2005–2016**



Source: American Community Survey Public Use Micro Sample as augmented by NYC Opportunity.  
 Note: Official poverty rates are based on the NYCgov poverty universe and unit of analysis.  
 Numbers in **bold** indicate statistically significant change from prior year.

Figure 1.3  
**Official and NYCgov Thresholds, Incomes, and Poverty Rates, 2016**



Sources: U.S. Bureau of the Census and American Community Survey Public Use Micro Sample as augmented by NYC Opportunity.

Notes: Incomes are measured at the 20th percentile and stated in family size and composition-adjusted dollars. Official poverty rates are based on the NYCgov poverty universe and unit of analysis.

rate than the official poverty measure. Figure 1.2 illustrates how the two poverty measures compare over time.<sup>7</sup>

Figure 1.3 compares U.S. official and NYCgov thresholds, income, and poverty rates for 2016. The higher NYCgov threshold results in higher poverty rates: 19.5 percent compared to 17.6 percent for the official rate, even accounting for the broader measure of income.

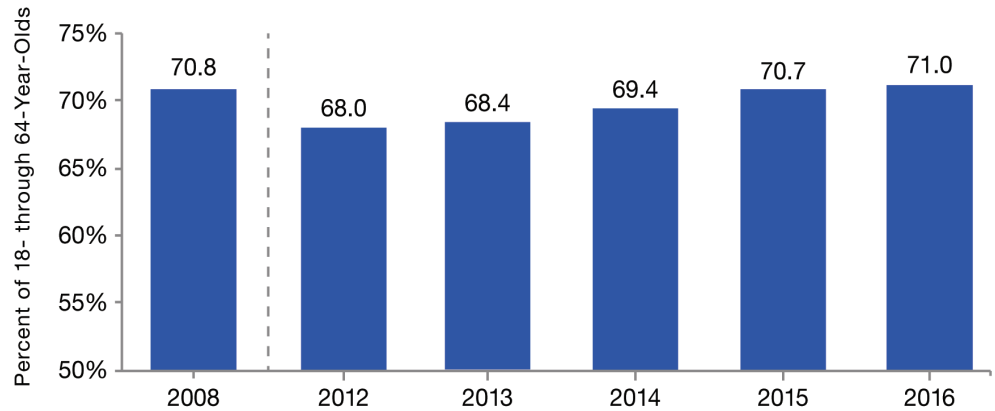
## 1.2 The New York City Labor Market

Poverty rates are influenced by the economic environment. New York City was not exempt from the effects of the Great Recession that began for most of the U.S. in late 2007. In New York City, recession-related employment declines did not occur until the last quarter of 2008. For that reason, we measure our current employment situation against the peak year of 2008. In 2016 we find that labor force participation is matching pre-recession levels, but wages, while rising, have not caught up to previous highs.

The employment/population ratio of 71.0 percent for 2016 has reached the pre-recession peak of 70.8 percent in 2008. Figure 1.4 also illustrates the increase

<sup>7</sup> The NYCgov estimate of the U.S. official poverty measure is not the same as the poverty rate for New York City released by the Census Bureau. For comparison purposes, we independently estimate the U.S. official poverty rate for New York City using the NYCgov data file. This file differs in total population and the number, configuration, and size of families. See Appendix A for a discussion of NYCgov's definition of the family and the unit of analysis.

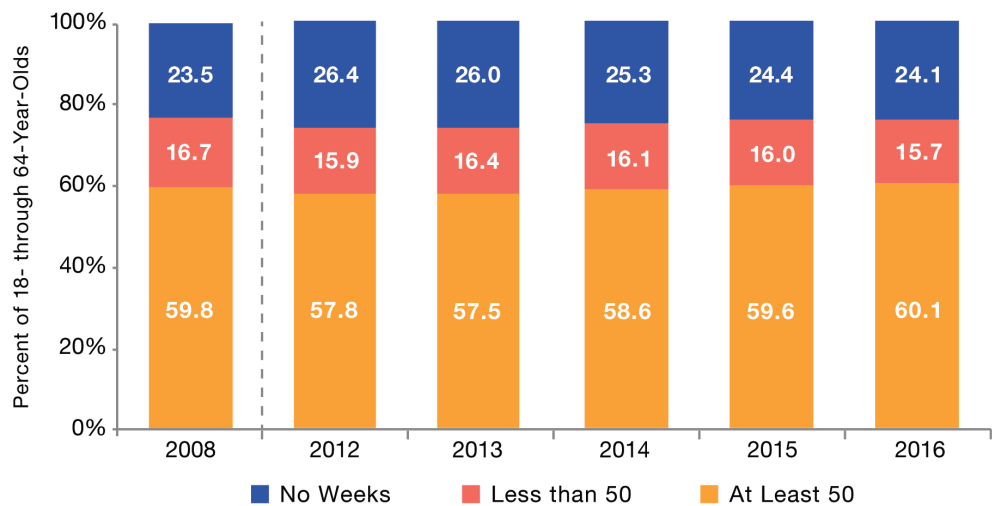
Figure 1.4  
**Employment/Population Ratios, 2008, 2012–2016**



Source: American Community Survey Public Use Micro Sample as augmented by NYC Opportunity.

in the employment/population ratio over the course of the recovery, 2012 to 2016. The number of weeks worked over the course of the year is another particularly telling labor market indicator because poverty is, in part, determined by annual income. By 2016 the share of the working age adult population working full time, 60.1 percent, was approximately the same as in 2008. Figure 1.5 shows the gradual increase in full-time employment from 2012 to 2016. We also provide data from 2008 for comparison. In addition, Figure 1.5 shows a decline in less than full-time work and a decline in the share of adults with no work from the years 2012 to 2016.

Figure 1.5  
**Weeks Worked in Prior 12 Months, 2008, 2012–2016**



Source: American Community Survey Public Use Micro Sample as augmented by NYC Opportunity.

Table 1.2

**Annual Family-Level Earned Income (\$), 2008, 2012–2016**

Percentile	2008	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	Percentage Change	
							2012–2016	2015–2016
20	14,016	10,543	11,288	11,972	13,132	13,206	25.3%	0.6%
25	21,024	17,041	17,813	18,624	19,411	20,152	18.3%	3.8%
30	28,622	23,370	24,037	24,450	25,840	26,787	14.6%	3.7%
35	35,852	29,821	30,477	31,115	32,137	33,083	10.9%	2.9%
40	43,069	35,644	36,675	37,229	39,084	40,304	13.1%	3.1%
45	50,375	42,542	44,116	44,583	46,590	47,798	12.4%	2.6%
50	57,755	49,831	51,659	52,897	54,852	55,822	12.0%	1.8%
							Percentage Point Change	
% Families with No Earnings	21.2	22.2	21.9	22.0	21.4	21.7	-0.5	0.4

Source: American Community Survey Public Use Micro Sample as augmented by NYC Opportunity.  
 Notes: Earnings are stated in family size and composition-adjusted dollars. They are stated in 2016 dollars using the NYC Opportunity threshold as a price index. Persons in families with no earnings are included.

The positive trends in employment and weeks worked are also reflected in earnings. Although earnings have yet to catch up to pre-recession levels, Table 1.2 shows some notable trends from 2012 to 2016 and compares the data to 2008. By 2016, earned incomes in the bottom half of the income distribution rose but still averaged 5.6 percent lower than their 2008 levels (not shown in table). The earned income of the median family grew by 12.0 percent over the past five years and lagged its 2008 peak by 3.3 percentage points. From 2015 to 2016, earned income grew for most of the families, albeit at a slower rate compared to the previous year. Families at the 25th and 30th percentiles saw their earned income grow by 3.8 and 3.7 percent, respectively, while earned income at the 20th percentile grew by only 0.6 percent—despite growing at 25.3 percent over the full five-year period.

Earnings growth among the lowest income households coincides with an expanding economy and mandated increases in the minimum wage. In 2013, the minimum wage in New York City was \$7.25 per hour, a rate that had not changed for five years.<sup>8</sup> It increased to \$8 per hour in 2014, \$8.75 in 2015, and \$9 in 2016. The hourly minimum wage continues to increase in each subsequent year at a rate of \$2 per hour until 2019, when it will reach \$15.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>8</sup> [https://labor.ny.gov/stats/minimum\\_wage.shtm](https://labor.ny.gov/stats/minimum_wage.shtm)

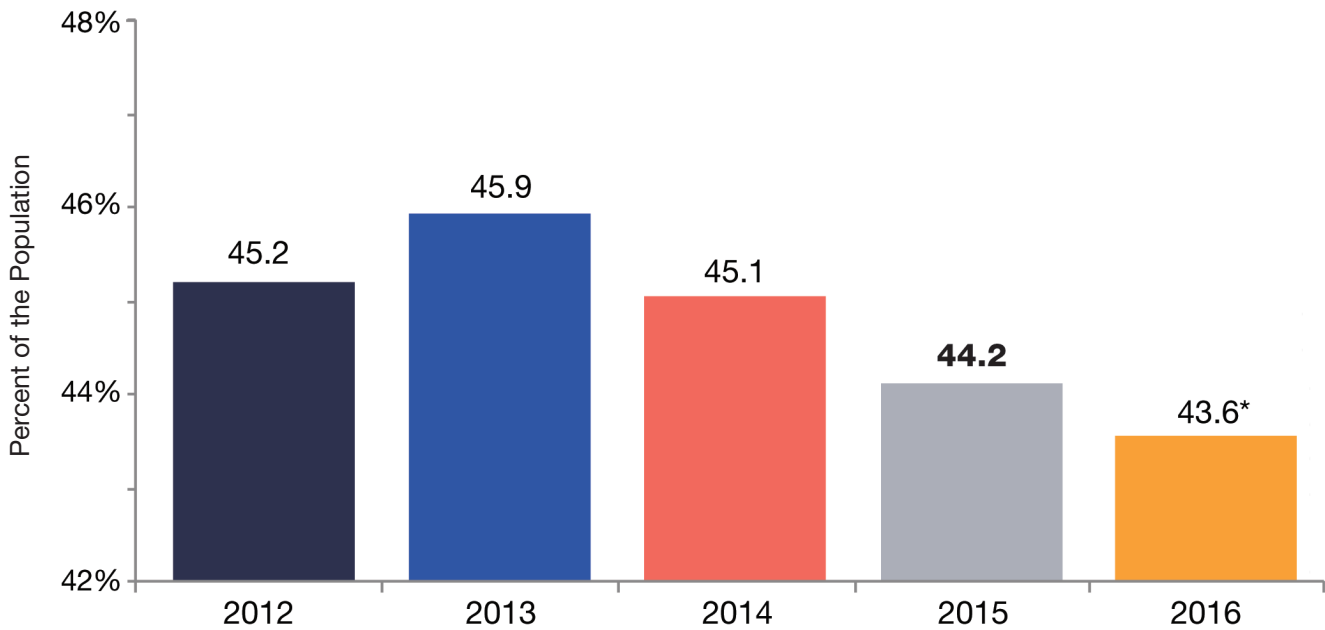
<sup>9</sup> The minimum wage for firms with 10 or fewer employees in New York City is \$1 per hour less than the citywide minimum wage in each year. See: <https://www.labor.ny.gov/workerprotection/laborstandards/workprot/minwage.shtm>

### 1.3 Selected Poverty Rates

Figures 1.6 through 1.10 show changes in the NYCgov poverty rate for subgroups of the New York City population. We show depth of poverty and poverty by work experience, age, ethnicity, and borough. Poverty rates for the figures in bold represent a statistically significant change from the prior year; those marked with an asterisk have a statistically significant change from 2012 to 2016; bold and asterisked indicate both one- and five-year changes that are significant.

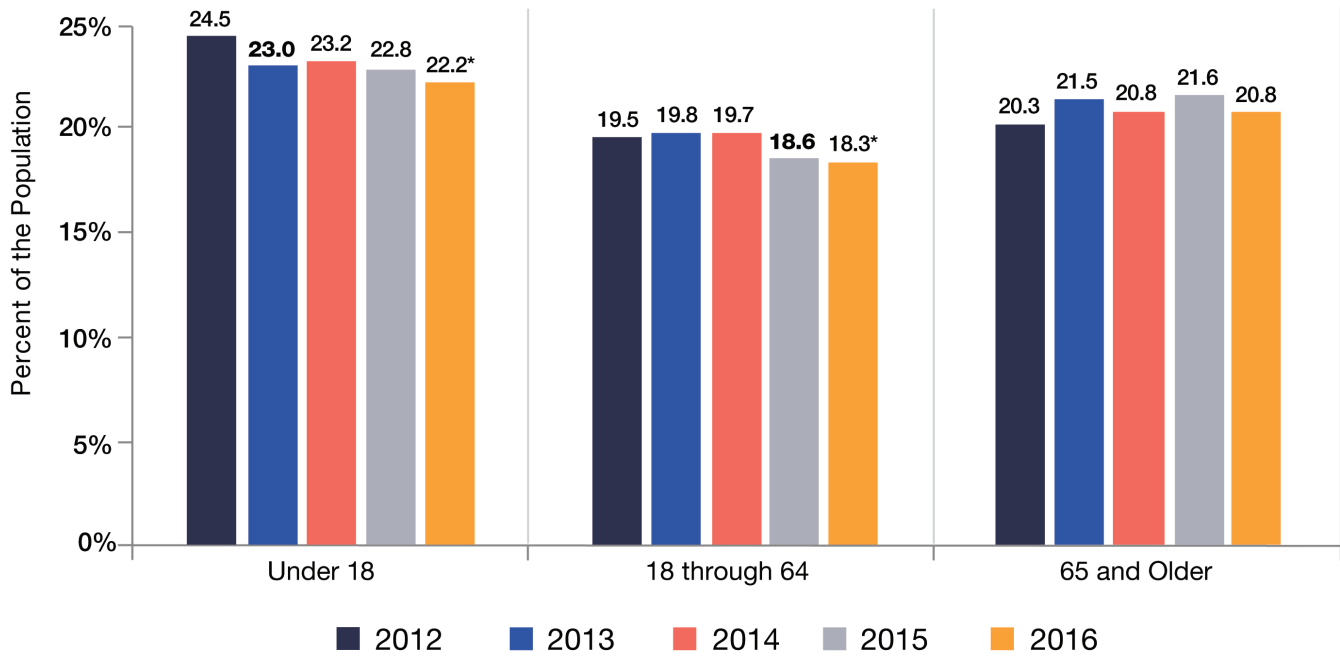
For example, in Figure 1.6 below, near poverty rates are shown. The 2015 near poverty rate fell significantly from 2014 (shown in bold) and the 2016 near poverty rate fell significantly from 2012 (asterisked).

Figure 1.6  
**NYCgov Near Poverty Rates, 2012–2016**



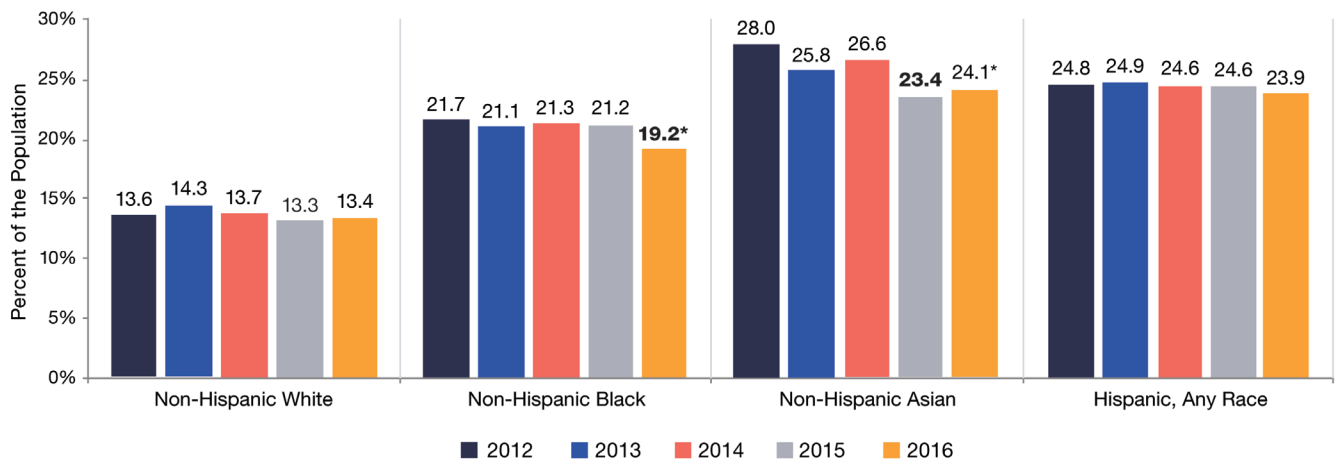
Source: American Community Survey Public Use Micro Sample as augmented by NYC Opportunity.  
 Notes: Numbers in **bold** indicate statistically significant change from prior year.  
 \* indicates statistically significant change from 2012 to 2016.

Figure 1.7  
**NYCgov Poverty Rates by Age, 2012–2016**



Source: American Community Survey Public Use Micro Sample as augmented by NYC Opportunity.  
 Notes: Numbers in **bold** indicate statistically significant change from prior year.  
 \* indicates statistically significant change from 2012 to 2016.

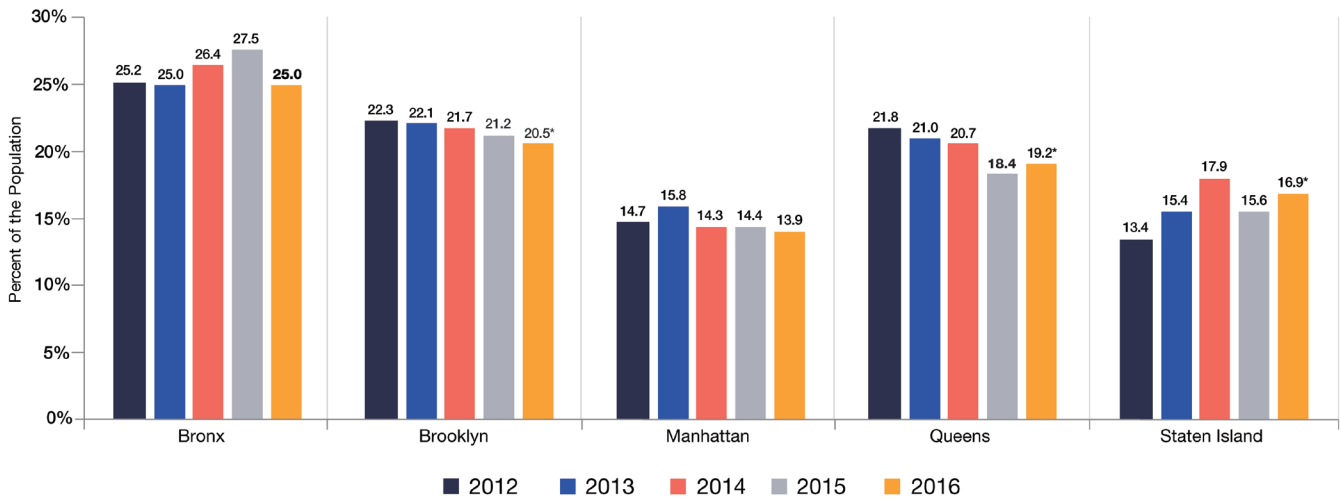
Figure 1.8  
**NYCgov Poverty Rates by Race/Ethnicity, 2012–2016**



Source: American Community Survey Public Use Micro Sample as augmented by NYC Opportunity.  
 Notes: Numbers in **bold** indicate statistically significant change from prior year.  
 \* indicates statistically significant change from 2012 to 2016.

- Figure 1.7 compares poverty rates by age group—children under 18, working age adults, and the elderly (age 65 and over). The poverty rate for children and working age adults declined significantly from 2012 to 2016. There were no significant changes in the elderly poverty rate.
- Poverty rates by race and ethnicity are shown in Figure 1.8. The only significant one-year decline in poverty among race and ethnic groups in 2016 is found among Non-Hispanic Black New Yorkers, who also had a significant decline in poverty in the 2012 to 2016 time period. Over the five-year period, the poverty rate for this group fell from 21.7 to 19.2 percent. Non-Hispanic Asian New Yorkers also had a significant five-year decline, including a prior one-year decline from 2014 to 2015. Their 2016 poverty rate, 24.1 percent, remains not significantly different from the Hispanic poverty rate of 23.9 percent. Poverty rates for Non-Hispanic Whites remained the lowest.
- Poverty rates by borough are shown in Figure 1.9. For the first time since the end of the recession there is a significant one-year decline in poverty in the Bronx, although the borough has the highest poverty rate at 25.0 percent. For the five year period 2012 to 2016, there was a significant drop in the poverty rate in Brooklyn and Queens and a significant increase in Staten Island, where year-over-year changes are not statistically significant but the cumulative change is toward higher poverty. Over five years, the Staten Island poverty rate rose from 13.4 percent to 16.9 percent.

Figure 1.9  
**NYCgov Poverty Rates by Borough, 2012–2016**



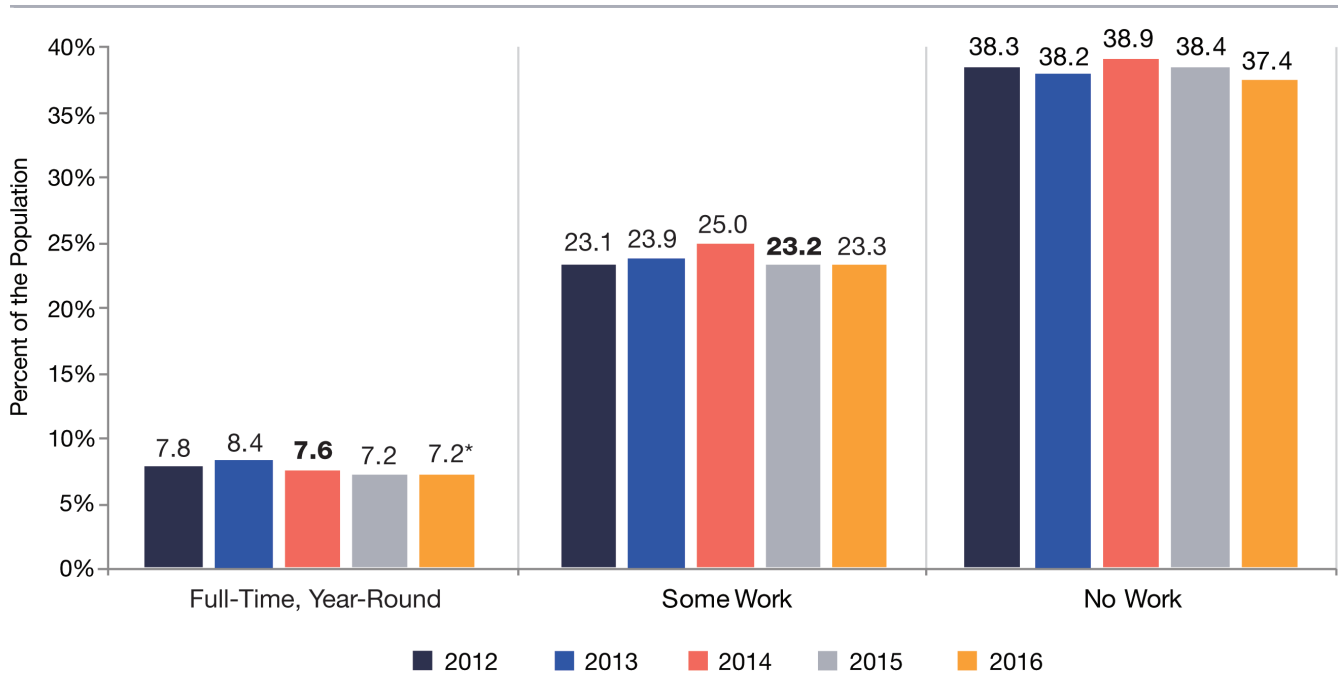
Source: American Community Survey Public Use Micro Sample as augmented by NYC Opportunity.

Notes: Numbers in **bold** indicate statistically significant change from prior year.

\* indicates statistically significant change from 2012 to 2016.



Figure 1.10  
**NYCgov Poverty Rates by Individual Work Experience, 2012–2016**



Source: American Community Survey Public Use Micro Sample as augmented by NYC Opportunity.  
 Notes: Numbers in **bold** indicate statistically significant change from prior year.  
 \* indicates statistically significant change from 2012 to 2016.

