

CONNECTICUT  
**VOICES**  
FOR CHILDREN

**A Picture of Children &  
Families in Main Street  
Communities**

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# Introduction

## Connecticut Voices for Children

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### Independent Research & Analysis

- Nonpartisan
- Data Driven

### Interrelation of Research, Policy and Advocacy

- Demographic changes create social pressure for policy changes now.
- Increasing income inequality threatens the long term economic health of the state.
- Investing in children yields long term economic benefits for the state.
- Children do well when families do well.

# Introduction

## Data Project Presentation

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### Baseline for assessing needs

- Identify High-Need Communities
- Broad variety of issues to paint a picture of children & families

### Opportunities for wise investments and policy advocacy

- Where can your energy and resources make the most difference?
- What are the most effective policies to pursue?

### Learning from each other

- State and local level
- Understanding local context and areas of focus

# Agenda

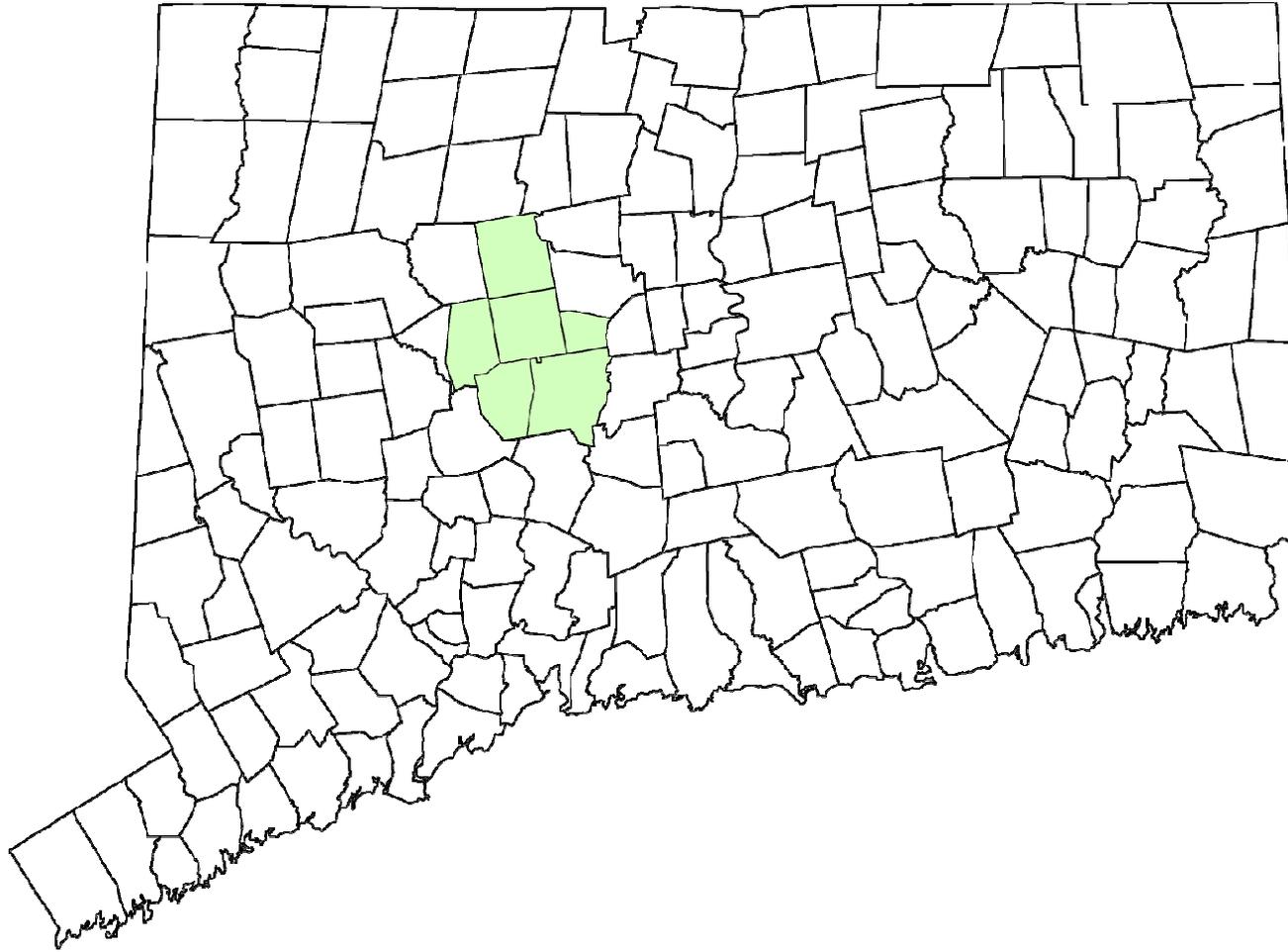
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- Introduction
- Part 1: Demographic Challenges & Child Poverty
- Part 2: Targeted Investments for Healthy Childhood Development
  - Families
  - Education
  - Health
- Part 3: Specific Policy Recommendations, Next Steps & Discussion

# Introduction

## Main Street Communities

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▶ **Bristol, Burlington, Plainville, Plymouth, Southington, Wolcott**

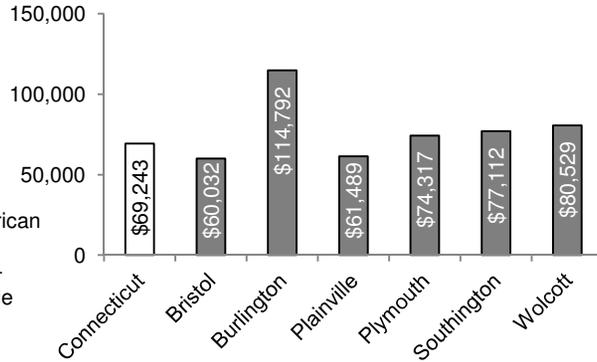
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## **Part One: Demographics & Child Poverty**

