



# Children in the States

## LOUISIANA

September 2015

### Child Population

**1,113,493 children lived in Louisiana in 2014; 48 percent were children of color.**

- 52 percent were White
- 6 percent were Hispanic
- 37 percent were Black
- 2 percent were Asian
- 3 percent were two or more races
- 1 percent were American Indian/Alaska Native
- <1 percent were Pacific Islander

### Child Poverty

**Nearly 3 in 10 (27.9 percent) of Louisiana's children were poor in 2014, a total of 306,198 children.<sup>1</sup>**

- Louisiana ranked 48<sup>th</sup> in child poverty among states.<sup>2</sup>
- Nearly 1 in 7 children lived in extreme poverty at less than half the poverty level.
- The youngest children were the poorest age group. More than 3 in 10 children under age 6 were poor; more than half of the poor children were extremely poor.

**Children of color in Louisiana are disproportionately poor.**

- Nearly 1 in 2 Black children, nearly 1 in 3 Hispanic children, and more than 1 in 3 American Indian/Native Alaskan children were poor in 2014, compared to more than 1 in 8 White children.

### Child Hunger and Homelessness

**Child poverty in Louisiana leads to unacceptable child homelessness and hunger.**

- Nearly 20,476 Louisiana public school students were homeless in the 2012-2013 school year.
- In 2014, more than 2 full-time minimum-wage jobs were necessary to be able to afford a fair market rent two-bedroom apartment in Louisiana and still have enough left over for food, utilities and other necessities.
- More than 24 percent of children lived in households that lacked access to adequate food in 2013. Nearly 40 percent of children ages 10-17 were overweight or obese in 2011-2012. Louisiana ranked 35<sup>th</sup> of 50 states in child food security and 50<sup>th</sup> in percent of children overweight and obese.
- 38 percent of Louisiana children relied on the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) to meet their nutritional needs on an average month in FY2013.
- Nearly 88 percent of Louisiana children receiving a free and reduced-price lunch during the school year did not participate in Summer Nutrition Programs in 2014 – ranking Louisiana 32<sup>nd</sup> of 50 states in ensuring that children have adequate summer nutrition.

### Child Health

**Although the majority of Louisiana's children have access to health coverage, that does not guarantee enrollment in coverage, jeopardizing their education and their future.**

- In 2013, 92.3 percent of eligible children participated in Bayou Health or LaCHIP, Louisiana's Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP). In FY2013, a total of 670,729 Louisiana children ages 0-18 were enrolled in Bayou Health, and 149,968 in LaCHIP.
- More than 63,000 Louisiana children ages 0-17 (5.7 percent) were uninsured in 2013. The state had the 23<sup>rd</sup> lowest rate of uninsured children among states.

<sup>1</sup> A family of four was poor if it was living on less than \$23,834 a year, \$1,986 a month, \$458 a week and \$65 a day, and extremely poor if living on less than \$11,917 a year, \$993 a month, \$229 a week and \$33 a day.

<sup>2</sup> The state ranked 1<sup>st</sup> is the best for children for that outcome and the state ranked 50<sup>th</sup> is the worst for children.

- In 2012, 44,000 uninsured children ages 0-18 were eligible for Bayou Health or LaCHIP but not enrolled.

### **Early Childhood and Education**

#### **Lack of early childhood investments deprives children of critical supports in the early years and reduces school readiness.**

- In 2013, the average annual cost of center-based child care for an infant was \$5,655 – 13.6 percent less than the average annual in-state tuition and fees at a public four-year college.
- Louisiana did not have a waiting list for child care assistance in early 2014.
- On average, 50 percent of Louisiana’s 3- and 4-year-olds were enrolled in public or private preschool from 2011-2013. Only 45 percent of children from families with incomes below 200 percent of poverty were enrolled.
- Louisiana’s state-funded preschool programs met an average of 8 of the 10 quality benchmarks set by the National Institute for Early Education Research in 2013-2014.

#### **Louisiana’s schools fail to educate all children, closing off a crucial pathway out of poverty.**

- In 2013, 77 percent of Louisiana’s fourth grade public school students were unable to read at grade level and 74 percent were unable to compute at grade level.
  - 89 percent of Black fourth graders could not read at grade level and 87 percent could not compute.
  - 80 percent of Hispanic fourth graders could not read at grade level and 71 percent could not compute.
- 72 percent of Louisiana public high school students graduated on time in 2012, placing Louisiana 45<sup>th</sup> among states. 65 percent of Black students and 87 percent of Hispanic students graduated on time compared to 76 percent of White students.
- Students who are suspended or expelled are more likely to drop out of school. During the 2011-2012 school year, 14 percent of Louisiana public secondary school students received at least one out-of-school suspension, placing Louisiana 41<sup>st</sup> among 48 ranked states. For Black and Hispanic students, the percentages were 20 percent and 10 percent, respectively.

### **Children Facing Special Risks**

#### **Many vulnerable children need treatment, services and permanent families.**

- In Louisiana, 10,119 children were abused or neglected in 2013 – 9.1 out of 1,000 children.
- On the last day of FY2013, there were 3,994 Louisiana children in foster care.

#### **Too many Louisiana children are involved in the juvenile justice system.**

- 957 children and youth were in residential placement in 2011. 73 percent of the children in residential placement were Black, 1 percent were Hispanic, and 24 percent were White.
- 23 Louisiana children were in adult jails in 2013.
- Louisiana spent 2 times as much per prisoner as per public school student in FY2012

#### **Louisiana ranked 40<sup>th</sup> out of 41 ranked states in preventing child and teen gun deaths.**

- A total of 97 children and teens were killed by guns in Louisiana in 2013 – a rate of 7.9 out of 100,000 children and teens.

For sources please visit [www.childrensdefense.org/cits](http://www.childrensdefense.org/cits)