

# CHILD POVERTY

## What does this indicator measure?

*Child Poverty* measures the percentage of Connecticut children under ages 6 and 18 living below 100% and 200% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL).

## Why is this indicator important?

The United States has the highest child poverty rate of the 17 wealthiest industrialized nations. Between 2001 and 2002, the overall U.S. poverty rate rose from 11.7% to 12.1%. The poverty rate for children stayed at 16.7% during that same period. However, the number of children in poverty increased from 11.7 million to 12.1 million.<sup>1</sup>

Children who live in poverty have a greater likelihood of experiencing many obstacles throughout their lives. They are at an increased risk for health problems such as asthma, anemia, and poor nutrition. Their physical development may be impaired or delayed. These children may have higher rates of involvement in smoking and early sexual activity.<sup>2</sup>

Children in poverty are at greater risk for social and emotional problems. They score below their peers on cognitive and overall school achievement

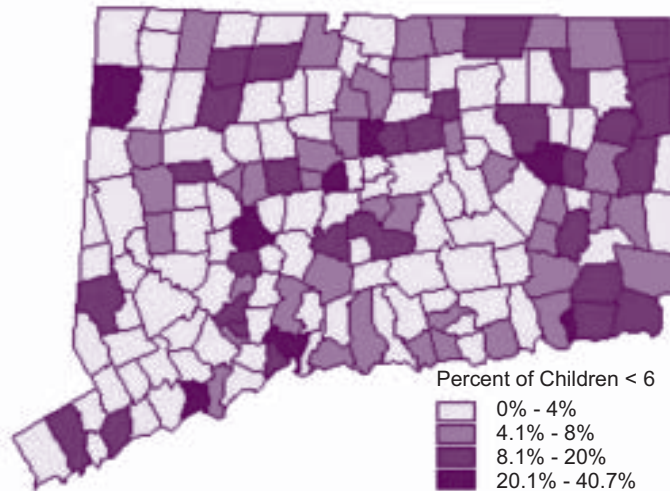
tests and are at greater risk of dropping out of high school. These obstacles can continue into adulthood. Children who experience poverty are more likely to be poor as adults and to earn lower wages than their peers.<sup>3</sup>

## Child Poverty and Family Economic Security

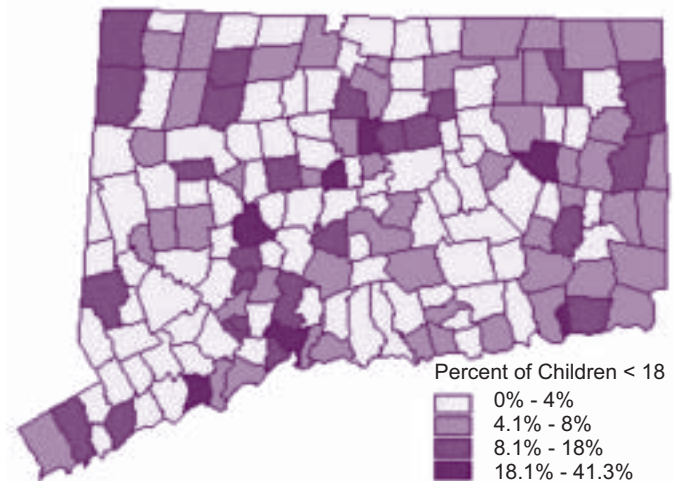
It is important to note that the Census uses the federal poverty threshold to measure poverty in the United States. However, research, including the Connecticut Self-Sufficiency Standard, shows that it takes at least twice the poverty level to provide families with the basic necessities, such as food, housing, and health care. The Self-Sufficiency Standard, developed in 1998 by Diana Pearce of the University of Washington, calculates how much money Connecticut adults needed in 1998 to meet their basic needs without subsidies of any kind. The standard takes into account family size, composition, age of children, regional differences in costs, net effect of taxes and tax credits. The Self-Sufficiency Standard is becoming an effective instrument used to shape public policies and programs for low-income people.

There are many “trigger” events that can precipitate a family’s fall into poverty or their rise above it. The birth of a child, divorce, loss of a job, or a chronic illness can cause a sudden and sustained decline in income. Changes in governmental policy as well as local-level economic conditions can affect job availability and wages.

