



Children's Action Alliance

A Voice for Arizona's Children since 1988

NEWS RELEASE

CONTACT: Pati Urias

purias@azchildren.org

(602) 266-0707 x209 (office)

(480) 322-2270 (cell, text)

EMBARGOED FOR RELEASE until
Monday, June 17, 2019

Arizona Ranks in Bottom Five States in Conditions for Kids *Rankings in Housing Affordability and High School Graduation Worsen*

PHOENIX — Housing affordability is one of the challenges for many children growing up in Arizona, according to the latest *KIDS COUNT® Data Book*, an annual report released by the Annie E. Casey Foundation. The report measures 16 indicators of children's health, education, and security and ranks the states from 1 to 50, with one being the state with the best conditions. Arizona ranks 46th overall for 2019; in 2018, the state's position was 45th.

This year's KIDS COUNT Data Book found that a larger than average percentage of Arizona families are spending more than 30 percent of their income on a place to live — a warning sign for family instability and economic stress. While this measure of "rent burden" showed a seventh year of improvement nationally, the improvement in Arizona has stalled. "On any given night in 2018, nearly 10,000 Arizonans were homeless," said Joan Serviss, Executive Director of the Arizona Housing Coalition. "High housing cost burdens make it nearly impossible for working families to accumulate emergency savings to respond to unexpected costs or loss of income, and can lead to eviction. Our state and federal leaders need to do more to address this economic threat." Arizona ranks 39th in the KIDS COUNT report in the housing affordability indicator; last year the state ranked 37th.

Because housing is one of the largest expenses for most households, rising rents that chip away at family budgets leave less money for families to spend on other necessities, such as food, child care, medical needs and transportation. Given the history of discrimination in both housing and employment in Arizona and nationwide, the data show that children of color are more likely to experience financial instability tied to rent burden, with 38 percent of Latino children affected in Arizona in 2017, compared to 24 percent of white children.

Arizona also departed from the continued national trend in improving high school graduation rates, with an increase to 22 percent of high school students not graduating within four years compared to 15 percent nationally.

Despite unemployment rates steadily dropping since the Great Recession, nearly three in ten children in Arizona live in homes where no parent has a stable, full-time job, ranking Arizona 37th in the KIDS COUNT report.

More than one in five children in Arizona lives in poverty and children in our state are much more likely than children nationally to live in high-poverty neighborhoods. Poverty poses one of the greatest threats to children's success, affecting their health, educational outcomes and future earning potential as adults.

"The data clearly show us that a growing economy does not automatically translate into better conditions for children and families," said Dana Wolfe Naimark, President and CEO of Children's Action Alliance. "Arizona has seen significant economic growth since the Great Recession, but many children and families and many communities continue to struggle. It takes combined community effort and strategic public policies to help more children grow up safer and healthier."



Children's Action Alliance

A Voice for Arizona's Children since 1988

The 2019 KIDS COUNT® Data Book will be available June 16, 2019 at 9:01 p.m. (Arizona time) at www.aecf.org. Additional information is [available online](#), which also contains the most recent national, state and local data on hundreds of indicators of child well-being. Journalists interested in creating maps, graphs and rankings in stories about the Data Book can use the KIDS COUNT Data Center at datacenter.kidscount.org.

About Children's Action Alliance

[Children's Action Alliance](#) is an independent voice for Arizona children at the state capitol and in the community. CAA works to improve children's health, education, and security through information and action.

About the Annie E. Casey Foundation

The Annie E. Casey Foundation creates a brighter future for the nation's children by developing solutions to strengthen families, build paths to economic opportunity and transform struggling communities into safer and healthier places to live, work and grow. For more information, visit www.aecf.org. KIDS COUNT is a registered trademark of the Annie E. Casey Foundation.

Reporters may conduct interviews on the data, but may not publish until the embargo is lifted on June 17th, 2019.

-30-





Children's Action Alliance

A Voice for Arizona's Children since 1988

How Are Children Doing in Arizona?

June 2019 KIDS COUNT Data Book

	U.S. Rate	AZ Rate	2018 AZ Rank	2019 AZ Rank
Overall Rank			45	46
Children in households that spend more than 30 percent of their income on housing (2017)	31%	32%	37	39
Children living in poverty (income below \$24,300 for a family of two adults and two children in 2017)	18%	21%	43	37
Children living in families where no parent has full-time, year-round employment (2017)	27%	29%	38	37
Teens ages 16 to 19 not attending school and not working (2017)	7%	8%	41	38
4th graders who scored below proficient reading level (2017)	65%	70%	43	43
8th graders who scored below proficient math level (2017)	67%	66%	25	25
Children ages 3 to 4 not attending school (2015-17)	52%	61%	45	43
High school students not graduating on time (2016-17)	15%	22%	43	46
Child and teen death rate (deaths per 100,000 children ages 1 to 19) (2017)	26	28	28	27
Low-birthweight babies (2017)	8.3%	7.5%	16	15
Children 0 to 19 without health insurance (2017) ¹	5%	8%	45	44
Teens ages 12 to 17 who abused alcohol or drugs in the past year (2016-17)	4%	5%	42	33
Children in families where the household head lacks a high school diploma (2017)	13%	16%	46	46
Children in single-parent families (2017)	34%	37%	38	36
Children living in high-poverty areas (census tracts with poverty rates ≥ 30%) (2013-17)	12%	20%	49	47
Teen birth rate (births per 1,000 females ages 15 to 19) (2017)	19	22	32	32

#1 is the best state for kids and #50 is the worst.

Source: 2019 KIDS COUNT Data Book, The Annie E. Casey Foundation, Baltimore, Maryland

For some indicators, a higher rate is better, while for others, a lower rate is better.

¹ US Census Bureau changed the methodology for calculating children without health insurance to include age 18 to reflect eligibility of public health insurance programs.