



**Child Poverty Reduction
Advisory Council**

Child Poverty Reduction Advisory Council (CPRAC)

Meeting 06 – November 20, 2023

Reminders – Administrative Items

- Meetings are being recorded and live streamed

Table of Contents

- I. Welcome – Meeting Goals**
- II. Status Update – Overview**
- III. Status Update – Committees**
- IV. Status Update – Progress Report**
- V. Looking Ahead – Next Steps**

Welcome

Welcome

- **Assistant Secretary to the Governor for Human Services and Mental Hygiene Alyson Tarek –**
Representing Deputy Secretary Jihoon Kim, CPRAC Co-Chair
- **Acting Commissioner Barbara Guinn (OTDA) –**
CPRAC Co-Chair

Goals for Meeting 6

- **Review** – recap goals, work to date
- **Status updates** – research, data analysis, committees
- **Discuss** – draft progress report
- **Schedule** – confirm Meeting 7

Status Update

Overview

Recap – CPRAC

- CPRAC is charged with:
 - studying child poverty in NYS,
 - developing recommendations for reducing child poverty by 50% over 10 years,
 - measuring and reporting on progress towards that goal

Recap – CPRAC

- **To study poverty**, CPRAC has reviewed key research and is also obtaining data from the Urban Institute
- **To develop recommendations**, CPRAC conducted initial orientations on key policy areas and created committees which are having focused discussion about specific policy and reform ideas that could reduce poverty
- **To measure and report on New York State's progress** in reducing poverty, the Urban Institute will estimate the effects of recently-enacted policies and programs

Recap – CPRAC

- CPRAC is required by statute to consider strategies to reduce child poverty that include, but are not limited to:
 - expanding and strengthening NY's Earned Income Tax Credit
 - expanding and strengthening NY's Empire State Child Credit
 - expanding access to subsidized housing/housing assistance
 - reforming Agency programs

Recap – CPRAC

- For policies that CPRAC considers, CPRAC is required to analyze the effects each policy would have by itself on child poverty, as well as in combination with others
- Research indicates it is unlikely that any single policy option will achieve the goal of reducing child poverty by 50%, so combinations of policies will have to be considered

Status Update – CPRAC

- As of this August, completed initial subject matter orientations for all key topics/committees:
 - Tax Policy
 - Housing
 - Employment/Wages
 - Public Benefits
 - Childhood
- All committees have begun convening to discuss each topic and create a list of policy ideas for modeling

Recap – Urban Institute

- Researchers at Urban Institute are conducting comprehensive analysis of poverty in NYS to:
 - Develop a baseline (“before”) against which NY’s progress and CPRAC’s proposed policies will be compared
 - Measure New York’s progress (estimating the effects of policies in past two budgets)
 - Project the effect on child poverty of several different policies (individually and in combination)

Status Update – Urban Institute

- UI's comprehensive analysis is underway and will be informed by ongoing discussions among CPRAC committees:
 - Baseline analysis (using 2019 data) – posted on our website
 - Analysis of recently enacted policies – underway
 - Estimates of effects of proposed policies – preparing to begin (within each topic area, proposed policies for modeling being discussed and honed by CPRAC committees)

Status Update – Measuring NYS Progress

- UI estimated the projected effects of recently-enacted policies (from SFY22-23 and 23-24 Budgets) on child poverty in New York, comparing to baseline
- Four *simulations*:
 - Effects of child-poverty-related permanent policies in FY23 and FY24 Budgets
 - Effects of one-time/temporary expansion/supplement of EITC
 - Effects of one-time/temporary expansion/supplement of ESCC
 - Effects of permanent policies referenced above, combined with temporary policies listed

Status Update – Measuring NYS Progress

- According to UI estimates, **NYS is already making progress reducing child poverty through recently-enacted policies**
- All four simulations are estimated to have child-poverty-reduction effects*:
 - Child-poverty-related permanent policies in FY23 and FY24 Budgets: 7.6% reduction
 - One-time/temporary expansion/supplement of EITC: 2.1% reduction on its own
 - One-time/temporary expansion/supplement of ESCC: 2.3% reduction on its own
 - Permanent policies together with temporary policies: estimated cumulative 12.4% reduction

