

# New York CAN Economic Security



## Fact Sheet

Children from economically secure families are far better equipped to seize life's opportunities than those who are not. Low-income families live from paycheck to paycheck, often without health insurance, paid sick leave, or other benefits. Modest economic shocks can rip apart the fragile stability of their lives. As gas and food prices spiral upwards, New York's low-income families face ever-increasing challenges.

In 2007, New York State established a Children's Cabinet and an Economic Security Cabinet to focus on policies that impact families, important steps in coordinating the state's resources on behalf of low-income families. In addition, the state has expanded access to health care for children and protected key programs in the face of budget shortfalls. Yet economic security remains out of reach for many of New York's children.

### Key Facts\*

- Approximately four out of ten children in New York live in low-income families (below 200% of poverty or \$42,400 for a family of four) and two out of every ten live in poor families (less than 100% of poverty or \$21,200 for a family of four). The share of children living in poverty is even higher in New York City, upstate cities like Buffalo and Syracuse, and rural counties like Jefferson and Wayne.
- The median "hardship gap" for New York families, the difference between the basic family budget and monthly income, is a staggering \$1,079 a month in New York, wider than 44 other states.
- Public programs such as food stamps, Child Health Plus and the Earned Income Tax Credit cover only about 40% of the gap between the average income of a poor family and what they need to be economically secure.

### What's Needed:

Over the years, New York State has done quite a bit to assist low-income families. Yet much more remains to be done. Most important is to set accountable goals for lifting New Yorkers out of poverty. Other states are aiming to reduce the number of people living in poverty by half over the next decade, and this would be a worthy goal for New York.

In the midst of a harsh economic climate, we should ensure that poor and low income families have access to critical public programs that help them get back on their feet and keep their children healthy. To do this, we must make sure that families enroll in and receive the essential benefits that New York State offers, and invest in advocacy services on their behalf.

\* See *Growing Up In New York, 2008 Update*, Schuyler Center for Analysis and Advocacy ([www.scaany.org](http://www.scaany.org)) and *Working Families and Economic Security in New York: How Effectively Do Work Supports Bridge the Gaps?*, Fiscal Policy Institute ([www.fiscalspolicy.org](http://www.fiscalspolicy.org)).