

# POVERTY IN NEW YORK CITY

Borough by Borough Analysis of Data from the US Census  
Bureau's 2011 American Community Survey

September 2012, ALIGN

## Summary

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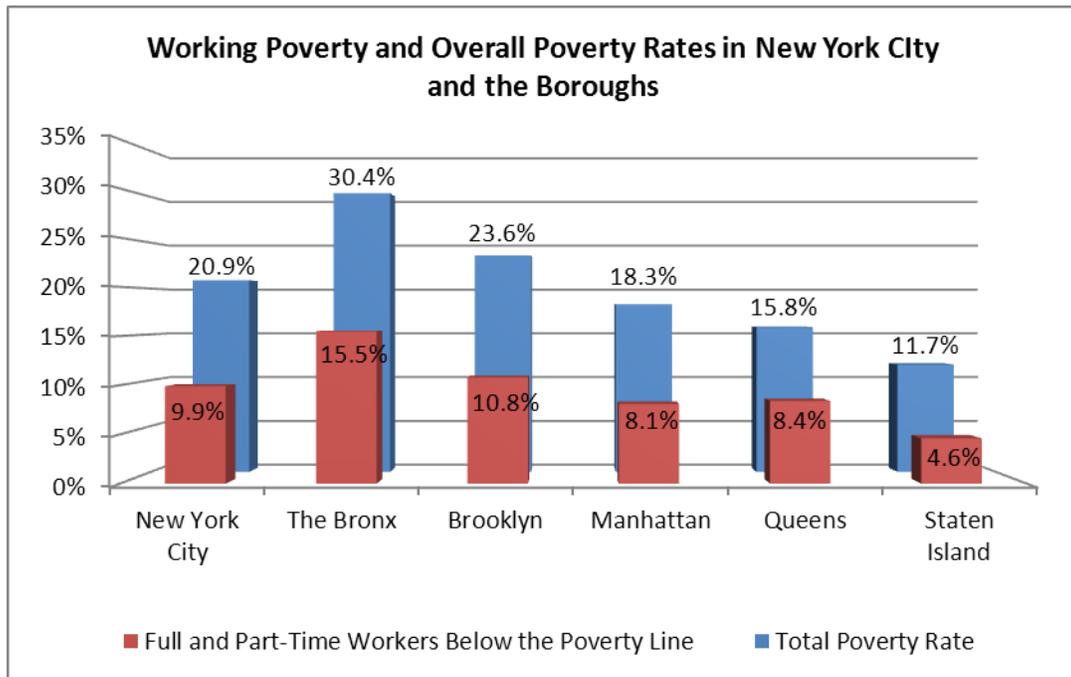
Many in New York are lauding New York City's recovery from the "Great Recession." This recovery, however, has failed to reach many communities in New York City. The 2011 American Community Survey allows us to take a moment to reflect on whether New York City's economic recovery has served the majority. The severe impact the recession has had on our neighborhoods and boroughs drove poverty, unemployment and income inequality to unacceptably high levels. Those levels did not decrease in 2011. The data shows that poverty increased slightly, Latino and Black households lost income, the rich got richer, and many working people continue to struggle to make ends meet. In addition, earnings for nearly half of the population in New York City do not allow for self-sufficiency, and Blacks and Latinos continue to experience severe income inequality.

## Key Findings

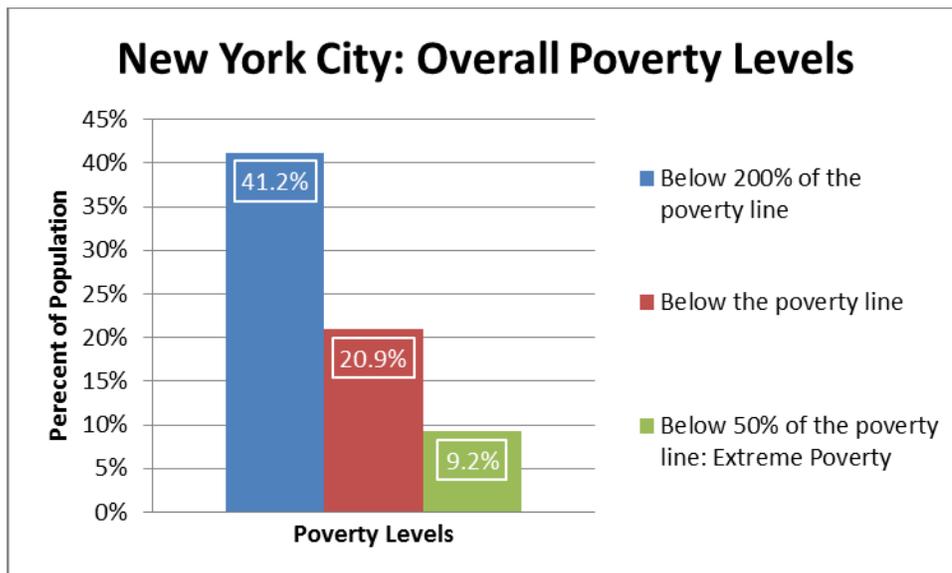
1. Working poverty in New York City remains high, with nearly one in ten full- and part-time workers living below the federal poverty line.
2. Poverty rates are consistently higher in New York City than for New York State or the U.S. Nearly one in ten residents of New York City live in extreme poverty.
3. Well over half the income in New York City is earned by just one-fifth of the population; a slightly greater share than in 2010, as the rich got richer and the poor got poorer.
4. Racial disparities in earnings continue to be high. Latino households have lost income since 2010, and now earn less than half the income of White households citywide. Black/African American households fared only somewhat better, earning just 55% of what White households earned.
5. Nationally, median household income declined 1.3% to \$50,502. In New York City, median household income dropped a slightly greater percentage, to \$49,411.

## New York City

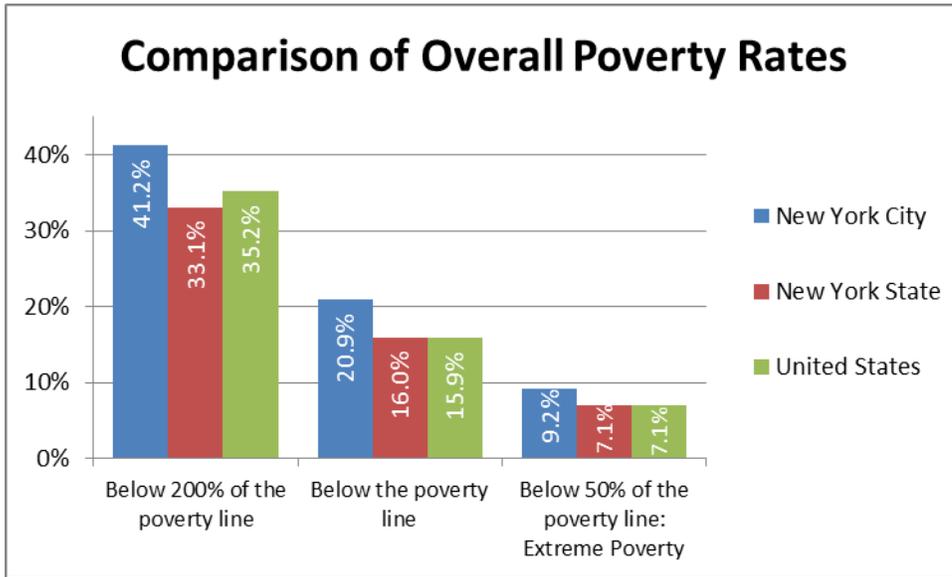
1. One out of every five New Yorkers, 1.7 million people, lives below the federal poverty line. One out of every ten New Yorkers has a full or part-time job and still lives below the federal poverty line. These numbers are slightly higher from 2010, and indicate that the economic recovery is not reaching all New Yorkers.



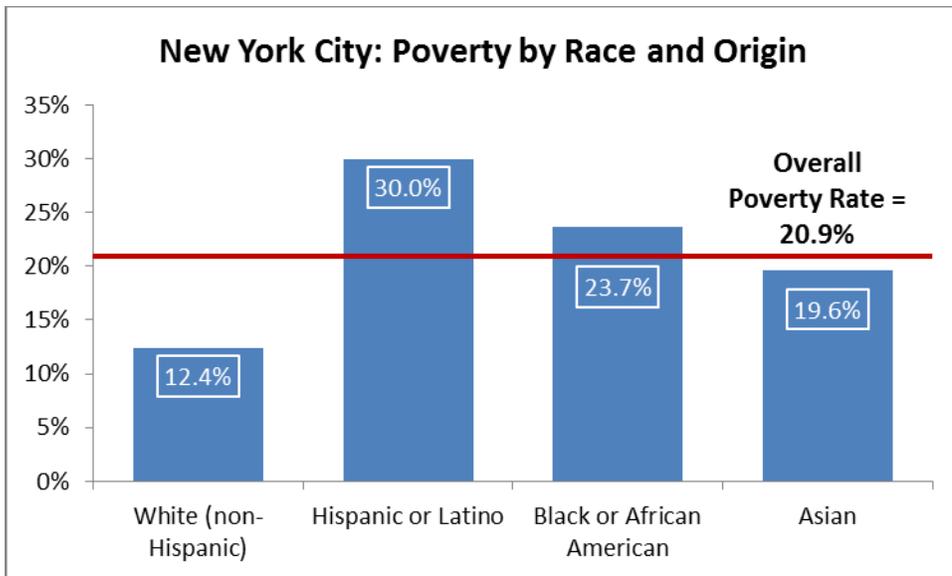
2. Poverty has slightly increased citywide in 2011, with 41% of residents living below 200% of the federal poverty line and nearly 21% living below the federal poverty line. The amount of those living in extreme poverty, 50% of the poverty rate, has remained the same since 2010.