**does not yet include Employment Effects*

Next Steps – Assessing Individual Policies

- Committees will continue to meet and come to a consensus in each policy area around the ideas to model to assess their projected effects on child poverty
- UI will provide estimates of the independent effects on child poverty of individual policy ideas
- Committees will reconvene to review data and develop priorities/rank, with a focus on child poverty reduction
- Committee will report consensus priorities back to CPRAC statutory members for further consideration

Next Steps – Developing Policy Packages

- Statutory members will review all committees' recommendations and develop packages that combine policy ideas from each area
- UI will model the effects of the various proposed policy combinations to determine their estimated *cumulative* effects, accounting for interactions between policies
- Based on the data, CPRAC will recommend packages of policy proposals that achieve a 50% reduction in child poverty in NYS over the next decade

Status Update

Committees

CPRAC Committees – Work to Date

- **The goal of each committee is to develop consensus around specific ideas in each policy area that could child reduce poverty in New York, including by:**
 - Reviewing existing research, data, policies, trends
 - Discussing specific proposals for policy reforms and/or new policies to reduce poverty
 - Obtaining data on the relative child poverty-reduction effects of those ideas, where possible
 - Using that data to help prioritize specific ideas for recommendation in each policy area
 - Reporting the committee's recommendations to the statutory members of CPRAC
- **To date, all committees have:**
 - Convened to recap contents of CPRAC's orientations for each policy area
 - Reviewed comprehensive research and data on specific evidence-based policies
 - Reviewed related first-hand experience of Council members
 - Begun developing ideas for modeling by Urban Institute and further discussion

Recurring Themes – Value, Eligibility, Access

- **Several recurring themes have been raised across committees, as related to the range of policies impacting and programs available to residents of New York State:**
 - Value of programs, benefits, credits (how much is provided to recipient),
 - Eligibility for programs, benefits, credits (who can apply and receive),
 - Accessibility of programs, benefits, credits (how individuals become aware of programs and how they are accessed by program applicants and recipients)
 - Administration (how programs, benefits, credits are implemented on the government side)

Recurring Themes – Existing Challenges

- **The following have been identified as existing challenges to address as the Committees and Council develop policy recommendations to reduce poverty:**
 - Many New Yorkers may not know about the range of programs available to them
 - Current eligibility for programs often excludes New Yorkers who may need assistance
 - Application processes for programs are often cumbersome and contain administrative burdens, such as paperwork requirements, and more, can prevent New Yorkers from accessing assistance for which they are eligible
 - Existing benefits and credits are often described as insufficient to meet basic needs, with \$ levels remaining flat amid rising costs of living (food, housing, energy, daily essentials, transportation, clothes, child care, and health care, which are exacerbated by inflation)
 - Significant disparities in poverty are exacerbated by disparities across programs, with benefits/programs underutilized (by race/ethnicity, geography, and more)

Recurring Themes – Solutions to Discuss

- **Broad concepts and ideas discussed across committees to address these recurring challenges, related to a range of programs provided by New York State, include:**
 - Increasing benefit levels to provide poor families with additional support
 - Increasing awareness, potentially via outreach and enrollment efforts
 - Adjusting eligibility to reach as many New Yorkers as possible
 - Removing or reforming outdated components of programs that act as administrative burdens
 - Easing access to programs to increase take-up/utilization of benefits and programs
 - Simplifying enrollment processes, including reducing application requirements
 - Addressing demographic disparities in poverty rate through strategic interventions
 - Using data about program access to identify areas for improvement
 - Explore auto-enrollment capabilities and/or use of technology to streamline processes
 - More use of trusted messengers/CBOs to help NYers navigate processes

Tax Policy Committee – Concepts Discussed

- Discussion focused on a several key policies, such as the Child Tax Credit
- Specific ideas raised for further discussion include:
 - Full refundability – make children in families with no or low earnings eligible for full credit
 - Per child benefits – make full credit available to children regardless of family size, birth order
 - Indexed to inflation – index value of credit to inflation so as not to erode over time
 - Young child bonus – provide larger credit to children under age 6
 - Monthly payments – consider regular payment installments, rather in annual “lump sum”
 - Income phase outs – ensure the same credit is available to poor, working, and middle-class families, and weigh if/when to phase out the credit for higher earning families
 - Inclusivity – include children regardless of immigration status

