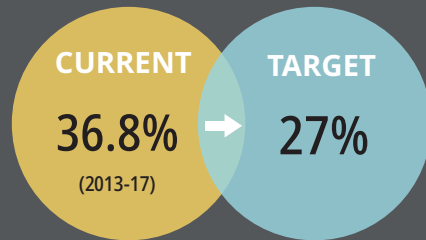


## HEALTH INDICATOR 1: INDIVIDUALS BELOW 200% FEDERAL POVERTY LEVEL (FPL)

DESIRED RESULT: DECREASE THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE LIVING IN POVERTY



### DEFINITION

Percent of individuals with incomes at or below 200% of the FPL

### DETAILS

Not applicable

### NC PERCENT OF INDIVIDUALS BELOW 200% FPL (2013-17)

37%

### 2030 TARGET

27%

### RANGE AMONG NC COUNTIES

Not Available

### RANK AMONG STATES (2017)

39th\*

### DATA SOURCE

American Community Survey

### STATE PLANS WITH SIMILAR INDICATORS

North Carolina Perinatal Health Strategic Plan<sup>F</sup>- indicator of addressing social and economic inequities for families

Early Childhood Action Plan<sup>G</sup>- Families living at or below 200% of FPL is a sub-target of all 10 goals in the Early Childhood Action Plan

\*Rank of 1st for state with lowest percent of individuals below 200% FPL

### Rationale for Selection:

*Income level is a strong predictor of a person's access to resources and health status. Low income restricts access to quality housing, transportation, food, and education, which limits opportunities for people to live healthy lives.*<sup>F, G</sup>

### Context

Poverty is directly linked to negative health outcomes. Income is central to accessing resources needed to be healthy such as safe housing, nutritious food, education, and transportation, as well as health services and treatment. Income is one of the greatest predictors of disease and mortality rates.<sup>21</sup> Low-income adults have higher rates of heart disease, diabetes, stroke, and other chronic disorders than their wealthier counterparts.<sup>22</sup> Income is an even stronger predictor of health disparities than race when considering the rates of disease within racial/ethnic groups.<sup>22</sup> People below 200% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) are more likely to rate themselves in fair or poor health (20%), have higher rates of obesity (36%), and are more likely to be a current smoker (25%).<sup>23</sup> They have fewer medical care options, are more likely to be uninsured, and the upfront costs of services are a greater burden for them.<sup>22</sup> Mental health services can also be inaccessible for adults with low incomes.<sup>24</sup> Adults with family incomes below and near poverty experience more stress, particularly financial stress, which is detrimental to their overall health and well-being.

Lower-income earners are constrained in their options for where to live. Lower-cost housing tends to be in areas that are farther removed from services, require higher transportation costs, have overcrowding, and have greater exposure to hazardous toxins such as mold. These poor housing conditions correlate with the poor health conditions of low-income children such as asthma and elevated lead levels.<sup>22</sup>

Children's health is positively correlated to parents' incomes, with children born to low-income mothers having a greater risk of low birth weight and higher rates of heart conditions, hearing problems, and intestinal disorders.<sup>22</sup> Controlling for children's health at birth, those born to lower income parents are less healthy in adulthood than their wealthier peers<sup>25</sup>.

The five-year average of individuals below 200% FPL between 2013-17 in North Carolina was 37% compared to approximately 33% of families nationwide.<sup>26</sup> For 2019, 200% FPL for individuals was \$24,980.<sup>27</sup>

<sup>F</sup> North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services. North Carolina Perinatal Health Strategic Plan: 2016-2020. March 2016. <https://whb.ncpublichealth.com/phsp/>

