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| LOCAL COMMISSIONERS MEMORANDUM |  
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DSS-4037EL (Rev. 9/89)

Transmittal No: 92 LCM-111

Date: July 22, 1992

Division: Executive Services  
and Support

TO: Local District Commissioners

SUBJECT: Release of Additional Census Data

ATTACHMENTS: (1) Census Report No. 2 (on line), (2) State tables from STF 3 (not on line), (3) County tables from STF 3 (not on line), (4) Census Report No. 1 (not on line), (5) State tables from STF 1 (not on line), (6) County tables from STF 1 (not on line)

The Census Bureau has recently released more data for New York State from the 1990 census. This release contains some of the most relevant information for program planning at both the state and local levels, e.g., data on poverty, housing, the ability to speak English, immigration, and labor force experience.

This packet contains Census Report No.2, which presents an analysis of changes in New York State's poverty population between the 1980 and 1990 censuses. Appended to the report are 10 pages of tables with this new information: 5 for your county and 5 for New York State.

The Department will release a series of reports presenting census information. Report No.1, which is also attached for your convenience, contained state-level findings on basic demographic characteristics of the population and an overview of census terminology. The tables for your district from the first census release are appended to this report. You may want to retain these reports so that you will have a complete set of census information for your district. Future Census Reports will analyze data from the 1990 census on such topics as housing or labor force preparedness.

If you have any questions regarding these data, please call George Falco, Acting Director of the Office of Program Planning, Analysis and Development at (518) 473-7111 or Nancy Dunton at (518) 473-8548.

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Mark Lewis  
Deputy Commissioner

NEW YORK STATE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

Mary Jo Bane, Commissioner

Mark Lewis, Deputy Commissioner, Executive Services and Support

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CENSUS REPORT NO. 2:

POVERTY IN NEW YORK STATE

1979 - 1989

Analysis of Data from the 1980 and 1990

Censuses of Population and Housing:

Summary Tape Files 3A.

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Issued: July 1992

Office of Program Planning, Analysis and Development

POVERTY IN NEW YORK STATE  
1979-1989

Poverty data from the 1990 census were recently released for New York State on Summary Tape File 3 (STF3). This report presents some of the findings on poverty from that data set and compares them to comparable data from the 1980 census.

Poverty data from the 1990 census reflect 1989 economic conditions, not those in 1992. Nevertheless, these data provide an important benchmark for estimating trends in the geographic distribution and demographic characteristics of the poverty population. Moreover, they are the only data that will be available for small geographic areas (such as counties, cities, or neighborhoods) until data from the year 2000 census are released. Census data are the most reliable data source available for analyzing poverty among specific demographic groups (e.g. different age categories, racial and ethnic populations, or family compositions).

#### HOW MUCH POVERTY?

In 1989, 2,277,296 (13.0%) New Yorkers lived in families that had incomes below the poverty line. According to the Department's administrative records, 9.7% of New York's population received some form of cash public assistance during 1989.

The 1990 census data show a modest reduction in the amount of poverty in New York State between 1979 and 1989 (poverty data always refer to income received during the previous year). In 1979, 2,298,922 New Yorkers (13.4%) were poor. This amounted to less than a 1% reduction in the number of people in poverty and a 3% reduction in the poverty rate. The decline in poverty reflected the effects of the economic boom during the second half of the 1980s.

Unfortunately, for the Department's planning needs, the data do not portray the effects of the recent, and continuing, recession. An analysis of another data set, the Current Population Survey, shows that between 1989 and 1990, the poverty rate in New York State increased by 1.7 percentage points -- more than four times the amount of the decline that occurred during the 1980s. In 1990, New York City's poverty rates were among the highest ever recorded there. Given the continuing rise in public assistance caseloads, it is reasonable to expect that when the 1991 data are released, they will show another increase in poverty for New York State.

#### CHARACTERISTICS OF THE POOR

The decline in poverty between 1979 and 1989 occurred for many, but not all, demographic groups. Table 1 presents the change in the number of persons and families in poverty between 1979 and 1989. The number of poor may change because the size of the total population changed. To control, or account, for this, poverty rates are presented in Table 2. Poverty rates portray the different chances of being poor that are experienced by various population groups.

