



# Common Cents

New Hampshire Fiscal Policy Institute Blog

## **New Hampshire Poverty Rate Declines, Yet Economic Stability Remains Out of Reach for Many**

*September 20, 2016*

New US Census Bureau data released September 15 finds that New Hampshire's poverty rate declined to 8.2 percent in 2015, a drop of one percent since 2014. While New Hampshire once again ranked first for the lowest state poverty rate in the nation, these findings demonstrate that there are still far too many Granite State families struggling to achieve economic stability.

This latest Census data finds that one in 12 Granite Staters lived below the federal poverty line during 2015. New Hampshire children fared worse, with one in 10 living in a household with income below the official poverty threshold. For context, in 2015 the federal poverty threshold for a family of four was approximately \$24,250.

At the same time, the data also finds that New Hampshire's median household income in 2015 rose to \$70,303.

The official poverty threshold understates the degree of economic insecurity in New Hampshire and elsewhere. Due to a relatively high cost of living, New Hampshire families require a significantly higher level of income in order to afford housing, child care, health care, transportation, and food, among other basic necessities.

NHFPI's recent report, [Taking the Measure of Need in the Granite State](#), outlines the shortcomings of the official poverty measures and examines alternate methods of assessing what it takes to afford a modest standard of living in various regions of the state. The report also finds that a sizeable number of jobs do not pay wages sufficient for many New Hampshire families to be able to make ends meet.

These latest findings underscore the need for policy changes to ensure that all Granite State families and children have the chance to achieve economic stability. New Hampshire could take steps to bolster wages and to ensure all families have access to affordable child care, which will enable them to remain in the workforce, to acquire new skills and training, and to transition to new employment opportunities.