

# child poverty in Massachusetts:

a tale of three cities

Lawrence, New Bedford and Springfield



Massachusetts KIDS COUNT  
Massachusetts Citizens for Children

# Massachusetts Citizens for Children

Massachusetts Citizens for Children (MCC) is the oldest state-based child advocacy organization in the country. It was founded in 1959 by pediatrician Martha May Eliot, MD, who served as Chief of the U.S. Children's Bureau and held influential positions in both the World Health Organization and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). With active support from Governor Foster Furculo, they established MCC as a permanent, independent citizens' voice for Massachusetts' most vulnerable children.

Over its 50-year history, the organization's work has been grounded in the belief that all Massachusetts children have the inherent right -

- To be safe from abuse, neglect, and violence;
- To be economically secure and free from poverty;
- To receive quality medical and preventive care;
- To learn in quality child care and school settings; and
- To live in caring families and healthy communities.

Since 1994, MCC has been the site of **Massachusetts KIDS COUNT** and the **KIDS COUNT Data Center** - an Annie E. Casey Foundation-supported initiative that tracks the well-being of children in the United States. For 25 years, MCC has been the state's Chapter of Prevent Child Abuse America. Under the **PCA Massachusetts** banner, MCC's current focus is to prevent physical child abuse through its **Shaken Baby Syndrome Prevention Center**, and medical child neglect through its **Coalition to Repeal Exemptions to Child Abuse Laws**. It is lead agency for the **Massachusetts Child Sexual Abuse Prevention Partnership** and the **Enough Abuse Campaign**, a statewide public engagement initiative to educate and mobilize parents, professionals and communities to prevent child sexual abuse. MCC serves as the Massachusetts member of **Voices for America's Children**, a national network of state and city multi-issue child advocacy organizations. It is a founding member organization of the recently launched **New England Child and Family Poverty Reduction Initiative**.

*It's only fair  
that each child  
be cherished*

Massachusetts Citizens for Children

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Boston, Massachusetts  
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# we gratefully acknowledge.

## The Annie E. Casey Foundation.

We express our sincere thanks to the Annie E. Casey Foundation for its vision in creating the National KIDS COUNT project and for its leadership in stimulating national, state and local discussions on ways to secure better futures for America's children. With support from the Casey Foundation and its national **KIDS COUNT Data Center**, Massachusetts Citizens for Children's (MCC) data-driven advocacy reports have informed and influenced public policies and promoted model programs to strengthen families for children in Massachusetts. MCC is honored to be part of the KIDS COUNT network of effective child advocates across the country.

## partners in Lawrence, New Bedford and Springfield.

We are thankful to service providers, directors of community-based organizations and political leaders in Lawrence, Springfield and New Bedford, who shared their perspectives about the nature of child and family poverty, along with their insights into the historical dynamics of these cities. We encourage their continued ideas and energy as we build public and political will to reduce and eventually end child poverty in Massachusetts.

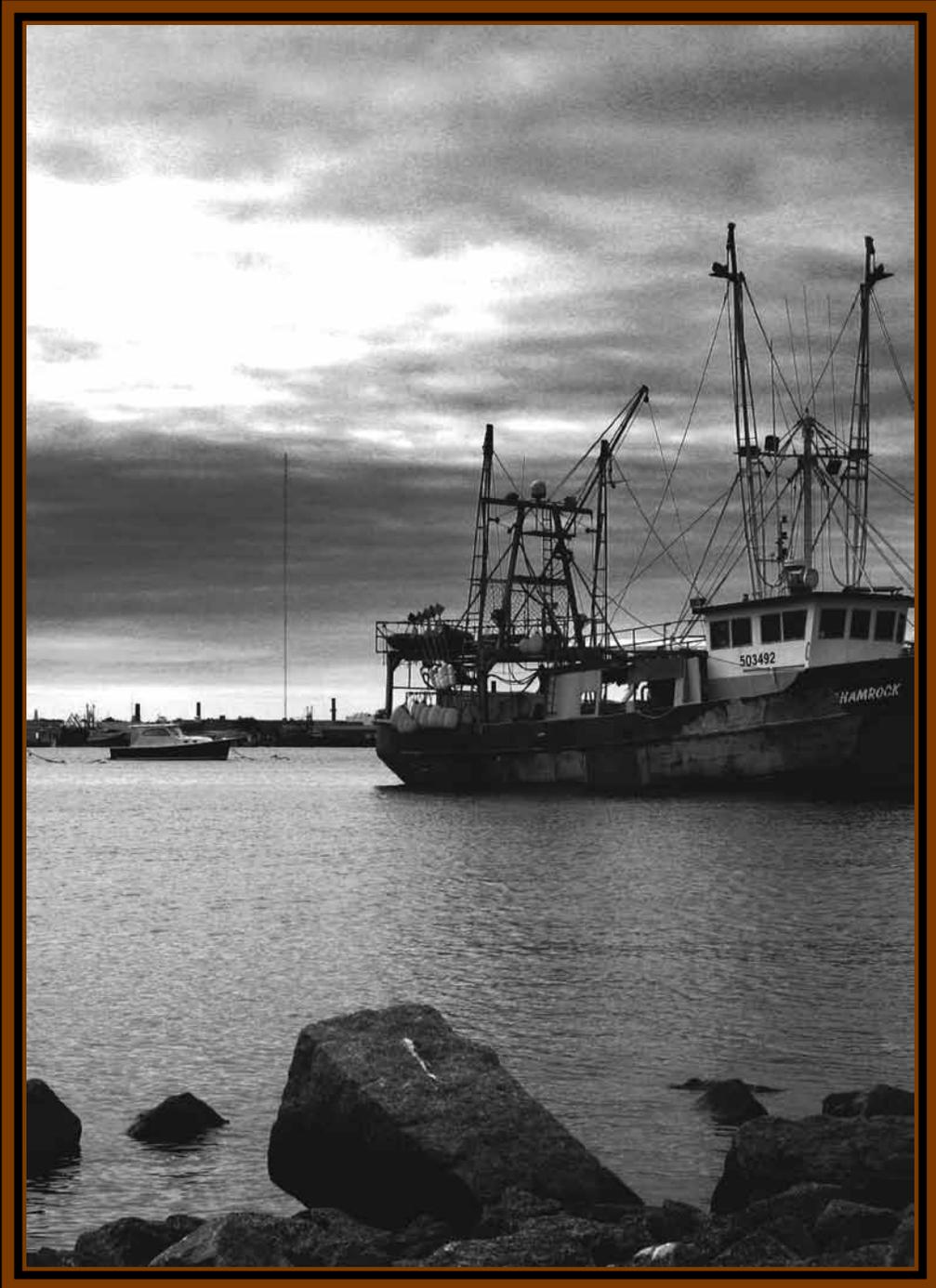
- **Maria Avila**, Director of Healthy Families, Lawrence
- **Paul Bailey**, Executive Director, Springfield Partners for Community Action
- **Nicole Blais**, Director of Community Relations and Staffing, Holyoke, Chicopee, Springfield Head Start, Inc.
- **Michael Denney**, Executive Director, New North Citizen's Council, Springfield
- **Milagro Grullón**, Former Director of Community Health Strategies and Research and Community Planner, City of Lawrence Community Development Department
- **Emily Hoffman**, Project Coordinator, Lawrence Pathways to Family Success
- **Pam Kuechler**, Program Director, People Acting in Community Endeavors (PACE, Inc.) Child Care Works, New Bedford
- **Maureen Mulcahy**, Director, Planning and Program Development, Greater Lawrence Community Action Council, Inc.
- **Bruce Morrell**, Executive Director, PACE, Inc., New Bedford
- **Janis Santos**, Executive Director, Holyoke, Chicopee, Springfield Head Start, Inc.
- **Annmarie Sawyer**, Project Director, New Bedford Family Center

## advocacy and research partners.

Massachusetts KIDS COUNT is grateful to a diverse and talented cadre of child advocates and data analysts for providing expertise in child well-being as well as systemic race and cultural issues. Through their contributions, policymakers and citizens will gain greater understanding of how child poverty expresses itself in Massachusetts and the compelling reasons we must work to end it:

- **Arthur Bakis**, Information Services Specialist, United States Census
- **Patricia Bergen**, Director of Quality Evaluation, Massachusetts Department of Transitional Assistance
- **Noah Berger**, Executive Director, Massachusetts Budget and Policy Center
- **Joseph Diamond**, Executive Director, Massachusetts Association for Community Action (MASSCAP)
- **Paula Dressel**, Vice President, JustPartners, Inc.
- **Antone C. Felix III**, Data Analyst, Data Management/Quality Assurance Unit, Information Technology Division, Massachusetts Department of Children and Families
- **Saul Franklin**, Director of MassChip, Bureau of Health Information, Statistics, Research and Evaluation, Massachusetts Department of Public Health
- **Carol Kamin**, Massachusetts KIDS COUNT Advisor, Former President and CEO, Children's Action Alliance, Arizona
- **Ilana Lescohier**, MCC Board of Directors, Former Assistant Director, Injury Control Center, Harvard School of Public Health
- **Jennifer Louis**, Management Analyst, Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care
- **Mark Mather**, Associate Vice President for Domestic Programs, Population Reference Bureau
- **Joanna Shoffner Scott**, Senior Director, Government Affairs and Policy, Voices for America's Children
- **Sarah Slautterback**, Specialist, Secondary School Services, Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education
- **Laura Spark**, Associate Director, MASSCAP
- **Robert Tansi**, Research Analyst, Massachusetts Department of Youth Services

Finally, we are grateful for the research of **MassINC Gateway Cities Project**, the **University of Massachusetts Urban Initiative**, and the **Federal Reserve Bank of Boston** that preceded this report.



# New Bedford: the whaling city.

The City of New Bedford covers an area of 24 square miles and is located in Bristol County, 51 miles south of Boston. New Bedford and Fall River form two adjacent communities on the South Coast of Massachusetts. New Bedford's estimated population of over 95,000 has a population density of approximately 5,000 people per square mile.<sup>1</sup>

New Bedford is called The Whaling City because during the 19<sup>th</sup> century, it was one of the most important whaling ports in the world. Today, New Bedford is a seaport city with a large fishing fleet and a working waterfront. New Bedford history is filled with people whose real-life stories are as fascinating as Melville's fictional Captain Ahab. Resident Hetty Green, the Witch of Wall Street, was the richest woman in the world in 1916. New Bedford also was an important stop on the Underground Railroad, which helped slaves on their journey to freedom. American Abolitionist Frederick Douglass found his voice in New Bedford. Important American artists Albert Bierstadt, William Bradford and Albert Pinkham Ryder also called New Bedford their home.

The New Bedford Whaling National Historical Park is a 13-block area of the downtown next to the waterfront. The County Street historic area features great whaling era mansions. Also located downtown is the Zeiterion Theatre, a meticulously restored Vaudeville Era theatre and home to the New Bedford Symphony Orchestra.<sup>2</sup>

## immigration.

New Bedford is a gateway city for immigrants, and like Springfield and Lawrence, foreign born residents continue to make up a significant share of the population. The city has a large population of native Puerto Ricans, many of whom leave for better opportunities elsewhere. These immigrants, including waves of Azurian, Cape Verdian and Portuguese immigrants, usually lack education and job training, and arrive poor.

## economic and workforce shifts.

Massachusetts' decline in manufacturing is 47<sup>th</sup> worst in the nation, with a decline in unionization and an increase in globalization – with low and moderately skilled production going offshore.<sup>3</sup> New Bedford, like many other New England cities and towns, experienced a profound loss of manufacturing and textile jobs in the last 30 to 40 years. Between 1960 and

2000, New Bedford lost 67% of its manufacturing employment, or 17,300 jobs, while Boston lost 138,000 jobs, a 48% loss. More recently, between 2001 and 2005, New Bedford has lost some of its knowledge industry employment as well, although New Bedford doubled its tech firms from 9 to 18 between 1991 and 2004. Notably, the fishing industry has been downsized by half.

New Bedford also has low education attainment, while the city is experiencing a continuing trend away from unskilled jobs in the workplace to a demand for high skills. Thus, there is an imbalance between the skills of the existing labor force and the new jobs that are being created in the region.

