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New Poverty & Health Data: 1.6 Million Children in California Lived in Poverty in 2017

Children remain the poorest age group in California, with 1.6 million living in poverty in 2017, according to American Community Survey (ACS) data released today by the U.S. Census Bureau. Although the child poverty rate declined from 19.9 percent in 2016 to 18.1 percent in 2017, it is still unconscionable that nearly 1 in 5 children live with economic hardship in California – the world's fifth-largest income and yet among the highest poverty rates of all states.

About 1 in 14 California children (644,223) lived in deep poverty – an income of \$34.64 or less a day for a family of four – putting them at severe risk of hunger, homelessness, and toxic stress.

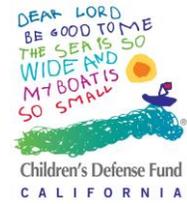
The data released is a part of an ongoing survey by the U.S. Census Bureau which defines poverty as an annual income below \$25,283 for a family of four, or less than \$2,107 a month or \$69.27 a day. Deep poverty is less than half of that level – an annual income of \$12,642 for a family of four. Of the poor children in California, 40 percent are living in deep poverty.

“CDF-CA and other advocates have been working hard to end deep child poverty in this state. This year, the California Earned Income Tax Credit was expanded to include 700,000 additional households and this year's state budget includes increased CalWorks grant levels for families,” said Shimica Gaskins, executive director of Children's Defense Fund-California. “But while we expand programs to secure the safety net for our most vulnerable group, we cannot have the federal government cutting anti-poverty programs like SNAP that help families provide basic needs for their children.”

Children of color in California continue to be disproportionately poor. Black, Latino and American Indian/Alaska Native children are about three times more likely to be living in poverty than their White peers – 24.2 percent (1,121,175) of Latino children, 28.6 percent (134,126) of Black children and 26.3 percent (19,197) of American Indian/Alaska Native children were poor in 2017, compared to 8.9 percent (203,123) of White children.

Despite considerable gains in covering California children through Medicaid, CHIP, the Affordable Care Act (ACA) and most recently, the expansion of Medi-Cal to all income-eligible children regardless of documentation, more than 300,000 children (3.1 percent) under age 19 remain uninsured. However, much of these coverage gains could be at risk if efforts to chip away at the ACA or radically revise immigration rules that impact legal immigrants are successful.

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Children's Defense Fund-California is the California office of the Children's Defense Fund, a non-profit child advocacy organization that has worked relentlessly for over 40 years to ensure a level playing field for all children. The Children's Defense Fund Leave No Child Behind® mission is to ensure every child a Healthy Start, a Head Start, a Fair Start, a Safe Start and a Moral Start in life and successful passage to adulthood with the help of caring families and communities. www.cdfca.org