

A "Real Cost of Living" Report Series, July 2021



# TRUE Poverty

What It Takes to Avoid Poverty  
and Deprivation in the Garden State

# About Legal Services of New Jersey and Its Poverty Research Institute

Legal Services of New Jersey (LSNJ) heads the 55-year-old statewide Legal Services system, consisting of six nonprofit corporations providing free essential legal aid in civil matters to low-income people in all 21 counties. LSNJ created the Poverty Research Institute (PRI) in 1997 to assemble data and other information that would assist in its mission of providing civil legal aid. Such information can pinpoint the location, demographics, and other aspects of poverty, helping fashion more effective and efficient legal responses and solutions. Periodically, as a public service, LSNJ publishes reports and statistics gleaned from this data to enhance public awareness of poverty's scope, causes, consequences, and remedies. Greater knowledge about poverty can produce public policy decisions that alleviate some of the legal problems of those living in poverty's grasp, and thereby further serve LSNJ's core mission. PRI is New Jersey's first entity exclusively focused on developing and updating information on poverty in the state.

To offer comments or ideas in response to this report, email [sprasad@lsnj.org](mailto:sprasad@lsnj.org).

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# True Poverty

## **What It Takes to Avoid Poverty and Deprivation in the Garden State**

A “Real Cost of Living” Report Series

Legal Services of New Jersey  
Poverty Research Institute  
July 2021

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## *In Memory of De Miller*

“True Poverty” is dedicated to the memory of Melville D. Miller, Jr., who unexpectedly passed away shortly before the public release of this report. “De,” as he was universally known, was at the time of his death president emeritus of Legal Services of New Jersey (LSNJ). Before that, and for over half a century, De served as the first and, until accepting his new position, only president of LSNJ.

De did not step down, he stepped aside. While relinquishing the operational responsibilities of his former position, De continued to work on projects especially meaningful to him. One of those projects was the empirical study and public education of poverty, and alleviating its devastating, wide-ranging effects on low-income individuals and families in New Jersey. These problems were of longstanding concern to De. In 1997, through his vision and at his direction, LSNJ created the Poverty Research Institute (PRI) to assemble data and other information that would assist LSNJ in its mission of providing civil legal assistance. At that time and to date, PRI remains New Jersey’s first and only entity exclusively focused on developing and updating information about poverty in the state.

This report is one part of LSNJ’s mission. It presents the most accurate poverty data currently available, developed within a new conceptual structure that more realistically and completely defines the scope of True Poverty in New Jersey. The report was nearly finished when De passed away. While he did not live to see its release, it is now part of his legacy.

*“Society must no longer accept the status quo. We need to challenge the awful untruths about poverty. The stakes are high here; we can’t keep talking about poverty in the same way we always have been.”*

*De Miller  
President, LSNJ, 1973-2020*

# Acknowledgements

This report is a collaborative product of Legal Services of New Jersey's (LSNJ) Poverty Research Institute (PRI). Since 1997, PRI has endeavored to weave the information and perspective derived from Legal Services' statewide system of legal representation and advocacy with government and social science data, as a way to bear witness and shed light on the causes, extent, characteristics, consequences of, and potential remedies for, True Poverty in New Jersey. PRI Director Shivi Prasad and Senior Research and Policy Analysts Arnela Ombasic and Janna Driskel were responsible for data gathering, analysis, and writing. Harvey Fisher provided editorial wisdom from the inception to completion of the project. Publications Director Robin Patric and Chief Content Officer Tricia Simpson-Curtin provided overall design guidance and editing assistance. PRI is grateful to LSNJ Chief Counsels Akil Roper, Harold Rubenstein, Maura Sanders, Joshua Spielberg and Linda Babeki for their insight and guidance. A special thanks to Diana Pearce and Lisa Manzer of the University of Washington for providing Self-Sufficiency Standard budget calculations. All secondary data analysis and compilations were generated by LSNJ staff.

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All perspectives are those of Legal Services of New Jersey.

*Dawn K. Miller, Esq.  
President, Legal Services of New Jersey  
July, 2021  
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## Key Terms

Adult	Individuals 18 to 64 years.
Infant	Children 0 to 2 years.
Preschooler	Children 3 to 5 years.
School-age Child	Children 6 to 12 years.
Teenager	Children 13 to 17 years.
Family	A group of people living together related by blood, marriage, or adoption. It includes adults and children.
Household	A single adult living alone or with other adults not related by blood, marriage, or adoption.
True Poverty Level (TPL) Or True Cost of Living	Minimum income families need to afford basic needs, without public or private support; used interchangeably with deprivation.
True Poverty or Deprivation	Households and families living below TPL.
True Poverty Rate	Percentage of population below True Poverty Level (TPL) or percentage experiencing deprivation.
True Poverty Budget	Minimum income required to avoid True Poverty or deprivation. This includes the cost of seven basic or essential needs necessary for survival.
Real Cost of Living (RCL)	In previous reports, True Poverty Level or TPL was referred to as the Real Cost of Living or RCL.
Bare-Bones Budget	The absolute minimum needed to afford basic needs, without any extras such as eating out, going to a movie, or having a savings account.
Federal Poverty Level (FPL)	The measure of poverty used by the federal government.
Self-Sufficiency Standard	A nationally established preeminent methodology that calculates the True Cost of Living using a bare-bones concept. It was developed by Dr. Diana Pearce of University of Washington and is currently available for 41 states.
Basic Needs	This refers to necessities that are fundamental for survival. This term is used interchangeably with essential needs.
Essential Needs	The term basic needs is used interchangeably with essential needs. These are necessities fundamental for survival.
Critical Life Areas	This term is used to denote basic or essential needs.



# 1. Introduction

*The Census Bureau widely reported last September that 800,000 New Jerseyans were living in poverty in 2019. LSNJ PRI's TPL places that number significantly higher—closer to a third of the state's population.*

LSNJ's Poverty Research Institute (PRI) considers the "True Poverty Level" or TPL, previously referred to as the "Real Cost of Living" (RCL), to be the real basis for determining what it takes to live beyond poverty in the Garden State. The True Poverty Level is the minimum income families need to afford basic necessities, without any public or private support, and without making trade-offs. In other words, it is the lowest amount families require to avoid deprivation in any one critical life area. For New Jerseyans, the harsh reality is that the cost of just getting by, with no frills, is—on average—at least three times more than the income levels defined by the federal poverty measure. That means the depth or sweep of poverty is far greater than what the Census reports. TPL estimates, for instance, show that a family of three—one parent and two children—needs an average of \$70,372 annually to pay necessary bills, not \$20,598, as set forth by the U.S. Census Bureau for the same family size. The Census Bureau reported last September that nearly 800,000 New Jerseyans were living in poverty in 2019.<sup>1</sup> LSNJ PRI's TPL places that number significantly higher—closer to a third of the state's population.

Before the pandemic, nearly 3 million New Jerseyans lived in deprivation. COVID-19 has escalated the hardships families encounter to make ends meet. It has devastated the economy and forced many businesses to close. While New Jersey has made some recovery related to employment since the low point in April 2020, the state has regained only 58 percent of the jobs lost due to the pandemic.<sup>2</sup> About 8 percent of the labor force remains unemployed, nearly 450,000 families report food insecurity, and 35 percent are "very likely" or "somewhat likely" to experience eviction.<sup>3</sup> The health crisis continues to expose stark and long-standing inequalities in society while simultaneously exacerbating them. Specific population groups—including Blacks or African Americans, other communities of color, persons with language barriers, and families with young children—are most vulnerable to poverty and its resulting conditions. Economic hardships are expected to persist in the forthcoming months. COVID-19 has heightened the urgency to measure poverty accurately, using a more reality-driven methodology that considers the actual costs of basic necessities. Without an accurate gauge, the need will remain grossly underestimated.



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## The TPL approach brings to light what it means to live in deprivation

The last decade has seen growing acceptance of the need for a more accurate measure of income inadequacy. Many researchers have developed their own methodologies to address the flaws embedded in the federal poverty level (FPL). While unified in their fundamental understanding that the federal poverty measure understates poverty, the conversation in contemporary research has often centered on wage adequacy and middle income living. Some studies include middle class staples such as home ownership and retirement funds in their basic needs calculation. On the other hand, some contemporary research does not consider the ability to meet *all* needs on a *permanent* basis a core necessity.

Through this report, PRI hopes to steer the conversation back to poverty and deprivation. How much income does a family need to survive on a daily basis? What happens to families who lack sufficient resources to make ends meet? We use the nationally established Self-Sufficiency Standard methodology as our guide and focus on a bare-bones concept. We use a minimal, but adequate, definition of basic needs. These necessities must be safe, stable, and sufficient for sustenance, and represent those needs that people simply cannot go without, or make trade-offs in. TPL budgets show how much income households and families need to make it on their own without depending on help from the government or from their friends, family, or neighbors. On average, the measure we are advancing as the True Poverty Level threshold for New Jersey is 300 percent of the FPL. If people cannot get beyond

deprivation or TPL thresholds, they are truly living in poverty.

Poverty negatively impacts every aspect of a person's life. Individuals living in poverty face immediate harms associated with deprivation, such as not having enough to eat, struggling to pay bills, and facing eviction. Poverty also isolates individuals from essential resources. Those in poverty are more likely to live in unsafe, overcrowded, and poor quality housing; attend low-performing schools; lack access to gainful employment; and live in communities without healthy food or market options. Together, the circumstances of poverty have a devastating, lasting impact on the individuals, families, and society as a whole. Given the broad spectrum of human harm directly and indirectly caused by poverty, it is essential for policymakers to address the devastating consequences. The first step in this regard is accurately defining and measuring poverty.

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## About LSNJ PRI's True Poverty Measure

The TPL addresses all the shortcomings of the FPL and serves as a realistic guide to the minimal incomes families must have in order to meet all of their essential needs, without concession.

- The measure realistically calculates the income needed to be self-sufficient without relying

on public or private support, and without making trade-offs such as skipping medicines to buy food.

- The TPL incorporates costs for seven basic need areas including housing, child care, food, transportation, health, and taxes. A small amount is also set

aside for essential miscellaneous items.

- The measure assumes that adults work full time, and thus includes the costs associated with employment, such as transportation and child care.

- The TPL costs are differentiated by county, number of

family members, and ages of children.

- LSNJ provides TPLs for more than 700 family types, including all combinations of families with one to three adults and zero to six children, for all of the state's 21 counties. This report focuses on six family types, but budgets for all 700 family types are available on LSNJ's website, [www.lsnjlaw.org/pri](http://www.lsnjlaw.org/pri).

- Note that TPL budgets are applicable to only nonelderly working families without members with a disability. The costs for families with members with

a disability will be much higher.

- It bears emphasis that the TPL is extremely modest. It includes none of the staples of middle-class living—savings for retirement or college, the purchase of a car, or other major items (such as television or furniture)—and no allowance for luxuries of any kind—no cable, no restaurant meals or take-out, and no vacations. The budget also does not allow for expenses such as a cell phone, computer, or internet.

- COVID-19 has altered the spending patterns of some

families, particularly expenses related to transportation and child care, since many individuals are now working from home. These patterns may continue until the pandemic ends. Budgets in this report, however, assume no such exigency and are applicable to the pre-pandemic period.

- The study reflects TPL budgets for 2019. Poverty data in the report uses the 2019 American Community Survey, the latest year for which data is available through the U.S. Census Bureau.

## 2. Main Findings

There is no way to realistically gauge the extent of poverty in New Jersey without fully taking into account the escalating cost of living in the state—the third highest in the nation.<sup>4</sup> That driving factor is largely ignored by the nearly 60-year-old official federal method of defining poverty. Most specifically, Legal Services of New Jersey’s Poverty Research Institute found that the federal measure hugely understated the number of New Jerseyans living in poverty in 2019 by overlooking 2.1 million residents. The FPL reported some 800,000 in poverty when actually there were nearly 3 million in True Poverty.

Through this study, the Poverty Research Institute advances as the standard for New Jersey a cost-of-living-sensitive threshold—the True Poverty Level or TPL—as the real basis for policymakers and others to embrace and calculate what it takes to live beyond poverty in the Garden State. This new standard could make a significant difference in the lives of the individuals experiencing poverty.

**This report finds that, on average, New Jerseyans need at least 300% of the federal poverty level—the FPL—to meet basic needs to avoid falling into True Poverty or deprivation.**

On average, the TPL amounts to at least 267% FPL for households without children and 320% FPL for families with children. The overall average for a nonelderly working family without members with disability is 300% FPL. This threshold represents the rock bottom working families need to survive with dignity, and without public or private support.

**The federal poverty level is based on an outdated, unrealistic methodology that does not reflect the True Cost of Living.**

While it may have been somewhat representative of true costs when it was created in the 1960s, the FPL is completely outdated and unrealistic in reflecting today’s costs. It has failed to keep up with the cost of living. For instance, the average housing cost for a three-person family with two children was 33.5 percent of the FPL threshold in 1960. In 2019, housing costs for the same family consumed 84 percent of the total FPL threshold.

**More than one-third of state residents lived in True Poverty in 2019.**

The number of New Jerseyans experiencing deprivation is alarming, but the problem often lacks public attention because the FPL essentially understates income hardships. While the FPL reported that 9.2 percent of New Jerseyans fell below poverty in 2019, the actual number lacking resources to meet basic needs under the TPL standard stood at 33.3 percent, or nearly 3 million New Jersey residents.

**The True Poverty Level varies considerably with family size and composition, as well as geographic location and other factors.**

Depending on family size and composition, there is a wide variation in the True Cost of Living. State-wide TPL averages range from \$31,995 for a single-adult household to \$99,112 for a five-person family with one preschooler and two school-age children.

## **The TPL is higher for families with young children and highest for families with infants.**

Families with young children have higher expenses than families without children or families with older children. Greater expenses are driven by higher child care costs for the youngest children. An infant, on average, adds \$26,204 to a family's basic needs budget. The amount is slightly lower for a preschooler, at \$25,450. An additional \$21,757 is required for raising a school-age child. The extra amount needed for a family's self-sufficiency is lowest for a teenager at \$11,583.

## **Housing and child care take up the largest portions of a family's budget.**

Housing and child care account for the greatest share of a family's budget. Based on U.S. Census Bureau data, the median monthly housing cost in New Jersey is the third highest in the country, after California and Hawaii. Housing and child care together, on average, make up nearly 50 percent of a family's TPL-based budget.

## **Low wages trap working families in poverty and deprivation. In fact, adults who work full time and year-round still need multiple minimum wage jobs to stave off falling into True Poverty.**

New Jersey's minimum wage during 2019 was \$10, generating far less income than families need to sustain themselves. In a three-person family with two children, a working parent needed 3.38 full-time minimum wage jobs or earnings of at least \$34 per hour to afford basic necessities.

In a five-person family with two working adults and three children, each adult needed to work 2.38 full-time minimum wage jobs (for a total of 4.8 jobs) to meet the TPL. In other words, each adult in the family had to earn at least \$24 per hour (for a total of \$48 per hour) to meet the TPL.

# 3. The Need to Measure Poverty Accurately

## What Is True Poverty or Deprivation?

True Poverty, or deprivation, occurs when a family cannot meet its basic needs and must make trade-offs or go without because of lack of resources. What is the actual point at which people cannot get by without experiencing deprivation in at least one of the seven basic needs necessary for survival? A realistic appraisal of what constitutes adequate existence is needed before policies and programs can be developed to assist people living in poverty.

## How Should Poverty Be Measured?

Defining poverty in practical terms is not deep science. We only need to define the point at which people suffer deprivation in critical life areas: housing, food, health care, transportation, child care, and other essentials, such as clothing. Each key area of need must be defined in measureable terms. The costs of meeting those needs must be assessed at the greatest possible level of detail, including factors such as family size, ages, place of residence, and other variants. A geography-specific poverty measure is fundamental in understanding the true extent of deprivation in a high-cost state such as New Jersey.

## Why Does Measuring Poverty Accurately Matter?

Poverty measures assess the extent of economic hardships and changes in need over time. They help formulate policies to assist struggling populations. A flawed measure—especially one that understates poverty—leads to misinformation and lack of understanding regarding the magnitude of hardships. Consequently, significant numbers of individuals experiencing deprivation may be overlooked or ignored.

The federal government also uses the federal poverty measure, or a multiple of it, to establish eligibility and benefit amounts for assistance programs. If the measure is inaccurate, many individuals struggling to make ends meet will not be considered as needing assistance.

## Why the Federal Poverty Measure Is an Inadequate Indicator of Need

### What is the Federal Poverty Level?

FPL is the income threshold used by the federal government to measure poverty. It is also used to determine eligibility guidelines for poverty assistance programs.