# Demographics

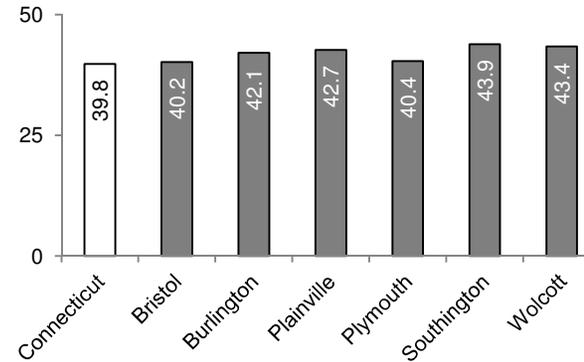
## Main Street Communities

Median Household Income in 2011



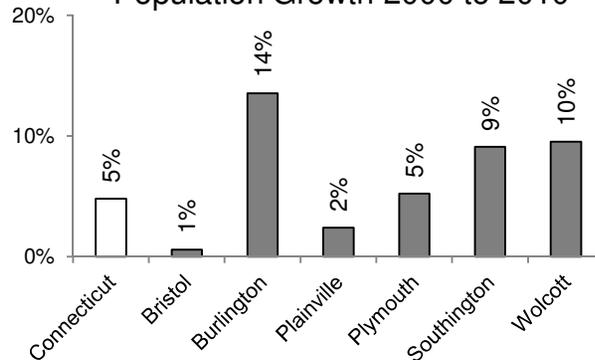
Source: American Community Survey, 2007-2011 5-yr table B19013

Median Age in 2011



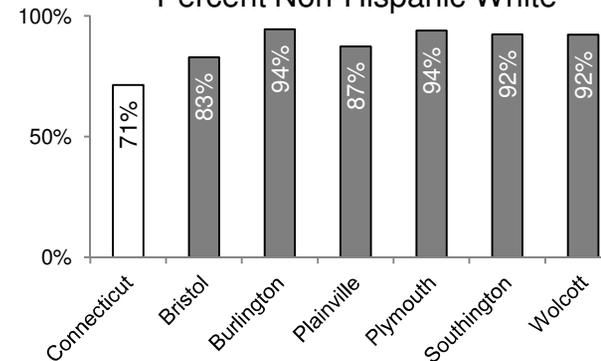
Source: American Community Survey, 2007-2011 5-yr table B01002

Population Growth 2000 to 2010



Source: Census 2000 SF1 P16 & Census 2010 SF2 PCT5

Percent Non-Hispanic White



Source: Census 2010 SF2 PCT5

▶ **Older, Avg. Pop. Growth, Mostly White, Above Avg. Income**

## Demographic Challenges

Shifting demographics require a more educated workforce

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- Employers are struggling to find enough skilled workers. The demand for workers with a postsecondary credential or degree is expected to outpace the supply.
- As the elderly population grows, Connecticut faces the prospect of relying on a smaller workforce to pay for public-sector programs.
- A productive workforce is critical to generating the resources to support a growing population of retirees and the future success of our economy.
- Economically secure families, healthy children, and high quality early care and education play an important role in preparing children for success.

 **Our children are a key resource in building an economically strong future.**

# Child Poverty

## Toxic Impact of Poverty

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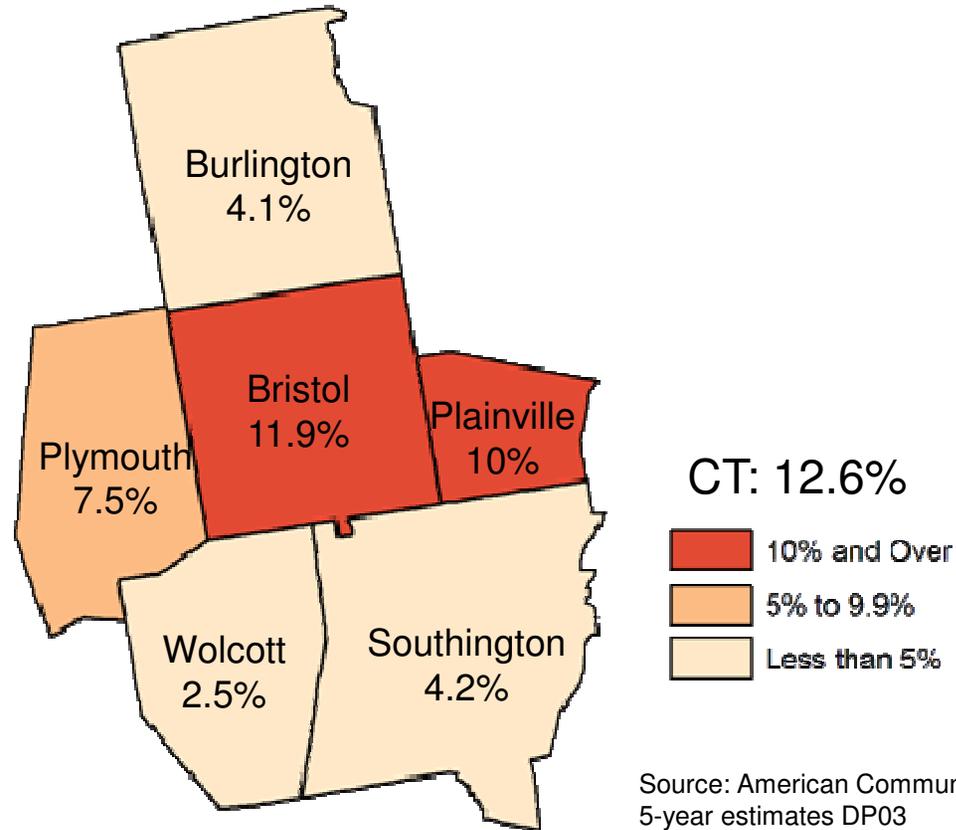
- What is child poverty and why does it matter?
- Individual & Civic, Short & Long Term Harms
- Dramatic increase during recession
  - More than one 1 of every 7 Connecticut children lived in poverty in 2012

 **The longer society waits to intervene in children's lives, the more costly and difficult it becomes to make up for early setbacks.**

# Child Poverty

Threatening our future

Children Under 18 in Poverty



Source: American Community Survey, 2007-2011  
5-year estimates DP03

▶ **About 1 in 8 children in Bristol and 1 in 10 in Plainville live in poverty.**

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## **Part Two: Targeted Investments for Healthy Childhood Development**

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**To change the course in child poverty, we need to make strategic investments in programs and services that work.**