According to Clyde Barrow, Director of the Center for Policy Analysis at the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth, *"The individuals who remain unemployed often lack the ability to read and write, do simple arithmetic or fill out a job application. Consequently, many of the new jobs created go to more highly educated and highly trained individuals living in the suburbs or Rhode Island. This diverts much of the prosperity created by new economic growth out of the cities"*.<sup>4</sup>

According to some observers, there has been a social investment deficit in the South Coast. Social investment in human capital (education, school-to-work and job training) increases the productivity of individual workers and offsets cost advantages of global competition. Social investment in physical infrastructure increases the efficiency of private business operations and contributes to their competitiveness. While there are numerous social investment projects under way on the South Coast, the beneficial effects of this investment will not be realized for five to 20 years, claims Barrow.<sup>5</sup>

## New Bedford poverty persists – employment data.

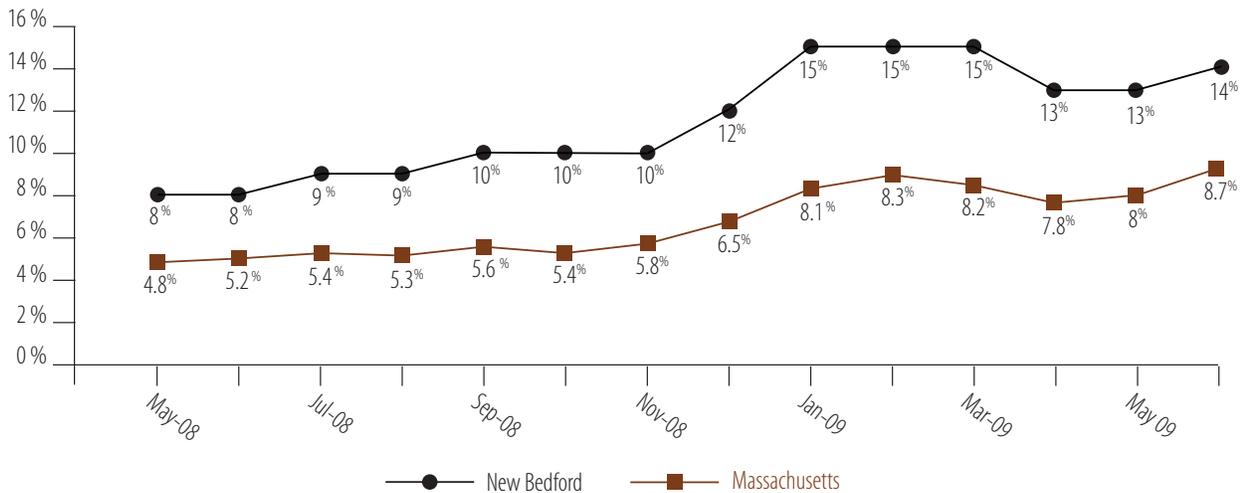
*There are not enough jobs in New Bedford. People lose hope. They might be able to cobble a job at Dunkin' Donuts or Burger King. They are probably living in substandard housing unless they are lucky enough to be in public housing. Ironically, there are tremendous amounts of natural resources in New Bedford. But it is not a real hopeful city.*

Program Coordinator, PACE  
(People Acting in Community Endeavors) Anti-Poverty Agency

**Child poverty persists because parents do not have enough work, and are not paid enough wages to support a family. Unemployment in the first four months of 2009 in New Bedford was 14.5%, nearly six percentage points higher than the state's rate for the same period.**

One resident observed: "There has been a lot of stimulus money in New Bedford, but I don't know what people could be trained for." Even skilled workers leave the community because there are no jobs. This serious lack of employment opportunities is matched by the lack of educational attainment among the population.<sup>6</sup> From 2005–2007, for the employed population 16 years and older, the leading industries in New Bedford city were Educational Services, Health Care, Social Assistance, and Manufacturing.

Labor Force, Employment and Unemployment (Not seasonally adjusted)

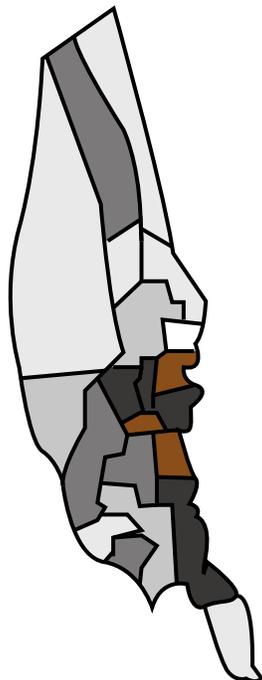
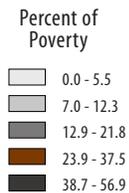


Source: Massachusetts Department of Labor Unemployment Data

### poverty by census tract.

In New Bedford, the highest rates of family poverty are in the southeast section of the city.

Census Tracts with Highest Rates of Family Poverty in New Bedford 2000 Census



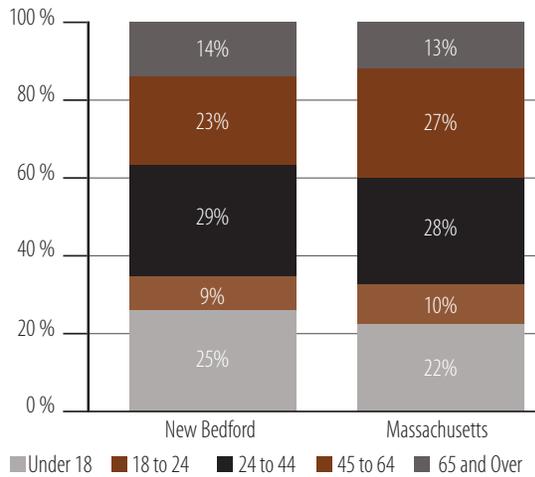
### New Bedford demographics.

The study *Addressing Concentrated Poverty* by the Federal Reserve Bank of Boston of 16 communities nationwide, maintains that although the reasons poverty becomes concentrated varies, communities share some common elements including, isolation, demographic change - including a rise in immigrant households and or a rise in single-parent families . and lack of workforce readiness. Many people in-migrate to these cities for possibility – as one step along the way.<sup>7</sup> Demographic characteristics of children and families are described here:

### age distribution.

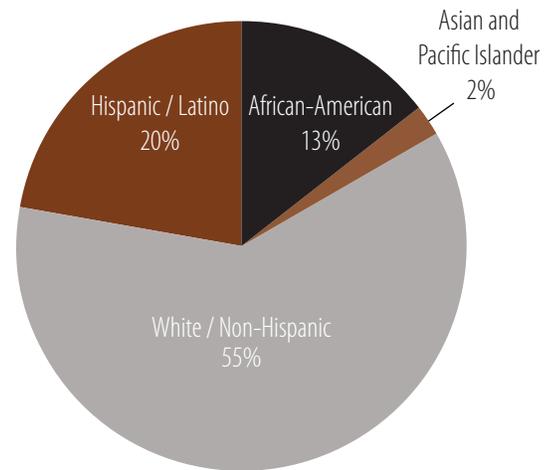
New Bedford has the 6<sup>th</sup> largest number of children under 18 in the state. About one-quarter or 23,603 of its population of 95, 272 are children. The age distribution of children under 18 years old in New Bedford is similar to the state's. However, New Bedford has slightly more children under age 4 than the state average. New Bedford's median age is 36 years.<sup>8</sup>

Age Distribution of Population

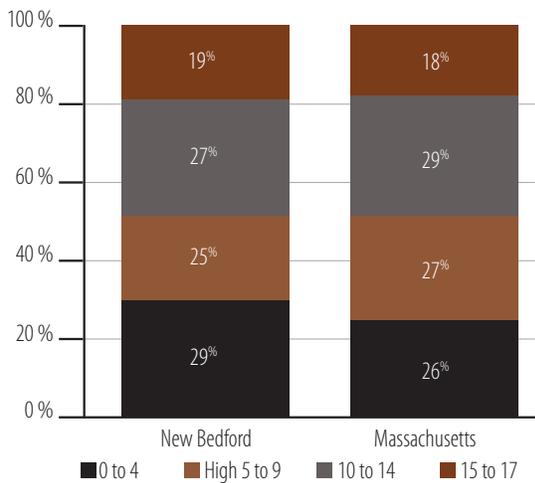


Source: American Community Survey 2006-2008 Population and Housing Narrative Profile

New Bedford 2005-2007 Child Population by Race

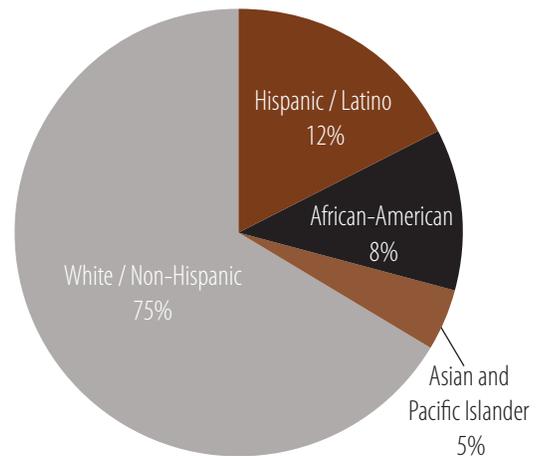


Child Population by Age Group 2005-2007



Source: The Annie E. Casey Foundation, KIDS COUNT Data Center, [www.kidscount.com](http://www.kidscount.com).

Massachusetts 2005-2007 Child Population by Race



Source: The Annie E. Casey Foundation, KIDS COUNT Data Center, [www.kidscount.org](http://www.kidscount.org)

## child race and ethnicity.

**New Bedford's child population is predominately White (55%) with 13% African-American and approximately 20% Hispanic.**

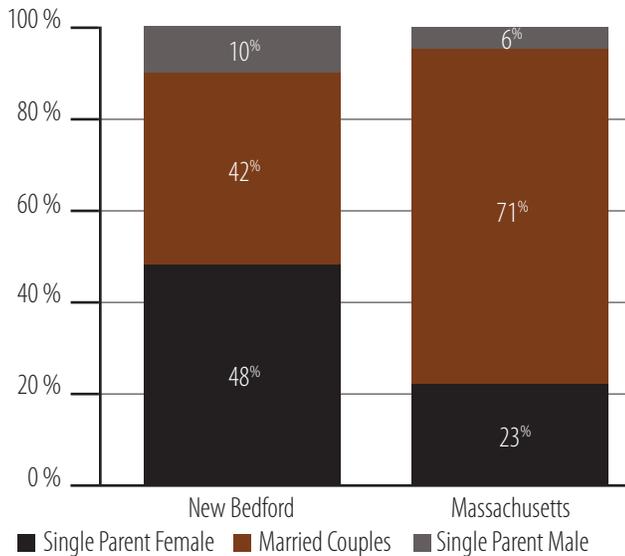
However, out of 100 towns reporting, New Bedford still has the 7<sup>th</sup> largest number of African-American children in the state. It has the 9<sup>th</sup> largest number of Hispanic children.

## household types.

**Nearly half of New Bedford's children (48%) live in households headed by a single female. In comparison 23% of children live in these households across the state.** There are more than 23,000 households with children under 18 years old in New Bedford. New Bedford

joins Lawrence and Springfield, along with some of the poorest towns in the state -- Monroe, Holyoke, Boston, Fall River, Southbridge, Chelsea, and North Adams -- in having large percentages of single-parent households.

Types of Households for Children Under 18 Years Old



Source: American Community Survey 2006-2008. Table B09005

**In New Bedford, just under half of both African-American and Hispanic households are headed by single females while about one-third of White households are headed by single females.**

Percent of Household Type by Race

White

Location	Married	Single Female	Single Male
New Bedford	61%	31%	7%
Massachusetts	79%	15%	05%

African-American

Location	Married	Single Female	Single Male
New Bedford	35%	48%	17%
Massachusetts	45%	44%	10%

Hispanic / Latino

Location	Married	Single Female	Single Male
New Bedford	32%	46%	22%
Massachusetts	43%	14%	44%

Source: American Community Survey 2006-2008. Tables 11001B, 11001H, 11001I.