### How Is the FPL Calculated?

The FPL was introduced in 1963 when Mollie Orshansky, an employee of the Social Security Administration, developed a simple equation. She started with a family's food budget using the U.S. Department of Agriculture's "thrifty food plan"—a subjective measure, even then, on the types and amounts of food needed for adequate nutrition. Then, she simply multiplied the cost of food by three

to account for all other essential expenses. Except for updating it for inflation, this formula remains the same today, nearly 60 years later.

## **What Are the Main Deficiencies of the FPL?**

### **It fails to adjust for regional differences in the cost of living.**

The federal poverty level is the same for all states—except Alaska and Hawaii. It remains constant whether someone lives in Mississippi, Manhattan, or Princeton. In reality, costs vary within states, and even within counties. The driving force of poverty in New Jersey is the cost of living. According to the Regional Price Parity Index of the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, New Jersey has the third-highest cost of living in the country. The overall index shows that expenditures for rent, food, and health are among the highest in the nation. Individuals living in New Jersey need more income to buy the same goods or services as someone living in a lower-cost region of the nation. To apply the same threshold to a family regardless of residence is arbitrary and misleading.

### **The FPL does not include the value of many benefits.**

When calculating net income to determine poverty status, the FPL does not include non-cash benefits (such as SNAP or housing assistance) or cash benefits (such as the Earned Income Tax Credit, or EITC). Such benefits increase disposable income and can alter a family's well-being.

### **The FPL fails to consider significant costs incurred by working families.**

Since the 1960s, the number of families in which all adults are working has increased markedly. The FPL, however, fails to consider

costs necessary for stable employment, such as child care and transportation.

Given the high cost of child care in the state, families with children have far less disposable income when both parents are working, or when the family is headed by a single parent. Similarly, for families in which both adults are employed, transportation costs are likely to make up a larger proportion of the family budget than food.

The FPL also does not account for health- or tax-related expenses or changes in consumption patterns over the years. This artificially inflates the disposable income available to a family, and may create a false notion of financial health.

### **The federal poverty level fails to measure current poverty realistically.**

While the FPL may have been somewhat representative of typical costs in the 1960s, U.S. society has changed substantially since then. More than five decades later, there are far more dual-earner families; and housing, transportation and child care consume a much larger share of family budgets than food.

For instance, in 2019, a three-person family with two children in New Jersey was considered living in poverty if the combined annual family income fell below \$20,598. In the same year, the median gross rent for a two-bedroom unit was \$17,316.<sup>5</sup> This means that a family in a two-bedroom unit would use 84 percent of its gross income just for housing. In 1960, the FPL for the same size family was \$2,654.



Median gross rent was \$888, or 33.5 percent of the total budget.<sup>6</sup> Clearly, the federal poverty measure no longer accurately represents the True Cost of Living in New Jersey. Because of its inherent deficiencies, the FPL overlooks and undercounts a vast group of individuals experiencing poverty. Even the Census Bureau refers to the measure as a “statistical yardstick,” rather than a complete measure of what people need to live.

**There is a mismatch between who the government considers impoverished and who needs assistance.**

One of the most important uses of FPL is the calculation of the poverty rate. Individuals below 100% FPL are considered to be

living in poverty by the federal government. Multiples of the FPL, however, are used to determine eligibility for public assistance programs. While in many cases, eligibility is set above 100% FPL, and can stretch to three times the FPL (see Appendix I on page 56), some critical public assistance programs continue to use a fraction of the FPL, such as Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF). Clearly, there is a mismatch between individuals the government considers to be living in poverty versus individuals who need assistance. This results in a gaping hole in assistance where it is needed the most. While the use of FPL multiples in determining eligibility may inspire optimism, multiples are still not enough to avoid True Poverty or deprivation.

## The share of annual income used for housing has more than doubled since 1960 for households with incomes at the federal poverty level.

**Housing Costs as a Percentage of FPL  
for a Family with One Adult and Two Children  
New Jersey 1960 and 2019**

	<b>Gross Median Rent (Annual)</b>	<b>FPL Threshold (Annual)</b>	<b>Percent of Annual Income Used for Housing</b>
<b>1960</b>	\$ 888	\$ 2,654	33.5%
<b>2019</b>	\$17,316	\$20,598	84.1%

## 4. Measuring True Poverty

### What Is the True Poverty Level?

The True Poverty Level is based on the actual costs families incur to afford basic or essential necessities. The TPL determines minimum incomes New Jersey families of varying sizes really need to survive and avoid True Poverty or deprivation.

Legal Services of New Jersey considers the TPL as the real basis for determining what it takes to live beyond True Poverty or deprivation in the Garden State. A person living in True Poverty does not have enough income to meet some portion of basic needs. Individuals experiencing True Poverty are forced to go without, usually by trading off one necessity for another—less food to make rent, or deferring a health exam to secure a child’s winter clothing. Below the threshold, individuals are almost certain to experience deprivation. While a precise threshold incorporating all individual hardships is not realistic, it is critical to agree on a level that captures the hardships and needs of the majority.

The TPL addresses the shortcomings of the FPL and serves as a realistic guide to what families need to afford essential necessities. Unlike the FPL, it realistically calculates the income needed to meet basic needs without relying on public or private support, and without making trade-offs. The TPL varies by geography, family size, and composition. By addressing FPL deficiencies, the TPL provides an accurate representation of populations experiencing deprivation in New Jersey.

As noted, the TPL calculates costs for seven basic needs: housing, child care, food, transportation, health, taxes, and other miscellaneous essential needs (such as cleaning and hygiene products, diapers, and toothpaste).

TPL budgets reflect costs for nonelderly working families without members with a disability. PRI provides TPLs for more than 700 family types in each of New Jersey’s 21 counties (see TPL calculator at [www.lsnj.org/pri](http://www.lsnj.org/pri)). This includes all combinations of families with one to three adults with zero to six children for all 21 counties of

the state. The TPL assumes that the adults in a family work full time, and thus assesses the costs of work.

### History of the TPL

The TPL is based on the nationally established Self-Sufficiency Standard methodology pioneered by Dr. Diana Pearce, originally for the organization Wider Opportunities for Women.<sup>7</sup> Since 1999, LSNJ has sponsored and conducted cost-of-living studies in New Jersey in collaboration with Dr. Pearce and the University of Washington. She first calculated the Self-Sufficiency Standard in 1996 for Iowa. After receiving major funding from the Ford Foundation in the early 2000s, Dr. Pearce expanded the methodology’s application and calculated Self-Sufficiency Standards for many other states. Currently, 41 states and the District of Columbia have Self-Sufficiency Standard calculations.<sup>8</sup> LSNJ produced the first cost-of-living report for New Jersey in 1999. Since then, the report has been updated four times—in 2002, 2005, 2008, and 2011. This report is the sixth in the series and updates the data for 2019.

## How Is the TPL Calculated?

TPL budgets calculate the minimum costs of seven essential needs for different family types depending on where they live. A market-based analysis was conducted for each of the essential need categories to reflect a true budget based not just on the cost, but also access and availability. Budgets reflect the costs of meeting basic needs for families in which adults work full time and year-round. Budgets are calculated for families without any senior members or members with a disability.

### Housing

Housing costs are based on the fair market rents established by U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). Costs include utilities (gas, electric and water), except telephone and cable. Appropriate adjustments are made for county of residence, number of bedrooms, and family composition.

### Child Care

Child care costs are calculated by county and age of child. Infant and preschooler costs assume full-time care, and costs for school-age children use part-time rates during the school year and full-time care during the summer. Costs are calculated based on a weighted average of family child care and center child care.

### Food

Food costs are calculated based on the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) low-cost food plan. Geographic differences in food costs within New Jersey are based on Map the Meal Gap data provided by Feeding America.

### Transportation

Transportation costs take into account the cost of traveling to and from work. A public transportation system is considered "adequate" if it is used by a substantial percentage of the working population to commute to work. Based on accessibility, public transportation is assumed for only two counties—Essex and Hudson. Private transportation or the costs of owning a vehicle are assumed for the other 19 counties. The fixed costs of car ownership such as fire, theft, property damage, and liability insurance, license, registration, taxes, repairs, monthly payments, and finance charges are included in the cost of private transportation. Initial purchase of the car is not.

### Health

The health calculation assumes employer-sponsored health care coverage for workers and their families. Health care budgets include premiums as well as out-of-pocket costs.

### Taxes

Tax calculations include federal and state income tax, payroll tax, and state and local sales tax, where applicable. Indirect taxes (e.g., property taxes paid by the landlord on housing) are assumed to be included in the price of housing passed on by the landlord to the tenant. Taxes on gasoline

and automobiles are included in the calculated cost of owning and running a car. Calculations also include federal tax credits (the Earned Income Tax Credit, the Child Care Tax Credit, and the Child Tax Credit) and applicable state tax credits.

### **Miscellaneous or Other Essentials**

This expense category consists of all other essentials including clothing, shoes, paper products, diapers, nonprescription medicines, cleaning products, household items, personal hygiene items, and telephone service. It does not include the cost of computer or internet access. It also does not include major items such as appliances or furniture. Miscellaneous expenses are estimated by adding 10 percent to the total budget.

A detailed methodology is available on the LSNJ website [www.lsnj.org/pri](http://www.lsnj.org/pri). (For direct download: [http://bit.ly/TP2021\\_method](http://bit.ly/TP2021_method).)

## **TPL Is a Bare-Bones Budget**

It is important to note that the TPL is extremely conservative and provides a standard for a bare-bones budget. It includes no provision for many expenses considered staples of middle-class existence in New Jersey. There are no savings allotments for retirement, college funds, vehicles, or other major items, and no luxuries, such as cable, restaurant meals or take out, no vacations, and no recreation. The definitions and assumptions allow a family to meet basic needs without skipping or making trade-offs among necessities.

Each cost area is considered separately; no gross, across-the-board multiplier is used, which helps eliminate distortion. Costs are assessed at the county level to capture significant regional differences.

While individual family circumstances may increase the cost of living, the TPL represents the minimum a family needs to survive with no extenuating conditions. Families with members with a disability or health issues, and many others, face higher costs based on the severity of hardship. The TPL thresholds in this report, however, only apply to nonelderly working families without any members with a disability or other special circumstances that limit work or increase the cost of living.

### **Strengths of the TPL**

#### **No other methodology is as comprehensive as the TPL in its approach.**

The TPL provides self-sufficiency budgets for more than 700 different family compositions in all 21 counties in the state. Together, these calculations account for the vast majority of New Jersey families.

#### **The TPL uses a minimum, but adequate, definition of basic needs.**

As a key example, the TPL uses the USDA's

"low-cost" food plan rather than its "thrifty" food plan. The thrifty food plan, while lower in cost, is intended for emergency, temporary use, and is not considered nutritionally adequate over a period of time. The low-cost food plan is based on more realistic and adequate nutritional assumptions that account for food preparation time and consumption patterns. In keeping with its bare-bones concept, the TPL does not allow for take-out or restaurant meals.

**The TPL uses original research and anticipates realities that affect budget decisions.**

The TPL not only uses bare-bones budgeting, it also includes costs for services and products widely accessible in New Jersey. For example, for a single-person household, the TPL uses the costs for a one-bedroom apartment rather than an efficiency or a studio unit, since efficiencies and studios are less available across the state.

**The TPL approach takes into account the importance of the poverty-reducing effect of public programs such as the Earned Income Tax Credit and the Child Care Tax Credit**

The TPL considers the net effect of taxes and tax credits in calculating basic costs.

**The TPL, based on the nationally established self-sufficiency standard, remains one of the preeminent methodologies with the longest history.**

Dr. Diana Pearce is a pioneer and authority in developing and refining the calculation of accurate family budgets. Combined with over 100 reports in 41 states, the Self-Sufficiency Standard has gained recognition as a preeminent national methodology. The first New Jersey report was published in 1999. This report is the sixth in the series.

## Notes on Analysis

- The TPL study provides costs at the county level to capture significant geographical differences. To calculate the TPL for the state, PRI uses a weighted methodology. Each county is given a weight based on its share of the state's nonelderly population. The county TPL is then multiplied by its weight. All weighted county TPLs are aggregated to create a statewide average.
- While TPLs for more than 700 families are available on PRI's website, [www.lsnj.org/pri](http://www.lsnj.org/pri), the state wide TPL weighted average is based on the 13 most common family types.
  - Ten family compositions with children.
  - Three household compositions with only adults—households with one adult, two adults, and three adults.
  - These 13 family compositions represent 90.5 percent of families with children, and 88.2 percent of households without children in the state.

Note: Families with four or more adults were excluded from the discussion because detailed TPLs are not available for such families.

- The majority of the discussion in the body of the report focuses on six of the 13 family compositions.<sup>9</sup>
  1. Single adult with no children
  2. Two adults with no children
  3. One adult with one preschool-age child and one school-age child
  4. Two adults with one preschool-age child
  5. Two adults with one preschool-age child and one school-age child
  6. Two adults with one preschool-age child and two school-age children

Households with Children					
One adult, one child	1 adult	preschooler			
One adult, two children	1 adult	preschooler	school-age		
One adult, three children	1 adult	preschooler	school-age	school-age	
Two adults, one child	2 adults	preschooler			
Two adults, two children	2 adults	preschooler	school-age		
Two adults, three children	2 adults	preschooler	school-age	school-age	
Two adult, four children	2 adults	Infant	preschooler	school-age	school-age
Three adults, one child	3 adults	school-age			
Three adults, two children	3 adults	preschooler	school-age		
Three adults, three children	3 adults	preschooler	school-age	school-age	

- Statewide True Cost of Living Averages
  - Adult-only households: 267% FPL
  - Families with children: 320% FPL
  - Weighted TPL for all New Jerseyans: 300% FPL
- The original TPL budget in this report was calculated for 2016. The budgets were inflation-adjusted to 2019 using the CPI-U index from the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS). Since the BLS does not produce a New Jersey specific index, a weighted methodology is used—employing one-third Philadelphia CPI-U and two-thirds New York CPI-U.
- While the TPL does not provide budgets for the seniors (65 years and over), they are included in the numbers experiencing deprivation or True Poverty. Analysis of data from the U.S. Census Bureau shows that seniors, on average, have higher rates of experiencing disability than any other age group. Many studies have demonstrated significantly higher costs for people with disabilities.<sup>10</sup> In addition, the seniors also have higher healthcare expenses, on average, regardless of disability status.<sup>11</sup> Combined with other costs, the seniors in the state face significant income challenges.

## Caveats and Limitations of the TPL

While the TPL is a realistic measure of poverty, it has certain limitations. Although the crux of the TPL focuses on working families, many families experience special circumstances that hinder work participation. An understanding of poverty must recognize that no individual experience is the same, that needs and circumstances vary among persons and families, and those circumstances affect their ability to meet basic needs. Even the most precise measure cannot justly capture unique or special situations. Assumptions recognized in the methodology can make TPL budgets more suitable for certain groups than others.



## Limitations of the study

1. TPL budgets are applicable only to working families with no members with a disability or who are elderly. Therefore, the additional expenses incurred by such families is not included in the TPL budget.
2. Employer-sponsored health insurance is assumed. TPL budgets will be higher for those who do not have health insurance through their employer.
3. No allowance is included for computer or internet.
4. It is assumed that all adults work full time.
5. The cost of buying a car is not included, although car ownership is assumed for 19 of the 21 counties using private transportation.

## Previous TPL Reports

- As noted, previous TPL reports were referred to as “The Real Cost of Living” or RCL.
- With this report, LSNJ PRI begins the expanded use of data at 300% FPL as the true determinant of poverty or deprivation. The previous version of this report, released in 2013, used 250% FPL as the marker. This change is mainly due to two factors:
  - Availability of self-sufficiency budgets for more than 700 New Jersey families for the first time. Previous versions were based on cost-of-living data analysis of only 70 different types of families.
  - PRI is advancing its methodology and moving away from the use of a “conservative” estimate of poverty to a more “realistic” approach. Our study incorporated a weighting methodology of the 700 family compositions in all 21 counties—capturing data on 90 percent of families living in the state. (See, “Note on Analysis, in this report).

## 5. True Poverty Budgets for New Jersey

**The extent of deprivation in New Jersey is alarming as nearly 3 million residents (one-third), do not have enough resources to afford basic necessities. Yet, federal poverty statistics count only 800,000 individuals.**

The number of New Jerseyans experiencing deprivation or striving endlessly to avoid it is shocking, but the vast majority are overlooked in federal poverty statistics. Based on the TPL study, 33.3 percent of individuals in the Garden State lack the resources to meet their basic needs. That's approximately 3 million residents. In contrast, federal poverty data recognizes 9.2 percent or 798,262 residents as "impoverished," effectively overlooking more than 2 million individuals.