- ✓ Families
- ✓ Education
- ✓ Health

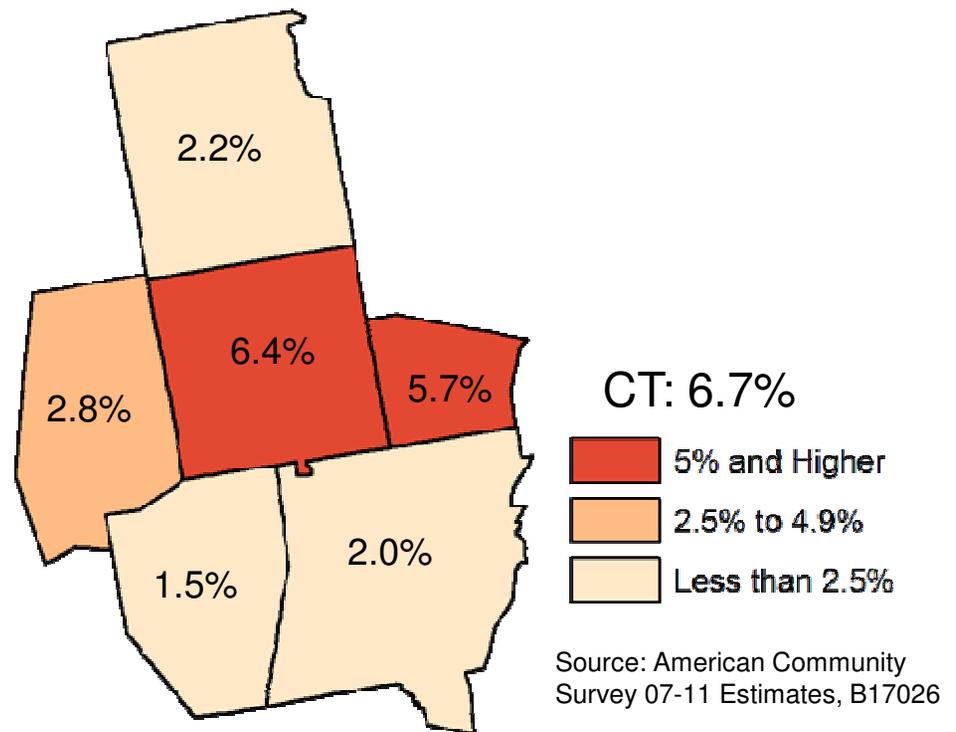
# Family Economic Security

Families below poverty level struggle to make ends meet

Size of Family	Poverty Threshold
One Person	\$11,720
Two People	\$14,937
Three People	\$18,284
Four People	\$23,492
Five People	\$27,827

Source: US Census Bureau Official Poverty Threshold 2012

Families Below Poverty Level

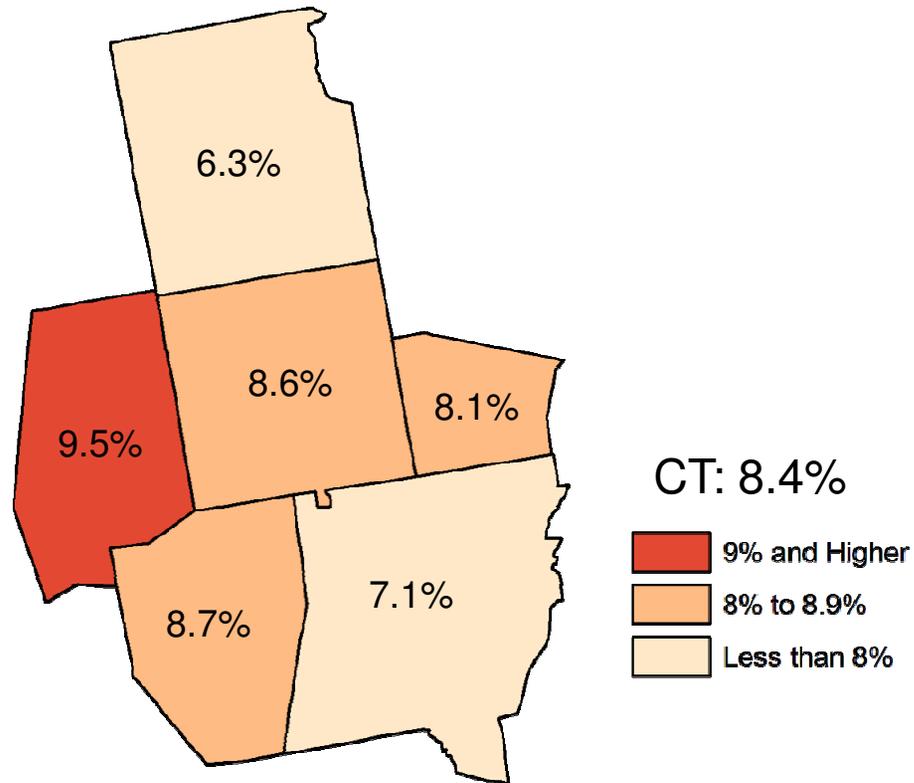


► **Impoverished families mean impoverished children and communities.**

# Family Economic Security

## High unemployment still plagues Connecticut

2012 Unemployment Rate



Source: CT State Department of Labor



**Unemployment means less stability for children and families.**

# Targeted Investments: Family Economic Security

## Make Work Pay with Earned Income Tax Credit

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- The EITC gets and keeps people working.
  - Can only be claimed by people who earn income through work. Beginning with the first dollar, a worker's EITC grows with each additional dollar of earning until the credit reaches maximum value.
- The EITC is a proven anti-poverty tool.
  - In 2011, the federal EITC kept 61,000 people in Connecticut above the poverty line, including 35,000 children.

 **The EITC lifts children and families out of poverty.**

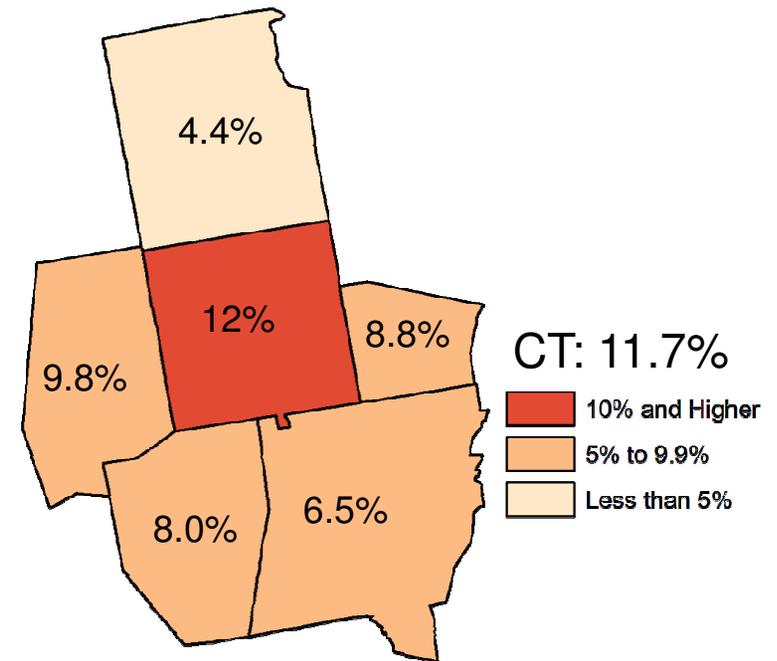
# Targeted Investments: Family Economic Security