- Figure 1.10 shows poverty rates by individual work experience. Only full-time, year-round workers showed a significant decline over the five-year period.

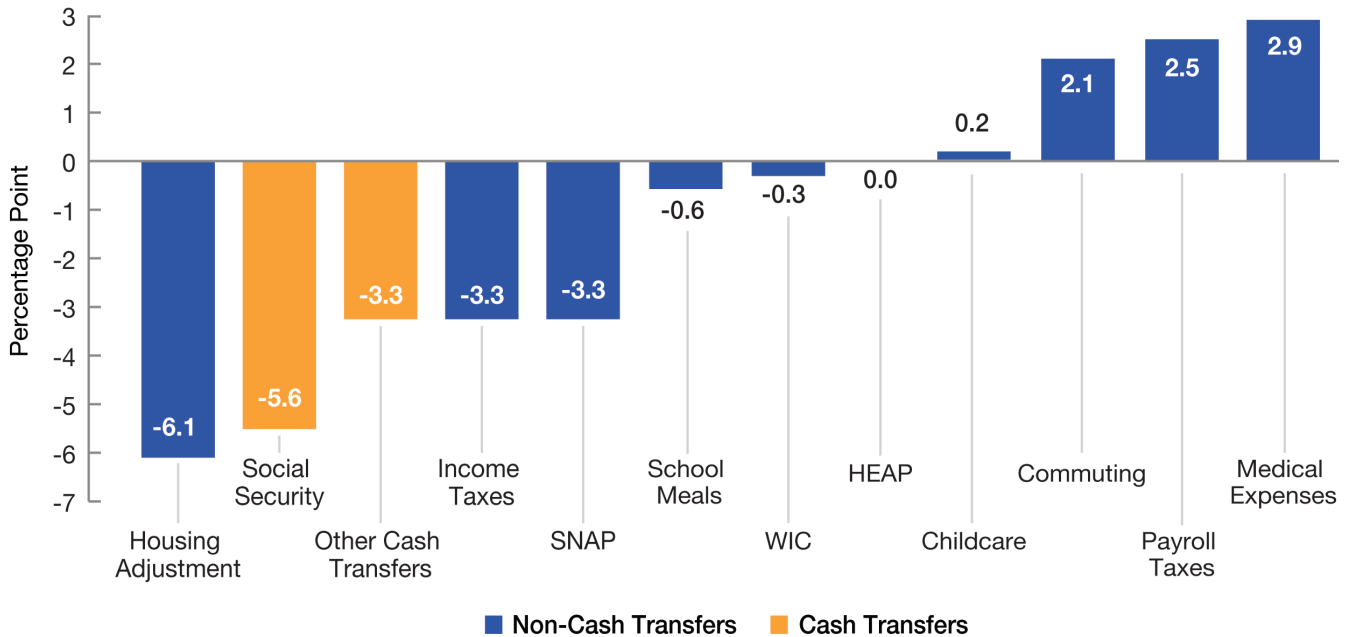
### 1.4 The Effect of Income Supports on the Poverty Rate

The NYCgov poverty measure includes the value of non-cash income supports (nutritional assistance, tax credits, housing supports, and others). This allows us to measure the effect of these programs in reducing the poverty rate. Conversely, including nondiscretionary expenditures (medical spending, work-related costs) as subtractions from income allows us to measure the effect of these expenditures in increasing the poverty rate.

Figure 1.11 shows the effect of income supports and additional expenditures in 2016. Social Security and other cash transfer programs are included. Those elements that lower the poverty rate are found to the left of zero in the chart, and those that raise the poverty rate are found to the right.

The housing adjustment is the most important component keeping people out of poverty, lowering the poverty rate by 6.1 percentage points. The NYCgov measure of housing adjustments includes housing supports from public housing, rent

Figure 1.11

**Marginal Effects, Selected Sources of Income on the NYCgov Poverty Rate, 2016**

Source: American Community Survey Public Use Micro Sample as augmented by NYC Opportunity.

stabilization, and multiple other programs. In the absence of these income supports, the poverty rate in 2016 would have been 25.6 percent.

On the expenditures side, medical spending on premiums and other out-of-pocket costs are the biggest factor in pushing families below their poverty threshold, increasing the overall poverty rate by 2.9 percentage points.

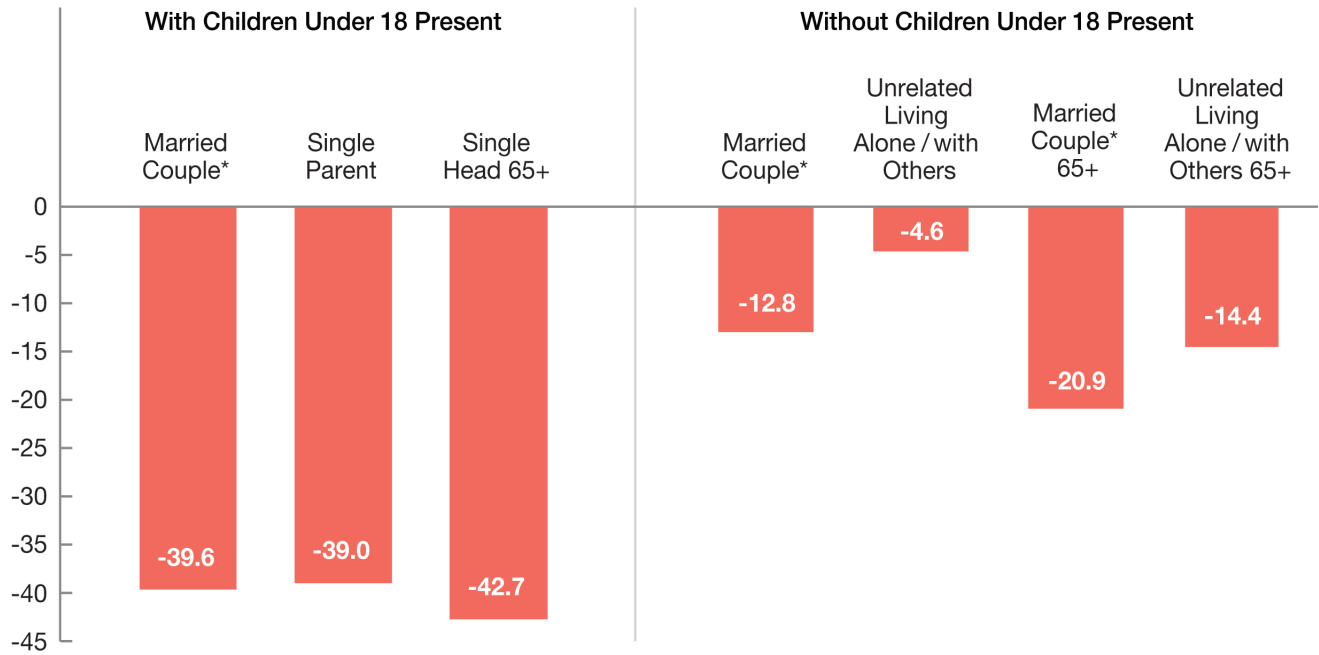
Given the disparity in poverty rates, we next look at whether the benefits included in the NYCgov income measure offer the same level of support to all. Our analysis, new in this report and developed further in Chapter 3, reveals that benefit advantage can differ across the population. This is not surprising. Benefits like SNAP and the Earned Income Tax Credit, for example, are often skewed by design toward providing the most assistance to families with children.

Figure 1.12 shows the impact of all additions to income on the poverty rate by family type. It is notable that both single parents and married couples<sup>10</sup> with children under 18 obtain equal advantage from these additional resources. Seniors who are raising children also have a lower probability of being in poverty due to resources targeted to children. The success of these programs is obvious

<sup>10</sup> Unmarried partners are included in the "married couples" population.

Figure 1.12

**Impact of Combined Government Assistance and Tax Credits by Selected Family Type, 2016** (Percent Decline in Poverty Rate)



Source: American Community Survey Public Use Micro Sample as augmented by NYC Opportunity.  
 \* Unmarried partners included.

and important. The figure also shows where more interventions are needed. The impact of benefits on families without children is starkly lower than on families with children.

**1.5 The Poverty Gap**

The data above demonstrate the extent to which income supports help lower the poverty rate and where those supports are most effective. But this does not tell us how much more would be needed to eliminate poverty. This is expressed in the poverty gap—the amount of money needed to bring everyone in poverty up to their poverty threshold.<sup>11</sup>

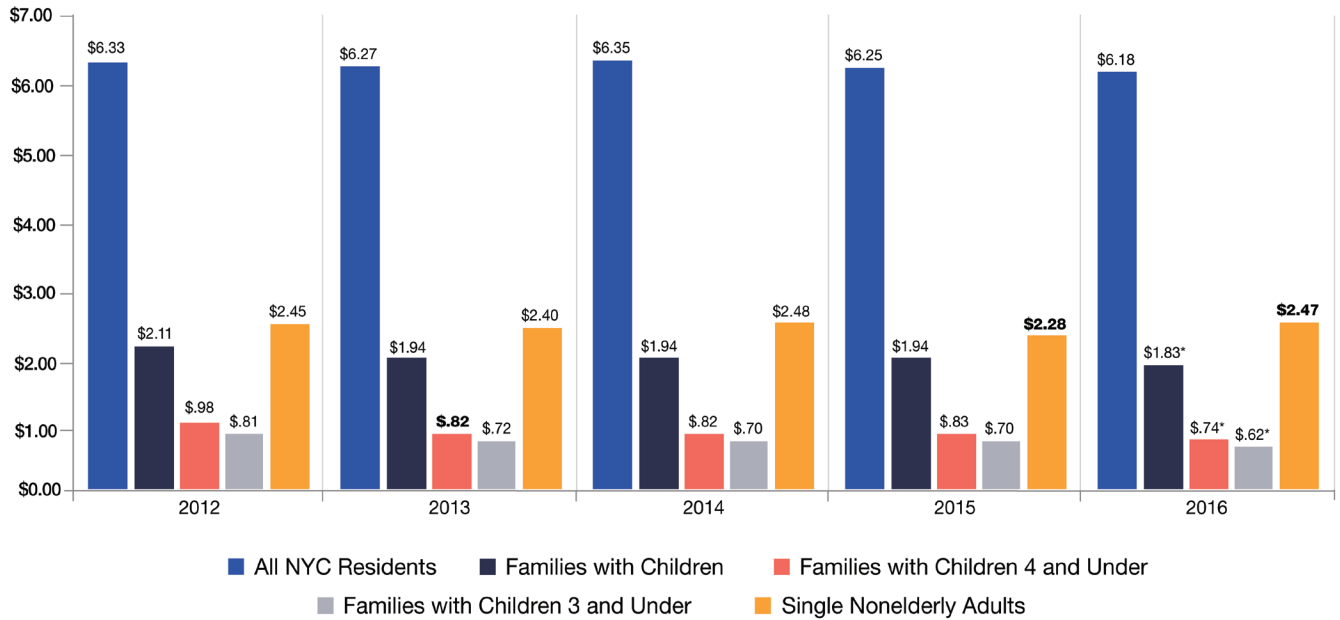
Figure 1.13 shows the poverty gap for New York City for the years 2012 to 2016, based on the NYCgov poverty measure. We report the gap in real dollars for all city residents and for several subpopulations: families with children; families with children age 4 and under and age 3 and under;<sup>12</sup> and single nonelderly adults.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>11</sup> This is the minimum amount needed if benefits are perfectly targeted to everyone below their poverty threshold.

<sup>12</sup> We specifically look at families with children 4 and under and 3 and under to identify those families assisted by pre-k programs.

<sup>13</sup> Single nonelderly adults are defined by the census as “unrelated individuals living alone or with others.” They are persons living in nonfamily households.

Figure 1.13  
**NYC Poverty Gap, 2012–2016** (\$ billions)



Source: American Community Survey Public Use Micro Sample as augmented by NYC Opportunity.

Note: Numbers in **bold** indicate statistically significant change from prior year.

\* indicates statistically significant change from 2012 to 2016.

The overall poverty gap as measured in dollars was \$6.18 billion in 2016, not a statistically significant decline from the \$6.33 billion gap in 2012. But for families with children and families with young children, the decline in the poverty gap was significantly lower from 2012 to 2016. The largest decline in the poverty gap occurred among families with children under 4, from \$980 million in 2012 to \$740 million in 2016—a decline of nearly 25 percent. The poverty gap for single nonelderly adults remains relatively constant over this time period. The \$2.47 billion dollar gap in 2016 is essentially unchanged from 2012.

The poverty gap, measured in dollar value, is a useful indicator for estimating the minimal cost of poverty eradication at a point in time. However, it is not ideal for the purpose of comparison because it is defined by threshold values that differ over time and across groups. The Poverty Gap Index—a measure that reports the mean poverty gap as a proportion of the poverty threshold—addresses this shortcoming and effectively captures the intensity of poverty. Table 1.4 shows the poverty rate (incidence) and the Poverty Gap Index (intensity of poverty) for selected family types. The larger the Poverty Gap Index value for a group, the deeper the intensity of their poverty. We find that the intensity of poverty can differ even across subgroups with similar incidence of poverty.

Table 1.4

### Incidence and Intensity of Poverty Experienced by Individuals in Selected Family Types, 2016

	NYCgov Poverty Rate (Incidence)	Poverty Gap Index (Intensity)
Married Couple with Children Under 18*	15.9	3.8
Single Parent	30.5	10.0
Unrelated / Living Alone / Others	26.6	13.8
Unrelated / Living Alone / Others 65+	30.5	11.4

Source: American Community Survey Public Use Micro Sample as augmented by NYC Opportunity.  
\*Unmarried partners and their children included.

For example, the poverty rate for single parents is comparable to that of single, childless adults (elderly and nonelderly). However, the latter have a higher intensity of poverty. Their needs, as captured by the Poverty Gap Index, are greater.

## 1.6 New York City Policy and the Goal of Poverty Reduction

The City has worked to meet our commitment to lowering the poverty rate through a wide array of initiatives aimed at lifting New Yorkers out of poverty and near poverty. The minimum wage has continued to rise, and City programs implemented under this administration—ranging from expansion of pre-k and paid sick leave to expanded rental assistance—have supported New Yorkers’ economic security.

The City has launched a variety of new programs and expanded existing ones, as detailed in Chapter 5 of this report. In the fall of 2017, Mayor de Blasio announced a significant ramping up of the administration’s affordable housing plan, from building or preserving 200,000 units of affordable housing to building or preserving 300,000 units. The City has also launched several new programs designed to protect tenants who currently do have housing from harassment and eviction. Pre-kindergarten programs have expanded. In the fall of 2017 the City launched its new 3-K for All program, designed to build on the success of the Pre-K for All program established in 2014 that is making free, high-quality pre-k available for all 4-year-olds. The first children enrolled in the 3-K for All program are in school districts in the South Bronx and Brownsville.

The data demonstrate that programs like those described above help low-income New Yorkers and in many cases play an important role in lifting them out of poverty. Data-driven policy goals reflect the conviction that more New Yorkers can be helped, and helped more, as these programs continue and expand.

## Conclusion

Poverty rates continue to fall in the post-recession era, with a real and significant decline in the poverty rate over the five-year period from 2012 to 2016 (20.7 percent to 19.5 percent). The near poverty rate has improved as well, falling from 44.2 percent to 43.5 percent in the same time period. Fewer New Yorkers are living close to, but just above, the poverty threshold. The poverty gap is also declining.

The remaining chapters of this report expand on the material presented above. Chapter 2 surveys poverty rates by demographics, family type, borough, and neighborhood. Chapter 3 provides more information on disparities in poverty, benefit impact, and the poverty gap. Chapter 4 provides historical context and details on the methodology used in the NYCgov poverty measure, comparing it to the U.S. official and Supplemental Poverty (SPM) measures. Chapter 5 includes a policy response to the findings contained in this report and summarizes the range of City programs designed for poverty reduction.

Chapter 2:

# NYCgov Poverty Rates in Demographic Detail, 2012–2016

## Chapter 2: NYCgov Poverty Rates in Demographic Detail, 2012–2016

NYCgov employs the American Community Survey (ACS) as our principal data set because it provides a large and detailed annual sample of New York City residents, allowing us to track poverty rates for key population groups. This chapter reports poverty rates by individual demographic characteristics, family composition, and work experience for the years 2012 to 2016. We also provide poverty rates by borough and community district using a five-year average for the same time period.

The chapter's tables are organized so that readers can readily track changes over time. The first set of columns in the tables provides poverty rates for each group, followed by calculations of change over time for the five-year period 2012 to 2016 and the one-year change 2015 to 2016 (measured in percentage points). Statistically significant changes are identified in bold type. Each row's final column provides context by noting the subgroup's share of the citywide population.

The pattern of change among subgroups of the city's population largely parallels the broad trends described in Chapter 1. The years 2012 to 2016 are marked by small nominal declines in the poverty rate and, in some cases, result in a significant decline over the five-year period.

Table 2.1 provides poverty rates by demographic characteristic. Table 2.2 reports poverty rates by family composition and work experience. Poverty rates by borough are given in Table 2.3. Table 2.4 displays community district poverty rates by borough and Figure 2.1 maps poverty rates across the city's community districts.



## 2.1 Poverty Rates by Demographic Characteristic

**Poverty Rates by Gender:** Females are more likely to live in poverty than males. In 2016, for example, the poverty rate for male New Yorkers was 18.1 percent and lower than the citywide rate of 19.5 percent. For females, the rate in 2016 was 20.7 percent. The poverty rate for males fell significantly from 2012 to 2016 while the poverty rate for females remained statistically unchanged.

**Poverty Rates by Age:** Children, as a group, are poorer than adults. In 2016, the poverty rate for children under 18 was 22.2 percent, significantly lower than the 2012 rate of 24.5 percent. The poverty rate for working age adults (18 through 64 years of age) also fell in the same period, to 18.3 percent in 2016. The 20.8 percent rate for elderly people (65 and older) did not significantly change in either the five-year or single-year time period. Historically, alternative poverty measures find higher poverty among the elderly than the U.S. official measure (see Chapter 5) because their income measures include higher levels of medical spending than other age cohorts.

**Poverty Rates for Children by Presence of Parent:** Since 2012, the poverty rate for children in one-parent families decreased by 3.8 percentage points. The poverty rate for children in two-parent families was statistically unchanged but children in single-parent families are nearly twice as likely to be living in poverty as children living in two-parent families. This difference in the likelihood of being in poverty has been consistent over the 2012 to 2016 time period, with no significant changes.

**Poverty Rates by Race/Ethnicity:** There are several significant declines in poverty within race and ethnic groups. The Non-Hispanic Black poverty rate fell significantly from 2015 to 2016, from 21.2 to 19.2 percentage points, while Hispanics and Non-Hispanic Asians had the highest poverty rates, at 23.9 and 24.1 percent, respectively, in 2016. This represents a statistically significant decline in the Non-Hispanic Asian poverty rate (3.9 percentage points) from 2012 to 2016 but no significant change in the Hispanic rate. There was also no change in the Non-Hispanic White poverty rate in this time period.

### Race and Ethnicity

**Race/Ethnicity** categories are constructed as follows: First, individuals are categorized by ethnicity into Non-Hispanic and Hispanic groups; Non-Hispanic individuals are then categorized by race. We use three racial categories: White, Black, and Asian. Each includes people who identify themselves as members of only one racial group. This sorting omits 2.9 percent of the city population that is Non-Hispanic and multi-racial or Non-Hispanic and a member of another race, such as Native American. We omit this residual category from Table 2.1.

Table 2.1

### NYCgov Poverty Rates for People by Demographic Characteristic, 2012–2016

(Numbers are Percent of the Population)

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	Percentage Point Difference		Group Share of 2016 Population
						2012–2016	2015–2016	
Total New York City	20.7	20.7	20.6	19.9	19.5	<b>-1.3</b>	-0.4	100
<b>Gender</b>								
Males	19.8	19.9	19.6	18.5	18.1	<b>-1.7</b>	-0.4	47.7
Females	21.5	21.4	21.4	21.2	20.7	-0.8	-0.5	52.3
<b>Age Group</b>								
Under 18	24.5	23.0	23.2	22.8	22.2	<b>-2.3</b>	-0.6	21.4
18 through 64	19.5	19.8	19.7	18.6	18.3	<b>-1.3</b>	-0.3	65.3
65 and Older	20.3	21.5	20.8	21.6	20.8	0.6	-0.8	13.3
<b>Children (under 18), by Presence of Parent</b>								
One Parent	36.4	33.6	34.6	33.3	32.6	<b>-3.8</b>	-0.7	33.3
Two Parents	18.1	17.0	16.7	17.1	17.0	-1.1	-0.1	66.7
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>								
Non-Hispanic White	13.6	14.3	13.7	13.3	13.4	-0.2	0.1	31.7
Non-Hispanic Black	21.7	21.1	21.3	21.2	19.2	<b>-2.5</b>	<b>-1.9</b>	21.9
Non-Hispanic Asian	28.0	25.8	26.6	23.4	24.1	<b>-3.9</b>	0.6	14.2
Hispanic, Any Race	24.8	24.9	24.6	24.6	23.9	-0.9	-0.7	29.3
<b>Nativity/Citizenship</b>								
Citizen by Birth	18.7	18.7	18.7	18.1	17.6	<b>-1.1</b>	-0.5	62.0
Naturalized Citizen	19.7	19.4	19.3	19.6	19.1	-0.6	-0.6	20.8
Not a Citizen	28.6	29.5	29.1	26.7	26.5	<b>-2.1</b>	-0.2	17.1
<b>Working Age Adults (18 through 64), by Educational Attainment<sup>1</sup></b>								
Less than High School	32.8	33.1	33.3	31.7	31.5	-1.3	-0.3	15.8
High School Degree	23.5	24.1	24.6	23.5	22.9	-0.6	-0.6	25.5
Some College	16.5	17.2	17.8	16.6	16.9	0.4	0.3	20.4
Bachelor's Degree or Higher	8.6	8.9	8.4	8.1	8.0	-0.6	-0.1	38.3
<b>Working Age Adults (18 through 64), by Work Experience in Past 12 Months<sup>1,2</sup></b>								
Full-Time, Year-Round	7.8	8.4	7.6	7.2	7.2	<b>-0.6</b>	0.0	56.2
Some Work	23.1	23.9	25.0	23.2	23.3	0.1	0.1	21.9
No Work	38.3	38.2	38.9	38.4	37.4	-0.9	-1.0	21.9

1. Category excludes people enrolled in school. 2. A change in the 2008 ACS questionnaire regarding work experience effects the comparability of estimates for 2008 and after with those for prior years. See text for definition of work experience categories.

Source: American Community Survey Public Use Micro Sample as augmented by NYC Opportunity.

Notes: Differences are taken from unrounded numbers; those in bold type are statistically significant. Shares may not sum to 100 percent due to rounding error.

**Poverty Rates by Nativity/Citizenship:** The 2016 poverty rate for non-citizens was 26.5 percent, which is substantially higher than poverty rates for both citizens by birth (17.6 percent) and naturalized citizens (19.1 percent). Poverty rates for native born citizens and non-citizens both fell significantly from 2012 to 2016, with 1.1 and 2.1 percentage point declines, respectively.

**Poverty Rates for People 18 through 64 by Educational Attainment:** For working age adults, the probability of being in poverty is inversely proportional to educational attainment. An individual with less than a high school education is nearly four times more likely to be in poverty than someone with a bachelor’s or more advanced degree (31.5 percent against 8.0 percent in 2016). The 2016 poverty rate for those with only a high school degree and those with some college (but less than a bachelor’s degree) fell between these two extremes, at 22.9 percent and 16.9 percent, respectively. There are no significant changes in these rates from 2012 to 2016. Moreover, the differences in poverty rates across levels of education remain stable over the years shown.

**Poverty Rates for People 18 through 64 by Work Experience:** Poverty rates vary markedly by an individual’s work experience over the prior 12 months. In 2016, the poverty rate for working age adults that worked full time, year round was 7.2 percent; for those with no work it stood at 37.4 percent. Working age adults with some, but less than full-time, year-round work had a poverty rate of 23.3 percent. Poverty has significantly declined only for full-time, year-round workers during recovery from the Great Recession, although the poverty rate for this group continues to be higher than the pre-recession low of 6.3 percent in 2008 (not shown).

