



# Poverty in Michigan's Counties, Cities and Townships (with total population over 65,000): 2005

February 2007

**P**overty in childhood threatens health, mental functioning, behavior, and school achievement. The lack of resources to meet basic human needs affects every aspect of a child's development. Lack of food can lead to an iron deficiency that interferes with cognitive development; substandard housing or homelessness heightens the risk to mental and physical health, school achievement and attendance, as well as to Attention Deficit and Hyperactivity Disorder. Constant financial stress in the family can lead to behavior problems for the children, limited resources for learning, and social problems.

Poverty among adults can often elevate the risk of homelessness and depression, strains relationships, and compromises mental and physical health.

Children continued to be at a higher risk of living in poverty than adults in 2005. The 2005 child poverty rate in Michigan was an estimated 19 percent, much higher than the rate of 13 percent for the total population.<sup>1</sup> Poverty rates varied dramatically across and within Michigan's counties.

The following discussion summarizes the latest information from the American Community Survey (ACS) about child poverty and total poverty for Michigan. These data were available only for those counties, cities and townships with total population over 65,000. The range of child poverty rates for Michigan counties and then its cities and townships will be reviewed, followed by total poverty. In 2005, the poverty level was roughly \$19,800 for a family of four and \$15,700 for a single parent with two children.

County	Rate	Margin of Error +/-*
Livingston	6.3%	2.5
Clinton	6.4%	2.3
Ottawa	6.5%	2.4
Oakland	8.5%	1.4
Allegan	9.6%	3.2
Gr. Traverse	10.6%	4.4
Lapeer	10.9%	3.9
Shiawassee	11.1%	4.5
Macomb	11.9%	1.8
Lenawee	12.4%	5.4
St. Clair	13.0%	4.4
Washtenaw	13.6%	3.5
Bay	14.4%	5.0
Monroe	15.6%	5.5
Kalamazoo	16.7%	4.1
Kent	16.7%	2.2
Eaton	17.6%	6.5
Midland	18.8%	6.7
Isabella	19.2%	5.7
Jackson	20.2%	5.5
Calhoun	20.6%	4.8
Muskegon	21.3%	4.5
Ingham	22.3%	4.2
Genesee	23.6%	3.6
Saginaw	24.9%	4.1
Van Buren	25.0%	8.9
Wayne	29.1%	1.9
Berrien	30.6%	5.9

Note: Child poverty under the age of 18  
 \*These margins of error are based on a 90 percent confidence level.  
 Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey

<sup>1</sup>For purposes of discussion, poverty rates are rounded to the nearest whole number.

# Child Poverty

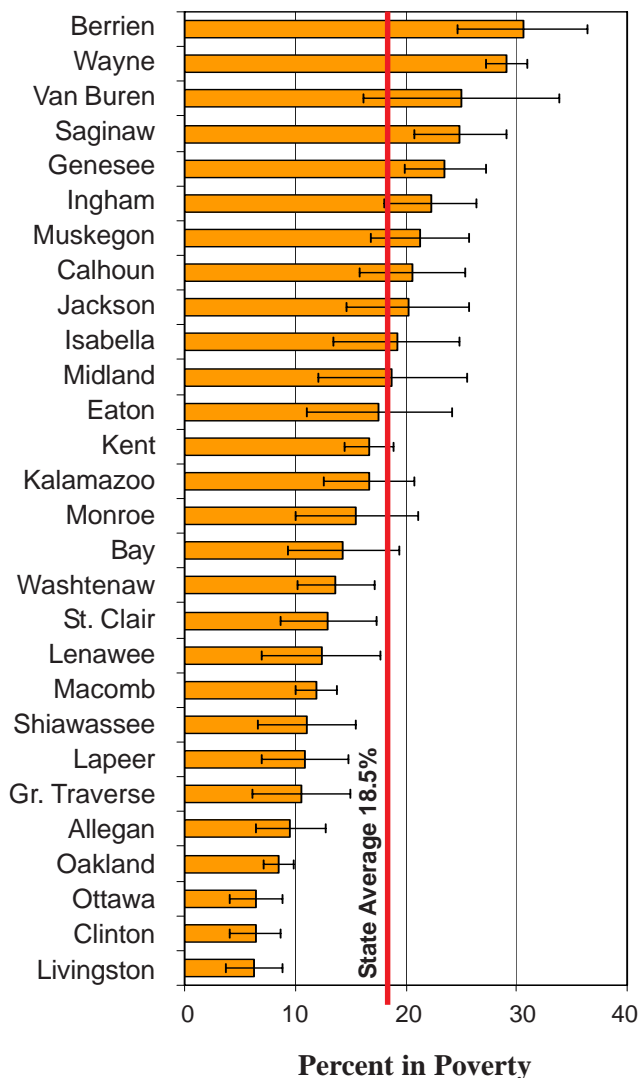
## Child Poverty Rates in Michigan Counties