## EITC (cont'd)

EITC By the Numbers			
	Number of Households Claiming EITC	Average Credit Amount	Average Income of Filer
Connecticut	181,620	\$601	\$17,957
Bristol	3,290	\$585	\$18,345
Burlington	178	\$437	\$19,895
Plainville	754	\$487	\$18,363
Plymouth	548	\$519	\$19,306
Southington	1,273	\$479	\$18,094
Wolcott	595	\$516	\$18,051

Source: CT Department of Revenue Service

Percent Returns Claiming EITC



▶ **Over 6,500 hard-working, low-income Main Street Families achieved greater economic security.**

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# Targeted Investment: Family Economic Security

Children need healthy food for future success

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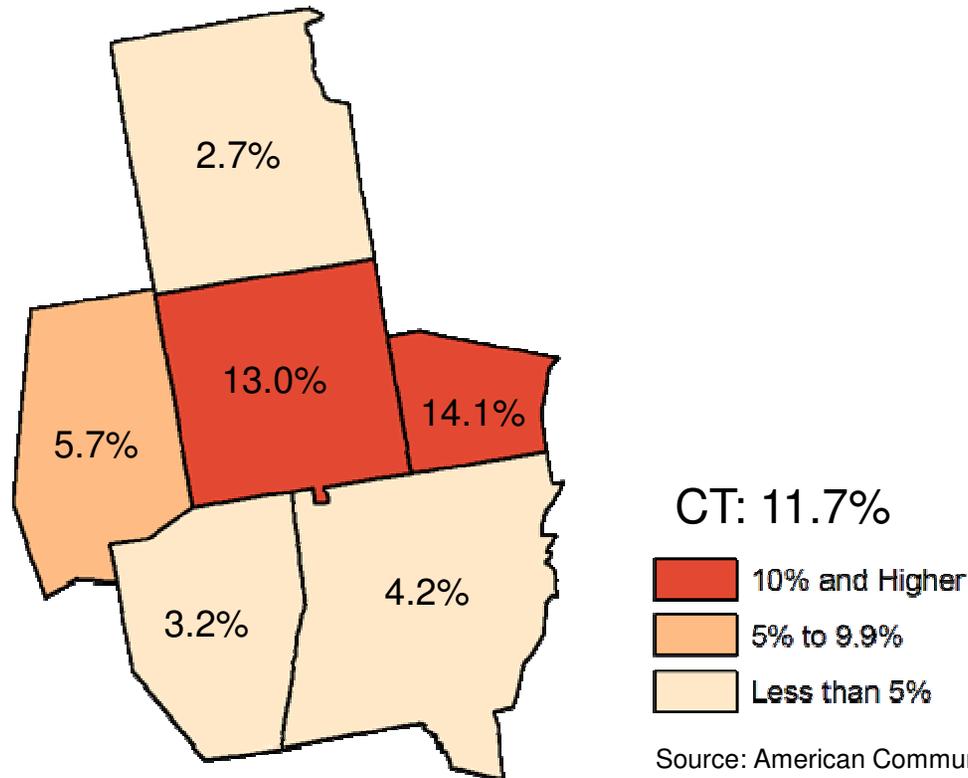
- Children who do not have enough to eat wind up with diminished capacity to learn and thrive.
- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program helps low-income families afford the cost of food, and provides education about nutrition.
  - For a single parent with two children to receive SNAP, the income standard is \$1,293/month, less than \$20,000/year
  - Nearly 225,000 CT households saw a drop in SNAP benefits November 1
  - Could lead to 17 million fewer meals

 **Food assistance programs support children's healthy development.**

# Targeted Investment: Family Economic Security

## Families in Main Street rely on SNAP

Families with Children Using SNAP

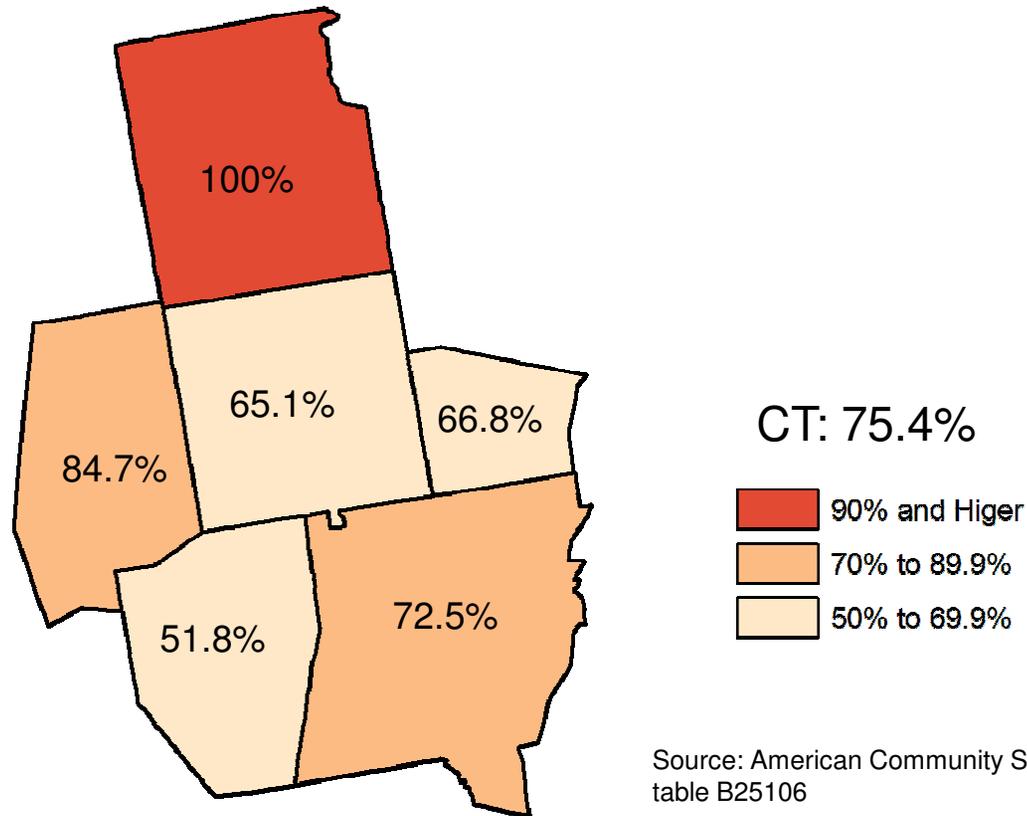


► **1 in 7 Bristol and Plainville families with children eat healthier with SNAP.**

