CENTER ON
POVERTY &
SOCIAL POLICY
at Columbia University

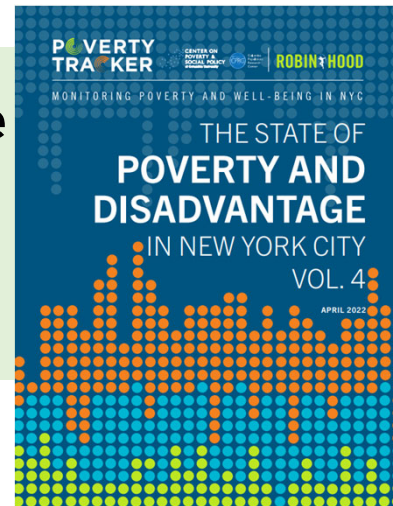POVERTY TRACKER
Powered by ROBIN HOOD

The State of Poverty and Disadvantage in New York City

Latest findings from the Poverty Tracker

Sophie Collyer
Center on Poverty and Social Policy Annual Conference
May 26, 2022

POVERTY TRACKER
CENTER ON POVERTY & SOCIAL POLICY | ROBIN HOOD
MONITORING POVERTY AND WELL-BEING IN NYC

THE STATE OF
POVERTY AND DISADVANTAGE
IN NEW YORK CITY
VOL. 4

APRIL 2022

POVERTY TRACKER
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LONGITUDINAL DESIGN

Launched in 2012 to capture a more complete picture of poverty and disadvantage in New York City and to track long-term trends and dynamics.

Surveying a representative sample of more than 3,000 New Yorkers every three months for up to four years.

MULTIDIMENSIONAL MEASURES

INCOME POVERTY

MATERIAL HARDSHIPS

HEALTH PROBLEMS

DISADVANTAGE
(INCOME POVERTY OR MATERIAL HARDSHIPS OR HEALTH PROBLEMS)

Measure more than just poverty. Annual measure rates of income poverty, material hardship, health problems. Also regularly collect data on factors related to disadvantage, such mental health, life satisfaction, assets and debts, employment, among others.
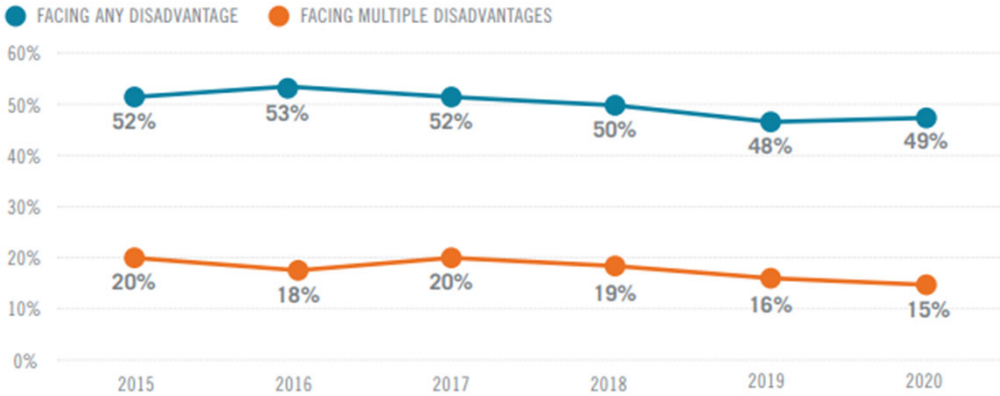
Poverty and disadvantage in New York City are widespread *and* citywide rates mask stark disparities.

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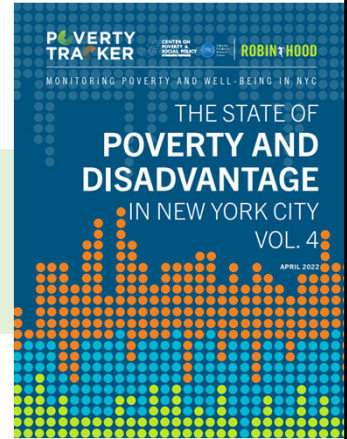
In 2020, the city's poverty rate was well above the national average.