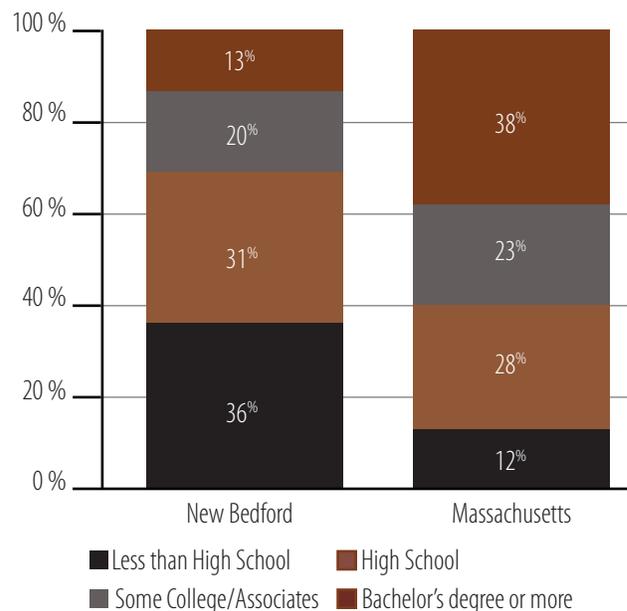
**education attainment of adults.**

*Educational programs that address parents' and children's education, like family literacy, are key to helping parents break the poverty cycle.*

Program Director, Child Care Works

**The percentage of New Bedford residents with high school diplomas or greater is lower than the state's.** From 2006-2008, 64% of New Bedford residents 25 years old and over had at a high school degree or more. Of these, 33% had at least some college or more. One in five (20%) New Bedford residents have less than a 9<sup>th</sup> grade education and another 16% completed 9<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> grade without a diploma. Compare this to Massachusetts, where 89% of people 25 years and over graduated from high school and 61% have had at least some college.

Highest Education Degree for Residents 25 Years and Over



Source: American Community Survey 2006-2008 Table S1501

**Over half of New Bedford residents over age 25 who speak another language at home do not have a high school degree, compared with 36% of residents over age 25 overall.**

Educational Attainment of People who Speak a Language Other than English at Home (Population 25 years and older)

Less than High School		
Location	Speak only English at Home	Speak a Language Other than English at Home
New Bedford	25%	52%
Massachusetts	8%	26%
High School or Equivalent		
Location	Speak only English at Home	Speak a Language Other than English at Home
New Bedford	34%	28%
Massachusetts	28%	26%
Some College		
Location	Speak only English at Home	Speak a Language Other than English at Home
New Bedford	25%	13%
Massachusetts	25%	17%
Bachelor's Degree or Higher		
Location	Speak only English at Home	Speak a Language Other than English at Home
New Bedford	17%	8%
Massachusetts	39%	18%

Source: American Community Survey 2006-2008. Table S1603

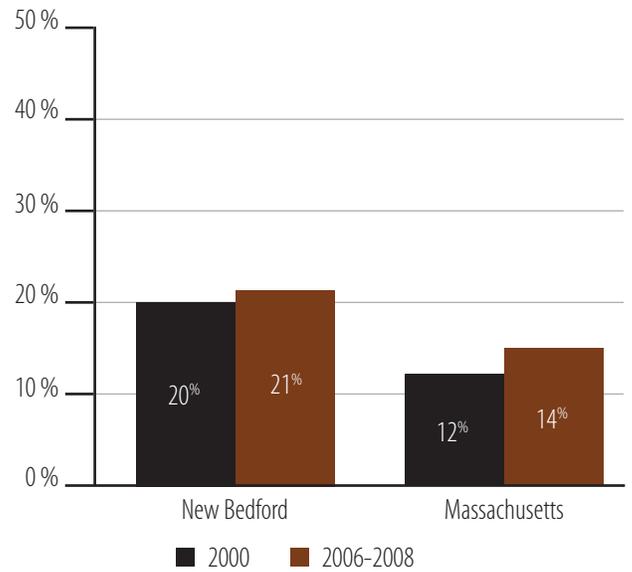
immigrants and language.

*Learning English is not a priority necessarily, so immigrants will not be able to move away from being in a service industry, working in the factory, or earning under the table. But they do have to work to survive, so they will always be struggling. New immigrants from Guatemala and Mexico work 50,000 jobs to make ends meet.*

Program Coordinator, New Bedford Family Center

Immigration to New Bedford increased by about 1% between 2000 and 2007, which is similar to the increase statewide. New Bedford's percentage of foreign born residents does not include another 4% of those residents born in Puerto Rico and the U.S. Islands because immigrants from these U.S. territories are not considered foreign born.<sup>9</sup>

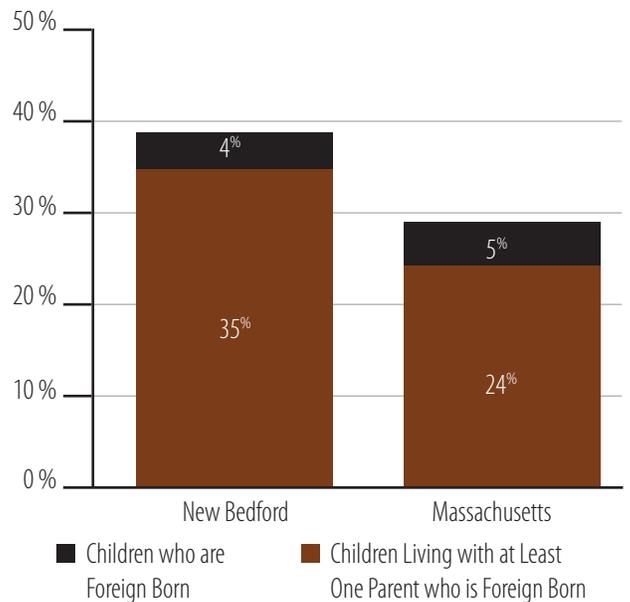
Trends in Foreign Born Population



Source: 2000 U.S. Census and American Community Survey 2006-2008, Social Data Profiles

**New Bedford has the 15<sup>th</sup> largest number of children in the state residing with at least one foreign born parent, and a larger percentage of children than the state (35% compared with 24%).** This speaks to the continued need in New Bedford for programs that address the social and economic needs of immigrant parents.

Percent of all Children who are Immigrants and Percent Living with at Least One Parent who is Foreign Born 2005-2007



Source: The Annie E. Casey Foundation, KIDS COUNT Data Center, [www.kidscount.org](http://www.kidscount.org)

**In New Bedford, 37% of residents over five years old speak a language other than English at home, compared with 20% throughout the state. Of New Bedford residents who speak another language at home, 26% speak Spanish and 74% speak another language, commonly Portuguese.** Of those who speak a language other than English, 17% report that they do not speak English “very well”, compared with 42% in Massachusetts.

Children in immigrant families grow up in complex language environments that can help promote the development of English language skills. The language skills of parents in immigrant families have important implications for language acquisition among children because parents provide the earliest environment in which children learn to speak. English language learner parents may be less able to help their children study for subjects taught in English.<sup>10</sup>

#### Languages Spoken at Home (Population Five Years Old and Over)

Location	English Only	
New Bedford	55,288	63%
Massachusetts	4,841,697	80%
Location	Speak Language Other than English at Home	
New Bedford	33,006	37%
Massachusetts	1,246,037	20%
Location	Linguistically Isolated	
New Bedford	14,880	17%
Massachusetts	523,294	42%
Location	Total	
New Bedford	88,294	100%
Massachusetts	6,087,734	100%

Source: American Community Survey 2006-2008 Social Profile

## New Bedford child and family poverty.

### child poverty.

**New Bedford, has one of the largest percentages of children who are poor – the 4<sup>th</sup> highest percentage of children under 18 who are poor in Massachusetts.** As is the case everywhere, children are more likely to be poor than any other age group.

**While 23% of New Bedford residents are at the poverty level, 36% or 8,286 children under 18 are at that level.** In New Bedford children who are poor comprise 5% of all of the state’s poor children.

#### Children in Poverty at 100% Federal Poverty Level in New Bedford

Location	Child Poverty Number	Child Poverty Percent	Child Poverty Percent
New Bedford	8,286	36%	5%
Massachusetts	177,912	12.6%	100%

Source: American Community Survey 2006-2008

New Bedford has the 5<sup>th</sup> largest participation rate in the state of families receiving Transitional Aid to Families with Dependent Children (TAFDC), a program that provides financial assistance and a limited range of employment-related services to families.

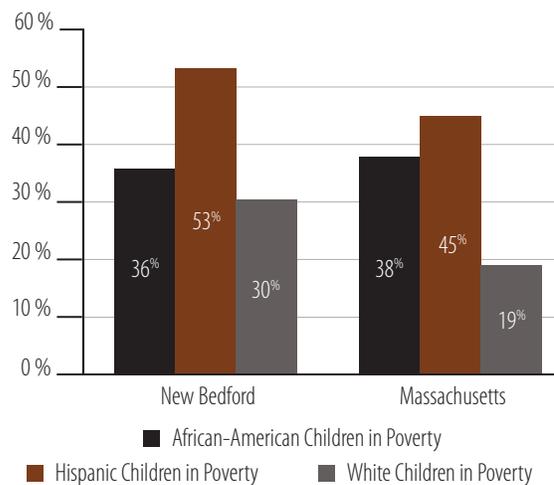
#### TAFDC Recipients 2005 to 2008

Location	2005	2006	2007	2008
New Bedford	10,522	10,452	10,465	10,726
Massachusetts	230,045	223,918	221,348	227,021

Source: Massachusetts Department of Transitional Assistance July 2009

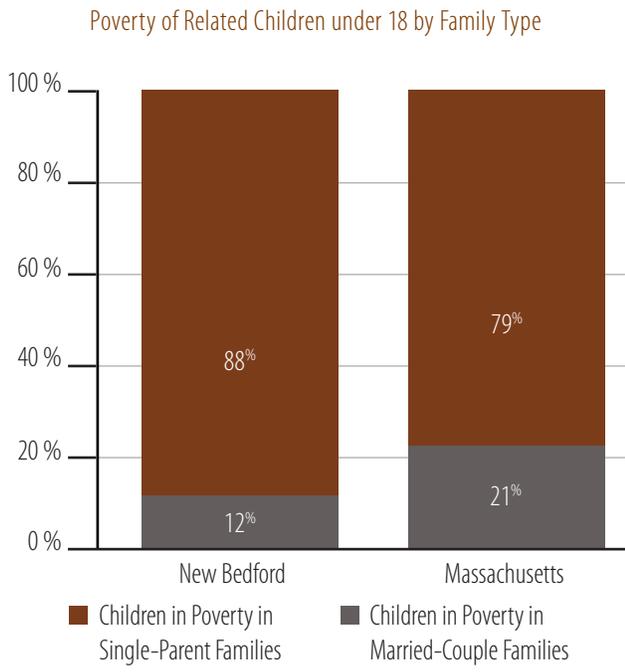
While Hispanic and African-Americans have similar median incomes in New Bedford, a higher percentage of Hispanic children are poor at the FPL or below compared with African-American children - 53% compared to 36%.

#### Percent of Children under 18 in Poverty by Race



Source: American Community Survey 2006-2008. Table C17020B, C17020H, C17020I

**While the overall child poverty rate is 36% in New Bedford, a child raised by a single mother in New Bedford is over seven times more likely than children raised by two parents to grow up in poverty.** Children in single-parent households score worse on measures of health, education, and behavior than children living in two-parent families. Later on, these children are more likely to drop out of school, to become heads of single-parent families themselves, and to experience a lower socioeconomic status as adults.<sup>11</sup>



Source: American Community Survey 2006-2008. Table C17006

### child poverty indicators in public schools.

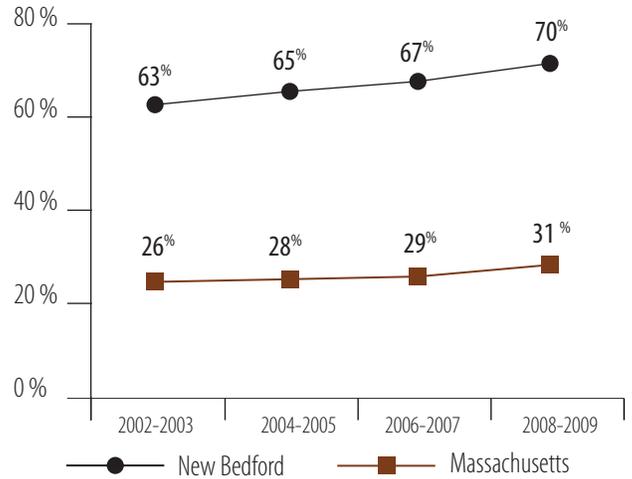
**The percentage of low-income and poor children in New Bedford increased from 63% to 70% of all children between 2002 and 2009,** although the actual number of children who were poor and low-income decreased slightly during this time, from 9,144 children in 2003 to 8,768 in 2009. Across the state, the percentage increased from 26% to 31%, from 266,294 to 294,692 children.

**School-age children ages 5 to 17 years old who are in poverty are three to four times more prevalent in New Bedford than in the state as a whole,** according to data from the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

**In New Bedford, 59% or 7,451 children are on the free or reduced lunch program.** The city has the 7<sup>th</sup> highest number of children

on the free lunch program in Massachusetts. The percentage of students on free lunch plans increased in New Bedford and on the state level between 2006 and 2009.