Among the 28 counties for which 2005 data are available from the ACS, Livingston County had the lowest estimated child poverty rate, at 6 percent, and Berrien the highest at 31 percent.<sup>2</sup> A child in Berrien County was five times more likely to live in poverty than one in Livingston County.

Berrien County's poverty rate was 12 percentage points higher than the state average.

In contrast, Clinton, Livingston, and Ottawa counties had child poverty rates at 12 percentage points below the state average.

**Child Poverty in Michigan Counties—2005  
(with total population over 65,000)**



## Child Poverty in Michigan Cities and Townships

In Michigan's 21 cities and townships with population over 65,000, child poverty rates in 2005 ranged from a low of 1 percent in Farmington Hills to a high of 45 percent in Flint.

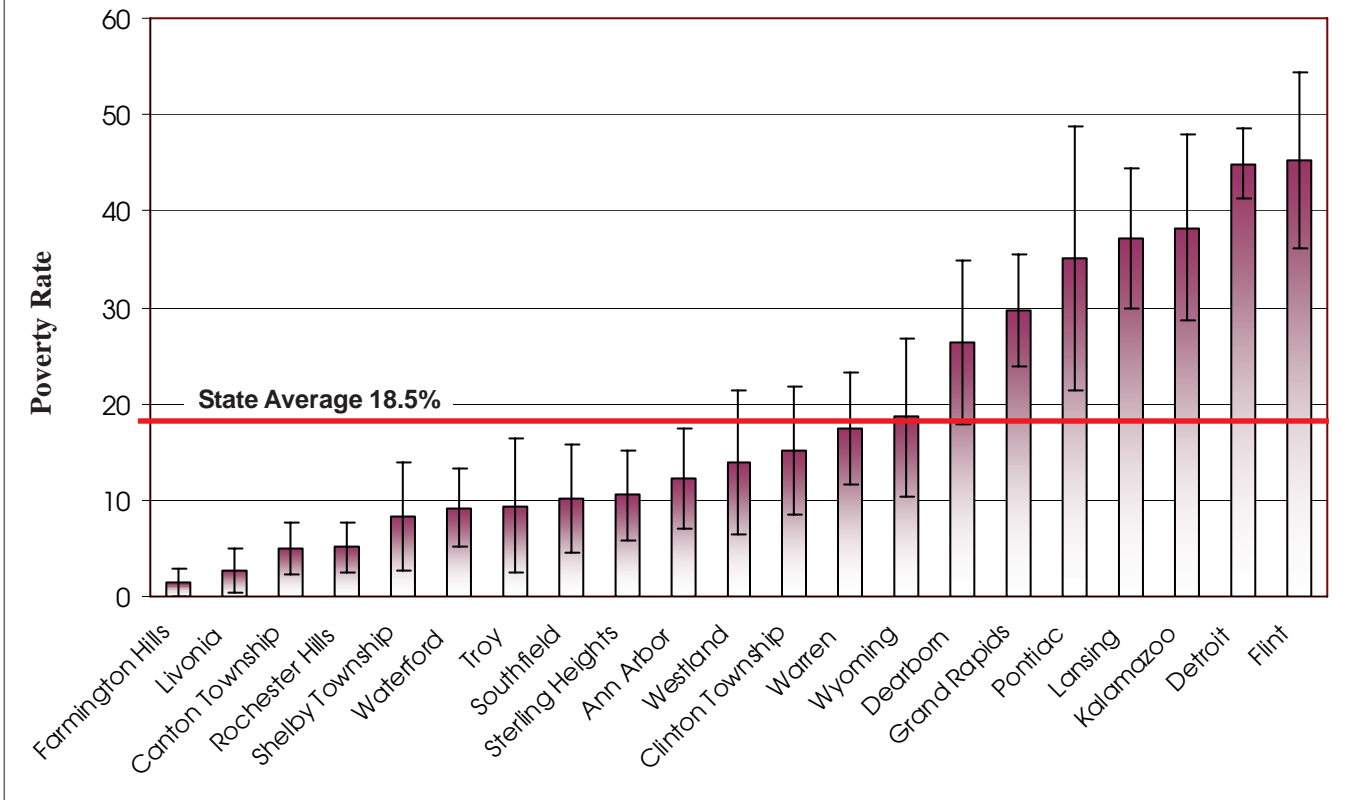
Within counties, these cities and townships also demonstrated a wide range in child poverty rates. For instance, although Farmington Hills and Pontiac, are located in Oakland County where the estimated child poverty rate was roughly 9 percent, in Pontiac children were 35 times more likely to be poor than those in Farmington Hills. In Wayne County, child poverty rates in Canton Township (5%), Livonia (3%), and Westland (14%) were significantly lower than the Wayne County rate of 29 percent.