Children < 6 Living Below 100% of FPL  
Census 2000



Children < 18 Living Below 100% of FPL  
Census 2000



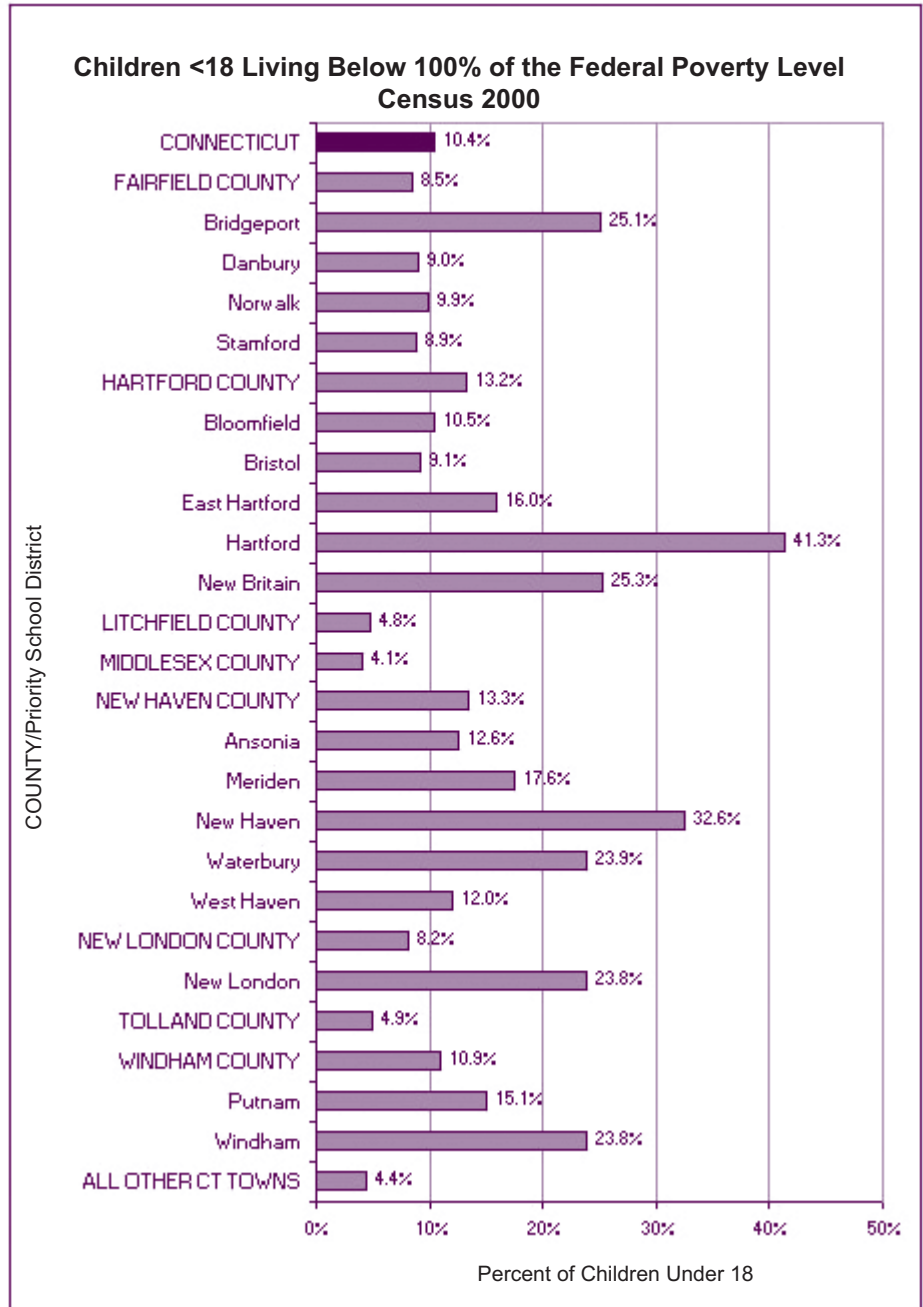
Similarly, a rise in earning potential due to educational advancement, access to employer-sponsored health insurance, or eligibility for government programs such as the Earned Income Tax Credit or the Care 4 Kids child care subsidy program can raise a family above the poverty level.