The poverty rate for adults with no work had no significant change from 2012 (38.3 percent) to 2016 (37.4 percent). This is not unexpected—adults with no work rely on a relatively stable amount of support over time that leaves them at a poverty rate that is nearly double the citywide poverty rate.

## 2.2 Poverty Rates by Family Characteristic

Table 2.2 provides poverty rates for individuals based on the characteristics of the family unit in which they live. As more fully described in Appendix A, “family,” from the perspective of the NYCgov poverty measure, is a broader concept than that used in the U.S. official poverty measure. In the official measure, “family” consists of people who live together and are related by blood, marriage, or adoption. The NYCgov “family” is the “poverty unit,” people living together who share costs and pool resources. This includes related individuals but extends to unmarried partners, their children, and other people believed to be economically dependent on other members of the household—even if they are not kin.

When the data is broken out by family type, there are few statistically significant changes in the poverty rate. Panel A in Table 2.2 begins by categorizing people as living

in families headed by a couple (married or unmarried partners) or in a single-head family. A third category is unrelated individuals. Each family-type category includes all members of the family. If a married couple has two children and two in-laws living with them, for example, then all six family members would be characterized as living in a married/unmarried partner family. Single heads are “householders” who do not have a spouse or unmarried partner but are living in families, for instance, a single mother with her children or an adult child with her parents.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The householder is typically the person in whose name a dwelling is owned or rented.

Table 2.2

### NYCgov Poverty Rates for People Living in Various Family Types, 2012–2016 (Numbers are Percent of the Population)

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	Percentage Point Difference		Group Share of 2016 Population
						2012–2016	2015–2016	
<b>Total New York City</b>	20.7	20.7	20.6	19.9	19.5	<b>-1.3</b>	-0.4	100.0
<b>A. Family Composition</b>								
<b>Married/Unmarried Partner<sup>1</sup></b>								
No Children under 18	13.2	14.4	12.9	13.1	12.4	-0.8	-0.8	22.4
With Children under 18	17.1	16.2	16.3	16.6	16.0	-1.1	-0.6	32.7
<b>Single Head of Household</b>								
No Children under 18	18.6	20.3	20.8	19.0	17.1	-1.5	-1.9	11.2
With Children under 18	32.4	29.5	31.5	29.7	29.2	<b>-3.2</b>	-0.5	14.9
<b>Single Mother Family with Children under 18</b>	33.7	30.8	32.4	30.8	30.0	<b>-3.7</b>	-0.8	12.9
<b>All Families with Children under 18</b>	22.1	20.7	21.5	20.9	20.1	<b>-1.9</b>	-0.7	47.6
<b>Unrelated Individuals</b>	27.1	28.3	27.4	26.2	27.6	0.4	<b>1.4</b>	18.8
<b>B. Work Experience of the Family<sup>2</sup></b>								
<b>Two Full-Time, Year-Round Workers</b>	4.9	5.9	5.5	5.0	5.1	0.3	0.1	35.3
<b>One Full-Time, Year-Round, and One Part-Time Worker</b>	14.5	12.7	14.8	12.4	12.8	-1.7	0.4	14.8
<b>One Full-Time, Year-Round Worker</b>	16.6	17.2	16.8	17.0	16.9	0.3	-0.1	24.7
<b>Less than One Full-Time, Year-Round Worker</b>	41.8	42.9	43.0	42.7	41.9	0.1	-0.8	11.3
<b>No Work</b>	50.9	50.4	50.2	51.6	49.5	-1.4	<b>-2.1</b>	13.8

1. In the NYCgov measure, unmarried partners are treated as spouses. See text for explanation.

2. See text for explanation of work experience categories.

Source: American Community Survey Public Use Micro Sample as augmented by NYC Opportunity.

Notes: Differences are taken from unrounded numbers; those in bold type are statistically significant. Shares may not sum to 100 percent due to rounding error.

Within each of these family types—married or single—we distinguish between those that do or do not include children under 18. Because single mothers have been a particular focus of public policy, poverty rates for members of single-mother families (households headed by a single female with children under 18) are also provided, as well as members of all families with children under 18, regardless of the number of parents in the family.

Not everyone is in a family or poverty unit with other people. Unrelated individuals are people that do not have family members or unmarried partners in the household. This includes those that live alone (the typical case) and some living with others, such as roommates or boarders, who are treated as economically independent from the people they live with. Unrelated individuals are treated as one-person poverty units (solely reliant on their own resources).

Panel B in Table 2.2 presents poverty rates for people in families by different groupings of work experience. Categories range from families with no workers to families with two full-time, year-round workers. Both panels are organized in a similar fashion to Table 2.1. They report poverty rates, changes in poverty rates, and the group share of the population.

**Married/Unmarried Partner:** In 2016, at 12.4 percent the poverty rate for people living in married/unmarried partner families without children under 18 was the lowest of any family type described in Panel A. The 2016 poverty rate for married/unmarried partner families with children under 18 was higher, at 16.0 percent.

**Single Head:** The poverty rate for single householders with no children was 17.1 percent in 2016. This compares to 29.2 percent for single householders with children under 18 and to single mother families (at 30.0 percent). Although high, the poverty rates for these last two groups did decline significantly from 2012 to 2016.

## Work Experience of the Family

**Work Experience of the Family** categories are constructed by summing the number of hours worked in the prior 12 months by people 18 and older for each family. Families with over 3,500 hours of work are labeled as having the equivalent of “Two Full-Time, Year-Round Workers.” Families with 2,341 through 3,499 hours are labeled “One Full-Time, Year-Round and One Part-Time Worker.” Families with at least 1,750 through 2,340 hours are identified as “One Full-Time, Year-Round Worker.” Families with at least one hour of work, but less than 1,750 hours, are called “Less than One Full-Time, Year-Round Worker.” Finally, there are families that have “No Work.”

**All Families with Children Under 18:** The 2016 poverty rate for all people living in a family with children (a group that includes nearly half the city’s population) was 20.1 percent. The rate has declined significantly from the 2012 rate of 22.1 percent.

**Unrelated Individuals:** Individuals in one-person “family” units are another high poverty group. In 2016, over a quarter of this group was poor (27.6 percent). This is the only family type to show a significant increase in poverty rate, at an increase of 1.4 percentage points in 2016 compared to the prior year.

**Work Experience of the Family:** Panel B in Table 2.2 groups individuals by the work experience of the family in which they reside. (Work Experience of the Family categories are defined in the accompanying text box.) Poverty rates in 2016 rise sharply as work activity decreases, ranging from 5.1 percent for families with the equivalent of two full-time, year-round workers to 49.5 percent for those in families with no work at all.

### 2.3 Poverty Rates by Borough and Neighborhood

Table 2.3 shows that in 2016, the poverty rate in the Bronx was the highest in the city at 25.0 percent. This is a statistically significant decline from the 2015 rate of 27.5 percent, and the Bronx is the only borough with a one-year significant decline in poverty. Brooklyn, at 20.5 percent, had the city’s second highest poverty rate, but poverty there has declined significantly from 2012. The decline in the poverty rate in Queens since 2012 was also significant, at 2.6 percentage points. Staten Island was the only borough that saw an increase in poverty, rising 3.5 percentage points since 2012. Year-over-year changes in that borough are not significant but the increase in the poverty rate from 2012 to 2016 is significant.

Table 2.3

#### NYCgov Poverty Rates by Borough, 2012–2016

(Numbers are Percent of the Population)

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	Percentage Point Difference		Borough Share of 2016 Population
						2012–2016	2015–2016	
Bronx	25.2	25.0	26.4	27.5	25.0	-0.2	<b>-2.5</b>	16.9
Brooklyn	22.3	22.1	21.7	21.2	20.5	<b>-1.8</b>	-0.7	31.0
Manhattan	14.7	15.8	14.3	14.4	13.9	-0.9	-0.6	18.9
Queens	21.8	21.0	20.7	18.4	19.2	<b>-2.6</b>	0.8	27.6
Staten Island	13.4	15.4	17.9	15.6	16.9	<b>3.5</b>	1.3	5.6

Source: American Community Survey Public Use Micro Sample as augmented by NYC Opportunity.  
Note: Differences are taken from unrounded numbers; those in bold type are statistically significant.

Table 2.4

**NYCgov Poverty Rates by Community District (CD)/Neighborhood, 2012–2016**(Numbers are Percent of the Population) Citywide Poverty Rate, 5-Year Average = 20.3%<sup>1</sup>

CD	Neighborhood	5 -Year Average	Margin of Error	CD	Neighborhood	5 -Year Average	Margin of Error
<b>Bronx</b>				<b>Manhattan</b>			
1 & 2	Hunts Point, Longwood, and Melrose	29.3	+/- 1.1	1 & 2	Battery Park City, Greenwich Village, and Soho	8.8	+/- 0.7
3 & 6	Belmont, Crotona Park East, and East Tremont	30.8	+/- 1.2	3	Chinatown and Lower East Side	18.0	+/- 1.1
4	Concourse, Highbridge, and Mount Eden	32.3	+/- 1.3	4 & 5	Chelsea, Clinton, and Midtown Business District	10.8	+/- 0.8
5	Morris Heights, Fordham South, and Mount Hope	34.4	+/- 1.6	6	Murray Hill, Gramercy, and Stuyvesant Town	10.0	+/- 0.8
7	Bedford Park, Fordham North, and Norwood	26.4	+/- 1.5	7	Upper West Side and West Side	9.0	+/- 0.8
8	Riverdale, Fieldston, and Kingsbridge	15.2	+/- 1.3	8	Upper East Side	7.3	+/- 0.6
9	Castle Hill, Clason Point, and Parkchester	26.4	+/- 1.2	9	Hamilton Heights, Manhattanville, and West Harlem	23.5	+/- 1.5
10	Co-op City, Pelham Bay, and Schuylerville	14.0	+/- 1.5	10	Central Harlem	21.1	+/- 1.2
11	Pelham Parkway, Morris Park, and Laconia	20.5	+/- 1.2	11	East Harlem	23.1	+/- 1.4
12	Wakefield, Williamsbridge, and Woodlawn	23.2	+/- 1.3	12	Washington Heights, Inwood, and Marble Hill	19.9	+/- 1.1
<b>Brooklyn</b>				<b>Queens</b>			
1	Greenpoint and Williamsburg	17.3	+/- 1	1	Astoria and Long Island City	18.3	+/- 0.9
2	Brooklyn Heights and Greenpoint	12.1	+/- 0.8	2	Sunnyside and Woodside	20.4	+/- 1
3	Bedford-Stuyvesant	22.6	+/- 1	3	Jackson Heights and North Corona	25.4	+/- 1
4	Bushwick	25.1	+/- 1.2	4	Elmhurst and South Corona	27.1	+/- 1.3
5	East New York and Starrett City	29.8	+/- 1.1	5	Ridgewood, Glendale, and Middle Village	18.6	+/- 0.8
6	Park Slope, Carroll Gardens, and Red Hook	9.5	+/- 0.8	6	Forest Hills and Rego Park	16.3	+/- 1
7	Sunset Park and Windsor Terrace	29.4	+/- 1.2	7	Flushing, Murray Hill, and Whitestone	25.2	+/- 1
8	Crown Heights North and Prospect Heights	21.4	+/- 1	8	Briarwood, Fresh Meadows, and Hillcrest	22.0	+/- 1.3
9	Crown Heights South, Prospect Lefferts, and Wingate	22.1	+/- 1.4	9	Richmond Hill and Woodhaven	21.9	+/- 0.9
10	Bay Ridge and Dyker Heights	19.0	+/- 1.1	10	Howard Beach and Ozone Park	18.9	+/- 0.9
11	Bensonhurst and Bath Beach	23.0	+/- 1	11	Bayside, Douglaston, and Little Neck	13.5	+/- 0.9
12	Borough Park, Kensington, and Ocean Parkway	28.3	+/- 1.3	12	Jamaica, Hollis, and St. Albans	20.4	+/- 0.8
13	Brighton Beach and Coney Island	24.0	+/- 1.2	13	Queens Village, Cambria Heights, and Rosedale	13.2	+/- 0.7
14	Flatbush and Midwood	22.1	+/- 1	14	Far Rockaway, Breezy Point, and Broad Channel	17.9	+/- 1.5
15	Sheepshead Bay, Gerritsen Beach, and Homecrest	19.4	+/- 1	<b>Staten Island</b>			
16	Brownsville and Ocean Hill	28.2	+/- 1.4	1	Port Richmond, Stapleton, and Mariners Harbor	21.2	+/- 1.9
17	East Flatbush, Farragut, and Rugby	19.0	+/- 1.1	2	New Springville and South Beach	14.4	+/- 1
18	Canarsie and Flatlands	15.0	+/- 0.8	3	Tottenville, Great Kills, and Annadale	11.4	+/- 0.8

1. 90 percent confidence level.

Source: American Community Survey Public Use Micro Sample as augmented by NYC Opportunity.

Note: Poverty rates shown are the average over the 2012–2016 period.



## 2.4 Poverty Rates by Neighborhood

Figure 2.1 illustrates and Table 2.4 lists NYCgov poverty rates for the 55 community districts in New York City. The districts are close approximations to Public Use Microdata Areas (PUMAs), the smallest geographical areas identified in the American Community Survey (ACS) Public Use Micro Sample (PUMS) files. The Census Bureau sets a minimum PUMA population requirement at 100,000 people.<sup>2</sup> This is a relatively small sample size, making it difficult to generate meaningful one-year estimates for the City’s community districts. Therefore, we combine estimates from the 2012 through 2016 ACS data to report the average poverty rate for neighborhoods<sup>3</sup> over a five-year period in Figure 2.1 and Table 2.4. The five-year citywide average poverty rate derived from the combined file is 20.3 percent.

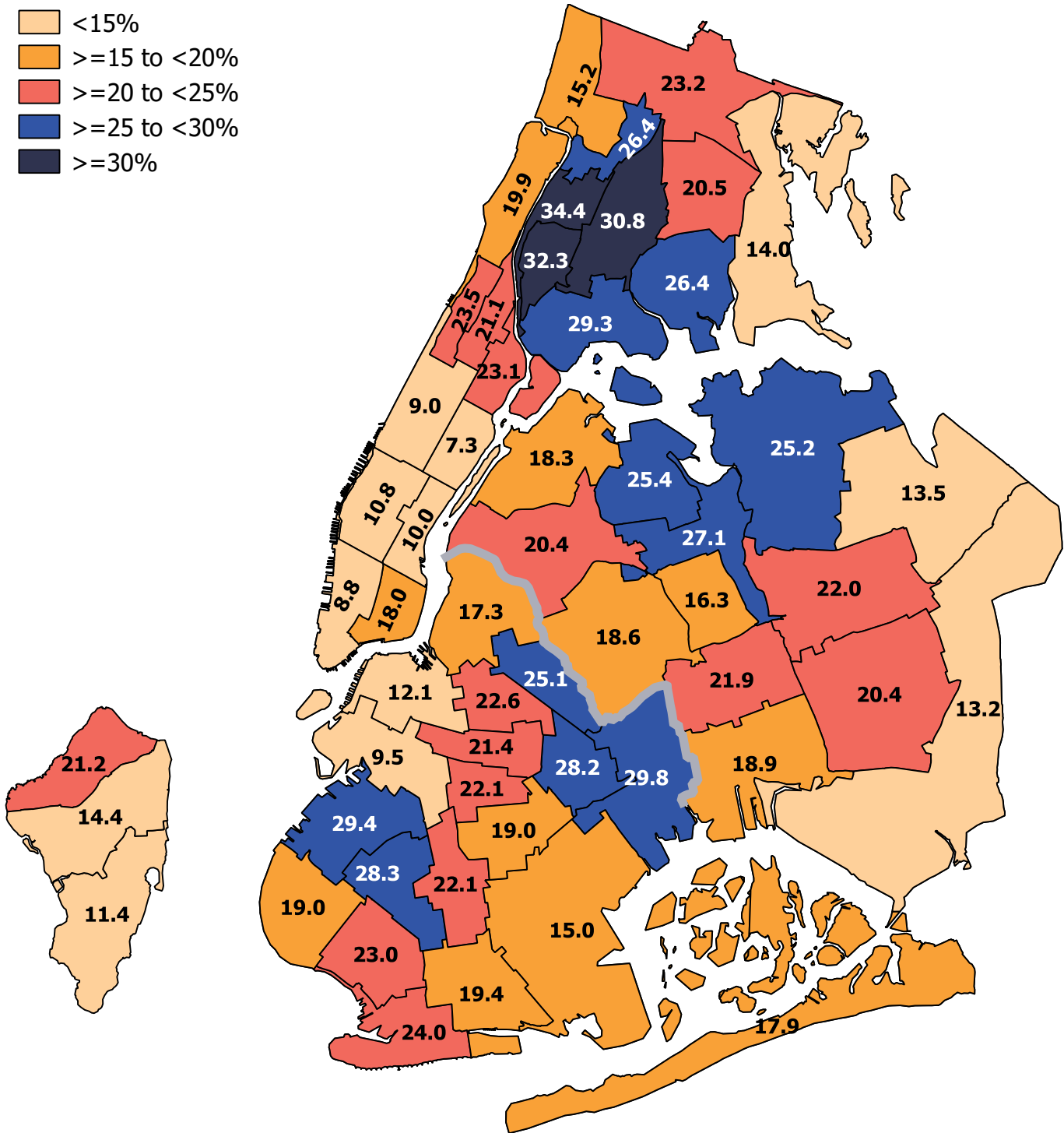
The disparities across New York City neighborhoods are striking, ranging from a poverty rate of 7.3 percent on Manhattan’s Upper East Side to a 34.4 percent poverty rate in the Bronx community district encompassing the neighborhoods of Morris Heights, Fordham South, and Mount Hope. In the Figure 2.1 map, areas of the city with the lowest poverty rates (no more than 15 percent) are shaded in light yellow. These include Manhattan south of Harlem (except for the Lower East Side); South Shore Staten Island; and eastern Queens. Poverty rates are also relatively low in “Brownstone Brooklyn”: Brooklyn Heights/Fort Greene and Park Slope/Carroll Gardens. Neighborhoods with the highest poverty rates (25 percent or more) are identified in shades of blue. They are clustered together in the South Bronx and across a wide swath of Brooklyn, from Sunset Park and Borough Park to East New York and Brownsville. Queens is home to a third high poverty cluster composed of Jackson Heights and Elmhurst/Corona.

<sup>2</sup> Most PUMAs are coterminous with community districts (CDs). However, in the case where a CD does meet the minimum population requirement for a PUMA, two PUMAs had to be combined.

<sup>3</sup> Neighborhood names are adopted from the PUMA/Community District Map published by the NYC Department of City Planning: [https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/planning/download/pdf/data-maps/nyc-population/census2010/puma\\_cd\\_map.pdf](https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/planning/download/pdf/data-maps/nyc-population/census2010/puma_cd_map.pdf)



Figure 2.1  
**Percentage of Population Below Poverty Threshold, by Neighborhood, 2012–2016**  
 Citywide Rate: 20.3%



Source: 2012–2016 American Community Survey Public Use Micro Sample as augmented by NYC Opportunity.

Chapter 3:

# Poverty: Incidence, Intensity, and Disparity

## Chapter 3: Poverty: Incidence, Intensity, and Disparity

### 3.1 Introduction

The poverty rate is a headcount measure that tells us the incidence of poverty—what fraction of the population lives below the poverty threshold. It makes no distinction between the poor who live far below the poverty line and those who live immediately under it, nor does it indicate what share of the non-poor live just above the line or far beyond it. Yet these are important distinctions for evaluating the effects of anti-poverty policy.

One way around this shortcoming is to look at the share of the population at different distances from the poverty threshold, as presented in Table 3.1. We refer to these categories as degrees of poverty. Those in deep poverty (with resources less than 50 percent of the poverty threshold) make up 5.1 percent of the population in 2016. Their resources are substantially lower than those living just under the poverty threshold (at 75 through 99 percent of the threshold) or those in near poverty (with resources between 100 and 149 percent of the threshold). From 2012 to 2016, the total share of the population living at or near poverty fell significantly, from 45.2 to 43.5 percent. This decline is not accompanied by any worsening of the percentage in deep poverty or in poverty

**Degrees of Poverty** are the income categories at different distances from the poverty threshold. Those in deep poverty are the poorest, those in near poverty are over – but close to – the poverty threshold.

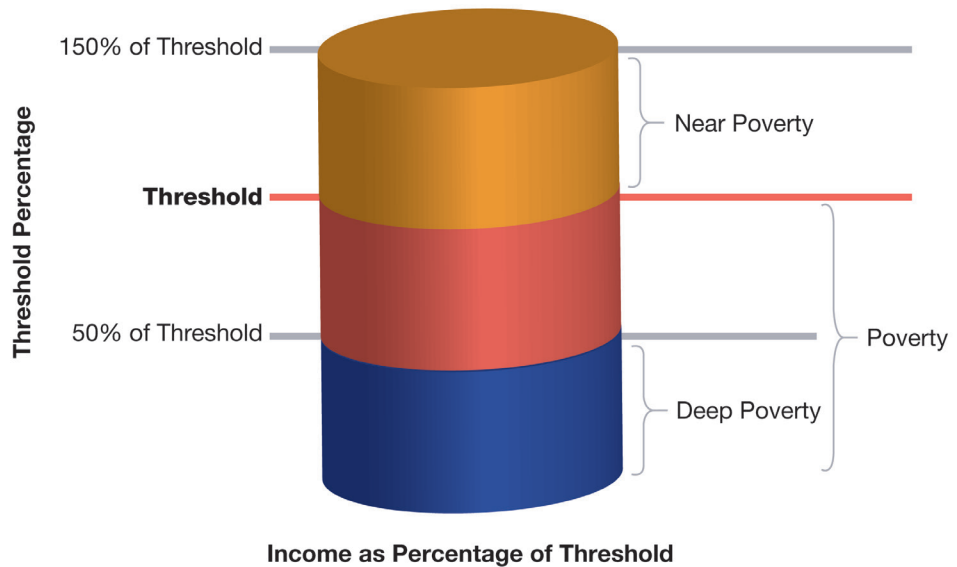


Table 3.1

**Distribution of the Population by Degrees of Poverty, 2012–2016**

(Numbers are Percent of the Population)

<b>A. Population by NYCgov Degrees of Poverty</b>						Percentage Point Change	
	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2012–2016	2015–2016
Below 50 percent	5.3	5.3	5.3	5.0	5.1	-0.2	0.1
50 through 74 percent	5.7	5.7	5.3	5.6	5.0	<b>-0.7</b>	<b>-0.6</b>
75 through 99 percent	9.7	9.7	10.0	9.3	9.4	-0.4	0.0
100 through 124 percent	12.4	13.4	13.2	12.6	12.9	0.5	0.3
125 through 149 percent	12.1	11.7	11.3	11.7	11.1	<b>-1.0</b>	-0.6
Cumulative percentage of population in poverty or near poverty	45.2	45.9	45.1	44.2	43.5	<b>-1.8</b>	-0.7

<b>B. 2016 NYCgov Poverty Threshold Ranges</b>			
Percent of Poverty Threshold	Reference Family Threshold Range	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Less than 50 percent	Less than \$16,201	5.1	5.1
50 through 74 percent	\$16,201 - \$24,302	5.0	10.1
75 through 99 percent	\$24,302 - \$32,402	9.4	19.5
100 through 124 percent	\$32,402 - \$40,503	12.9	32.3
125 through 149 percent	\$40,503 - \$48,603	11.1	43.5

Source: American Community Survey Public Use Micro Sample as augmented by NYC Opportunity.  
 Note: Differences are taken from unrounded numbers; those in **bold** type are statistically significant

alone. Panel B shows the reference family (two-adult, two-child) threshold income range for each degree of poverty.

Even though disaggregation by degrees of poverty captures differences in economic deprivation, it fails to quantify the amount of resources needed to bring individuals above the poverty threshold. This income gap between available resources and the poverty threshold, defined as the poverty gap, indicates the intensity of poverty. It speaks to the resources needed to escape poverty. When viewed together, these two measures—incidence and intensity of poverty—provide a helpful guide to how targeted resources would reduce poverty.