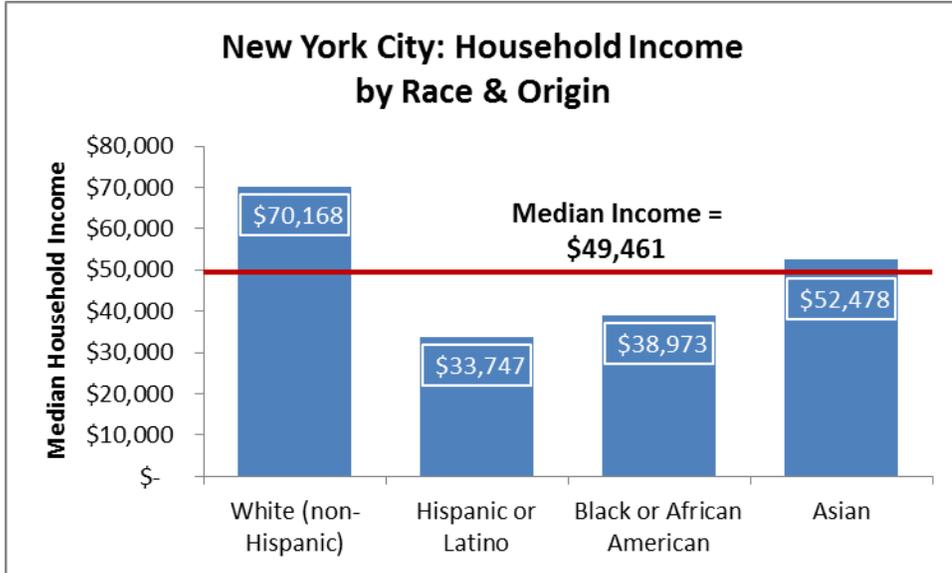
- Poverty rates are consistently higher in New York City than in New York State or the U.S.



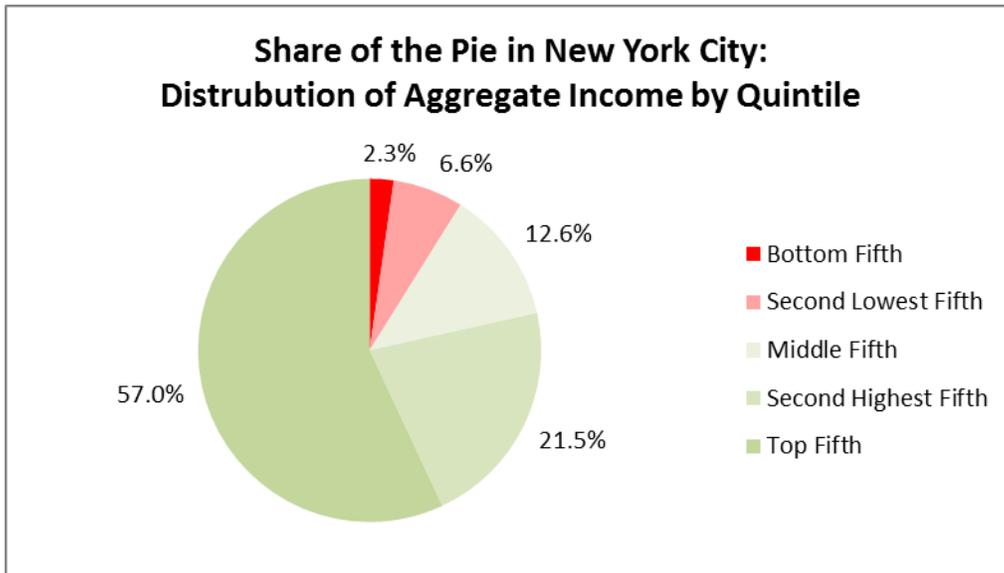
- Latinos experienced the most significant increase in poverty levels between 2010 and 2011, from 27.9% to 30%. Whites, Blacks and Asians remained at similar poverty levels from 2010.



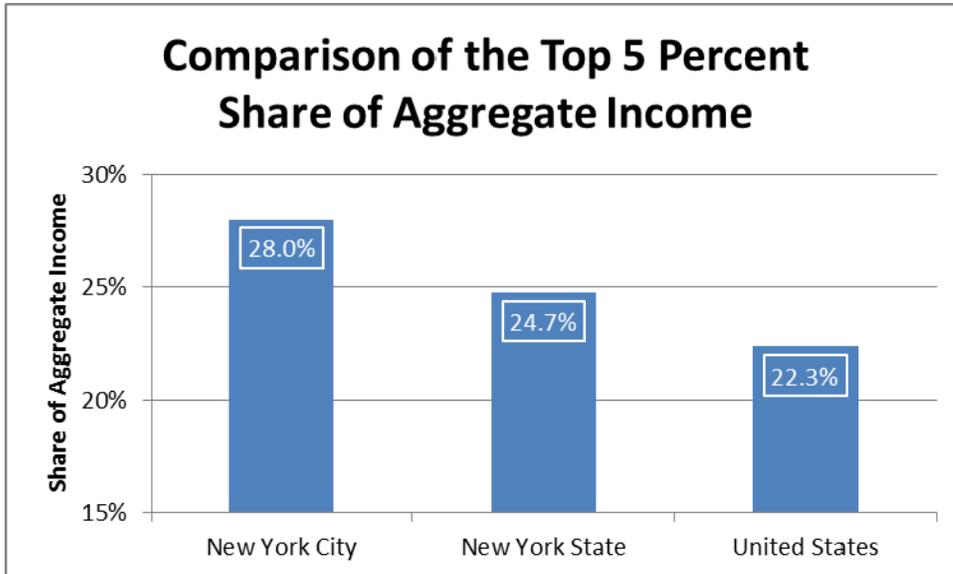
5. Latino and Black households in New York City have lost income since 2010, while White households have increased their income over the same period. Declining income, along with continuing high levels of poverty, is placing a significant burden on people of color in New York City. Latino households earn less than half the income of White households in New York City, while Black households fare only somewhat better.



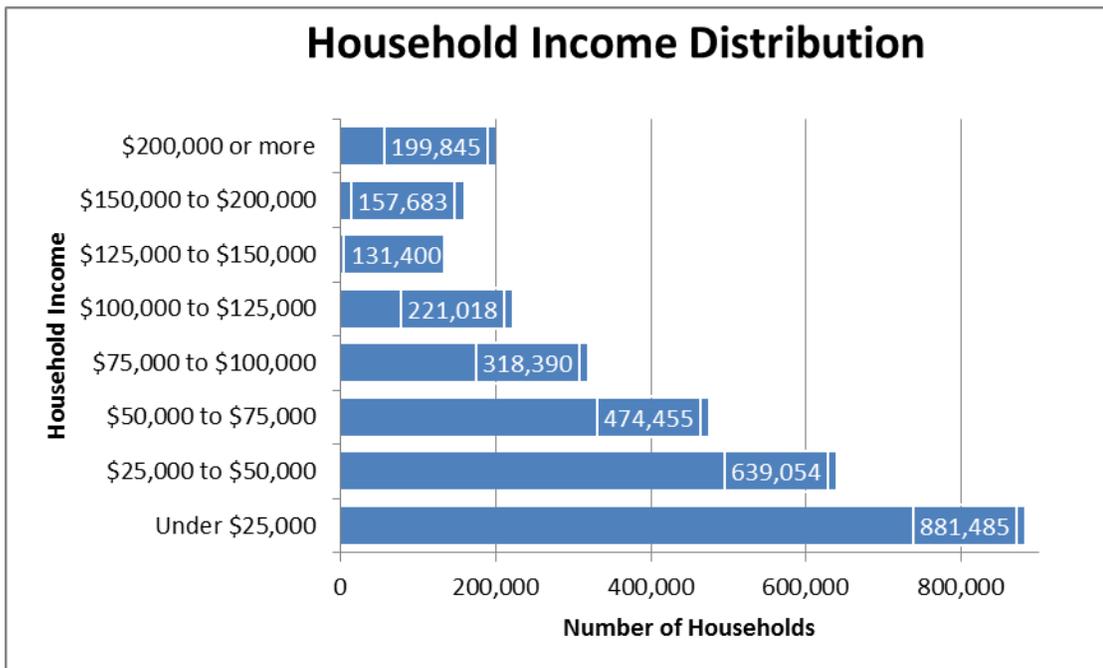
6. Well over half the income in New York City is earned by just one-fifth of the population. The bottom 20% earns 2.3% of the income. Since 2010, the poor in New York City have gotten slightly poorer and the rich slightly richer.



7. Wealth is concentrated among the top earners of New York City to a higher degree than in New York State or the U.S. The top 5% of residents in New York City earn 28% of the city's income. New York City's top 5% collect 20% more of the aggregate income than their U.S. counterparts.