**How are Connecticut children and families faring?**

In Connecticut, the child poverty rate rose from 10% in 1999 to 11% in 2002.<sup>4</sup> However, these figures do not tell the whole story. Cities such as Bridgeport, New Britain, Waterbury, New London, and Windham had child poverty rates over 20%. In New Haven, 32% of children lived in poverty, and in Hartford, 41%. These numbers stand in stark contrast to Connecticut’s classification as the “richest state” in the country. Indeed, there are great socio-economic disparities between the most affluent towns and the poorest cities in Connecticut. For instance, according to the 2000 Census, several Connecticut towns had no children living below the federal poverty level. These towns are Bethlehem, Chester, Lyme, Marlborough, New Hartford, and Killingworth.

**What can be done: Eliminating child poverty**

Historically, financial support for the health, well-being, and early education of children in the United States has been largely dependent on parental resources, unlike our counterparts in the rest of the world. In France, the Netherlands, and Sweden, to name just a few, the tax system funds a portion of the cost of paid parental leave, universal health care, and some or all of the early childhood education system, with the belief that these programs benefit far more of society than the immediate recipients. While in some cases the programs are means-tested either fully or under certain conditions or ages of the child, the programs are still accepted as important social components. Despite economic highs and lows, the programs in some form have been maintained. Until we come to see the importance of optimizing developmental outcomes for all children, our child poverty rate will continue to be one of the highest in the developed world, and its negative impact on the life of a significant number of our families will continue to be with us.