# Targeted Investments: Family Economic Security

## Affordable Rental Housing

Households (Income <\$50,000) Paying  $\geq$  30% on Rent



Source: American Community Survey, 2007-2011 5-yr table B25106

► **Rental housing is expensive and/or in short supply in Burlington.**

## Education

Third Grade Reading is an important indicator

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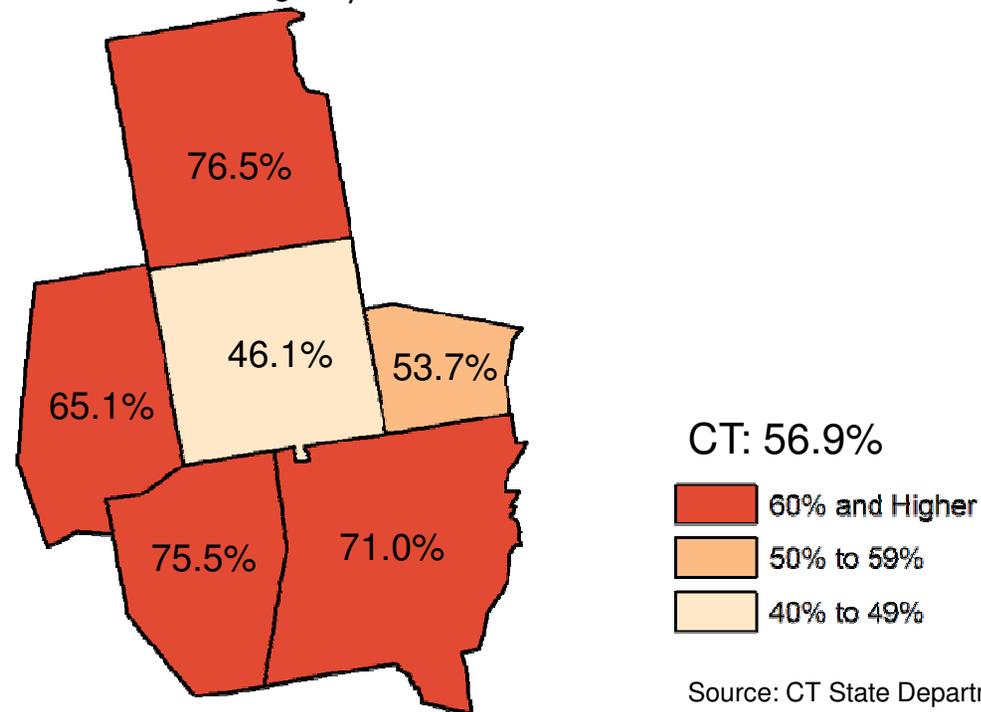
- Alienation from school
- Four times more likely to leave school without a diploma than proficient readers. (Annie E. Casey)
- Interventions for struggling readers after third grade are often not as effective as those in the early years.

 **Invest in education early for future success.**

# Education

## Achievement gap seen in test scores

3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Reading at/Above Goal



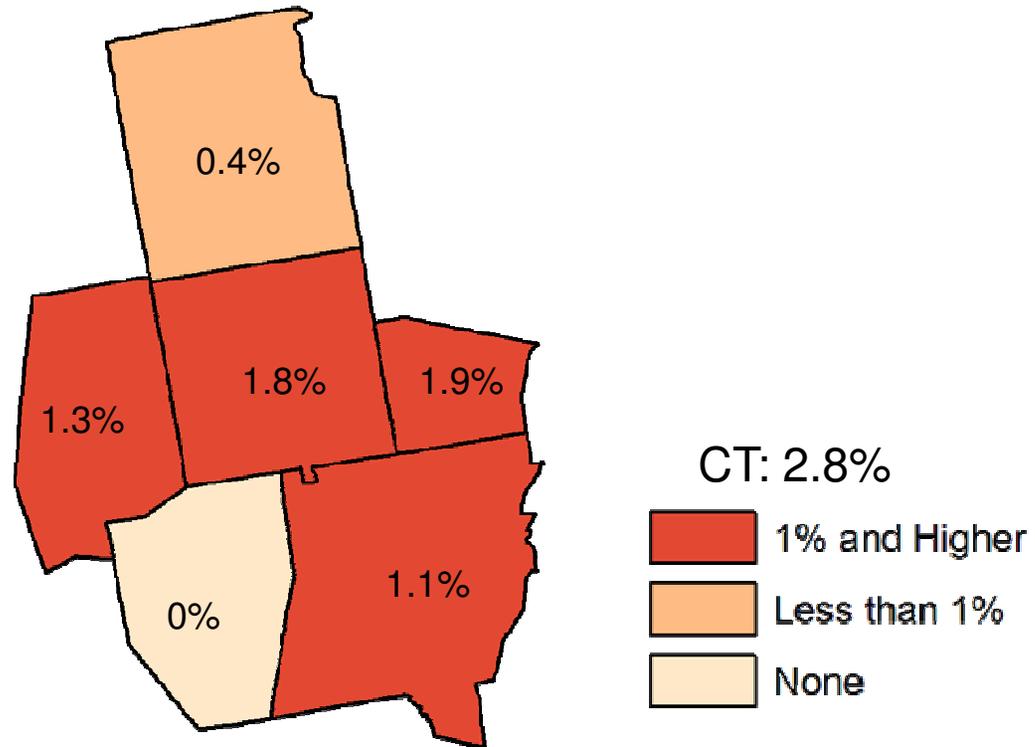
Source: CT State Department of Education

▶ **Students in towns with more poverty score lower on standardized tests.**

# Education

## Higher drop-out rates in lower-income communities

Annual Dropout Rate 2009-10



Source: CT State Department of Education

▶ **High school graduates make higher future earnings and are less likely to be unemployed.**

## Targeted Investment: Education

High-quality early care and education crucial for academic success

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- Achievement gap already present at kindergarten.
- Preschool attendance make the greatest difference for low-income and at-risk children.
- High-quality early care and education can be powerful counters to risk factors that cause some children to start kindergarten at a disadvantage from which they never recover.

