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Fact Sheet

A Place at the Table: Setting a Goal to End Hunger Hunger & Poverty Among African-American Children

February 2013

Toward the end of 2012, the U.S. Census Bureau and U.S. Department of Agriculture released new data revealing that hunger and poverty in America remain high, especially among children.¹

Alarming, the African-American and African-American child hunger and poverty rates are even greater than the national averages—sometimes nearly twice as high.

A Snapshot of Hunger and Poverty in America

More than 1 in 7 Americans, or 15 percent of the entire population, live below the poverty line (\$22,811 for a family of four with two children).

Hunger closely mirrors the poverty figures: 14.9 percent of households in the United States (50.1 million Americans, or 1 in 6) are food insecure—meaning that the people in the household are unsure of how they will provide for their next meal at some point during the year.²

Households with children are more likely to experience food insecurity. Around the country, nearly 1 in 4 children—16.7 million—lives in a food insecure family.³ More than a quarter of all children under age 5 lived in poverty in 2011.⁴

Hunger and Poverty and the Impact on African-American Children

The most recent food insecurity data released by the U.S. Department of Agriculture reveal that 25.1 percent of African-American households are food insecure.⁵ Among African-American households with children, 29.2 percent are food insecure, compared to 20.6 percent of all U.S. households with children.⁶

Similarly, 27.6 percent of African-Americans live in poverty. The African-American child poverty figures are particularly disturbing: 38.8 percent of children under age 18 and 42.7 percent of children under age 5 live below the poverty line.⁷

The table on the right shows the 20 states with the highest African-American child poverty rates in the country.⁸ The figures are particularly dismal in some major metropolitan areas. On the next page is a list of the 20 metropolitan areas



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	Poverty Rate for African-American Children ⁹	Poverty Rate for All Children ¹⁰
Iowa	55.7	17.3
Ohio	50.5	24.2
Michigan	50.0	24.8
Mississippi	49.6	31.8
Wisconsin	49.1	18.2
Indiana	48.7	23.0
Louisiana	48.3	28.8
Kansas	46.2	18.8
Alabama	45.8	27.6
Minnesota	45.8	15.4
Kentucky	45.7	27.4
Arkansas	45.4	28.1
Illinois	44.8	21.6
Oklahoma	44.8	23.4
South Carolina	44.4	27.8
Tennessee	43.6	26.3
D.C.	43.2	30.3
Missouri	41.7	22.1
Florida	41.2	24.9
Pennsylvania	40.8	19.6

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Metropolitan Area ¹⁴	AA Child Poverty (2011) ¹⁵	Overall Child Poverty (2011) ¹⁶
Chattanooga, Tenn.-Ga., Metro Area	58.3	25.7
Greenville-Mauldin-Easley, S.C., Metro Area	57.0	27.1
Rochester, N.Y., Metro Area	54.7	22.8
Buffalo-Niagara Falls, N.Y., Metro Area	53.8	21.6
Toledo, Ohio, Metro Area	53.4	28.0
Cleveland-Elyria-Mentor, Ohio, Metro Area	52.9	24.7
Tulsa, Okla., Metro Area	51.7	21.6
Cincinnati-Middletown, Ohio-Ky.-Ind., Metro Area	50.8	20.2
Akron, Ohio, Metro Area	50.5	24.6
Milwaukee-Waukesha-West Allis, Wisc., Metro Area	49.6	22.4
Columbus, Ohio, Metro Area	49.4	21.3
Detroit-Warren-Livonia, Mich., Metro Area	48.6	26.3
New Orleans-Metairie-Kenner, La., Metro Area	47.2	27.9
Louisville/Jefferson County, Ky.-Ind., Metro Area	45.9	22.9
Pittsburgh, Pa., Metro Area	45.5	18.3
Dayton, Ohio, Metro Area	45.4	26.4
Minneapolis-St. Paul-Bloomington, Minn.-Wisc., Metro Area	45.1	14.3
Kansas City, Mo.-Kan., Metro Area	44.0	19.7
Albany-Schenectady-Troy, N.Y., Metro Area	43.4	17.6
Portland-Vancouver-Hillsboro, Ore.-Wash., Metro Area	43.3	20.3

in the country with the highest African-American child poverty rates, compared to overall child poverty in those same regions.¹¹

Safety-Net Programs Make a Difference in the African-American Community

As the economy continues to rebound, federal initiatives play a tremendous role in protecting African-American children and families from falling into hunger and poverty. These initiatives include the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, formerly food stamps) and the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC).

- **SNAP:** During the recession of 2008, poverty and unemployment skyrocketed while the number of hungry people held relatively steady, due largely to programs like SNAP. In 2011, more than 3.9 million African-American families received SNAP benefits.¹²
- **WIC:** The health and potential of some of our most vulnerable community members are safeguarded through monthly packages of food that supply important nutrients to mothers and their infants and children under age 5. WIC served nearly 9 million women and children in 2012. The most recent racial and ethnic data, published in February 2012, found that 20 percent of women and children enrolled in WIC are African-American.¹³

Setting a Goal for Ending Hunger

Now is the time for President Barack Obama to work with Congress on setting a goal to end hunger. As the president and lawmakers work to reduce our federal deficit, Bread for the World urges lawmakers to protect the programs that help keep hunger at bay for low-income African-Americans—and all hungry Americans.

Endnotes

¹ Data compiled from Household Food Security in the United States, 2011 (USDA, Economic Research Service, September 2012) and U.S. Census Bureau poverty data, 2011

² Household Food Security in the United States, 2011: Table 1A

³ Household Food Security in the United States, 2011: Table 2

⁴ Bread for the World Poverty Fact Sheet, 2011

⁵ Household Food Security in the United States, 2011: Table 2

⁶ Household Food Security in the United States, 2011: Table 3

⁷ U.S. Census Bureau Current Population Survey (CPS)

⁸ U.S. Census Bureau's – 2011 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates

⁹ U.S. Census Bureau's – 2011 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates

¹⁰ U.S. Census Bureau's – 2011 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates

¹¹ U.S. Census Bureau, 2011 American Community Survey, 1-Year Estimates

¹² U.S. Census Bureau, American Fact Finder, 2011 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates

¹³ WIC Program Racial and Ethnic Data, April 2010, published February 2012

¹⁴ U.S. Census Bureau, 2011 American Community Survey, 1-Year Estimates

¹⁵ U.S. Census Bureau, 2011 American Community Survey, 1-Year Estimates

¹⁶ U.S. Census Bureau, 2011 American Community Survey, 1-Year Estimates



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