



**children's  
defense fund**  
Leave No Child Behind®

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**Latest Data Shows Continued Child Poverty Crisis Across America**

*As fewer states saw reductions in child poverty than in previous year, millions of children continue to grow up in poverty*

**Washington, D.C.** – The Children’s Defense Fund analysis of new 2018 state data released by the U.S. Census Bureau shows that children across the nation continue to be harmed by our leader’s failure to address child poverty. Five states experienced significant decreases in child poverty from 2017, a notable drop-off from the previous year when 16 states saw a child poverty reduction.

The new data show that more than 1 in 5 children were poor in 14 states and the District of Columbia. Child poverty rates ranged from 9.5 percent in Utah to 27.8 percent in Mississippi. Half of all poor children in America live in just seven states—California, Texas, Florida, New York, Georgia, Ohio and Illinois. This year, Texas surpassed California as the state with the highest number of poor children.

The youngest children remain the poorest. In all but three states, poverty rates were higher among children under 6 than among children 6-17. In 17 states and the District of Columbia, 1 in 5 children under 6 lived in poverty.

“Too many children are growing up poor in this country—period,” said Max Lesko, national executive director for the Children’s Defense Fund. “That fewer states saw reductions in child poverty last year than in 2017 is an alarming sign. Our nation’s continued failure to address the moral and economic crisis of child poverty is shameful.”

Amid the Trump administration’s continued attacks on immigrant families, the latest Census data show more than 25 percent of Hispanic children are poor in a majority of states in America.

“We know that many immigrant families are withdrawing from programs that serve children in poverty, such as SNAP and Medicaid, out of fear of being deported or putting in jeopardy their path to citizenship,” said Kathleen King, interim director policy for the Children’s Defense Fund. “Far too many Hispanic children, many of whom are U.S. citizens, are living in poverty, and this administration’s hostile policies toward immigrant communities will only deepen this crisis.”

## Child Poverty in 2018 at a Glance

- **More than 1 in 5 children were poor** in 14 states and the District of Columbia in 2018.
- **More than 10 percent of children were extremely poor\*** in 6 states and the District of Columbia.
- **More than 1 in 5 children under 6 were poor** in 17 states and the District of Columbia.
- **More than 1 in 3 Black children were poor** in 20 states and the District of Columbia.
- **More than 1 in 4 American Indian/Alaska Native children were poor** in 20 states.
- **More than 1 in 4 Hispanic children were poor** in 30 states.

\*Poverty is defined as an annual income below \$25,465 for an average family of four, or less than \$2,122 a month, \$490 a week, or \$70 a day. Extreme poverty is defined as less than half of the annual poverty level, or less than \$12,732 for a family of four.

| States with the Highest Child Poverty Rates, 2018 |                         | States with the Largest Numbers of Poor Children, 2018 |                         |
|---|-------------------------|--|-------------------------|
| State   | 2018 Child Poverty Rate | State  | Number of Poor Children |
| <b>Mississippi</b>                                | 27.8                    | <b>Texas</b>   | 1,545,362               |
| New Mexico  | 26.3                    | <b>California</b>                                      | 1,541,067               |
| Louisiana   | 26.2                    | Florida  | 819,256                 |
| Arkansas  | 24.7                    | <b>New York</b>  | 743,024                 |
| West Virginia                                     | 24.5                    | Georgia  | 504,745                 |
| Alabama   | 23.8                    | <b>Ohio</b>  | 495,616                 |
| Kentucky  | 23.0                    | Illinois   | 456,926                 |
| South Carolina                                    | 22.6                    | North Carolina   | 455,971                 |
| Tennessee   | 22.3                    | Pennsylvania   | 434,736                 |
| Oklahoma  | 21.7                    | Michigan   | 412,692                 |

\*Bold text indicates states with Children's Defense Fund state offices

In April of this year, the Children's Defense Fund released its latest [Ending Child Poverty Now](#) report, which showed that the United States could lift millions out of poverty now by improving and investing in existing policies and programs to increase employment, make work pay and meet children's basic needs. The report detailed how investing an additional 1.4 percent of the federal budget into these proven policies and programs could reduce child poverty at least 57 percent, lift 5.5 million children out of poverty and make an immediate down payment on ending child poverty for all children.

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