In the next section, 3.2, we analyze poverty gap and sub-group disparities. Section 3.3 demonstrates the success of existing programs and policies in lowering the poverty rate and explores disparities in the advantages afforded by these benefits.

### 3.2 The Poverty Gap and Intensity of Poverty

Table 3.2 presents time trends in the poverty gap, expanding on data presented in Chapter 1, Figure 1.13. The table includes detailed information for all New York City residents, all families with children, and single nonelderly adults. The poverty gap from 2012 to 2016 is shown, along with the average dollar amount needed to move each sub-group over the poverty threshold. In 2016 the citywide poverty gap is \$6.18 billion, \$1.83 billion for all families with children, and, for unrelated individuals living alone or with others (people in nonfamily households), \$2.47 billion—the largest gap.

This information is useful to policymakers since it describes the amount of resources required at any point in time to move a given population over the

#### Incidence of Poverty, Poverty Gap, and Intensity of Poverty

**Incidence of poverty** is the proportion of the population with income below the poverty threshold. It is interchangeably used with “**poverty rate**” in this report when describing the likelihood of a population being in poverty. For example, the poverty rate for men (18.1 percent) is lower than for women (20.7 percent); therefore, women have a higher incidence of poverty.

**The poverty gap** for families is defined by taking the difference between family resources and the poverty threshold. For example, in 2016, a two-adult, two-child family with annual resources of \$30,402 and a poverty threshold of \$32,402 has a poverty gap of \$2,000. Similarly, a single-parent family with one child, annual resources of \$20,661, and a poverty threshold of \$22,661, has a poverty gap of \$2,000. For families above the poverty threshold the gap is zero.

For the City, the poverty gap measure is the sum of poverty gaps across all families—the minimal cost needed to bring all those deemed poor above the poverty threshold.

**The intensity of poverty:** The experience of being “in poverty” can differ depending on how far away from the poverty threshold a family exists. The **poverty gap index** quantifies this extent, accounting for differences in thresholds across family sizes. At the family level, the poverty gap index is calculated as the poverty gap divided by the poverty threshold. For instance, the two-adult, two-child family described above has resources close to 94 percent of the threshold and has a poverty gap index of 6.2 percent, while the single-parent, one-child family has resources amounting to only 91 percent of their threshold and a poverty gap index of 8.8 percent. This example shows that although both families in poverty have the same poverty gap, deprivation is more intense for the single-parent family. The larger the poverty gap index value, the greater are needs. Family-level poverty gap index values are aggregated to generate the citywide poverty gap index.

threshold and out of poverty. However, it is not an adequate measure to track poverty-related outcomes over time for several reasons: First, it does not account for changes in the threshold. The poverty gap can change solely due to changes in the threshold, even without changes in income. As discussed in Chapter 1, the poverty threshold indeed changes over time and differs by family size. Second, not everyone in poverty is the same distance from the threshold. The average dollar amount of the poverty gap will increase if only those closest to the threshold are moved out of poverty, leaving behind a smaller pool but with a larger average gap. To overcome these limitations, we present the poverty gap index – the average poverty gap expressed as a proportion of the poverty threshold – in Table 3.2. The higher the poverty gap, the greater the distance from the threshold and the greater the severity of poverty.

The poverty gap index is 5.71 for families with children (Panel B) compared to 13.78 for single, nonelderly adults (Panel C). In general, disparities in the poverty

Table 3.2

### NYCgov Poverty Gap, 2012–2016 (All Amounts are in 2016 Dollars)

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	Change 2012- 2016	Change 2013- 2016	Change 2014- 2016	Change 2015- 2016
<b>A. All NYC Residents</b>									
Poverty Gap (\$ billions)	\$6.33	\$6.27	\$6.35	\$6.25	\$6.18	-0.15	-0.09	-0.18	-0.07
Average \$ Below Poverty Line Among Poor Families	\$8,229	\$7,877	\$8,045	\$8,126	\$7,974	-\$255	\$97	-\$71	-\$152
Poverty Gap Index (%)	7.20	7.20	7.05	6.93	6.69	<b>-0.50</b>	<b>-0.51</b>	<b>-0.36</b>	-0.24
Number of Families	3,452,545	3,492,226	3,535,978	3,545,000	3,549,049	96,504	56,823	13,071	4,049
<b>B. Families with Children</b>									
Poverty Gap (\$ billions)	\$2.11	\$1.94	\$1.94	\$1.94	\$1.83	<b>-0.28</b>	-0.11	-0.11	-0.11
Average \$ Below Poverty Line Among Poor Families	\$9,879	\$9,531	\$9,303	\$9,513	\$9,462	-\$417	-\$69	\$159	-\$52
Poverty Gap Index (%)	6.58	6.11	6.12	6.06	5.71	<b>-0.87</b>	-0.39	-0.40	-0.35
Number of Families	941,291	951,316	931,106	925,525	915,791	-25,500	-35,525	-15,315	-9,734
<b>C. Unrelated Individuals Living Alone or with Others</b>									
Poverty Gap (\$ billions)	\$2.45	\$2.40	\$2.48	\$2.28	\$2.47	0.02	0.07	-0.01	<b>0.19</b>
Average \$ Below Poverty Line Among Poor Families	\$8,050	\$7,432	\$8,005	\$7,742	\$7,766	-\$284	<b>\$334</b>	-\$239	\$24
Poverty Gap Index (%)	14.23	14.10	14.39	13.02	13.78	-0.46	-0.32	-0.62	0.76
Number of Families	1,145,023	1,174,657	1,163,207	1,173,522	1,194,133	49,110	19,476	30,926	20,611

Source: American Community Survey Public Use Micro Sample as augmented by NYC Opportunity.

Notes: The poverty gap is total assistance needed to bring this group out of poverty (\$ billions). The poverty gap index is the income shortfall as a percent of the poverty threshold. Changes in **bold** are statistically significant.

Table 3.3

**Poverty Rate and Poverty Gap Index by Family Type, 2016**

(Numbers are Percent of the Population)

Persons in:	Intensity of Poverty		Incidence of Poverty		Share of Poor	Share of Population
	Poverty Gap Index	Rank	NYCgov Poverty Rate	Rank		
Unrelated Individuals Living Alone or with Others	13.8	1	26.6	3	19.6	14.3
Unrelated Individuals Living Alone or with Others 65+	11.4	2	30.5	2	7.1	4.5
Single Parent with Children Under 18 Present	10.0	3	30.5	1	20.8	13.2
Married Couple 65+ with Children Under 18 Present	7.6	4	17.9	5	1.5	1.6
Single Head without Children Under 18 Present	5.8	5	17.7	6	7.3	8.0
Single Head 65+ without Children Under 18 Present	5.2	6	15.6	9	2.6	3.2
Married Couple 65+ without Children Under 18 Present	5.0	7	16.0	7	5.9	7.2
Single Parent 65+ with Children Under 18 Present	4.7	8	19.0	4	1.6	1.6
Married Couple with Children Under 18 Present	3.8	9	15.9	8	25.5	31.1
Married Couple without Children Under 18 Present	3.3	10	10.7	10	8.4	15.3

Source: American Community Survey Public Use Micro Sample as augmented by NYC Opportunity.

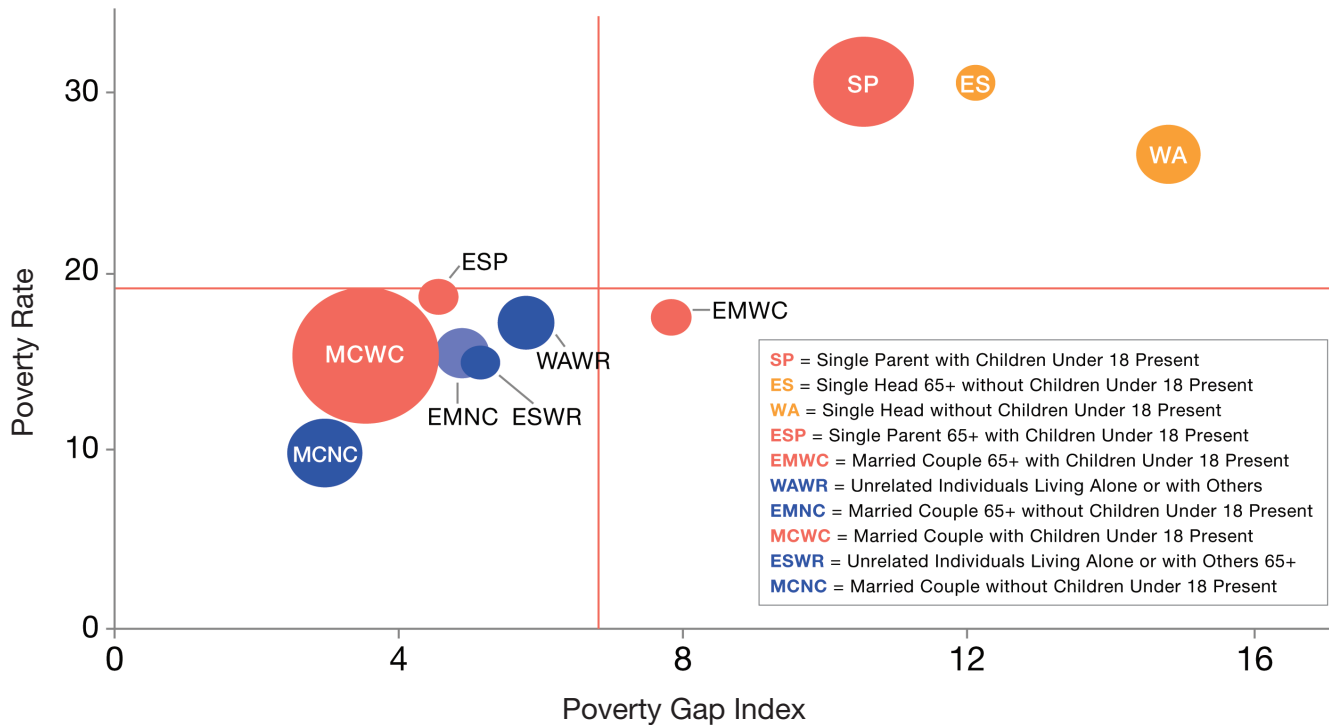
gap index match disparities in the impact of benefits and tax credits as discussed in Section 3.3.

The remainder of this section explores differences in the intensity of poverty across population sub-groups. Expanded information on disparities is presented for family types, race and ethnicity groups, and community districts. Tables 3.3, 3.4, and 3.5 rank selected sub-populations by their poverty gap index value and poverty rates. We also show each group's share in the city population.

These tables make it apparent that, while usually similar, the rankings by poverty rate and poverty gap can differ for some sub-populations. There are instances where a low poverty rate—incidence of poverty—might be associated with a high intensity of poverty as measured by the poverty gap index.

Table 3.3 shows incidence and intensity of poverty by family type. The data are also plotted in Figure 3.1: the poverty gap index (measuring the intensity of poverty) is

Figure 3.1  
**Poverty Rate and Poverty Gap Index by Family Type**



Source: American Community Survey Public Use Micro Sample as augmented by NYC Opportunity.  
 Note: Horizontal red line = Citywide Average Poverty Rate; Vertical red line = Citywide Average Poverty Gap Index

on the horizontal axis and the poverty rate (measuring the incidence) is on the vertical axis. Using citywide average rates for intensity and incidence of poverty as benchmarks, family types are grouped into three distinct clusters. The first cluster, on the upper right-hand corner of the plot, is composed of family types experiencing high intensity and high incidence of poverty (high-high cluster). Family types experiencing high intensity of poverty but low incidence of poverty are the second cluster, located close to the center of the plot (high-low cluster). The third cluster, located in the lower left corner of the plot, is composed of family types with both low intensity and low incidence of poverty (low-low cluster).

- High-high cluster: Comprised of single parents and unrelated individuals living in nonfamily households, both elderly and nonelderly. Lowering the incidence of poverty for this group requires addressing their large average income shortfall from the poverty threshold. An important finding within this cluster is that people in nonfamily households are in need of income supports greater than those required for single parent families. In general, families with children have access to more income supports, thus reducing the severity of their poverty.



Table 3.4

**Poverty Rate and Poverty Gap Index by Race and Ethnicity, 2016**  
(Numbers are Percent of the Population)

	Intensity of Poverty		Incidence of Poverty	
	Poverty Gap Index	Rank	NYCgov Poverty Rate	Rank
Non-Hispanic Asian	8.6	1	24.1	1
Hispanic, Any Race	7.3	2	23.9	2
Non-Hispanic Black	6.6	3	19.2	3
Non-Hispanic White	5.3	4	13.4	4

Source: American Community Survey Public Use Micro Sample as augmented by NYC Opportunity.

- High-low cluster: Elderly couples with children are the sole family type in the second cluster. They have a relatively lower poverty rate due to existing government benefit programs although their intensity of poverty remains relatively high, perhaps because of their higher age-related expenses.
- Low-low cluster: The largest group in the third cluster is couples with children. The presence of two income earners and child-targeted benefits helps to alleviate poverty for this family type. Other family types in this cluster are elderly single parents and all other family types without children present. Additional resources to lift this cluster out of poverty are relatively small compared to those required for the previous two clusters.

Table 3.4 shows intensity and incidence of poverty by race and ethnicity. Although the rankings by intensity and incidence of poverty coincide, there are interesting differences in magnitude across race and ethnic groups. For example, Non-Hispanic Asian New Yorkers have a much higher poverty gap index value (8.6) compared to Hispanics (7.3), even though their poverty rates are not statistically different. The relatively higher intensity among Asians is coincident with a larger share of non-citizens, 32.5 percent, compared to 23.2 percent for Hispanics (data not shown). Many non-citizens are ineligible for government benefits, which intensifies their poverty.

Table 3.5 shows intensity and incidence of poverty by community district; the same data is plotted in Figure 3.2. As in Figure 3.1, poverty rates are plotted on the vertical axis and poverty gap index values are plotted on the horizontal axis. Community districts are numbered and color-coded to indicate the borough to which they belong. Using the citywide five-year average rates for intensity and incidence of poverty as benchmarks, community districts are grouped into four distinct clusters: high intensity and high incidence (high-high), high intensity

Table 3.5

**Poverty Rate and Poverty Gap Index by Community District (CD)/Neighborhood, 2012–2016** (Numbers are Percent of the Population), Citywide Poverty Rate 5-Year Average = 20.3%, Poverty Gap Index = 7.0

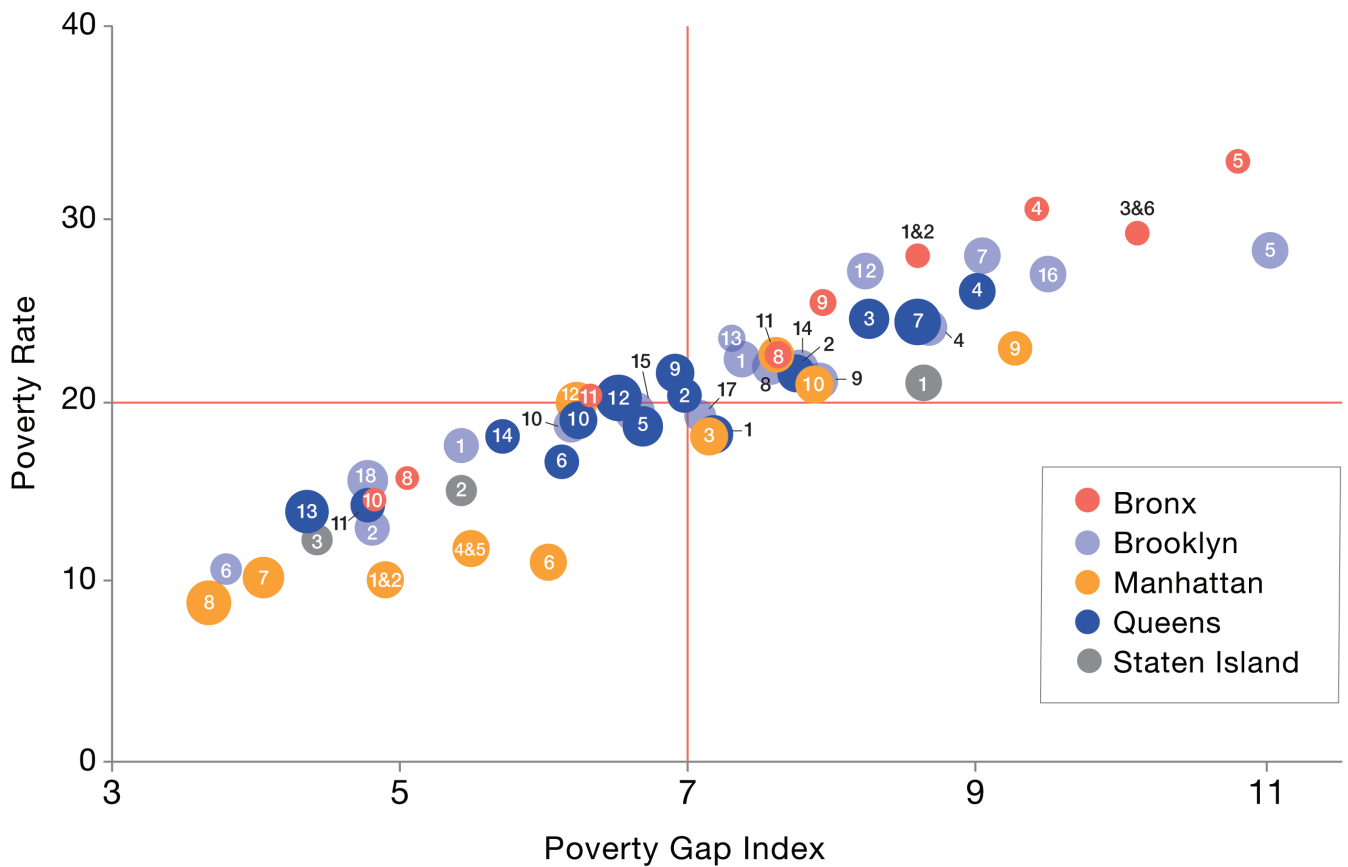
CD	Neighborhood	5 -Year Average		CD	Neighborhood	5 -Year Average	
		Poverty Gap Index	Poverty Rate			Poverty Gap Index	Poverty Rate
<b>Bronx</b>		<b>8.1</b>	<b>25.8</b>	<b>Manhattan</b>		<b>6.0</b>	<b>14.5</b>
1 & 2	Hunts Point, Longwood, and Melrose	8.6	29.3	1 & 2	Battery Park City, Greenwich Village, and Soho	4.9	8.8
3 & 6	Belmont, Crotona Park East, and East Tremont	10.2	30.8	3	Chinatown and Lower East Side	7.2	18.0
4	Concourse, Highbridge, and Mount Eden	9.5	32.3	4 & 5	Chelsea, Clinton, and Midtown Business District	5.5	10.8
5	Morris Heights, Fordham South, and Mount Hope	10.8	34.4	6	Murray Hill, Gramercy, and Stuyvesant Town	6.1	10.0
7	Bedford Park, Fordham North, and Norwood	8.0	26.4	7	Upper West Side and West Side	4.1	9.0
8	Riverdale, Fieldston, and Kingsbridge	5.1	15.2	8	Upper East Side	3.7	7.3
9	Castle Hill, Clason Point, and Parkchester	8.0	26.4	9	Hamilton Heights, Manhattanville, and West Harlem	9.3	23.5
10	Co-op City, Pelham Bay, and Schuylerville	4.8	14.0	10	Central Harlem	7.9	21.1
11	Pelham Parkway, Morris Park, and Laconia	6.3	20.5	11	East Harlem	7.7	23.1
12	Wakefield, Williamsbridge, and Woodlawn	7.7	23.2	12	Washington Heights, Inwood, and Marble Hill	6.3	19.9
<b>Brooklyn</b>		<b>7.3</b>	<b>21.6</b>	<b>Queens</b>		<b>6.9</b>	<b>20.2</b>
1	Greenpoint and Williamsburg	5.5	17.3	1	Astoria and Long Island City	7.2	18.3
2	Brooklyn Heights and Greenpoint	4.8	12.1	2	Sunnyside and Woodside	7.0	20.4
3	Bedford-Stuyvesant	7.7	22.6	3	Jackson Heights and North Corona	8.3	25.4
4	Bushwick	8.7	25.1	4	Elmhurst and South Corona	9.1	27.1
5	East New York and Starrett City	11.1	29.8	5	Ridgewood, Glendale, and Middle Village	6.7	18.6
6	Park Slope, Carroll Gardens, and Red Hook	3.8	9.5	6	Forest Hills and Rego Park	6.2	16.3
7	Sunset Park and Windsor Terrace	9.1	29.4	7	Flushing, Murray Hill, and Whitestone	8.6	25.2
8	Crown Heights North and Prospect Heights	8.0	21.4	8	Briarwood, Fresh Meadows, and Hillcrest	7.8	22.0
9	Crown Heights South, Prospect Lefferts, and Wingate	7.6	22.1	9	Richmond Hill and Woodhaven	6.9	21.9
10	Bay Ridge and Dyker Heights	6.2	19.0	10	Howard Beach and Ozone Park	6.3	18.9
11	Bensonhurst and Bath Beach	7.4	23.0	11	Bayside, Douglaston, and Little Neck	4.8	13.5
12	Borough Park, Kensington, and Ocean Parkway	8.3	28.3	12	Jamaica, Hollis, and St. Albans	6.6	20.4
13	Brighton Beach and Coney Island	7.4	24.0	13	Queens Village, Cambria Heights, and Rosedale	4.4	13.2
14	Flatbush and Midwood	7.8	22.1	14	Far Rockaway, Breezy Point, and Broad Channel	5.7	17.9
15	Sheepshead Bay, Gerritsen Beach, and Homecrest	6.7	19.4	<b>Staten Island</b>		<b>6.3</b>	<b>15.8</b>
16	Brownsville and Ocean Hill	9.5	28.2	1	Port Richmond, Stapleton, and Mariners Harbor	8.7	21.2
17	East Flatbush, Farragut, and Rugby	7.1	19.0	2	New Springville and South Beach	5.4	14.4
18	Canarsie and Flatlands	4.8	15.0	3	Tottenville, Great Kills, and Annadale	4.4	11.4

High poverty rate (>20.3) and high poverty gap index (>7.01)  
 Low poverty rate (<20.3) and low poverty gap index (<7.01)

High poverty rate and low poverty gap index  
 Low poverty rate and high poverty gap index

Source: American Community Survey Public Use Micro Sample as augmented by NYC Opportunity.

Figure 3.2  
**Poverty Rate and Poverty Gap Index by Community District**



Source: American Community Survey Public Use Micro Sample as augmented by NYC Opportunity.  
 Note: Horizontal red line = Citywide Average Poverty Rate; Vertical red line = Citywide Average Poverty Gap Index

but low incidence (high-low), low intensity and low incidence (low-low), and low intensity but high incidence (low-high). Clusters can be viewed in clock-wise order from the upper right corner of the plot.

In general, there is a linear relationship between incidence and intensity of poverty experienced by community districts located in the upper right (high-high) and lower left (low-low) clusters. For example, the highest intensity of poverty is found within districts with the highest poverty rates: Morris Heights, Fordham South, and Mount Hope (Bronx CD 5); conversely, the lowest intensity of poverty is found within districts with the lowest poverty rates: Upper East Side (Manhattan CD 8).