**The outdated federal poverty measure fails to truly capture the hardships of many New Jerseyans experiencing deprivation in the state.**

Total Population Below FPL and TPL, New Jersey 2019						
Year	Total Population below FPL	Percentage of Total Population below FPL	Number below 300% FPL	Percentage below 300% FPL	Undercounted in Federal Poverty Statistics (Number)	Undercounted in Federal Poverty Statistics (% Points)
2019	798,262	9.2%	2,898,437	33.3%	2,104,628	24.1%

### New Jersey Families Need Three Times the FPL to Meet Basic Needs

**The TPL study finds that, on average, 300% FPL is the rock bottom for the majority of families to survive with dignity and without public or private support.**

On average, the majority of families in New Jersey need 300% FPL to afford basic necessities. A household without children needs an average of 267% FPL and families with children need an average of 320% FPL.

A single-adult household needs at least 241% FPL to meet basic needs. The amounts are higher for families with children. A family of three with one preschooler and one school-age child needs \$70,372 annually or 342% FPL. For the same family type, the Census counts only those with annual incomes below \$20,598 as living in poverty. This highlights a stark gap between the federal definition of poverty and actual costs of living for residents.

**Families with children, especially younger children,  
have higher TPL thresholds.**

**The True Cost of Living as a Percentage of the Federal Poverty Level  
for Six Family Compositions  
(New Jersey Statewide Weighted Average, 2019)**

	<b>FPL 2019</b>	<b>TPL 2019</b>	<b>TPL as % of FPL</b>
Single adult (below 65 years)	\$13,300	\$31,995	241%
Two adults (below 65 years)	\$17,120	\$44,761	261%
One adult, one preschool-age child, and one school-age child	\$20,598	\$70,372	342%
Two adults, one preschool-age child	\$20,578	\$65,977	321%
Two adults, one preschool-age child and one school-age child	\$25,926	\$78,364	302%
Two adults, one preschool-age child and two school-age children	\$30,510	\$99,112	325%

**The federal poverty level, the minimum wage and cash grants,  
are all far below the TPL.**

	Single Adult	Two Adults	One Adult, One Pre-schooler, One School-age	Two Adults, One Pre-schooler	Two Adults, One Pre-schooler, One School-age	Two Adults, One Preschooler, Two School-age
Annual TPL	\$31,995	\$ 44,761	\$ 70,372	\$ 65,977	\$ 78,364	\$ 99,112

Federal Poverty Level (FPL)	\$13,300	\$ 17,120	\$ 20,598	\$ 20,578	\$ 25,926	\$ 30,510
Difference	\$18,695	\$ 27,641	\$ 49,774	\$ 45,399	\$ 52,438	\$ 68,602
FPL as % of TPL	42%	38%	29%	31%	33%	31%

Minimum Wage	\$20,800	\$ 41,600	\$2 0,800	\$ 41,600	\$ 41,600	\$ 41,600
Difference	\$11,195	\$ 3,161	\$ 49,572	\$ 24,377	\$ 36,764	\$ 57,512
Minimum Wage as % of TPL	65%	93%	30%	63%	53%	42%

Cash Benefit* + SNAP	\$ 4,548	\$ 7,308	\$ 12,816	\$ 12,816	\$ 15,480	\$ 17,952
Difference	\$27,447	\$ 37,453	\$ 57,556	\$ 53,161	\$ 62,884	\$ 81,160
Cash Benefit* + SNAP as % of TPL	14.2%	16.3%	18.2%	19.4%	19.8%	18.1%

Median Household/ Family Income **	\$85,751	\$105,705	\$105,705	\$105,705	\$105,705	\$105,705
Difference	\$53,756	\$ 60,944	\$ 35,333	\$ 39,728	\$ 27,341	\$ 6,593
Median Family Income as % of TPL	268%	236%	150%	160%	135%	107%

\*Cash benefits refers to General Assistance (GA) or Temporary Assistance to Needy families (TANF). Both are last resort safety net programs for single adults and families respectively.

\*\*U.S. Census Bureau statistic on median household income used for calculating median income of single-adult households; median family income data is used for families.

The annual TPL is substantially higher than the annual FPL threshold, and the annual income from minimum wage or cash grants—made up of a combination of cash benefits (Temporary Assistance to Needy Families or General Assistance) and SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program).

In 2019, the FPL was considerably lower than the TPL across all six family compositions. In relation to the TPL, the FPL ranged from a low of 29 percent of the TPL for a three-person family with one preschooler and one school-age child to 42 percent of the TPL for a single-adult household. The dollar differences between the FPL and TPL ranged from \$18,695 for a single-adult household to \$68,602 for a five-person family with three children (one preschooler and two school-age children).

Neither minimum wage work nor a combination of cash and SNAP benefits provide enough income to meet the TPL. Both fall far short of the amount needed to cover the basic costs of any of the six selected family compositions. The gap between the TPL and full-time minimum wage of \$10 per hour (or \$20,800 annually) is lowest for a two-adult family at \$3,161 and is highest for a five-person family at \$57,512.

The maximum monthly TANF cash grant of \$559 for a one-adult and two-child family, together with SNAP benefits of \$509 per month, amounted to \$12,816 in 2019. By comparison, the statewide annual TPL for a family of this size is \$70,372, making for a shortfall of \$57,556. The shortfall is lowest for a single-adult household and highest for a five-person family with three children—ranging from \$27,447 to \$81,160.

The combined cash grant and SNAP benefit is 14.2 percent of the TPL for a single-adult household eligible for GA. The shortfall is lowest for a four-person family with one preschool and one school-age child where the benefit makes up 19.8 percent of the TPL.

In 2019, the median income for New Jersey families was \$105,705, an amount that was greater than the statewide TPL average for each of the six selected family types. It was 267 percent of the TPL for a single-adult household and decreased to 107 percent of the TPL for a two adults family with three children (one preschooler and two school-age).

## The gap between TPL and FPL has increased for all family compositions.

Household/Family Composition	Difference between TPL and FPL in 2011*	Difference between TPL and FPL in 2019*	Percent Change
Single adult	\$16,891	\$18,695	11%
Two adults	\$25,025	\$27,641	10%
One adult, one preschool-age child, and one school-age child	\$43,357	\$49,774	15%
Two adults, one preschool-age child	\$40,440	\$45,399	12%
Two adults, one preschool-age child and one school-age child	\$45,989	\$52,438	14%
Two adults, one preschool-age child and two school-age children	\$58,313	\$68,602	18%

Note: \* LSNJ/PRI's last RCL/TPL report was released in 2013. The study reported data from 2011.

The gap between the TPL and FPL has increased for all family compositions. For a single-adult household, the gap between the TPL and FPL grew by 11 percent between 2011 and 2019. These gaps were wider for larger families. For a five-person family with three children (one preschooler and two school-age children), the gap between FPL and TPL increased by 18 percent between 2011 and 2019.

**While the gap between the TPL, FPL, and cash benefits continues to persist, the recent increase in minimum wage has bridged its shortfall with the TPL slightly.**

**TPL, FPL, minimum wage and cash grants, and their ratios to TPL for selected family compositions.**

TPL, FPL, Minimum Wage, Cash Benefits and SNAP			Ratio of TPL to FPL, Minimum Wage, Cash Benefits and SNAP		
Family with One Adult, One Preschooler, and One School-age Child					
	2011	2019		2011	2019
TPL	\$61,480	\$70,372	TPL	\$61,480	\$70,372
FPL	\$18,123	\$20,598	FPL	29.5%	29.3%
Minimum Wage	\$15,080	\$20,800	Minimum Wage	24.5%	29.6%
Cash benefits + SNAP	\$11,400	\$12,816	Cash benefits + SNAP	18.5%	18.2%
Family with Two Adults and One Preschooler					
	2011	2019		2011	2019
TPL	\$58,546	\$65,977	TPL	\$58,546	\$65,977
FPL	\$18,106	\$20,578	FPL	30.9%	31.2%
Minimum Wage	\$30,160	\$41,600	Minimum Wage	51.5%	63.1%
Cash benefits + SNAP	\$11,400	\$12,816	Cash benefits + SNAP	19.5%	19.4%
Family with Two Adults, One Preschooler and One School-age Child					
	2011	2019		2011	2019
TPL	\$68,800	\$78,364	TPL	\$68,800	\$78,364
FPL	\$22,811	\$25,926	FPL	33.2%	33.1%
Minimum Wage	\$30,160	\$41,600	Minimum Wage	43.8%	53.1%
Cash benefits + SNAP	\$13,872	\$15,480	Cash benefits + SNAP	20.2%	19.8%



While the ratio<sup>12</sup> between TPL, FPL, and welfare benefits remained steady or increased between 2011 and 2019, the ratio between TPL and minimum wage has decreased. The increase in minimum wage to \$10 in 2019 from \$7.25 in 2011 has helped in bridging this gap. For a family of three with one preschooler and one school-age child, the minimum wage was 24.5 percent of the TPL in 2011; it increased to 29.6 percent in 2019. The gains are greater for families with two full-time minimum wage workers. For a family of three with one preschooler, the minimum wage was 51.5 percent of the TPL in 2011. It increased to 63.1 percent in 2019.

## Despite the increase in minimum wage, adults working full time and year-round need to work multiple full-time minimum wage jobs to meet TPL

New Jersey's minimum wage during 2019 was \$10, generating far less income than families need to sustain themselves. In a three-person family with two children, a parent needed to work 3.38 full-time minimum wage jobs or earn at least \$34 per hour to afford basic necessities.

In a five-person family with two working adults and three children, each adult needed to work 2.38 full-time minimum wage jobs (for a total of 4.8 jobs) to meet TPL. In other words, each adult in the family had to earn at least \$24 per hour (for a total of \$48 per hour) to meet the TPL.

Family Composition		#Min. Wage JOBS PER ADULT to Meet TPL	# Min. Wage JOBS PER FAMILY to Meet TPL	Annual TPL 2019	Hourly TPL Wage Per Adult to Meet TPL	Hourly TPL Wage Per Family to Meet TPL	Annual Full-Time Min. Wage at \$10/hr.	Hourly Min. Wage Per Adult	Hourly Min. Wage Per Family
Adult	Children								
1	1	2.76	2.76	\$ 57,405	\$28	\$28	\$20,800	\$10	\$10
1	2	3.38	3.38	\$ 70,372	\$34	\$34	\$20,800	\$10	\$10
1	3	4.48	4.48	\$ 93,136	\$45	\$45	\$20,800	\$10	\$10
2	1	1.59	3.17	\$ 65,977	\$16	\$32	\$41,600	\$10	\$20
2	2	1.88	3.77	\$ 78,364	\$19	\$38	\$41,600	\$10	\$20
2	3	2.38	4.77	\$ 99,112	\$24	\$48	\$41,600	\$10	\$20
2	4	2.87	5.73	\$119,262	\$29	\$57	\$41,600	\$10	\$20
3	1	1.41	4.22	\$87,824	\$14	\$42	\$62,400	\$10	\$30
3	2	1.66	4.97	\$103,359	\$17	\$50	\$62,400	\$10	\$30
3	3	1.99	5.96	\$124,037	\$20	\$60	\$62,400	\$10	\$30

Note: It is assumed that a person working full time at minimum wage works 40 hours a week, 52 weeks per year.

## 6. Major Cost Components of the TPL Budget

Housing is one of the biggest cost areas in a family's budget. This is especially true in New Jersey where housing costs are among the highest in the nation.

- For a single-adult household, housing cost is about 45 percent of the total income; 32.3 percent for a family with two adults, and approximately a quarter of the budget among other family types selected for detailed analysis.
- Child care is the second largest cost for families with children.
- Food comprises 11 percent of the budget for a single-adult household, and 16 percent in families with two adults and two school-age children.
- Transportation ranges from 7 percent for two adults with three school-age children, to 11 percent for a single-adult household.
- Health care costs range from 8 percent to 10 percent for all family types under consideration.
- Taken together, housing and child care are the largest costs, consuming about half of a family's resources.

**Housing and child care are the largest cost items for a family. Together, they account for nearly 50 percent of a household's TPL-based budget.**

**Major Cost Components of the TPL Budget for Six Selected Family Compositions. Statewide Averages for New Jersey in 2019.**

	Single Adult		Two Adults		One Adult, One Preschooler and One School-age	
Cost Components	TPL	% of TPL	TPL	% of TPL	TPL	% of TPL
Housing	\$1,206	45%	\$1,206	32%	\$1,478	25%
Child Care	\$ 0	0%	\$ 0	0%	\$1,617	28%
Food	\$ 285	11%	\$ 564	15%	\$ 653	11%
Transportation	\$ 282	11%	\$ 551	15%	\$ 288	5%
Health Care	\$ 203	8%	\$ 570	15%	\$ 544	9%
Miscellaneous	\$ 198	7%	\$ 289	8%	\$ 458	8%
Net Taxes	\$ 491	18%	\$ 550	15%	\$ 827	14%
Monthly TPL	\$2,666	100%	\$3,730	100%	\$5,864	100%

*Chart continued on next page*

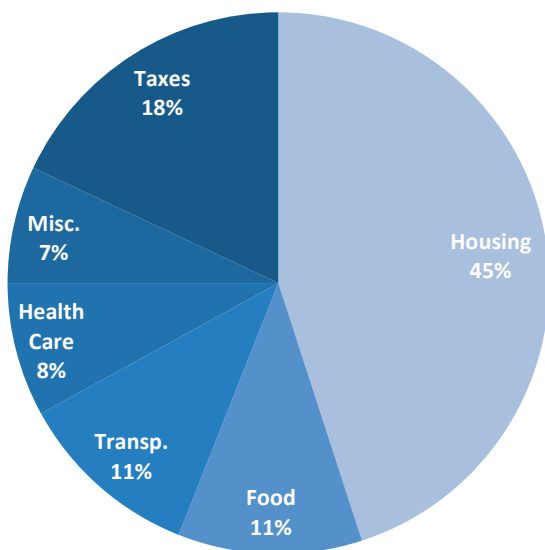
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Major Cost Components of the TPL Budget for Six Selected Family Compositions; New Jersey 2019						
	Two Adults with One Preschooler		Two Adults, One Preschoolers and One School-age		Two Adults, One Preschooler and Two School-age	
Cost Components	TPL	% of TPL	TPL	% of TPL	TPL	% of TPL
Housing	\$1,478	27%	\$1,478	23%	\$1,909	23%
Child Care	\$ 958	17%	\$1,617	25%	\$ 2,276	28%
Food	\$ 701	13%	\$ 896	14%	\$1,069	13%
Transportation	\$ 557	10%	\$ 557	9%	\$ 557	7%
Health Care	\$ 582	11%	\$ 604	9%	\$ 625	8%
Miscellaneous	\$ 428	8%	\$ 515	8%	\$ 644	8%
Net Taxes	\$ 795	14%	\$ 863	13%	\$1,180	14%
Monthly TPL	\$5,498	100%	\$6,530	100%	\$8,197	100%

**For households without children, the greatest share of income goes toward housing. For households with children, nearly half of household income is consumed by housing and child care.**

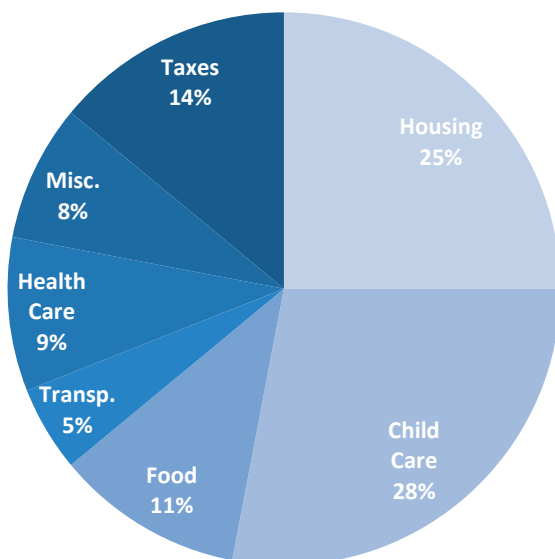
### Cost Components as a Percentage of TPL Income, New Jersey, 2019

**Single Adult**

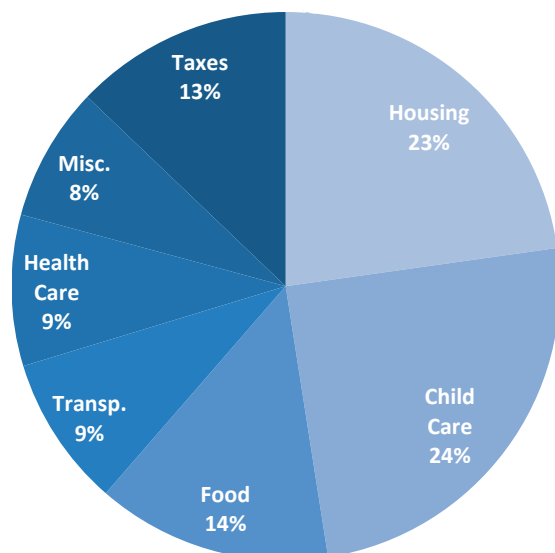


These charts show how household budgets must be divided among various necessities to avoid deprivation. In the real world, and particularly in New Jersey, this is very hard to achieve. As noted, New Jersey has the third highest housing cost in the nation. New Jersey families spend a high share of income on housing, leaving too little to afford other essential costs. A three-person family with an income at FPL (\$20,598) uses at least 84 percent of family income on housing. They are left with \$3,275 annually or \$273 monthly to afford other essential needs.