## Age

Most (53.2%) of the poor were working-age adults. While the number of working-age poor increased during the 1980s, the total population in this age range increased at an even faster pace. Thus, the percentage of working-age adults who were poor (i.e., their poverty rate) declined between 1979 and 1989.

The number of elderly who were poor increased by 12.7% between 1979 and 1989. This was the largest percentage increase among all of the age groups. In fact, the growth in the number of elderly poor exceeded the rate of increase in the total elderly population. As a result, the poverty rate for the elderly increased during the 1980s. This was the only age group to experience an increased risk of being in poverty.

The number of New York State children who were poor declined by more than 77,000 during the 1980s. The child poverty rate fell, as well. Nevertheless, children remained significantly more likely to be poor than people in other age groups. Children under the age of five continued to have higher poverty rates (20.6%) than children aged five through 17 (18.3%).

## Race/Ethnicity

In 1989, approximately half of the poor population was white. (Some of the whites were also Latino.<sup>1</sup>) Whites, however, had the lowest poverty rate (8.7%) and were the only racial group to experience a decline both in the number of poor and in the poverty rate during the 1980s.

Except for whites, the number of poor persons in each race/ethnicity category increased between 1979 and 1989. Some of these increases appear quite significant. This was due, at least in part, to the growth in the total population in each of these categories. In fact, total population figures show that the number of African Americans in New York State increased by 19% between 1980 and 1990; Native Americans, Eskimos, and Aleuts increased by 58%; and Asian and Pacific Islanders increased by 123%. The number of Latinos increased by 33%. These increases were not only due to births and immigration, but also to the propensity of persons to identify themselves on census questionnaires as belonging to a particular racial/ethnic category. On the other hand, the number of whites in the total population declined by 4% during the 1980s.

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<sup>1</sup>The census form asks people to select a racial identification and to report whether or not they are of Hispanic origin (called Latino here). Thus, all individuals will have a racial and a Latino identifier. Poverty data currently available from the census do not allow the merging of these questions so that poverty rates can be reported for non-Latino whites, non-Latino African Americans, Latinos, and others. Thus, in Tables 1 and 2, poverty rates are presented for persons in four racial categories, and for persons who said they were of Latino origin.

The poverty rates for most racial/ethnic groups declined during the 1980s. The African American rate declined the most, by 3.3 percentage points. On the other hand, Asian and Pacific Islanders were the only group for which poverty rates increased during the 1980s (by 1.1 percentage points). However, this group still had the second lowest poverty rate (14.5%). The 1989 poverty rates for African Americans and Native Americans were approximately equal, with one out of four persons living in poverty. This was nearly three times the white poverty rate. Latinos had the highest poverty rate at 30.5%, three and one-half times the white rate.

#### Family Composition

In 1989, 10.0% of all New York State families (or 454,872 families) were living below the poverty line, down from 10.8% in 1979. The number of families in poverty declined for all types of families between 1979 and 1989.<sup>2</sup> The number of poor families with children declined by a larger percentage (7.0%) than the number of poor families without children (1.5%). The number of poor families maintained by a male declined by 12.7%, while the number of poor families maintained by a single female declined by just 0.6%.

In 1989, approximately 80% of all poor families contained children; 42% contained children under the age of five. Sixty percent of all poor families were maintained by single females, while 40% were maintained by males.

The risk of being in poverty, or poverty rates, also declined for all family types. However, poverty rates declined about three times as fast for male householders (-35.5%) as for single female householders (-12.0%).

In 1989, families with children were nearly four times more likely to be poor (15.8%) than families without children (4.2%). Families with children under the age of five were the most likely to be poor (19.2%). Families maintained by a single female were about six times more likely to be poor (30.1%) than families maintained by a male (5.1%). The highest likelihood of poverty was found among families with young children maintained by a single female: 57.2% were poor.

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<sup>2</sup> Families can be categorized according to a number of dimensions. Tables 1 and 2 present information for families with and without children under the age of 18, and, for those with children, for families with children under the age of five. Poverty figures are also presented for families maintained by females without a spouse present and by males, regardless of whether there was a spouse present. Thus, according to this categorization, female householders with children are single mothers, while male householders with children may be either married or single.