Housing Committee – Concepts Discussed

- The CPRAC Housing Committee discussion focused on a few key policies, such as the Housing Choice Voucher Program and rent burden relief credits.
- Specific ideas raised for further discussion include:
 - Adjust eligibility/value of State level vouchers to reach New Yorkers excluded from HCV, including more rent-burdened New Yorkers
 - Increase total number of HCV-type vouchers available at State level so that more eligible families are able to receive them, without a cap
 - Make application/vouchers available at other locations besides local Public Housing Agencies
 - To design a rent burden relief credit, identify rent burden target and share of excess rent burden to be covered by credit, define income eligibility and phase-outs, set maximum allowable rent, adjustments for family size, any exclusions, and more

Employment Committee – Concepts Discussed

- The CPRAC Employment/Wages Committee discussion focused on a few key policies, such as the Earned Income Tax Credit and minimum wage.
- Specific ideas raised for further discussion include:
 - Policies that would help close and systemically address racial and gender wage gaps, including paid leave, unions, enforced minimum wages
 - Consider successful examples of pandemic-era policies, which were effective at supporting low-income working families and addressing some of the persistent gaps between groups
 - Confronting systemic racism and implicit bias must be central any plans/strategy to improve employment and wages for low-income workers
 - Reform the EITC to reach more workers with more support, including by increasing awareness of EITC, making EITC application more accessible, raising EITC values, adjusting overall structure of EITC curve to avoid adverse intersection with minimum wage

Public Benefits Committee – Concepts Discussed

- The CPRAC Public Benefits Committee discussion focused on a few key policies, like SNAP, PA, and SSI/SSP.
- Specific ideas raised for further discussion include:
 - Increase benefit levels, including PA and SNAP, and consider indexing benefit levels so that they change over time to reflect New Yorkers' changing cost of living
 - Adjust program eligibility, including by taking flexible approaches
 - Allow New Yorkers receiving benefits to earn more income while maintaining benefits
 - Making programs more accessible by simplifying and streamlining processes and paperwork
 - Reaching more eligible New Yorkers with benefits via outreach and enrollment efforts
 - Improving awareness and take-up of public benefit programs among poorest households
 - Investment in community-based organizations (trusted messengers) to help navigate process
 - Investment in legal services for New Yorkers at hearings related to their benefits
 - Ensure immigrant households are not excluded and can receive needed supports

Childhood Committee – Concepts Discussed

- The CPRAC Childhood Committee discussion focused on the broad range of child care reforms underway as a result of Governor Hochul's recent historic investments and the work OCFS is doing to implement those investments/reforms, including:
 - Increasing access to child care
 - Continuing to simplify child care processes, including CCAP application process
 - Continuing to increase child care options for families
 - Incentivizing new providers to offer child care services, which will increase child care seats
 - Strategically targeting Hochul Administration's recent historic investments to areas in need
 - Increasing awareness of the availability of child care assistance
 - Potential changes at the Federal level that would affect provision of child care in New York

**It is also anticipated that the Childhood Committee will discuss additional topics beyond child care, such as: Medicaid, maternal and infant health, and more, which may lead to additional reforms for discussion and consideration*

Initial Policies to Model

- **Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC)**
 - Increases in the percentage applied to the federal EITC for households with and without dependent children to determine the state EITC (currently 30%) at 50% and 100% of the federal EITC
 - Expansion of the ages of persons eligible to receive the federal EITC for households without dependent children:
 - Minimum age reduced to age 21
 - Maximum age remains unchanged
 - Expansion of the state EITC to cover persons filing using an Individual Taxpayer Identification Number, in all above scenarios

Initial Policies to Model

- **Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC)**
 - Adjust shape of EITC curve* to ensure NYS' minimum wage level (up to \$17) remains within the phase-in or plateau/flat portions of EITC curve, rather than intersecting with the phase-out as is done currently. This would entail:
 - Applying same curve change/adjustments for tax units with and without children
 - Assume a worker that works full-time, full-year (2080 hours) at minimum wage
 - Assume all income comes from earnings
 - For married couples, assume one worker working full-time at minimum wage

**To model, would need to determine more detailed policy design, including to figure out the exact shape, kink points, phase in and phase out, etc.*

