



Children in the States

MASSACHUSETTS

September 2015

Child Population

1,390,468 children lived in Massachusetts in 2014; 35 percent were children of color.

- 65 percent were White
- 17 percent were Hispanic
- 8 percent were Black
- 7 percent were Asian
- 4 percent were two or more races
- <1 percent were American Indian/Alaska Native
- <1 percent were Pacific Islander

Child Poverty

More than 1 in 7 (15.2 percent) of Massachusetts's children were poor in 2014, a total of 207,673 children.¹

- Massachusetts ranked 9th in child poverty among states.²
- More than 1 in 14 children lived in extreme poverty at less than half the poverty level.
- The youngest children were the poorest age group. More than 1 in 6 children under age 6 were poor; more than half of the poor children were extremely poor.

Children of color in Massachusetts are disproportionately poor.

- More than 3 in 10 Black children, nearly 2 in 5 Hispanic children, and more than 1 in 5 American Indian/Native Alaskan children were poor in 2014, compared to more than 1 in 13 White children.

Child Hunger and Homelessness

Child poverty in Massachusetts leads to unacceptable child homelessness and hunger.

- Nearly 16,000 Massachusetts public school students were homeless in the 2012-2013 school year.
- In 2014, 3 full-time minimum-wage jobs were necessary to afford a fair market rent two-bedroom apartment in Massachusetts and still have enough left over for food, utilities and other necessities.
- Nearly 17 percent of children lived in households that lacked access to adequate food in 2013. Nearly 31 percent of children ages 10-17 were overweight or obese in 2011-2012. Massachusetts ranked 4th of 50 states in child food security and 27th in percent of children overweight and obese.
- Nearly 24 percent of Massachusetts children relied on the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) to meet their nutritional needs in an average month in FY2013.
- Nearly 81 percent of Massachusetts children receiving a free and reduced-price lunch during the school year did not participate in Summer Nutrition Programs – ranking Massachusetts 13th of 50 states in ensuring children have adequate summer nutrition.

Child Health

Although the majority of Massachusetts's children have access to health coverage, it does not guarantee enrollment in coverage, which can jeopardize their education and their future.

- In 2013, 96.8 percent of eligible children participated in MassHealth, Massachusetts's combined Medicaid and Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP). In FY2013, a total of 544,851 Massachusetts children ages 0-18 were enrolled in MassHealth thanks to Medicaid funding, and an additional 148,719 due to CHIP funding.

¹ 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.

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

- More than 21,000 Massachusetts children ages 0-17 (1.5 percent) were uninsured in 2013. The state had the lowest rate of uninsured children among states.
- In 2012, 12,000 uninsured children ages 0-18 were eligible for MassHealth 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 \$16,549 – 53 percent more than the average annual in-state tuition and fees at a public four-year college.
- Massachusetts had 40,047 children on a waiting list for child care assistance in early 2014.
- On average, 58 percent of Massachusetts' 3- and 4-year-olds were enrolled in public or private preschool from 2011-2013. Only 46 percent of children from families with incomes under 200 percent of poverty were enrolled.
- Massachusetts's state-funded preschool program met 6 of the 10 quality benchmarks set by the National Institute for Early Education Research in 2013-2014.

Massachusetts's schools fail to educate all children, closing off a crucial pathway out of poverty.

- In 2013, 53 percent of Massachusetts's fourth grade public school students were unable to read at grade level and 42 percent were unable to compute at grade level.
 - 79 percent of Black fourth graders could not read at grade level and 74 percent could not compute.
 - 80 percent of Hispanic fourth graders could not read at grade level and 68 percent could not compute.
- 86 percent of Massachusetts public high school students graduated on time in 2012, placing Massachusetts 12th among states. 82 percent of Black students and 69 percent of Hispanic students graduated on time compared to 90 percent of White students.
- Students who are suspended or expelled are more likely to drop out of school. During the 2011-2012 school year, 8 percent of Massachusetts public secondary school students received at least one out-of-school suspension, placing Massachusetts 14th among 48 ranked states. For Black and Hispanic students, the percentages were 16 percent and 14 percent, respectively.

Children Facing Special Risks

Many vulnerable children need treatment, services and permanent families.

- In Massachusetts, 20,307 children were abused or neglected in 2013 – 14.6 out of 1,000 children.
- On the last day of FY2013, there were 8,553 Massachusetts children in foster care.

Too many Massachusetts children are involved in the juvenile justice system.

- 12,205 children were arrested in Massachusetts in 2012 – a rate of 1,871 out of 100,000 children ages 10-17.
- 543 children and youth were in residential placement in 2011. 29 percent of the children in residential placement were Black, 36 percent were Hispanic, and 30 percent were White.
- 3 Massachusetts children were in adult jails in 2013.
- Massachusetts spent 5.1 times as much per prisoner as per public school student in FY2012.

Fewer than 10 children and teens were killed by guns in Massachusetts in 2013.

For sources please visit www.childrensdefense.org/cits