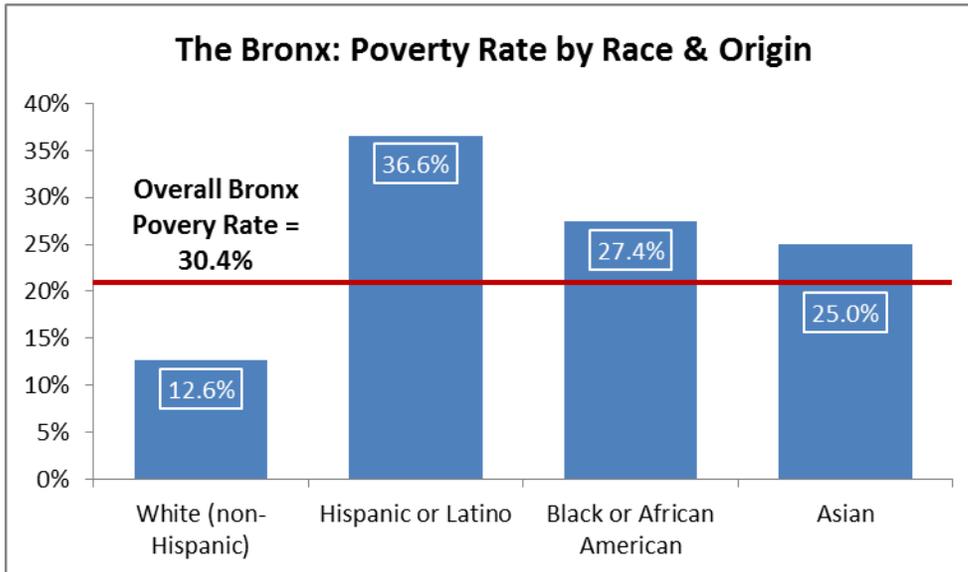
8. One and a half million households, or 50% of New York City's three million households, earn below \$50,000 per year. According to a recent cost of living study, Manhattan, Brooklyn and Queens are three of the top seven most expensive cities in the United States.<sup>1</sup> Meanwhile, nearly 900,000 households in New York City earn below \$25,000 per year.



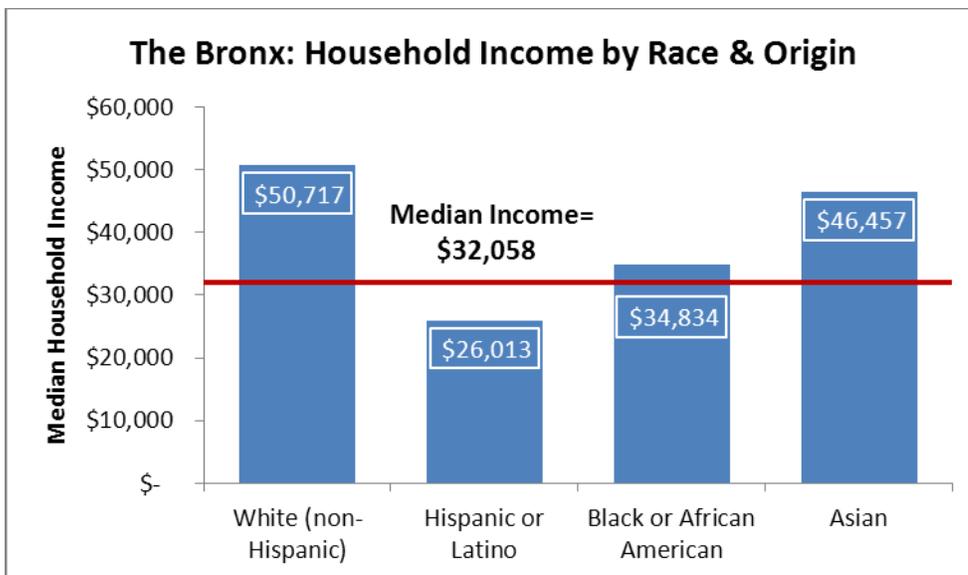
<sup>1</sup> The Council for Community and Economic Research: The Most Expensive Places in America, by Danielle Kurtzleben, U.S. News, at <http://www.usnews.com/news/articles/2012/05/24/the-most-expensive-places-in-america>

## The Bronx

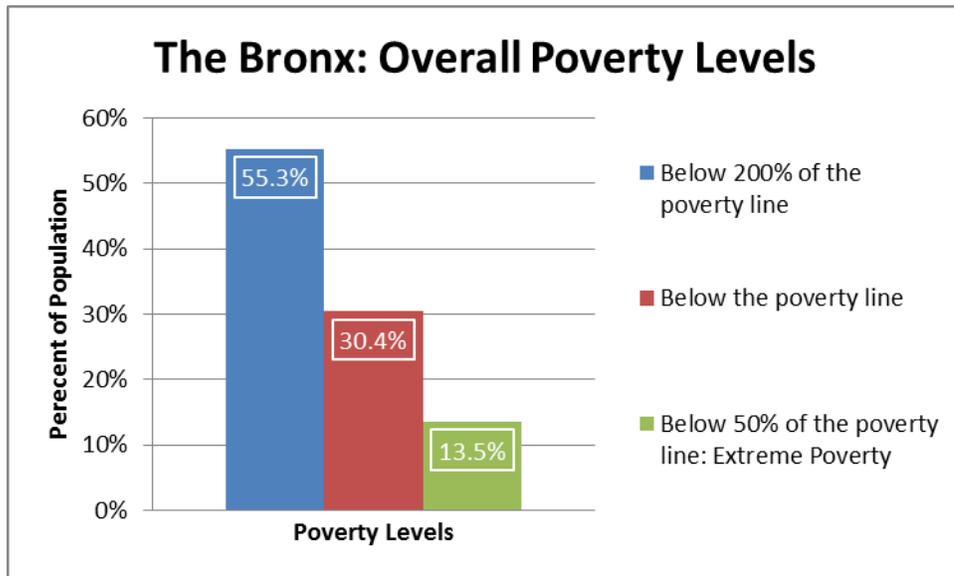
1. One of every three Latino residents of the Bronx lives in poverty. One-quarter of Black and Asian residents also live in poverty. Despite the announcements of economic recovery in New York City, the poverty rate has remained unacceptably high in the Bronx, and disproportionately impacts people of color.



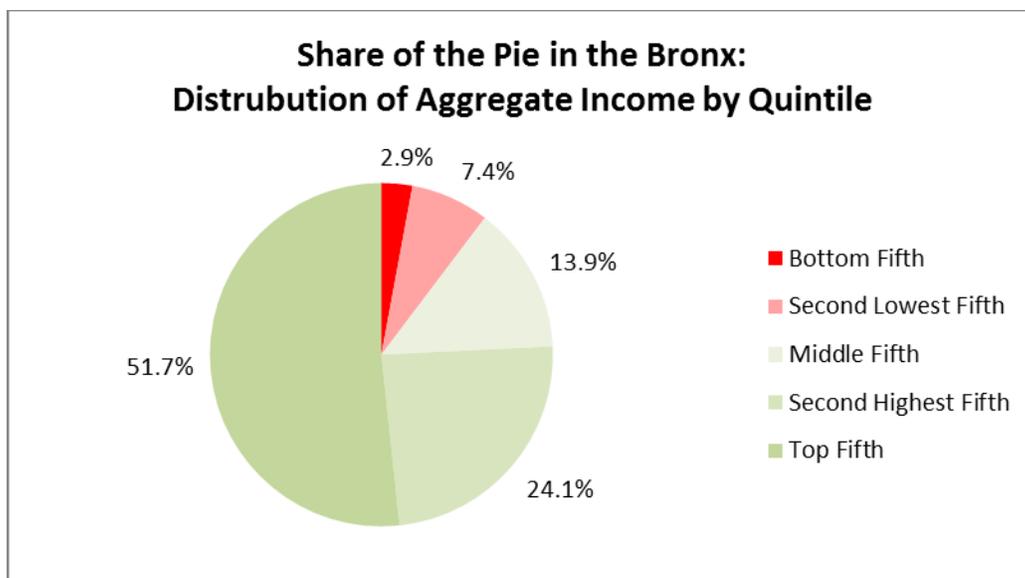
2. Since 2010, Latin and Asian households in the Bronx have lost income, while Black households remained steady and White household income grew slightly. Latino households earn just over half the income of White households. Black households fare only somewhat better.



- The Bronx continues to have the highest level of poverty in New York City. One in three Bronx residents lives under the federal poverty line, and extreme poverty is also widespread. Over 180,000 residents of the Bronx live below 50% of the poverty level, which is \$5,742 per year for an individual. One in two residents of the Bronx lives below 200% of the federal poverty line. The Self-Sufficiency Standard, which measures how much someone must earn to meet basic needs, sets the Bronx's minimum income at \$26,536. This means that potentially 60%-70% of Bronx residents struggle to meet their basic needs.<sup>2</sup>

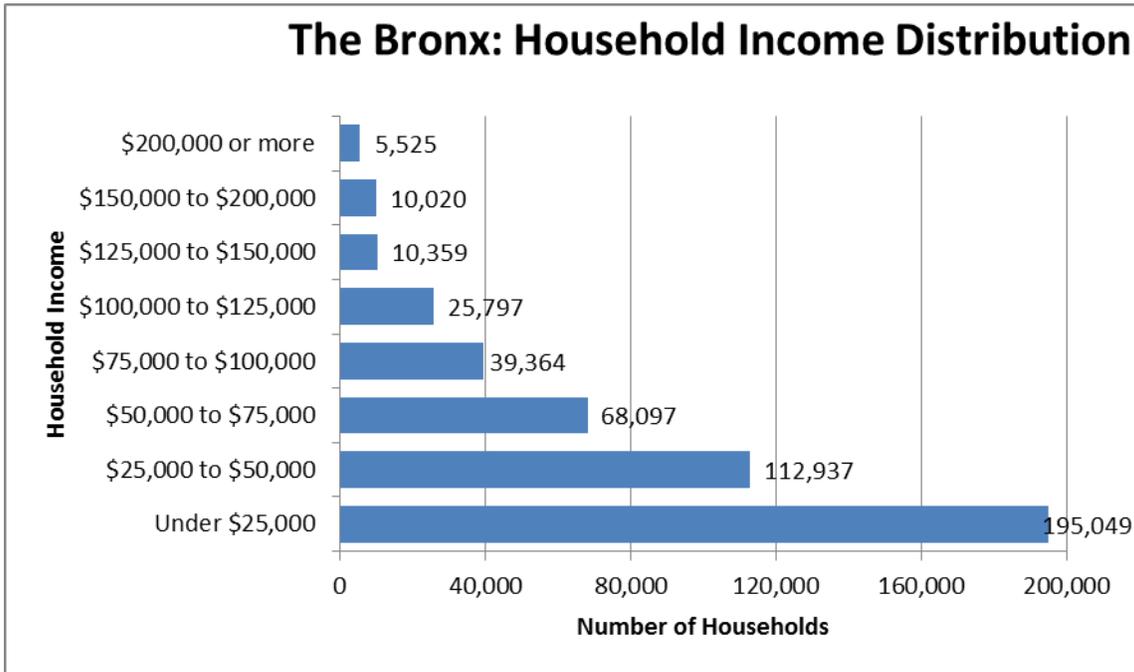


- Over half the income in the Bronx is earned by just one-fifth of the population. Three-fifths of the population share just one-quarter of the income. The wealthiest slightly increased their share of income in 2011.



