

Staggering Statistics: The Scope of the Problem

Sources: UNICEF, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Youth Service America, Do Something, Habitat for Humanity, United Way of Central Ohio, Mid-Ohio Foodbank, and Community Shelter Board

What Do Poverty and Hunger Look Like in America?

Poverty is a complicated issue with root causes that require complex and comprehensive solutions. For 2014, the **Federal Poverty Level (FPL)** for a family of four was an annual income of **\$23,850**. Approximately **50 million Americans** are currently living in poverty; a comparable number live in **food insecure households**.

Extreme or Deep Poverty was defined as half the FPL, or less than **\$11,925** annually for a family of four. More than **14,400 children younger than age 6** lived in extreme poverty in Columbus in 2010.

Research suggests that families actually need an income about twice the FPL in order to meet their basic needs. Families earning between 100% and 200% of the FPL are considered **low income** or **economically disadvantaged** and face similar hardships, such as eviction or foreclosure, electricity/gas shutoffs, insufficient access to health care, unstable child care arrangements and food insecurity.

For a family of four this would be **less than \$47,700 annually**. These families struggle daily to meet their basic needs of housing, shelter, utilities, food, material goods and transportation. When parents are making difficult financial decisions about paying their rent or adequately feeding their children, it's impossible for them to plan and work for a better future.

An estimated **8.5 million American households face worst-case housing situations** (43% increase from 2007-2011). Receiving little or no government housing assistance, these families are unable to find a decent place to live at a price they can afford to pay. According to the National Low Income Housing Coalition, families across the country would need to earn a **"housing wage" of \$18.46** an hour, roughly 2-1/2 times the minimum wage, to afford a two-bedroom apartment at the average fair market rent.

In the U.S., **more than 3.5 million people experience homelessness** each year. Families with children comprise more than 35% of the homeless population. **2.5 million children (1 in 30) were homeless** at some point in 2013, along with more than **58,000 veterans**.

As indicated earlier, nearly **50 million Americans** suffer from hunger/food insecurity. That number equals the combined population of our nation's **50 largest cities**.

16 million children in America—more than **1 in 5**—now live in households that struggle to put food on the table. Many experts indicate that **1 in 2** youngsters will experience food insecurity at some point in their childhood/adolescence.

Although **9.8 million children** get free or reduced price school **breakfast** on an average day, **10 million eligible children go without**.

Over **20 million children** receive free or reduced-price lunch each school day. **Less than half of these youngsters get breakfast, and only 10% have access to summer feeding sites**. For every **100 school lunch programs**, there are only **87 breakfast sites** and just **36 summer food programs**.

1 in 7 people are enrolled in Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). **More than half of them are children**. Projections indicate that **1 in 2 children** will receive food assistance at some point prior to adulthood.

40% of food is thrown out in the US every year, or about \$165 billion worth. All of this uneaten food could feed 25 million Americans.

In 1980, there were **200 food banks and pantries** in America. Today, there are more than **40,000**.

What Do Poverty and Hunger Look Like in Central Ohio?

Did you know that **Columbus ranks #1 in poverty** when compared to 15 similar metropolitan areas across the country? In Franklin County more than **200,000 people live in poverty**. Another **500,000 people struggle daily** to meet their basic needs. That's more than 700,000 people—**SEVEN full Ohio Stadiums**—striving to get by and adequately care for their families. They're our neighbors, co-workers and friends, and include people of all ages, races and household types.

In central Ohio, **1 in 4 children and 1 in 6 adults** are struggling to make ends meet. And throughout our state, almost **2 million people are living below the poverty level, and several million others have great difficulty meeting basic needs**.

Poverty's reach is expanding across central Ohio. Last year, a record **10,432 people slept in homeless shelters**, a **13% increase** from the previous year. 3,101 of them were children, and the youngest of these was just several weeks old. Since 2011, the **number of families served in the**

emergency system has increased by a staggering 79%, despite the fact that national family homelessness rates have decreased since 2010.

Recent statistics show that even suburban communities are feeling the effects. **Suburban poverty has increased more than 64%** over the past decade nationally, and our region is no exception.

In the past five years, Mid-Ohio Foodbank has worked with area partners to open **10 pantries in Columbus's surrounding suburbs**. In just two years, a Worthington food pantry went from serving an average **20 families a month to 300 families a month**. In 2013, visits to the pantry increased nearly 80% over the previous year.

More than **524,300 individuals, including 183,500 children, received emergency food last year through the Mid-Ohio Foodbank—more than twice the number served in 2010**. **35%** of those served are children under 18.

Nearly half of the Foodbank's clients are **employed**. Still, **69%** of them have been forced to choose between **food and utilities**; **67%** between **food and medical care**; **64%** between **food and transportation**; and **55%** between **food and housing costs** (rent/mortgage).

What Do Poverty and Hunger Look Like in the World?

Poverty is an especially daunting challenge when viewed globally. The following statistics will serve as dramatic examples:

At least **80% of humanity lives on less than \$10 a day**. In fact, **hundreds of millions** of people live on less than **\$1 a day**. (Some estimates actually exceed 1 billion.)

According to UNICEF, **1 billion children (nearly half the world total) live in poverty**. **22,000 of these children die each day** of causes related to poverty.

Lack of clean water and sanitation claim the lives of more than **1.8 million young children** every year.

Worldwide, someone dies of hunger **every 3.6 seconds**.

It is estimated that some **800 million people** in the world suffer from hunger and malnutrition, about 100 times as many as those who actually die from these causes each year.

Worldwide, some **827.6 million people live in urban slums**. By 2020, it is estimated that the world slum population will reach almost **1 billion**.

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