

# The latest Census Bureau data on incomes and poverty show just how far NYC has slipped from pre-pandemic levels in relation to the U.S. overall and the nation's other large cities

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The September 14 release of the Census Bureau American Community Survey (ACS) data on household income and poverty levels for 2022 provides fairly definitive confirmation of New York City's lagging recovery from the disruptive economic impact of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Comparing major Census indicators for 2019 and 2022 provides a clear picture: New York City is far from economically recovered. New York City inflation-adjusted household incomes have fallen more than in the nation overall, and by the most among the 10 largest U.S. cities. The story is similar when it comes to poverty and child poverty. Both have increased more in New York City over the past three years than in the U.S. or among the 10 largest cities with one exception:

Figure 1

## NYC's median household income fell by 6.9 percent from 2019 to 2022, more than four times greater than the 1.6 percent U.S. decline and the largest decline among the 10 largest cities

Median household income	2022	Statistically significant change from 2019 (\$2022)	% change 2019-22 if significant
U.S.	\$74,755	Yes	-1.6%
<b>New York City</b>	<b>\$74,694</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>-6.9%</b>
Los Angeles	\$76,135	No	
Chicago	\$70,386	No	
Houston	\$60,426	No	
Phoenix	\$75,969	Yes	7.9%
Philadelphia	\$56,517	No	
San Antonio	\$58,829	Yes	-5.3%
San Diego	\$100,010	No	
Dallas	\$65,400	No	
San Jose	\$133,835	No	

Source: CNYCA Analysis of Census Bureau American Community Survey data, 2019 and 2022

child poverty increased faster in Houston than here. (Throughout this brief, changes in indicators from 2019 to 2022 are checked using the Census Bureau’s preferred statistical testing method to determine if changes are statistically significant.<sup>1</sup>)

The latest Census data also confirm that there are extremely wide racial and ethnic median income differences in New York City, and that poverty rose much faster for NYC Blacks and Hispanics than for whites.

The 2022 ACS data indicates that income inequality in NYC, as measured by the Gini index, is the greatest among the 10 largest cities, and that inequality increased more from 2019 to 2022 than in the nation overall or in any other large city. (Chicago was the only city among the 10 largest with a significant decline in income inequality over the past three years.)

Figure 2

## From 2019-22, only the Bronx did not experience a statistically significant median income drop; but the Bronx had by far the lowest 2022 median income level

Median household income	2022	Statistically significant change from 2019 (\$2022)	% change 2019-22 if significant
U.S.	\$74,755	Yes	-1.6%
New York City	\$74,694	Yes	-6.9%
Bronx	\$45,517	No	
Brooklyn	\$73,951	Yes	-4.4%
Manhattan	\$95,866	Yes	-11.4%
Queens	\$80,557	Yes	-5.4%
Staten Island	\$93,164	Yes	-10.2%

Source: CNYCA analysis of Census Bureau American Community Survey data, 2019 and 2022

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/guidance/statistical-testing-tool.html>

Figure 2 shows that while Manhattan had the highest median household income among the five boroughs in 2022, median incomes fell faster in Manhattan (-11.4%) than in any other borough from 2019 to 2022.

Figure 3

## From 2019-22, median household income changes were not significant for all NYC race and ethnic categories, but median income levels for Black and Hispanic households considerably trailed those for Non-Hispanic White and Asian households

Median household income	2022	Statistically significant change from 2019 (\$2022)	% change 2019-22 if significant
New York City	\$74,694	Yes	-6.9%
Non-Hispanic White	\$106,649	Yes	-9.1%
Asian	\$82,101	Yes	-5.5%
Black or African American	\$58,073	No	
Hispanic or Latino	\$53,025	No	

**Note:** Except for non-Hispanic whites, race/ethnic categories not mutually exclusive.

Source: CNYCA analysis of Census Bureau American Community Survey data, 2019 and 2022

These trends mark a sharp break from what had been a far different pre-pandemic story of declining poverty and little or no growth in income inequality.

The several years before the pandemic had seen an historic decline in poverty; it has been partially reversed by the pandemic. From 2012-2019, the percentage of New York City residents living in poverty (using the traditional federal poverty measure based only on cash income and in use since the early 1960s) fell by one-fourth, from 21.2% to 16%. Over the same period, the percentage of New York City children living in poverty fell by an even larger proportion: from 31.4% to 22.2%, a 29% drop. Both measures rose by 2.3 percentage points from 2019-2022, with the all poverty increase greater than in the U.S. and the other large cities, and the child poverty increase surpassed only by Houston's, which recorded a 5.2 percentage point increase.