Initial Policies to Model

- **Child Tax Credit (“Empire State Child Credit”, i.e. ESCC)**
 - Decouple ESCC from federal credit and establish new values for NYS:
 - Fully refundable credit (similar to the Federal CTC of 2021)
 - Assess impacts of maximum credit at \$500, \$1,500, \$3000 per child
 - Assess effects of indexing the maximum CTC value to inflation
 - Set a minimum credit of \$100 per child
 - Model with and without enhanced credit for youngest children <6 y/o (\$500 larger than the base credit for both the \$500/child and \$1500/child scenarios referenced above)
 - Model credit increase for children under 6 to \$500 and \$1000, while keeping the credit as-is for children over 6 years old
 - Eliminate minimum income requirement (income phase-in) so that lowest-income households can receive full credit

Initial Policies to Model

- **Child Tax Credit (“Empire State Child Credit,” or ESCC)**
 - Assess each CTC policy option outlined with a lower maximum income requirement to ensure credit is targeted to low- and middle-income households
 - In this scenario, households earning over \$100,000 or claiming no income due to asset loss would no longer be eligible
 - Phase out on the same income schedule as the pre-2017 federal Child Tax Credit
 - Same AGI points for beginning and ending the phase-out period
 - Allow ITIN (and SSN not required for eligibility)

Initial Policies to Model

- **Renters Credit (also known as “Rent Burden Relief Credit”)**
 - Tax credit to unsubsidized renter households covering a percentage of the difference between household rents and 30% of total household income (excess rent burden):
 - Eligible income levels (using State AGI)?
 - Max allowable rent: FMR level
 - Determine %s of the excess rent burden to be covered by credit: 50% and 100%?
 - Phase out income level: from 50% to 100% of State Area Median Income
 - Adjustments for family size?
 - Limited to unsubsidized renter households?
 - Rules related to immigration status?
 - Allow for other tax filers in the housing unit besides the tax unit of the person/couple in whose name the home is rented

Initial Policies to Model

- **Rental Assistance (i.e. Housing Vouchers)**
 - Establish entitlement-type* state-funded housing assistance program to fill gaps in existing City and Federal housing assistance programs:
 - Set values to FMR levels (same as current HCV program)
 - No adjustments for family size – all eligible households can receive FMR level voucher
 - Income eligibility (% AMI)? Equivalent to HCV (50% AMI) or more generous?
 - Phaseout from 50% to 100% of State Area Median Income
 - Same eligibility for unauthorized and mixed-status households as HCV? More inclusive?
 - Otherwise, same rules as HCV?

**If this state-funded program were to use the same rules as HCV, an entitlement-type approach would be equivalent to modeling an increase in HCV utilization to 100% of eligible families*

Initial Policies to Model

- **Public Assistance**
 - Increase the PA shelter allowance (the portion of the grant for rent):
 - Model increases of 100% and 200%
 - Model for a shelter allowance increase equal to 50%, 75%, and 100% of FMR, growing to 100% FMR (capped at the household's contracted rent)
 - As part of these models, the PA shelter allowance schedule for households without children should be raised to the same level as that for households with children.
 - Run the models using both the current income disregard policy used for applicants and also applying the income disregard policy used for recipients to applicants

Initial Policies to Model

- **Public Assistance**

- Increase the PA basic allowance (the portion of the grant based solely on household size)
 - Model increases by 50% and 100%
 - Assess the effects on child poverty of indexing PA basic allowance to Federal Poverty Guidelines
 - Run the models using both the current income disregard policy used for applicants and also applying the income disregard policy used for recipients to applicants
- Increase the Personal Needs Allowance
 - Assess effects of making equal to current PA grant levels
 - Assess effects of increasing PNA by 100% and 200%

Initial Policies to Model

- **Public Assistance**
 - Increase the Supplemental Security Income (SSI) State Supplement (SSP) amount by 50% and 100%, for the following groups:
 - Adult recipients in the 'living alone' living arrangement
 - Adult recipients in the 'living with others' living arrangement and not residing with a related child
 - Adult recipients residing with a related child in the 'living with others' living arrangement
 - Child recipients in the 'living with others' living arrangement.