 **Every dollar invested in high-quality early childhood education means greater savings later on.**

## Targeted Investment: Education

### Need for more high-quality subsidized slots

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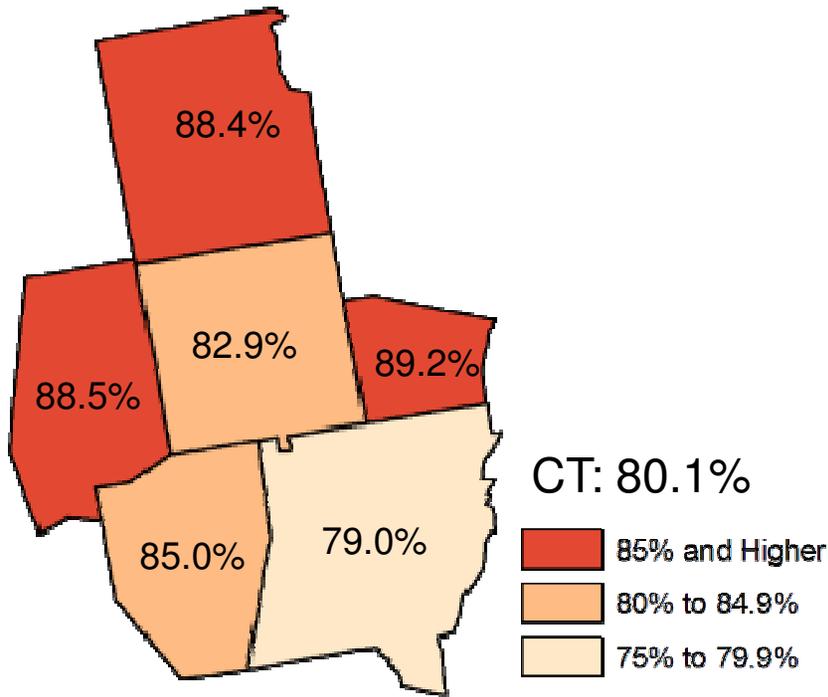
- Not enough slots
  - 30% of 3 and 4 year olds and 84% of infants and toddlers living in families earning under 75% of the State Median Income did not receive any kind of subsidized early care and education.
- Costs for high-quality care are prohibitive
  - The average yearly cost for full-time care for a preschooler in a licensed child care center is \$10,954. (211 Child Care)
  - For a family with a preschooler and a toddler in center-based care, average annual child costs would reach \$24,131. For a family of three earning the state median income, this would represent 28% of their pre-tax income devoted to child care. (Connecticut Alliance for Basic Human Needs)

 **Not all students who need quality early care and education have access.**

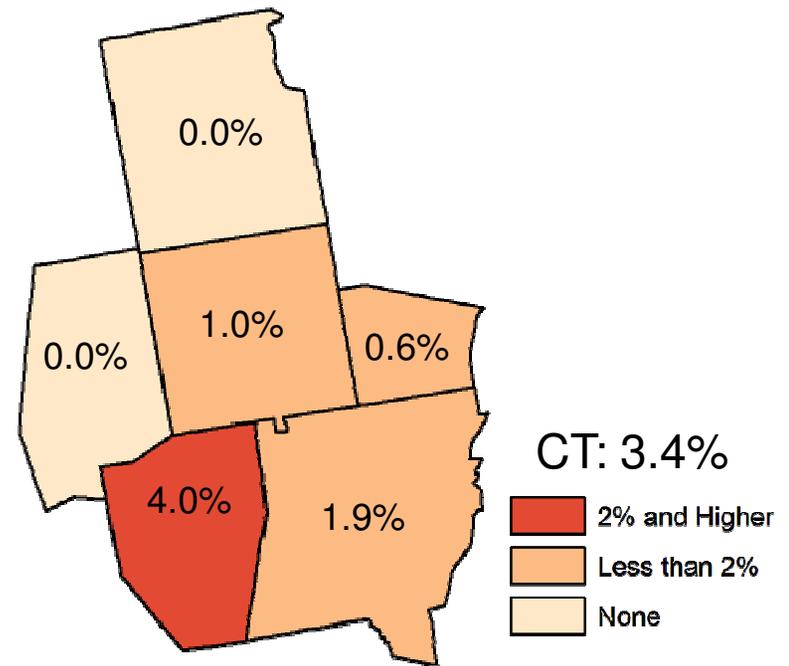
# Targeted Investment: Education

## Ensure high-quality, universal Pre-K

Kindergarteners with Pre-K Experience



Kindergarteners Retained



Source: CT State Department of Education

▶ **Access and quality both important.**

## Targeted Investment: Education

Support coordinated system for high-quality ECE

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- Office of Early Childhood
- “One-stop shop” for quality early care and education
- Governor signed by Executive Order, need legislature to pass

