



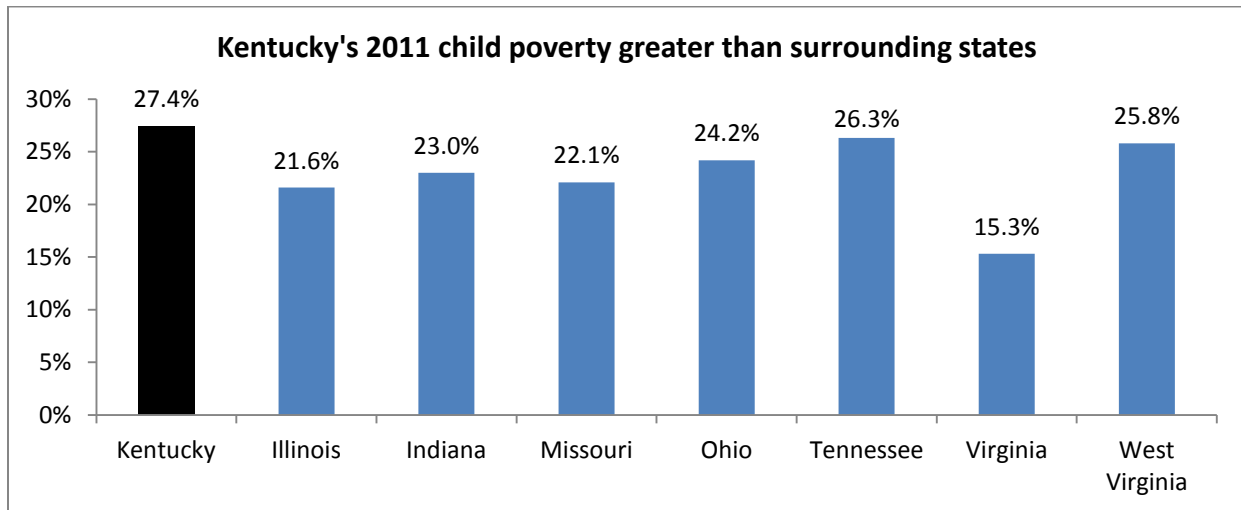
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### Child Poverty in Kentucky Remains High

More than One in Four Children Living in Poverty, and Median Household Income Falling

**Jeffersontown, KY** – More than one in four children in Kentucky are now living in poverty, according to new Census Bureau data from the American Community Survey, released today. Child poverty in Kentucky increased to 27.4 percent in 2011 from 23.5 percent in 2008 just when the recession started, bringing the total number of children who live in families with incomes below \$22,350 a year for a family of four to 275,394.



Source: US Census Bureau, 2011 American Community Survey

These sustained levels of high poverty come after several years of continued economic hardship for families across Kentucky. Not only did child poverty remain high, but total poverty rose from 17.3 percent in 2008 to 19.1 percent in 2011, bringing the Commonwealth into a tie for 46th place compared to other states and the District of Columbia. This fresh evidence tells the story about the lasting impacts

of the recession. Kentucky families are still struggling and this election season is a perfect time for policymakers to articulate their plans for addressing poverty.

“This report again makes me wonder when the core needs of children will become a priority for our leaders in Frankfort. When will kids compete with business and coal and horses? For Kentucky to have a strong future, we must support our vulnerable children and families now – ensuring that parents are able to meet their children’s basic needs,” said Terry Brooks, executive director of Kentucky Youth Advocates. “There are proven ways to lift families up and build a stronger middle class. We can do this by working to increase the ease of access to public benefits, and to enact a state Earned Income Tax Credit.”

In addition to the increase in poverty, the median household income for Kentuckians has decreased since 2008. Median household income has fallen to \$41,141 from \$43,232 in 2008. Even as the nation recovers from the recession, it is clear that families are not earning what they used to, and many are not making ends meet. It is imperative that services and programs meant to help working families are preserved.

“We can invest in strong public structures, like health care, education and job-training programs, and help families attain the stability and security that comes with good jobs and financial security. Or, we can continue to ignore poverty and its pervasive hold on this state and on this country and let thousands of Kentucky children and families fall through the cracks,” said Brooks. “Kentucky advocates and policymakers have serious issues to face in the next year, including how to help low-income, working families make ends meet.”

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***Kentucky Youth Advocates** is a non-partisan, non-profit children's advocacy organization. KYA represents a voice for Kentucky's most precious asset – its youth. We believe that Kentucky's youth deserve the opportunities and resources necessary to ensure their productive development and health.*