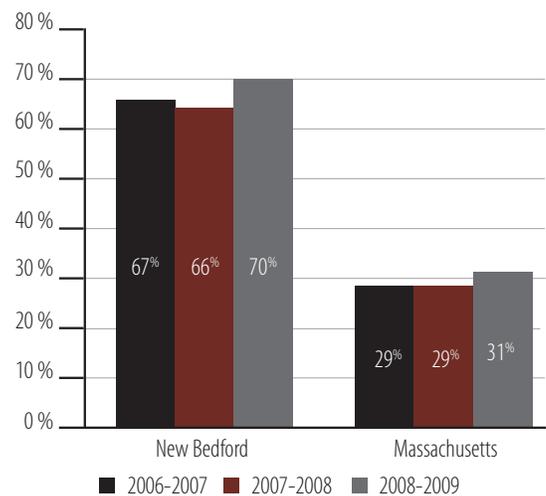
Percent of Children in Low-Income and Poor Families 2002 to 2009



Source: Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

The Free Lunch program is available to students in households on the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Transitional Assistance to Needy Families (TANF), and most foster children. School meals have the potential to reach the entire population of food-insecure school-age children and are a first line of defense in protecting them from hunger. Students who eat breakfast and have access to better nutrition have significantly higher math and reading scores, fewer absences, improved attentiveness and lower incidences of social and behavioral problems.

Percent of Students on Free or Reduced Lunch Plans 2006-2009



Source: Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

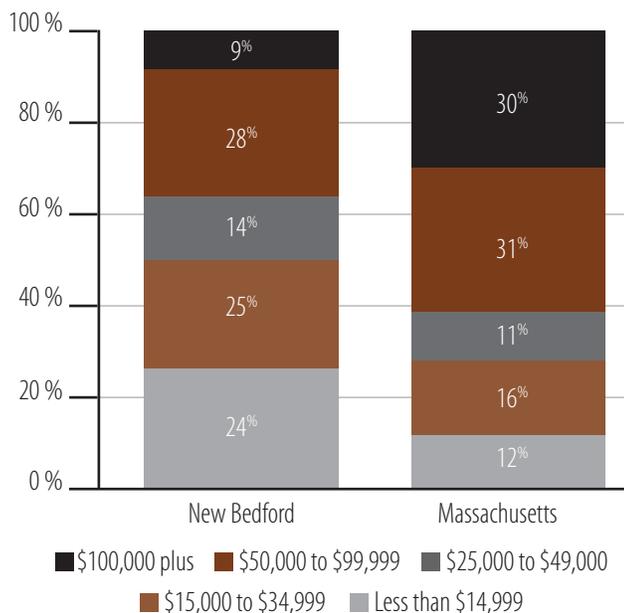
## family poverty.

**Families (with and without children) in poverty increased by 3 percentage points in New Bedford between 2000 and 2008, from 17% to 21% while the poverty rate of all families statewide hovered at 7% during this time.**<sup>12</sup>

**The median household income of \$36,809 in New Bedford just exceeds half of the state’s median household income of \$64,684. Similarly, the median family income in New Bedford is just over half of the state’s median family income – \$45,743 compared with \$81,056.**

Overall, nearly two-thirds of all New Bedford residents earn under \$50,000 annually. The reverse is true statewide, where nearly two-thirds of residents earn over \$50,000 annually. Median household and family income are measures of the ability of families to meet the costs of food, clothing, housing, health care, transportation, child care and higher education.

New Bedford Household Income (2008 Inflation-Adjusted Dollars)



Source: American Community Survey 2006-2008. Table C19001

**Median household income varies by race. The median income of White/Non-Hispanics in New Bedford is about 1.5 times more than Hispanics and African-Americans.** For most minorities, disparities in assets such as home ownership, however, are far greater than disparities in income. The inequality is passed down from one generation to another when there is no private family wealth to draw upon to gain economic leverage.<sup>13</sup>

Median Household Income by Race (2008 Inflation-Adjusted Dollars)

Race/Ethnicity	New Bedford	Massachusetts
Hispanic	\$26,473	\$32,037
African-American	\$26,489	\$42,095
Asian	\$73,532	\$72,168
White Non-Hispanic	\$39,819	\$69,226
Median Household Income	\$36,809	\$64,684

Source: American Community Survey 2006-2008. Table S1903

**Median family incomes vary dramatically for different types of families as well. In New Bedford, the median income of female heads of households is \$20,517 compared with that of \$62,260 for married couple households.** The estimated median family incomes in New Bedford are lower in each family category than the counterpart family on the state level.

Median Family Income by Type of Family

Location	Median Family Income Average
New Bedford	\$45,743
Massachusetts	\$80,056
Location	Female Householder
New Bedford	\$20,517
Massachusetts	\$38,019
Location	Families with Children under 18
New Bedford	\$36,202
Massachusetts	\$81,865
Location	Male Householder – no Wife Present
New Bedford	\$44,135
Massachusetts	\$57,172
Location	Married Couples
New Bedford	\$62,260
Massachusetts	\$95,474

Source: American Community Survey 2006-2008. Table S1903

## family self-sufficiency.

**The median income of New Bedford female householders of \$20,517 falls far short of what is sufficient to afford basic necessities. According to the Crittenton Women’s Union, in**

**Bristol County, a family of three (one parent and two young children) needs to earn \$45,220 annually to cover expenses.**

Most workers do not make ends meet on their wages alone, even upper and moderate-wage workers receive on the job benefits such as health insurance or paid sick days. Workers in low-wage jobs often find themselves with insufficient wages to cover their basic family needs and typically cannot access job-related benefits to supplement family earnings.<sup>14</sup>

Monthly Budget Required for Self-Sufficiency for Households in Bristol County by Living Expense

Item	Bristol County
Housing	\$753
Child Care	\$1,220
Food	\$503
Transportation	\$290
Health Care	\$312
Miscellaneous	\$308
Taxes	\$731
Earned Income Tax Credit (-)	0
Child Care Tax Credit (-)	-\$100
Child Tax Credit (-)	-\$167
<b>Monthly Total</b>	<b>\$3,852</b>
Hourly Equivalent	\$21.88
<b>Annual Equivalent</b>	<b>\$46,220</b>

Source: Crittenton Women's Union Self-Sufficiency Calculator [www.liveworkthrive.org/calculator.php](http://www.liveworkthrive.org/calculator.php)

**cost of rent.**

**Over half of all renters in New Bedford are paying more than 30% of their income on rent, as is the case statewide.**<sup>15</sup> Cost of rent is the percentage of income needed by a very low-income family to cover the average cost of rent. There is a cost burden when more than 30% of a family's monthly income is spent on housing. These families are more likely to endure food insecurity, lack of health insurance, have trouble paying the housing or utility bills and have difficulty paying for transportation.<sup>16</sup>

Percent of Renters Paying > 30% Income

Location	Percent
New Bedford	53%
Massachusetts	50%

Source: American Community Survey 2005 - 2007. Table GCT2515

**foreclosures.**

*One bright light is rapid rehousing money coming to cities as part of the stimulus. New Bedford received \$1.2 million. It is a flexible program and can pay for subsidies, rent, etc.*

Executive Director, PACE Anti-Poverty Agency

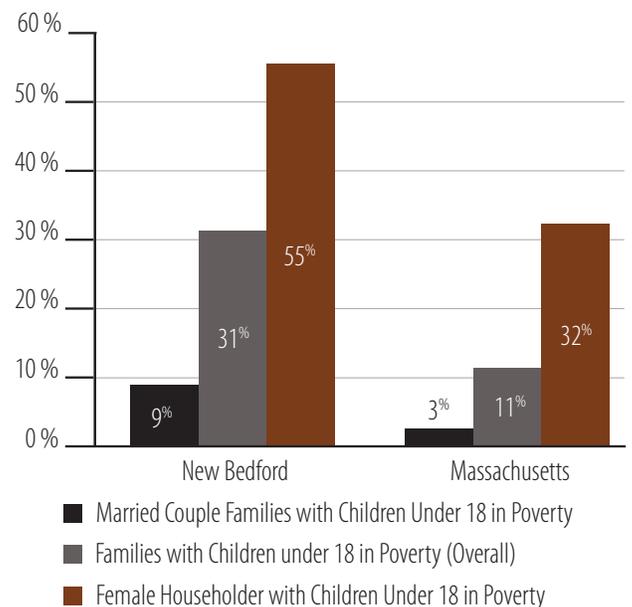
**New Bedford had the 8<sup>th</sup> highest foreclosure rate in the state in July and August 2009. Between March and September of 2009, New Bedford had 242 foreclosures.**<sup>17</sup> Housing prices in New Bedford are rapidly appreciating yet remain relatively affordable at \$247,000.<sup>18</sup> Still, residents are acutely affected by the foreclosure crisis, either as property owners not able to make mortgage payments or as renters facing eviction due to the owner's inability to make mortgage payments.

**single-parent poverty.**

**Poverty varies by population group. For example, a larger percentage of families are poor than people 65 and older.**<sup>19</sup>

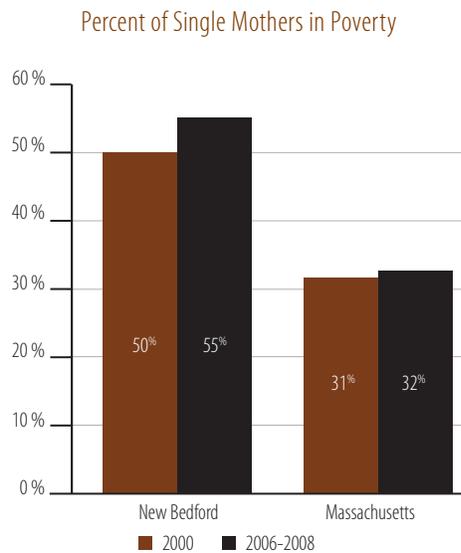
Within the population of families with children under 18, a larger percentage of families headed by a single mother are poor than families with children under 18 overall. Single-parent families headed by a female are more likely to be poor because a woman's wages typically are less than a man's. As noted above, single New Bedford mothers earn \$20,517 compared with the city's median family income of \$45,743.<sup>20</sup>

Percent of Families with Children under 18 who are in Poverty by Type of Family



Source: American Community Survey 2006-2008. Table S1702

**In New Bedford, single mothers in poverty increased five percentage points, from 50% of all single mothers in 2000 to 55% in 2008. In Massachusetts, 31% of single mothers were poor in 2000, with the percentage increasing to 32% in 2008.**

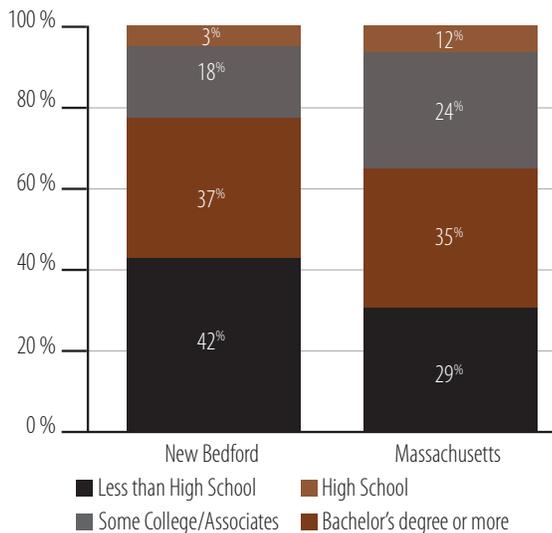


Source: American Community Survey 2006-2008, Table S1702

### education and poverty.

**Lack of adequate education is a systemic root of intergenerational poverty.** Parents with low levels of education are at risk of being low-income, and have an impact on the literacy levels of their children.