▶ **Office of Early Childhood coordinates complex system of ECE.**

## Targeted Investment: Education

Support policies that keep kids in school

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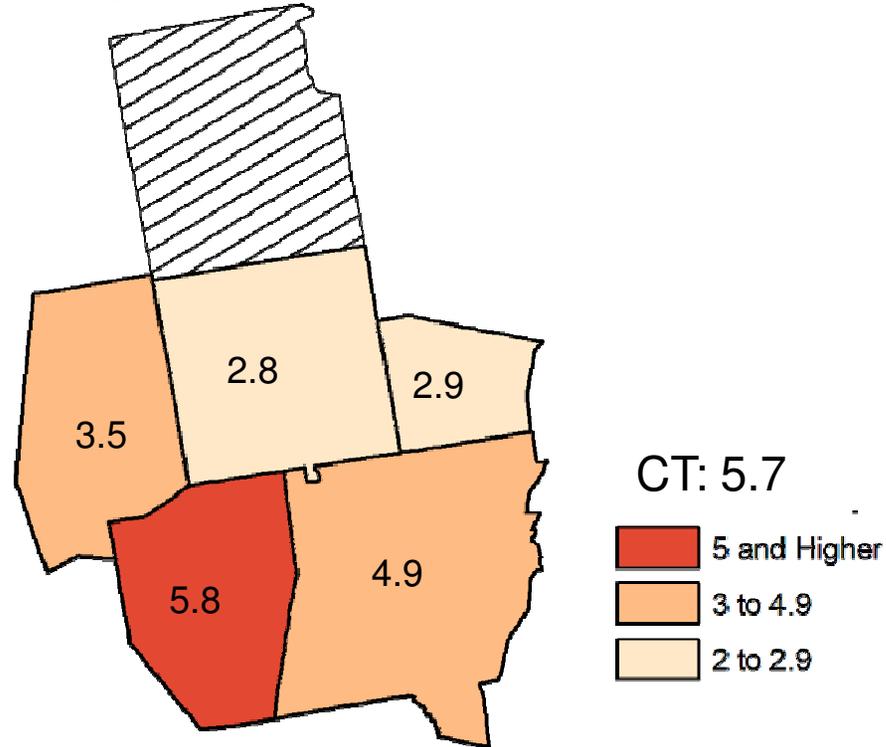
- Children learn best when they are in school.
- Excluding children for disciplinary reasons is ineffective and counterproductive.
- Arrests and juvenile justice system involvement harms individual and society.
- Cost to society of career criminals, heavy drug users, and high school dropouts estimated per individual at \$2 million, \$523,000 to \$1.4 million, and \$400,000.

 **Arrest doubles the probability of dropout, and fuels entrance into the juvenile justice system.**

## Targeted Investment: Education

Support policies that keep kids in school

Arrests per 1,000 students



Source: CT State Department of Education

▶ **Arrests happen across socioeconomic lines and often for typical student behavior.**

## Targeted Investment: Education

Support policies that keep kids in school

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- School-Police Collaboration Bill
- Will appear in legislative session this year with broad bi-partisan support
- Defines school arrest and collects data
- Creates memorandum of agreement between school and police to determine appropriate disciplinary responses

 **School-Police Collaboration Bill keeps kids in schools and collects the data we need for better decision making.**

## Health

### Good coverage for kids & families in Connecticut

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- In Connecticut, the Medicaid program for children and families (HUSKY A) covers:
  - **Children under the age of 19 in families with income up to 185% of the Federal Poverty Level (for a family of 4, \$43,567/year)**
  - **Pregnant women in families with income under 250% FPL (for a family of 4, \$58,875/year)**
  - **Parents or relative care givers in families with income up to 185% FPL**
  - Youth in foster care up to age 21 (if in care at age 18)

 **Publicly funded health care is crucial to keep many parents and children in CT healthy.**

## Health

### Good coverage for Connecticut kids & families

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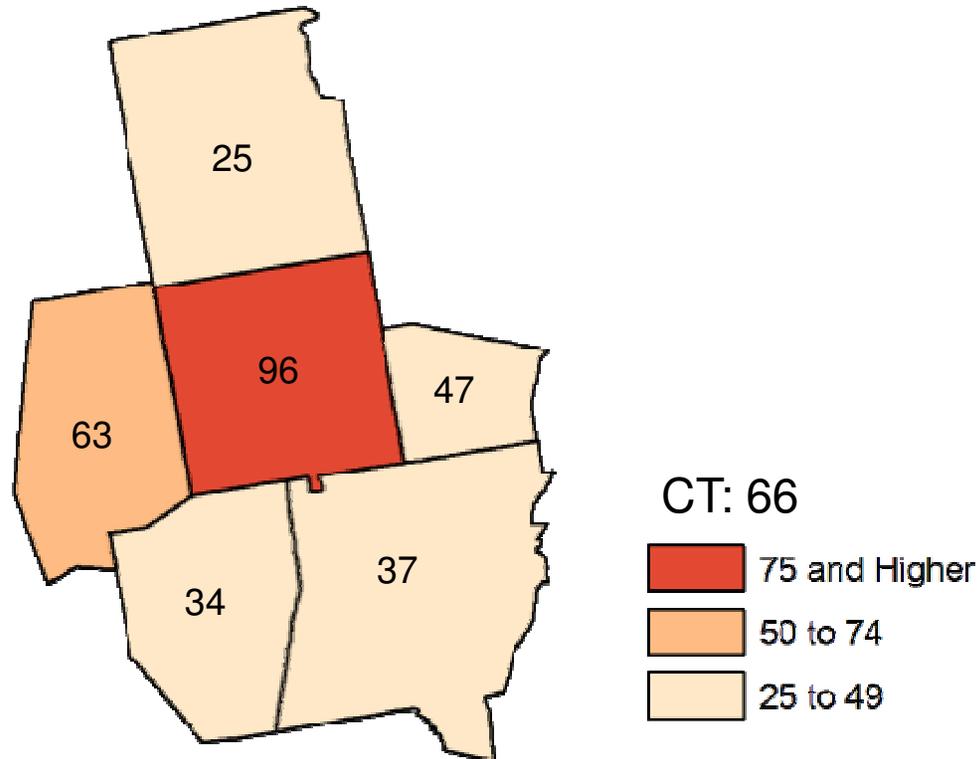
- In CT, 8.9% of the population under 65 is uninsured.
- In Main Street communities, 7.7% of the population under 65 is uninsured.
  - Bristol 10.0%
  - Southington 6%
- In CT, 3.2% of the population under 18 is uninsured.
- In Main Street communities, 3.0% of the population under 18 is uninsured.
  - Bristol 2.6%
  - Southington 3.0%
- These numbers represent significant decline in uninsured, despite recession and increased poverty.