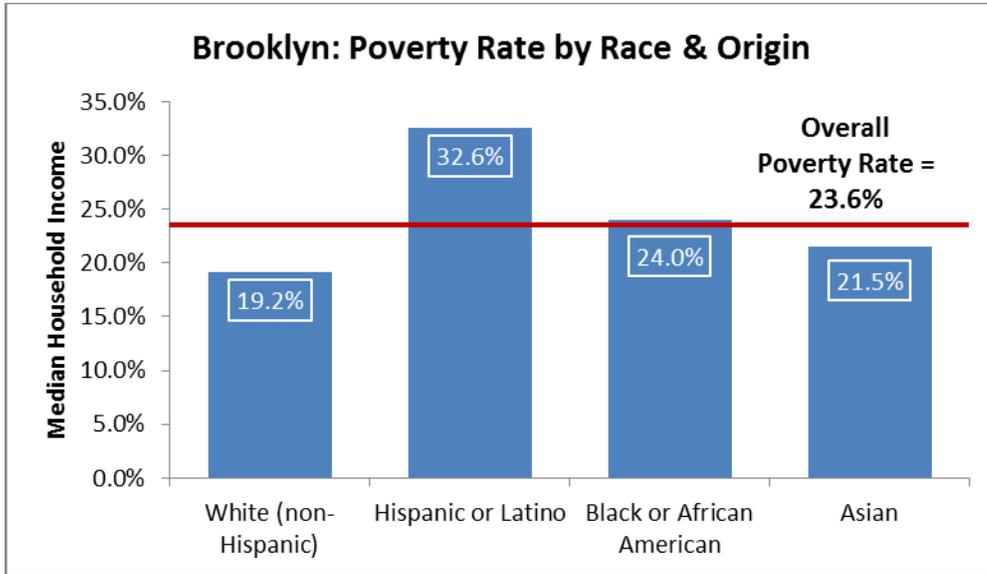
<sup>2</sup> The Self-Sufficiency Standard for New York City 2010, Diana Pearce, June 2010, at [http://www.wceca.org/publications/NYC\\_SSS\\_2010\\_WEB\\_062310\\_v2.pdf](http://www.wceca.org/publications/NYC_SSS_2010_WEB_062310_v2.pdf)

5. Two-thirds of households in the Bronx, a total of 308,000 households, earn below \$50,000 per year. Four in ten households earn below \$25,000 per year.

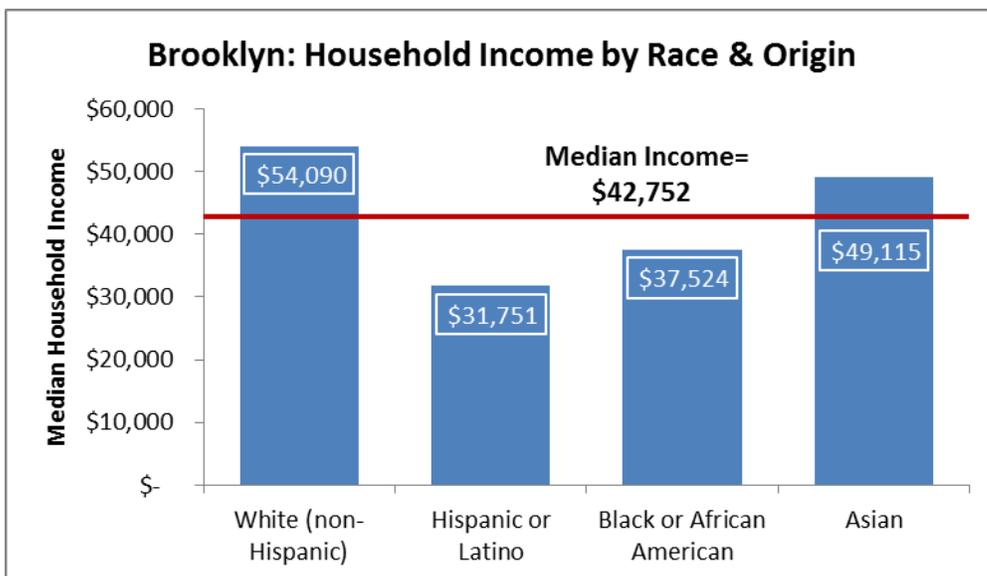


## Brooklyn

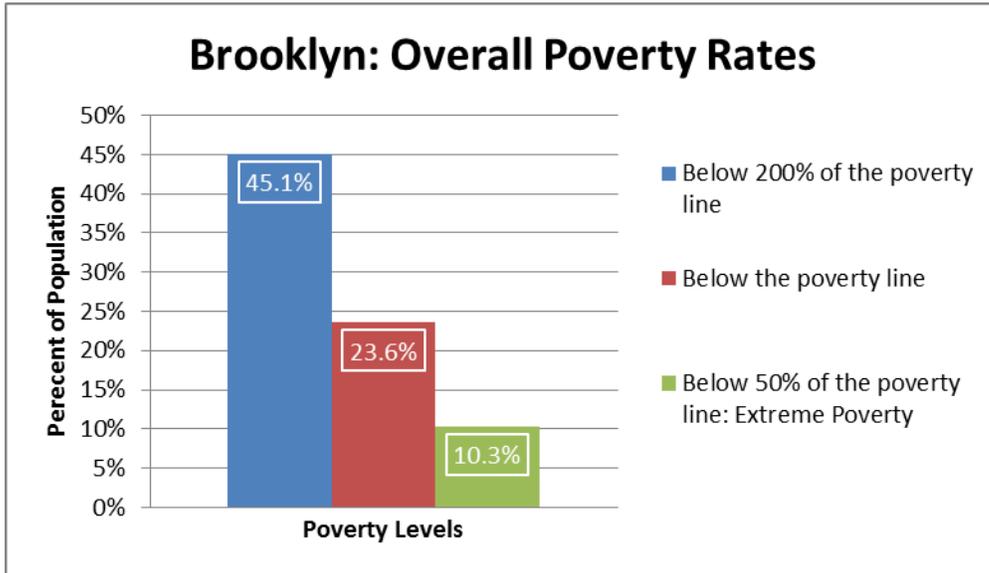
1. Poverty remains stubbornly high in Brooklyn. In 2011 the poverty rates of White, Latino, and Black residents increased slightly.



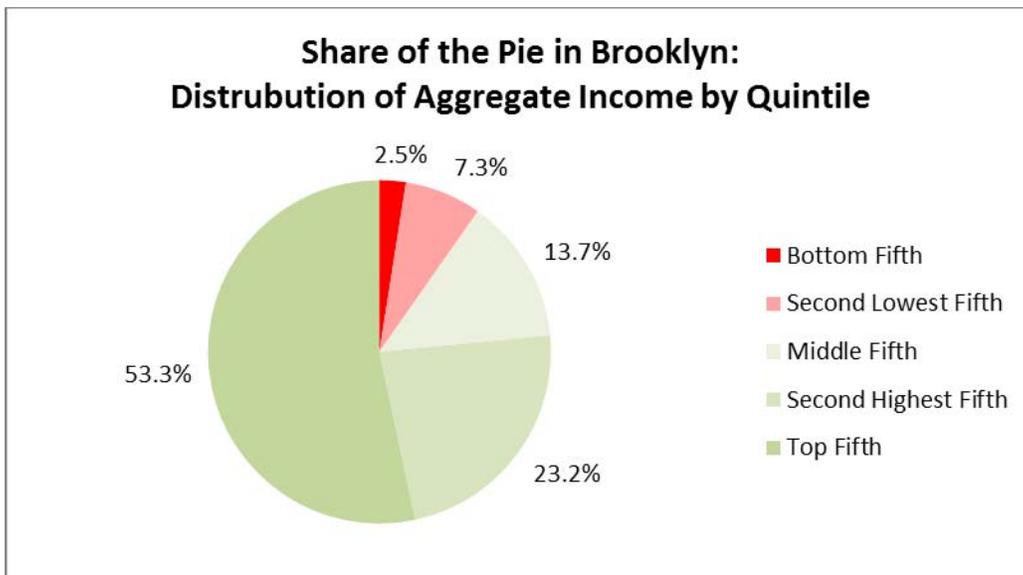
2. Since 2010, Brooklyn's Latino and Black households have had declining incomes, while Asian and White households increased their incomes. Latino households earn one-third less than White households.