**One Adult, One Preschool, One School-Age**



**Two Adults, One Preschool, One School-Age**



## Housing

The high cost of housing is a challenging issue for New Jerseyans with limited resources. Families with inadequate resources experience housing-related hardships such as living in substandard or unsafe homes;<sup>13</sup> residing in high-crime neighborhoods;<sup>14</sup> attending high-poverty and low-performing schools;<sup>15</sup> and facing eviction<sup>16</sup> or housing instability.<sup>17</sup> New Jersey had the third highest median monthly housing cost in 2019, after California and Hawaii.<sup>18</sup> Such costs are also reflected in the county-level analysis of housing TPLs for the six selected family types.

- Housing costs are lower for households without children and higher for larger-sized families with children.
- Housing costs are highest in Somerset and Bergen counties for all family types.
- For a five-person family with three children, monthly costs average \$2,410 in Somerset and \$2,188 in Bergen. The same family type living in Warren or Cumberland counties pay less per month—but still about \$18,000 annually.

### Monthly Housing TPLs for Selected Families by County, New Jersey 2019

Single Adult		Two Adults		One Adult, One Preschooler, One School-Age	
Somerset	\$1,481	Somerset	\$1,481	Somerset	\$1,890
Bergen	\$1,452	Bergen	\$1,452	Bergen	\$1,703
Hudson	\$1,323	Hudson	\$1,323	Hunterdon	\$1,656
Hunterdon	\$1,297	Hunterdon	\$1,297	Middlesex	\$1,650
Middlesex	\$1,293	Middlesex	\$1,293	Hudson	\$1,573
Morris	\$1,239	Morris	\$1,239	Monmouth	\$1,537
Passaic	\$1,234	Passaic	\$1,234	Ocean	\$1,535
Burlington	\$1,199	Burlington	\$1,199	Morris	\$1,503
Monmouth	\$1,197	Monmouth	\$1,197	Passaic	\$1,447
Ocean	\$1,197	Ocean	\$1,197	Burlington	\$1,445
Mercer	\$1,148	Mercer	\$1,148	Mercer	\$1,412
Gloucester	\$1,124	Gloucester	\$1,124	Gloucester	\$1,358
Sussex	\$1,089	Sussex	\$1,089	Atlantic	\$1,356
Union	\$1,078	Union	\$1,078	Sussex	\$1,321
Camden	\$1,051	Camden	\$1,051	Union	\$1,305
Atlantic	\$1,049	Atlantic	\$1,049	Camden	\$1,269
Essex	\$1,031	Essex	\$1,031	Essex	\$1,248
Salem	\$1,024	Salem	\$1,024	Salem	\$1,240
Cape May	\$ 966	Cape May	\$ 966	Cape May	\$1,173
Warren	\$ 960	Warren	\$ 960	Cumberland	\$1,170
Cumberland	\$ 909	Cumberland	\$ 909	Warren	\$1,157

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Monthly Housing TPLs for Selected Families by County, New Jersey 2019					
Two Adults, One Preschooler		Two Adults, One Preschooler, One School-Age		One Adult, One Preschooler, Two School-Age	
Somerset	\$1,890	Somerset	\$1,890	Somerset	\$2,410
Bergen	\$1,703	Bergen	\$1,703	Bergen	\$2,188
Hunterdon	\$1,656	Hunterdon	\$1,656	Hunterdon	\$2,114
Middlesex	\$1,650	Middlesex	\$1,650	Middlesex	\$2,104
Hudson	\$1,573	Hudson	\$1,573	Monmouth	\$2,079
Monmouth	\$1,537	Monmouth	\$1,537	Ocean	\$2,077
Ocean	\$1,535	Ocean	\$1,535	Hudson	\$2,015
Morris	\$1,503	Morris	\$1,503	Morris	\$1,932
Passaic	\$1,447	Passaic	\$1,447	Passaic	\$1,861
Burlington	\$1,445	Burlington	\$1,445	Mercer	\$1,856
Mercer	\$1,412	Mercer	\$1,412	Atlantic	\$1,827
Gloucester	\$1,358	Gloucester	\$1,358	Burlington	\$1,809
Atlantic	\$1,356	Atlantic	\$1,356	Gloucester	\$1,698
Sussex	\$1,321	Sussex	\$1,321	Sussex	\$1,697
Union	\$1,305	Union	\$1,305	Union	\$1,677
Camden	\$1,269	Camden	\$1,269	Cape May	\$1,629
Essex	\$1,248	Essex	\$1,248	Essex	\$1,605
Salem	\$1,240	Salem	\$1,240	Camden	\$1,588
Cape May	\$1,173	Cape May	\$1,173	Salem	\$1,552
Cumberland	\$1,170	Cumberland	\$1,170	Cumberland	\$1,530
Warren	\$1,157	Warren	\$1,157	Warren	\$1,448



## Child Care

Child care is the second largest item in a family budget, and for some families, it exceeds housing cost. Families with limited incomes struggle to afford safe, quality child care and may be forced to accept lower-quality or inconsistent child care—which can disrupt a parent’s ability to work.<sup>19</sup>

- Somerset, Hunterdon, and Morris counties have the highest child care costs. In Somerset County, it ranges from \$1,330 for a family with one preschooler, to \$3,167 for a family with two school-age children and one preschooler.
- Atlantic, Cumberland, and Hudson counties have the lowest costs for child care, but only in comparison to the highest-cost counties. In fact, the costs range between \$714 to \$2,006 for Hudson County, and \$750 to \$1,663 for Cumberland County.

### Monthly Childcare TPLs for Selected Families by County, New Jersey 2019

One Adult One Preschooler One School-Age		Two Adults One Preschooler		Two Adults One Preschooler One School-Age		Two Adults One Preschooler Two School-Age	
Somerset	\$2,249	Somerset	\$1,330	Somerset	\$2,249	Somerset	\$3,167
Hunterdon	\$1,977	Hunterdon	\$1,181	Hunterdon	\$1,977	Hunterdon	\$2,773
Morris	\$1,939	Morris	\$1,143	Morris	\$1,939	Morris	\$2,735
Monmouth	\$1,776	Mercer	\$1,094	Monmouth	\$1,776	Monmouth	\$2,560
Mercer	\$1,757	Bergen	\$1,085	Mercer	\$1,757	Middlesex	\$2,448
Bergen	\$1,753	Middlesex	\$1,014	Bergen	\$1,753	Bergen	\$2,420
Middlesex	\$1,731	Monmouth	\$ 993	Middlesex	\$1,731	Mercer	\$2,419
Passaic	\$1,654	Burlington	\$ 972	Passaic	\$1,654	Passaic	\$2,385
Union	\$1,607	Cape May	\$ 953	Union	\$1,607	Union	\$2,266
Ocean	\$1,575	Union	\$ 947	Ocean	\$1,575	Ocean	\$2,225
Sussex	\$1,551	Sussex	\$ 931	Sussex	\$1,551	Sussex	\$2,171
Cape May	\$1,548	Ocean	\$ 924	Cape May	\$1,548	Cape May	\$2,142
Warren	\$1,489	Passaic	\$ 923	Warren	\$1,489	Essex	\$2,091
Burlington	\$1,470	Warren	\$ 909	Burlington	\$1,470	Warren	\$2,068
Essex	\$1,448	Camden	\$ 894	Essex	\$1,448	Hudson	\$2,006
Gloucester	\$1,440	Gloucester	\$ 885	Gloucester	\$1,440	Gloucester	\$1,995
Camden	\$1,389	Atlantic	\$ 823	Camden	\$1,389	Burlington	\$1,968
Hudson	\$1,360	Essex	\$ 805	Hudson	\$1,360	Camden	\$1,884
Salem	\$1,253	Salem	\$ 770	Salem	\$1,253	Salem	\$1,735
Atlantic	\$1,222	Cumberland	\$ 750	Atlantic	\$1,222	Cumberland	\$1,663
Cumberland	\$1,206	Hudson	\$ 714	Cumberland	\$1,206	Atlantic	\$1,620

## Food

Food costs, as calculated in the TPL, do not include fast food, restaurant meals, or take-out. It is a bare-bones concept based on realistic assumptions of food preparation time and consumption patterns.

- Food costs are highest in Essex, Hunterdon, and Cape May counties and lowest in Burlington, Cumberland, and Gloucester counties.
- Costs are lowest for single adults, ranging from \$242 per month in Cumberland County to \$339 in Essex County.
- The TPL for food is highest for a two-adult family with two school-age children and one pre-schooler, ranging from \$907 in Cumberland County to \$1,270 in Essex County.

Monthly Food TPLs for Selected Families by County, New Jersey 2019					
Single Adult		Two Adults		One Adult, One Preschooler, One School-Age	
Essex	\$339	Essex	\$670	Essex	\$776
Hunterdon	\$335	Hunterdon	\$661	Hunterdon	\$766
Cape May	\$324	Cape May	\$640	Cape May	\$742
Sussex	\$313	Sussex	\$618	Sussex	\$716
Warren	\$309	Warren	\$611	Warren	\$708
Salem	\$308	Salem	\$609	Salem	\$706
Bergen	\$300	Bergen	\$594	Bergen	\$688
Morris	\$300	Morris	\$594	Morris	\$688
Somerset	\$298	Somerset	\$588	Somerset	\$682
Monmouth	\$284	Monmouth	\$561	Monmouth	\$650
Passaic	\$279	Passaic	\$550	Passaic	\$638
Hudson	\$277	Hudson	\$547	Hudson	\$634
Ocean	\$277	Ocean	\$547	Ocean	\$634
Mercer	\$275	Mercer	\$544	Mercer	\$630
Atlantic	\$272	Atlantic	\$538	Atlantic	\$624
Camden	\$272	Camden	\$538	Camden	\$624
Middlesex	\$264	Middlesex	\$521	Middlesex	\$604
Union	\$264	Union	\$521	Union	\$604
Burlington	\$259	Burlington	\$511	Burlington	\$592
Gloucester	\$252	Gloucester	\$499	Gloucester	\$578
Cumberland	\$242	Cumberland	\$478	Cumberland	\$554

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Monthly Food TPLs for Selected Families by County, New Jersey 2019					
Two Adults One Preschooler		Two Adults One Preschooler One School-Age		Two Adults One Preschooler Two School-Age	
Essex	\$833	Essex	\$1,065	Essex	\$1,270
Hunterdon	\$822	Hunterdon	\$1,051	Hunterdon	\$1,254
Cape May	\$796	Cape May	\$1,018	Cape May	\$1,214
Sussex	\$768	Sussex	\$ 983	Sussex	\$1,172
Salem	\$758	Warren	\$ 972	Warren	\$1,159
Bergen	\$738	Salem	\$ 969	Salem	\$1,155
Morris	\$738	Bergen	\$ 944	Bergen	\$1,126
Somerset	\$732	Morris	\$ 944	Morris	\$1,126
Monmouth	\$698	Somerset	\$ 936	Somerset	\$1,116
Passaic	\$685	Monmouth	\$ 892	Monmouth	\$1,064
Hudson	\$680	Passaic	\$ 876	Passaic	\$1,044
Ocean	\$680	Hudson	\$ 870	Hudson	\$1,038
Mercer	\$676	Ocean	\$ 870	Ocean	\$1,038
Atlantic	\$670	Mercer	\$ 865	Mercer	\$1,031
Camden	\$670	Atlantic	\$ 856	Atlantic	\$1,021
Middlesex	\$648	Camden	\$ 856	Camden	\$1,021
Union	\$648	Middlesex	\$ 829	Middlesex	\$ 988
Burlington	\$635	Union	\$ 829	Union	\$ 988
Gloucester	\$620	Burlington	\$ 812	Burlington	\$ 969
Cumberland	\$595	Gloucester	\$ 793	Gloucester	\$ 946
Warren	\$760	Cumberland	\$ 760	Cumberland	\$ 907

## Transportation

TPL cost calculations for transportation highlight the advantages of having a good public transportation network. Essex and Hudson are two counties where public transportation is assumed as the primary mode of travel because of a well-developed public transportation infrastructure. Transportation cost is consistently lower there than in the rest of the state. It is important to note that even though a bare-bones cost structure is assumed for private transportation—with no allowance for the initial purchase of a car—it still exceeds the cost of public transportation.

- Based on the TPL, Camden, Passaic and Union counties have the highest transportation costs.
- Essex and Hudson counties have the lowest costs.

**Monthly Transportation TPLs for Selected Families by County  
New Jersey 2019**

Single Adult		Two Adults		One Adult, One Preschooler, One School-Age	
Camden	\$354	Camden	\$691	Camden	\$361
Passaic	\$351	Passaic	\$685	Passaic	\$358
Union	\$347	Union	\$678	Union	\$354
Bergen	\$334	Bergen	\$652	Bergen	\$341
Mercer	\$333	Mercer	\$649	Mercer	\$340
Atlantic	\$313	Atlantic	\$610	Atlantic	\$320
Cumberland	\$311	Cumberland	\$605	Cumberland	\$318
Middlesex	\$310	Middlesex	\$604	Middlesex	\$317
Ocean	\$304	Ocean	\$592	Ocean	\$311
Gloucester	\$304	Gloucester	\$591	Gloucester	\$310
Cape May	\$301	Cape May	\$586	Cape May	\$308
Salem	\$301	Salem	\$586	Salem	\$308
Monmouth	\$298	Monmouth	\$580	Monmouth	\$305
Burlington	\$298	Burlington	\$579	Burlington	\$305
Sussex	\$294	Sussex	\$571	Sussex	\$300
Warren	\$294	Warren	\$571	Warren	\$300
Somerset	\$291	Somerset	\$566	Somerset	\$298
Hunterdon	\$290	Hunterdon	\$563	Hunterdon	\$297
Morris	\$290	Morris	\$563	Morris	\$297
Essex	\$114	Essex	\$228	Essex	\$114
Hudson	\$114	Hudson	\$228	Hudson	\$114

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Monthly Transportation TPLs for Selected Families by County New Jersey 2019					
Two Adults One Preschooler		Two Adults, One Preschooler, One School-Age		Two Adults, One Preschooler, Two School-Age	
Camden	\$698	Camden	\$698	Camden	\$698
Passaic	\$692	Passaic	\$692	Passaic	\$692
Union	\$685	Union	\$685	Union	\$685
Bergen	\$659	Bergen	\$659	Bergen	\$659
Mercer	\$656	Mercer	\$656	Mercer	\$656
Atlantic	\$617	Atlantic	\$617	Atlantic	\$617
Cumberland	\$612	Cumberland	\$612	Cumberland	\$612
Middlesex	\$611	Middlesex	\$611	Middlesex	\$611
Ocean	\$599	Ocean	\$599	Ocean	\$599
Gloucester	\$597	Gloucester	\$597	Gloucester	\$597
Cape May	\$593	Cape May	\$593	Cape May	\$593
Salem	\$593	Salem	\$593	Salem	\$593
Monmouth	\$587	Monmouth	\$587	Monmouth	\$587
Burlington	\$585	Burlington	\$585	Burlington	\$585
Sussex	\$577	Sussex	\$577	Sussex	\$577
Warren	\$577	Warren	\$577	Warren	\$577
Somerset	\$573	Somerset	\$573	Somerset	\$573
Hunterdon	\$570	Hunterdon	\$570	Hunterdon	\$570
Morris	\$570	Morris	\$570	Morris	\$570
Essex	\$228	Essex	\$228	Essex	\$228
Hudson	\$228	Hudson	\$228	Hudson	\$228

## Health Care

As a result of the Affordable Care Act (ACA), insurance companies can set rates based on established rating areas. However, New Jersey has only one rating area for the entire state. As a result, TPL costs are the same across all counties; they only differ by family type.

- Healthcare TPLs are lowest for families with fewer members and higher for larger families.
- Monthly health care for a single adult averaged \$203 across all counties.
- Costs are more than three times higher (\$625) for a four-person family with two school-age children.

