

FACT SHEET

Low-Income Workers in New York City

- 1.8 million New Yorkers live at or below the federal poverty line—that’s one in five New Yorkers. (Source: U.S. Census Bureau; Current Population Survey for 2004)
- Another 1.6 million New Yorkers live *near* the federal poverty line—earning less than \$30,000 a year for a family of three.
- Altogether, more than 40 percent of New Yorkers live in low-income households.
- Among poor New York City households, even with a full- time worker, a 2005 survey called “The Unheard Third,” by the Community Service Society, revealed:
 - 48 percent did not get or postponed needed medical care or prescriptions.
 - 45 percent fell behind in paying their rent or mortgage.
 - 39 percent had their utilities turned off.
 - 39 percent relied on meal programs or food pantries.
- In 2004, the median annual wage for a single mother in New York City was \$25,534—about half the income needed to cover the most basic expenses for a family of three. (Source: Women’s Center for Education and Career Advancement)
- In 2005, a Community Service Society study found that thousands of non-union security guards in major commercial Manhattan buildings, like the Empire State Building, earned only about \$10 per hour with no adequate benefits such as health insurance or paid sick leave. (Source: Community Service Society, “Shortchanging Security,” 2006)
- Hundreds of thousands of New Yorkers are without a high school degree - New York City public schools have a high school graduation rate of barely over 50 percent. (Source: New York City Department of Education)
- Nearly 30 percent of working-age adults in New York City lack health insurance of any kind. (Source: “Health Insurance in New York, 2002-2003,” United Hospital Fund, 2005)
- 65 percent of poor households in New York City devote at least half of their income toward rent—leaving as little as \$30 per person per week to cover basic necessities. (Source: “Making the Rent,” Community Service Society, 2005)