NEW YORK CITY

16%
of adults

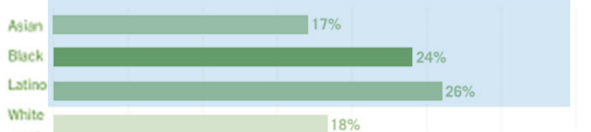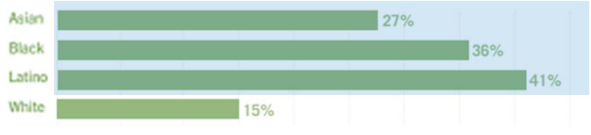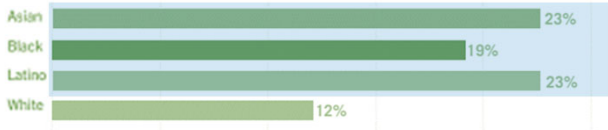18%
of children

NATIONAL

9%
of adults

10%
of children
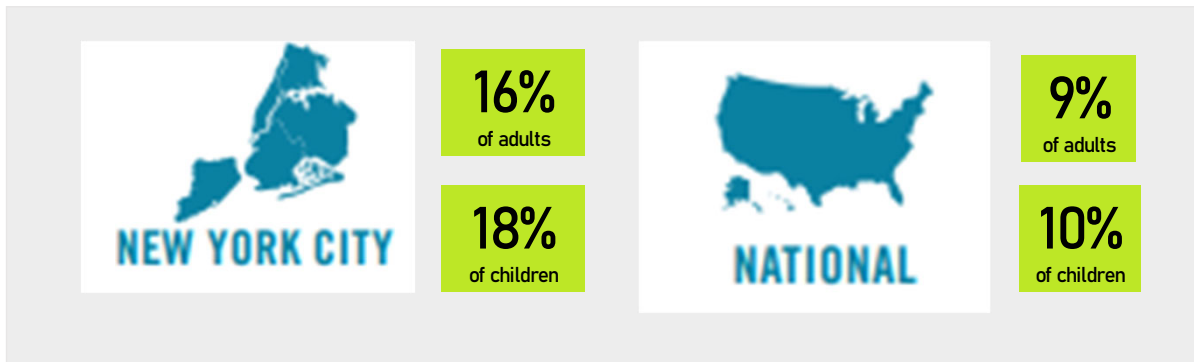
Roughly half of New Yorkers faced at least one form of disadvantage (poverty, material hardship, or health problems) in 2020.

INCOME POVERTY

MATERIAL HARDSHIPS

HEALTH PROBLEMS

● FACING ANY DISADVANTAGE   ● FACING MULTIPLE DISADVANTAGES

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Facing any disadvantage	52%	53%	52%	50%	48%	49%
Facing multiple disadvantages	20%	18%	20%	19%	16%	15%

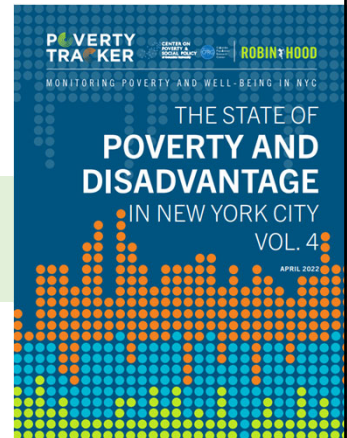CENTER ON POVERTY & SOCIAL POLICY
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Economic disadvantage was disproportionately borne by Asian, Black, and Latino New Yorkers.

Addressing the underlying policy drivers of these disparities is key to an equitable recovery from the pandemic.

INCOME POVERTY
Asian 23%
Black 19%
Latino 23%
White 12%

MATERIAL HARDSHIPS
Asian 27%
Black 36%
Latino 41%
White 15%

HEALTH PROBLEMS
Asian 17%
Black 24%
Latino 26%
White 18%

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The economic shocks of the pandemic are tied to ongoing mental health struggles.

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2020 worsened New Yorkers' mental health.