Monthly Health Care TPLs for Selected Families by County New Jersey 2019						
	Single Adult		Two Adults		One Adult One Preschooler One School-Age	
	Cost	% of TPL	Cost	% of TPL	Cost	% of TPL
Atlantic	\$203	8.3%	\$570	16.1%	\$544	10.7%
Bergen	\$203	6.5%	\$570	13.3%	\$544	8.3%
Burlington	\$203	7.7%	\$570	15.5%	\$544	9.9%
Camden	\$203	8.1%	\$570	15.5%	\$544	10.3%
Cape May	\$203	8.5%	\$570	16.1%	\$544	10.0%
Cumberland	\$203	9.2%	\$570	17.5%	\$544	11.6%
Essex	\$203	9.1%	\$570	18.0%	\$544	10.5%
Gloucester	\$203	8.0%	\$570	16.0%	\$544	10.2%
Hudson	\$203	7.9%	\$570	16.7%	\$544	10.2%
Hunterdon	\$203	7.1%	\$570	14.2%	\$544	7.9%
Mercer	\$203	7.7%	\$570	15.2%	\$544	9.1%
Middlesex	\$203	7.3%	\$570	14.7%	\$544	8.7%
Monmouth	\$203	7.6%	\$570	15.2%	\$544	8.8%
Morris	\$203	7.4%	\$570	14.8%	\$544	8.4%
Ocean	\$203	7.6%	\$570	15.2%	\$544	9.3%
Passaic	\$203	7.3%	\$570	14.4%	\$544	9.2%
Salem	\$203	8.3%	\$570	15.9%	\$544	10.7%
Somerset	\$203	6.6%	\$570	13.6%	\$544	7.1%
Sussex	\$203	8.0%	\$570	15.5%	\$544	9.7%
Union	\$203	8.0%	\$570	15.5%	\$544	9.7%
Warren	\$203	8.6%	\$570	16.4%	\$544	10.3%

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Monthly Health Care TPLs for Selected Families by County New Jersey 2019						
	Two Adults One Preschooler		Two Adults One Preschooler One School-Age		Two Adults One Preschooler Two School-Age	
	Cost	% of TPL	Cost	% of TPL	Cost	% of TPL
Atlantic	\$582	11.3%	\$604	10.4%	\$625	8.7%
Bergen	\$582	9.4%	\$604	8.3%	\$625	6.8%
Burlington	\$582	10.7%	\$604	9.8%	\$625	8.3%
Camden	\$582	11.1%	\$604	10.0%	\$625	8.5%
Cape May	\$582	11.1%	\$604	9.7%	\$625	7.9%
Cumberland	\$582	12.5%	\$604	11.3%	\$625	9.5%
Essex	\$582	12.5%	\$604	10.6%	\$625	8.5%
Gloucester	\$582	11.3%	\$604	10.1%	\$625	8.5%
Hudson	\$582	12.2%	\$604	10.5%	\$625	8.4%
Hunterdon	\$582	9.3%	\$604	8.0%	\$625	6.5%
Mercer	\$582	10.2%	\$604	9.0%	\$625	7.4%
Middlesex	\$582	10.0%	\$604	8.7%	\$625	7.1%
Monmouth	\$582	10.2%	\$604	8.8%	\$625	7.0%
Morris	\$582	9.9%	\$604	8.5%	\$625	6.9%
Ocean	\$582	10.5%	\$604	9.2%	\$625	7.4%
Passaic	\$582	10.4%	\$604	9.0%	\$625	7.4%
Salem	\$582	11.6%	\$604	10.4%	\$625	8.8%
Somerset	\$582	8.7%	\$604	7.4%	\$625	5.9%
Sussex	\$582	10.9%	\$604	9.5%	\$625	7.9%
Union	\$582	10.9%	\$604	9.5%	\$625	7.9%
Warren	\$582	11.5%	\$604	10.0%	\$625	8.4%



## Taxes

Taxes in the TPL include federal and state income tax, payroll taxes, and state and local sales tax where applicable. Tax credits (Earned Income Tax Credit, Child Care Tax Credit, Child Tax Credit) received by families are deducted from the total taxes owed. The table shows net taxes by county for selected family compositions.

- Monthly net taxes range from \$379 for a single-adult household in Cumberland County to \$1,969 for a five-person household with three children in Somerset County.
- Families in Somerset and Bergen counties pay the highest taxes; those in Cumberland, Essex, and Salem counties pay lower taxes.

Monthly Net Taxes by TPL for Selected Family Compositions, New Jersey 2019					
Single Adult		Two Adults		One Adult, One Preschooler, One School-Age	
Bergen	\$604	Bergen	\$684	Somerset	\$1,409
Somerset	\$598	Somerset	\$662	Hunterdon	\$1,148
Hunterdon	\$545	Hunterdon	\$621	Bergen	\$1,020
Middlesex	\$525	Passaic	\$603	Morris	\$ 987
Passaic	\$524	Middlesex	\$584	Middlesex	\$ 911
Morris	\$511	Morris	\$576	Monmouth	\$ 899
Monmouth	\$493	Mercer	\$556	Mercer	\$ 851
Ocean	\$493	Monmouth	\$555	Passaic	\$ 835
Mercer	\$485	Ocean	\$554	Ocean	\$ 818
Burlington	\$485	Burlington	\$537	Sussex	\$ 757
Hudson	\$470	Camden	\$534	Union	\$ 751
Sussex	\$463	Sussex	\$533	Burlington	\$ 728
Union	\$461	Union	\$533	Cape May	\$ 714
Gloucester	\$458	Gloucester	\$510	Gloucester	\$ 682
Camden	\$456	Salem	\$505	Hudson	\$ 679
Atlantic	\$441	Atlantic	\$504	Warren	\$ 671
Salem	\$436	Cape May	\$502	Camden	\$ 666
Cape May	\$425	Warren	\$484	Essex	\$ 646
Warren	\$415	Hudson	\$469	Atlantic	\$ 622
Essex	\$387	Cumberland	\$440	Salem	\$ 607
Cumberland	\$379	Essex	\$423	Cumberland	\$ 524

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Monthly Net Taxes by TPL for Selected Family Compositions, New Jersey 2019					
Two Adults One Preschooler		Two Adults, One Preschooler, One School-Age		Two Adults, One Preschooler, Two School-Age	
Somerset	\$1,103	Somerset	\$1,286	Somerset	\$1,969
Hunterdon	\$ 994	Hunterdon	\$1,132	Hunterdon	\$1,593
Bergen	\$ 976	Bergen	\$1,053	Bergen	\$1,414
Morris	\$ 891	Morris	\$1,016	Morris	\$1,404
Middlesex	\$ 879	Middlesex	\$ 964	Monmouth	\$1,370
Mercer	\$ 849	Monmouth	\$ 954	Middlesex	\$1,309
Monmouth	\$ 839	Mercer	\$ 916	Passaic	\$1,239
Passaic	\$ 814	Passaic	\$ 908	Mercer	\$1,230
Ocean	\$ 810	Ocean	\$ 874	Ocean	\$1,216
Burlington	\$ 773	Sussex	\$ 820	Union	\$1,088
Sussex	\$ 759	Union	\$ 818	Sussex	\$1,088
Union	\$ 754	Cape May	\$ 784	Cape May	\$1,073
Camden	\$ 735	Burlington	\$ 775	Burlington	\$ 974
Cape May	\$ 729	Camden	\$ 738	Hudson	\$ 954
Atlantic	\$ 711	Warren	\$ 732	Warren	\$ 946
Gloucester	\$ 709	Gloucester	\$ 729	Gloucester	\$ 937
Warren	\$ 689	Atlantic	\$ 677	Essex	\$ 922
Salem	\$ 664	Hudson	\$ 668	Camden	\$ 921
Hudson	\$ 612	Salem	\$ 668	Atlantic	\$ 880
Cumberland	\$ 589	Essex	\$ 655	Salem	\$ 849
Essex	\$ 585	Cumberland	\$ 566	Cumberland	\$ 742

## Miscellaneous

TPLs for miscellaneous essential expenses are calculated by taking 10 percent of all other costs.

- Monthly TPL for miscellaneous expenses range from \$167 for a single-adult household in Cumberland County to \$789 for a five-person family with three children in Somerset County.
- Costs are lowest in Cumberland and Essex counties, and highest in Somerset, Bergen and Hunterdon counties.

**Monthly TPLs for Miscellaneous Essential Expenses  
for Selected Family Compositions, New Jersey 2019**

Single Adult		Two Adults		One Adult, One Preschooler, One School-Age	
Bergen	\$229	Bergen	\$327	Somerset	\$566
Somerset	\$227	Somerset	\$321	Hunterdon	\$524
Hunterdon	\$213	Hunterdon	\$309	Bergen	\$503
Middlesex	\$207	Passaic	\$304	Morris	\$497
Passaic	\$207	Middlesex	\$299	Middlesex	\$485
Morris	\$203	Morris	\$297	Monmouth	\$481
Monmouth	\$198	Mercer	\$291	Mercer	\$468
Ocean	\$198	Monmouth	\$291	Passaic	\$464
Mercer	\$196	Ocean	\$291	Ocean	\$460
Burlington	\$196	Burlington	\$286	Sussex	\$443
Hudson	\$192	Camden	\$285	Union	\$441
Sussex	\$190	Sussex	\$285	Burlington	\$436
Union	\$189	Union	\$285	Cape May	\$431
Gloucester	\$188	Salem	\$279	Gloucester	\$423
Camden	\$188	Gloucester	\$278	Hudson	\$422
Atlantic	\$184	Atlantic	\$277	Warren	\$420
Salem	\$184	Cape May	\$276	Camden	\$419
Cape May	\$179	Warren	\$271	Essex	\$413
Warren	\$177	Hudson	\$267	Atlantic	\$407
Essex	\$169	Cumberland	\$256	Salem	\$405
Cumberland	\$167	Essex	\$250	Cumberland	\$379

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Monthly TPLs for Miscellaneous Essential Expenses for Selected Family Compositions, New Jersey 2019					
Two Adults One Preschooler		Two Adults, One Preschooler, One School-Age		Two Adults, One Preschooler, Two School-Age	
Somerset	\$511	Somerset	\$625	Somerset	\$789
Hunterdon	\$481	Hunterdon	\$586	Hunterdon	\$734
Bergen	\$477	Bergen	\$566	Bergen	\$702
Morris	\$454	Morris	\$556	Morris	\$699
Middlesex	\$450	Middlesex	\$542	Monmouth	\$691
Mercer	\$442	Monmouth	\$540	Middlesex	\$678
Monmouth	\$440	Mercer	\$529	Passaic	\$661
Passaic	\$433	Passaic	\$527	Mercer	\$659
Ocean	\$432	Ocean	\$518	Ocean	\$656
Burlington	\$422	Sussex	\$504	Sussex	\$624
Sussex	\$418	Union	\$503	Union	\$624
Union	\$417	Cape May	\$494	Cape May	\$620
Camden	\$411	Burlington	\$492	Burlington	\$596
Cape May	\$410	Camden	\$482	Hudson	\$591
Atlantic	\$405	Warren	\$480	Warren	\$588
Gloucester	\$404	Gloucester	\$479	Gloucester	\$586
Warren	\$399	Salem	\$466	Essex	\$582
Salem	\$394	Atlantic	\$465	Camden	\$582
Hudson	\$378	Hudson	\$463	Atlantic	\$571
Cumberland	\$371	Essex	\$459	Salem	\$566
Essex	\$370	Cumberland	\$435	Cumberland	\$534

# 7. Differences in the True Poverty Level by Family Type and County of Residence

## Family Size and Composition

Depending on family size and composition, the True Poverty level varies greatly. Statewide TPL averages range from \$31,995 for a single-adult household, to \$99,112 for a five-person family with one preschooler and two school-age.

The True Poverty Level in New Jersey in 2019 for six selected household types ranged from a low of \$31,995 for a single-adult household to a high of \$99,112 for a family of two adults, one preschool-age child, and two school-age children (see table 1). Statewide averages of the TPL show that a single adult requires a monthly income of at least \$2,666 to cover basic living expenses without public or private assistance. The amount nearly doubles to \$5,864 per month or \$70,372 annually for a single adult living with one preschool-age child and one school-age child. The addition of a second adult further increases the TPL. In the case of two adults and one school-age child and one preschool-age child, the monthly amount rises to \$6,530 and the annual amount increases to \$78,364. For a family of two adults with one preschool-age child and two school-age children, the monthly income required to meet basic needs is \$8,259 or \$99,112 annually.

## The Federal Poverty Level grossly understates the income required to avoid deprivation in New Jersey

While the annual TPL for a single-adult household is \$31,995, the 2019 FPL was \$13,300. Similarly, the annual TPL for a two-adult household is \$44,761, while the FPL is \$17,622. For a three-person family with one preschool-age child and one school-age child, the annual TPL is \$70,372, compared to the FPL of \$20,598.

Statewide Weighted TPL Average for Six Selected Family Compositions New Jersey 2019						
	Single Adult	Two Adults	One Adult One PreSchool One School-age	Two Adults One Pre-School	Two Adults One PreSchool One School-age	Two Adults One PreSchool Two School-age
Hourly	\$15.15	\$21.19	\$33.32	\$31.23	\$37.10	\$46.92
Monthly	\$2,666	\$3,730	\$5,864	\$5,498	\$6,530	\$8,259
Annual	\$31,995	\$44,761	\$70,372	\$65,977	\$78,364	\$99,112

Note: Hourly calculations assume that an individual is working for 8 hours a day for 22 days a month.

Federal Poverty Thresholds for Six Selected Family Compositions, New Jersey 2019						
	Single Adult	Two Adults	One Adult Two Children	Two Adults One Child	Two Adults Two Children	Two Adults Three Children
Monthly	\$1,108	\$1,427	\$ 1,716	\$ 1,715	\$ 2,161	\$ 2,543
Annual	\$13,300	\$17,120	\$20,598	\$20,578	\$25,926	\$30,510

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2019 Federal Poverty Thresholds

Difference Between TPL and FPL for Six Selected Family Compositions New Jersey 2019						
	Single Adult	Two Adults	One Adult One Preschool One School-age	Two Adults One Pre-School	Two Adults One Preschool One School-age	Two Adults One Preschool Two School-age
Monthly	\$ 1,558	\$ 2,303	\$ 4,148	\$ 3,783	\$ 4,369	\$ 5,716
Annual	\$18,695	\$27,641	\$49,774	\$45,399	\$52,438	\$68,602

**TPL is higher for families with young children. It is highest for infants, and, as the ages of children increase, the TPLs decrease.**

An infant, on average, adds \$26,204 to a family's basic needs budget. The amount is slightly lower for a preschooler, at \$25,450. An additional \$21,757 is required for raising a school-age child. The additional amount needed for self-sufficiency is lowest for a teenager at \$11,583.

Increase in Cost by Age of Child, New Jersey 2019		
	True Cost of Living	Average Net Increase in Cost
One Adult	\$31,955	-
Adult + infant	\$58,449	+\$26,204
Adult + preschooler	\$57,405	+\$25,450
Adult+ school-age	\$53,752	+\$21,757
Adult + teenager	\$43,578	\$11,583

## County Variations

The TPL varies significantly by county. It is consistently higher in some counties and consistently lower in others across all family compositions. In general, the TPL varies both for different family compositions within the same county and for the same composition in different counties.

### TPL varies significantly by county

In the following tables, the 13 selected family compositions have been sorted by lowest to highest TPL.

- Cumberland and Essex—lowest.
- Bergen and Somerset—highest.
- A family with two adults, one preschooler, and two school-age children living in Somerset County had the highest TPL—\$127,788—among all 13 family compositions.
- A single adult in Cumberland County has the lowest TPL—\$26,527.