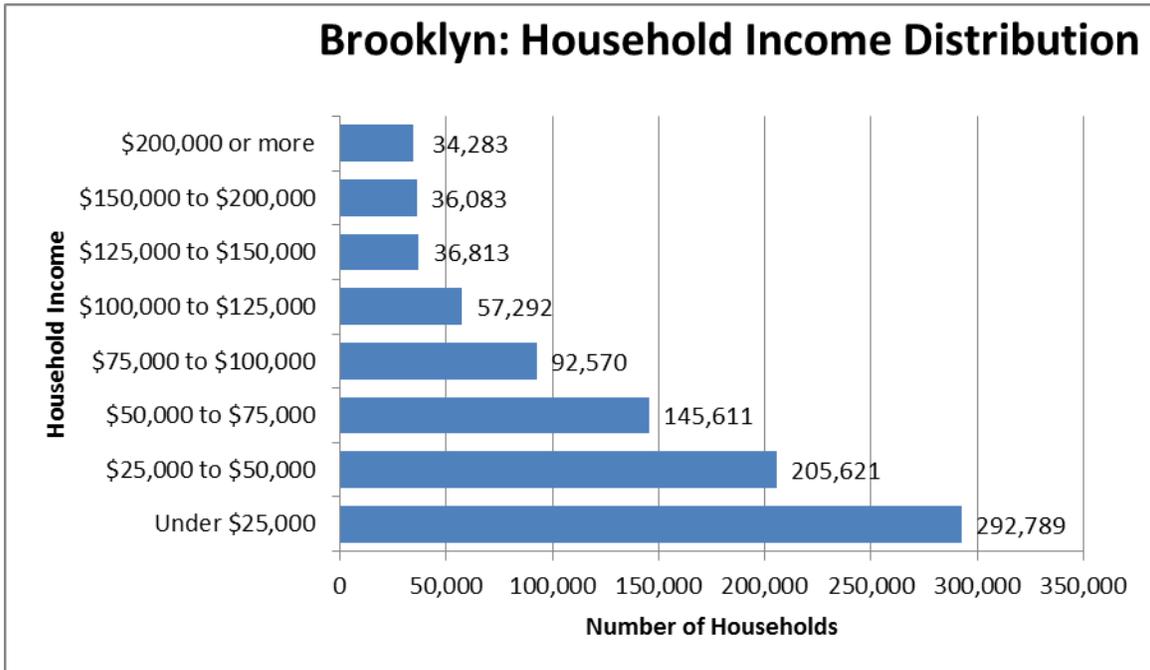
- Nearly half of the population in Brooklyn lives below 200% of the poverty rate, which is \$22,986 per year for an individual. Nearly one-quarter of the population lives below the federal poverty line. One in ten Brooklynites, 260,000 people, lives in extreme poverty. The Self-Sufficiency Standard, which measures how much someone must earn to meet basic needs, sets Brooklyn's minimum income at \$28,367. This means that potentially over half of all people in Brooklyn struggle to meet their basic needs, including housing, child care, food, health care, and transportation.



- Over half the income in Brooklyn is earned by just one-fifth of the population. Three-fifths of the population in Brooklyn share one-quarter of the income. These numbers remain largely unchanged since 2010.



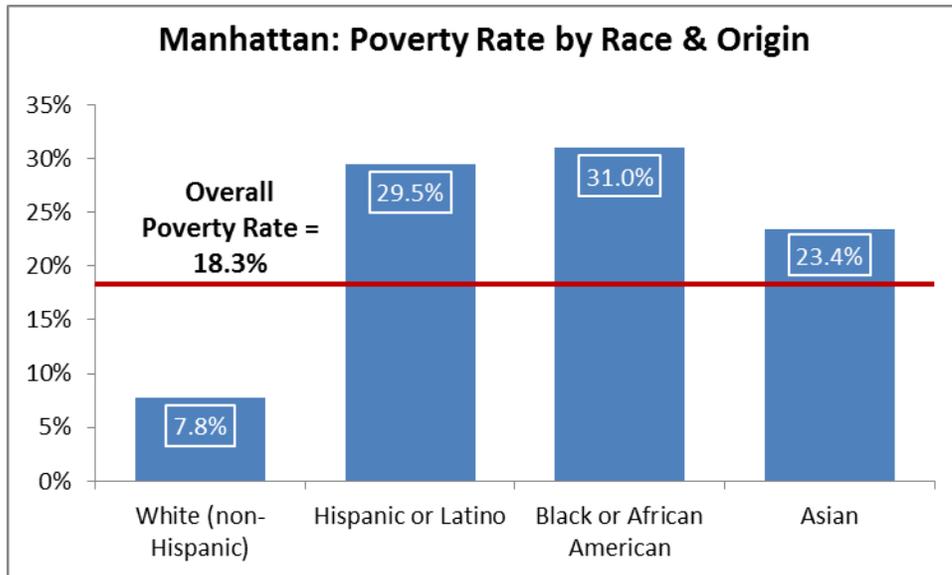
5. Nearly 500,000 households in Brooklyn, 55% of the total, earn below \$50,000 per year. At the same time, Brooklyn is ranked the second most expensive city in the U.S.<sup>3</sup>



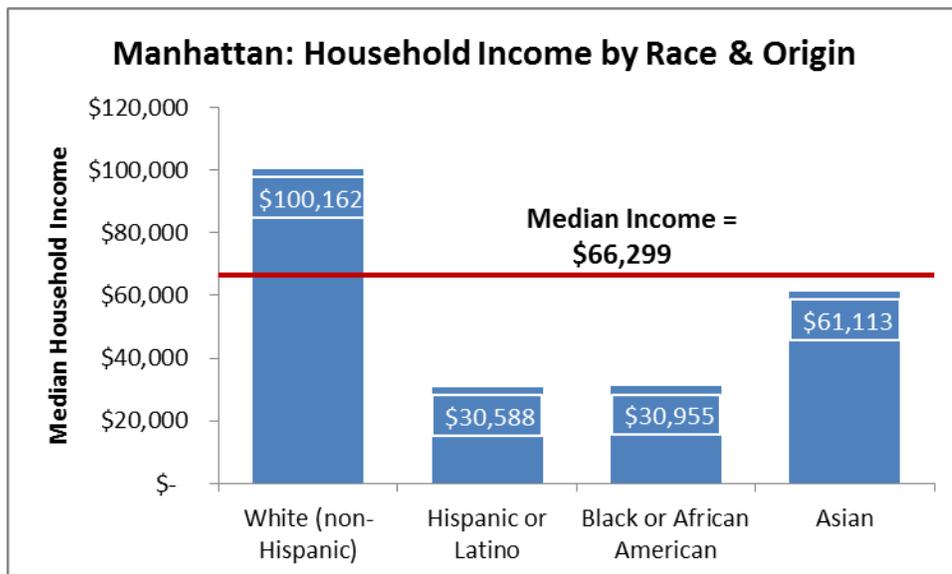
<sup>3</sup> The Most Expensive Places in America, by Danielle Kurtzleben, U.S. News, at <http://www.usnews.com/news/articles/2012/05/24/the-most-expensive-places-in-america>

## Manhattan

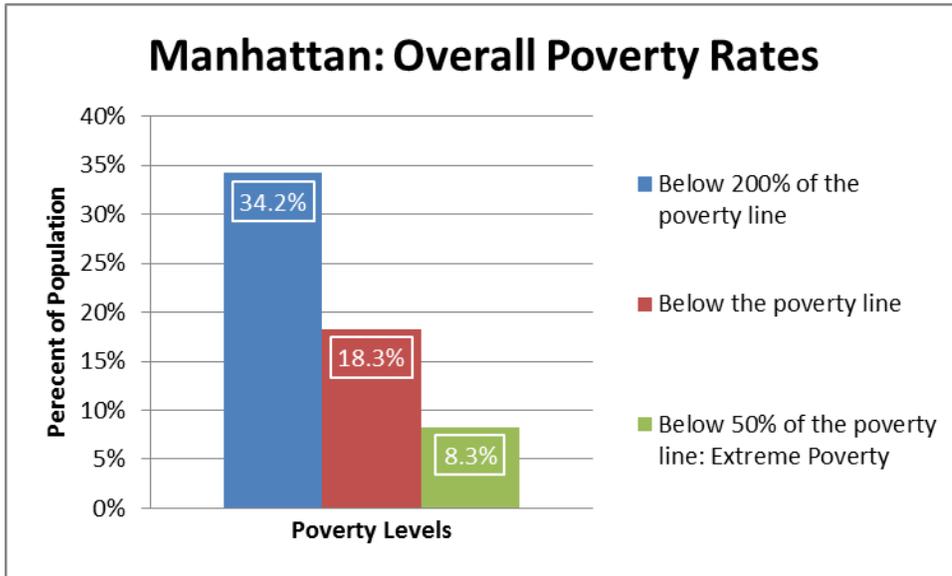
1. Nearly one in every three Latino and Black residents of Manhattan lives in poverty. Nearly one-quarter of Asian residents also live in poverty. The poverty rate among each of these groups has increased since 2010, while for White residents it has remained steady.