Poverty Status of Families by Educational Attainment of Householder (Percent of Poor Families)



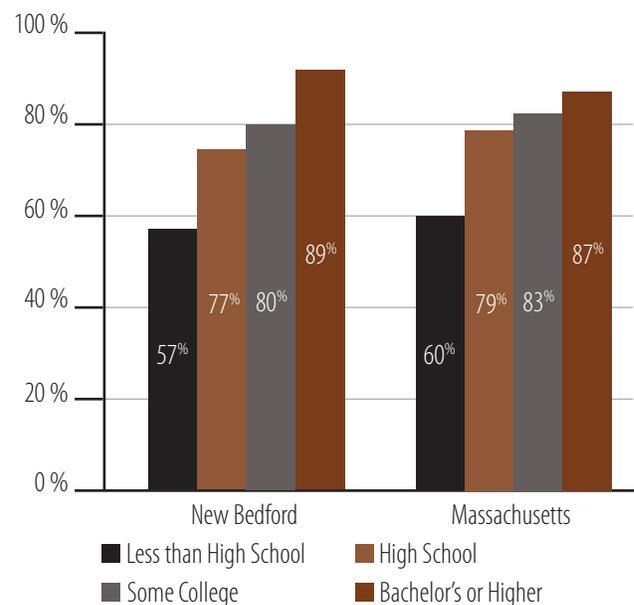
Source: American Community Survey 2006-2008, Table C17018

**Of all families that are poor at 100% of the Federal Poverty Level in New Bedford, nearly 80% have a high school diploma or less.** Families are more likely to be poor if the heads of households do not have a minimum of a Bachelor's degree.

**The percent of residents in New Bedford between ages 25 and 64 who are in the labor force rises somewhat with more education, from 57% for residents with less than high school degree to 89% of residents with a Bachelor's Degree or more.**

Likewise, unemployment rises with less education. For example, on average, 11% of residents with less than a high school degree were unemployed between 2006 and 2008; 7% with a high school degree or with some college, and 3% with a Bachelor's degree or more were unemployed. Poverty rates also increase with less educational attainment. In fact in New Bedford, those with some college or a Bachelor's Degree or more have a lower rate of poverty than their educational counterparts statewide.

Percent in Labor Force by Educational Attainment 2005-2007 Ages 25 to 64



Source: American Community Survey 2006-2008, Table B23006

### immigrant poverty.

*New Bedford immigrants are willing to work long hours, deal with harassment and poor working conditions. They do not apply for social services because they want to stay anonymous.*

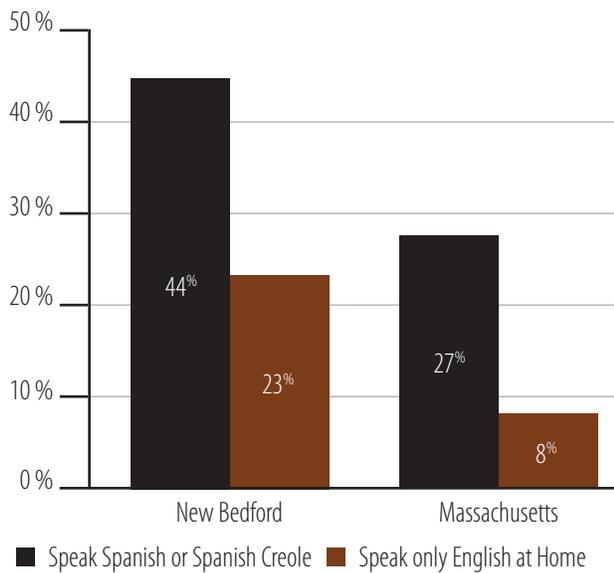
New Bedford Resident

In New Bedford, the waves of immigrants who worked in the fishing industry have historically been and continue to be mostly poor and

uneducated, even while looking for more opportunity. Language, lack of employment and skills, and mobility contribute to poverty.

**The poverty level for New Bedford residents speaking only Spanish at home is 1.5 times as high as for those that speak English at home (compared with twice as high in Lawrence and Springfield).** Living in linguistic isolation has been strongly linked with lower earnings for non-English speakers, with limited proficiency in English imposing a wage penalty that is most severe for Latinos.

Percent of Residents below Poverty Level by Language Spoken at Home



Source: Census and American Community Survey 2006-2008. Table S1603

Children in immigrant families experience important challenges. Many experience challenges associated with low parental education, low parental hourly earning, high family poverty, that in turn lead to overcrowded housing and limited access to early education. Many children in immigrant families live below the poverty line.<sup>21</sup>

Issues connected with immigrants' cultures and perspective can contribute to social isolation and poverty. According to one New Bedford resident, "A lot of immigrants do not vote whether they are documented or not. It's not part of their culture." Transience and fear also contribute to immigrant poverty. According to director of New Bedford's anti-poverty agency PACE (People Acting in Community Endeavors), "Guatemalan workers with entry level jobs in fishing house. get kicked out of their homes, landlords take advantage of them. Some end up back in their home country. Many often return to the U.S. again."

Examining the effect of immigration raids on children in immigrant families is important because children have strong claims to protection by society, especially when they are citizens and are integrated into their schools and communities. For most of these children, the United States is the only country they have known and they consider it home. They warrant our attention because they are emotionally, financially, and developmentally dependent on their parents' care, protection, and earnings.<sup>22</sup>

In March 2007 a raid was conducted at the Mico Bianco leather goods factory in New Bedford by 300 immigration officials around which legal issues are still being resolved. The company's owner and three managers were charged with hiring illegal workers, mainly from Guatemala and El Salvador, to meet labor demands. That day 361 workers were arrested, leaving hundreds of children separated from their parents. Immigration and customs officials report that of these workers 165 were deported. Homeland Security now partners with the Division of Immigration and Health Services to do medical and humanitarian screenings before deportation is considered. However, according to a New Bedford official, "Whatever fear there was before the raid, there is more now".

## New Bedford child health.

*The New Bedford population tends to be sicker, which is evident in a lot of school absences. They feel hopeless, and do not see their circumstances improving.*

Program Coordinator, New Bedford Family Center

**In 2007, 15% of New Bedford residents had no health insurance and a similar proportion could not see a doctor due to medical costs, according to a 2007 Department of Public Health report.** With the Commonwealth of Massachusetts instituting Health Care for All, all residents are now required to have health insurance. Yet accessing healthcare remains problematic for some children and families in New Bedford and the financial barriers to health care continue to disproportionately affect New Bedford residents overall.<sup>23</sup>

New Bedford children, beginning at birth, are subjected to multiple factors that put them at risk for developmental failure, school failure, and failure to achieve economic self-sufficiency as adults. Children who live in New Bedford are disproportionately vulnerable to negative health outcomes because of low income, leading to a greater likelihood of poor nutrition and inadequate access to preventive health care.

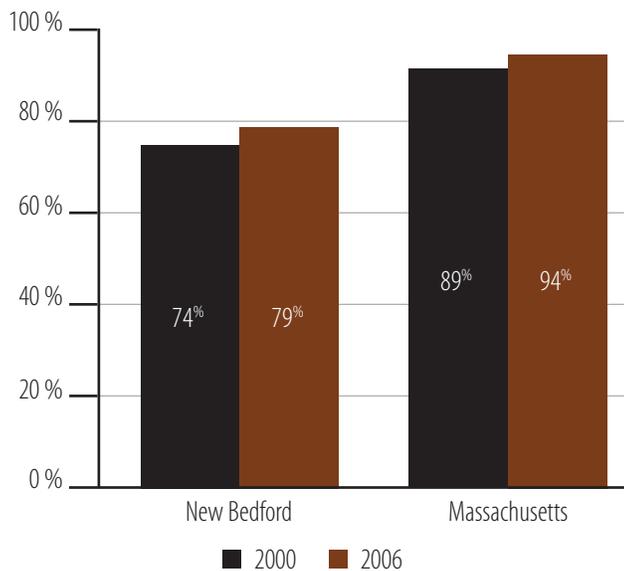
## mother's education.

### The percentage of New Bedford mothers with at least a high school or equivalent degree is less than the state average but has increased since 2000.

In 2006, 79% of birth mothers in New Bedford compared with 94% of birth mothers statewide had a high school or equivalent degree.

Mother's education is an indicator of child health because women with higher levels of education are more likely to receive adequate prenatal care, more likely to breastfeed, and more likely to be married. Mother's education is the percentage of all birth mothers in any given year that have a high school diploma, GED or higher. These mothers are less likely to smoke during pregnancy and to receive publicly financed prenatal care. The connection between education and earnings is a well-documented trend. Higher levels of maternal education can typically lead to higher levels of income and less chance of family poverty.

Percent of Mothers with a High School or Equivalent Degree



Source: Massachusetts Department of Public Health Massachusetts Community Health Profile (MassCHIP) [www.masschip.state.ma.us](http://www.masschip.state.ma.us)

## births to teens.

### New Bedford's teen birth rate - the number of births per 1,000 females ages 15 to 19 years old - is the 4<sup>th</sup> highest teen birth rate in the state, at 67 per 1,000 births.

In contrast, the teen birth rate in Massachusetts decreased 10%, from 26 births per 1,000 to 22 births per 1,000 between 2000 and 2007. This is about half the national teen birth rate of 42 births per 1,000 and ranks Massachusetts 2<sup>nd</sup> among all the states.

Adolescent pregnancy is associated with a number of serious health, educational, and economic consequences. During the pregnancy, teenage mothers are more likely to experience complications including anemia and prolonged labor and less likely to obtain adequate prenatal care.<sup>24</sup> Teen mothers are less likely to complete high school and to marry. A child born to a teen mother has greater risk of infant mortality, worse educational outcomes, higher rates of behavioral problems, higher rates of adolescent childbearing themselves and poor health.

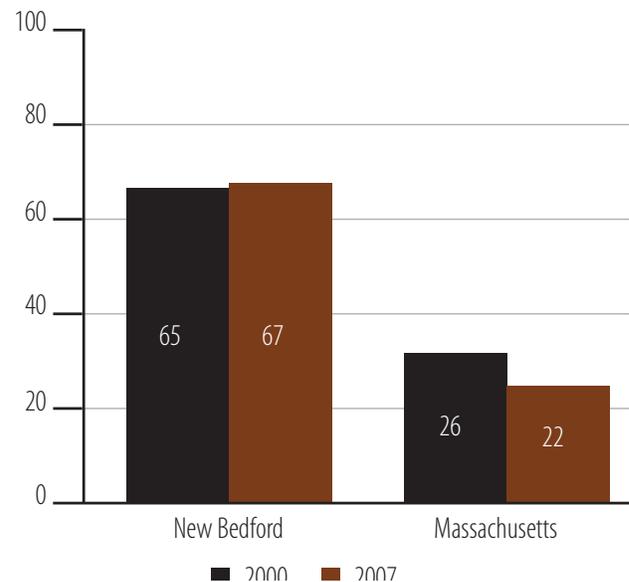
Number of Teen Births Ages 15 to 19

Location	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
New Bedford	195	185	175	169	183	174	207	197
Massachusetts	5,305	4,979	4,642	4,639	4,559	4,539	4,722	4,944

Source: Massachusetts Department of Public Health Massachusetts Community Health Profile (MassCHIP) [www.masschip.state.ma.us](http://www.masschip.state.ma.us)

Trends in Teen Birth Rate

Number of Births per 1,000 Females Ages 15 to 19 Years Old



Source: Massachusetts Department of Public Health Massachusetts Community Health Profile (MassCHIP) [www.masschip.state.ma.us](http://www.masschip.state.ma.us)

## prenatal care.

Twenty-seven percent (27%) of mothers in New Bedford are not receiving adequate care in the first trimester of their pregnancies, placing the city 26<sup>th</sup> worst on this measure among all cities and towns in Massachusetts.



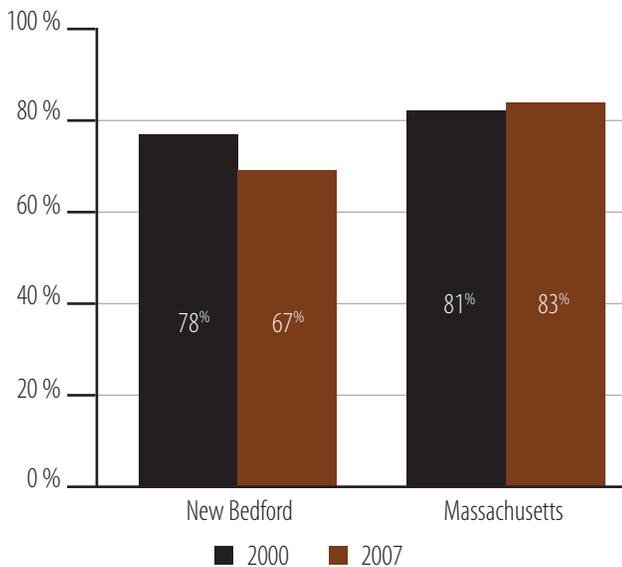
### Prenatal Care Health 2007

Location	Mothers not Getting Prenatal Care in First Trimester		Mothers Receiving Adequate Prenatal Care		Mothers Receiving Publicly Funded Prenatal Care	
New Bedford	370	27%	903	67%	788	60%
Massachusetts		18%		83%		36%

Source: Massachusetts Department of Public Health Massachusetts Community Health Profile (MassCHIP) [www.masschip.state.ma.us](http://www.masschip.state.ma.us)

**The percentage of New Bedford pregnant women with adequate prenatal care declined from 78% to 67% between 2000 and 2007. Statewide, this percentage improved slightly from 81% to 83% in the same period.** A baby's development before birth can have a significant impact on learning. The brain development that takes place during the prenatal period and in the first year of life is rapid and extensive and is extremely vulnerable to environmental influence.<sup>25</sup>

Trends in the Percent of Mothers with Adequate Prenatal Care 2000 to 2007



Source: Massachusetts Department of Public Health Massachusetts Community Health Profile (MassCHIP) [www.masschip.state.ma.us](http://www.masschip.state.ma.us)

### low birth weight.

**Eleven percent (11%) of babies in New Bedford are born with low birth weight, 3% higher than the state's rate of 8%.** Low birth weight is the percentage of infants born weighing less than 2,500 grams or 5 pounds 8 ounces.