Serious Psychological Distress among New Yorkers, 2019 and 2020

OVERALL

30%

25%

20%

15%

10%   9%   11%

5%

0%
        2019   2020
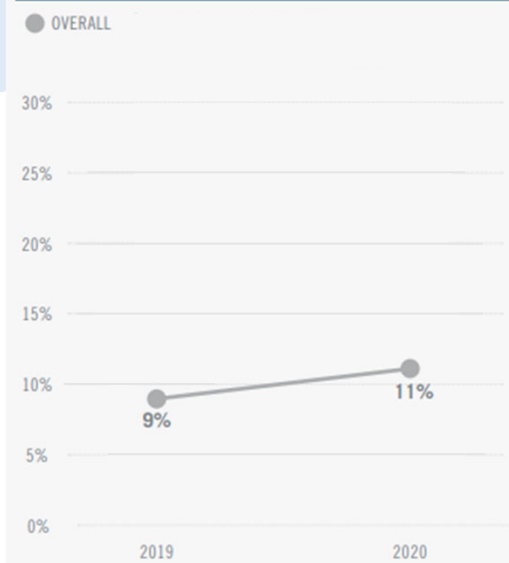
Share of adults facing serious psychological distress rose from 9% to 11%.

But declines in mental health were most acute for New Yorkers facing economic disadvantage.
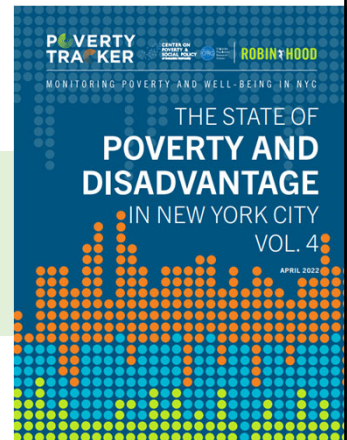
Serious Psychological Distress among New Yorkers, 2019 and 2020

- OVERALL
- MULTIPLE DISADVANTAGES
- ONE FORM OF DISADVANTAGE
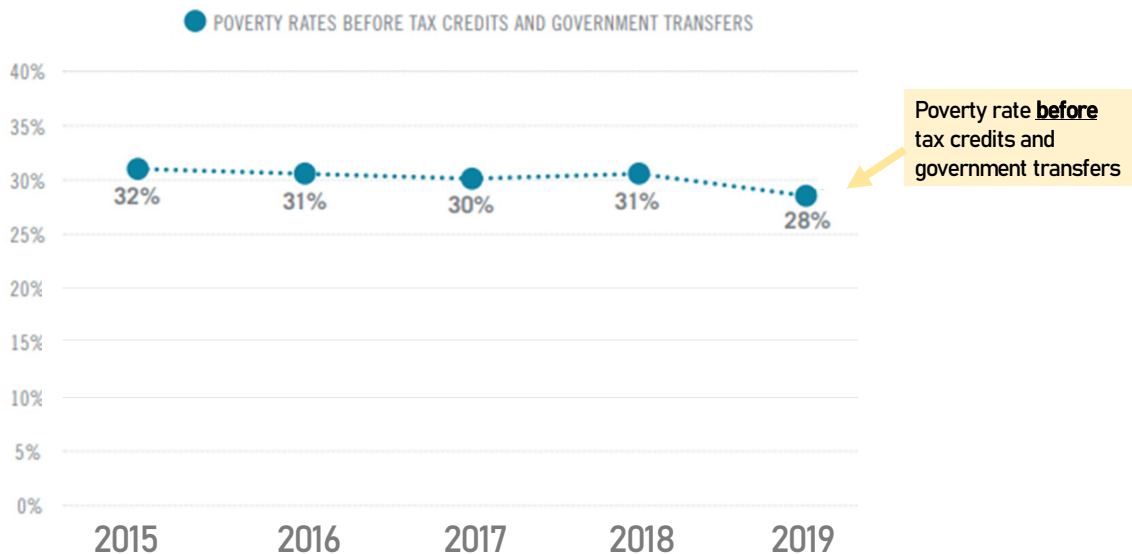- NO DISADVANTAGE

28%
24%
14%
11%
11%
9%
3%
3%

2019   2020
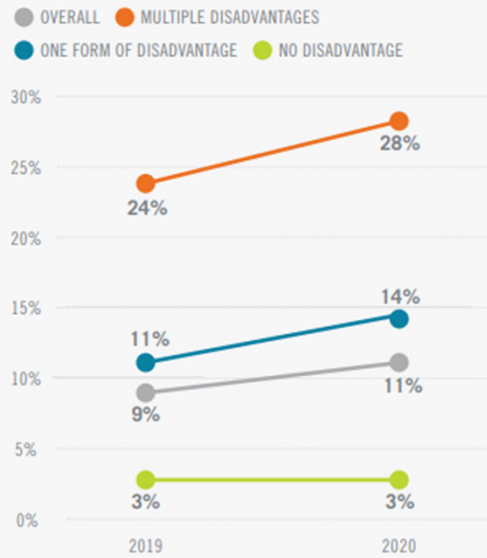
Among those facing multiple disadvantages, it rose from 24% to 28%