<sup>2</sup>Margins of error were quite large for some county and city poverty estimates, particularly in those geographic areas with smaller populations. In some counties the poverty rate could be plus or minus as much as nine percentage points with a 90 percent certainty that the actual rate fell in that range. Thus, the poverty rates estimated for these geographic areas should be used with caution. (All ACS margins of error are based on a 90% confidence level.)

Note: I-bars show boundaries within which the poverty estimate would fall 90 percent of the time.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey

### Child Poverty in Michigan Cities and Townships–2005 (with total population over 65,000)



Note: I-bars show boundaries within which the poverty estimate would fall 90 percent of the time.  
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey

### Child Poverty in Michigan Cities and Townships–2005 (with population over 65,000)

City or Township	Rate	Margin of Error +/-*	City or Township	Rate	Margin of Error +/-*
Farmington Hills	1.4%	1.6	Warren	17.4%	5.8
Livonia	2.7%	2.3	Wyoming	18.6%	8.2
Canton Township	5.0%	2.7	Dearborn	26.4%	8.5
Rochester Hills	5.1%	2.6	Grand Rapids	29.7%	5.8
Shelby Township	8.3%	5.6	Pontiac	35.0%	13.7
Waterford	9.2%	4.0	Lansing	37.2%	7.2
Troy	9.4%	6.9	Kalamazoo	38.3%	9.6
Southfield	10.1%	5.6	Detroit	44.9%	3.6
Sterling Heights	10.5%	4.6	Flint	45.3%	9.1
Ann Arbor	12.2%	5.2			
Westland	13.9%	7.5			
Clinton Township	15.2%	6.7			

Note: Child poverty under the age of 18  
\*These margins of error are based on a 90 percent confidence level.  
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey



## Total Poverty

### Total Poverty Rates in Michigan Counties

Only five of the 28 most populous Michigan counties had total poverty rates higher than their child poverty rates: Allegan, Clinton, Isabella, Ottawa, and Washtenaw. Michigan counties with the highest child poverty rates (Berrien, Genesee, Saginaw, Van Buren, and Wayne) were also the counties with the greatest differences between their child and total poverty rates. For example, Berrien County's child poverty rate was roughly 12 percentage points higher than its total poverty rate, while the average for all 28 counties was a five percentage point difference.

Eight of the 28 counties had poverty rates significantly higher than the state average. Isabella County's poverty rate, roughly 24 percent, was the highest among these counties while Livingston County had the lowest at 4 percent. The five poorest counties were Isabella, Wayne, Berrien, Ingham, and Saginaw. Three of these counties—Berrien, Wayne, and Saginaw—were also among the five counties with the highest child poverty rates.

