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New York City's poverty rate rose to alarming 20.1% in 2010, latest Census Bureau figures show

BY **KATHLEEN LUCADAMO**
DAILY NEWS STAFF WRITER

Friday, September 23rd 2011, 4:00 AM

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Julia Xanthos/News

Marilyn Muentes has four children to care for but has been out of work since 2009.

One of five New Yorkers is too poor to pay rent or buy food - a troubling sign the city is still stumbling through a bruising recession, new statistics show.

The latest **Census Bureau** figures show the city's poverty rate catapulted to 20.1% last year, its highest point in more than 10 years.

Even city officials were stunned by the leap from 18.7% in 2009, but they blamed the bad economy for the growing number.

"We are not here to put lipstick on a pig. These are not the numbers we wanted to see," said **Mark Levitan**, **Mayor Bloomberg's** poverty point man.

Poverty has been a sticky issue for **Bloomberg**, who counted 1.49 million New Yorkers in poverty when he came into office in 2002. Now it's 1.6 million.

"I really hope things turn around," said **Marilyn Muentes**, 22, who relies on friends' homes in **Manhattan** and the **Bronx** to shelter her and her four children.

"My babies are hungry. We all need help now," she said, noting she hasn't worked since she lost her waitressing job in 2009.

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New York mirrored a national trend of swelling poverty - 15% of Americans are poor, meaning they earn \$21,765 for a family of four. That's up from 14% in 2009.

The crisis is most severe in big cities - more than 20% of the population in [Chicago](#), [Los Angeles](#) and [Dallas](#) are poor.

Most worrisome, experts say, are the racial disparities. In New York, 15% of whites are poor while 28% of Hispanics and 23% of blacks meet the poverty threshold.

Queens had the most dramatic jump in poverty last year. The Bronx had the highest poverty rate in the city, followed by [Brooklyn](#).

Every borough but Manhattan suffered an increase.

Anti-poverty groups say working-class people are increasingly falling to the bottom of the economic food chain - those whose hours are cut back or lose the second job that paid for clothes and food.

"If this problem goes untreated, you are endangering the entire economic engine that is [New York City](#)," said [David Jones](#), president of [Community Service Society](#).

At St. John's Bread and Life, a food pantry and soup kitchen in [Bedford-Stuyvesant](#), Brooklyn, traffic for meals soared 17% this year, [Executive Director Anthony Butler](#) said.

"People don't have enough money, so they are using their emergency funds to pay rent and they can't afford food," Butler said.

[Bloomberg](#) has tried to tackle the poverty issue by forming the [Center for Economic Opportunity](#) and, most recently, announcing a public-private partnership to help young black and Latino men get the skills and services they need to move ahead.

City Hall even created a poverty formula that has pegged the city's rate as higher than the fed's because it accounts for a local cost of living.

It was 19.9% in 2009 and will be updated later this year.

Still, the flip-flops on [Wall Street](#) and hemorrhaging of jobs will make it difficult to budge any poverty rate, Jones predicted.

"New York City can't do this on their own," he said.

"It can come up with remedies on its own, but it's part of a national problem."

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danbx

10:30:06 AM Too poor for food, but still have cable TV, because that is essential.
Sep 23, 2011

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hjo4

10:31:48 AM [At least her hair is did.]--- "Laid to the bone", as they say. Hell she can do hair on the side and probably does as she scam the welfare and

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Opinion: Each, in his or her own way, seized opportunities that both men missed.



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Summer's over, but that doesn't stop these stars from baring some skin



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system.

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bklove

10:40:14 AM
Sep 23, 2011 Jturner1105 is a stupid bigot. immigrants constitute a large proportion of the working population of this city. im an immigrant from Nigeria. came here with \$400 in my pocket. now live comfortably. never collected food stamps, welfare or any other form of public asst. im grateful to God. we immigrants are too proud to live on govt asst.

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daber35

10:46:29 AM
Sep 23, 2011 I'm not going to mention any nationalities, but I already probably know where this one came from. These immigrants and young girls have learned to manipulate the NYS welfare system. They know you can have as many kids as you can and no one can tell you anything about it. They also know that their little kids will generate benefits for them, such as Section 8 housing, Medicaid, Welfare, Food Stamps, etc. In addition, to that, someone hook up wit the local neighborhood drug dealer and start living a fabulous life.. Many even start subleasing their Section 8 Apts to newer illegal immigrants and go live in the some country in the caribbean come once a year to complete the affidavit and then go back to their country and continue living like a Queen. America, you got to love it. We really are a cash cow. But all this is going to stop some day soon. Too bad the politicians are too blind to see what happens behind the scenes...

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Just_like_them

10:48:14 AM
Sep 23, 2011 Hjo: "The Mayor who ran on his expertise of CREATING JOBS has FAILED NY'ers." That's because businessmen don't create jobs, they NEED HELP. And the mayor's help seems to have robbed the city blind over and over again. Not that those things EVER happen in the private sector.

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hjo4

10:51:49 AM
Sep 23, 2011 [That's because businessmen don't create jobs, they NEED HELP. And the mayor's help seems to have robbed the city blind over and over again]-- Well according to Mayor Bloomberg and the NY MEDIA he knew how to create JOBS, JOBS, JOBS because he's a BILLIONAIRE. That was his 3rd term platform and we see how much of a JOB creator his is. NOT.

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vemberjudgement

10:52:01 AM
Sep 23, 2011 Thanks to the people in the comments section in proving America is not a Christian nation.

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papa108

11:04:08 AM
Sep 23, 2011 Shame on this Marilyn Muentes! Four kids and only 22 years old. Practice birth control. Why would she have four kids at the age of 22 and no job?

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hitmeoff

11:13:21 AM
Sep 23, 2011 even with the poverty rate increase they still want to cut out the advantage program. and of course there was an increase of poverty in all the boroughs in the city except manhattan. look at the type of people who live in manhattan. i bet that the poverty increase is only geared to demographics of people. Blacks and Hispanics. No whites or very little.

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Spydergurl33

11:14:52 AM
Sep 23, 2011 Stop living beyond your means by charging up your credit cards for non-essentials! Also,quit popping kids "left-to-right", that too is not a necessity.

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