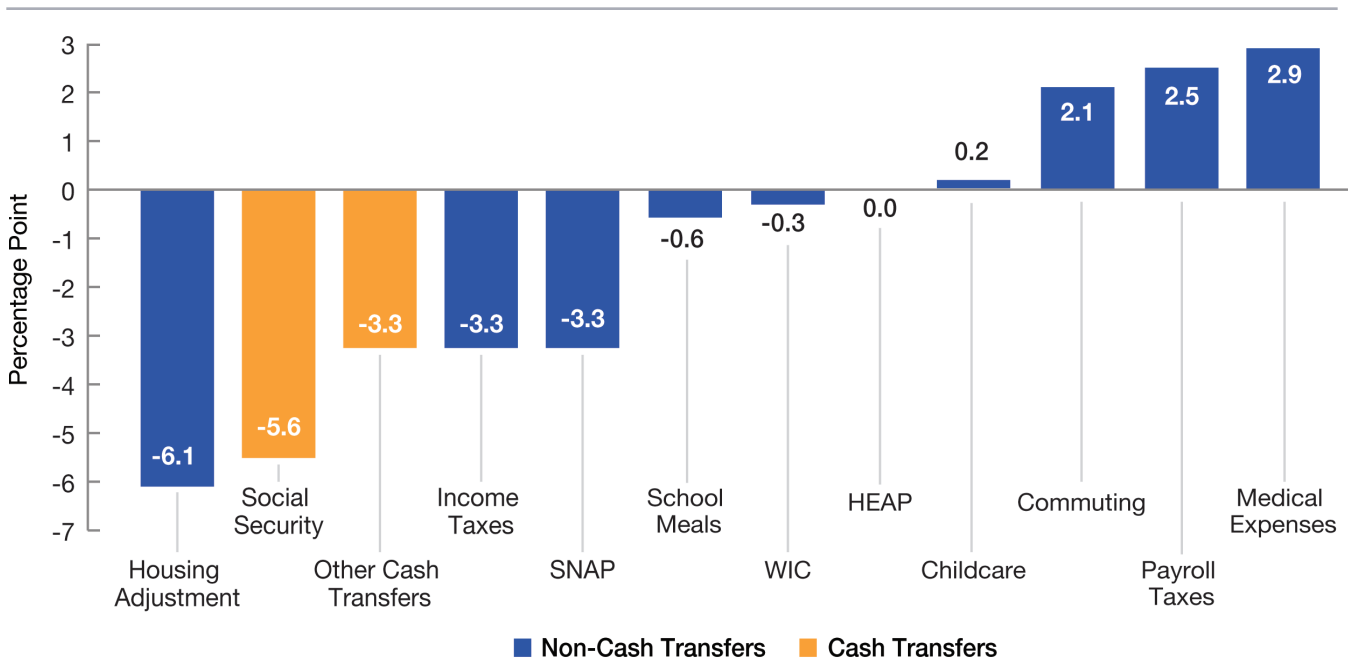
However, some of the districts with high poverty rates—Pelham Parkway, Morris Park, and Laconia (Bronx CD 11)—are grouped into a cluster of low intensity of poverty (low-high). In an analogous manner, some community districts such as

Chinatown and Lower East Side (Manhattan CD 3) and Astoria and Long Island City (Queens CD 1) show lower than citywide average poverty rates but tend to experience a much higher intensity of poverty. Detailed information on neighborhoods and their corresponding intensity and incidence rates are presented in Table 3.5.

### 3.3 The Effect of Assistance Programs on Poverty

Section 3.2 identified disparities in the incidence and intensity of poverty across sub-populations. To a large extent, these sub-group disparities mirror the differences in the receipt of government benefit assistance. The NYCgov poverty measure enables us to measure the effect of transfer programs, tax credits, and nondiscretionary spending on the poverty rate. It allows us to understand the extent to which anti-poverty programs lift people over the poverty threshold. Conversely, we also detect how non-discretionary expenditures (childcare, commuting, and medical spending) can pull people into poverty. Figure 1.11 in Chapter 1 displayed the effects of these income supports and expenditures for the city in 2016; we reproduce it here as Figure 3.3. Those elements that lower the poverty rate are found to the left of zero in the chart, and those that raise the poverty rate are to the right. The figure includes the effect of cash transfer programs, income components that are also included in the official income measure and provide some context. Given their relative importance, these programs are grouped into Social Security and all other cash transfers. Social Security (which includes pensions, survivor benefits, and

Figure 3.3  
**Marginal Effects, Selected Sources of Income on the NYCgov Poverty Rate, 2016**



Source: American Community Survey Public Use Micro Sample as augmented by NYC Opportunity.

disability insurance) lowers the poverty rate by 5.6 percentage points. Only the housing adjustment has a larger impact. The combined effect of all the other cash transfer programs (such as public assistance, Supplemental Security Income, Unemployment Insurance, Workers Compensation) is 3.3 percentage points, not that different from the impact of the Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP). On the expenditure side, medical expenses do the most to push people into poverty. The net effect of out-of-pocket medical expenses is to raise the poverty rate by 2.9 percentage points. Figure 3.3 provides clear evidence for the effectiveness of anti-poverty programs.

Panel A of Table 3.6 reports poverty rates. The first row, labeled “Total NYCgov Income,” gives the poverty rate using the full NYCgov income measure. The following rows in Panel A show poverty rates calculated by omitting one of the non-pre-tax-cash elements of NYCgov income in turn. The poverty rates based on leaving out additions to NYCgov income—beginning with the row for housing adjustment and ending with the row for HEAP (Home Energy Assistance Program)—are higher than the full NYCgov income poverty rate. Likewise, the poverty rates that result from leaving out subtractions from income—payroll taxes through MOOP (medical out-of-pocket expenditures) are lower than the full NYCgov resource poverty rate.

Panel B of Table 3.6 shows the marginal effects on the poverty rate of omitting each income element—the difference between the full NYCgov poverty rate and the poverty rate without the income element. It represents the percent of the city’s population that is moved into or out of poverty by each income element. For example, the 2016 poverty rate net of the housing adjustment to income is 25.6 percent, compared to the full NYCgov income rate of 19.5 percent.

The housing adjustment has the largest poverty-reducing effect in each year, followed by income taxes and SNAP.<sup>1</sup> The other poverty-reducing elements—school meals, WIC (Supplemental Nutritional Program for Women, Infants, and Children) and HEAP—have relatively minor effects on the citywide poverty rate, either because they are narrowly targeted (WIC) or small in value (school meals, HEAP).

On the other side of the ledger, MOOP consistently has the largest poverty-increasing effect of nondiscretionary expenses that reduce family income. MOOP raised the poverty rate 2.9 percentage points in 2016, followed by FICA (payroll taxes) and commuting costs. Childcare costs can be a considerable drain on a family’s resources but they are incurred by too small a share of the population in our estimate to have an effect on the citywide poverty rate.<sup>2</sup>

Figure 3.3 and Table 3.6 show the importance of government benefit programs in keeping New Yorkers out of poverty. A question arises when viewing anti-poverty

<sup>1</sup> The income tax system reduces poverty because many low-income tax filers find their tax liability is eliminated by tax credits and receive refunds that create a net addition to after-tax income.

<sup>2</sup> See Appendix G for methodology behind the NYC Opportunity childcare estimate.

Table 3.6

### Marginal Effects of Non-Cash Resources on NYCgov Poverty Rates, 2012–2016 (Numbers are Percent of the Population)

<b>A. Poverty Rates</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2016</b>
Total NYCgov Income	20.7	20.7	20.6	19.9	19.5
<b>Net of:</b>					
Housing Adjustment	27.2	27.2	27.1	25.7	25.6
Income Taxes	24.4	24.6	24.5	23.8	22.7
SNAP	24.4	24.7	24.2	23.1	22.7
School Meals	21.2	21.3	21.1	20.6	20.1
WIC	21.0	20.9	20.8	20.1	19.8
HEAP	20.7	20.7	20.6	19.9	19.5
FICA (Payroll Taxes)	19.0	18.5	18.3	17.7	17.0
Commuting	19.0	18.9	18.5	17.9	17.4
Childcare	20.5	20.5	20.3	19.6	19.3
MOOP	18.1	18.0	18.0	17.1	16.6
<b>B. Marginal Effects</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2016</b>
Housing Adjustment	-6.5	-6.5	-6.5	-5.8	-6.1
Income Taxes	-3.7	-3.9	-4.0	-3.9	-3.3
SNAP	-3.7	-4.0	-3.6	-3.2	-3.3
School Meals	-0.5	-0.6	-0.5	-0.7	-0.6
WIC	-0.3	-0.2	-0.2	-0.2	-0.3
HEAP	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
FICA (Payroll Taxes)	1.7	2.2	2.3	2.2	2.5
Commuting	1.7	1.8	2.1	2.0	2.1
Childcare	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.3	0.2
MOOP	2.6	2.7	2.6	2.8	2.9

Source: American Community Survey Public Use Micro Sample as augmented by NYC Opportunity.

effects of government benefit programs through a lens of equal opportunity: do these programs offer equal advantages to everyone in poverty? The anti-poverty effects of these programs may differ across sub-groups given the design of benefit structures. Over the past half century, child poverty has been the main focus of anti-poverty policies. The success of this focus is evident in lower child poverty rates when benefits are taken into account (see Chapter 4).

Figure 3.4 combines the benefits from assistance programs and tax credits and illustrates these different outcomes in 2016 by family type. To facilitate comparison across sub-groups that have different baseline poverty rates, we present the percent change in poverty rates rather than percentage point change as shown in Figure 3.3. Two notable results are found:

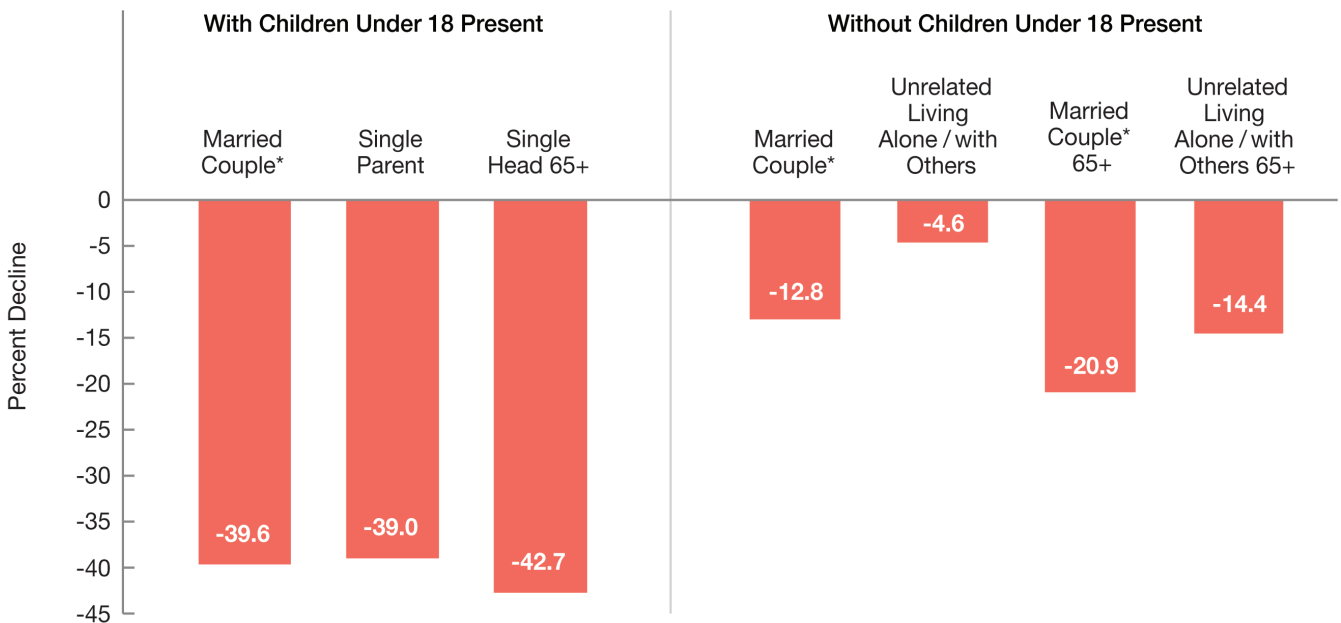
- The largest offset to the poverty rate, around 40 percent, occurs among families with children—married or single parents and elderly caregivers of young children. For family types without young children, the impacts are smaller and varied, ranging from 4.6 percent for unrelated individuals living alone or with others to 20.9 percent for elderly married couples.
- Among families with children that are receiving assistance, the advantage afforded by benefits is consistent between married couple (two-parent) and single-parent families. The total benefit package modeled here offers equal economic leverage across these families despite their unequal poverty rates.<sup>3</sup>

Figure 3.4 illustrates that the sum of all benefits and tax credits lessen the incidence of poverty relatively equally for one- and two-parent families. But not

<sup>3</sup> Note that benefit impacts are offsetting different poverty rates between these family types. See Table 2.2 for differences in poverty rates between one- and two-parent families.

Figure 3.4

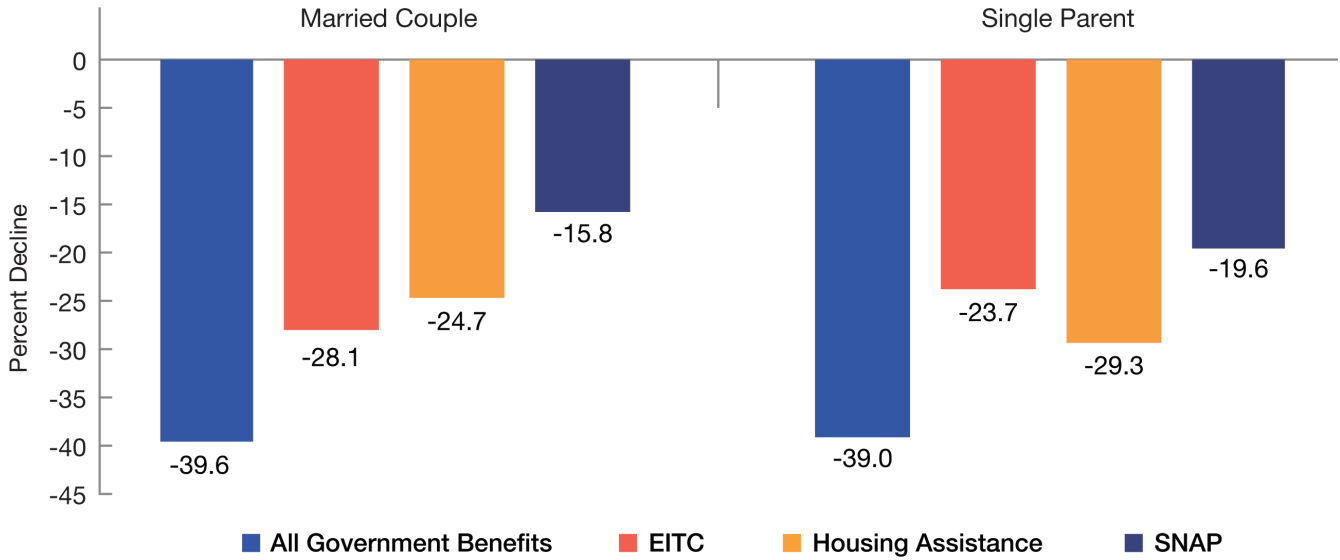
**Impact of Combined Government Assistance and Tax Credits by Selected Family Type, 2016** (Percent Decline in Poverty Rate)



Source: American Community Survey Public Use Micro Sample as augmented by NYC Opportunity.  
 \* Unmarried partners included

Figure 3.5

**Impacts of Government Assistance and Tax Credits on Persons in Families with Children, 2016** (Percent Decline in Poverty)



Source: American Community Survey Public Use Micro Sample as augmented by NYC Opportunity.

all benefits programs offer equal advantage. Figure 3.5 replicates the impact of all government benefits from Figure 3.4 and disaggregates three benefit programs—Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC), housing assistance, and SNAP—showing their relative effect across single and married families with children. The EITC is higher for married couples, as incomes from two people may generate a bigger credit. In contrast, housing assistance and SNAP provide greater assistance for single parent families. With lower income, they are more likely to qualify for these means-tested programs.

**Conclusion**

The sub-group analysis presented in sections 3.2 and 3.3 suggests that there are significant disparities in intensity and incidence of poverty that require different policy remedies to address economic deprivation. Disparities in the intensity of poverty match disparities in the impact of benefits and tax credits. In particular, people in nonfamily households are considerably underserved by the existing benefit structures. Poverty eradication among this group would require addressing their significantly larger poverty gap. This analysis shows not only disparities between sub-groups but also the success of anti-poverty programs: existing benefit programs have a meaningful impact on reducing the poverty rate of families with children.



Chapter 4:

# The NYCgov Poverty Measure

## Chapter 4: The NYCgov Poverty Measure

### 4.1 The Need for an Alternative to the U.S. Official Poverty Measure

This chapter explains the origins of the NYCgov poverty measure and what it measures. It is then compared to other poverty measures—the U.S. official measure and the U.S. Supplemental Poverty Measure.

It has been over a half century since the development of the current U.S. official measure of poverty. At its inception in the early 1960s, this income-based measure represented an important advance and served as a focal point for the public’s growing concern about poverty in America. But over the decades, discussions about poverty increasingly included concerns about the adequacy of the poverty measure as society evolved and public policy shifted. The official Census Bureau poverty measure now appears to be sorely out of date based on how it defines income and the poverty threshold. Pretax cash income is compared to a threshold based on the value of a minimal food budget.

The official measure’s threshold, developed in the early 1960s, was based on the cost of the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Economy Food Plan, a diet designed for “temporary or emergency use when funds are low.” Survey data available at the time indicated that families typically spent a third of their income on food, so the cost of the plan was simply multiplied by three to account for other needs. The threshold is also adjusted for family size. Since the threshold’s 1963 base year, it has been updated annually by changes in the Consumer Price Index.<sup>1</sup>

A half century later, this poverty line has little justification; it does not represent contemporary spending patterns or needs. Food now accounts for less than one-seventh of family expenditures—housing is the largest item in the typical family’s budget. The threshold also remains frozen in time. Since it only rises with the cost of living, it assumes that the standard of living that defined poverty in the early 1960s remains appropriate, despite advances in living standards since that time. Finally, the official threshold also ignores differences in the cost of living across the nation, an issue of obvious importance when measuring poverty in New York City.

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<sup>1</sup> Fisher, Gordon M. “The Development and History of the Poverty Thresholds.” *Social Security Bulletin*, Vol. 55, No. 4. Winter 1992.

The official measure's definition of resources to be compared against the threshold is simply pre-tax cash. This includes wages, salaries, earnings from self-employment, income from interest, dividends, and rents, and what families receive from public programs, *if* they take the form of cash income. Thus, payments from Unemployment Insurance, Social Security, Supplemental Security Income (SSI), and public assistance are included in the official resource measure. Given the data available and the policies in place at the time, this was not an unreasonable definition. But over the years an increasing share of what government does to support low-income families takes the form of tax credits (such as the Earned Income Tax Credit) and in-kind benefits (such as housing vouchers) or SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) benefits. If policymakers or the public want to know how these programs affect poverty, the U.S. official measure cannot provide an answer.

#### **4.2 Alternative Measures: The National Academy of Science's Recommendations and the Supplemental Poverty Measure**

Dissatisfaction with the U.S. official measure prompted Congress to request a study by the National Academy of Sciences (NAS).<sup>2</sup> However, neither the federal nor any state or local government had adopted the NAS approach, issued in 1995, until the Center for Economic Opportunity (now the Mayor's Office for Economic Opportunity) released their initial report on poverty in New York City in August 2008.<sup>3</sup>

The NAS-recommended methodology is also income based, but it is considerably different from the official U.S. poverty measure. The NAS threshold reflects the need for multiple necessities and is based on a point in the distribution of actual expenditures on food, clothing, shelter, and utilities (FCSU) incurred by a two-adult, two-child reference family. A small multiplier is applied to account for miscellaneous expenses. This threshold is updated annually to account for changes in spending and living standards. The NAS-style poverty line is also adjusted to reflect geographic differences in housing costs.

On the resource side, the NAS-based measure accounts for both income and in-kind benefits that can be used to meet the needs represented in the threshold. This is more inclusive than the official measure of pre-tax cash and an important addition in accounting for family resources. The tax system and the cash equivalent value of in-kind benefits for food and housing are important additions to family resources.

But families also have nondiscretionary expenses that reduce the income available to meet needs for the FCSU necessities represented by the threshold. These include the cost of commuting to work, childcare, and medical care that

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<sup>2</sup> Citro, Constance F. and Robert T. Michael (eds). *Measuring Poverty: A New Approach*. Washington, DC: National Academy Press, 1995. Much of the research inspired by the NAS report is available at: <https://www.census.gov/topics/income-poverty/supplemental-poverty-measure/library/working-papers/topics.html>

<sup>3</sup> New York City Center for Economic Opportunity. *The CEO Poverty Measure: A Working Paper* by the New York City Center for Economic Opportunity. August 2008. Available at: [www1.nyc.gov/site/opportunity/poverty-in-nyc/poverty-measure.page](http://www1.nyc.gov/site/opportunity/poverty-in-nyc/poverty-measure.page)

must be paid for out of pocket. This spending is accounted for in the NAS recommendations as deductions from income because dollars spent on those items are not considered available to purchase food or shelter.

Since November 2011, the U.S. Bureau of the Census has issued an annual Supplemental Poverty Measure (SPM).<sup>4</sup> The new federal measure is shaped by the NAS recommendations and an additional set of guidelines provided by an Interagency Technical Working Group in 2010.<sup>5</sup> The guidelines made several revisions to the 1995 NAS recommendations. The most important of these are:

1. An expansion of the type of family unit whose expenditures determine the poverty threshold from two-adult families with two children to all families with two children.
2. Use of a five-year, rather than three-year, moving average of expenditure data to update the poverty threshold over time.
3. Creation of separate thresholds based on housing status: whether the family owns its home with a mortgage; owns, but is free and clear of a mortgage; or rents.

<sup>4</sup> The most recent SPM report is Liana Fox, U.S. Bureau of the Census, The Supplemental Poverty Measure 2016. Revised September 2017. Available at: <https://www.census.gov/library/publications/2017/demo/p60-261.html>

<sup>5</sup> Observations from the Interagency Technical Working Group on Developing a Supplemental Poverty Measure. March 2010. Available at: <https://www.census.gov/content/dam/Census/topics/income/supplemental-poverty-measure/spm-twgobservations.pdf>

## Measures of Poverty

**U.S. Official:** The current U.S. official poverty measure was developed in the early 1960s. It consists of a set of thresholds that were based on the cost of a minimum diet at that time. A family's pre-tax cash income is compared against the threshold to determine whether its members are poor.

**NAS:** At the request of Congress, the National Academy of Sciences issued a set of recommendations for an improved poverty measure in 1995. The NAS threshold represents the need for clothing, shelter, and utilities, as well as food. The NAS income measure accounts for taxation and the value of in-kind benefits.

**SPM:** In March 2010 the Obama Administration announced that the Census Bureau, in cooperation with the Bureau of Labor Statistics, would create a Supplemental Poverty Measure based on the NAS recommendations, subsequent research, and a set of guidelines proposed by an Interagency Working Group. The first report on poverty using this measure was issued by the Census Bureau in November 2011.

**NYCgov:** The first NYCgov poverty estimate for New York City was released in August 2008. The NYCgov poverty measure is largely based on the NAS recommendations, with modifications based on the guidelines from the Interagency Working Group.

### 4.3 NYC Opportunity's Adoption of the NAS/SPM Method

Initial releases of the NYCgov poverty measure were based on the NAS recommendations. With the release of the SPM, the NYCgov measurement was adjusted for better comparability. The first two of the three SPM revisions listed above have been incorporated. We do not utilize the SPM's development of thresholds that vary by housing status. Instead, we adjust the SPM poverty threshold to account for the differential between national and New York City housing costs. In 2016, for example, the NYCgov poverty threshold of \$32,402 was larger than the SPM renter threshold of \$26,104.

We then account for all differences in housing status on the income side of the poverty measure—including renters at market rate, renters with means-tested housing assistance or in rent regulated units, and homeowners with and without mortgages.<sup>6</sup>

To measure the resources available to a family to meet the needs represented by the threshold, we employ the Public Use Micro Sample (PUMS) from the Census Bureau's American Community Survey (ACS) as our principal data set. The advantages of this survey for local poverty measurement are numerous. The ACS is designed to provide measures of socioeconomic conditions on an annual basis in states and larger localities. It offers a robust sample for New York City (roughly 26,700 households in 2016) and contains essential information about household composition, family relationships, and cash income from a variety of sources.

As noted earlier, the NAS-recommended poverty measure greatly expands the scope of resources that must be measured in order to determine whether a family

<sup>6</sup> See Appendix C, Housing, for more on housing adjustments.

