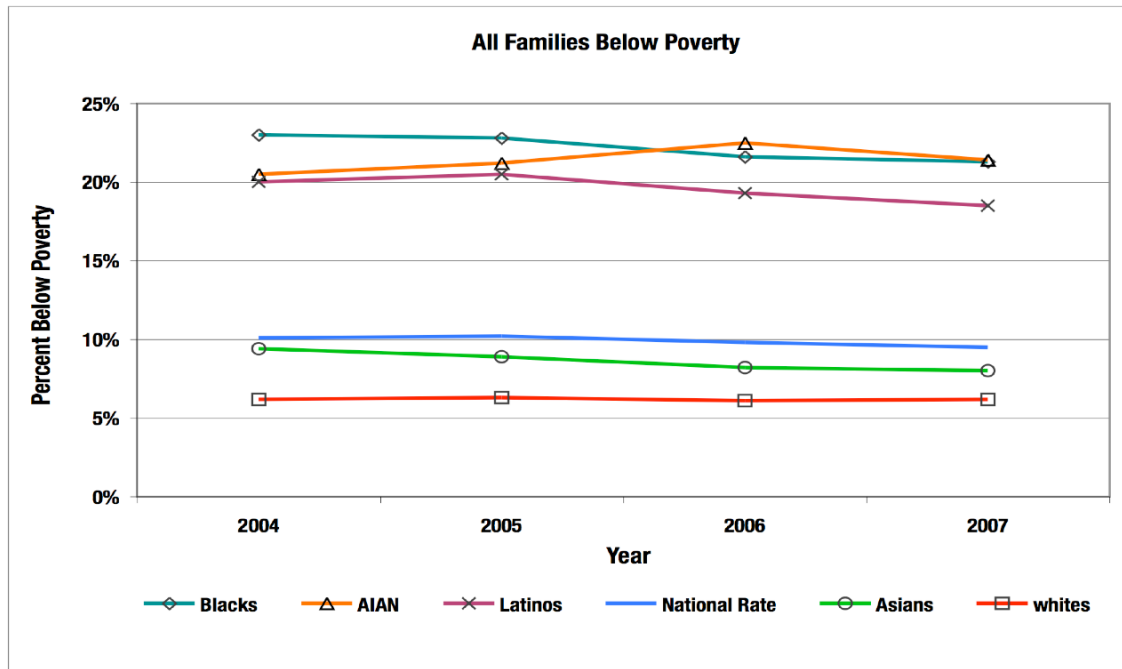




November 2008

CHECK THE COLORLINE: POVERTY FACT SHEET

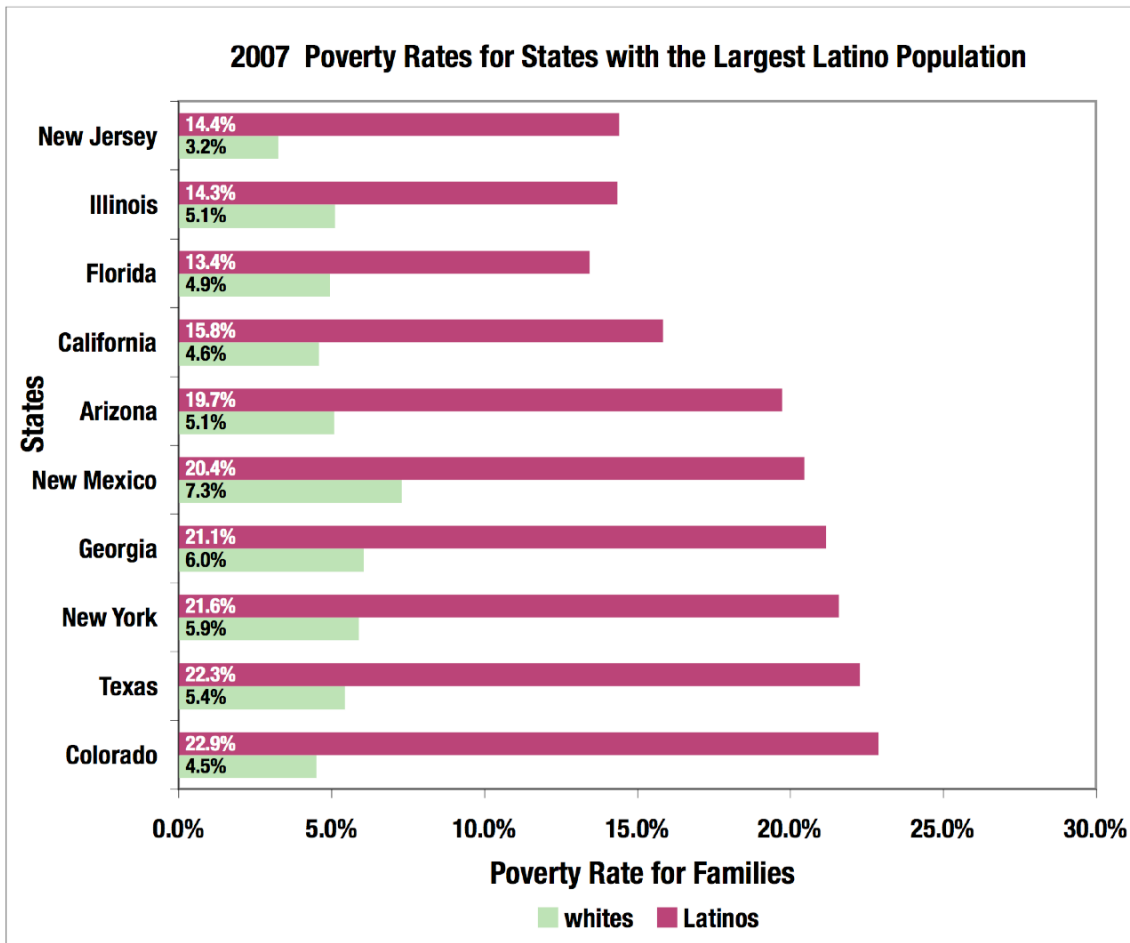
Since 2004, poverty rates in the United States have remained relatively stagnant according to American Community Survey data. As of 2007, the national poverty rate for all families was 9.5 percent. However, as this graph makes clear, a wide gap between whites and people of color—particularly Blacks and Latinos—continues to exist. Since 2004, the poverty threshold has increased an average of \$495, or 3.1 percent per year, to its current figure of \$16,689 for a family of two adults and one child.¹ Although close to 1 in 10 Americans, and approximately 1 in 5 Blacks, Latinos, and American Indians are living in poverty, the heavy focus during our recent presidential election on strengthening the middle class demonstrates that the plight of the poor remains largely out of the public discourse. In addition, the lack of easily available data on Asian ethnic groups further masks inequality within that segment of our population already rendered invisible by the “model minority” myth.



