State policies that promote the economic security of our nation’s families can help offset larger economic and social conditions that make it difficult for families to get by and get ahead. This four-part profile provides data on Illinois’s low-income children and families and highlights state policy choices regarding families’ work attachment and advancement, income adequacy, and asset development.

In Illinois, there are 1,586,359 families, with 3,028,535 children. Among these children, 40 percent live in families that are low-income, defined as income below twice the federal poverty level (nationally, 45 percent of children live in low-income families). Young children are particularly likely to live in low-income families.

Low wages and a lack of higher education contribute to families having insufficient incomes. Nationally, 48 percent of low-income children have at least one parent who works full-time, year-round; in Illinois, the figure is 47 percent.

Parents without a college education often struggle to earn enough to support a family, but only 29 percent of adults in Illinois have a bachelor’s degree. A substantial portion of children in Illinois whose parents only have a high school diploma—65 percent—are low income.

Children of foreign-born parents are also more likely to be low income than children of native-born parents.

**Percent of children who are low-income by parental education, 2011**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Illinois</th>
<th>U.S.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No high school degree</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td>86%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Only a high school degree</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beyond a high school degree</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Percent of children who are low-income by parents’ nativity, 2011**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Illinois</th>
<th>U.S.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Children w/native-born parents</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children w/immigrant parents</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>63%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
State Choices to Promote Child Care Affordability and Access

Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) Subsidies

- Earnings limit for a single-parent family of 3²: $30,396/year
- Co-payment as percent of income for family of 3 at 150% FPL, 1 child in care³: 7%
- Providers prohibited from charging additional fees⁵: No⁴
- Provider payment rates at least 75th percentile of market rate⁶: No⁴

State Child and Dependent Care Tax Credit

- Refundable credit available⁷: No state credit
- Benefit structure⁷: No state credit
- Max benefit for family with 2 qualifying children⁷: No state credit

State Choices to Promote Access to Health Insurance

Public Health Insurance for Parents

- Applicant earnings limit for single parent with 2 children⁸: $32,556/year
- Parents eligible up to same limit as children, single parent with 2 children⁹: No
- Legal immigrants eligible for state-funded benefits when barred from federal¹⁰: Only if victims of domestic violence
- Legal immigrants otherwise barred from benefits eligible for prenatal care¹¹: Yes (no immigration test)

Public Health Insurance for Children

- Medicaid income eligibility limit as % of FPL for children ages 1-5 in family of 3¹²: 133%
- Medicaid income eligibility limit as % of FPL for children ages 6-19 in family of 3¹²: 133%
- SCHIP (separate program) income eligibility as % of FPL for children in family of 3¹⁴: 200%¹³

Low-income children who have parents working full- or part-time, 2011¹

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Illinois</th>
<th>U.S.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parent employed part-time</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent employed full-time</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Health insurance status by age, 2007¹⁶

- Children who lack health insurance: 7% Illinois, 11% U.S.
- Adults who lack health insurance: 18% Illinois, 20% U.S.

Employer-based health insurance coverage, 2000 and 2006¹⁷

- Individuals under 65 (2000): 71% Illinois, 68% U.S.
- Individuals under 65 (2006): 68% Illinois, 63% U.S.
- Children under 18 (2000): 68% Illinois, 66% U.S.
- Children under 18 (2006): 65% Illinois, 60% U.S.
**State Choices to Promote Access to Benefits for the Under- and Unemployed**

**Unemployment Insurance**

State counts most recent earnings when determining eligibility. No

Eligible if seeking part-time work. Yes, in some cases.

State has general provision recognizing "good cause" for quitting work.

**Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Cash Assistance**

Earnings limit for a single-parent family of 3. $5,832/year

**INCOME ADEQUACY**

**State Choices to Increase and Supplement Wages**

**Minimum Wage Standards**

Indexed to inflation. No

**State Earned Income Tax Credit**

Refundable credit available. Yes

Percent of federal EITC. 5%

**State Choices to Reduce Tax Burdens**

**Income Tax Liability**

Income tax threshold for single-parent family of 3. $13,900/year

Income tax threshold for two-parent family of 4. $15,900/year

Income tax burden for single-parent family of 3 at 100% FPL. $92/year

**Official unemployment rate, 2007**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>U.S.</th>
<th>Illinois</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4.6%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Part-time workers who want full-time work, 2003**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>U.S.</th>
<th>Illinois</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>13%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Income tax burden for two-parent family of 4 at 100% FPL**

$201/year
Median annual household income for family of four, 2006

- U.S.: $70,354
- Illinois: $75,484

Workers covered by a union, 1987 and 2007

- 1987:
  - Illinois: 24%
  - U.S.: 19%
- 2007:
  - Illinois: 15%
  - U.S.: 13%
State Choices to Promote Access to Paid Leave

Family and Medical Leave

State provisions for paid leave\textsuperscript{30} None

State Choices to Promote Adequate Benefits for the Under- and Unemployed

Unemployment Insurance

Minimum weekly benefit (no dependents)\textsuperscript{31} $51/week

Additional dependent allowance provided\textsuperscript{31} Yes

Weekly benefit amount is indexed to average weekly wage\textsuperscript{32} Yes

Potential duration of benefits\textsuperscript{34} 26 weeks\textsuperscript{33}

Food Stamps

Legal immigrants eligible for state-funded benefits when barred from federal\textsuperscript{36} No

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Cash Assistance

Annual maximum benefit for family of 3\textsuperscript{22} $4,752/year

Treatment of child support income\textsuperscript{37} Up to $50 passed through. Amount disregarded for purposes of eligibility and benefits.