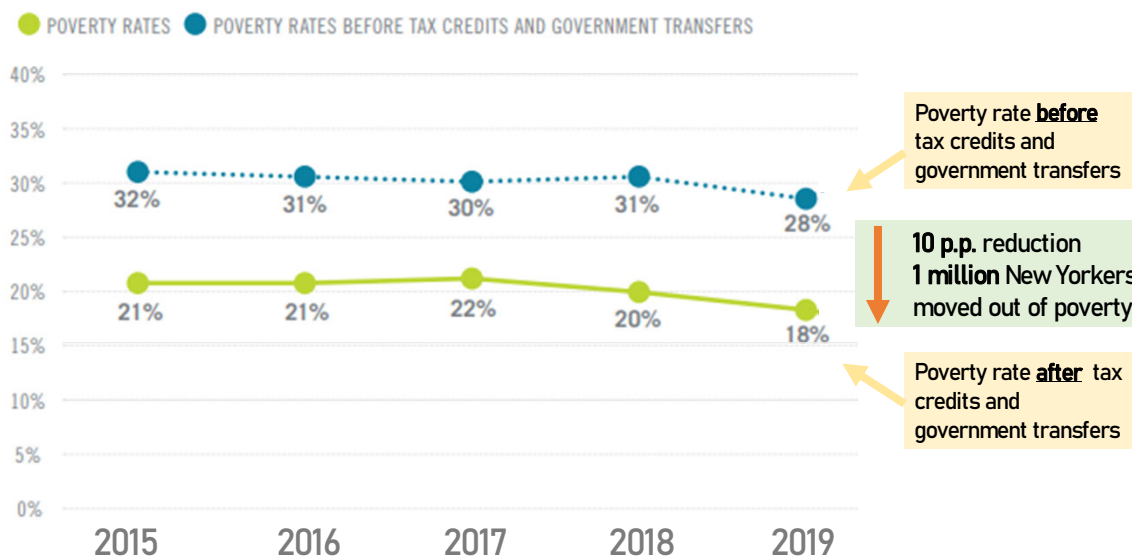**While remaining relatively stable for those not facing economic disadvantage.**

Policy reforms can have a substantial effect on the economic hardships and disadvantages that New Yorkers face today.

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POVERTY &
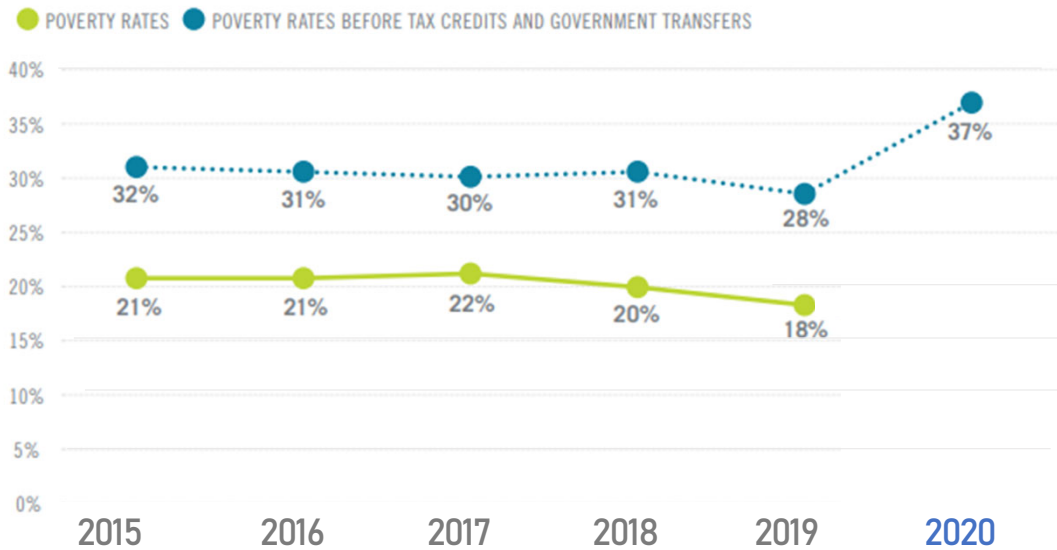SOCIAL POLICY
at Columbia University

In a typical year, roughly 30% of New Yorkers live in poverty *before* accounting for the role of government policies like the EITC, SNAP, UI, and housing subsidies.