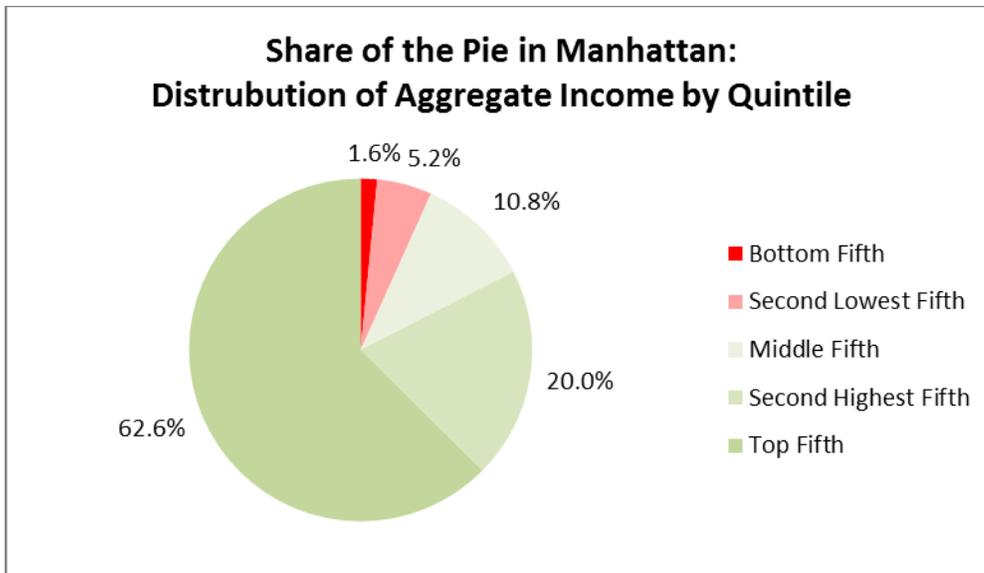
2. Manhattan has the greatest income inequality by race among the five boroughs. Latino and Black households earn just one-third that of White households, and Asian households just one-half. In addition, income in White households has increased since 2010, while Asian, Latino and Black households have all seen reductions in income over that period.



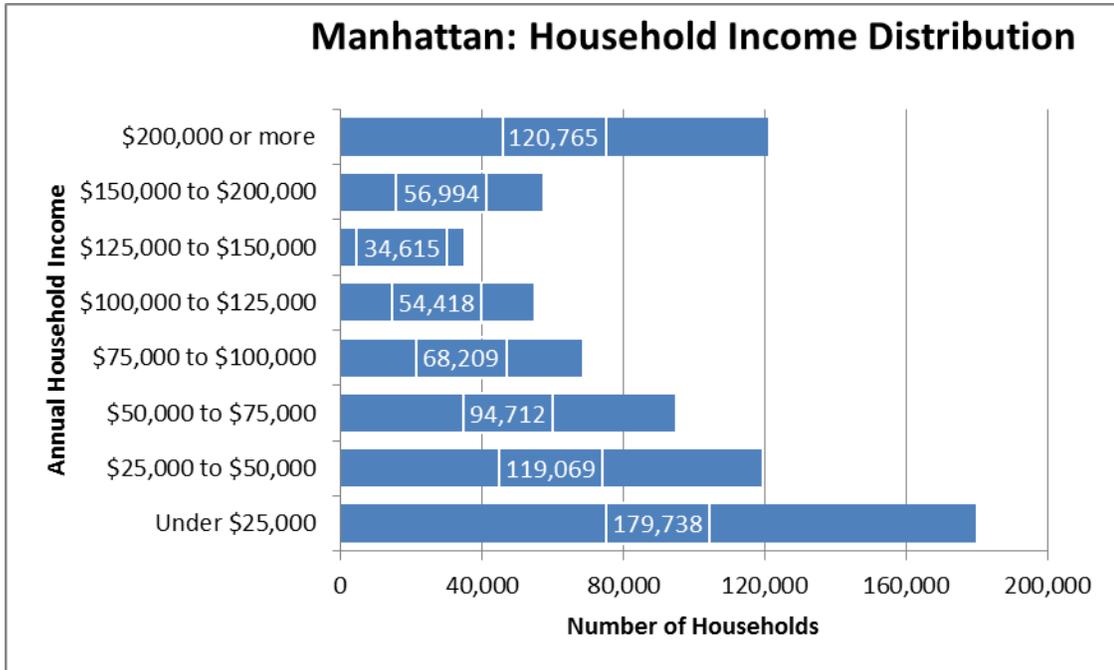
- One in every three residents of Manhattan lives below 200% of the poverty line. In addition, nearly one in ten residents of Manhattan lives in extreme poverty. The Self-Sufficiency Standard, which measures how much someone must earn to meet basic needs, breaks Manhattan's minimum income into two regions, North Manhattan and South Manhattan. North Manhattan's minimum income is \$23,394, while South Manhattan's is \$50,570. The high cost of Manhattan, particularly in the southern part, means that potentially over half of Manhattan's residents cannot meet their basic needs, including housing, childcare, food, health care, and transportation.



- The share of income for the top income earners increased slightly since 2010, while the poorest share decreased slightly. Over 60% of the income in Manhattan is earned by the top 20% of the population. Three-fifths of the population in Manhattan share less than one-fifth of the income.

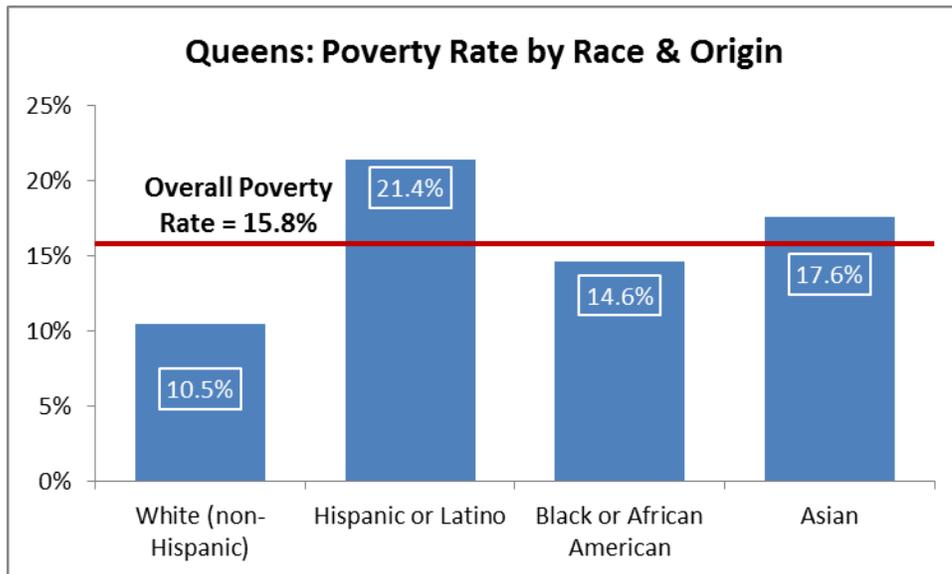


5. In Manhattan, which is the most expensive city in the U.S., nearly 300,000 households, 41% of the total, earn below \$50,000 per year. Yet Manhattan also has 120,765 high-income households earning over \$200,000 per year, making it the most unequal of all the boroughs. In comparison, the Bronx has 5,525 high-income households.

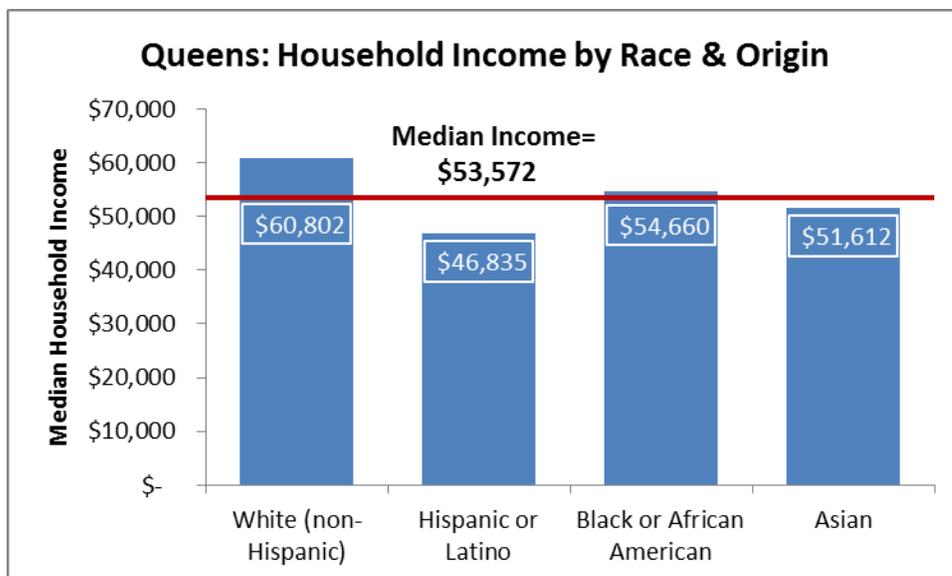


## Queens

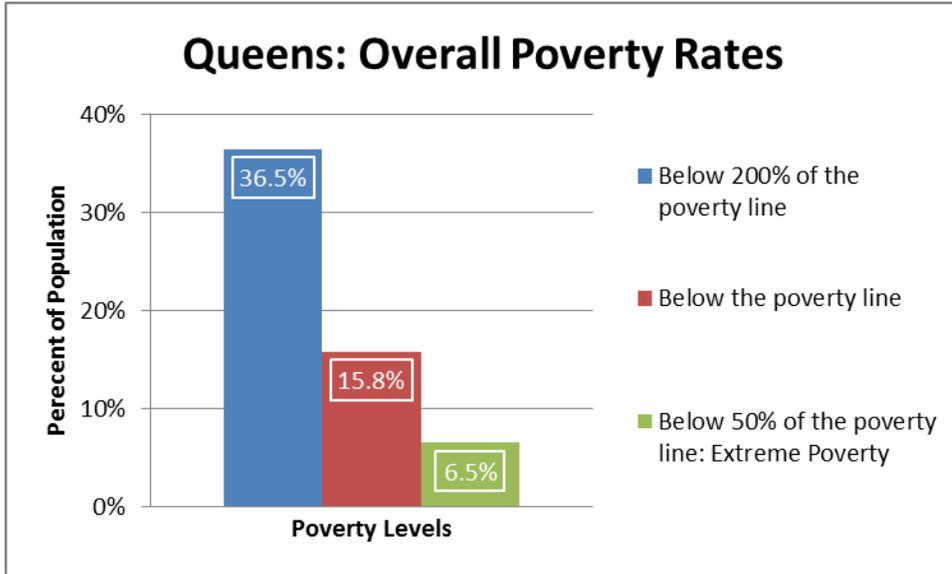
1. The poverty rate in Queens has remained steady since 2010. Though it has one of the lowest overall poverty levels of all the boroughs in New York City, the economic recovery seems to have not improved the situation for most residents. The poverty rate for Latinos increased the most in 2011, from 18.5% to 21.4%