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As was the case in 1979, the state's highest 1989 poverty rate was in the Bronx (28.7%). Four other counties had poverty rates at or near the 20% level: Kings/Brooklyn (22.7%), St. Lawrence (20.8%), New York/Manhattan (20.5%), and Tompkins (18.9%). Four of the next five poorest counties were along the Southern Tier: Allegany (14.8%), Cattaraugus (14.0%), Chautauqua (13.8%), and Steuben (13.5%). The remaining county among the top ten poorest counties was Otsego (13.9%).

On the other hand, five of the ten least poor counties were in New York City's suburban ring: Putnam (3.6%), Nassau (3.7%), Suffolk (4.7%), Rockland (6.4%), and Westchester (6.8%). The tenth-ranking least poor county was Richmond/Staten Island (7.8%). Two more counties in the least poor ten were in the Hudson Valley: Dutchess (5.4%) and Saratoga (5.9%). The last two of the ten counties with the lowest poverty rates were Genesee (7.3%) and Ontario (7.4%).

Of the state's 62 counties, 40 experienced declines in poverty rates during the 1980s, while 22 had increases. Counties with the biggest declines generally had quite moderate poverty rates in 1979. The five counties with the biggest declines in poverty rates were: Hamilton, Madison, Saratoga, Warren, and Washington. Four of these counties are contiguous. There were also notable declines in poverty in Cortland, Dutchess, Green, Nassau, and Ulster counties.

The biggest increases in poverty rates during the decade occurred along the western edge of the state (Chautauqua, Erie, and Niagara counties). There were also large increases in Monroe, Tompkins, and Broome counties, and in Seneca and St. Lawrence counties. None of the major increases in poverty rates occurred in the Hudson Valley or New York City metropolitan areas.

## DISCUSSION

While the state as a whole experienced a modest decline in poverty between 1979 and 1989, specific subpopulations and geographic areas showed the greatest improvements in poverty rates. These groups included young children and their families, families maintained by male householders, and African American persons. Geographically, some of the greatest reductions in poverty rates occurred in the Glens Falls and southern Hudson Valley areas.

Despite the overall trend toward improvement in the poverty situation, some subpopulations showed increases in the odds of being poor. These groups included the elderly and Asian and Pacific Islanders. Areas of the state showing increases in poverty rates were concentrated along the western edge of the state and the Southern Tier.

More recent analyses of New York State's poverty populations can be conducted using successive Current Population Surveys. Such analyses are underway and will be available shortly. Moreover, the Department is investigating the feasibility of generating annual estimates of poverty populations for counties, since the next information for those areas will not be available until after the turn of the century.

TABLE 1  
 SELECTED POVERTY POPULATIONS  
 New York State  
 1979 - 1989

	1979	1989	Change	% Change
All Persons	2,298,922	2,277,296	-21,626	-0.9%
<u>Age</u>				
<5	252,287	251,862	-425	-0.2
5-17	624,641	547,669	-76,972	-12.3
<18	876,928	799,531	-77,397	-8.8
18-64	1,186,164	1,211,902	25,738	2.2
65+	235,830	265,863	30,033	12.7
<u>Race/Ethnicity</u>				
White	1,284,523	1,136,871	147,652	-11.5
African American	662,779	685,113	22,334	3.4
Native American	10,542	13,404	2,862	27.1
Asian/Pac. Isl.	43,412	97,718	54,306	125.1
Latino	540,909	638,530	97,621	18.0
Families	483,340	454,872	-28,468	-5.9%
Without Children	96,161	94,710	-1,451	-1.5
With Children	387,179	360,162	-27,017	-7.0
With Children <5	189,909	189,066	-843	-0.4
<u>Male Householder</u>				
With Children	209,924	183,191	-26,733	-12.7
With Children <5	139,386	120,122	-19,264	-13.8
	n.a.	65,008		
<u>Female Householder</u>				
With Children	273,416	271,681	-1,735	-0.6
With Children <5	247,793	240,040	-7,753	-3.1
	n.a.	124,058		

Source: 1980 and 1990 Censuses of Population, Summary Tape Files 3A.