Lowest to Highest TPL by Family Type, New Jersey Counties, 2019					
1. Single Adult		2. Two Adults		3. Three Adults	
Cumberland	\$26,527	Essex	\$38,049	Cumberland	\$59,348
Essex	\$26,913	Cumberland	\$39,094	Gloucester	\$63,429
Warren	\$28,290	Hudson	\$40,834	Union	\$65,175
Cape May	\$28,796	Warren	\$41,593	Warren	\$65,211
Salem	\$29,483	Cape May	\$42,485	Hudson	\$65,241
Atlantic	\$29,554	Atlantic	\$42,571	Burlington	\$65,356
Camden	\$30,302	Gloucester	\$42,865	Camden	\$65,640
Gloucester	\$30,359	Salem	\$42,874	Atlantic	\$65,735
Union	\$30,505	Union	\$43,973	Essex	\$65,738
Sussex	\$30,619	Sussex	\$43,982	Salem	\$66,729
Hudson	\$30,943	Camden	\$44,031	Cape May	\$67,242
Burlington	\$31,668	Burlington	\$44,173	Mercer	\$67,684
Mercer	\$31,686	Ocean	\$45,006	Sussex	\$68,443
Ocean	\$32,067	Monmouth	\$45,039	Ocean	\$69,015
Monmouth	\$32,085	Mercer	\$45,098	Passaic	\$69,288
Morris	\$32,973	Morris	\$46,064	Monmouth	\$69,540
Passaic	\$33,567	Middlesex	\$46,449	Middlesex	\$69,940
Middlesex	\$33,630	Passaic	\$47,353	Morris	\$70,303
Hunterdon	\$34,586	Hunterdon	\$48,259	Bergen	\$75,388
Somerset	\$37,188	Somerset	\$50,255	Hunterdon	\$76,413
Bergen	\$37,481	Bergen	\$51,347	Somerset	\$76,906

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Lowest to Highest TPL by Family Type, New Jersey Counties, 2019					
4. One Adult One Preschooler		5. One Adult, One Pre- schooler, One School-age		6. One Adult, One Pre- schooler, Two School-age	
Cumberland	\$47,722	Cumberland	\$56,332	Cumberland	\$ 71,763
Essex	\$49,085	Salem	\$60,755	Salem	\$ 76,610
Salem	\$50,817	Atlantic	\$61,129	Atlantic	\$ 77,903
Hudson	\$51,510	Essex	\$62,271	Camden	\$ 79,084
Warren	\$51,781	Camden	\$63,260	Warren	\$ 81,005
Atlantic	\$53,063	Warren	\$63,462	Gloucester	\$ 81,330
Cape May	\$53,306	Hudson	\$63,903	Essex	\$ 82,651
Gloucester	\$53,486	Gloucester	\$64,020	Burlington	\$ 83,283
Camden	\$53,507	Cape May	\$65,518	Hudson	\$ 85,479
Union	\$54,786	Burlington	\$66,226	Cape May	\$ 87,263
Sussex	\$55,124	Union	\$67,269	Union	\$ 88,048
Burlington	\$56,656	Sussex	\$67,584	Sussex	\$ 88,389
Passaic	\$57,304	Ocean	\$70,521	Passaic	\$ 95,317
Ocean	\$57,997	Passaic	\$71,276	Mercer	\$ 95,331
Mercer	\$59,276	Mercer	\$72,010	Ocean	\$ 99,355
Monmouth	\$59,312	Monmouth	\$74,307	Middlesex	\$ 99,932
Middlesex	\$61,323	Middlesex	\$74,893	Monmouth	\$102,831
Morris	\$61,640	Morris	\$77,452	Bergen	\$103,996
Bergen	\$64,908	Bergen	\$78,613	Morris	\$104,341
Hunterdon	\$65,922	Hunterdon	\$82,943	Hunterdon	\$111,215
Somerset	\$71,884	Somerset	\$91,650	Somerset	\$123,626

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Lowest to Highest TPL by Family Type, New Jersey Counties, 2019					
7. Two Adults One Preschooler		8. Two Adults, One Pre- schooler, One School-age		9. Two Adults, One Pre- schooler, Two School-age	
Essex	\$55,805	Cumberland	\$64,230	Cumberland	\$ 79,342
Cumberland	\$56,004	Essex	\$68,489	Salem	\$ 84,902
Hudson	\$57,200	Hudson	\$69,194	Atlantic	\$ 85,938
Salem	\$60,006	Salem	\$69,499	Camden	\$ 87,832
Warren	\$60,875	Atlantic	\$69,563	Essex	\$ 87,873
Gloucester	\$61,874	Gloucester	\$72,009	Gloucester	\$ 88,620
Atlantic	\$61,950	Warren	\$72,131	Warren	\$ 88,945
Cape May	\$62,835	Camden	\$72,435	Hudson	\$ 89,488
Camden	\$63,105	Burlington	\$74,201	Burlington	\$ 90,311
Union	\$64,063	Cape May	\$74,546	Cape May	\$ 94,771
Sussex	\$64,268	Union	\$76,205	Union	\$ 95,451
Burlington	\$64,980	Sussex	\$76,307	Sussex	\$ 95,453
Ocean	\$66,758	Ocean	\$78,894	Ocean	\$101,226
Passaic	\$66,913	Passaic	\$80,499	Mercer	\$101,723
Monmouth	\$68,096	Mercer	\$80,864	Passaic	\$102,090
Mercer	\$68,529	Monmouth	\$82,680	Middlesex	\$105,161
Middlesex	\$70,000	Middlesex	\$83,168	Monmouth	\$107,720
Morris	\$70,576	Morris	\$85,580	Morris	\$109,100
Bergen	\$74,635	Bergen	\$87,377	Bergen	\$109,619
Hunterdon	\$75,435	Hunterdon	\$90,913	Hunterdon	\$115,953
Somerset	\$80,642	Somerset	\$97,947	Somerset	\$127,788

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Lowest to Highest TPL by Family Type, New Jersey Counties, 2019							
10. Two Adults One Infant One Preschooler Two School-age		11. Three Adults One School-age		12. Three Adults One Preschooler Two School-age		13. Three Adults One Preschooler Two School-age	
Cumberland	\$ 95,112	Cumberland	\$ 73,410	Cumberland	\$ 84,663	Cumberland	\$ 98,051
Salem	\$100,654	Gloucester	\$ 79,000	Gloucester	\$ 92,753	Salem	\$107,148
Atlantic	\$101,493	Camden	\$ 79,979	Salem	\$ 92,936	Atlantic	\$107,427
Hudson	\$103,686	Burlington	\$ 80,402	Atlantic	\$ 93,791	Gloucester	\$107,871
Essex	\$103,847	Warren	\$ 80,905	Camden	\$ 93,992	Camden	\$108,080
Camden	\$104,772	Salem	\$ 81,028	Hudson	\$ 95,193	Burlington	\$110,197
Gloucester	\$106,108	Atlantic	\$ 81,053	Warren	\$ 95,332	Hudson	\$111,650
Warren	\$106,531	Union	\$ 83,274	Burlington	\$ 95,756	Warren	\$113,635
Burlington	\$109,138	Essex	\$ 83,859	Essex	\$ 96,577	Essex	\$115,202
Cape May	\$114,426	Hudson	\$ 84,347	Union	\$ 98,247	Union	\$116,373
Sussex	\$114,792	Cape May	\$ 86,251	Sussex	\$101,358	Sussex	\$119,894
Union	\$115,495	Sussex	\$ 86,380	Cape May	\$101,694	Cape May	\$122,996
Passaic	\$120,226	Mercer	\$ 87,222	Passaic	\$104,375	Mercer	\$125,680
Ocean	\$120,736	Passaic	\$ 89,573	Ocean	\$104,916	Ocean	\$125,935
Mercer	\$124,048	Ocean	\$ 90,100	Mercer	\$105,098	Passaic	\$127,309
Middlesex	\$127,036	Middlesex	\$ 90,547	Middlesex	\$106,968	Middlesex	\$132,057
Monmouth	\$129,642	Morris	\$ 92,239	Monmouth	\$109,287	Monmouth	\$134,014
Bergen	\$134,066	Monmouth	\$ 93,096	Morris	\$111,250	Morris	\$135,665
Morris	\$136,172	Bergen	\$ 96,103	Bergen	\$114,374	Bergen	\$138,931
Hunterdon	\$144,186	Hunterdon	\$ 99,314	Hunterdon	\$120,387	Hunterdon	\$149,223
Somerset	\$157,034	Somerset	\$102,839	Somerset	\$127,516	Somerset	\$159,803

## The ratio of the TPL to the FPL varies substantially between counties and by family composition.

The TPL as a percentage of FPL differs significantly between counties and by family composition. At a minimum, it is always more than 2.5 times the FPL, with some exceptions for a single-adult and two-adult households. At a maximum, the TPL is a little more than four times the FPL, as seen in the case of a three-person family with one preschooler and one school-age child in Somerset County.

The True Cost of Living as a Percentage of the Federal Poverty Level for Selected Family Compositions; New Jersey Counties, 2019						
County	One Adult	Two Adults	One Adult, One Preschool, One School-age	Two Adults One Preschool	Two Adults One Pre-School, One School-age	Two Adults One Preschool Two School-age
Atlantic	222%	249%	297%	301%	268%	282%
Bergen	282%	300%	382%	363%	337%	359%
Burlington	238%	258%	322%	316%	286%	296%
Camden	228%	257%	307%	307%	279%	288%
Cape May	217%	248%	318%	305%	288%	311%
Cumberland	199%	228%	273%	272%	248%	260%
Essex	202%	222%	302%	271%	264%	288%
Gloucester	228%	250%	311%	301%	278%	290%
Hudson	233%	239%	310%	278%	267%	293%
Hunterdon	260%	282%	403%	367%	351%	380%
Mercer	238%	263%	350%	333%	312%	333%
Middlesex	253%	271%	364%	340%	321%	345%
Monmouth	241%	263%	361%	331%	319%	353%
Morris	248%	269%	376%	343%	330%	358%
Ocean	241%	263%	342%	324%	304%	332%
Passaic	252%	277%	346%	325%	310%	335%
Salem	222%	250%	295%	292%	268%	278%
Somerset	280%	294%	445%	392%	378%	419%
Sussex	230%	257%	328%	312%	294%	313%
Union	229%	257%	327%	311%	294%	313%
Warren	213%	243%	308%	296%	278%	292%

## 8. Why True Poverty Matters

The experience of poverty creates realities, conditions, and environments with harmful consequences. Each harm seeps into the next, creating a vicious cycle for individuals and families—making it harder for the next generation to climb out of poverty. The cumulative, long-term consequences are enormous: enduring harms to health, limited access to essential resources and opportunities, and unrealized potential and productivity. For far too many in New Jersey, these circumstances are a daily reality, yet remain invisible to most.

### Enduring Health Harms

The inability to meet basic financial needs has a debilitating impact on an individual's mental, emotional and physical health. Deprivation impacts health by stripping people of essential needs such as access to adequate nutrition, stable housing, and safe physical environments that offer clean air, proper utilities, and secure infrastructure.

Mounting evidence shows that an environment of deprivation causes a person to experience prolonged, acute, or frequent stress—called “toxic stress.”<sup>20</sup> Research affirms toxic stress response causes developmental body and brain impair-

ment. In children, toxic stress impairs hormone regulation, learning ability, memory capacity, and emotional control, which contributes to adverse adult outcomes. It may also lead to lifelong chronic illness: poorer immune health, greater risk of cardiovascular disease, higher likelihood of asthma, and even anxiety and depression.<sup>21</sup>

Toxic stress compounds the health harms of poor nutrition caused by food insecurity, including obesity, diabetes, tooth decay, osteoporosis, and high blood pressure.<sup>22</sup> Toxic stress exacerbates the health harms caused by unsafe physical environments—exposure to lead, air pollution and other toxins. In particular, air pollutants are known to cause asthma, cardiovascular problems, and cancer.<sup>23</sup>

### Limited Access to Essential Resources and Opportunities

Families in poverty often lack access to resources critical to upward mobility and promising life outcomes, such as preventative and quality health care; good schools; mentors; safe neighborhoods; and secure, resource-rich networks with access to information, skills, and wealth. Unjust practices and policies put lower income families at risk of inadequate access to critical

institutions and create adverse relationships with them.

Evidence suggests poverty is a key factor in determining the extent of child welfare involvement. Often, child welfare becomes involved due to poverty, rather than abuse or neglect. In fact, children are frequently removed from their homes due to circumstances such as inadequate housing and food insecurity. The unjust interjection of the system often causes vulnerable families to be split up or face other unnecessary hardships.<sup>24</sup> Similar adverse outcomes result from the inability to be fairly represented in the judicial system, as people experiencing deprivation are not able to afford legal assistance in civil matters.<sup>25</sup>

### Unrealized Potential and Productivity

Deprivation threatens the physical and cognitive abilities of persons in poverty and limits access to critical resources and opportunities. Studies show that children in poverty are more likely to drop out of high school<sup>26</sup> and less likely to attend higher education or college<sup>27</sup>—which contribute to difficulty finding a job and the likelihood of earning below a livable wage.<sup>28</sup> Together, these harms diminish individuals' ability

to be productive members of society and to realize their full potential. Consequently, persons in poverty may have lower educational attainment, inadequate access to higher-paying jobs, and fewer prospects for advancement—limiting their ability to contribute to the economy and society. Instead, they are exhausted by the daily struggle to survive.

## **Inequities in Who Experiences Poverty**

Unfortunately, people of color, women, individuals with a disability, and many other groups experience higher rates of poverty. People of color, in particular, face systemic and structural barriers in almost

every aspect of life that impede financial stability. Individuals who are Black or African American and Hispanic or Latino face significant employment barriers, including discriminatory hiring practices, isolation from lucrative jobs with decent benefits, and limited access to promising careers and networks.<sup>29</sup> Simultaneously, people of color confront disadvantages in homeownership resulting from past discriminatory policies and practices such as redlining<sup>30</sup> and exclusionary zoning.<sup>31</sup> Although less perceptible, discrimination still persists, such as higher denials for conventional mortgages,<sup>32</sup> even when Black and Hispanic applicants have the same qualifications as white applicants.<sup>33</sup> Children of color are also impacted by inequities

affecting their parents. They are likelier to attend lower-performing and higher-poverty schools, placing them at a further disadvantage for future opportunities.<sup>34</sup> Further, institutions such as the criminal justice<sup>35</sup> and child welfare systems<sup>36</sup>—too often fail to equally serve and protect people of color. Harms caused by racism and discrimination create and sustain poverty<sup>37</sup>—compounding the consequences of poverty.<sup>38</sup>

*Enduring health harms, limited access to essential resources and opportunities, and unrealized potential and productivity create a vicious cycle perpetuating poverty—with the consequences falling inequitably on some New Jerseyans.*

# 9. Policy Implications

This report reveals that the extent of True Poverty greatly exceeds the federal poverty counts. In 2019, an additional two million residents were effectively deprived of critical necessities, as well as public recognition of their plight. Many of these residents are working full time and year-round. Wages earned from full-time employment should provide a path out of poverty. When full-time work cannot get people out of True Poverty in one of the wealthiest states in the nation, something is askew. Until the economy can support the wages necessary to afford basic necessities, public assistance programs must bridge the self-sufficiency gap. Additionally, it is imperative that the public assistance programs also acknowledge economic hardships of individuals who cannot work or experience barriers to work, because of disability or other factors.

Anti-poverty programs play an essential role in alleviating hardships; however, they are failing to assist all individuals in need in New Jersey. This failure leaves many New Jerseyans exposed to the enduring and life-threatening consequences of poverty. Policy changes must be implemented to lift and prevent families from falling below the TPL.

## **Reconsider the definition and calculation of poverty. A state-specific poverty threshold that incorporates geographical variations in the cost of living is essential.**

Both federal and state government must acknowledge variations in cost of living by geographic location and individual family circumstances. To ensure anti-poverty programs are effective, accurate cost data is critical. Public assistance programs cannot determine “need” if the poverty measure is based on an inaccurate measure. To create effective policies and adequately fund public assistance programs, a clear definition and measure of True Poverty must be recognized by the state.

## **Improve Employment Earnings and Opportunities**

- Invest in human capital development: Provide education and training opportunities that help individuals improve and gain skills, allowing them to qualify for better and higher-paying jobs.
- Raise the minimum wage to make it a livable wage.

## **Ensure that basic needs are met, which often helps individuals secure and keep jobs**

- Invest in public transportation infrastructure to decrease commuting time and improve access to job-rich areas.
- Develop and implement strategies to increase access and reduce the cost burden of quality child care for all families.
  - o Improve New Jersey’s Child Care Subsidy reimbursement rate to reflect the actual cost of child care in each county.
  - o Expand the child and dependent care tax credit
    - i. Increase the age of qualifying child from 13 to 17 years.
    - ii. Expand the income eligibility for the credit to 300% FPL.
    - iii. Increase the state credit to 100 percent of the federal benefit.


- iv. Make the credit fully refundable
  - v. Implement periodic payments of the refundable portion to eligible families, instead of a lump sum at the end of the year.
- o Provide more direct support to child care providers to ensure children are receiving high-quality affordable care.
- Focus on strategies to improve housing stability, as housing security can improve many outcomes, including job stability.
  - o Reduce the cost burden of quality housing by increasing the supply of safe, habitable, and affordable housing, and by preserving existing affordable housing.
  - o Increase asset building and home ownership opportunities and supports for families at or below 300% FPL by increasing down payment and mortgage assistance and racially equitable lending programs, and by eliminating exclusionary zoning rules.
  - o Provide rental assistance vouchers to all persons who meet the eligibility criteria such as in programs like SNAP and Medicaid. Currently, voucher programs (both federal and state) operate as restricted programs based on limited, annual funding allocations. As a result, people meeting the eligibility criteria are often unable to actually receive the assistance. The program has a years-long waiting list. Rental assistance vouchers like Section 8 must move to a universal model where all eligible individuals are able to receive assistance.
  - o Institute statewide rent control to allow a sufficient supply of affordable housing for low-income renters. This will prevent rent from climbing along with the rising prices of luxury apartments and condos.
  - o Prohibit rental practices that protect discriminatory tenant screening and deter tenants from asserting their right to enforce habitability standards. Shield prior eviction records from public credit reporting and tenant screening use and prohibit their use in evaluating a prospective tenant's current creditworthiness and ability to rent.
- Make health care truly accessible.
  - o Recognize that healthcare affordability remains a major barrier to health care access for many individuals, including those who work. Being uninsured or underinsured prevents people from seeking medical help when needed.
  - o Improve health care affordability by reducing health care costs to individuals to make health care truly accessible to all. Although some attention has been paid to providing subsidies to help pay for premiums, there must also be a focus on reducing cost-sharing, such as high deductibles, co-pays, co-insurance, cost of prescription drugs, including inability to afford life-sustaining medicines such as insulin.

