

Rochester-Monroe Anti-Poverty Initiative



City of Rochester, NY
Lovely A. Warren, Mayor
Rochester City Council

ACT Rochester

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FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:

Nate Dougherty, Communication coordinator
Rochester-Monroe Anti-Poverty Initiative
(585) 749-2650
nathan.dougherty@uwrochester.org

U.S. Census Data Shows Rochester Poverty Rate And Child Poverty Rate Declines

Rochester, NY – New data released by the U.S. Census Bureau for the most recent five-year period indicates a slight decline in overall poverty rates and child poverty rates throughout the city of Rochester. The data, updated from 2015, shows the overall poverty rate dropped from 33.5 percent to 32.8 percent, meaning there are 1,200 fewer people living in poverty including 876 fewer children living in poverty.

- Rochester's **child poverty rate** decreased from 51.6 percent to 50.5 percent.
- The city's rate of **extreme poverty** (below half the federal poverty line) remained the same at 16.3 percent.
- Rochester continues to rank 4th in overall poverty among the nation's 75 largest metropolitan areas and 1st in overall poverty, child poverty, and extreme poverty among comparably sized cities.

These statistics were compiled by the City of Rochester Mayor's Office of Innovation in partnership with the Rochester-Monroe Anti-Poverty Initiative and ACT Rochester based on information gathered by the Census Bureau's five-year American Community Survey from 2012 to 2016. This survey uses a larger sample size, making it the most comprehensive and reliable measure of poverty in our country.

"We are heartened by the thoughtful and strategic work being done in communities throughout the greater Rochester region to address the root causes and ripple effects of poverty," says Jennifer Leonard, president and CEO of Rochester Area Community Foundation. "Building on this momentum is essential to improving life for all of our neighbors."

The 10 Poorest Cities Among Top 75 U.S. Metropolitan Areas		
Rank By Poverty Rate	City	Poverty Rate
1	Detroit, MI	39.4%
2	Cleveland, OH	36.0%
3	Dayton, OH	34.5%
4	Rochester, NY	32.8%
5	Greenville, NC	32.0%
6	Hartford, CT	31.9%
7	Buffalo, NY	31.2%
8	Fresno, CA	30.0%
9	Cincinnati, OH	29.9%
10	Birmingham, AL	29.4%

Source: U.S Census Bureau, American Community Survey for 2012-2016

“It is encouraging to know that there are now 1,200 fewer people living in poverty in Rochester today including 876 fewer children,” says Dr. Leonard Brock, executive director of the Rochester-Monroe Anti-Poverty Initiative. “The ability to arrest, and or reduce, poverty is a sign our community is moving in the right direction.

“Our collective anti-poverty effort remains focused on creating the systemic change needed to address the root causes of poverty. RMAPI and its partners are taking actions that will bring higher earnings and increased labor force participation, increased use and effectiveness of benefits, increased alignment of funders to our community’s poverty reduction goals, data-informed decision-making among key stakeholders and increased accessibility of basic needs, including resources that are better connected and more accessible, efficient and affordable. While these goals will not be accomplished overnight, we remain encouraged at the steps we have taken together as a community to address poverty, build stronger neighborhoods and move people into self sufficiency.”

The report put Rochester’s poverty rate into context by comparing the city’s statistics against 18 other principal cities in similar-sized metropolitan areas (those within 200,000 of Rochester’s total population). This benchmark group includes Buffalo, Hartford, Conn.; Richmond, Va.; Birmingham, Ala.; Tulsa, Okla.; Louisville, Ky.; and Honolulu.

Among this benchmark group, the Census data found that Rochester continues to rank 1st in overall poverty, childhood poverty, and extreme poverty.

While Rochester saw a drop in overall poverty and child poverty in the most recent data, these rates remain higher when compared to five years ago (2007-2011). The current Census data showed:

- Rochester’s poverty rate is still higher (32.8 percent compared with 31.1 percent).
- Rochester’s child poverty rate is still higher (50.5 percent compared with 45.8 percent).
- Rochester’s rate of extreme poverty is still higher (16.3 percent compared with 15.0 percent).

“Today’s report clearly demonstrates that poverty is a social disease that will not be easily eradicated from our community,” says Rochester Mayor Lovely A. Warren. “While the one-year decline provides some encouragement that our efforts are moving in the right direction, the overall trends continue to show that poverty remains firmly embedded. Poverty is largely the result of bad policy decisions made over multiple generations. Today’s report further inflames my anger at those decisions, which continue to rob thousands of our citizens of an opportunity to reach their full potential. It also reinforces my commitment to reversing

the effect of those decisions on future generations. We clearly have more to do so all of us in government and the private sector must keep working to bring an end to poverty in Rochester.”

Poverty Rates Among Rochester’s Benchmark Cities¹				
Rank: Overall Poverty Rate	City	Poverty Rate: Overall	Poverty Rate: Child under 18	Extreme Poverty Rate:
1	Rochester, NY	32.8%	50.5%	16.3%
2	Hartford, CT	31.9%	43.2%	14.5%
3	Buffalo, NY	31.2%	47.8%	15.4%
4	Fresno, CA	30.0%	42.2%	14.3%
5	Birmingham, AL	29.4%	47.7%	14.0%
6	New Orleans, LA	26.2%	39.8%	13.3%
7	Richmond, VA	25.4%	40.5%	13.8%
8	Grand Rapids, MI	25.1%	35.0%	11.5%
9	Tucson, AZ	25.1%	34.7%	11.7%
10	Bridgeport, CT	22.1%	32.9%	10.4%
11	Worcester, MA	22.1%	30.6%	9.9%
12	Tulsa, OK	20.3%	31.9%	9.4%
13	Salt Lake City, UT	19.1%	24.6%	9.5%
14	Albuquerque, NM	18.9%	26.8%	8.1%
15	Oklahoma City, OK	17.8%	27.0%	7.6%
16	Louisville, KY	17.7%	25.8%	7.7%
17	Raleigh, NC	14.9%	20.7%	6.7%
18	Honolulu, HI	9.5%	12.2%	4.7%

¹Principal cities in all metro areas within 200,000 population (+/-) of Rochester

For more details on the Rochester-Monroe Anti-Poverty Initiative, visit www.uwrochester.org/RMAPI.

For more details on the earlier poverty reports, visit <http://www.racf.org/Reports> or <http://www.ACTRochester.org/Poverty>