### Child Poverty - Census 2000

Location	< 18 Years			< 6 Years			Location	< 18 Years			< 6 Years		
	Total	<100% FPL	<200% FPL	Total	<100% FPL	<200% FPL		Total	<100% FPL	<200% FPL	Total	<100% FPL	<200% FPL
<b>Fairfield County</b>	223,382	8.5%	20.4%	75,757	8.5%	20.4%							
Bethel	4,899	1.3%	8.3%	1,477	1.4%	12.1%	Norwalk	18,031	9.9%	26.1%	6,481	8.7%	25.2%
Bridgeport	38,649	25.1%	51.4%	13,109	25.5%	52.1%	Redding	2,369	2.1%	7.7%	707	1.4%	7.8%
Brookfield	4,262	2.6%	5.8%	1,205	2.2%	6.2%	Ridgefield	7,228	1.7%	5.5%	2,291	2.3%	7.1%
Danbury	15,918	9.0%	26.2%	5,816	8.3%	23.9%	Shelton	8,854	3.4%	11.3%	2,827	3.8%	12.3%
Darien	6,337	1.8%	4.6%	2,380	2.0%	4.3%	Sherman	1,010	2.1%	8.0%	292	1.4%	4.5%
Easton	2,076	2.0%	6.8%	680	1.9%	3.7%	Stamford	25,524	8.9%	26.0%	9,295	9.7%	25.3%
Fairfield	13,476	3.0%	7.6%	4,886	1.7%	6.6%	Stratford	11,400	5.8%	17.8%	3,465	6.0%	16.0%
Greenwich	15,419	4.2%	10.3%	5,280	3.9%	9.7%	Trumbull	8,896	2.4%	5.1%	2,790	2.9%	5.1%
Monroe	5,561	2.7%	9.2%	1,890	3.7%	12.2%	Weston	3,334	1.6%	3.3%	1,119	0.8%	1.7%
New Canaan	6,026	2.2%	5.5%	1,907	2.4%	4.7%	Westport	7,115	2.9%	6.1%	2,310	1.7%	3.3%
New Fairfield	4,143	1.5%	6.1%	1,412	2.2%	7.7%	Wilton	5,553	2.1%	4.4%	1,736	1.9%	5.8%
Newtown	7,302	3.3%	7.2%	2,402	2.4%	5.5%							
<b>Hartford County</b>	207,321	13.2%	27.7%	65,083	13.9%	29.8%							
Avon	4,101	1.3%	7.0%	1,170	0.0%	5.9%	Manchester	12,276	11.6%	27.2%	4,065	11.7%	29.0%
Berlin	4,455	1.2%	5.5%	1,305	0.8%	4.3%	Marlborough	1,521	0.0%	6.3%	520	0.0%	6.7%
Bloomfield	3,996	10.5%	22.4%	1,169	8.0%	19.0%	New Britain	16,854	25.3%	50.8%	5,230	25.7%	52.2%
Bristol	13,691	9.1%	24.7%	4,462	8.3%	27.4%	Newington	5,879	3.8%	11.5%	1,883	3.3%	10.6%
Burlington	2,311	0.9%	6.6%	736	0.8%	8.7%	Plainville	3,597	5.0%	14.8%	1,016	7.4%	19.5%
Canton	2,208	3.2%	10.0%	677	3.1%	8.1%	Rocky Hill	3,486	2.5%	10.1%	1,078	3.2%	14.9%
East Granby	1,246	0.6%	8.1%	382	2.1%	8.6%	Simsbury	6,789	1.6%	3.8%	2,009	1.7%	3.7%
East Hartford	11,848	16.0%	36.5%	3,840	18.0%	41.6%	Southington	9,367	3.3%	11.8%	2,903	3.2%	12.0%
East Windsor	2,129	3.1%	15.7%	642	5.3%	19.3%	South Windsor	6,618	0.8%	4.1%	1,870	1.0%	4.2%
Enfield	10,110	3.8%	19.1%	3,061	5.5%	19.4%	Suffield	2,986	3.0%	8.3%	881	3.1%	8.2%
Farmington	5,670	3.2%	8.8%	1,668	4.3%	10.0%	West Hartford	13,829	4.7%	12.9%	4,376	5.2%	11.8%
Glastonbury	8,507	1.9%	8.7%	2,739	2.4%	8.5%	Wethersfield	5,220	4.5%	13.1%	1,595	2.8%	13.9%
Granby	2,774	4.2%	11.2%	853	7.3%	12.9%	Windsor	6,850	4.4%	11.7%	2,065	5.1%	13.8%
Hartford	35,624	41.3%	69.3%	11,923	40.7%	71.6%	Windsor Locks	2,836	5.2%	17.9%	835	3.7%	22.0%
Hartland	543	0.6%	15.3%	130	0.0%	14.6%							
<b>Litchfield County</b>	43,866	4.8%	15.2%	12,773	5.0%	15.1%							
Barkhamsted	871	5.2%	16.0%	215	10.7%	26.5%	Norfolk	396	5.6%	21.5%	125	6.4%	24.8%
Bethlehem	835	0.0%	5.0%	224	0.0%	4.9%	North Canaan	770	3.1%	29.6%	211	0.0%	19.0%
Bridgewater	402	5.5%	9.0%	96	0.0%	2.1%	Plymouth	2,945	3.2%	14.5%	873	5.3%	18.9%
Canaan	250	5.6%	22.8%	77	1.3%	11.7%	Roxbury	486	4.1%	14.2%	127	7.1%	15.0%
Colebrook	357	0.6%	14.8%	120	0.0%	19.2%	Salisbury	831	11.7%	29.7%	203	3.0%	19.2%
Cornwall	337	3.0%	11.0%	85	2.4%	11.8%	Sharon	635	10.4%	16.9%	134	29.9%	29.9%
Goshen	612	4.6%	8.7%	169	3.0%	6.5%	Thomaston	1,881	5.8%	17.1%	573	8.0%	16.1%
Harwinton	1,316	0.7%	5.3%	334	0.0%	10.8%	Torrington	7,988	8.8%	25.0%	2,462	9.1%	24.6%
Kent	648	0.9%	15.1%	210	0.0%	13.3%	Warren	286	6.3%	12.6%	81	6.2%	13.6%
Litchfield	1,970	2.6%	11.6%	509	0.6%	12.6%	Washingtown	795	2.9%	8.1%	163	7.4%	9.8%
Morris	562	11.4%	18.5%	154	16.2%	16.2%	Watertown	5,248	1.0%	10.6%	1,523	2.3%	8.9%
New Hartford	1,630	0.0%	4.5%	453	0.0%	2.4%	Winchester	2,437	10.7%	25.2%	725	11.7%	25.9%
New Milford	7,276	3.2%	9.4%	2,304	2.3%	9.6%	Woodbury	2,102	5.2%	12.2%	623	2.7%	6.9%
<b>Middlesex Co.</b>	35,051	4.1%	13.6%	11,503	4.7%	14.5%							
Chester	826	0.0%	11.3%	289	0.0%	10.7%	East Hampton	2,773	2.7%	13.7%	870	0.0%	10.2%
Clinton	3,233	5.2%	10.0%	1,032	6.6%	10.9%	Essex	1,351	1.0%	2.7%	476	2.9%	2.9%
Cromwell	2,697	3.9%	9.0%	791	6.1%	8.1%	Haddam	1,764	4.6%	4.9%	490	3.5%	3.5%
Deep River	1,095	4.7%	16.8%	307	7.2%	23.8%	Killingworth	1,616	0.0%	4.2%	492	0.0%	10.0%
Durham	1,809	0.4%	5.8%	576	0.0%	3.5%	Middlefield	1,027	0.8%	9.4%	268	3.0%	20.5%
East Haddam	2,026	2.1%	13.5%	665	1.2%	11.0%	Middletown	9,042	7.7%	23.3%	3,336	8.2%	23.4%