Households facing hardships, 2006\textsuperscript{35}
**ASSET DEVELOPMENT AND PROTECTION**

**State Policy Choices to Promote Asset Development**

**Individual Development Accounts**

State-supported IDA program in operation\(^{38}\)

**State Choices to Promote Asset Protection**

**Public Health Insurance for Parents**

Assets disregarded for eligibility determination\(^{14}\)

**Public Health Insurance for Children**

Assets disregarded for Medicaid eligibility\(^{79}\)

Assets disregarded for SCHIP (separate program) eligibility\(^{14}\)

**Food Stamps**

Treatment of vehicles in asset test\(^{40}\) Aligned to TANF cash assistance rules

**Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Cash Assistance**

Assets disregarded for eligibility determination\(^{22}\)

Treatment of vehicles in asset test\(^{22}\) Excludes value of 1 vehicle per household\(^{41}\)

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**Children who are "asset poor," 2004\(^{42}\)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>U.S.</th>
<th>Illinois</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Children who are &quot;asset poor,&quot; 2004</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Homeownership rate, 2007\(^{43}\)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>U.S.</th>
<th>Illinois</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Homeownership rate, 2007</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>69%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Data were compiled from 50-state sources. Some state policy decisions may have changed since these data were collected.

1. National data were calculated from the 2011 American Community Survey, representing information from 2011. State data were calculated from the 2009-2011 American Community Survey, representing information from the years 2009 to 2011.
3. If the state calculates co-payments based on the cost of care, figure reflects the co-payment for a 4-year-old in licensed, nonaccredited center care at the maximum state payment rate. Karen Schulman and Helen Blank, State Child Care Assistance Policies 2007: Some Steps Forward, More Progress Needed, National Women's Law Center, September 2007.
4. Additional fees are allowed for vouchers, but not for contracted slots.
6. States were asked to report state reimbursement rates and the 75th percentile of market rates for their state's most populous city, country, or region. Data reflect basic provider payment rates (higher rates may be available for particular types of care). Rates are considered below the 75th percentile if they are based on an out-dated market rate survey (more than 2 years old). Karen Schulman and Helen Blank, State Child Care Assistance Policies 2007: Some Steps Forward, More Progress Needed, National Women's Law Center, September 2007.
21. A general "good cause" provision extends eligibility to persons who leave their jobs for "personal emergencies" or "compelling circumstances", which should include--among others--child care conflicts, illness, domestic violence, and spousal relocation. Eligibility determinations, however, may vary in practice. States may also specifically recognize certain reasons as "good cause"; for more information see Appendix B in Rebecca Smith, Rick McHugh, Andrew Stettner, and Nancy Segal, Between a Rock and a Hard Place: Confronting the Failure of State Unemployment Insurance Systems to Serve Women and Working Families, National Employment Law Project, 2003. Rebecca Smith, Rick McHugh, Andrew Stettner, and Nancy Segal, Between a Rock and a Hard Place: Confronting the Failure of State Unemployment Insurance Systems to Serve Women and Working Families, National Employment Law Project, July 2003.


24. Figure reflects the percent of part-time workers who are available to work full-time, but usually work less than 35 hours per week due to slack work or unfavorable business conditions, inability to find full-time work, or seasonal declines in demand. U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Geographic Profile of Employment and Unemployment, 2003, "Estimates for States, Table 16: Employed and Unemployed Persons by Full- and Part-Time Status, Sex, Age, Race, and Hispanic or Latino Ethnicity," http://www.bls.gov (accessed March 14, 2008).


27. Calculations include income tax credits that are available to all low-income families in the state, such as state earned income tax credits.


31. These reflect provisions for private sector employees; more generous rules may apply for the public sector.


35. Claimants are eligible for the lesser of 26 weeks of benefits or their total base period wages.

36. Potential duration is the maximum number of weeks of benefits that a claimant is eligible for under the regular state program. In most states, it is determined based on the amount and distribution of the recipient's earnings in the base period; eight states have a uniform potential duration for all claimants.


39. Housing Insecurity: Figure reflects the percent of families living in rental units who pay 30 percent or more of their income on housing. U.S. Census Bureau, "American Community Survey Custom Tables, 2006: Gross Rent as a Percentage of Household Income in the Past 12 Months," http://factfinder.census.gov (accessed March 14, 2008).

40. Adult lawful permanent residents (LPRs) are generally barred from federal benefits during their first 5 years as LPRs. Exceptions include refugees and U.S. veterans (and their families). See data source for more details.


42. A child support pass-through is the amount of collected child support that the state gives to families on whose behalf the child support was collected. A child support disregard is the amount of child support that the family can keep without lowering their TANF benefits.


44. Community-based IDA programs are operating in all states but often without state support. Also, in some states without state-supported IDA programs, IDA legislation was passed but never implemented due to lack of state funding, or IDA legislation expired, and no new state support was allocated.


47. Households in which all members receive TANF cash assistance or SSI benefits do not have to meet gross income or asset eligibility criteria. Most states also waive these criteria for recipients of certain other benefits; some states waive these criteria for nearly all applicants.

41. When there is more than one vehicle, the equity value of the vehicle of greater value is exempt.

42. Figure reflects the percent of children in households that have insufficient net worth to subsist at the federal poverty level for three months in the absence of income. Corporation for Enterprise Development, *Assets and Opportunity Scorecard*, [http://www.cfed.org](http://www.cfed.org) (accessed February 25, 2008).

43. Figure reflects the percent of households who are homeowners. U.S. Census Bureau, "Housing Vacancies and Homeownership, Annual Statistics 2007, Table 13," [http://www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov) (March 14, 2008).