## **Re-examine public assistance programs, including eliminating practices that disproportionately harm people of color**

While the crux of the TPL focuses on working families, many families cannot work, or are not expected to work due to circumstances out of their control, such as disability or other enduring issues. It is imperative that public programs adequately address the needs of this group.

- Strengthen last resort safety-net programs such as Temporary Assistance to Needy Families and General Assistance, to reflect the True Cost of Living.



- 
- Provide opportunities to build assets or emergency funds.
    - o Eliminate or raise asset limits for public assistance programs.
    - o Provide incentives to create assets, including seed money to open a savings account, low interest loans, revised credit rating policies, etc.
  - Identify and eliminate subjective public assistance program rules that disproportionately harm families, including families of color.

# Appendix I: Income Eligibility for Means Tested Assistance Programs

Program	Income Eligibility
<b>Child Care</b>	
Head Start and Early Head Start	100% FPL
New Jersey Child Care Subsidy Program and Pre-school Wrap Around Child Care	150-200% FPL
State Funded Kinship Child Care Services	300% FPL
WorkFirst New Jersey (WFNJ) Child Care Assistance	WFNJ Recipient
<b>Food and Nutrition</b>	
Free School Lunch Program	130% FPL
Free and Reduced School Breakfast Program	130-185% FPL
Reduced School Lunch Program	185% FPL
Summer Food Service Program	185% FPL
Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)	185% FPL
Women Infants and Children (WIC)	185% FPL
<b>Health</b>	
NJ FamilyCare – Adult, 1964	138% FPL
	205% FPL
NJ FamilyCare – Children	355% FPL
NJ Charity Care	200% FPL (No Charge)
	300% FPL (Reduced Charge)
<b>Housing</b>	
Homelessness Prevention Program	80% of Area Median Income (AMI)
Homelessness Prevention Program and Rapid Rehousing	30% of AMI
Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher	50-80% of AMI
State Rental Assistance Program	30-40% of AMI
<b>Income and Work Supports</b>	
General Assistance	17% FPL
Supportive Assistance to Individuals and Families (SAIF)	130% FPL
WorkFirst New Jersey (WFNJ)	23-40% FPL (initial eligibility)
WFNJ Support Services	250% FPL

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<b>Taxes</b>	
Earned Income Tax Credit	186%-236% FPL
<b>Utilities and Technology</b>	
Comfort Partners	250% FPL
Lifeline (Federal Telephone Assistance Program)	135% FPL
Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)	200% FPL
Universal Service Fund	185% FPL

# APPENDIX II














## TRUE POVERTY THRESHOLDS BY COUNTY

THIS APPENDIX INCLUDES THE TRUE POVERTY THRESHOLDS FOR ALL 13 FAMILY TYPES IN EACH OF NEW JERSEY'S 21 COUNTIES. THE FOLLOWING SECTION ALSO INCLUDES THE SHARE OF RESIDENTS IN EACH COUNTY WHO LIVE BELOW THE FEDERAL POVERTY LINE AND BELOW THE TRUE POVERTY THRESHOLD.

KEY TERMS AND SYMBOLS	
	ADULT: AN INDIVIDUALS AGED 18-64
	SCHOOL-AGE CHILD: A CHILD BETWEEN THE AGES OF 6 & 12
	PRESCHOOL-AGE CHILD: A CHILD BETWEEN THE AGES OF 3 & 5
	INFANT: A CHILD UNDER THE AGE OF 2
TP	TRUE POVERTY














# ATLANTIC COUNTY

## INCOME THRESHOLDS BY FAMILY TYPE

FAMILY TYPE	TPL	FPL	GAP	%FPL
	\$29,554	\$13,300	\$16,254	222%
	\$42,571	\$17,120	\$25,451	249%
	\$65,735	\$19,998	\$45,737	329%
	\$53,063	\$17,622	\$35,441	301%
	\$61,129	\$20,598	\$40,531	297%
	\$77,903	\$26,017	\$51,886	299%
	\$61,950	\$20,578	\$41,372	301%
	\$69,563	\$25,926	\$43,637	268%
	\$85,938	\$30,510	\$55,428	282%
	\$101,493	\$34,161	\$67,332	297%
	\$81,053	\$26,801	\$54,252	302%
	\$93,791	\$31,275	\$62,516	300%
	\$107,427	\$35,239	\$72,188	305%














# BERGEN COUNTY

## INCOME THRESHOLDS BY FAMILY TYPE

FAMILY TYPE	TPL	FPL	GAP	%FPL
 .....	\$37,481	\$13,300	\$24,181	282%
 .....	\$51,347	\$17,120	\$34,227	300%
 .....	\$75,388	\$19,998	\$55,390	377%
 .....	\$64,908	\$17,622	\$47,286	368%
 .....	\$78,613	\$20,598	\$58,015	382%
 .....	\$103,996	\$26,017	\$77,970	400%
 .....	\$74,635	\$20,578	\$54,057	363%
 .....	\$87,377	\$25,926	\$61,451	337%
 .....	\$109,619	\$30,510	\$79,109	359%
 .....	\$134,066	\$34,161	\$99,905	392%
 .....	\$96,103	\$26,801	\$69,302	359%
 .....	\$114,374	\$31,275	\$83,099	366%
 .....	\$138,931	\$35,239	\$103,692	394%














# BURLINGTON COUNTY

## INCOME THRESHOLDS BY FAMILY TYPE

FAMILY TYPE	TPL	FPL	GAP	%FPL
 .....	\$31,668	\$13,300	\$18,368	238%
 .....	\$44,173	\$17,120	\$27,053	258%
 .....	\$65,356	\$19,998	\$45,358	327%
 .....	\$56,656	\$17,622	\$39,034	322%
 .....	\$66,226	\$20,598	\$45,628	322%
 .....	\$83,283	\$26,017	\$57,266	320%
 .....	\$64,980	\$20,578	\$44,402	316%
 .....	\$74,201	\$25,926	\$48,275	286%
 .....	\$90,311	\$30,510	\$59,801	296%
 .....	\$109,138	\$34,161	\$74,977	319%
 .....	\$80,402	\$26,801	\$53,601	300%
 .....	\$95,756	\$31,275	\$64,481	306%
 .....	\$110,197	\$35,239	\$74,958	313%

# CAMDEN COUNTY














## INCOME THRESHOLDS BY FAMILY TYPE

FAMILY TYPE	TPL	FPL	GAP	%FPL
 .....	\$30,302	\$13,300	\$17,002	228%
 .....	\$44,031	\$17,120	\$26,911	257%
 .....	\$65,640	\$19,998	\$45,642	328%
 .....	\$53,507	\$17,622	\$35,885	304%
 .....	\$63,260	\$20,598	\$42,662	307%
 .....	\$79,084	\$26,017	\$53,067	304%
 .....	\$63,105	\$20,578	\$42,527	307%
 .....	\$72,435	\$25,926	\$46,509	279%
 .....	\$87,832	\$30,510	\$57,322	288%
 .....	\$104,772	\$34,161	\$70,611	307%
 .....	\$79,979	\$26,801	\$53,178	298%
 .....	\$93,992	\$31,275	\$62,717	301%
 .....	\$108,080	\$35,239	\$72,841	307%
















# CAPE MAY COUNTY

## INCOME THRESHOLDS BY FAMILY TYPE














FAMILY TYPE	TPL	FPL	GAP	%FPL
 .....	\$28,796	\$13,300	\$15,496	217%
 .....	\$42,485	\$17,120	\$25,365	248%
 .....	\$67,242	\$19,998	\$47,244	336%
 .....	\$53,306	\$17,622	\$35,684	303%
 .....	\$65,518	\$20,598	\$44,920	318%
 .....	\$87,263	\$26,017	\$61,246	335%
 .....	\$62,835	\$20,578	\$42,257	305%
 .....	\$74,546	\$25,926	\$48,620	288%
 .....	\$94,771	\$30,510	\$64,261	311%
 .....	\$114,426	\$34,161	\$80,265	335%
 .....	\$86,251	\$26,801	\$59,450	322%
 .....	\$101,694	\$31,275	\$70,419	325%
 .....	\$122,996	\$35,239	\$87,757	349%

# CUMBERLAND COUNTY

INCOME THRESHOLDS BY FAMILY TYPE				
FAMILY TYPE	TPL	FPL	GAP	%FPL
 .....	\$26,527	\$13,300	\$13,227	199%
 .....	\$39,094	\$17,120	\$21,974	228%
 .....	\$59,348	\$19,998	\$39,350	297%
 .....	\$47,722	\$17,622	\$30,100	271%
 .....	\$56,332	\$20,598	\$35,734	273%
 .....	\$71,763	\$26,017	\$45,746	276%
 .....	\$56,004	\$20,578	\$35,426	272%
 .....	\$64,230	\$25,926	\$38,304	248%
 .....	\$79,342	\$30,510	\$48,832	260%
 .....	\$95,112	\$34,161	\$60,951	278%
 .....	\$73,410	\$26,801	\$46,609	274%
 .....	\$84,663	\$31,275	\$53,388	271%
 .....	\$98,051	\$35,239	\$62,812	278%














# ESSEX COUNTY

## INCOME THRESHOLDS BY FAMILY TYPE

FAMILY TYPE	TPL	FPL	GAP	%FPL
 .....	\$26,913	\$13,300	\$13,613	202%
 .....	\$38,049	\$17,120	\$20,929	222%
 .....	\$65,738	\$19,998	\$45,740	329%
 .....	\$49,085	\$17,622	\$31,463	279%
 .....	\$62,271	\$20,598	\$41,673	302%
 .....	\$82,651	\$26,017	\$56,634	318%
 .....	\$55,805	\$20,578	\$35,227	271%
 .....	\$68,489	\$25,926	\$42,563	264%
 .....	\$87,873	\$30,510	\$57,363	288%
 .....	\$103,847	\$34,161	\$69,686	304%
 .....	\$83,859	\$26,801	\$57,058	313%
 .....	\$96,577	\$31,275	\$65,302	309%
 .....	\$115,202	\$35,239	\$79,963	327%














# GLOUCESTER COUNTY

## INCOME THRESHOLDS BY FAMILY TYPE

FAMILY TYPE	TPL	FPL	GAP	%FPL
 .....	\$30,359	\$13,300	\$17,059	228%
 .....	\$42,865	\$17,120	\$25,745	250%
 .....	\$63,429	\$19,998	\$43,431	317%
 .....	\$53,486	\$17,622	\$35,864	304%
 .....	\$64,020	\$20,598	\$43,422	311%
 .....	\$81,330	\$26,017	\$55,313	313%
 .....	\$61,874	\$20,578	\$41,296	301%
 .....	\$72,009	\$25,926	\$46,083	278%
 .....	\$88,620	\$30,510	\$58,110	290%
 .....	\$106,108	\$34,161	\$71,947	311%
 .....	\$79,000	\$26,801	\$52,199	295%
 .....	\$92,753	\$31,275	\$61,478	297%
 .....	\$107,871	\$35,239	\$72,632	306%














# HUDSON COUNTY

## INCOME THRESHOLDS BY FAMILY TYPE

FAMILY TYPE	TPL	FPL	GAP	%FPL
 .....	\$30,943	\$13,300	\$17,643	233%
 .....	\$40,834	\$17,120	\$23,714	239%
 .....	\$65,241	\$19,998	\$45,243	326%
 .....	\$51,510	\$17,622	\$33,888	292%
 .....	\$63,903	\$20,598	\$43,305	310%
 .....	\$85,479	\$26,017	\$59,462	329%
 .....	\$57,200	\$20,578	\$36,622	278%
 .....	\$69,194	\$25,926	\$43,268	267%
 .....	\$89,488	\$30,510	\$58,978	293%
 .....	\$103,686	\$34,161	\$69,525	304%
 .....	\$84,347	\$26,801	\$57,546	315%
 .....	\$95,193	\$31,275	\$63,918	304%
 .....	\$111,650	\$35,239	\$76,411	317%














# HUNTERDON COUNTY

## INCOME THRESHOLDS BY FAMILY TYPE

FAMILY TYPE	TPL	FPL	GAP	%FPL
 .....	\$34,586	\$13,300	\$21,286	260%
 .....	\$48,259	\$17,120	\$31,139	282%
 .....	\$76,413	\$19,998	\$56,415	382%
 .....	\$65,922	\$17,622	\$48,300	374%
 .....	\$82,943	\$20,598	\$62,345	403%
 .....	\$111,215	\$26,017	\$85,198	427%
 .....	\$75,435	\$20,578	\$54,857	367%
 .....	\$90,913	\$25,926	\$64,987	351%
 .....	\$115,953	\$30,510	\$85,443	380%
 .....	\$144,186	\$34,161	\$110,025	422%
 .....	\$99,314	\$26,801	\$72,513	371%
 .....	\$120,387	\$31,275	\$89,112	385%
 .....	\$149,223	\$35,239	\$113,984	423%














# MERCER COUNTY

## INCOME THRESHOLDS BY FAMILY TYPE

FAMILY TYPE	TPL	FPL	GAP	%FPL
 .....	\$31,686	\$13,300	\$18,386	238%
 .....	\$45,098	\$17,120	\$27,978	263%
 .....	\$67,684	\$19,998	\$47,686	338%
 .....	\$59,276	\$17,622	\$41,654	336%
 .....	\$72,010	\$20,598	\$51,412	350%
 .....	\$95,331	\$26,017	\$69,314	366%
 .....	\$68,529	\$20,578	\$47,951	333%
 .....	\$80,864	\$25,926	\$54,938	312%
 .....	\$101,723	\$30,510	\$71,213	333%
 .....	\$124,048	\$34,161	\$89,887	363%
 .....	\$87,222	\$26,801	\$60,421	325%
 .....	\$105,098	\$31,275	\$73,823	336%
 .....	\$125,680	\$35,239	\$90,441	357%

# MIDDLESEX COUNTY














## INCOME THRESHOLDS BY FAMILY TYPE

FAMILY TYPE	TPL	FPL	GAP	%FPL
	\$33,630	\$13,300	\$20,330	253%
	\$46,449	\$17,120	\$29,329	271%
	\$69,940	\$19,998	\$49,942	350%
	\$61,323	\$17,622	\$43,701	348%
	\$74,893	\$20,598	\$54,295	364%
	\$99,932	\$26,017	\$73,915	384%
	\$70,000	\$20,578	\$49,422	340%
	\$83,168	\$25,926	\$57,242	321%
	\$105,161	\$30,510	\$74,651	345%
	\$127,036	\$34,161	\$92,875	372%
	\$90,547	\$26,801	\$63,746	338%
	\$106,968	\$31,275	\$75,693	342%
	\$132,057	\$35,239	\$96,818	375%
















# MONMOUTH COUNTY

## INCOME THRESHOLDS BY FAMILY TYPE

FAMILY TYPE	TPL	FPL	GAP	%FPL
 .....	\$32,085	\$13,300	\$18,785	241%
 .....	\$45,039	\$17,120	\$27,919	263%
 .....	\$69,540	\$19,998	\$49,542	348%
 .....	\$59,312	\$17,622	\$41,690	337%
 .....	\$74,307	\$20,598	\$53,709	361%
 .....	\$102,831	\$26,017	\$76,814	395%
 .....	\$68,096	\$20,578	\$47,518	331%
 .....	\$82,680	\$25,926	\$56,754	319%
 .....	\$107,720	\$30,510	\$77,210	353%
 .....	\$129,642	\$34,161	\$95,481	380%
 .....	\$93,096	\$26,801	\$66,295	347%
 .....	\$109,287	\$31,275	\$78,012	349%
 .....	\$134,014	\$35,239	\$98,775	380%














# MORRIS COUNTY

## INCOME THRESHOLDS BY FAMILY TYPE

FAMILY TYPE	TPL	FPL	GAP	%FPL
 .....	\$32,973	\$13,300	\$19,673	248%
 .....	\$46,064	\$17,120	\$28,944	269%
 .....	\$70,303	\$19,998	\$50,305	352%
 .....	\$61,640	\$17,622	\$44,018	350%
 .....	\$77,452	\$20,598	\$56,854	376%
 .....	\$104,341	\$26,017	\$78,324	401%
 .....	\$70,576	\$20,578	\$49,998	343%
 .....	\$85,580	\$25,926	\$59,654	330%
 .....	\$109,100	\$30,510	\$78,590	358%
 .....	\$136,172	\$34,161	\$102,011	399%
 .....	\$92,239	\$26,801	\$65,438	344%
 .....	\$111,250	\$31,275	\$79,975	356%
 .....	\$135,665	\$35,239	\$100,426	385%