Child Poverty - Census 2000													
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<b>Middlesex Co. contd.</b>													
Old Saybrook	2,208	1.9%	13.9%	706	0.0%	11.9%	Westbrook	1,375	4.1%	14.3%	465	8.0%	21.1%
Portland	2,209	4.8%	12.7%	740	5.5%	14.9%							
<b>New Haven Co.</b>													
Ansonia	4,478	12.6%	33.1%	1,436	13.6%	34.7%	New Haven	30,577	32.6%	59.1%	9,882	33.7%	61.5%
Beacon Falls	1,292	9.8%	16.1%	412	6.8%	12.1%	North Branford	3,565	1.2%	13.2%	1,052	0.0%	4.8%
Bethany	1,382	4.1%	13.2%	421	2.1%	12.4%	North Haven	5,107	2.1%	10.6%	1,467	3.2%	10.0%
Branford	5,845	4.6%	14.7%	1,785	4.8%	13.8%	Orange	3,255	1.9%	5.0%	993	0.0%	1.6%
Cheshire	6,982	2.7%	5.4%	2,076	2.1%	4.3%	Oxford	2,667	3.0%	9.0%	790	0.6%	5.8%
Derby	2,676	10.1%	20.6%	917	5.1%	14.5%	Prospect	2,127	0.8%	2.4%	642	0.0%	1.4%
East Haven	6,178	5.3%	18.5%	1,799	3.8%	16.8%	Seymour	3,708	5.6%	16.9%	1,116	8.8%	14.8%
Guilford	5,411	3.7%	8.7%	1,635	5.0%	10.4%	Southbury	4,203	2.6%	7.3%	1,185	2.3%	8.3%
Hamden	11,616	9.3%	18.8%	3,508	7.5%	16.7%	Wallingford	10,221	5.3%	14.6%	3,231	5.2%	17.5%
Madison	5,004	0.9%	2.3%	1,533	0.5%	3.0%	Waterbury	27,932	23.9%	50.1%	9,614	26.8%	53.9%
Meriden	14,576	17.6%	40.2%	4,804	20.0%	40.1%	West Haven	11,954	12.0%	31.4%	3,991	13.1%	36.8%
Middlebury	1,566	2.8%	9.9%	470	0.0%	4.9%	Wolcott	3,944	3.1%	10.3%	1,201	3.2%	6.7%
Milford	11,556	4.2%	12.0%	3,683	2.4%	10.3%	Woodbridge	2,480	3.1%	8.6%	536	0.7%	2.6%
Naugatuck	8,282	10.2%	24.8%	2,553	11.2%	27.1%							
<b>New London Co.</b>													
Bozrah	544	5.5%	28.3%	148	4.7%	28.4%	New London	5,633	23.8%	54.3%	2,012	29.4%	57.6%
Colchester	4,268	2.6%	10.1%	1,489	2.6%	8.3%	North Stonington	1,216	6.3%	18.8%	354	4.5%	23.2%
East Lyme	3,976	3.1%	11.5%	1,147	3.3%	17.3%	Norwich	8,512	14.8%	37.5%	2,594	19.0%	45.7%
Franklin	444	2.3%	11.5%	142	4.9%	12.7%	Old Lyme	1,737	5.4%	15.5%	483	7.7%	14.3%
Griswold	2,732	6.7%	18.1%	697	6.2%	25.7%	Preston	1,039	2.4%	9.9%	247	0.0%	14.2%
Groton	9,709	8.3%	33.7%	3,783	12.6%	40.4%	Salem	1,139	1.3%	5.7%	306	2.9%	2.9%
Lebanon	1,782	2.0%	13.7%	508	2.8%	15.4%	Sprague	748	5.1%	33.0%	197	3.6%	38.6%
Ledyard	4,094	4.8%	13.5%	1,103	8.2%	23.9%	Stonington	3,855	5.7%	12.5%	1,228	8.1%	15.6%
Lisbon	1,042	2.7%	15.2%	285	7.0%	31.9%	Voluntown	662	5.7%	14.0%	201	2.5%	14.4%
Lyme	408	0.0%	12.5%	113	0.0%	15.0%	Waterford	4,081	5.7%	14.3%	1,143	5.3%	17.9%
Montville	4,239	5.0%	19.1%	1,209	6.4%	21.6%							
<b>Tolland County</b>													
Andover	814	2.8%	6.8%	305	0.0%	8.5%	Somers	2,117	3.5%	10.8%	556	5.0%	13.3%
Bolton	1,304	1.4%	8.0%	356	5.1%	9.6%	Stafford	2,852	7.8%	26.4%	937	12.9%	28.3%
Columbia	1,297	6.0%	8.1%	371	5.1%	9.2%	Tolland	3,689	2.4%	6.3%	1,274	0.9%	4.9%
Coventry	3,119	2.9%	19.0%	982	0.5%	14.0%	Union	152	5.9%	20.4%	39	5.1%	5.1%
Ellington	3,234	4.1%	10.7%	970	3.7%	10.2%	Vernon	6,071	8.5%	24.1%	2,028	9.9%	26.6%
Hebron	2,592	0.6%	7.2%	916	0.0%	8.4%	Willington	1,228	5.3%	7.9%	324	2.2%	9.0%
Mansfield	2,729	6.9%	20.3%	721	9.6%	25.4%							
<b>Windham County</b>													
Ashford	1,059	6.1%	17.7%	293	2.7%	7.2%	Pomfret	1,016	3.9%	8.0%	254	3.5%	3.5%
Brooklyn	1,673	6.2%	19.1%	432	8.8%	25.7%	Putnam	2,122	15.1%	31.4%	601	19.0%	31.9%
Canterbury	1,211	5.2%	11.7%	301	6.0%	10.3%	Scotland	432	5.8%	17.4%	144	9.0%	16.0%
Chaplin	542	0.9%	12.7%	166	3.0%	14.5%	Sterling	853	4.3%	22.6%	266	1.9%	22.2%
Eastford	416	11.3%	21.4%	125	14.4%	19.2%	Thompson	2,206	6.6%	31.0%	620	12.1%	37.7%
Hampton	444	1.4%	15.8%	130	1.5%	14.6%	Windham	5,158	23.8%	48.6%	1,704	28.9%	53.0%
Killingly	4,047	9.1%	30.8%	1,245	10.7%	32.2%	Woodstock	1,909	5.8%	19.1%	484	6.8%	22.3%
Plainfield	3,821	9.6%	33.3%	1,148	10.6%	29.8%							
<b>CONNECTICUT</b>													
	828,171	10.4%	24.1%	264,929	11.1%	25.5%							