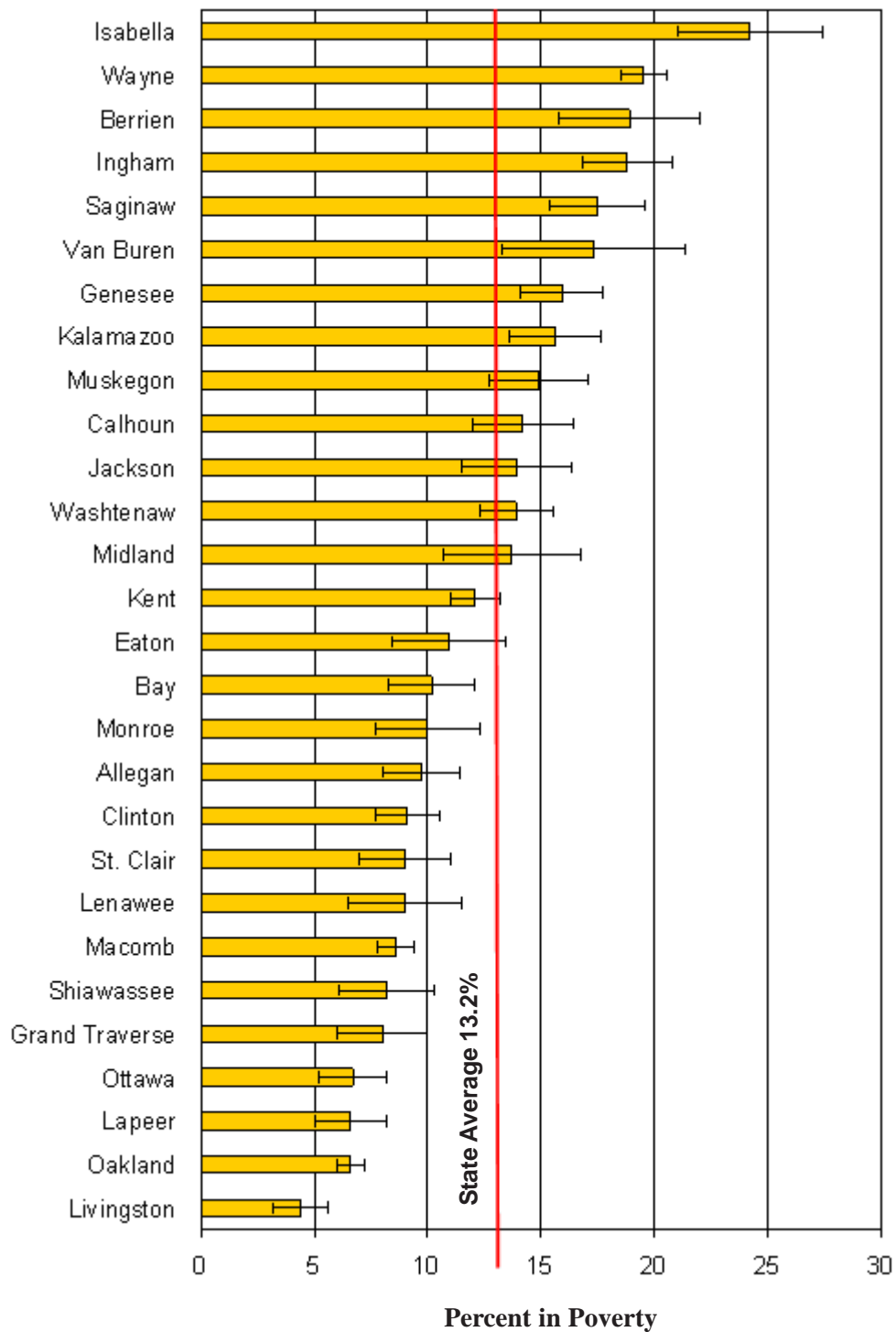
### Total Poverty in Michigan Counties—2005 (with population over 65,000)