 **Low rates indicate success of state and federal policy reforms aimed at improving access to health care.**

# Health

## Troubling Trends in Asthma

Asthma ER Visits per 10,000 children



Source: CT Department of Public Health



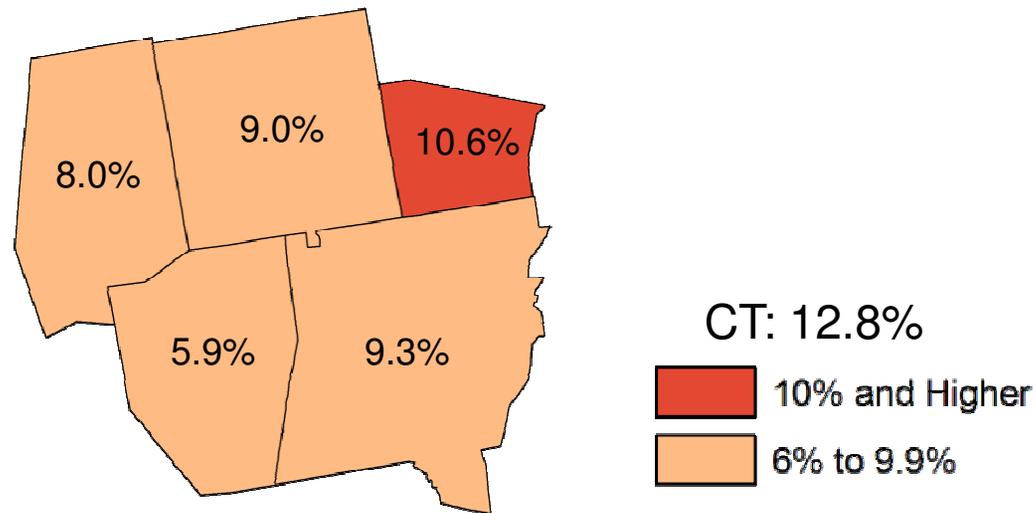
**Ensure that children have health insurance to prevent asthma ER visits.**

## Health

### Lack of Pre-Natal Care threatens health of pregnant women & infants

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Late or No Pre-Natal Care



Source: CT Department of Public Health

▶ **Better than state average, but many pregnant women still lacking pre-natal care.**

## Targeted Investment: Health

HUSKY coverage for low-income infants & moms

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- Medicaid provides crucial pre-natal and infant care.
- Regular prenatal screenings can identify problems early.
- For women with existing risk factors, active monitoring and treatment to control the conditions during the prenatal period are especially important.

 **Covering pregnant women & new parents means healthier infants and children in the future.**

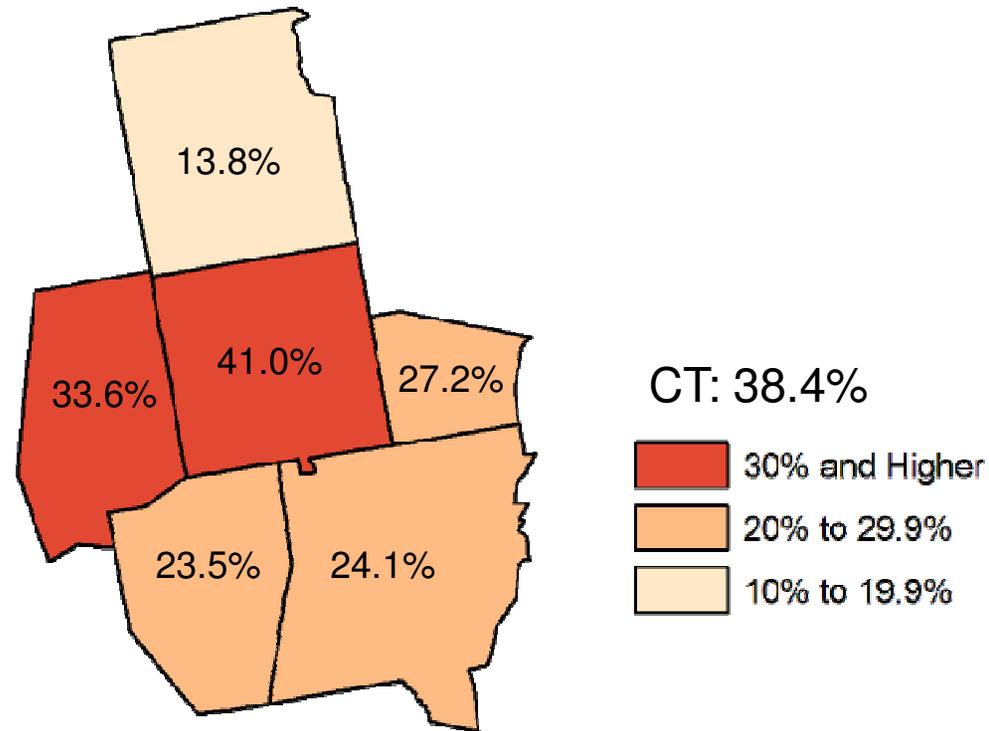
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# Targeted Investment: Health

## HUSKY coverage for low-income infants & moms (cont'd)

Births to Mothers in HUSKY or FFS Medicaid



Source: CT Department of Public Health and Department of Social Services, 2010

▶ **Ensure that eligible pregnant women and infants have Medicaid coverage.**

## Targeted Investment: Health

Parents and Children should be covered together

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- Governor has proposed reducing eligibility for some HUSKY parents.
- When whole families are covered together the number of children who are insured and have access to care is much higher.
  - Insured children with uninsured parents are nearly 2.5 times more likely to experience a gap in insurance coverage, and are at greater risk of having unmet health care needs.
  - A child with publicly insured parents is about 8 times more likely to be enrolled in public coverage compared to a child whose parent is uninsured.

 **Maintain parent eligibility – when parents are covered, children are more likely to be covered.**

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## **Part 3: Specific Policy Recommendations, Next Steps & Discussion**

## Next Steps

### Policy and advocacy recommendations

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#### Family Economic Security

- Support and strengthen programs like the Earned Income Tax Credit that make work pay
- Support and strengthen programs like SNAP that keep kids well-fed and alert

 **Children exist in families, and economically secure families mean economically secure children.**

## Next Steps

### Policy and advocacy recommendations

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#### Education

- Support measures for high-quality early care and education, like increasing the number of high-quality slots and passing the Office of Early Childhood legislation
- Support measures that keep students in school where they belong, like the School-Police Collaboration Bill

 **Investing in high quality early education pays for the future.**

## Next Steps

### Policy and advocacy recommendations

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#### Health

- Support services that keep kids and families both covered, like maintaining Medicaid coverage for HUSKY parents under 185 percent of FPL
- Support services that ensure eligible pregnant women and new mothers are covered early in pregnancy, and ensure that eligible women are enrolled.

 **Publicly funded health care coverage keeps Connecticut's kids and moms healthy**

## Next Steps

### Exploring the data and takeaways

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- Every Community needs focus in different areas
  - Taken as a whole, Main Street Communities are doing better than CT average
  - Bristol shows highest overall need
  - Plymouth and Plainville demonstrate worrisome trends
  - Wolcott shows highest number of student arrests

 **Data starting point for digging deeper and asking questions.**

## Discussion

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## Questions?

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