#### American Community Survey

**The American Community Survey (ACS)** is conducted as a rolling sample gathered over the course of a calendar year. Approximately one-twelfth of the total sample is collected in each month. Respondents are asked to provide information on work experience and income during the 12 months prior to the time they are included in the sample. Households that are surveyed in January of 2016, for example, would report their income for the 12 months of 2015; households that are surveyed in February of 2016 would report their income for February 2015 through January 2016, and so on. Consequently, estimates for poverty rates derived from the 2016 ACS do not, strictly speaking, represent a 2016 poverty rate. Rather, it is a poverty rate derived from a survey that was fielded in 2016. Readers should bear in mind this difference as they interpret the findings in this report.

is poor. Unfortunately, the ACS provides only some of the information needed to estimate the additional resources required by the NAS measures. Therefore, NYCgov incorporates a variety of models developed internally that estimate the effect of taxation, nutritional and housing assistance, work-related expenses, and medical out-of-pocket expenditures on total family resources and poverty status. We reference the resulting data set as the “American Community Survey Public Use Micro Sample as augmented by NYC Opportunity,” and we refer to our estimate of family resources as “NYCgov income.”

Below is a brief description of how the non-pre-tax cash income items are estimated. More details on each of these procedures can be found in the report’s technical appendices.

**Housing Adjustment:** The high cost of housing makes New York City an expensive place to live. The NYCgov poverty threshold, as we noted above, is adjusted to reflect that reality. But some New Yorkers do not need to spend as much to secure adequate housing as the higher threshold implies. Many of the city’s low-income families live in public housing or receive a housing subsidy, such as a Section 8 housing voucher. A large proportion of New York City’s renters live in rent-regulated apartments. Some homeowners have paid off their mortgages and own their homes free and clear. We make an upward adjustment to these families’ incomes to reflect these advantages. For families living in rent-subsidized housing units, the adjustment equals the difference between what they would be paying for their housing if it were market rate and what they are actually paying out of pocket. The adjustment is capped so that it cannot exceed the housing portion of the NYCgov threshold. The ACS does not provide data on housing program participation. To determine which households in the ACS could be participants in rental subsidy or regulation programs, we match households in the Census Bureau’s New York City Housing and Vacancy Survey (HVS) with household-level records in the ACS. (See Appendix C.)

**Taxation:** Our tax model creates tax filing units within the ACS households; computes their adjusted gross income, taxable income, and tax liability; and then estimates net income taxes after non-refundable and refundable credits are applied. The model takes account of federal, state, and City income tax programs, including all the credits that are designed to aid low-income filers. The model also includes the effect of the federal payroll tax for Social Security and Medicare (FICA). (See Appendix D.)

**Nutritional Assistance:** We estimate the value added to family resources if they receive nutritional assistance. SNAP, the National School Lunch program, the School Breakfast Program, and the Supplementary Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) are included. To estimate SNAP benefits, we make use of New York City Human Resources Administration SNAP records, and impute SNAP cases to “Food Stamp Units” that we construct within census households. We count each dollar of SNAP benefits as a dollar added to family income.

Estimates of school meals programs has changed with City policy. The earliest releases of the NYCgov measure estimated free, reduced, and full price school meals. School breakfasts are now universally free. School lunches were either free or full price in 2016 and are universally free beginning with the 2017 school year. We follow the Census Bureau's method for valuing income from the programs by using the per-meal cost of the subsidy. Appendix E explains how the likelihood of participation in the school meals programs is calculated for relevant years. We identify participants in the WIC program by matching enrollment in the program to population participation estimates from the New York State Department of Health. Benefits are calculated using the average benefit level per participant calculated by the U.S. Department of Agriculture. (See Appendix E.)

**Home Energy Assistance Program:** The Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP) provides assistance to low-income households in order to offset their utility costs. In New York City, households that receive cash assistance, SNAP, or are composed of a single person receiving Supplemental Security Income benefits are automatically enrolled in the program. Other low-income households can apply for HEAP, but administrative data from the City's Human Resources Administration indicate that nearly all HEAP households come into the program through participation in other benefit programs. Therefore, we identify HEAP-receiving households by their participation in public assistance, SNAP, or SSI, and then add the appropriate benefit to their income. Beginning in 2011, we also make use of HEAP receipt reported in the Housing and Vacancy Survey. (See Appendix F.)

**Work-Related Expenses:** Workers generally travel to and from their jobs, and we treat the cost of that travel as a non-discretionary expense. We estimate the number of trips a worker will make per week based on their usual weekly hours. We then calculate the cost per trip using information in the ACS about mode of transportation and include administrative data (such as subway fares). Weekly commuting costs are computed by multiplying the cost per trip by the number of trips per week. Annual commuting costs equal weekly costs times the number of weeks worked over the past 12 months.

Families in which the parents are working must often pay for the care of their young children. Like the cost of commuting, the NYCgov poverty measure treats these childcare expenses as a nondiscretionary reduction in income. Because the ACS provides no information on childcare spending, we have created an imputation model that matches the weekly childcare expenditures reported in the Census Bureau's Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP) to working families with children in the ACS data set. Childcare costs are only counted if they are incurred in a week in which the parents (or the single parent) are at work. They are capped by the earned income of the lowest earning parent. (See Appendix G.)

**Medical Out-of-Pocket Expenditures (MOOP):** The cost of medical care is also treated as a non-discretionary expense that limits the ability of families to attain the standard of living represented by the poverty threshold. MOOP includes

health insurance premiums, co-pays, and deductibles, as well as the cost of medical services that are not covered by insurance. In a manner similar to that for childcare, we use an imputation model to match MOOP expenditures by families in the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality’s Medical Expenditure Panel Survey to families in the ACS sample. (See Appendix H.)

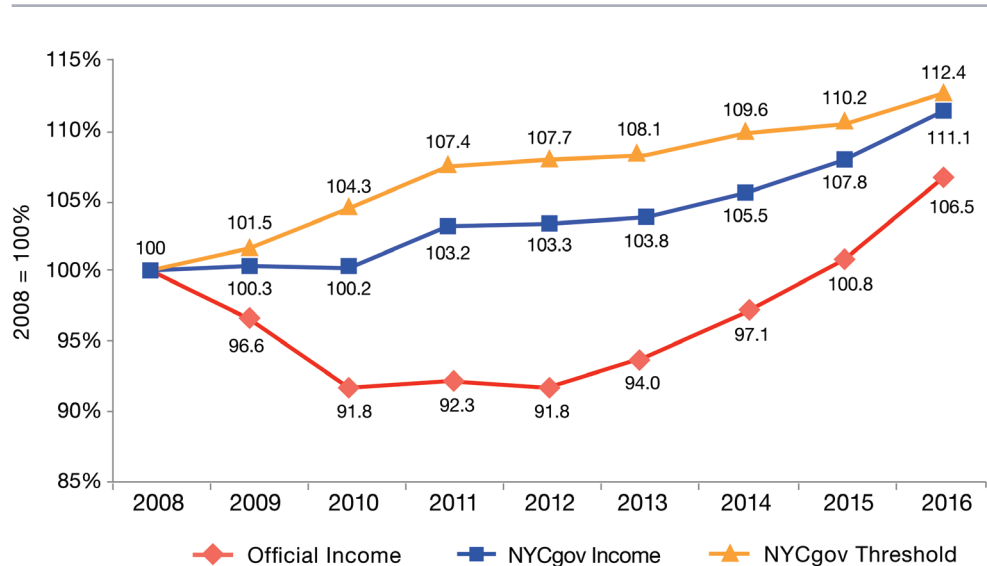
#### 4.4 Comparing Poverty Rates

We noted in Chapter 1 that the NYCgov measure has a higher threshold than both the official U.S. and SPM thresholds. The NYCgov income measure is constructed using a method conceptually similar to the SPM. Resources included as income are broader than those of the official measure. This section compares the incomes, thresholds, and poverty rates of the NYCgov measure to the official measure and then the SPM. Differences between the measures are highlighted.

Figure 4.1 illustrates the interaction between income and threshold. Growth in official income, NYCgov income, and the NYCgov threshold are shown relative to their respective levels in 2008, the pre-recession peak.<sup>7</sup> Official income includes only earnings and any transfer payments that occur in the form of cash and grows less than NYCgov income, increasing 6.5 percent from 2008 to 2016.

<sup>7</sup> Each income measure is listed in family size and composition-adjusted dollars. U.S. official and NYCgov incomes are taken at the 20th percentile of their respective distributions. All three measures are stated in current, not inflation-adjusted, dollars.

Figure 4.1  
**Comparison of Income Trends with the NYCgov Poverty Threshold, 2008–2016**



Source: American Community Survey Public Use Micro Sample as augmented by NYC Opportunity.  
 Notes: Incomes are measured at the 20th percentile of their respective distributions. All three measures are stated in current, not inflation-adjusted, dollars.



NYCgov income includes anti-recessionary efforts such as tax credits and enhanced SNAP benefits. These additional benefits kept NYCgov income stable during the recession, but as benefits tapered off, the differences in the two income measures diminish by 2016. NYCgov income increased 11.1 percent from 2008 to 2016.

The NYCgov threshold grew more than either income measure. While NYCgov income in 2016 was 111.1 percent of its 2008 level, the threshold was 112.4 percent of its 2008 level. The result constrained the decline in poverty even as incomes grew due to a combination of increases in the minimum wage and higher employment rates.

### Degrees of Poverty

The most significant differences between the official measure and the NAS-based alternatives are the outcomes in poverty rates by age and the distribution of poverty rates based on the ratio of incomes to the threshold—in particular, the portions of the population in extreme poverty and near poverty.

Table 4.1

### Comparison of Poverty Rates by Age Group Using Different Measures, 2016 (Numbers are Percent of the Population)

A. United States			
	Official	SPM	Percentage Point Difference
Total	12.7	14.0	<b>1.3</b>
Under 18	18.0	15.2	<b>-2.8</b>
18 through 64	11.6	13.3	<b>1.7</b>
65 and Older	9.3	14.5	<b>5.2</b>
B. New York City			
	Official	NYCgov	Percentage Point Difference
Total	17.6	19.5	<b>1.9</b>
Under 18	25.6	22.2	<b>-3.4</b>
18 through 64	15.0	18.3	<b>3.3</b>
65 and Older	17.6	20.8	<b>3.3</b>

Sources: U.S. Bureau of the Census and American Community Survey Public Use Micro Sample as augmented by NYC Opportunity.

Notes: Differences are measured in percentage points and are taken from unrounded numbers; those in **bold** type are statistically significant. Official poverty rates, reported in Panel B, are based on the NYC Opportunity poverty universe and unit of analysis.

## 4.5 Poverty Rates by Age Group

Given the focus that policymaking has had on children, differences in poverty rates by age group are a particularly important set of comparisons. Table 4.1 provides 2016 poverty rates by age using the official and NAS-style measures. Panel A of Table 4.1 reports these for the U.S.<sup>8</sup> and the table's Panel B provides the data for New York City.

Differences between the official and SPM measures for the nation are comparable to those between the official and NYCgov measures for the city. Poverty rates for the total population using the alternative measures exceed the poverty rates using the official measure. For the U.S., the difference is 1.3 percentage points while the difference for the city is 1.9 percentage points.

Another distinguishing aspect between the U.S. official and alternative poverty measures—common to the city and the nation—is that, despite the higher poverty rate overall, the alternative measures yield poverty rates for children that are below the official poverty rates. The U.S. SPM poverty rate for children is 15.2 percent, 2.8 percentage points below the U.S. official rate of 18.0 percent. The NYCgov poverty rate for children is 22.2 percent, 3.4 percentage points below the official rate of 25.6 percent for New York City.

The lower child poverty rates under the NAS-style measures shed light on the effectiveness of government benefit programs—many of which are targeted toward families with children—as discussed in Chapter 3. Note that lower child poverty rates occur despite the subtraction of nondiscretionary taxes, work-related expenses, and medical out-of-pocket costs. This is further proof that government benefits not counted in the U.S. official poverty measure reduce child poverty effectively—even when the nondiscretionary expenses limit the resources available for families with children to meet their needs for food and shelter.

Elderly poverty rates, however, are higher under the NAS-style measures than under the U.S. official measure, 5.2 percentage points for the U.S. and 3.3 percentage points for New York City. This is primarily a result of the alternative measures' deduction of MOOP expenses from the income measure, an important factor when considering the higher medical costs of the elderly.

## 4.6 Extreme Poverty and Near Poverty

**Extreme Poverty:** In Chapter 3 we noted that the proportion of the population living in extreme poverty (below 50 percent of the poverty line) is smaller under the NYCgov poverty measure and the SPM than under the U.S. official measure. Table 4.2 compares extreme poverty rates for the U.S. and New York City by age using the official, SPM, and NYCgov measures. A smaller fraction of the nation's population is

<sup>8</sup> The U.S.-level SPM poverty rates cited in this chapter are taken from Fox, 2016.

Table 4.2

### Comparison of Extreme Poverty Rates by Age Group Using Different Measures, 2016 (Numbers are Percent of the Population)

A. United States			
	Official	SPM	Percentage Point Difference
Total	5.8	4.9	<b>-0.9</b>
Under 18	8.2	4.4	<b>-3.8</b>
18 through 64	5.5	5.1	<b>-0.4</b>
65 and Older	3.3	5.2	<b>1.9</b>
B. New York City			
	Official	NYCgov	Percentage Point Difference
Total	7.1	5.1	<b>-2.1</b>
Under 18	11.3	4.3	<b>-7.0</b>
18 through 64	6.4	5.3	<b>-1.1</b>
65 and Older	4.1	5.4	<b>1.2</b>

Sources: U.S. Bureau of the Census and American Community Survey Public Use Micro Sample as augmented by NYC Opportunity.

Notes: Differences are measured in percentage points and are taken from unrounded numbers; those in **bold** type are statistically significant. Official poverty rates, reported in Panel B, are based on the NYC Opportunity poverty universe and unit of analysis.

in extreme poverty using the alternative poverty measure: 0.9 percentage points lower. The corresponding difference for the city is 2.1 percentage points. The pattern of differences across age groups is similar. For the nation and the city, the largest difference between the official and alternative measures of extreme poverty is for children, 3.8 percentage points and 7.0 percentage points, respectively. Differences between the measures for working age adults in extreme poverty are more modest: 0.4 percentage points for the U.S. and 1.1 percentage points for New York City.

When using alternative measures, the pattern of lower rates of extreme poverty is reversed for the elderly. Historically, the alternative measures have found a higher incidence of extreme poverty for persons 65 and older than the official measure. For the U.S., the SPM extreme poverty rate for people 65 and older is 1.9 percentage points above the U.S. official rate. In 2016, the NYCgov extreme poverty rate for the elderly is 1.2 percentage points above the official rate.

**Near Poverty:** Table 4.3 reports the share of the U.S. and New York City population that is near poor in the official and NAS-based poverty measures. The near poor poverty rate is defined here as the proportion of the population whose income ranges from 100 to 150 percent of the respective poverty thresholds. As Chapter 3 indicated, the NYCgov measure places a much larger

Table 4.3

**Comparison of Near Poverty Rates by Age Group  
Using Different Measures, 2016** (Numbers are Percent of the Population)

<b>A. United States</b>			
	<b>Official</b>	<b>SPM</b>	<b>Percentage Point Difference</b>
Total	8.5	15.4	<b>6.9</b>
Under 18	10.9	19.8	<b>8.9</b>
18 through 64	7.0	13.8	<b>6.8</b>
65 and Older	10.8	15.1	<b>4.3</b>
<b>B. New York City</b>			
	<b>Official</b>	<b>NYCgov</b>	<b>Percentage Point Difference</b>
Total	9.8	24.0	<b>14.2</b>
Under 18	12.3	31.1	<b>18.8</b>
18 through 64	8.5	21.9	<b>13.5</b>
65 and Older	11.9	22.6	<b>10.7</b>

Sources: U.S. Bureau of the Census and American Community Survey Public Use Micro Sample as augmented by NYC Opportunity.

Notes: Differences are measured in percentage points and are taken from unrounded numbers; those in **bold** type are statistically significant. Official poverty rates, reported in Panel B, are based on the NYC Opportunity poverty universe and unit of analysis.

share of the population in near poverty than does the U.S. official measure. Likewise, the Census Bureau's SPM categorizes a larger share of the nation in this group than the official measure. For the population as a whole, the SPM near poverty rate is 15.4 percent, 6.9 percentage points above the U.S. official rate. The difference between the SPM and the official measure is particularly high for children, at 8.9 percentage points.

The near poverty rate is substantially higher under the NYCgov measure than the official or SPM measures. The NYCgov measure, for example, categorizes 24.0 percent of the city population as near poor while the corresponding proportion from the U.S. official measure is 9.8 percent, a 14.2 percentage point difference. One reason for the larger between-measure difference for New York City compared to the nation is the geographic adjustment that accounts for the relatively high cost of housing in New York City. The resulting NYCgov poverty threshold is higher than the U.S.-wide SPM poverty threshold.

We use the SPM threshold for renters in 2016 in the following example: The U.S.-wide SPM threshold for a two-adult, two-child family of renters was \$26,104 while the comparable NYCgov threshold was \$6,298 higher at \$32,402. The near poor in the U.S.-wide SPM measure are defined as people living in families with

equivalent incomes of \$26,104 through \$39,156 (1.5 times the threshold). The near poor for the NYCgov measure are people living in families with the equivalent income of \$32,402 to \$48,603. The NYCgov measure categorizes a much larger share of the population as near poor because the income band that defines the group is higher and larger.

#### 4.7 Changes in the SPM and NYCgov Poverty Rates, 2012–2016

Table 4.4 reproduces the Census Bureau’s SPM national poverty rates for the years 2012–2016 and comparable data for New York City using the NYCgov measure. However, it should be noted that in 2013, the Census Bureau implemented redesigned survey instruments for the March Current Population Survey (CPS),<sup>9</sup> causing a break in data series of the SPM. For this reason, we emphasize changes in poverty for the years 2014 to 2016.

From 2014 to 2016, the SPM measure shows a statistically significant decline in the poverty rate for the total population, for children, and for working age adults from 2014 to 2016. The NYCgov measure shows significant declines only for the total population and working age adults.

Comparing 2016 to 2015, the SPM measure finds statistically significant declines in the U.S. poverty rate for all age groups. For the NYCgov poverty rate, there are no significant declines by age group.

<sup>9</sup> See the technical documentation for the 2016 CPS Annual Social and Economic Supplement (ASEC): <https://www2.census.gov/programs-surveys/cps/techdocs/cpsmar16.pdf>

Table 4.4  
**Change in Poverty Rates, U.S. SPM and NYCgov, 2012–2016** (Numbers are Percent of the Population)

A. United States, SPM						Percentage Point Difference	
Year	2012	2013*	2014	2015	2016	2012–2016	2015–2016
Total	16.0	15.8	15.3	14.5	14.0	<b>-1.3</b>	<b>-0.5</b>
Under 18	18.0	18.1	16.7	16.2	15.2	<b>-1.5</b>	<b>-1</b>
18 through 64	15.5	14.9	15	14.1	13.3	<b>-1.7</b>	<b>-0.8</b>
65 and Older	14.8	15.5	14.4	13.7	14.5	0.1	<b>0.8</b>
B. New York City, NYCgov						Percentage Point Difference	
Year	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2014–2016	2015–2016
Total	20.7	20.7	20.6	19.9	19.5	<b>-1.1</b>	-0.4
Under 18	24.5	23.0	23.2	22.8	22.2	<b>-1.0</b>	-0.6
18 through 64	19.5	19.8	19.7	18.6	18.3	<b>-1.4</b>	-0.3
65 and Older	20.3	21.5	20.8	21.6	20.8	0.1	-0.8

Sources: U.S. Bureau of the Census published data for 2012 through 2016, and American Community Survey Public Use Micro Sample as augmented by NYC Opportunity.  
 Notes: Changes are measured in percentage points. Those for NYCgov rates are taken from unrounded numbers; those in **bold** type are statistically significant.  
 \* Estimates are based on responses from a sample of the population who completed the redesigned income and health insurance questions.

Chapter 5:

# Poverty in the City, Policy Responses, and the Path Forward

## Chapter 5: Poverty in the City, Policy Responses, and the Path Forward

In his second inaugural address on January 1, 2018, Mayor de Blasio declared that the animating theme for the second term would be establishing New York City as “the fairest big city in America.” An important part of this vision, which the mayor reiterated the following month in his State of the City address, is increasing equity and reducing the number of New Yorkers in poverty. This vision builds on progress to date.

Both the poverty rate and the near poverty rate have declined by statistically significant amounts since the mayor took office in 2014. The City is also making greater-than-projected progress toward the goal, announced in 2015, in the New York City Government Poverty Measure and in OneNYC: The Plan for a Strong and Just City, of lifting 800,000 New Yorkers out of poverty or near poverty in ten years.

As set out in this year’s report, the NYCgov poverty rate<sup>1</sup> in 2016 was 19.5 percent, which was down from 19.9 percent in 2015. The 2016 NYCgov near poverty rate—reflecting people with resources under 150 percent of the NYCgov threshold—was 43.5 percent, down from 44.2 percent in 2015. Though neither of these one-year declines was statistically significant, both measures were down significantly from 2013, when the NYCgov poverty rate was 20.6 percent and the NYCgov near poverty rate was 45.1 percent.

The numbers also show that this progress has been widely shared across the city. From 2014 to 2016, poverty rates fell for many of the demographic groups tracked in this poverty report. This includes statistically significant declines for Blacks, Asians, working-age adults, adults working less than full time, families with children under 18, citizens, non-citizens, high school graduates, residents of the borough of Queens, and many other groups. From 2015 to 2016 poverty also fell significantly in the Bronx.

Poverty in the city also declined by other metrics. The poverty gap, which is the difference between family resources and the poverty threshold, was \$6.18 billion in 2016, a decrease of \$180 million since 2014. The average dollar value gap for all

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<sup>1</sup> For a description of the NYCgov poverty rate, see Chapter 1.

families in poverty was \$7,974 in 2016, which represents a \$71 decline from 2014 and a \$152 decline from 2015.

There was other positive news for low-income New Yorkers. The economy in the city grew steadily in 2016, providing more jobs and higher income. Median household income in New York City has increased 7.8 percent since 2014, and income in the bottom 20th percentile has increased 4 percent from 2014 (adjusted for inflation). The minimum wage has increased three times from 2014 to 2016 and the city added 329,300 jobs between January 2014 and December 2016.

These positive trends occurred at a time when the de Blasio administration was combatting poverty and advancing opportunity in a wide variety of ways, from establishing universal pre-k to bringing extensive new mental health resources to communities citywide. This work has helped produce clear progress toward the City's announced goal of lifting 800,000 New Yorkers out of poverty or near poverty by 2025. As the administration enters its second term, it will be expanding on these initiatives and introducing new ones to follow through on its commitment to a fairer, more inclusive city—including putting an increased focus on how City government itself operates.

In its work combatting poverty, the City is committed to an evidence-based approach, rigorously evaluating programs and expanding those that perform well while reducing or ending a commitment to those that are less effective. The national climate for low-income individuals and families is becoming more difficult. Key components of the social safety net, including the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), formerly known as Food Stamps, and federal housing funds, are under constant threat. Harsh new immigration policies are making life more difficult for many New Yorkers, including, in some cases, interfering with their ability to support themselves and their families. In times like these, the role of cities in standing up for vulnerable populations is more important than ever. In the past year, New York City has been at the forefront of this effort.

This chapter highlights some of the initiatives the City has launched, expanded, or maintained to combat poverty in the past year. The focus is on programs with a connection to the data presented earlier in this report, as well as to initiatives that stand out because of their size, innovation, or potential to have a major impact on poverty among New Yorkers.

## 5.1 Increasing Income

The most direct way of reducing poverty in New York City is increasing the income of residents, and the City has a wide array of initiatives aimed at doing so—many of which have recently launched or expanded. These employment-focused programs are important to advancing the City's commitment to lift 800,000 New Yorkers out of poverty or near poverty over ten years.



## Minimum Wage

An economic simulation from the poverty research team of the Mayor's Office for Economic Opportunity (NYC Opportunity) using 2013 data found that a \$15 minimum wage would be a powerful method of moving people out of poverty and near poverty. The City drew on this modeling to lobby New York State to increase the city's minimum wage.