TABLE 2

SELECTED POVERTY RATES  
New York State  
1979 - 1989

	1979	1989	Change	% Change
Persons	13.4%	13.0%	-0.4	-3.0%
<u>Age</u>				
<5	22.6	20.6	-1.9	-8.4
5-17	17.9	18.3	0.4	2.2
<18	19.0	18.6	-0.4	-2.1
18-64	11.3	11.0	-0.3	-2.7
65+	11.6	11.9	0.3	2.6
<u>Race/Ethnicity</u>				
White	9.4	8.7	-0.7	-7.4
African American	28.3	25.0	-3.3	-11.7
Native American	24.6	23.5	-1.1	-4.5
Asian/Pac. Isl.	13.4	14.5	1.1	8.2
Latino	33.1	30.5	-2.6	-7.6
Families	10.8	10.0	-0.8	-7.4%
Without Children	4.6	4.2	-0.4	-8.7
With Children	16.4	15.8	-0.6	-3.7
With Children <5	21.4	19.2	-2.2	-10.3
<u>Male Householder</u>	7.9	5.1	-2.8	-35.5
With Children	7.6	7.0	-0.6	-7.9
With Children <5	n.a.	8.5		
<u>Female Householder</u>	34.2	30.1	-4.1	-12.0
With Children	47.8	43.4	-4.4	-9.2
With Children <5	n.a.	57.2		

Source: 1980 and 1990 Censuses of Population, Summary Tape Files 3A.

TABLE 3

RATIO OF INCOME TO POVERTY LEVEL  
New York State - Persons  
1989

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Ratio	Number	Percent	Cummulative Percent
<.50	1,109,501	6.3%	6.3%
.50 - .74	558,722	3.2	9.5
.75 - .99	609,073	3.5	13.0
1.00 - 1.24	636,381	3.6	16.6
1.25 - 1.49	599,131	3.4	20.9
1.50 - 1.75	685,424	3.9	23.9
1.75 - 1.84	260,155	1.5	25.4
1.85 - 1.99	411,856	2.4	27.8
2.00+	12,611,519	72.1	99.9
Total	17,481,762	100.0	100.0

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Source: 1990 Census of Population, Summary Tape File 3A.

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TABLE 4

PERSONS IN POVERTY  
BY COUNTY  
New York State  
1979 - 1989

County	1979	1989	Change	% Change
New York State	2,298,922	2,277,296	-21,626	-0.9%
New York City	1,391,181	1,384,994	-6,187	-0.4
Albany	27,972	27,031	-941	-3.4
Allegany	7,030	6,726	-304	-4.3
Bronx	315,371	334,137	18,766	6.0
Broome	18,071	21,530	3,459	19.1
Cattaraugus	11,156	11,394	238	2.1
Cayuga	8,645	7,932	-713	-8.2
Chautauqua	15,911	18,818	2,907	18.3
Chemung	10,354	10,247	-107	-1.0
Chenango	5,984	5,942	-42	-0.7
Clinton	9,743	10,294	551	5.7
Columbia	6,108	5,835	-273	-4.5
Cortland	6,651	5,810	-841	-12.6
Delaware	6,303	5,768	-535	-8.5
Dutchess	16,801	12,997	-3,804	-22.6
Erie	105,664	115,613	9,949	9.4
Essex	4,760	4,263	-497	-10.4
Franklin	7,224	7,354	130	1.8
Fulton	6,397	6,889	492	7.7
Genesee	5,346	4,300	-1,046	-19.6
Green	4,656	4,081	-575	-12.3
Hamilton	650	450	-200	-30.8
Herkimer	8,512	8,453	-59	-0.7
Jefferson	11,924	12,252	328	2.8
Kings	530,106	514,163	-15,943	-3.0
Lewis	3,256	3,495	239	7.3
Livingston	5,310	4,826	-484	-9.1
Madison	7,532	5,872	-1,660	-22.0
Monroe	59,998	71,734	11,736	19.6
Montgomery	5,545	5,990	445	8.0
Nassau	62,249	47,192	-15,057	-24.2
New York	305,575	297,617	-7,958	-2.6
Niagra	19,760	23,276	3,516	17.8
Oneida	26,714	28,203	1,489	5.6
Onondaga	43,060	46,462	3,402	7.9
Ontario	6,768	6,784	16	0.2
Orange	24,867	27,471	2,604	10.5
Orleans	3,707	3,821	114	3.1
Oswego	13,335	13,614	279	2.1
Otsego	8,228	7,758	-470	-5.7
Putnam	3,169	3,045	-124	-3.9
Queens	212,558	210,057	-2,501	-1.2