Low birth weight is linked to behavioral disorders and visual and auditory impairments. Infant health problems are a strong predictor of lower preschool cognitive abilities. Increased risk of low birth weight is associated with maternal poverty, smoking and low levels of educational attainment.

### Low Birth Weight Babies 2007

Location	Number of Babies	Percent of Total Births
New Bedford	143	11%
Massachusetts	6,138	8%

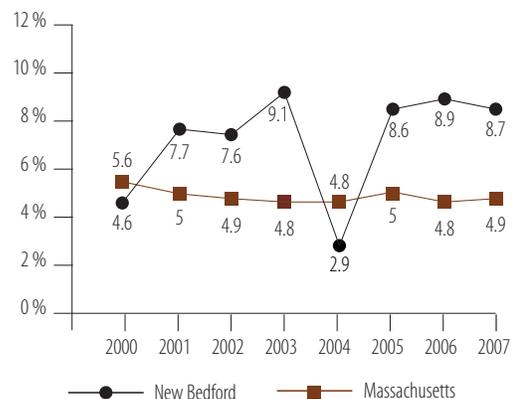
Source: Massachusetts Department of Public Health Massachusetts Community Health Profile (MassCHIP) [www.masschip.state.ma.us](http://www.masschip.state.ma.us)

### infant mortality.

**In New Bedford, infant mortality nearly doubled between 2000 and 2007, from 4.6 deaths per 1,000 births to 8.7 deaths per 1,000 births. The infant mortality rate in New Bedford is almost twice the state rate of 4.9.**

Infant mortality is associated with a variety of factors including women's health, quality of and access to medical care, socioeconomic conditions and public health practices. Communities with multiple problems such as poverty, unemployment and illiteracy tend to have higher infant mortality rates than more advantaged communities, with the two chief causes of infant death being low birth weight and prematurity. Note that there is more variability in the rate on the city rather than state level since state's rate is based on a larger population. The dip in New Bedford's rate in 2004 appears to be an outlier due to a possible hospital reporting error.

Trends in Infant Mortality (Deaths per 1,000 Births) All Causes 2000 to 2007



Source: Massachusetts Department of Public Health Massachusetts Community Health Profile (MassCHIP) [www.masschip.state.ma.us](http://www.masschip.state.ma.us)

Infant mortality data available for White/Non-Hispanic children in New Bedford alone shows that city rates have exceeded state rates for White/Non-Hispanic children since 2001.

Infant Mortality (All Causes) Rate per 1,000 Births by Race

Location	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
New Bedford White/Non-Hispanic	3.36	5.87	8.23	6.90	4.56	6.76	5.64	4.83
Massachusetts White/Non-Hispanic	3.86	4.14	4.11	4.08	3.8	4.3	4.17	3.91

Source: Massachusetts Department of Public Health Massachusetts Community Health Profile (MassCHIP) [www.masschip.state.ma.us](http://www.masschip.state.ma.us)

## hunger.

*The problems that poverty brings influence the whole fabric in the city. You see it in the schools. Parents are worried about feeding their kids and can't focus on homework.*

Program Director, Child Care Works

**Many New Bedford children are malnourished. Thirteen census tracts in the city qualify for hunger designation, placing it among the top hunger designation cities in the state.**<sup>26</sup> *"Children in New Bedford are thin, and not growing as they should. . . They are eating a high calorie, high sugar diet",* observes one social services worker.

**Ten percent (10%) of New Bedford households receive SNAP assistance, formerly the Food Stamp Program, with 58% of these households feeding children under 18.** In Massachusetts, 4% of households receive Food Stamps, with just over half (51%) feeding children under 18 years. New Bedford has the 7<sup>th</sup> highest SNAP participation rate for three to five year-olds in Massachusetts.

Households with Children under 18 Years old Receipt of SNAP

Location	Households with children under 18 years old Receiving SNAP	Percent of all SNAP Households	Percent of Total Households
New Bedford	3,879	58%	10%
Massachusetts	86,278	51%	4%

Source: American Community Survey 2006-2008. Tables C22002 and S2201

**New Bedford comprises 3% of all children and 3% of all infants participating in WIC in the state.** The Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) serves low-income pregnant postpartum and breast feeding women, infants and children up to age five who are at nutrition risk.

WIC Participation Children and Infants 2007

Location	Number of Children Participating in WIC	Percent of Massachusetts	Number of Infants Participating in WIC	Percent of Massachusetts
New Bedford	2,277	3%	980	3%
Massachusetts	69,802	100%	30,422	100%

Source: Massachusetts Department of Public Health Massachusetts Community Health Profile (MassCHIP) [www.masschip.state.ma.us](http://www.masschip.state.ma.us)

## lead poisoning and asthma.

**Twenty-three (23) children in New Bedford or 4.85 % of all the city's children screened per 1,000, had lead poisoning or elevated blood lead levels. This lead poisoning rate was more than twice the state's rate of 2.02%.**

New Bedford's rate for this preventable childhood disease is the highest of the three cities in this report. Children with lead poisoning can suffer from learning and behavioral problems as well as permanent damage to their brain, kidneys and nervous system. Infants, toddlers and preschool age children are most susceptible to the toxic effects of lead because they absorb lead more readily than adults.<sup>27</sup> Lead dust can come from repairing areas containing lead paint as well as through normal wear and tear on painted areas in older housing structures.

## New Bedford child education.

*The job market has become something of a dead end for less-educated workers. Once upon a time, a high school graduate could find good paying work in a factory and support a middle-class family. Such jobs, mostly replaced by machines or sent overseas, have gone away. A good education in today's global economy means at least some type of postsecondary degree.*

*An Old Battle Rejoined*, National Center for State Legislatures, January 2009

High quality education is a way for children to move up the economic ladder. Scholars who have examined the long-term effects of high quality early childhood education, starting with infants, have found that young children who receive high quality services show better cognitive development at 24

months of age and better language development at 36 months. They are 30% more likely to graduate from high school than children from similar backgrounds who don't have the same exposure to high quality early education. They are 40% less likely to need special education or be held back, and are 50% more likely to go to college.<sup>28</sup>

### preschool through 12<sup>th</sup> grade participation.

**As of March 2009, there were 306 children waitlisted for public preschools in New Bedford.** The local child care resource and referral agency, Child Care Works, documents many more requests for infant and toddler placements than there are placements, and a shortage of center-based child care. Waitlist data is important because it shows the scope of access to literacy development in early education and care settings.

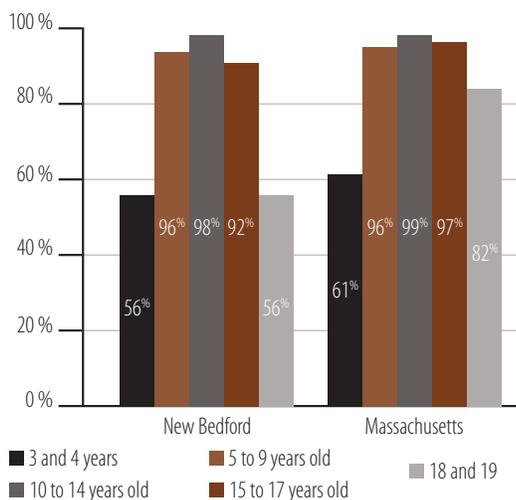
Capacity of Public Preschool Programs March 2009

Location	Public Preschool Center Capacity	Waitlisted for Public Preschools
New Bedford	2,615	306

Source: Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care

**While similar percentages of elementary and middle school children (ages 5 to 14 years old) are enrolled in schools in New Bedford, Springfield, Lawrence, and in the state as a whole, the enrollment rate drops in New Bedford as children reach age 15,** according to the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

Percent of Age Group Enrolled in School (Public or Private)



Source: American Community Survey 2006-2008. Table S1401

Dropout rates are higher in New Bedford than they are statewide. As with Springfield, New Bedford's dropout rates increased fairly dramatically between 2003 and 2006 from 7% to 11% of 9<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> graders.

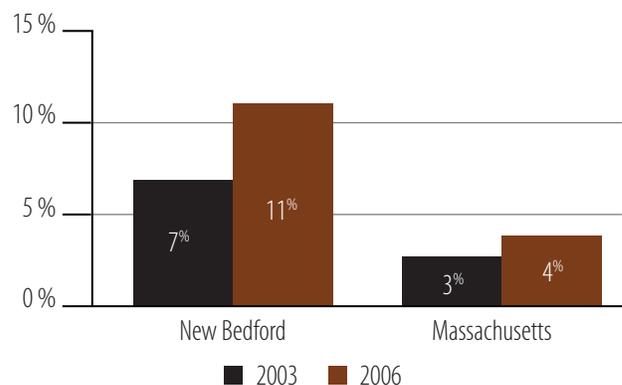
Number Enrolled & Dropped Out 9<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> Grades and Dropout Rates

Location	2003		
	Enrollment	Drop-out	Rate
New Bedford	3,334	228	7%
Massachusetts	281,939	8,425	3%
Location	2004		
	Enrollment	Drop-out	Rate
New Bedford	3,410	310	9%
Massachusetts	288,329	9,389	3%
Location	2005		
	Enrollment	Drop-out	Rate
New Bedford	3,412	331	10%
Massachusetts	293,399	10,633	4%
Location	2006		
	Enrollment	Drop-out	Rate
New Bedford	3,265	355	11%
Massachusetts	296,678	11,137	4%

Source: Massachusetts Department of Public Health Massachusetts Community Health Profile (MassCHIP) [www.masschip.state.ma.us](http://www.masschip.state.ma.us)

Enrollment is an indicator of success in school, which leads to completing high school, moving on to postsecondary school, and earning more over a lifetime.<sup>29</sup> By ages 18 and 19, only 56% of New Bedford students are enrolled in school compared with 82% across the state.

Trends in Dropout Rates 2003 and 2006 - 9<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> Grades



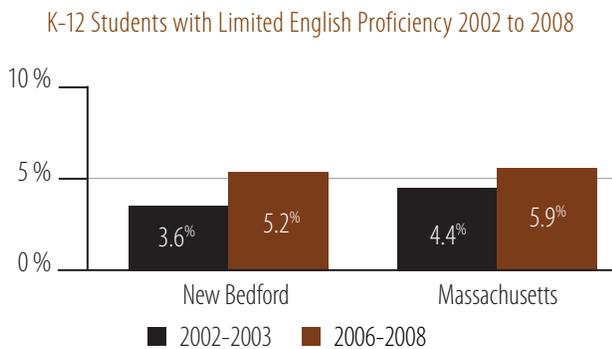
Source: Massachusetts Department of Public Health Massachusetts Community Health Profile (MassCHIP) [www.masschip.state.ma.us](http://www.masschip.state.ma.us)

## students with limited English proficiency.

### New Bedford had the 19<sup>th</sup> largest number (550 students) with limited English proficiency (LEP) in the state in 2005-2007.<sup>30</sup>

The percentage of LEP students increased slightly between 2002 and 2009, similar to the state's rate of increase, but remained below statewide levels.

The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's tracking of LEP among kindergarten through 12<sup>th</sup> grade students confirms the nationwide trend that English learners demonstrate lower results on standardized tests, especially as they reach 8<sup>th</sup> grade. Students who perform at this lowest category of achievement in 8<sup>th</sup> grade are at risk of dropping out during their high school years, and it is at that grade level where English learners often begin to disappear from school attendance rolls.