The state did raise the minimum wage in the city through a phased-in series of increases. The minimum wage for workers in New York City rose from \$7.25 per hour in 2013 to \$9 in 2016. NYC Opportunity projections show that the minimum wage increases that began in 2013 could, on their own, move approximately 80,000 people out of poverty or near poverty by 2016. In 2016, NYCgov data reflected that there were approximately 141,000 fewer people in poverty or near poverty. This greater-than-anticipated decline was due to multiple factors and went beyond what would have been expected from increases in the minimum wage alone.

## Jobs and Job Training

The City has seen strong economic growth in recent years, adding hundreds of thousands of new jobs. These gains have not, however, reached all New Yorkers and have not been distributed evenly. Less educated and lower income New Yorkers face particular challenges in the current economy. Unemployment among New Yorkers without a college degree is almost twice the rate of the working population overall, and like much of the country New York City has seen its middle class hollow out. The City views increased job creation and job training as key to lifting New Yorkers out of poverty.

**Career Pathways:** The de Blasio administration established Career Pathways as the framework for its approach to workforce development. The Career Pathways model emerged from the Jobs for New Yorkers Task Force that put an increased emphasis on tailoring job training to specific careers. The Career Pathways program recognizes the need to make a range of supports available, from basic job readiness preparation to career advancement. The City's biggest agencies tackling workforce issues have significantly changed their approaches to align their job training work with the Career Pathways vision. The Department of Social Services (DSS)/Human Resources Administration (HRA) is altering its approach from a single rapid-attachment model to a population-specific menu of services that puts increased emphasis on education and employment skills. The Department of Small Business Services (SBS) has set a job quality standard of full time employment or \$11.50 an hour for employers using recruitment services from the Workforce1 Career Center. With support from NYC Opportunity and the Young Men's Initiative (YMI), the Department of Youth and Community Development (DYCD) is piloting bridge programming and making substantial investments in advanced training.

**HireNYC:** HireNYC was launched in 2015 to fill jobs created by the City’s purchases and investments. Through the HireNYC Portal operated by the DSS, vendors who are awarded certain City contracts are now required to consider New Yorkers for employment opportunities. HireNYC: Human Services provides free, high-quality recruitment services to contractors and free, high-quality employment services to New Yorkers seeking jobs. Since its launch, HireNYC has connected over 5,000 New Yorkers to job opportunities.

**100,000 Good Jobs:** A guiding vision behind the City’s efforts to put more New Yorkers in well-paying jobs is the goal Mayor de Blasio set in the 2017 State of the City address of creating 100,000 jobs with good wages over the next decade. The expectation is that these jobs will pay \$50,000 or more or put workers on a clear path to reaching that salary level so they can pursue a middle-class career. In his 2018 State of the City address, the mayor reiterated the importance of putting “better-paying jobs in the hands of New Yorkers.”

The mayor’s plan has three components: (1) investing in the creation of middle-class jobs; (2) ensuring that these jobs are accessible to New Yorkers; and (3) preparing for the jobs of the future.

New York Works is a set of initiatives designed to promote the creation of these 100,000 jobs through City investments and direct actions. In particular, it will be investing in and helping to promote five sectors where the potential for job growth is greatest:

- Technology, with a special focus on cybersecurity, a large and growing segment of the technology industry (30,000 jobs)
- Life sciences and health care, through LifeSci NYC, a \$500 million program intended to see that the city is at the forefront of research and innovation in the field (15,000 jobs)
- Industrial and manufacturing, with the sector increasing manufacturing capacity and facilitating the movement of goods into, around, and out of New York City (20,000 jobs)
- Creative and cultural sectors, which define the New York City brand and employ large numbers of New Yorkers, including fashion, film and TV, media and advertising, and music and the arts (10,000)
- Jobs of the future, which the City will advance by promoting growth in office districts in Manhattan and in emerging commercial centers in all five boroughs (25,000)

**NYC: ATWORK:** In April 2017, the City launched NYC: ATWORK, the City’s first public-private partnership to increase employment opportunities for New Yorkers with disabilities. The program uses a multifaceted approach to build a sustainable

pipeline of qualified individuals and helps connect them with meaningful, living wage, high-growth jobs in industries across the city.

## 5.2 Benefits Access

Benefits play an important role in reducing poverty among New Yorkers. SNAP benefits lowered the poverty rate in the city by 3.3 percentage points in 2016. In recognition of the importance of benefits in lifting families out of poverty, the City has a variety of initiatives to increase awareness of these credits and provide help in filing for them.

**ACCESS NYC:** A persistent difficulty in human services programs nationwide is ensuring that everyone who is eligible for a benefit is aware of it. ACCESS NYC is an online public screening tool that allows New Yorkers to determine their eligibility for City, state, and federal health and human service benefits. ACCESS NYC relaunched in March 2017 with a simplified ten-step screening process, plain language program information, content in seven languages, a location finder, and an accessible, mobile-responsive design. NYC Opportunity redesigned ACCESS NYC through an iterative prototyping process that engaged residents, social workers, case managers, and agency staff. The new design and core user experience were created in-house. Information about each of the benefits it covers was standardized and made available through the tool itself or via the Benefits and Programs API, a dataset that includes benefit, program, and resource information on health and human services programs available to New Yorkers. The website is open source and the code is available on Github.

ACCESS NYC was recognized at “The Best of New York 2017” at the New York Digital Government Summit in Albany, NY, and received an award for “Best Application Serving the Public.”

**GetCoveredNYC:** In 2017, the City strengthened its investment in GetCoveredNYC, a multilingual outreach initiative to enroll more New Yorkers in affordable, quality health insurance and provide them with primary and preventive care at NYC Health + Hospitals. The program, a partnership between the Mayor’s Public Engagement Unit, NYC Health + Hospitals, the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, HRA, and the MetroPlus Health Plan, proactively engages uninsured New Yorkers who may be eligible for health insurance. GetCoveredNYC specialists reach out to New Yorkers by knocking on doors, making phone calls, and holding local events with community validators, such as community-based organizations and elected officials, to inform them of their health insurance options and schedule free, in-person enrollment appointments. In 2017 the initiative included a \$3 million citywide advertising campaign, including ethnic media, and enrolled over 80,000 New Yorkers. The majority of those served by GetCoveredNYC are low-income New Yorkers who are eligible to enroll in Medicaid or the free or low-cost Essential Plan, or seniors who are eligible to enroll in Medicare, saving them a significant amount in health care costs annually.

### 5.3 Increasing and Maintaining Available Affordable Housing

From public housing to rent regulation, stable and affordable housing lowers the poverty rate and prevents homelessness. In 2016, housing supports lowered the city's poverty rate by 6.1 percentage points.

**Housing Plan:** In October 2017, Mayor de Blasio announced an expansion of the administration's affordable housing plan, which originally set a goal of building or preserving 200,000 units of affordable housing in ten years. At the time, the mayor stated that the original plan, which was announced in 2013, was two years ahead of schedule. Under the expansion, the City will finance an additional 100,000 units for a total of 300,000 by 2026. To finance the new plan, the City will invest an additional \$150 million per year in the existing four-year finance plan.

At the same time, the mayor announced the launch of a new initiative, Neighborhood Pillars, which will create a \$275 million public-private fund to use in fast-changing neighborhoods where aggressive speculation threatens traditional rent-regulated apartments. Through the program, the largest of its kind in the nation, the City's Department of Housing Preservation and Development will fund nonprofits and other mission-driven organizations to purchase older rent-regulated buildings so they can be maintained as affordable housing and current tenants can remain in place. Plans call for Neighborhood Pillars to secure an addition 1,000 affordable homes a year.

**NYC Rent Freeze:** New York City renters who live in the city's approximately 1 million rent-regulated apartments have benefited from strong efforts by the New York City Rent Guidelines Board to rein in the high cost of housing. In 2015 and 2016, the board voted to freeze rents on one-year leases and to limit increases on two-year leases to 2 percent. In June 2017, the board voted to allow 1.25 percent increases for one-year leases and 2 percent for two-year leases. The 2017 increases were below the rate of inflation in 2017, and cumulative increases since 2015 have been well below it as well.

The City has programs that offer relief from rent increases to some of the most vulnerable New Yorkers. The Senior Citizen Rent Increase Exemption (SCRIE) freezes the rent for head-of-household seniors 62 or older who live in rent-regulated apartments and have a household income of \$50,000 or less. The income cap was raised under Mayor de Blasio from \$29,000. The Disability Rent Increase Exemption (DRIE) provides exemptions against future rent increases for eligible disabled persons living in rent-controlled, rent-stabilized, Mitchell-Lama, and other eligible apartments. In both programs, landlords receive tax credits to make up the difference between the frozen rent and the amount tenants would otherwise be paying.

The mayor's Public Engagement Unit's Rent Freeze Team, launched in the summer of 2017 in partnership with the NYC Department of Finance and the Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities, proactively engages targeted

low-income tenants who may be eligible for the SCRIE or DRIE programs through door knocking, phone calls, and by holding events with community validators, including elected officials. The Rent Freeze Team also conducts outreach to homeowners who may qualify for the Senior Citizen Homeowners Exemption (SCHE) and the Disability Homeowners Exemption (DHE), which provide tax relief to lower income homeowners who may be experiencing financial hardship due to rising housing costs.

**HOME-STAT:** Homeless Outreach and Mobile Engagement Street Action Teams (HOME-STAT) is the most comprehensive street homelessness outreach effort ever deployed in a major American city. Launched in 2016, it conducts proactive weekly canvasses of every block in Manhattan from Canal Street to 145th Street, and selected locations in other boroughs, to identify people in need of services and to inform contracted Street Outreach Teams. Unlike traditional counts that are conducted overnight, HOME-STAT canvassing provides a regular, consistent snapshot of street homelessness and helps connect people to skilled outreach providers.

In June 2017, the City announced that HOME-STAT had helped nearly 1,500 street homeless off the city's streets and transitioned them into safer, more stable environments, including transitional programs and permanent housing. The program has operated as a collaboration between the Department of Homeless Services, the New York City Police Department, other agency partners, and not-for-profit social service providers. Its success has been made possible by new City investments in outreach programs and providers, a substantial increase in dedicated shelter capacity, and a doubling of the number of outreach staff deployed in all five boroughs and around the clock.

**Shelter Expansion:** In February 2017, Mayor de Blasio announced Turning the Tide on Homelessness, an initiative to reduce street homelessness and move more homeless New Yorkers into permanent housing. As part of the initiative, the mayor announced plans to open approximately 90 new shelters over the next five years and to expand approximately 30 more. The new shelters will have security overseen by the NYPD as well as on-site career counsellors, mental health and substance abuse disorder counselors, and other services. In January 2018, the City opened the tenth of these new shelters and it continues to identify locations and launch new ones. That same month, the City gave notice that a budget hotel on West 58th Street in Midtown Manhattan that is close to luxury skyscrapers known as "Billionaires' Row" will be converted into a shelter.

**One Shot Assistance:** The City's One Shot Deal emergency assistance program offers people who cannot meet an unexpected expense the funds to meet it and, in many cases, avoid the threat of homelessness. The program offers assistance to New Yorkers facing homelessness, dispossession/eviction, utilities termination, fire disasters, domestic violence, and other circumstances that put their own and their family's health and safety at risk.

Enhanced one shot deals, established by the HRA and the Department of Homeless Services, are also available, primarily to assist homeless working families in the shelter system to leave it and move into independent living. To be eligible, New Yorkers must have resided in the NYC shelter system for at least 60 days.

**Legal Services for Tenants:** In August 2017, New York City enacted a law making it the first city in the nation that will provide all tenants facing eviction in housing court and those in New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) administrative proceedings with access to legal services. Mayor de Blasio signed the new law establishing the Universal Access initiative, overseen by the Civil Justice Coordinator at the HRA, which is expected to serve 400,000 New Yorkers annually when fully implemented in 2022. Before the start of this administration, tenants in Housing Court rarely had legal representation. In 2013, state court officials estimated that just 1 percent of tenants facing eviction in Housing Court were represented by counsel. The administration significantly expanded the availability of City-funded legal services for low-income tenants, increasing funding for legal assistance for tenants facing eviction and harassment twelvefold, from \$6 million in 2013 to \$77 million in 2018. The Mayor’s Public Engagement Unit and the HRA’s Office of Civil Justice will conduct outreach in targeted neighborhoods across the city to ensure that tenants in these communities know their rights and have access to the legal services they need.

**Displacement Protection:** In November 2017, the City adopted a new policy to protect tenants from the cycle of harassment and displacement. The Certification of No Harassment program requires covered building owners seeking to demolish or make significant alterations to prove that they have not engaged in tenant harassment before they can get necessary permits from the New York City Department of Buildings.

When a landlord applies for certification, tenants, community groups, the community board, and elected officials are notified. The City then investigates, including interviewing current and former tenants, to determine whether the landlord engaged in harassment. Landlords who are found to have harassed tenants are not eligible for permits for five years—unless they make a substantial portion of their building affordable to low-income families without public subsidies.

**Tenant Support Unit:** The Tenant Support Unit (TSU), part of the Mayor’s Public Engagement Unit, uses proprietary technology and a data-driven approach to engage and provide assistance to New Yorkers who may be at risk of displacement or who are experiencing harassment. Outreach specialists engage New York tenants through door-to-door outreach to inform them of their rights, identify any housing-related issues, and connect them with a range of resources, such as emergency repairs and legal assistance.

**HomeBase:** Under the auspices of the Department of Homeless Services, the HomeBase program provides homeless prevention services to New Yorkers at



risk of eviction. Working out of community-based prevention centers staffed with homelessness prevention experts, the program offers a variety of services under a single roof, including eviction prevention services, assistance in obtaining rental assistance, and emergency rental assistance. HomeBase helps tenants develop a personalized plan to overcome an immediate housing crisis and achieve housing stability.

**Home Support Unit:** The Home Support Unit (HSU), part of the Mayor’s Public Engagement Unit, partners with the DSS and community-based providers to help New Yorkers transitioning out of shelter move into stable, affordable homes. HSU specialists work with landlords and brokers to facilitate renting to tenants with rental subsidies, increasing the number of lower-income New Yorkers who find long-term housing after leaving shelter.

## 5.4 Education

The data is clear that the higher the level of education an individual attains, the lower their risk of falling into poverty. A New Yorker who did not graduate high school is four times more likely to be in poverty than a college graduate. Programs to increase educational opportunity begin at pre-k and continue through college completion.

**Universal Pre-K and Universal 3-K:** In April 2017, Mayor de Blasio announced 3-K for All, the most ambitious effort in U.S. history to provide universal, high-quality, free full-day early childhood education for all 3-year-olds, regardless of family income. The City launched the program in the fall of 2017 in District 7 in the South Bronx and District 23 in Brownsville. By the fall of 2018, the program aims to have a seat for every 3-year-old living in those districts whose family would like to enroll them. The City has announced plans to extend 3-K for All to 12 community school districts by 2020, and to maintain the program citywide in the 2021–2022 school year with additional support from partners in the state and federal government.

The initiative builds on the success of Pre-K for All, the City’s universal pre-k program for 4-year-olds. The City has executed on Pre-K for All’s commitment to provide universal, high-quality free pre-k to all 4-year-old New Yorkers. Full-day pre-kindergarten enrollment grew from 19,000 in September 2013 to 53,000 in 2014 to more than 68,000 in 2016. This is the first time in the city’s history that every child whose family wanted to enroll them in kindergarten was able to receive a seat.

**Graduation, Enrollment, and Other Educational Metrics:** In February 2018, the City announced a record high graduation rate of 74.3 percent, with the dropout rate falling to 7.8 percent, the lowest ever. The graduation rate rose and the dropout rate fell among every ethnic group and in every borough.

In 2017, the City announced the highest ever postsecondary enrollment rate—57 percent of the rate of the Class of 2016. It also announced the highest ever number of New York City students taking and passing Advanced Placement (AP) exams in 2017, with a 9.9 percent increase in students taking at least one AP exam and a 7.5 percent increase in the number of students passing at least one AP exam.

The City also reported the highest ever college readiness rate, with 47 percent of all students and 64 percent of all graduates in the class of 2017 graduating high school on time and meeting CUNY’s standards for college readiness in English and math.

### Equity and Excellence

The de Blasio administration’s Equity and Excellence initiative works to ensure that all of the city’s students have a chance to achieve at high levels, with a focus on preparing for college and careers. It concentrates on three key areas: Academic Excellence, or striving to ensure that every student is college- and career-ready; Student and Community Support, which works to support the whole child, and their whole family, inside and outside the classroom; and Innovation, which means experimenting with different approaches to achieve goals. Equity and Excellence has launched a wide array of programs, including:

- **Universal Literacy:** The Universal Literacy program works to ensure that every student is reading on grade level by the end of 2nd grade. When launched in 2015–2016, the program set the goal of having at least two-thirds of students read proficiently by 2nd grade within six years, with a target of 100 percent of all 2nd graders reading proficiently by 2026. In February 2017, Schools Chancellor Fariña announced a new \$3 million investment in classrooms as part of the initiative, which will allow 107 participating elementary schools to build classroom libraries for kindergarten, 1st, and 2nd grades. Principals are working with their Universal Literacy reading coaches to purchase classroom library books, as well as collections of texts for small group instruction in targeted grades.
- **AP for All:** AP for All is intended to give every high school student access to Advanced Placement courses, with the goal of offering students at all high schools access to a full slate of at least five AP classes by fall 2021. In the 2016–2017 school year, the program supported new AP classes at 63 schools, including 30 that had not offered AP courses in the previous year. As a result of the program, 75 percent of high school students will have access to at least five AP courses by the fall of 2018. AP for All was a significant driving force behind the record number of city students who took AP courses in 2017, particularly Black and Hispanic students.
- **Algebra for All:** Algebra for All aims to ensure that all students complete algebra no later than 9th grade, preparing them for more advanced math courses in high school. Studies have shown that students who pass algebra



no later than the 9th grade are more likely to graduate from high school and to go on to and graduate from college. The program, which spans grades 5–10, supports educators in teaching coursework that is essential to success in algebra. The City has set a goal that by 2022, all students will have access to an algebra course in 8th grade and academic supports in elementary and middle school that ensure greater algebra readiness.

- **Computer Science for All:** Computer Science for All is an unprecedented public-private partnership working to ensure that by 2025 all NYC public school students receive high-quality computer science education at every school level: elementary, middle, and high school. When fully in place, Computer Science for All will make New York City the largest school district in the nation to teach computer science to all public school students.

### Diversity in New York City Public Schools

In June, 2017, Schools Chancellor Fariña released *Equity and Excellence for All: Diversity in New York City Public Schools*, a plan for increasing diversity in the NYC school system. In addition to setting out a clear commitment to creating a more diverse and inclusive school system, the plan sets specific initial goals, which will be annually reported on pursuant to the School Diversity Accountability Act. A School Diversity Advisory Group will make formal policy recommendations to the mayor and schools chancellor, and there will be a process for engaging community school districts to include them in diversity planning.

The plan also takes into account immediate policy changes, including eliminating the Limited Unscreened method of high school admission, eliminating revealed middle school ranking, and creating online applications for middle and high school admissions. *Equity and Excellence for All* builds on steps the Department of Education has already taken locally and citywide to promote diversity, including launching Diversity in Admissions pilots to create socioeconomic diversity, increasing the number of Dual Language programs that bring together English and non-native speakers, and expanding access for Students with Disabilities.

### College Persistence

**CUNY ASAP:** City University of New York (CUNY) Accelerated Study in Associate Programs (ASAP) provides CUNY students from low-income backgrounds with a wide range of additional financial, academic, and social supports to help them in earning an associate’s degree. With funding from NYC Opportunity, the program launched in 2007 to serve just over 1,000 students. In a random assignment evaluation conducted by MDRC, CUNY ASAP was shown to have great success in increasing graduation rates. From the fall of 2011 to the fall of 2012, the overall CUNY college graduation rate for associate’s and bachelor’s degrees increased from 16.9 percent to 21.1 percent, the biggest one-year increase in 20 years. Over

half of this increase can be attributed to the expansion of ASAP during those years. As a result of the positive results achieved, the City is expanding the program to serve 25,000 students by academic year 2018–2019. The expansion will produce 12,000 more CUNY graduates, which will increase the overall CUNY three-year associate’s degree graduation rate from 12 percent to 34 percent by Fiscal Year 2022.

**ACE:** CUNY is building on the success of ASAP with the Accelerate Complete Engage (ACE) program at John Jay College of Criminal Justice. ACE is a comprehensive program that helps participants complete a bachelor’s degree in four years. Like ASAP, ACE provides students with a wide range of supports, including intensive academic advisement, career counseling, tuition assistance, and subsidies for textbooks and transportation. The program launched in the fall of 2015 with 262 students and is adding two additional cohorts with support from NYC Opportunity and private funders. At the end of the first semester, the retention rate for the original cohort was higher than for similar students not in the program.

**Behavioral Interventions at CUNY:** In cooperation with NYC Opportunity and Ideas42, a nonprofit consulting group, CUNY has used behavioral interventions, including “nudges,” to increase persistence to graduation by students. There is extensive social science evidence showing that well-administered nudges can promote socially desirable behaviors of all kinds. This has been the case at CUNY, where several recent projects have helped move students to take actions that make it more likely that they will become college graduates, a status associated with higher income and lower rates of poverty. These interventions included:

- The FAFSA Renewal project, which encourages students to renew the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). Many students fail to renew, even when they are almost certain to receive aid. Preliminary results show that the project increased FAFSA renewal by 40 percent to 50 percent.
- Two rounds of interventions at LaGuardia Community College (LaGCC), where graduation rates are as low as 16 percent, were designed to encourage students to maintain a positive mindset in their first semester. In the 2016 intervention, LaGCC students in the treatment had a 48 percent reduction in dropout rates and were 12 to 21 percentage points more likely to enroll in the spring semester than the control group.

## 5.5 Increasing Access to Opportunity

### Immigration Assistance

Poverty rates for noncitizens are consistently higher than rates for native born and naturalized citizens. The City has invested in supporting all immigrants, regardless of their status, and also in providing assistance to immigrants to transition to legal residency.

**IDNYC:** IDNYC, New York City’s official municipal identification card, helps New Yorkers more fully participate in economic, cultural, and civic life. As a free form of government identification, in particular it serves members of low-income and vulnerable communities who otherwise might not have access to official ID. An IDNYC provides access to City services and can be used to open a bank account or interact with law enforcement. Through IDNYC’s Mobile Command Center and pop-up enrollment centers, the program brings enrollment teams to harder-to-reach communities—such as homebound seniors, recently arrived immigrants, and those experiencing homelessness—to make it easier for them to obtain an ID. The card also offers numerous benefits. Since the program’s launch in 2015, IDNYC has helped cardholders redeem nearly 600 thousand free one-year museum memberships, purchase over 55 thousand discounted theater tickets, save over \$670,000 on prescriptions, and enjoy nearly 30 thousand discounted fitness memberships. In March 2017, the City announced that 1 million IDNYC cards had been issued and the program has continued to grow since then.

**NYCitizenship:** NYCitizenship provides free citizenship application assistance and financial empowerment services to immigrant New Yorkers. Launched in April 2016, the program is operated in partnership by the Mayor’s Office of Immigrant Affairs, the Brooklyn Public Library, the New York Public Library, the Queens Library, New York City HRA, the New York Legal Assistance Group, and the Mayor’s Fund to Advance New York City. NYCitizenship is supported by the Mayor’s Office for Economic Opportunity and a variety of private funders.

Through NYCitizenship, individuals receive comprehensive immigration legal screenings to determine their eligibility for citizenship, as well as full legal representation in completing the naturalization application. If eligible, individuals also receive assistance with fee waiver and disability waiver applications, as well as connections to free and confidential financial counseling. In 2017, NYCitizenship reached over 7,200 individuals and filed over 850 citizenship applications.

**ActionNYC:** Launched in 2016, ActionNYC is a citywide community-based immigration legal services program operated jointly by the Mayor’s Office of Immigrant Affairs (MOIA), HRA, and CUNY. It is implemented in collaboration with over 20 community-based organizations and legal services providers across the five boroughs. Immigrant New Yorkers receive free, safe, and high-quality immigration legal services in their community and in their language. These services include comprehensive immigration legal screenings regarding immigration legal options; trusted legal advice; full legal representation in straightforward immigration matters such as citizenship, green card renewals, temporary protected status, and other services, including directed referrals to other City-funded programs for complex immigration legal matters and cases involving removal defense.