Initial Policies to Model

- **Public Assistance**
 - Simplify PA policies and index income eligibility and maximum benefit levels, inclusive of all current grant components, to the Federal Poverty guidelines as follows:
 - For applicants across all districts and all household sizes, model maximum income eligibility (and maximum benefit for a household with no income) at 50%, 75% and 100% of Federal Poverty, with benefit reduced according to a phase-out schedule
 - For recipients across all districts and all household sizes, model maximum income eligibility at 150% and 200% of Federal Poverty, with benefit reduced according to a phase-out schedule
 - Alternatively/additionally, consider adjusting in line with Social Security adjustments to Social Security benefits

Initial Policies to Model

- **Public Assistance**
 - Eliminate Public Benefits resource/asset tests, as many other states have done
 - Eliminate durational sanctions state-wide

Initial Policies to Model

- **Food Assistance**
 - Provide a food benefit to all households with children that would be eligible for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) except for their citizenship status,* in an amount equal to the allotment for similarly situated SNAP-eligible households.
 - Model for all non-citizens and separately for non-citizens eligible for Safety Net Assistance
 - Provide data for all such households and separately just families with children.
 - Provide a food benefit to current SNAP cases with children where the SNAP household resides with a person or persons that would be included in the SNAP case except for their citizenship status,* in the amount of the difference between the household's SNAP allotment and the amount that would pertain if the person were included in the SNAP household

**Unauthorized households, temporary residents with and without work visas, and Legal Permanent Residents who are ineligible (not exempt from restrictions and resided in U.S. fewer than 5 years)*

Initial Policies to Model

- **Employment and Wages**
 - Assess the effects on child poverty of increasing wages for those currently make less than the minimum wage, including workers/sectors currently excluded from receiving the minimum wage
 - Assess the effects on child poverty of closing wage gaps and achieving pay parity across genders and race/ethnicity

Initial Policies to Model

- **Childhood**
 - To ensure CPRAC is aligned with New York's reimagined Child Care Availability Task Force (CCATF) and supporting/complimenting the State's ongoing child care efforts, CPRAC will evaluate whether the recommendations currently being developed by CCATF are modellable
 - CPRAC will discuss potential CCATF recommendations through anti-poverty lens
 - Where possible, UI will model recommendations to provide poverty-reduction data

Status Update

Progress Report

Status Update – Draft Progress Report

- **The Progress Report is to summarize CPRAC's work from inception to present day:**
 - Provides an overview of the Child Poverty Reduction Act and the Council's charge
 - Outlines CPRAC membership, structure, rules, and more
 - Recaps key context on how to measure poverty, poverty in New York, major poverty studies
 - Reviews subject-matter orientations, including evidence-based research presented
 - Includes testimonials on first-hand experiences of poverty/programs from Council members
 - Explains Urban Institute role, process, methodology, and status
 - Estimates the progress NYS has made in reducing child poverty with recently-enacted policies
 - Recaps the committees' deliberations to date and the policies lists they developed for modeling
 - Previews CPRAC's next steps on the path to developing data-based policy recommendations
 - Forecasts potential areas of recommendation for CPRAC, based on preponderance of research, presentations/orientations, and discussions to date

Looking Ahead

2023

Looking Ahead – 2023

- **CPRAC statutory members will issue progress report**
- Next meeting (final of 2023): December 6
 - To vote on and issue progress report
- CPRAC will hold regional sessions to hear from New Yorkers with lived experience, services providers, and more
- CPRAC Committees will finalize initial policies to model, review UI data, and prepare initial Committee recommendations

Looking Ahead – 2024

- Based on the work of CPRAC to date, including committee discussions and evidence reviewed on the important effect of various policies on child poverty:
 - Enhancement of the Empire State Child Credit is a key tool to achieve the goals of the Council
 - Additionally, recommendations are expected to address housing affordability for low-income families
- Committees will work over the coming months to develop specific recommendations, based on data CPRAC receives

Closing

Closing

- **Assistant Secretary to the Governor for Human Services and Mental Hygiene Alyson Tarek** – Remarks
Representing CPRAC Co-Chair Deputy Secretary Jihoon Kim
- **Acting Commissioner Barbara Guinn (OTDA)** – Remarks
CPRAC Co-Chair

Questions? Comments? Feedback?

Thank you!