# OCEAN COUNTY

## INCOME THRESHOLDS BY FAMILY TYPE

FAMILY TYPE	TPL	FPL	GAP	%FPL
 .....	\$32,067	\$13,300	\$18,767	241%
 .....	\$45,006	\$17,120	\$27,886	263%
 .....	\$69,015	\$19,998	\$49,017	345%
 .....	\$57,997	\$17,622	\$40,375	329%
 .....	\$70,521	\$20,598	\$49,923	342%
 .....	\$99,355	\$26,017	\$73,338	382%
 .....	\$66,758	\$20,578	\$46,180	324%
 .....	\$78,894	\$25,926	\$52,968	304%
 .....	\$101,226	\$30,510	\$70,716	332%
 .....	\$120,736	\$34,161	\$86,575	353%
 .....	\$90,100	\$26,801	\$63,299	336%
 .....	\$104,916	\$31,275	\$73,641	335%
 .....	\$125,935	\$35,239	\$90,696	357%














# PASSAIC COUNTY

## INCOME THRESHOLDS BY FAMILY TYPE

FAMILY TYPE	TPL	FPL	GAP	%FPL
 .....	\$33,567	\$13,300	\$20,267	252%
 .....	\$47,353	\$17,120	\$30,233	277%
 .....	\$39,288	\$19,998	\$49,290	346%
 .....	\$57,304	\$17,622	\$39,682	325%
 .....	\$71,276	\$20,598	\$50,678	346%
 .....	\$95,317	\$26,017	\$69,300	366%
 .....	\$66,913	\$20,578	\$46,335	325%
 .....	\$80,499	\$25,926	\$54,573	310%
 .....	\$102,090	\$30,510	\$71,580	335%
 .....	\$120,226	\$34,161	\$86,065	352%
 .....	\$89,573	\$26,801	\$62,772	334%
 .....	\$104,375	\$31,275	\$73,100	334%
 .....	\$127,309	\$35,239	\$92,070	361%














# SALEM COUNTY

## INCOME THRESHOLDS BY FAMILY TYPE














FAMILY TYPE	TPL	FPL	GAP	%FPL
 .....	\$29,483	\$13,300	\$16,183	222%
 .....	\$42,874	\$17,120	\$25,754	250%
 .....	\$66,729	\$19,998	\$46,731	334%
 .....	\$50,817	\$17,622	\$33,195	288%
 .....	\$60,755	\$20,598	\$40,157	295%
 .....	\$76,610	\$26,017	\$50,593	294%
 .....	\$60,006	\$20,578	\$39,428	292%
 .....	\$69,499	\$25,926	\$43,573	268%
 .....	\$84,902	\$30,510	\$54,392	278%
 .....	\$100,654	\$34,161	\$66,493	295%
 .....	\$81,028	\$26,801	\$54,227	302%
 .....	\$92,936	\$31,275	\$61,661	297%
 .....	\$107,148	\$35,239	\$71,909	304%

# SOMERSET COUNTY

## INCOME THRESHOLDS BY FAMILY TYPE














FAMILY TYPE	TPL	FPL	GAP	%FPL
 .....	\$37,188	\$13,300	\$23,888	280%
 .....	\$50,255	\$17,120	\$33,135	294%
 .....	\$76,906	\$19,998	\$56,908	385%
 .....	\$71,884	\$17,622	\$54,262	408%
 .....	\$91,650	\$20,598	\$71,052	445%
 .....	\$123,626	\$26,017	\$97,609	475%
 .....	\$80,642	\$20,578	\$60,064	392%
 .....	\$97,947	\$25,926	\$72,021	378%
 .....	\$127,788	\$30,510	\$97,278	419%
 .....	\$157,034	\$34,161	\$122,873	460%
 .....	\$102,839	\$26,801	\$76,038	384%
 .....	\$127,516	\$31,275	\$96,241	408%
 .....	\$159,803	\$35,239	\$124,564	453%

# SUSSEX COUNTY

INCOME THRESHOLDS BY FAMILY TYPE				
FAMILY TYPE	TPL	FPL	GAP	%FPL
 .....	\$30,619	\$13,300	\$17,319	230%
 .....	\$43,982	\$17,120	\$26,862	257%
 .....	\$68,443	\$19,998	\$48,445	342%
 .....	\$55,124	\$17,622	\$37,502	313%
 .....	\$67,584	\$20,598	\$46,986	328%
 .....	\$88,389	\$26,017	\$62,372	340%
 .....	\$64,268	\$20,578	\$43,690	312%
 .....	\$76,307	\$25,926	\$50,381	294%
 .....	\$95,453	\$30,510	\$64,943	313%
 .....	\$114,792	\$34,161	\$80,631	336%
 .....	\$86,380	\$26,801	\$59,579	322%
 .....	\$101,358	\$31,275	\$70,083	324%
 .....	\$119,894	\$35,239	\$84,655	340%

# UNION COUNTY














## INCOME THRESHOLDS BY FAMILY TYPE

FAMILY TYPE	TPL	FPL	GAP	%FPL
 .....	\$30,505	\$13,300	\$17,205	229%
 .....	\$43,973	\$17,120	\$26,853	257%
 .....	\$65,175	\$19,998	\$45,177	326%
 .....	\$54,786	\$17,622	\$37,164	311%
 .....	\$67,269	\$20,598	\$46,671	327%
 .....	\$88,048	\$26,017	\$62,031	338%
 .....	\$64,063	\$20,578	\$43,485	311%
 .....	\$76,205	\$25,926	\$50,279	294%
 .....	\$95,451	\$30,510	\$64,941	313%
 .....	\$115,495	\$34,161	\$81,334	338%
 .....	\$83,274	\$26,801	\$56,473	311%
 .....	\$98,247	\$31,275	\$66,972	314%
 .....	\$116,373	\$35,239	\$81,134	330%

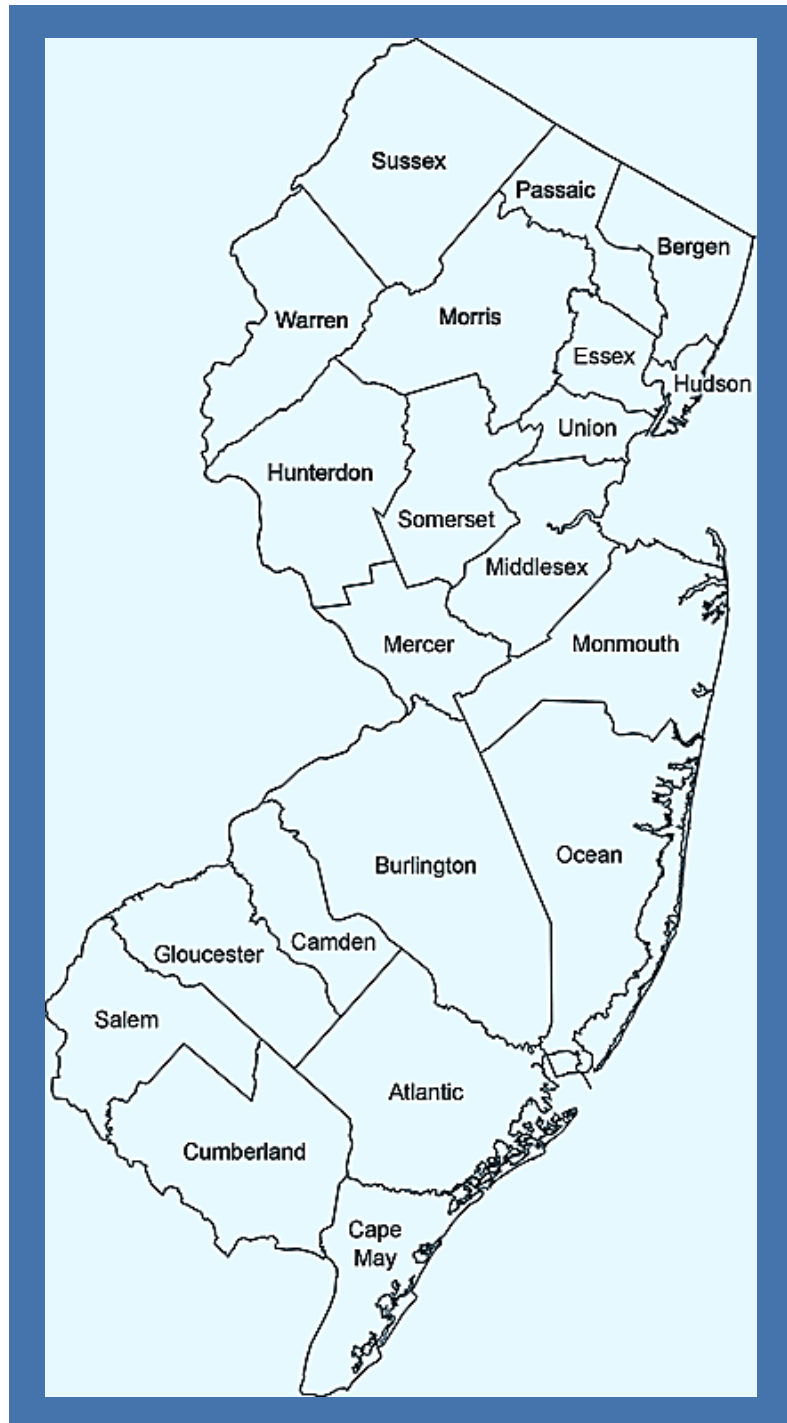


# WARREN COUNTY

## INCOME THRESHOLDS BY FAMILY TYPE

FAMILY TYPE	TPL	FPL	GAP	%FPL
 .....	\$28,290	\$13,300	\$14,990	213%
 .....	\$51,781	\$17,120	\$34,159	294%
 .....	\$41,593	\$19,998	\$24,473	243%
 .....	\$63,462	\$17,622	\$42,864	308%
 .....	\$60,875	\$20,598	\$40,297	296%
 .....	\$65,211	\$26,017	\$45,213	326%
 .....	\$81,005	\$20,578	\$54,988	311%
 .....	\$72,131	\$25,926	\$46,205	278%
 .....	\$80,905	\$30,510	\$54,104	302%
 .....	\$88,945	\$34,161	\$58,435	292%
 .....	\$95,332	\$26,801	\$64,057	305%
 .....	\$106,531	\$31,275	\$72,370	312%
 .....	\$113,635	\$35,239	\$78,396	322%

# COUNTY MAP



# Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> 2019 is the latest year for which data is available through the U.S. Census Bureau’s American Community Survey.

<sup>2</sup> New Jersey Department of Labor. [www.nj.gov/labor/lpa/pub/emppress/pressrelease/prelease.pdf](http://www.nj.gov/labor/lpa/pub/emppress/pressrelease/prelease.pdf).

<sup>3</sup> U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Economy at a Glance, New Jersey, March 2021, [www.bls.gov/eag/eag.nj.htm](http://www.bls.gov/eag/eag.nj.htm); U.S. Census Bureau, Household Pulse Survey Data Tables, New Jersey, Week 27 Household Pulse Survey: March 17-March 29, [www.census.gov/programs-surveys/household-pulse-survey/data.html](http://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/household-pulse-survey/data.html).

<sup>4</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, 2019 American Community Survey (ACS).

<sup>5</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, ACS Data & Poverty Thresholds.

<sup>6</sup> U.S. Census Bureau Data & Poverty Thresholds.

<sup>7</sup> It was developed as part of the State Organizing Project for Family Economic Self-Sufficiency (FESS).

<sup>8</sup> The Self-Sufficiency Standards for other states are available at [www.selfsufficiencystandard.org](http://www.selfsufficiencystandard.org).

<sup>9</sup> While the 13 families selected for calculating the TPL average for the state represent 90 percent of the population, the body of the report discusses six of the 13 families to facilitate effective discussion. Detailed information on all 13 families is available in the appendix of the report. Data on more than 700 families is available on PRI’s website at [www.lsnj.org/pri](http://www.lsnj.org/pri).

<sup>10</sup> Findings of the study by Zaidi and Burchardt show that for a single adult with a disability of low severity, the cost of living increases by 14 percent. With medium severity, the cost of living increases by 41 percent, and with high severity, the cost of living increases by 78 percent. Where both partners have a disability of low severity, the cost of living rises by 24 percent. The costs rise by 72 percent for a disability of medium severity, and by 136 percent when the severity is high.

A second study undertaken by Noel Smith et al, (2004) has higher cost estimates for people with more severe disabilities. In this study, the costs for people with low to medium disability-related needs rise by 34 percent. For people with medium to high needs, costs increased by 107 percent. The costs related to intermittent needs were 42 percent higher. In addition, for people with needs related to hearing or vision impairment, costs are 46 and 47 percent higher.

<sup>11</sup> Medical Expenditure Panel Survey, Statistical Brief #441: Out-of-Pocket Expenses by Age and Insurance Coverage, by Steven R. Machlin, MS and Kelly Carper, Med (June 2014). Available at [https://meps.ahrq.gov/data\\_files/publications/st441/stat441.shtml#:~:text=Nearly%20one%2Dfifth%20of%20people,people%20age%2065%20and%20older](https://meps.ahrq.gov/data_files/publications/st441/stat441.shtml#:~:text=Nearly%20one%2Dfifth%20of%20people,people%20age%2065%20and%20older). Retrieved from the web on April 27th, 2021.

<sup>12</sup> Ratio is defined as the relative value of FPL, cash grants, minimum wage, and median income in relation to the TPL. For instance, the FPL ratio of 29.3% vis-à-vis TPL means that FPL is one third of the TPL. In other words, TPL is three times the FPL.

<sup>13</sup> Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion. “Quality of Housing.” Healthy People 2020. Last modified 2020. [www.healthypeople.gov/2020/topics-objectives/topic/social-determinants-health/interventions-resources/quality-of-housing](http://www.healthypeople.gov/2020/topics-objectives/topic/social-determinants-health/interventions-resources/quality-of-housing).

- <sup>14</sup> Office of Policy Development and Research. “Evidence Matters: Neighborhoods and Violent Crime.” U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. Last modified Summer 2016. [www.huduser.gov/portal/periodicals/em/summer16/highlight2.html](http://www.huduser.gov/portal/periodicals/em/summer16/highlight2.html).
- <sup>15</sup> U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. “Strategies for Overcoming Barriers to Neighborhoods and Schools of Opportunity.” Last modified 2016. [www.huduser.gov/portal/pdredge/pdr-edge-featd-article-112116.html](http://www.huduser.gov/portal/pdredge/pdr-edge-featd-article-112116.html).
- <sup>16</sup> “American Families Face a Growing Rent Burden.” Pew Research Center. Last modified April 19, 2018. [www.pewtrusts.org/en/research-and-analysis/reports/2018/04/american-families-face-a-growing-rent-burden](http://www.pewtrusts.org/en/research-and-analysis/reports/2018/04/american-families-face-a-growing-rent-burden).
- <sup>17</sup> Rice, Douglas, Stephanie Schmit, and Hannah Matthews. “Child Care and Housing: Big Expenses with Too Little Help Available.” Center on Budget and Policy Priorities and Center on Law and Social Policy. Last modified April 26, 2019. [www.cbpp.org/research/housing/child-care-and-housing-big-expenses-with-too-little-help-available](http://www.cbpp.org/research/housing/child-care-and-housing-big-expenses-with-too-little-help-available).
- <sup>18</sup> American Community Survey, 2019.
- <sup>19</sup> Rice, Douglas, Stephanie Schmit, and Hannah Matthews. “Child Care and Housing: Big Expenses with Too Little Help Available.” Center on Budget and Policy Priorities and Center on Law and Social Policy. Last modified April 26, 2019. [www.cbpp.org/research/housing/child-care-and-housing-big-expenses-with-too-little-help-available](http://www.cbpp.org/research/housing/child-care-and-housing-big-expenses-with-too-little-help-available).
- <sup>20</sup> “Toxic Stress.” Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University, <https://developingchild.harvard.edu/science/key-concepts/toxic-stress>.
- <sup>21</sup> Shonkoff JP, Garner AS; Committee on Psychosocial Aspects of Child and Family Health; Committee on Early Childhood, Adoption, and Dependent Care; Section on Developmental and Behavioral Pediatrics. The lifelong effects of early childhood adversity and toxic stress. *Pediatrics*. 2012 Jan;129(1):e232-46. doi: 10.1542/peds.2011-2663. Epub 2011 Dec 26. PMID: 22201156.
- <sup>22</sup> <https://frac.org/wp-content/uploads/hunger-health-impact-poverty-food-insecurity-health-well-being.pdf>.
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- <sup>25</sup> Legal Services Corporation, 2017. *The Justice Gap: Measuring the Unmet Civil Legal Needs of Low-Income Americans*. Prepared by NORC at the University of Chicago for Legal Services Corporation. Washington, D.C.
- <sup>26</sup> Chapman, C., Laird, J., Ifill, N., & KewalRamani, A. (2011). Trends in high school dropout and completion rates in the United States: 1972-2009. (NCES 2012-06). Washington, D.C.: National Center for Education Statistics, Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education. Source: <http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2012006>.

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