County	Rate	Margin of Error +/-*
Livingston	4.4%	1.2
Oakland	6.6%	0.6
Lapeer	6.6%	1.6
Ottawa	6.7%	1.5
Gr. Traverse	8.0%	2.0
Shiawassee	8.2%	2.1
Macomb	8.6%	0.8
Lenawee	9.0%	2.5
St. Clair	9.0%	2.0
Clinton	9.1%	1.4
Allegan	9.7%	1.7
Monroe	10.0%	2.3
Bay	10.2%	1.9
Eaton	10.9%	2.5
Kent	12.1%	1.1
Midland	13.7%	3.0
Washtenaw	13.9%	1.6
Jackson	13.9%	2.4
Calhoun	14.2%	2.2
Muskegon	14.9%	2.2
Kalamazoo	15.6%	2.0
Genesee	15.9%	1.8
Van Buren	17.3%	4.0
Saginaw	17.5%	2.1
Ingham	18.8%	2.0
Berrien	18.9%	3.1
Wayne	19.5%	1.0
Isabella	24.2%	3.2

\*These margins of error are based on a 90 percent confidence level.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey

## Total Poverty in Michigan Counties—2005 (with total population over 65,000)



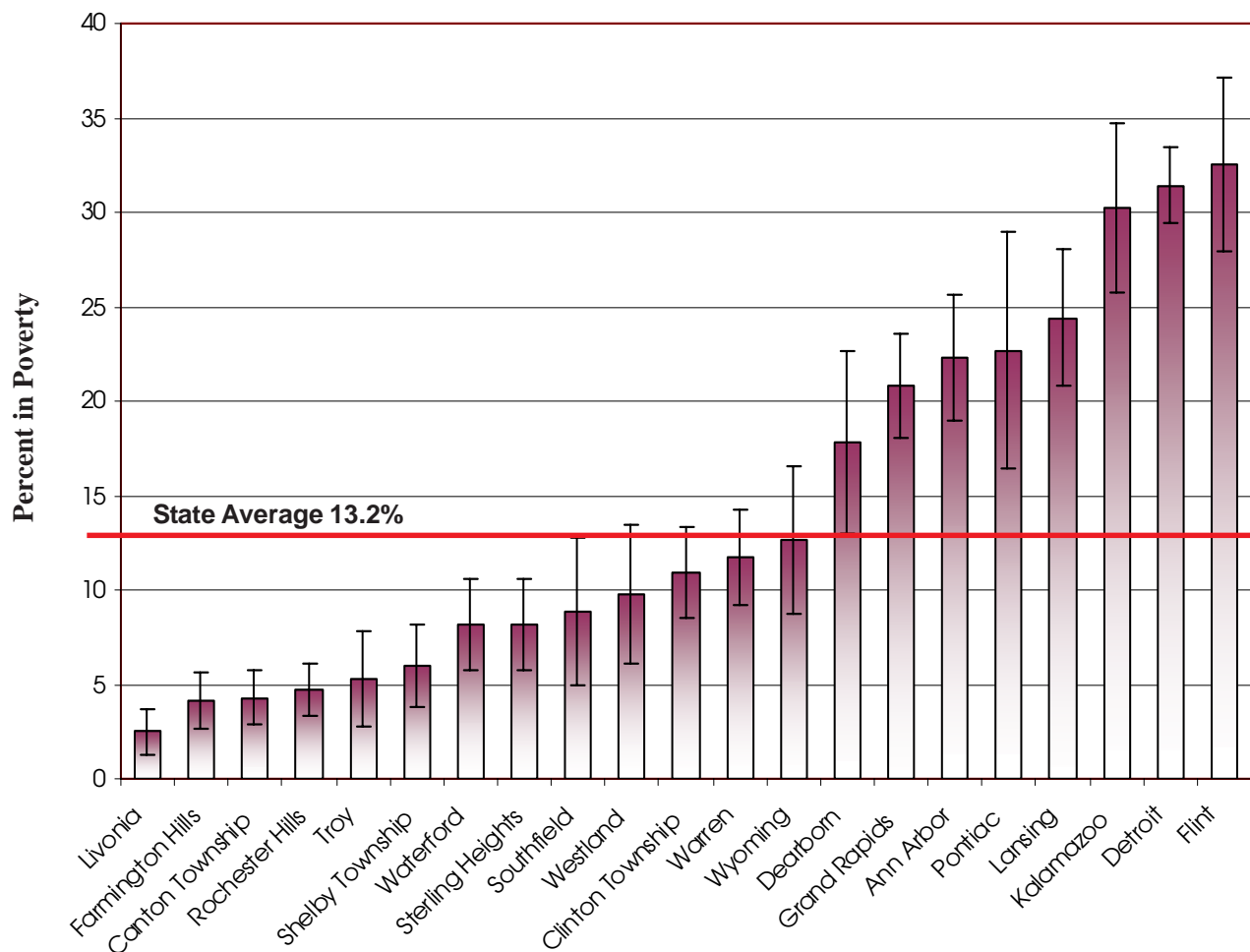
Note: I-bars show boundaries within which the poverty estimate would fall 90 percent of the time.  
 Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey

## Total Poverty Rates in Michigan Cities and Townships

The range in poverty rates was even greater for Michigan's 21 cities and townships than for its counties. The lowest city/township poverty rate was roughly 3 percent in Livonia, while the highest,

was 32 percent in Flint. Eight of the 21 Michigan cities had poverty rates above the state average, with all but one of these (Dearborn) having a poverty rate of 20 percent or higher. Seven of these eight cities also had the highest child poverty rates.

### Total Poverty Rates in Michigan Cities and Townships—2005 (with total population over 65,000)



Note: I-bars show boundaries within which the poverty estimate would fall 90 percent of the time.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey

## Total Poverty in Michigan Cities and Townships—2005 (with population over 65,000)

City or Township	Rate	Margin of Error +/-*
Livonia	2.5%	1.2
Farmington Hills	4.1%	1.5
Canton Township	4.3%	1.4
Rochester Hills	4.7%	1.4
Troy	5.3%	2.5
Shelby Township	6.0%	2.2
Waterford	8.2%	2.4
Sterling Heights	8.2%	2.4
Southfield	8.9%	3.9
Westland	9.8%	3.7
Clinton Township	10.9%	2.4
Warren	11.7%	2.5

City or Township	Rate	Margin of Error +/-*
Wyoming	12.6%	3.9
Dearborn	17.8%	4.8
Grand Rapids	20.8%	2.8
Ann Arbor	22.3%	3.3
Pontiac	22.7%	6.3
Lansing	24.4%	3.6
Kalamazoo	30.2%	4.5
Detroit	31.4%	2.0
Flint	32.5%	4.6

\*These margins of error are based on a 90 percent confidence level.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey

### Conclusions and Recommendations

Adults and children living on income below the poverty level struggle to meet their basic needs for shelter and food. Such acute conditions exert tremendous stress that can compromise mental, emotional, and physical well-being. The fact that one of every eight adults and almost one of every five children in Michigan live in such deprivation should be a major cause for concern. Economic insecurity during the critical growing up years can have lifelong consequences for individual potential. Without addressing child poverty, the state will be hard-pressed to meet the educational goals to equip its future citizens for the transition to a knowledge-based economy.

Even more troubling is the concentration of poverty in the state and its communities. Children in Berrien County experience five times the risk of destitution compared to those in Livingston County. Similarly in Farmington Hills, only one child in one hundred lives in poverty compared to almost half the children in Flint and Detroit. Communities with

high poverty and unemployment often have few resources to assist poor families with children.

Some areas in the state have taken steps to address the issue of poverty on a local level; for example in 2003 the City and County of Kalamazoo launched a joint Poverty Initiative to improve regional economic efficiencies and reduce disparity. National support for such efforts is available from the Municipal Action to Reduce Poverty project at the National League of Cities (NLC). With support from the W. K. Kellogg Foundation, the NLC is researching feasible strategic approaches cities can take to reduce poverty.

Clearly without state and local commitment to addressing poverty, these disparities will continue to grow and blight the future of a substantial share of the state's children.