● POVERTY RATES BEFORE TAX CREDITS AND GOVERNMENT TRANSFERS

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
	32%	31%	30%	31%	28%

Poverty rate **before** tax credits and government transfers

And in a typical year these policies reduce the poverty rate by roughly 10 percentage points, moving close to 1 million New Yorkers above the poverty line.
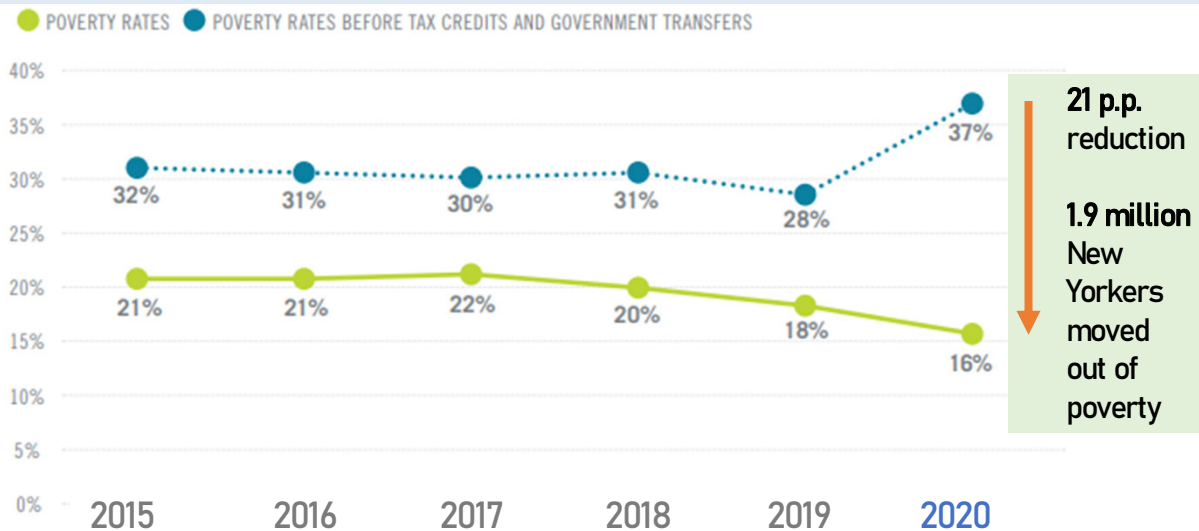
● POVERTY RATES   ● POVERTY RATES BEFORE TAX CREDITS AND GOVERNMENT TRANSFERS

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
	32%	31%	30%	31%	28%
	21%	21%	22%	20%	18%

Poverty rate **before** tax credits and government transfers

10 p.p. reduction
1 million New Yorkers moved out of poverty

Poverty rate **after** tax credits and government transfers

In 2020, as millions of New Yorkers lost work or income, we saw a sharp increase in the poverty rate before accounting for government policies

● POVERTY RATES ● POVERTY RATES BEFORE TAX CREDITS AND GOVERNMENT TRANSFERS

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Poverty rates before tax credits and government transfers	32%	31%	30%	31%	28%	37%
Poverty rates	21%	21%	22%	20%	18%	

2020 also saw <u>temporary</u> reforms made all levels of government to strengthen the safety net and stabilize incomes in uncertain times.

- Temporary expansion to Unemployment Insurance benefits

- Economic Impact Payments or "stimulus checks"

- Expanded SNAP benefits

- Pandemic EBT

- Eviction moratoria

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Due to these policy expansions, the poverty rate in New York City actually fell between 2019 and 2020 and 1.9 million New Yorkers were kept above the poverty line by government policies.

● POVERTY RATES   ● POVERTY RATES BEFORE TAX CREDITS AND GOVERNMENT TRANSFERS

21 p.p. reduction

1.9 million New Yorkers moved out of poverty

Altogether ...
- highlight the high rates of disadvantage in New York City
- economic disadvantage and mental health, and
- the effects of policy reforms

- Single metric vs. multi-dimensional measures
- Multitude of social forces affecting well-being and economic security
- The potential of policy reforms in addressing these multiple and varying challenges

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Thank you!

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