TABLE 5

POVERTY RATES - PERSONS  
BY COUNTY  
New York State  
1979 - 1989

County	1979	1989	Change	% Change
New York State	13.4%	13.0%	-0.4	-3.0%
New York City	20.0	19.3	-0.7	-3.5
Albany	10.2	9.7	-0.5	-4.9
Allegany	15.0	14.8	-0.2	-1.3
Bronx	27.6	28.7	1.1	4.0
Broome	8.8	10.5	1.7	19.3
Cattaragus	13.5	14.0	0.5	3.7
Cayuga	11.3	10.2	-1.1	-9.7
Chautauqua	11.2	13.8	2.6	23.2
Chemung	11.0	11.4	0.4	3.6
Chenango	12.3	11.7	-0.6	-4.9
Clinton	13.3	13.2	-0.1	-0.1
Columbia	10.5	9.6	-0.9	-8.6
Cortland	14.7	12.7	-2.0	-13.6
Delaware	14.1	12.8	-1.3	-9.2
Dutchess	7.3	5.4	-1.9	-26.0
Erie	10.6	12.2	1.6	15.1
Essex	13.4	12.3	-1.1	-8.2
Franklin	16.7	17.1	0.4	2.4
Fulton	11.8	13.0	1.2	10.4
Genesee	9.1	7.3	-1.8	-19.8
Green	11.7	9.7	-2.0	-17.1
Hamilton	13.0	8.7	-4.3	-33.1
Herkimer	12.9	13.1	0.2	1.6
Jefferson	13.7	11.8	-1.9	-13.9
Kings	24.0	22.7	-1.3	-5.4
Lewis	13.2	13.3	0.1	0.1
Livingston	10.1	8.5	-1.6	-15.8
Madison	12.4	9.2	-3.2	-25.8
Monroe	8.8	10.4	1.6	18.2
Montgomery	10.5	11.8	1.3	12.4
Nassau	4.8	3.7	-1.1	-22.9
New York	21.8	20.5	-1.3	-6.0
Niagra	8.8	10.7	1.9	21.6
Oneida	11.0	11.9	0.9	8.2
Onondaga	9.6	10.3	0.7	9.1
Ontario	7.9	7.4	-0.5	-6.3
Orange	10.0	9.3	-0.7	-7.0
Orleans	9.8	9.7	-0.1	-1.0
Oswego	12.3	11.7	-0.6	-4.9
Otsego	15.3	13.9	-1.4	-9.2
Putnam	4.1	3.6	-0.5	-12.2
Queens	11.4	10.9	-0.5	-4.4

County	1979	1989	Change	% Change
Rensselaer	11.2	9.3	-1.9	-17.0
Richmond	8.2	7.8	-0.4	-4.9
Rockland	6.2	6.4	0.2	3.2
St.Lawrence	17.2	20.8	3.6	20.9
Saratoga	8.0	5.9	-2.1	-26.3
Schenectady	8.7	8.3	-0.4	-4.6
Schoharie	13.3	11.5	-1.8	-13.5
Schuyler	10.6	11.2	0.6	5.7
Seneca	8.5	10.4	1.9	22.4
Steuben	12.2	13.5	1.3	10.7
Suffolk	6.6	4.7	-1.9	-25.8
Sullivan	15.1	13.4	-1.7	-11.3
Tioga	8.7	9.3	0.6	6.9
Tompkins	17.0	18.9	1.9	11.2
Ulster	11.2	8.6	-3.2	-28.6
Warren	12.7	9.6	-2.9	-23.2
Washington	12.5	9.6	-2.9	-23.6
Wayne	8.8	8.3	-0.5	-5.7
Westchester	7.1	6.8	-0.3	-4.2
Wyoming	9.4	8.5	-0.9	-9.6
Yates	14.4	13.4	-1.0	-6.9

Source: 1989 and 1990 Censuses of Population, Summary Tape Files 3A.