By the traditional federal poverty measure, child poverty was slightly lower in 2022 than in 2019. However, the Supplemental Poverty Measure that the Census Bureau estimates, which factors in tax credits and noncash income, showed an eye-popping jump from 5.2% in 2021 to 12.4% in 2022.<sup>2</sup> This reflected the importance of the American Rescue Plan’s child tax credit increase in 2021, an increase that Republicans and conservative Democrats in Congress refused to extend in 2022. The Census Bureau does not estimate New York City poverty using the Supplemental Poverty Measure, but if it had, the increases in 2022 would also have been much greater than the traditional poverty measure based on cash income alone, and not tax credits or noncash benefits.

Figure 4

## New York City had the largest increase in all poverty among the 10 largest cities between 2019 and 2022, and the second largest increase in child poverty, after Houston

	All Poverty			Child Poverty		
	2022	Statistically significant change from 2019	Percentage point change 2019-22 if significant	2022	Statistically significant change from 2019	Percentage point change 2019-22 if significant
U.S.	12.6%	Yes	0.3%	16.3%	Yes	-0.5%
<b>New York City</b>	<b>18.3%</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>2.3%</b>	<b>24.5%</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>2.3%</b>
Los Angeles	16.8%	No		22.1%	Yes	-2.4%
Chicago	17.2%	No		26.0%	No	
Houston	20.7%	No		34.1%	Yes	5.2%
Phoenix	13.9%	Yes	-1.7%	18.8%	Yes	-4.6%
Philadelphia	21.7%	No		28.8%	No	
San Antonio	18.7%	No		27.7%	No	
San Diego	11.3%	No		12.0%	No	
Dallas	17.8%	No		25.9%	No	
San Jose	9.0%	Yes	1.9%	8.6%	No	

Source: CNYCA analysis of Census Bureau American Community Survey data, 2019 and 2022

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<https://www.census.gov/newsroom/press-releases/2023/income-poverty-health-insurance-coverage.html#:~:text=The%20SPM%20child%20poverty%20rate,people%20out%20of%20SPM%20poverty.>

The ACS data indicate that most of New York City’s poverty increase in 2022 compared to 2019 occurred among people in what is considered “deep poverty.” That term covers those with incomes less than half of the federal poverty level. Nearly 52 percent of the city’s poverty population of 1.5 million in 2022 lived in “deep poverty,” up from 45 percent in 2019. In 2022, the federal poverty threshold according to the traditional measure was \$14,880 for a single person, and \$29,678 for a four-person family with two adults and two children. NYC poverty also rose from 2019-22 for seniors (ages 65+), for both men and women, and for city residents regardless of education attainment level. In 2022, the senior poverty rate was 19.5%. Among all men the poverty rate was 17%, and among all women it was 19.4%.

As noted above, and as indicated in Figure 5, among NYC racial and ethnic groups, poverty increased fastest among Blacks and Hispanics from 2019-2022.

Figure 5

## The 2022 poverty rates for NYC Black and Hispanic persons were twice the level for white persons, and both groups had greater increases from 2019-22 than the citywide 2.3 percentage point poverty increase

Poverty	2022	Statistically significant change from 2019	Percentage point change 2019-22 if significant
New York City	18.3%	Yes	2.3%
Non-Hispanic White	11.6%	Yes	1.5%
Asian	15.2%	No	
Black or African American	22.9%	Yes	2.4%
Hispanic or Latino	24.3%	Yes	3.4%

Note: Except for non-Hispanic whites, race/ethnic categories not mutually exclusive.

Source: CNYCA analysis of Census Bureau American Community Survey data, 2019 and 2022

The increase in income inequality in New York City over the past three years follows a six-year period (2013-19) when income inequality had stabilized in New York City; i.e., there had not been a statistically significant change in the Gini coefficient in NYC over that period. The Census definition of income does not include realized capital gains. Income tax data *does* include realized capital gains, and by that broader income measure, there has been an even sharper acceleration in income inequality since the beginning of the pandemic. A forthcoming CNYCA report will delve deeper into the rise in income inequality since the beginning of the pandemic.

Figure 6

## Income inequality increased (based on the Gini Index) in NYC and the U.S. from 2019-22, with NYC the only city among the nation's 10 largest to record a statistically significant increase

Gini Income Inequality Index *	2022	Statistically significant change from 2019	% change 2019-22 if significant
U.S.	0.4863	Yes	1.1%
<b>New York City</b>	<b>0.5547</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>1.4%</b>
Los Angeles	0.5315	No	
Chicago	0.5246	Yes	-2.3%
Houston	0.5292	No	
Phoenix	0.4662	No	
Philadelphia	0.5148	No	
San Antonio	0.4573	No	
San Diego	0.4670	No	
Dallas	0.5483	No	
San Jose	0.4702	No	

\* Gini income inequality index values range from 0 to 1; a higher value indicates greater inequality

Source: CNYCA analysis of Census Bureau American Community Survey data, 2019 and 2022