Poverty and Low Wages

- Poverty Rates:
  - https://www.povertycenter.org/resources/state-fact-sheets/
- Unemployment Rates:
  - https://data.bls.gov/t commuting/0202/0300000001
- Household and Student Debt:
  - https://nlihc.org/oor
- Workers Earning Less than $15/Hour:
  - https://nlihc.org/oor
- Hours of Work to Afford Housing:
  - https://blogs.gallup.com/gallup/2023/01/30/how-many-people-are-winning-the-wage-war-
- Living Wage Calculators:
  - https://livingwage.mit.edu/
  - https://www.livingwage.org/
- Student Loan Debt:
  - https://www.sloan.org/
- Workers with Student Debt:
- The Cost of a College Education:
  - https://www.policymatters.org/research/reports/the-cost-of-college/
IN NEW YORK:

Poverty and Low-Wages: Poverty is a policy choice, reflecting both low wages and high costs of living. These two conditions make it hard to meet basic needs and easy to fall into debt. In New York:

- Between 2018-2020, there were 8,182,000 poor and low-income people, accounting for 42.8% of the population.**
- To meet their basic needs, a household with two adults and two children needs to earn over $29/hour. However, the current minimum wage is just $14.20/hour. At this wage, an individual must work 113 hours/week to afford a modest two-bedroom apartment.
- There are 2,312,420 people, or 25.1% of the workforce, earning less than $15/hour. This includes 2,070,527 adults and 20.7% of Asian and Native workers, 33.7% of Black workers, 41.5% of Hispanic workers, 18.2% of white workers, 31.1% of working men and 41.2% of working women of color.
- Average household debt rose 9% in 2022 to an average of $46,710.
- Average student loan debt held by households was $4,100 at the end of 2022.

Rolling Back on Basic Needs: Pandemic relief policies temporarily lifted the load of poverty, but ended too soon, resulting in higher rates of economic, food and housing insecurity. In New York:

- In 2021, 3,513,000 children in 2,173,000 households received the expanded Child Tax Credit and 910,000 low-wage workers without children received the expanded Earned Income Tax Credit. The expansions contributed to a dramatic decline in poverty, but ended in 2021.
- In 2022, 2,839,300 people relied on expanded SNAP (food stamps) benefits to feed themselves and their families. However, in 2023, SNAP benefits were reduced by $90-$250 / month, cutting them down to $6 / day. At least 1,610,000 people will be impacted by these cuts.
- At the beginning of 2023, more than one year after eviction protections were ended, 1,138,777 households reported being behind on their rent or housing payments.

Health Care and the Pandemic: Across the country, approximately 1,000 people are still dying from Covid every week and billions of people lack access to health care. In New York:

- During the most intense period of the pandemic, 1,013,200 people were uninsured.
- With the ending of continuous eligibility for Medicaid, 1,422,400 people are estimated to lose access to health care.
- Between 2019 and 2020, New York experienced a 3 year decline in average life expectancy.

Climate Crisis and Ecological Devastation: Extreme heat, storms and drought are becoming more common, with poor and low-income communities at greatest risk. In New York:

- Over the past century, the state warmed 1.4 degrees Celsius, which is 0.3 degrees greater than the global average. As this trend continues, food production, spread of diseases, and health will all be adversely impacted.
- Precipitation patterns have also changed, with increased risks of flooding, drought and water scarcity.
- The percentage of poor and low-income household income that goes towards energy costs is 6 times greater than what an average income household spends on energy.
- The percentage of poor and low-income household income that goes towards water costs is 3 times greater than what an average income household spends on water.

Democracy: Across the nation, a surge of attacks on voting rights and on the rights of women and LGBTQ+ people are denying basic rights to millions of people and constraining our ability to participate in democracy. Poor and low-income people can change this direction. In New York:

- There were 41 voter restrictive bills introduced between 2020 and 2023, and 2 anti-LGBTQ+ law introduced in 2023. One voter restriction bill was enacted.
- In New York, there are 4,479,151 poor and low-income eligible voters, including 2,769,180 white voters, 680,252 Latino voters, 149,330 Asian voters, 715,151 Black voters and 1,248 Indigenous voters. Together, they account for 28.18% of the electorate.


Militaryism: Government spending that prioritizes war, mass incarceration, excessive policing, and anti-immigrant forces is leading to greater violence, fear and criminalization of the poor. In New York:

- In 2023, taxpayers will contribute $80.64 billion to Pentagon spending, $2.29 billion to immigration enforcement and $2.76 billion to nuclear weapons.
- Over the past 30 years, $41 million in military equipment (tanks, drones, combat rifles and ammunition) has been transferred from the Pentagon to state and local law enforcement.
- Between 2001-2020, 3,609 veterans committed suicide.
- In 2021, 1,078 people were killed by gun violence.
- There are 50,771 people incarcerated. As of April 2023, 369 immigrants are in detention.
- From Oct 2002-June 2020, over 108,246 people were deported from New York.

There is an abundance of wealth and resources to meet our basic needs and ensure we all survive and thrive.

- A proposed federal tax on the annual increase in billionaires’ wealth would generate an estimated $557 billion over 10 years. New York has 118 billionaires with combined wealth of $645.7 billion, whose wealth can be taxed to pay for more social programs.
- In New York, state taxpayer dollars are being siphoned towards militarism: state taxpayer dollars for deportations and border control could instead subsidize more than 216,649 public housing units. Taxpayer dollars going to nuclear weapons could provide health insurance for 1.11 million children. Taxpayer dollars going to the largest weapons contractor, Lockheed Martin, could hire more than 29,902 elementary school teachers.
- More than $759.79 million from New York taxpayers that is going to federal prisons could instead power more than 3.21 million households with solar energy.
- New York has only spent $4.5 billion of the $12.75 billion it was allocated under the American Rescue Plan, which could be used for housing, health care and other pressing needs. If the state and local governments do not allocate these resources by December 2024, the remaining funds will be lost.

Moving these resources, and investing more, to fully meet all of our needs will save lives and revive our national economy.

- During the pandemic, eviction moratoria and moratoria on utility disconnections saved lives. If enacted earlier, they could have prevented Covid deaths by 40% and 15%, respectively, across the nation. Universal health care could have saved 330,000 lives.
- Enacting Medicare for All will save $450 billion in health care costs and 68,000 lives every year.
- Ending mass incarceration could raise average US life expectancy by five years.
- Providing permanent safe housing delivers lifelong benefits to children and families at an national average cost of $1,820 per person per year, far less than the cost of crisis services for those suffering chronic homelessness.
- Paid Family and Medical Leave improves employment, especially among women, increases child well-being and protects against poverty when health challenges arise.
- Increasing resources for the poor stimulates the economy much more than making the rich even richer, because the poor need to spend nearly everything they earn. Every dollar going to a low-wage worker adds $1.20 to the economy overall. Every dollar spent on food stamps generates $1.50-$1.80 in economic activity.
- Expanded unemployment insurance during the pandemic protected 5.1 million jobs by boosting economic activity.
- The expanded Child Tax Credit was estimated to have a greater impact on the economy than military spending, without negative impacts on employment.
- Overdue improvements to TANF could triple its reach and improve the lives of at least 2.38 million families nationwide.
- Every dollar invested in providing families clean water and proper sanitation yields 5 times as many returns to the US economy.
- Freedom from debt would allow more people to start small businesses and move around the country to take better jobs, strengthening our economy and workforce.