

N.Y. TRIPPING OVER POVERTY LINE – STUDY

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THE FEDERAL government's measuring stick on poverty is way out of whack in New York, according to a report released yesterday.

The national poverty line for a family of three is \$15,670 a year, which is barely enough to make rent in the city, according to the "2004 **Self Sufficiency Standards** for the City of New York."

The report, put out by the United Way of New York City and the Women's Center for Education and Career Advancement, said a single New Yorker with two kids needs nearly \$50,000 to get by. And that would cover only such basics as food, housing and health care.

"None of the things that many of us take for granted on a daily basis are included," said the director of the Women's Center, Merble Reagon, citing cell phones, movie tickets and gifts.

The report provides a borough-by-borough breakdown of how much money families and individuals need to make ends meet.

A Bronx family of three needs at least \$49,874, while it takes \$77,957 in wealthier areas of Manhattan.

"We would love to make \$50,000," said Jaritza Martinez, a Bronx mom whose family takes in \$36,000 annually. "We barely have enough for rent, supplies for

the house and that's about it."

The report paints a bleaker picture than four years ago, when a parent with two kids could get by on \$43,237. But housing costs have gone up between 19% and 40%, according to the report.

"What you see is a picture of people being squeezed by high housing costs and low wages," said James Parrott, deputy director of the Fiscal Policy Institute.

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