## Where can I get more information?

More information can be found using the following sources:

- ▶ Economic Policy Institute, at: [www.epinet.org](http://www.epinet.org)
- ▶ National Center for Children in Poverty, at: [www.nccp.org](http://www.nccp.org)
- ▶ “Budgeting for Poverty,” *Poverty USA*, Catholic Campaign for Human Development, U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, at: <http://www.nccbuscc.org/cchd/povertyusa/tour2.htm>
- ▶ *The Jobs Initiative Update*, The Annie E. Casey Foundation, at: <http://www.aecf.org/jobsinitiative/>

### Endnotes

<sup>1</sup>Pearce, D. & the State of Connecticut. (1999). *The Self-Sufficiency Standard for Connecticut, Summary Report*. Hartford, CT: Connecticut Office of Policy and Management.

<sup>2</sup>Proctor, B. D. & Dalaker, J. (2003). *Poverty in the United States*. U.S. Census Bureau Current Population Reports, p. 60-222. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.

<sup>3</sup>Moore, K. & Redd, Z. (2002). *Children in Poverty: Trends, Consequences, and Policy Options*. Research Brief. Washington, DC: Child Trends.

<sup>4</sup>U.S. Census Bureau. (2003). *Current Population Survey 2003 Annual Social and Economic Supplement*. Washington, DC.

## Child Poverty

### Source:

U.S. Census Bureau. *2000 Census, Summary File 3, Table P87, PCT50*.

### Methodology:

The number of children below 100% and 200% of poverty as a percentage of the number of all children in a town or county. The denominator is the number of children for whom poverty status has been determined.

## What we need to know

- Connecticut Self-Sufficiency Standard update for 2004-2005
- Number of children in poverty by race, age, and town between Census years