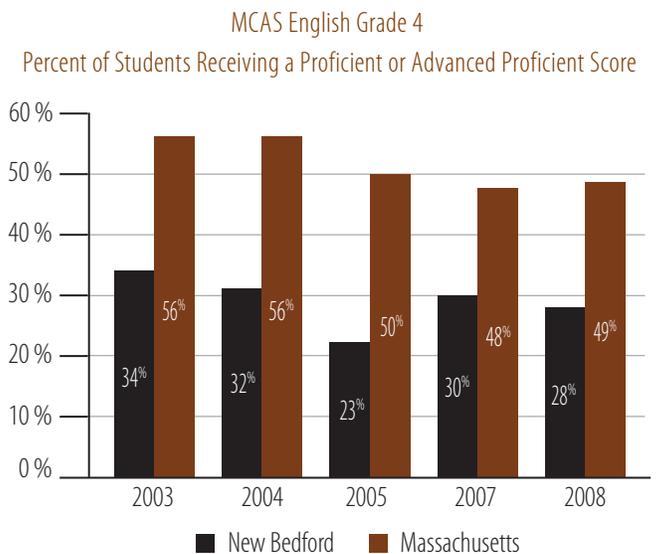
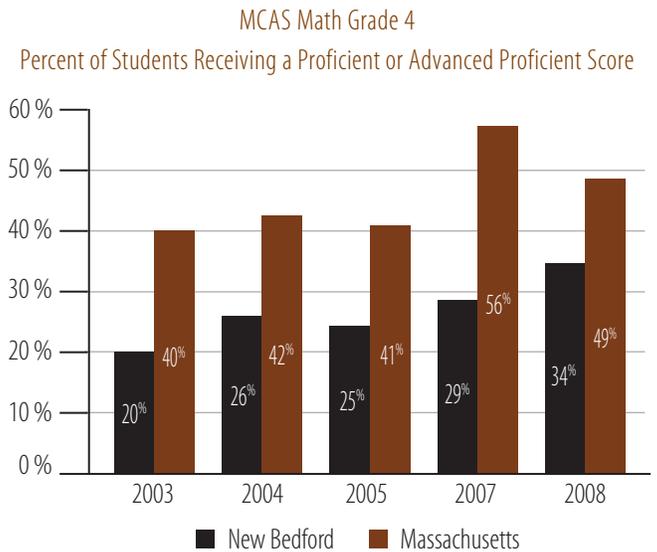


Source: Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

## MCAS scores.

**While the percentage of 4<sup>th</sup> graders who are proficient in Math and English in 2008 are well below the state average, there has been steady improvement between 2003 and 2008 in 4<sup>th</sup> grade Math and improvement, though more uneven, in 4<sup>th</sup> grade English.** There has been steady improvement on the 10<sup>th</sup> grade English and Math MCAS tests as well, although the rate of improvement has been slower over this time period.

Despite these improvements, the gap between students in New Bedford and across the state is still significant and troubling. Reading and Math proficiency is fundamental to the development of academic competencies and basic life skills. Students with poor reading skills will experience difficulty completing coursework, graduating from high school and can experience difficulty finding and maintaining employment later.



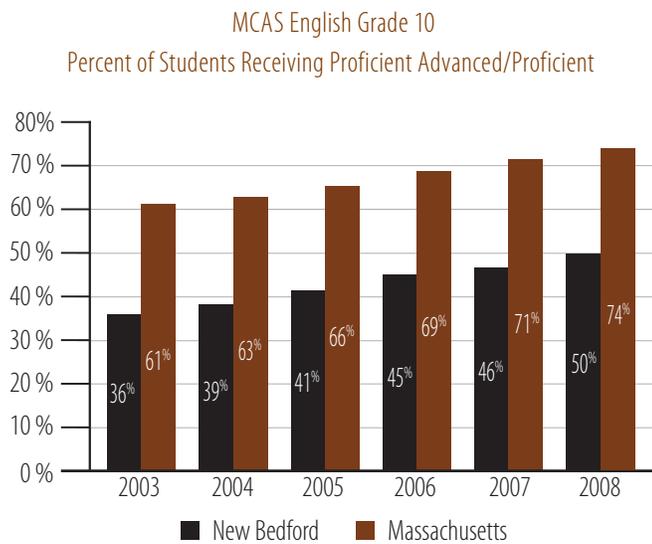
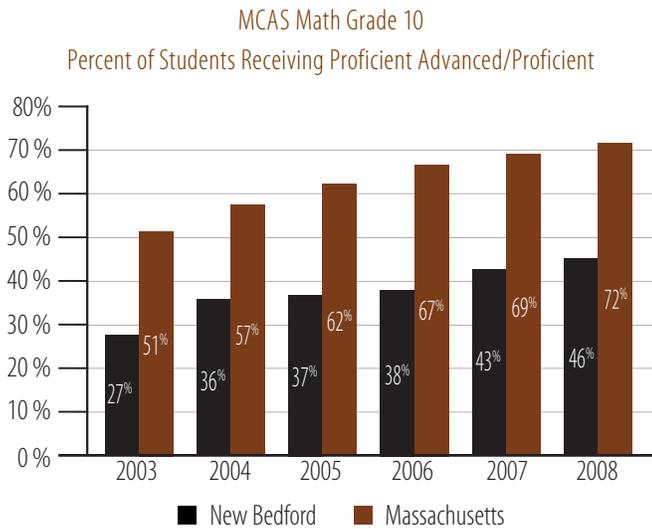
Note: 2006 data unavailable

Source: Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

## graduation rates and postsecondary enrollment.

*The New Bedford Workforce Investment Board's main priority for the past decade has been increasing the educational attainment of New Bedford's population because the economic development sector needs to show potential employers that New Bedford's workforce has a generally good education.*

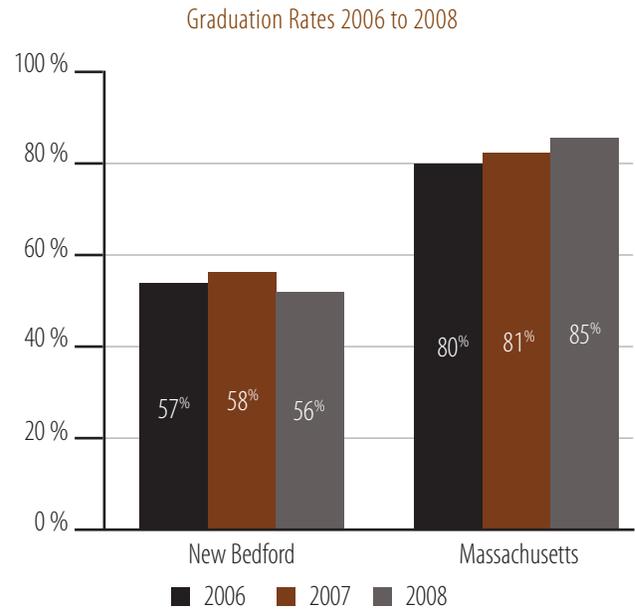
Executive Director, PACE Anti-Poverty Agency



Source: Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

### Just over half (56%) of New Bedford students graduated from high school in 2008. Statewide, graduation rates improved from 80% in 2006 to 85% in 2008.

The path to high school graduation begins early; research indicates that children who attend a high quality preschool program are more likely to graduate from high school. Repeating grades, failing one or more subjects in 9<sup>th</sup> grade, ongoing patterns of absenteeism or tardiness, suspension, poor grades, and high mobility are linked to a student's likelihood of dropping out.<sup>31</sup>



Source: Massachusetts Department of Education, Elementary and Secondary Education

**Of the population of teens and young adults ages 18 to 24 years, 26% are enrolled in postsecondary programs in New Bedford. In Massachusetts, 51% are enrolled in college or graduate school.**

#### Population 18 to 24 Enrolled in College or Graduate School

Location	Percent
New Bedford	26%
Massachusetts	51%

Source: American Community Survey 2006-2008. Table S1401

# New Bedford child safety.

Resource poor areas, such as those with high-poverty rates, have been associated with violence, poor employment prospects for parents, and high mobility into and out of an area – all characteristics which act against not only the perceived level of safety of a neighborhood, but the overall health and well-being of children. Youth living in poor neighborhoods are more likely to be arrested than those living in more affluent neighborhoods.<sup>32</sup>

## homelessness.

*A number of years ago, the state had a Gateway Cities Reclaim our Community Program that included housing development, building playgrounds and turning around neighborhoods. However, without paid organizers making a sustained effort, those efforts fell apart. There has to be a paid presence that continues efforts when volunteers fall off. We have seen some of the most diligent volunteers have problems and drop out.*

Executive Director, PACE Anti-Poverty Agency

**As of January 2009 in New Bedford, there were 35 sheltered families with 67 people; one unsheltered family with 4 people; and 11 transitional or long-term homeless families with 30 people, according to the Boston Emergency Shelter Program.**

New Bedford's PACE Child Care Works, a community organization dedicated to promoting quality childcare for low-income and poor families, works with homeless families through its voucher program. However, these families can only get these services if they are already connected to other services. "There are other homeless families that are living with friends, or in their cars, that we just don't see", says a PACE worker.

**The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education reports that in 2007, there were 577 homeless youth enrolled in New Bedford schools.**

The Department defines homelessness more broadly than the Emergency Shelter Program, which applies the HUD definition. The number includes preschoolers through 12<sup>th</sup> graders who may be in shelters, doubled-up due to economic hardship, unaccompanied youth not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian, unsheltered in cars, parks, etc., living in hotels/motels, or awaiting foster care.

Children who end up homeless may suffer twice as many ear infections, diarrhea and stomach problems, anemia, eczema, headaches, and other chronic illnesses. They go hungry at twice the rate of other children. Homeless newborns have higher rates of low birth weight and need special care after birth four times as often as other children. Homeless children are

more likely to have academic problems due to changing schools frequently. They are six times more likely to have speech and stammering problems. Nearly half have problems such as anxiety, depression or withdrawal. Over one-third manifest delinquent or aggressive behavior.<sup>33</sup>

## child abuse and neglect.

**Families who are poor are not inherently more abusive than families who are not. But a number of problems associated with poverty can contribute to child maltreatment.** The National Incidence Study of Child Abuse and Neglect found that children from families with annual incomes below \$15,000 were over 44 times more likely to experience some form of maltreatment than children from families with annual incomes above \$30,000.<sup>34</sup>

Factors such as a supportive family environment, stable family relationships, parental employment, adequate housing, and access to health care and social services lessen the risk of child abuse and maltreatment. According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, children younger than four years old are at the greatest risk for severe injury or death due to abuse or neglect.<sup>35</sup>

**New Bedford (along with Springfield, North Adams, Holyoke, Pittsfield, and Southbridge) was among the top six municipalities with the highest reporting rates of child maltreatment of all types in the state, according to the most recent data available from the Massachusetts Department of Children and Families (DCF).**

Consistent with other high reporting cities, New Bedford holds some of the highest victimization rates, i.e. children whose maltreatment was substantiated after investigation. Victimization rates for New Bedford children were nearly three times as high as the state average.

Child Maltreatment Reporting and Victimization Rates 2008

Location	Reporting Rate (per 1,000)	Victimized Children	Victimization Rate per 1,000 children under 18 years old
New Bedford	119.3	1,654	70.9
Massachusetts	52.9	36,617	24.4

Source: Massachusetts Department of Children and Family 2008 Child Maltreatment Statistics

In 2008, there were 2,415 supported allegations or reports of child maltreatment at the New Bedford DCF Area Office.

Of these:

- 94% or 2,270 involved neglect;
- 10% or 247 involved physical abuse. and
- 2% or 60 involved sexual abuse.

According to the Massachusetts Enough Abuse Campaign on child sexual abuse prevention, nationally 85% or more of sexual abuse cases are never reported to authorities. As a result, sexual abuse reports account for the smallest percentage of official maltreatment reports.