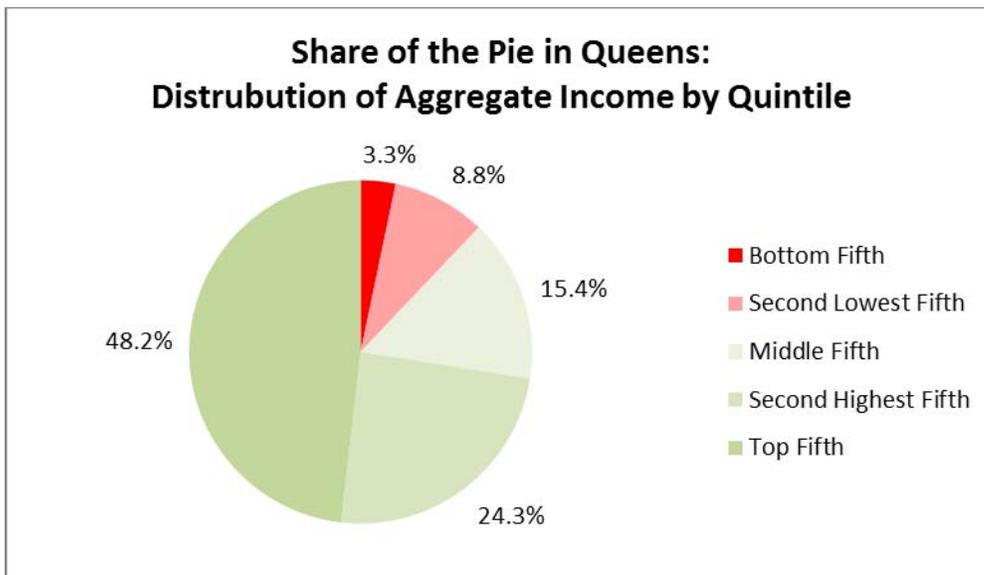
2. In 2011, Queens had the greatest degree of income equality by race among the five boroughs, with Black and Latino households earning nearly as much as White households. In 2011, the income for White households increased by over \$5,000 per year, while Latino households lost nearly \$4,000 over the same period. While there is still some balance in income compared with other boroughs, this is a startling shift.



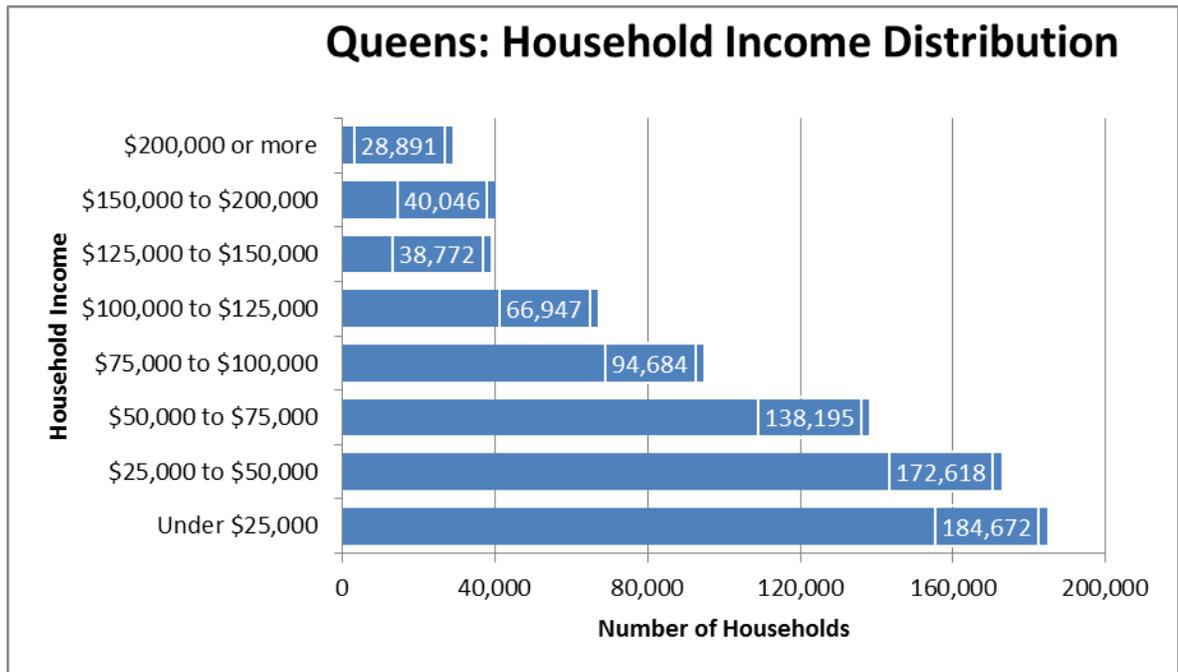
- One in three Queens residents lives below 200% of the poverty rate, which is \$22,968 per year for an individual. There are over 140,000 Queens' residents living in extreme poverty on less than \$5,585 per year for an individual. The Self-Sufficiency Standard, which measures how much someone must earn to meet basic needs, sets Queen's minimum income at \$31,185. As a result, potentially over half of all people in Queens cannot meet their basic needs, including housing, child care, food, health care, and transportation.



- The share of income for the top income earners in Queens increased slightly since 2010, while the share for the poorest decreased slightly. Nearly one-half of the income in Queens is earned by just one-fifth of the population. Three-fifths of the population must share just over one-quarter of the income.

