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NEW ANALYSIS ANTICIPATES CHILD POVERTY INCREASE

Austin, Texas—More than one of every five Texas children, or nearly 1.5 million kids, lived in poverty during 2008—and when data from 2009 are compiled, that number is likely to increase to one of every four kids, according to a new [analysis](#) released Wednesday by First Focus and Brookings researcher Julia Isaacs. Even before the national economic downturn that hit the state in late 2008, Texas faced some of the highest rates of child poverty in the nation, and the recession likely exacerbated the problem. The increase in poor children is placing an even heavier burden on an already strained network of private charities and state agencies already reeling from the triple punch of inadequate funding, staffing shortages, and a broken eligibility system that withholds critical assistance to needy families.

- **More than 1 in 18 children in the U.S. lived in poverty in 2008, but these numbers do not take the recession into account**
- **Child poverty data from 2009 will likely show that the rate of child poverty increased nationwide, with one of the largest increases in Texas.**
- **Texas faced some of the highest pre-recession rates of child poverty combined with a safety net that failed to meet the needs of the poor before the recession hit.**
- **Based on poverty trends following past recessions, the rate of child poverty will likely continue to rise in 2010.**

Texas to disproportionately feel burden of child poverty

The study, entitled "[The Effects of the Recession on Child Poverty.](#)" bases its assessment of the increase of child poverty rates on families' participation in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), formerly called the Food Stamp Program. As [CPPPP research](#) has shown, however, Texas has failed to provide timely SNAP assistance to families in need since 2006, and hundreds of thousands of Texas families were improperly denied or made to wait for benefits in 2008, perhaps making the increasing rate of child poverty in Texas even more severe than the First Focus analysis estimates.

The First Focus analysis divides states into four groups based on how severe the increase in child poverty is they are expected to face. Texas is grouped with eight other states that are expected to see the most severe increase in the child poverty rate when the impact of the recession is taken into account. According to the First Focus analysis, Texas falls among the group of states that "face a high risk of poverty in 2009, reflecting a combination of high child poverty in 2008 and very high increases of SNAP assistance between 2008 and 2009." The report estimates that the states facing the highest levels of poverty will see at least a 2 percentage point increase in child poverty from 2008 to 2009.

SNAP participation in Texas jumped 20 percent between the first six months of 2008 and the first six months of 2009, according to First Focus' analysis.

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The Center for Public Policy Priorities (CPPPP) is a non-profit, non-partisan policy institute dedicated to improving the economic and social conditions of low- and moderate-income Texans. You can learn more about CPPPP at www.cphp.org.