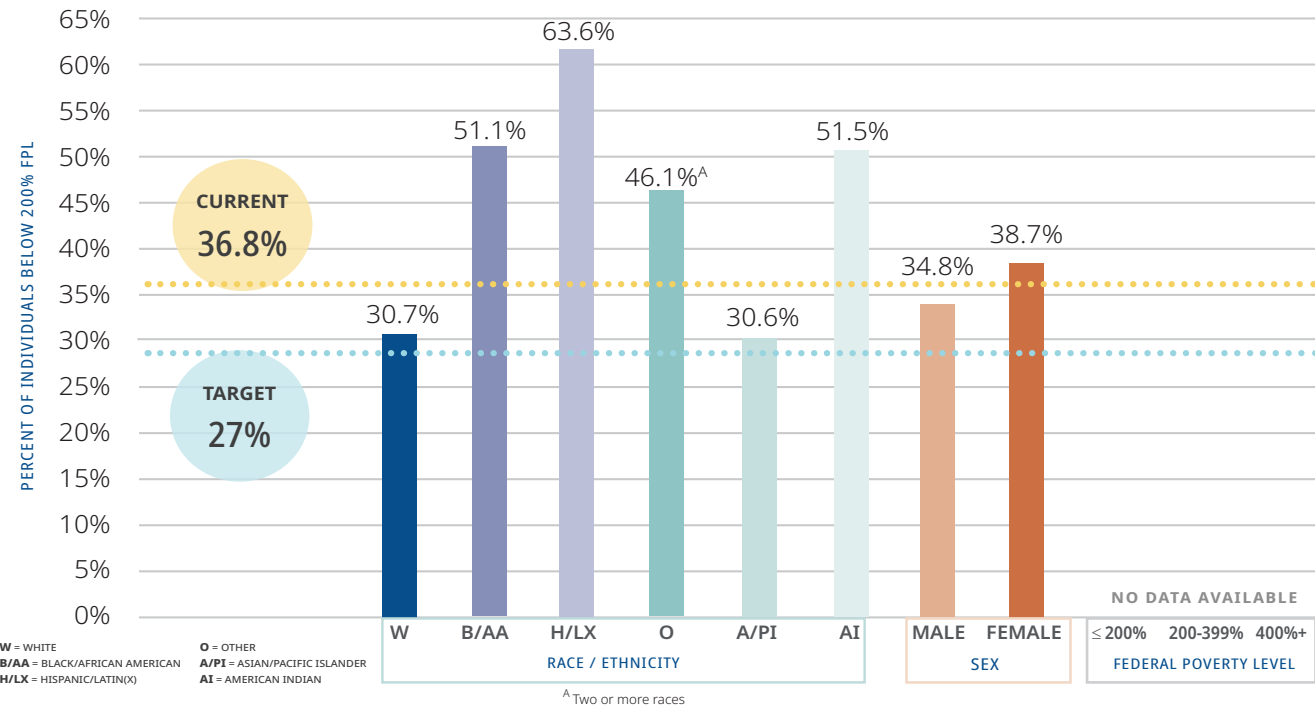
<sup>G</sup> North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services. North Carolina Early Childhood Action Plan. February 2019. <https://files.nc.gov/ncdhhs/ECAP-Report-FINAL-WEB-f.pdf>

# HEALTH INDICATOR 1: INDIVIDUALS BELOW 200% FEDERAL POVERTY LEVEL (FPL)

DESIRED RESULT: DECREASE THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE LIVING IN POVERTY

**FIGURE 5**

Percent of individuals below 200% Federal Poverty Level across populations in North Carolina and distance to 2030 target



## Disparities

Nationally, children are the most likely of any age group to live in poverty, with 38.8% of people under the age of 18 living under 200% of the FPL compared to 26.2% aged 18 to 64 and 30.1% aged 65 and older.<sup>28</sup> Whites make up the largest share of those living with incomes below 200% of the FPL (58%). However, people of color are disproportionately more likely to live in poverty. In North Carolina, half of American Indians (52%) and African American (51%) and 64% of Hispanic individuals have incomes below 200% of the FPL, compared to 31% of whites.

## 2030 Target and Potential for Change

Although the percentage of individuals below 200% FPL has been decreasing slowly over the past decade, North Carolina ranks 39th out of 50 states in this indicator (single-year estimate, 2017).<sup>29</sup> The HNC 2030 group looked at averages in other states across the country and set an ambitious target of 27% of individuals living below 200% of the FPL by the end of the next decade. The state with the lowest percentage is New Hampshire at 16%, and many other states are around 25%. A faster decrease in the percentage than seen over the past decade will be seen as a success, even if the exact target is not met by 2030.

## Levers for Change

- Raise the minimum wage to \$15 per hour (Children's Defense Fund, 2019)
- Increase the state earned income tax credit
- Focus economic development on well-paying jobs
- Increase subsidized childcare
- Expand Medicaid eligibility
- Increase paid medical leave
- Improve teen pregnancy prevention
- Improve 3rd grade reading proficiency, high school graduation rates, and support and strengthen the community college system
- Reduce incarceration