**Legal Services for Immigrants at HRA’s Office of Civil Justice:** The Office of Civil Justice (OCJ) at HRA oversees an array of legal services programs for immigrant New Yorkers in need of assistance. Through the administration’s Immigrant Opportunity

Initiative (IOI), networks of nonprofit legal providers and community-based organizations conduct outreach in immigrant communities across the city and provide legal assistance to low-income immigrant New Yorkers in matters ranging from citizenship and lawful permanent residency applications to more complex immigration matters. OCJ also oversees immigration legal services programs funded through federal Community Service Block Grants that allow legal services organizations to assist immigrant adults and youth attain citizenship and lawful immigration status, as well as services targeted to groups such as immigrant survivors of domestic violence and human trafficking, low-wage immigrant workers at risk of exploitation and violations of their employment rights, and immigrant youth in foster care. This year, OCJ is also overseeing immigration legal services programs funded through City Council discretionary grants, including the New York Immigrant Family Unity Project (NYIFUP) and the Unaccompanied Minors and Families Initiative (UMI)/ Immigrant Children Advocates Relief Effort (ICARE), which supports legal representation for low-income immigrants facing removal proceedings.

*For more on the City's programs for immigrants, see the Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs Annual Report for 2018: [http://www1.nyc.gov/assets/immigrants/downloads/pdf/moia\\_annual\\_report\\_2018\\_final.pdf](http://www1.nyc.gov/assets/immigrants/downloads/pdf/moia_annual_report_2018_final.pdf)*

### Small Business Opportunity

**Minority and Women-Owned Businesses and Small Businesses:** In Fiscal Year 2017, the City for the first time awarded over \$1 billion to minority and women-owned business enterprises (M/WBEs). This figure reflects only awards from mayoral agencies. When non-mayoral agencies are included, such as those that receive federal and state funding, the City has awarded over \$6 billion to M/WBEs since the start of the de Blasio administration.

In May 2017, the mayor convened all of the City's designated banks to work on ways to promote access to capital for M/WBEs in the city. In February 2018, he announced the first round of commitments to emerge from that convening. Three of the City's designated banks—Amalgamated, Bank of America, and TD Bank—have committed \$40 million toward two of the City's three programs that help M/WBEs and small businesses access affordable loans to grow and sustain these businesses. These loan programs, the Contract Financing Loan Fund and the Emerging Developer Loan Fund, were established by the de Blasio administration to address historic barriers faced by many M/WBEs and small businesses in obtaining access to capital.

The City successfully lobbied the state legislature to pass two bills in June 2017 that expanded the City's authority to spend money on M/WBEs. The new laws free the City to spend as much as \$150,000 on M/WBEs without going through the full range of bureaucratic hurdles, which will allow for smaller projects to be more expeditiously approved, among other changes.

## 5.6 Health Care

**Connections to Care:** One in five New Yorkers face mental health issues each year, which often go untreated, particularly in low-income communities. In addition to being affordable, care must be culturally relevant and delivered in the language of the recipient. In 2015, NYC Opportunity partnered with the Mayor’s Fund to Advance NYC and the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene to launch Connections to Care (C2C), a program that funds community-based organizations (CBOs) across the city to be a part of the mental health solution. The 15 CBOs funded by C2C contract with mental health providers (MHPs) to train CBO staff in evidence-based mental health skills relevant to the needs of their communities, including Mental Health First Aid, Motivational Interviewing, and psychoeducation.

Early outcomes from C2C are encouraging. About 18 months into the program, providers met the five-year goal of training 1,000 staff in C2C’s four core modalities. As of December 31, 2017, C2C providers and their partners trained 1,097 staff members in at least one of the four modalities. Organizations began serving participants in the fall of 2016. As of December 31, 2017, trained staff have served close to 13,000 individuals with one of the C2C modalities and/or referrals to their MHP partner. About 30 percent of program participants have screened positive for mental health needs like depression, anxiety, trauma, or substance use. CBO staff are now equipped to support participants and refer them to clinical services, both through their contracted MHP partnerships and with other providers in the community. Once referred, about 74 percent of participants engage in clinical services.

In December 2017, the RAND Corporation, which is the C2C evaluator, published a research brief that provides an in-depth look at perceptions of C2C from leaders of participating CBOs, including early findings on program implementation, best practices for partnerships between CBOs and MHPs, and strategies to develop staff buy-in to take on mental health skills. Leaders report that C2C is succeeding at this early stage in important ways, including improving staff members’ ability to deliver workforce, education, and other services in addition to mental health supports. RAND will release the first C2C Interim Report in September 2018 and a third research brief in late 2019. The final evaluation report will be released in mid-2020.

## 5.7 Improving the Anti-Poverty Infrastructure

**Service Design Studio:** In October 2017, NYC Opportunity launched its Service Design Studio which supports City agency partners in applying human-centered design to program development and implementation. “Service design” refers to techniques used to create, understand, and improve products, policies, and services by focusing on the actual experiences of people involved with them. The Studio, launched with support from founding partner Citi Community Development and

managed in coordination with the Mayor’s Fund, brings a variety of resources that are often underutilized in government.

In its first months, the Studio has supported a number of significant projects that address the needs of low-income New Yorkers. The Studio worked on NYCHA Broadband, the City’s \$10 million initiative to bring free broadband service to five NYCHA housing developments, including conducting user research with Queensbridge residents to guide the online experience for the new service. It also helped to inform and operationalize HOME-STAT, the most comprehensive street homelessness outreach effort ever deployed in a major American city, working with the Department of Homeless Services and colleagues at the Mayor’s Office of Operations.

**Social Indicators Report:** The City releases an annual Social Indicators Report that analyzes social conditions citywide. An overall statistical portrait of conditions in the city, the report reveals areas where unmet needs exist and areas where progress is being made. It examines eight domains that cut across the responsibilities of individual agencies: Education, Health and Wellbeing, Housing, Empowered Residents and Neighborhoods, Economic Security and Mobility, Core Infrastructure and the Environment, Personal and Community Safety, and Diverse and Inclusive Government.

Released in April 2016, the last Social Indicators Report contained more disaggregated data than ever, including breakouts by race, income, and other demographic factors. This disaggregated data can be used by the City to identify inequities and unmet needs, and to guide in addressing them.

**Growing Up NYC:** Growing Up NYC is an initiative that, working in partnership with the City’s Children’s Cabinet, brings together the City’s child- and family-related resources in a mobile-responsive accessible platform that makes it easier for parents to raise strong, healthy children—and for young people to find information related to their needs. Launched in 2016, Growing Up NYC offers information on more than 70 City, state, and federally funded benefits and programs (hosted on the Benefits and Programs API); easy-to-read age guides with developmental milestones and parenting tips; and details about local events and activities. Since its launch, the program has reached over 100,000 New York City families.

In February 2018, the City launched Generation NYC as part of Growing Up NYC, a new, first-of-its-kind digital platform targeted to New Yorkers ages 13-24. Generation NYC contains a wide array of subject matter of interest to young people in this age bracket, including information on high school and college admissions, finding employment, and mental health resources.

**Equity within City Government:** The City has long had in place a variety of programs and procedures to identify and address inequities in its own work. In



2017 the City Council enacted three laws to further promote equity efforts of this kind. One law requires City agencies to conduct equity assessments, which examine their own budgets, services and programs, and employment and contracting to identify inequities based on race, gender, income, and other characteristics, and then develop and implement equity action plans to address those inequities. The second law requires some agencies to conduct gender and racial equity training for staff. The Council's third law requires the City to annually measure and report on race and gender inequities. The legislation also creates an Equity Committee to advise agencies on equity matters; the chair and most of its members are appointed by the mayor.

The Mayor's Office of Operations and NYC Opportunity have been assisting agencies in complying with the new equity requirements.

### **5.8 Ongoing Portfolio Programs**

NYC Opportunity, the producer of this report, supports the City's efforts to reduce poverty and advance equity using research and evidence. NYC Opportunity also promotes innovation by working with agencies and other partners to develop, manage, and evaluate program and policy initiatives to support low-income New Yorkers.

This work involves many parts of City government. Tables 5.1 and 5.2 below show the breadth of the effort, presenting data on the performance of an array of City agencies, including data drawn from the Preliminary Mayor's Management Report (PMMR) of February 2018. The PMMR is produced by the Mayor's Office of Operations and includes data on the performance of City agencies during Fiscal Years 2015–2017, as well as the first four months of Fiscal Year 2018.

NYC Opportunity also works closely with the Young Men's Initiative—the pioneering municipal strategy for addressing the disparities faced by young men of color.

These tables reflect activity from Fiscal Years 2015–2017, which are the closest available comparisons to the 2016 poverty data contained in this report. For more detailed information on the agencies, initiatives, indicators, and their performance over time, see the full MMR report at [www.nyc.gov/mmr](http://www.nyc.gov/mmr).

### **5.9 Looking Forward**

The latest poverty and near poverty numbers are good news. Poverty and near poverty rates are down, and jobs and median income are up. The gains are being felt across the city, in all boroughs and all demographic groups. The evidence shows that increases in the minimum wage have been making an important difference and helping to move the City toward meeting its goal of lifting 800,000 New Yorkers out of poverty or near poverty by 2025.

In its first four years, the de Blasio administration launched an array of initiatives that have made a major difference in the lives of poor New Yorkers. It put in place universal, free, high-quality pre-k that is now available for all 4-year-olds in the city. It created the HOME-STAT program, the most comprehensive strategy for addressing street homelessness ever tried in an American city, and an array of technical tools to help low-income New Yorkers access critical benefits.

There is a great deal more to come. The City has announced plans for universal pre-k for 3-year-olds and has begun rolling out the program in the first school districts. The mayor announced a goal of creating 100,000 good paying jobs, and there are plans in place for seeing that ambitious goal through. By 2019 the minimum wage will be \$15 per hour. The City's affordable housing program, ahead of schedule for its original commitment to build or preserve 200,000 units of affordable housing, has increased the goal to 300,000 units.

These are challenging times nationally as the federal government looks for ways to shrink the social safety net and targets immigrants. Global economic conditions today are also, in many ways, unprecedented. But New York City has shown in the past four years that well-conceived, well-operated programs can make an important difference in the lives of poor people—and its ambitions and goals for fighting poverty and increasing opportunity will be even greater in the days ahead.



Table 5.1

**Selected Performance Indicators from NYC Opportunity and Young Men's Initiative (YMI)**

<b>Education</b>		
<b>CUNY Accelerated Study in Associate Programs (ASAP) (CUNY)</b> The Center launched 9/2007	Fiscal Year 2017 Comparison Group	Fiscal Year 2017 Actual
Enrollees Cohort 10 (Entered Academic Year 2016–2017)	N/A <sup>1</sup>	10,436
Enrollees Cohort 9 (Entered Academic Year 2015–2016)	N/A <sup>2</sup>	5,678
Enrollees Cohort 8 (Entered Academic Year 2014–2015)	12.7%	2,278
Enrollees Cohort 7 (Entered Fall 2013)	28.4%	57.6%
Cohort 6 (Fall 2012) Graduation Rate after Three Years	29.2%	55.4%
Cohort 5 (Fall 2011) Graduation Rate after Three Years	24.8%	57.1%
<b>Young Adult Literacy Program / Community Education Pathways to Success (DYCD/BPL/NYPL/QPL/DOP)</b> The Center launched 11/2007, YMI expansion began 8/2011	Fiscal Year 2016	Fiscal Year 2017
New Enrollees	725	785
Gained 1 or More Literacy Grade Level	69% (312 / 453)	61% (325 / 533)
Gained 1 or More Numeracy Grade Level	66% (296 / 451)	61% (315 / 520)
<b>Employment</b>		
<b>Jobs-Plus (NYCHA/HRA/DCA-OFE)</b> The Center launched 10/2009, YMI expansion began 3/2013	Fiscal Year 2016	Fiscal Year 2017
New Enrollees	3,148	2,373
Placed in Jobs	1,418	1,420
3-6 Month Job Retention <sup>3</sup>	848	910
<b>Sector-Focused Career Centers (SBS)</b> The Center launched 6/2008		
New Enrollees	17,632	16,892
Placed in Jobs Paying \$10/Hour or More, or Promoted	2,819	3,133
<b>Young Adult Internship Program (DYCD)</b> The Center launched 11/2007, YMI expansion began 8/2011		
Participants	1,803	1,744
Percent of Participants Who Completed Internship	82%	83%
Percent of Participants Placed in Employment or Education	57%	59%

<sup>1</sup> Indicators shown reflect the most recent outcomes for each cohort. Three-year graduation rates are only available for Cohorts 1 to 7. Cohorts 8, 9, and 10 do not have any graduation data, as the cohort has not reached the three-year mark yet.

<sup>2</sup> Beginning with Cohort 9, ASAP will no longer be creating comparison groups for analysis, but will instead monitor progress against goals based on historical outcomes from the previous eight cohorts.

<sup>3</sup> Metric changed from 3 Month Job Retention to 3-6 Month Job Retention.

Table 5.1 continued on next page.

Table 5.1

**Selected Performance Indicators from NYC Opportunity and Young Men's Initiative (YMI)***(continued)*

<b>Health</b>		
<b>School-Based Health Centers (DOHMH),</b> The Center launched 6/2008	Fiscal Year 2016	Fiscal Year 2017
Program Participants	15,909	17,474
Program Participants Utilizing the Clinics	9,977	11,245
Number of Total Clinic Visits	47,734	51,855
<b>Shop Healthy NYC (DOHMH)</b> The Center launched 1/2012		
Number of Stores That Are Promoting Healthy Foods	146	88
Number of Community Members Who Attended a Training Event	342	1,003
<b>Justice</b>		
<b>Arches: Transformative Mentoring (DOP)</b> YMI launched 7/2012	Fiscal Year 2016	Fiscal Year 2017
Program Participants	611	N/A
Number of New Participants Receiving One-On-One Mentoring	412	N/A
Completed Program %	61%	N/A
<b>Employment Works (SBS and DOP)</b> The Center launched 8/2008		
Program Participants	2,641	5,376
Placed in Jobs	843	994
6-Month Job Retention %	52%	50%
<b>Justice Community (DOP)</b> The Center and YMI launched 1/2012		
Program Participants	215	210
Placed in Job or Education %	37%	33%

Table 5.2

**Selected Agency Performance Indicators**

Agency/Program Area	Indicator Name	Fiscal Year 15	Fiscal Year 16	Fiscal Year 17
<b>Administration For Children's Services</b>				
Early Child Care and Education	Average EarlyLearn contract enrollment	30,079	30,671	30,117
	Average EarlyLearn center-based enrollment	23,077	23,396	22,663
	Average EarlyLearn family childcare enrollment	7,002	7,275	7,454
	Average EarlyLearn utilization (%)	81.8%	83.4%	81.9%
	Average EarlyLearn center-based utilization (%)	82.0%	83.1%	80.5%
	Average EarlyLearn utilization—family childcare (%)	81.4%	84.6%	86.7%
	Average mandated children voucher enrollment	55,000	54,761	53,723
	Average other eligible children voucher enrollment	11,801	12,659	13,245
	Average center-based childcare voucher enrollment	27,052	27,132	27,864
	Average family childcare voucher enrollment	22,177	24,119	24,786
	Average informal (home-based) childcare voucher enrollment	17,572	15,976	14,318
<b>Career Pathways</b>				
Connection to Employment	Individuals enrolled in industry-based training	14,633 (preliminary)	16,161	21,331
	Individuals obtaining industry-based training credentials	--	7,423	N/A
	Individuals connected to employment	--	63,420	57,127
	Number of jobs, internships or mentorships provided by CYE	N/A	81,915	91,070
	Cumulative number of employers that provide jobs, internships or mentorships through CYE	N/A	493	637
<b>City University Of New York (CUNY)</b>				
Academic Success	Six-year systemwide graduation rate (%) – CUNY associate's degree students	30.5%	31.8%	32.2%
	Six-year systemwide graduation rate (%) – CUNY baccalaureate students	52.7%	53.9%	54.8%
	CUNY Associate's degree recipients who transfer to a CUNY baccalaureate program within one year (%)	54.0%	54.8%	54.9%
	One-year (fall-to-fall) retention rate (%) of full-time, first-time freshmen enrolled in CUNY Associate's degree programs	67.9%	66.3%	66.0%
	One-year (fall-to-fall) retention rate (%) of full-time, first-time freshmen enrolled in CUNY baccalaureate degree programs	87.3%	86.8%	86.9%

Table 5.2 continued on next page.

Table 5.2 **Selected Agency Performance Indicators** (continued)

Agency/Program Area	Indicator Name	Fiscal Year 15	Fiscal Year 16	Fiscal Year 17
<b>Department for the Aging (DFTA)</b>				
Administer in-home services	Total meals served (000)	11,671	12,104	11,719
	Hours of home care services provided	906,442	1,102,019	1,207,529
	Total recipients of home care services	2,928	3,831	3,087
Administer senior centers	Senior center utilization rate (%)	85.0%	85.0%	81.0%
Administer the caregiver program	Persons who received information and/or supportive services through DFTA's in-house and contracted caregiver programs	11,033	11,342	10,201
<b>Department of Homeless Services (DHS)</b>				
Adult Services	Single adults entering the DHS shelter services system	18,091	19,139	19,800
	Average number of single adults in shelters per day	11,330	12,727	13,626
	Average length of stay for single adults in shelter (days)	329	355	383
	Single adults who exited to permanent housing and returned to the DHS shelter services system within one year (%)	21.8%	18.9%	17.1%
Adult Services (Street Homelessness Reduction)	Unsheltered individuals who are estimated to be living on the streets, in parks, under highways, on subways and in the public transportation stations in New York City (HOPE)	3,182	2,794	3,892
Family Services (Adult Families)	Average number of adult families in shelters per day	2,110	2,212	2,461
	Adult families entering the DHS shelter services system	1,283	1,476	1,583
	Average length of stay for adult families in shelters (days)	515	563	550
	Adult families who exited to permanent housing and returned to the DHS shelter services system within one year (%)	12.5%	8.7%	11.5%
Family Services (Families with Children)	Average number of families with children in shelters per day	10,649	12,089	12,818
	Families with children entering the DHS shelter services system	11,848	13,311	12,595
	Families with children who exited to permanent housing and returned to the DHS shelter services system within one year (%)	12.5%	10.0%	8.1%

Table 5.2 continued on next page.

Table 5.2 **Selected Agency Performance Indicators** (continued)

Agency/Program Area	Indicator Name	Fiscal Year 15	Fiscal Year 16	Fiscal Year 17
<b>Department of Education (DOE)</b>				
General Education Teaching and Learning	Students in grades 3 to 8 meeting or exceeding standards - English Language Arts (%)	30.4%	38.0%	40.6%
	Students in grades 3 to 8 meeting or exceeding standards - Math (%)	35.2%	36.4%	37.8%
Graduation and Dropout Prevention	Students in cohort graduating from high school in 4 years (%) (NYSED)	70.5%	73.0%	74.3%
	Students in cohort graduating from high school in 6 years (%) (NYSED)	77.7%	N/A	N/A
	Students with disabilities in cohort graduating from high school in 4 years (%) (NYSED)	41.1%	45.3%	46.7%
	Students with disabilities in cohort graduating from high school in 6 years (%) (NYSED)	50.1%	N/A	N/A
	Students in cohort dropping out from high school in 4 years (%) (NYSED)	9.0%	8.5%	7.8%
	Students with disabilities in cohort dropping out from high school in 4 years (%) (NYSED)	15.4%	14.4%	13.8%
<b>Department of Youth and Community Development (DYCD)</b>				
Community Development Programs	Community anti-poverty program participants achieving target outcomes designated for clients in each program area (%)	67%	64%	64%
Literacy Programs	Participants in DYCD-funded English literacy programs meeting federal standards of improvement in their ability to read, write, and speak English (%)	52%	54%	59%
Out-of-School Time Programs (OST)	COMPASS NYC programs meeting minimum attendance rate goal - elementary (school-year) (%)	87%	88%	80%
	COMPASS NYC programs meeting target enrollment (school year) (%)	96%	94%	96%
	COMPASS NYC programs meeting target enrollment (summer) (%)	92%	80%	81%
Runaway and Homeless Youth (RHY) Services	Utilization rate for crisis beds (%)	99%	96%	92%
	Utilization rate for transitional independent living (TIL) beds (%)	96%	91%	93%
	Youth reunited with family or placed in a suitable environment from crisis shelters (%)	89%	77%	77%
	Youth reunited with family or placed in a suitable environment from transitional independent living (TIL) centers (%)	92%	89%	88%
Youth Employment programs (OSY and ISY)	Youth who are out-of-school, attend a DYCD-funded training or employment program, and are placed in post-secondary education, employment, or advanced training in the 1st quarter after exiting the program (%)	68%	68%	N/A
	Youth who attend a training program while in school and are placed in post-secondary education, employment, or advanced training during the first quarter after exiting the program (%)	82%	85%	N/A

Table 5.2 continued on next page.

Table 5.2 **Selected Agency Performance Indicators** (continued)

Agency/Program Area	Indicator Name	Fiscal Year 15	Fiscal Year 16	Fiscal Year 17
<b>NYC Health + Hospitals</b>				
Health Insurance Access	Uninsured patients served	421,647	425,089	414,738
<b>Human Resources Administration (HRA)</b>				
Agencywide Management	Fair hearings upheld (%)	5.2%	7.9%	9.6%
Cash Assistance Administration	Cash assistance unduplicated number of persons (12-month) (000)	591.1	601.8	598.6
	Cash assistance caseload (point in time)(000)	192.4	196.1	194.5
	Cash assistance application timeliness rate (%)	94.4%	97.5%	97.9%
Child Support Enforcement	Child support cases with orders of support (%)	73.2%	76.7%	79.4%
	Support cases with active orders receiving current payments (%)	59.1%	59.7%	59.7%
Employment Programs	Family cases engaged in training or education in accordance with New York City guidelines (%)	25.5%	27.4%	26.3%
	Clients whom HRA helped obtain employment (000)	46.6	47.0	44.8%
	Cash assistance family cases participating in work or work-related activities per federal guidelines (official federal fiscal year-to-date average) (%)	34.1%	33.4%	27.3%
	HRA clients who obtained employment, and maintained employment or did not return to CA for 180 days (City fiscal year-to-date average) (%)	73.9%	73.3%	73.1%
	Safety Net Assistance (SNA) cases engaged in training or education in accordance with New York City guidelines (%)	20.7%	25.5%	27.0%
Public Health Insurance	Application timeliness rate for Medicaid administered by HRA (%)	96.5%	92.1%	95.6%
IDNYC	Number of applications processed	336,473	545,184	245,610
	Total number of cards issued	334,794	544,083	238,737
	Application timeliness (%)	95%	99%	99%
Homelessness Prevention Services (Eligible Children and Adults)	Adults receiving preventive services who did not enter the shelter system (%)	93.5%	90.6%	92.6%
	Adult families receiving preventive services who did not enter the shelter system (%)	91.5%	90.7%	94.0%
	Families with children receiving preventive services who did not enter the shelter system (%)	94.5%	94.1%	94.2%

Table 5.2 continued on next page.

Table 5.2 **Selected Agency Performance Indicators** (continued)

Agency/Program Area	Indicator Name	Fiscal Year 15	Fiscal Year 16	Fiscal Year 17
<b>New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA)</b>				
Public Housing Access	Occupancy rate (%)	99.5%	99.5%	99.4%
Resident/Social Services	Resident job placements — Total	1,084	1,410	3,835
	Emergency Transfer Program disposition time (days)	48.17	39.60	33.24
Section 8 Program	Section 8 Occupied Units (vouchers)	86,167	85,224	85,175
	Utilization rate for authorized Section 8 vouchers (%)	88.1%	87.0%	85.0%
<b>Small Business Services (SBS)</b>				
Workforce1 Career Centers	Workforce1 systemwide job placements and promotions	26,952	28,455	28,170

Source: Mayor's Management Report. February 2018. New York. See: <http://www1.nyc.gov/site/operations/performance/mmr.page>

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Matthew Klein, Executive Director of NYC Opportunity and Senior Advisor in the Mayor's Office of Operations, provides valuable support and guidance as we develop the report each year. This year's report is published under the aegis of Emily Newman, Acting Director of Operations.