**Overall, child maltreatment in the city increased 14% from the previous year, compared to 11% statewide. Physical abuse decreased 2%, compared with a 12% increase in Massachusetts and neglect saw a 15% increase, compared to a 10% increase statewide. Sexual abuse increased 33% in New Bedford during 2007, more than double the 16% increase across the state.**  
**youth crime.**

*There needs to be more funding effort targeted to neighborhoods. There was some good work done in the South First Street neighborhood that saw*

Children with Supported Allegations: All Maltreatment January 1 to December 31, 2008

Location	# All Maltreatment	% Change 2007-2008	# Neglect	% Change 2007-2008	# Physical	% Change 2007-2008	# Sexual Abuse	% Change 2007-2008
New Bedford	2,415	14%	2,270	15%	247	-2%	60	33%
Massachusetts	41,125	11%	37,973	10%	5,167	12%	988	16%

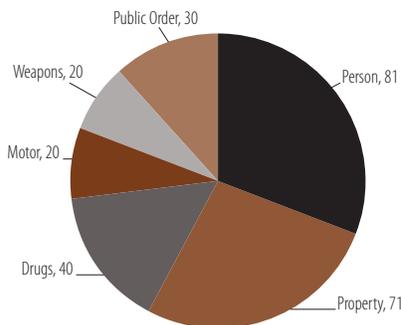
**Note:** The three types of maltreatment exceed 100% because a child may have been subjected to more than one type of abuse/neglect so the child is recorded in each category.  
**Source:** Massachusetts Department of Children and Families 2008 Child Maltreatment Statistics

*a reduction in shootings, an increase in first time home ownership and new playgrounds. Unfortunately, these kinds of problems have migrated to other parts of city.*

New Bedford Resident

**Between 2001 and 2008, violent crimes comprised 31% of juveniles in custody in New Bedford. Statewide, violent crimes comprised 37% of juvenile custodies.**

Number of New Bedford Juvenile Custodies 2001-2008



Source: Massachusetts Department of Youth Services

## New Bedford poverty programs.

*PACE is fighting to run programs with an ever-reducing budget. We've seen what community organizing can do but it has to be funded.*

Program Director, Child Care Works

**anti-poverty.**

- **People Acting in Community Endeavors, Inc. (PACE)**, is the main anti-poverty program in New Bedford and the South Coast area. Since its inception, PACE has been a consistent partner in working with local, State and Federal governments and private agencies in creating opportunities and providing hope for low-income people. PACE provides programs in the areas of early education and care, health and nutrition, education, training and workforce development, home energy assistance, housing, and social services. For example, **PACE Housing Services** program works to prevent homelessness and assists families and individuals searching for affordable housing. Other PACE programs include **Fuel Assistance, SERVE Emergency Food Bank, Health Access, Dental Sealant Clinic, Grassroots Support, The Family Center, Child Care Resource and Referral/Voucher Day Care, Massachusetts Family Network And Head Start.**

## early literacy and family literacy.

- **PACE Childcare Works** is a community service organization that works with parents, childcare providers, businesses, and community organizations to promote the availability of quality childcare services in the area. PACE Childcare Works also provides parenting education and resources, and offers childcare providers valuable training and support services to improve the quality of early education and care in New Bedford.
- In July 2008, the **Early Literacy Consortium**, a project of the **Community Foundation of Southeastern Massachusetts**, began distributing welcome bags filled with resources and literacy materials to every baby born at St. Luke's Hospital. Funded by the **Acushnet Foundation Fund** of the Community Foundation, the Early Literacy Consortium is an organization of early literacy and care providers including pediatricians and **St. Luke's Hospital, New Bedford Public Library, Buttonwood Park Zoo, the School Department** and others.
- In 2008, New Bedford was chosen as a site for one of the Family Literacy Consortium (MFLC) **Pathways to Family Success pilot programs**. Pathways to Family Success is a new consortium of community agencies in New Bedford all focused on building child, adult and family literacy. New Bedford is one of six such programs funded by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.
- **Reach Out and Read** Massachusetts hosted a **Continuing Medical Education** event at the Greater New Bedford Community Health Center in February 2009 for pediatricians, family practitioners, physician assistants and nurses.
- The **Adult Learning Center** holds its annual **Open House and Family Literacy Day** in conjunction with **Family Literacy Month**. The event provides opportunities for the children of adult students to meet students and staff, tour the facility, and participate in family literacy activities. Jason Wentworth, LiteracyWorks Entrepreneur, points to the spirit and dedication of the adult students as a reason for optimism in the City of New Bedford. *"These adult students are striving for self-reliance and self-improvement in difficult circumstances. They are a model of success and courage to the community and, most importantly, to their own children."*

- The **Coalition Against Poverty** is an advocacy organization that works to strengthen the welfare safety net and to increase opportunities for affordable housing, child care, health care, education and living wage jobs. It empowers welfare mothers and low-income working people by developing leadership through public education and action campaigns. It also works to increase voter participation and holding elected officials accountable.

## family asset building.

- The **PACE Family Center Community Foundation** features a **Youth Individual Development Account (IDA)** program component, which matches \$1,000 in savings with \$2,000. The Foundation offers **Financial Literacy Workshops, Credit Counseling, and Eviction Clinics** for people trying to keep their homes. It also works with the courts to negotiate agreements to encourage people to stay at home, enabling them to move forward.

## workforce development.

- The **Greater New Bedford Workforce Investment Board** is a business-led, policy setting board that oversees workforce development initiatives in the South Coast region. In October 2009, more than 500 business and civic leaders gathered to lend their expertise to the **Greater New Bedford Regional Vocational Technical High School** at fall meetings of the school's Program Advisory Committees.
- **Gateway Cities Coalition**. In October 2009, mayors and city managers from Massachusetts Gateway Cities, including New Bedford, urged state legislators to pass a bill that would significantly advance the economic revitalization of the state's mill communities. Calling the 11 cities the economic engines of the Massachusetts middle class, the executives strongly supported the provision of House Bill 2702 which includes several key economic development policies that reflect the agenda developed by the GCC.

## neighborhoods and housing.

- New Bedford received \$1.2 million for **housing programs and subsidies** as part of the federal stimulus package. The programs are working because they are flexible and can pay rent. They represent *"a bright light coming to New Bedford"* according to one resident.

- **Immigrants Assistance Center** helps immigrants overcome language, cultural, social and economic barriers. The Center is also a member of the **Emergency Food and Shelter Program through United Way**.
- **Community Foundation of Southeastern Massachusetts** was launched in 1995 by a group of volunteers who wanted to create a new avenue for philanthropy in the region. The Community Foundation's mission is to assess community needs, promote collaboration and raise funds that improve and protect the quality of life in the region. **New Bedford ACTS** is an all-volunteer group of residents, educators and business people working together to identify short-term and long-term solutions to violence through community dialogues. **The Southeastern Environmental Education Alliance (SEEAL)** is a coalition of 28 organizations that provides environmental educational experiences to young people in New Bedford. **The Women's Fund**, established in 2001, supports programs to develop, promote and protect women and girls. The Fund focuses on education, health, violence prevention, civil and reproductive freedom, advocacy, leadership development and economic independence.

## youth and teens.

- The **YWCA Kids School-Age Child Care Summer Program** and the **Girls Giving and Growing Summer Program** outings offer summer field trips to the New Bedford Whaling Museum, the New England Aquarium and the Boston Museum of Science.
- The **Green Brigade** is a summer jobs program that engages at-risk youth in sustainable and green projects across New Bedford, providing the participants with work readiness skills in emerging green economy. The program includes 50 qualified youth who work for seven weeks in the summer. Funding and support is provided by the **Workforce Investment Board** and **New Directions South Coast, Inc.**
- **Invest-In-Kids/Career Success (CS2)** plays a pivotal role in a variety of school/community agency collaborations, dropout prevention initiatives, partnerships with local arts and cultural institutions and joint career development initiatives with the local **Workforce Investment Board**, the **Greater New Bedford One-Step Career Center** and the **Chamber of Commerce**. New

Bedford's CS2 entrepreneurs are employed by the city's Department of Community Services. CS2 is located at **Normandin Middle School** and **New Bedford High School**. Initiatives include **Pathways to MCAS Success** for high school seniors, **Summer of Work and Learning Program**, a tutoring program with **UMass Dartmouth**, **Community Action Fair**, and a collaboration with the Superintendent's **Alternative Education Task Force** to assess alternative education pathways for underserved youth. A Youth **Advocacy Center** is being piloted, which includes academic tutoring, mentoring, job readiness, certification programs,

## child abuse.

- The **Children's Advocacy Center (CAC) of Bristol County** provides forensic evaluation and other treatment and evaluation services in response to serious cases of physical abuse and child sexual abuse.

## Ending Child Poverty in New Bedford

New Bedford service providers realize that reducing poverty will require collaborative, city-wide efforts that will engage citizens and establish poverty reduction goals. Four steps to establishing a poverty reduction initiative in New Bedford include:

- **Organize the infrastructure.** Investigate how other cities have organized a poverty task force to get the work done.
- **Establish priorities, targets, timetables and benchmarks.** Targets grab attention and provide an operational framework for reducing poverty.
- **Examine promising programs and policies.** There are innovative programs and policies in other states and cities worth adopting.
- **Engage the public.** The public attitude toward poverty is shifting. New Bedford can leverage this momentum in 2010 by providing opportunities for citizens to become engaged in reducing poverty in New Bedford.

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## children in poverty by city.

This table shows the percent of children under 18 living below the poverty level in 98 cities and towns with populations of 20,000 or more. Cities with the ten highest percentages of children living in poverty are shaded.

Percent of Children under 18 Years below Poverty Level

Location	Percent of Children in Poverty
Massachusetts	12.6
Acton	7.2
Agawam	5.4
Amherst	14.4
Andover	4
Arlington	3.4
Attleboro	7.7
Barnstable	6.1
Belmont	4.6
Beverly	11.5
Billerica	4.1
Boston	27.7
Braintree	9.4
Bridgewater	5
Brockton	15.4
Brookline	11.2
Burlington	2.2
Cambridge	18.5
Canton	1.7
Chelmsford	2.6
Chelsea	25.8
Chicopee	22
Danvers	6.9
Dartmouth	3.2
Dedham	10.8
Dracut	2.4
Easton	1.5
Everett	13.8
Fall River	26.6
Falmouth	9.7
Fitchburg	25.2
Framingham	13
Franklin	3.9

Percent of Children under 18 Years below Poverty Level

Location	Percent of Children in Poverty
Gardner	13.9
Gloucester	13.9
Haverhill	12.2
Hingham	3.9
Holyoke	43.7
Lawrence	37.4
Leominster	17.4
Lexington	2.8
Lexington	2.8
Lowell	24.2
Ludlow	3.8
Lynn	21.6
Malden	16.9
Mansfield	2.4
Marblehead	3.1
Marlborough	13.8
Marshfield	5.3
Medford	8.4
Melrose	2.1
Methuen	5.4
Middleborough	7.4
Milford	8
Milton	0.8
Natick	4
Needham	1.8
Needham	1.8
New Bedford	36.2
Newton	6.2
Northampton	15.2
North Andover	2.5
North Attleborough	3.5
Norwood	8.2
Peabody	6.5

Percent of Children under 18 Years below Poverty Level

Location	Percent of Children in Poverty
Pittsfield	21.3
Plymouth	3.9
Quincy	13.6
Randolph	3.9
Reading	1.1
Reading	1.1
Revere	13.8
Salem	8.3
Sandwich	1.7
Saugus	8.9
Shrewsbury	0.6
Somerville	22.5
Springfield	40.8
Stoneham	12.8
Stoughton	7
Taunton	18
Tewksbury	3.6
Wakefield	0.7
Walpole	2.9
Waltham	11.2
Wareham	13.1
Watertown	11.2
Wellesley	2.7
Westfield	21
Westford	1.2
West Springfield	15
Weymouth	8.8
Wilmington	3
Winchester	1.1
Winthrop	12.3
Woburn	9.8
Worcester	24.7
Yarmouth	6.8

Source: American Community Survey 2006-2008. Table GCT1704

a note about the data.

**understanding margin of error.**

All data that are based on samples, such as the American Community Survey (ACS), include a range of uncertainty or sampling variability. The degree of uncertainty for an estimate arising from sampling variability is represented through the margin of error. The Census Bureau reports the 90% confidence interval on all ACS estimates on a given range of margin of error. That is, there is a 90 percent probability that the interval defined by the ACS contains the true value. For example, in Lawrence, there are 5,660 estimated Hispanic households headed by a single female. The confidence interval in which there is 90 percent probability that the interval contains the true value, is 5,660 households + or - 576 families. Confidence intervals are not provided in this report but are available at [www.factfinder.census.gov](http://www.factfinder.census.gov).

**American Community Survey three-year estimates.**

The 2006 - 2008 ACS three-year estimates are averages of the characteristics of an area over the 36 months from January 2006 to December 2008. This report uses the ACS three-year estimates versus the ACS one-year estimate because they are based on a larger sample - 36 months rather than 12 months - and have a smaller margin of error.

credits.

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end ...

child

poverty.

# child poverty in Massachusetts:

a tale of three cities

Lawrence, New Bedford and Springfield



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