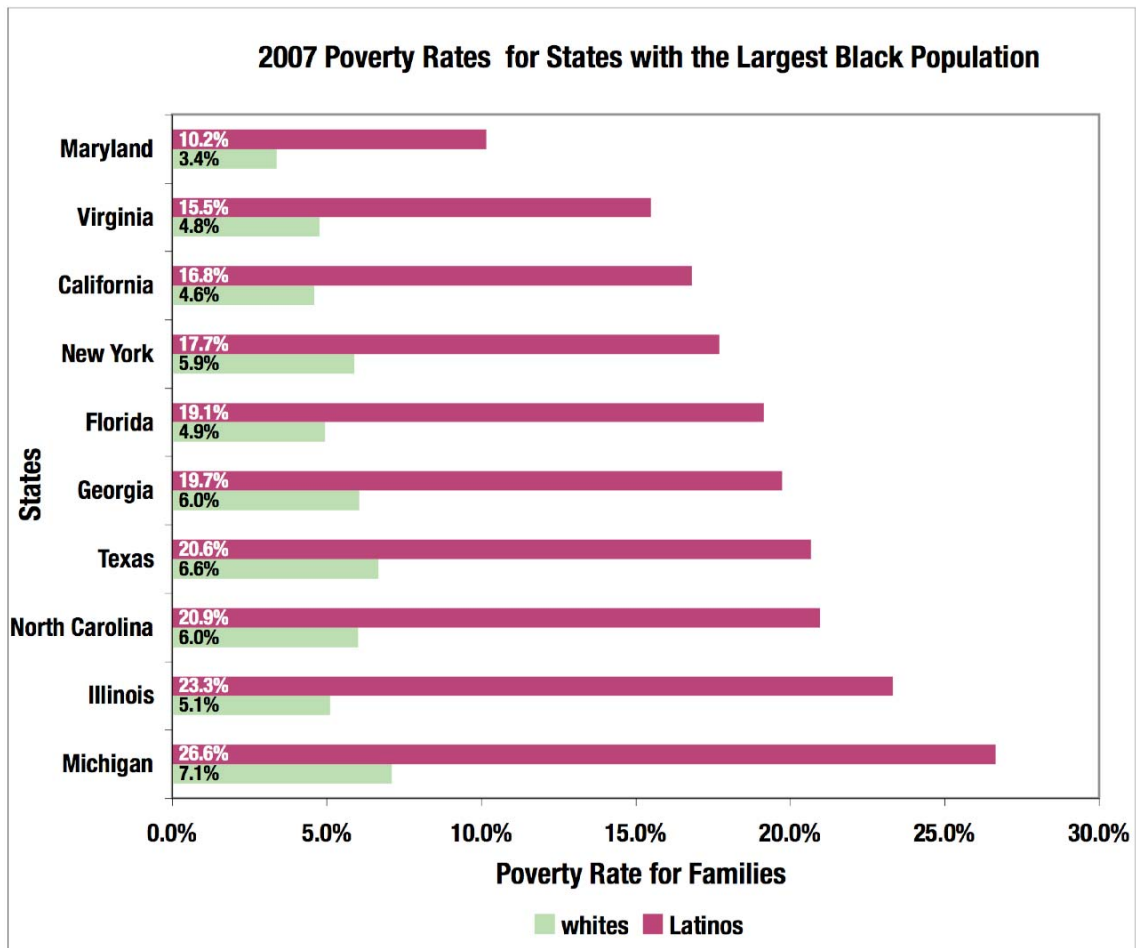
Source: U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey, "Percentage of families whose income in the past 12 months is below the poverty level," Years 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007.

The following data reveal considerable racial disparities in poverty rates at the state level. We expect that in the coming years, the effects of the economic recession, inflation, stagnant wages, increasing unemployment, and the foreclosure crisis will make it more difficult for all Americans, but especially people of color, to make ends meet.