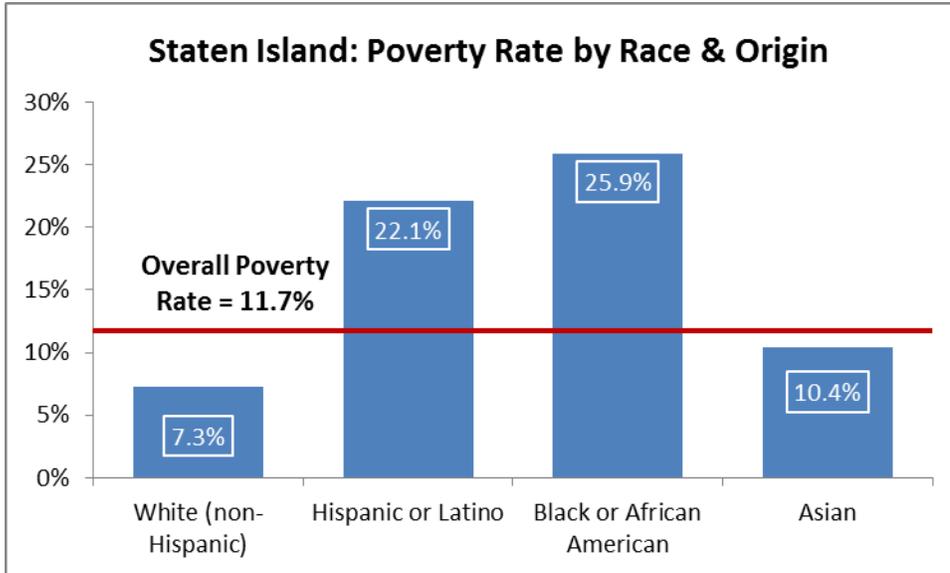


5. One-half of the households in Queens, 357,000 in total, earn below \$50,000 per year.

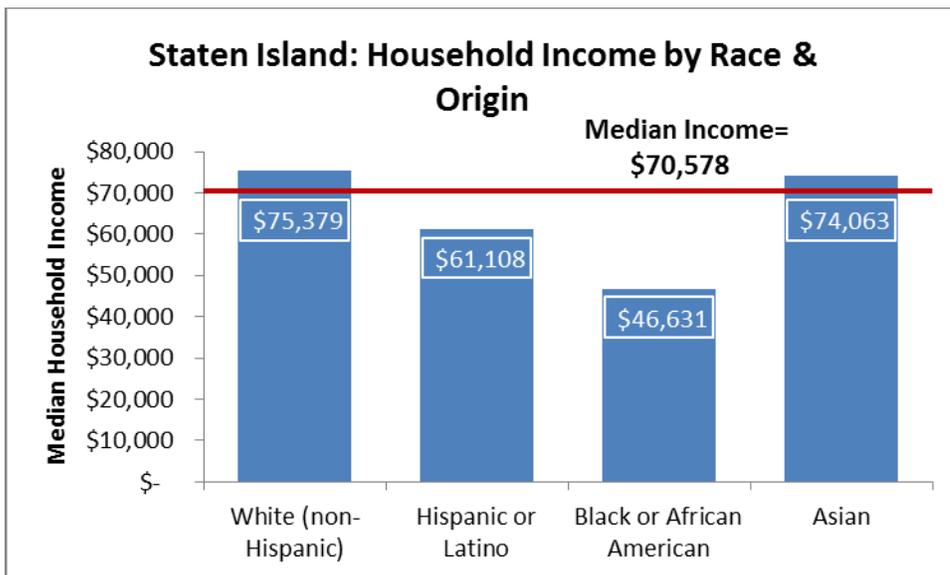


## Staten Island

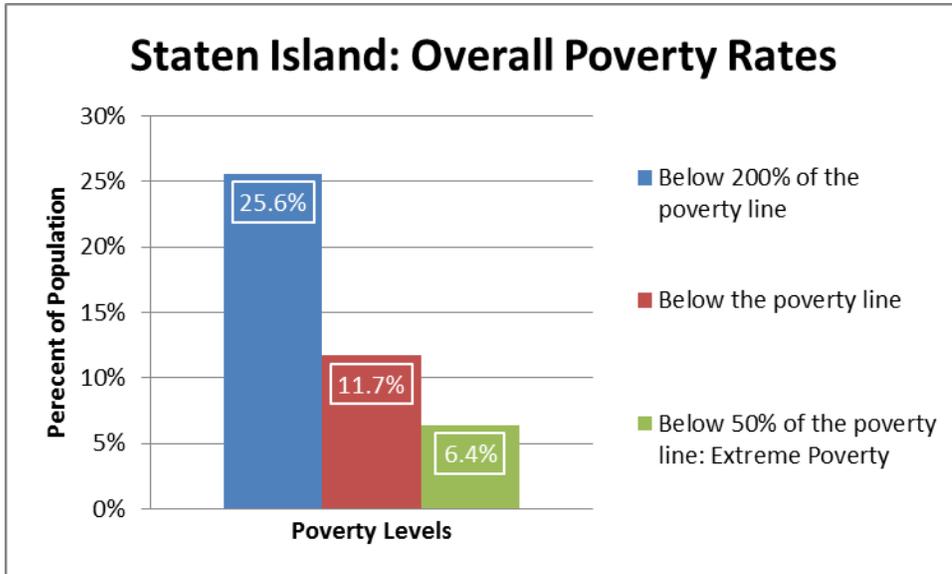
1. Staten Island has the lowest overall poverty rate of all the boroughs in New York City. At 11.7%, it is 18.7% lower than the Bronx's poverty rate. Poverty rates have remained largely unchanged in Staten Island since 2010, though Blacks experienced an uptick of .8% while the poverty rate for Asians declined 1.3%. One-quarter of Black residents of Staten Island live below the poverty level.



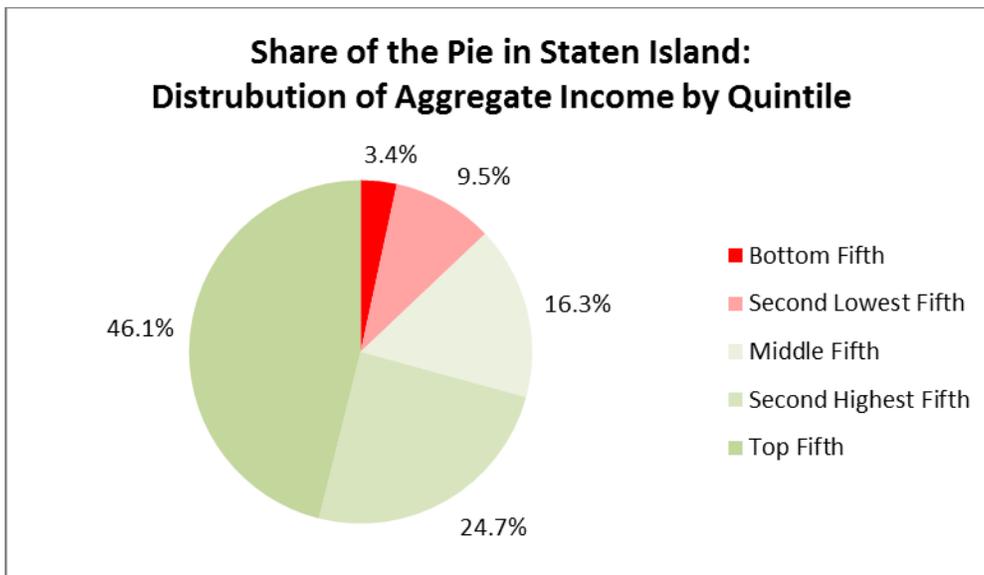
2. Staten Island has a distinct divergence from the other boroughs in household income distribution. The income of White households decreased since 2010, while that of Latino, Black and Asian households increased. Asian and Black households saw the largest increases, \$13,000 and \$6,000 respectively, reducing income inequality in the borough.



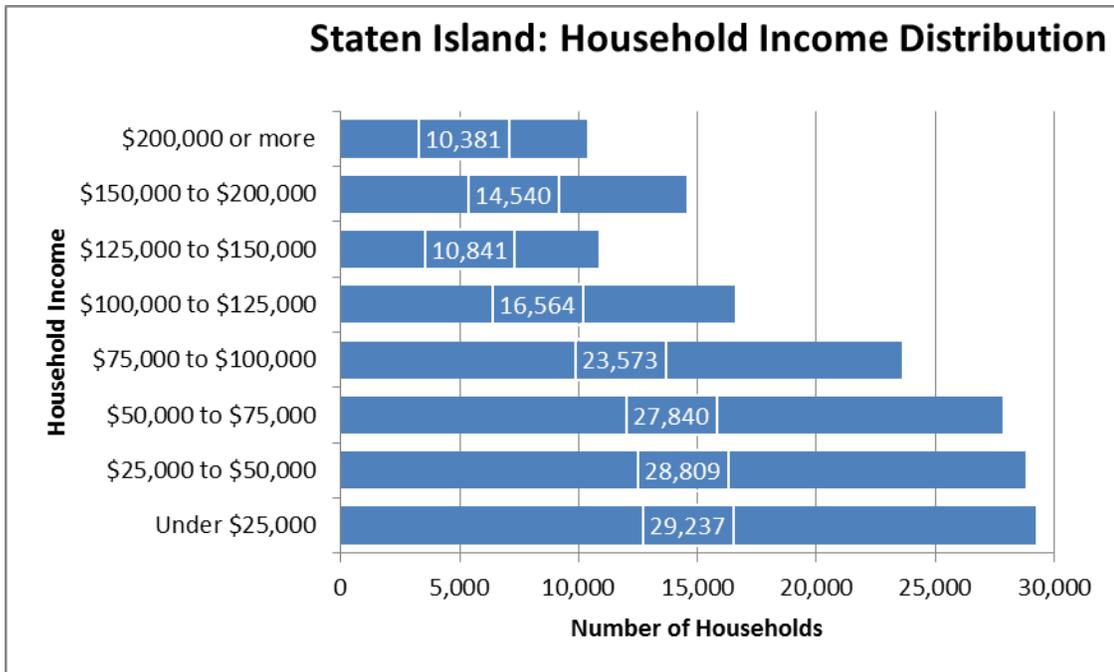
- One-quarter of the population in Staten Island lives below 200% of the poverty rate, which is \$22,968 per year for an individual. Nearly 30,000 Staten Islanders live in extreme poverty. The Self-Sufficiency Standard, which measures how much someone must earn to meet basic needs, sets Staten Island minimum income at \$30,361.



- In contrast to the other boroughs in New York City, the poor in Staten Island slightly increased their share of income in 2011. This shift in income came not from the wealthiest residents in Staten Island, who retained the same share of income as 2010, but from the middle and middle-upper income groups. Nevertheless, just under half the income in Staten Island is still earned by one-fifth of the population, while three-fifths of the population shares less than one-third of the income.



5. Staten Island has a greater balance of household income distribution than any other borough in New York City. Still, 58,000 households in Staten Island, 36% of the total, earn below \$50,000 per year.



## **Background Information**

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### **About the Data**

This data summary is based on American Community Survey data released on September 20, 2012 for January to December 2011. The American Community Survey is an annual survey of the U.S. Census Bureau that is conducted year-round for areas of population of 65,000 or above. Household incomes and earnings are reported for the past 12 months, and earnings are reported for the civilian employed population 16 years and over. Poverty rates are determined using the Census Bureau's Poverty Thresholds for 2011. Because the survey is based on a sample, the American Community Survey reports margins of error.

Poverty rates are based on the U.S. Census Bureau's Poverty Thresholds for 2011. The rates are based on annual income, and are as follows: Individual \$11,484; Two person household \$14,657; Three person household \$17,916; Four person household \$23,021. The Threshold ends at nine person household or more \$46,572.

If you have any questions about this report, please contact Josh Kellermann at ALIGN at 212.701.9483.

### **Summary of Source Tables**

*Overall Poverty Rates:* 2011 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates, S1701

*Working Poverty:* 2011 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates, S1701

*Median Household Income by Race and Origin:* 2011 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates, S1903

*Poverty Rate by Race and Origin:* 2011 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates, S1701

*Aggregate Share of Income by Quintile:* 2011 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates, B19082

*Household Income Distribution:* 2011 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates, B19001

### **About ALIGN**

ALIGN: The Alliance for a Greater New York's mission is to create good jobs, vibrant communities, and an accountable democracy for all New Yorkers. Our work unites worker, community, and other allies to build a more just and sustainable New York. ALIGN is a local affiliate of the Blue Green Apollo Alliance, Jobs with Justice and the Partnership for Working Families.