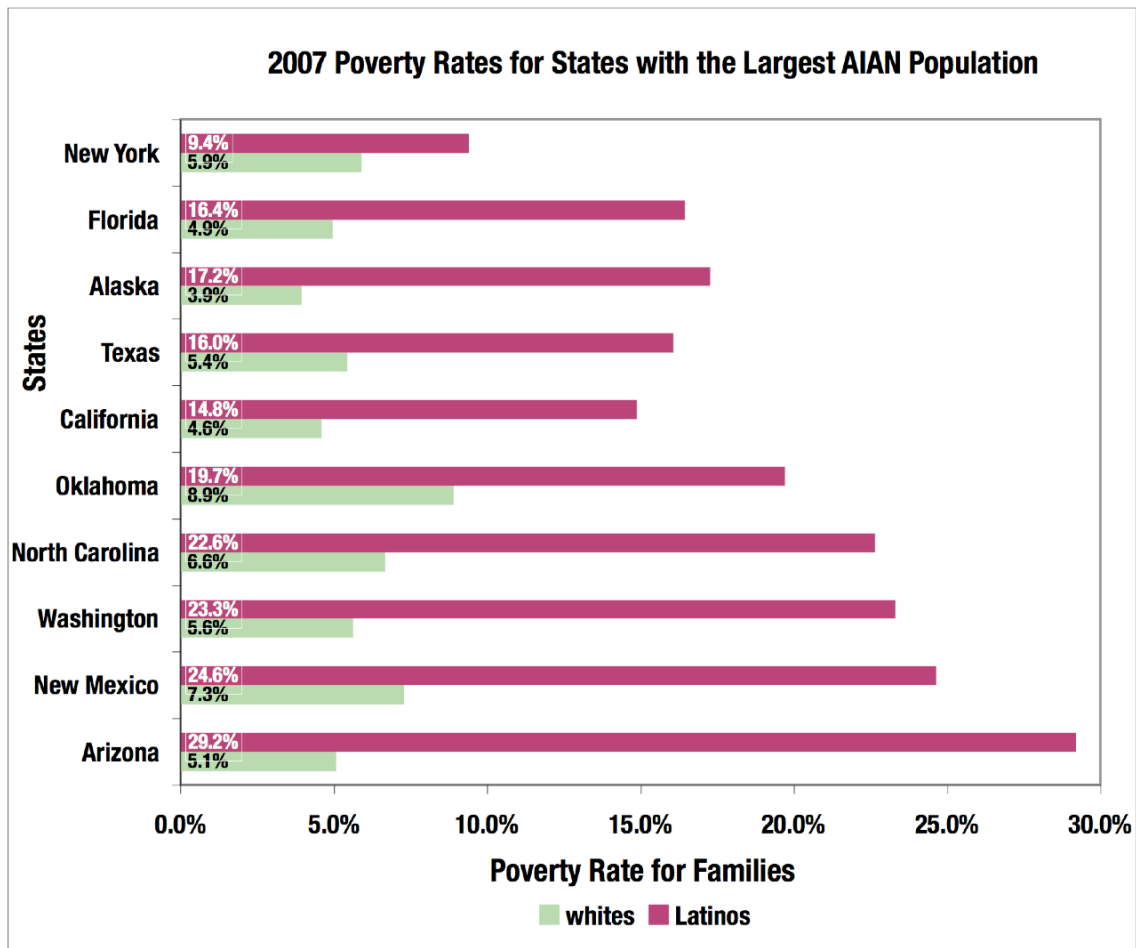
¹ Poverty Thresholds: \$15,205 (2004), \$15,720 (2005), \$16,227 (2006), \$16,689 (2007).



For Latinos, the national poverty rate stands at 18.5%. Among the ten states with the largest Latino populations, Colorado has the highest Latino poverty rate, and the widest poverty gap between whites and Latinos. The poverty rates among the ten states ranged from 14.4% to 22.9%, and the gaps ranged from 8.5% to 18.4%.



For Blacks, the national poverty rate stands at 21.3%. Among the ten states with the largest Black population, Michigan has the highest Black poverty rate, and the widest poverty gap between whites and Blacks. The poverty rates among the ten states ranged from 10.2% to 26.6%, and the gaps ranged from 6.8% to 19.5%.



For American Indian Alaska Natives, the national poverty rate stands at 21.4%. Among these states, Arizona has the highest American Indian Alaska Native poverty rate, and the widest poverty gap between white and American Indian Alaska Natives. The poverty rates in the ten states ranged from 9.4% to 29.2%, and the gaps ranged from 3.5% to 24.1%.

About the Applied Research Center

The Applied Research Center is a non-partisan, non-profit racial justice think tank with offices in Oakland, New York City, and Chicago. Founded in 1981, ARC investigates the hidden racial consequences of public policy initiatives, and develops theoretical frameworks to support people and institutions in communities, government, and academia that are working for racial equity.