

POVERTY

Definition of Poverty

Meriam Webster Dictionary

the state of one who lacks a usual or socially acceptable amount of money or material possessions

Dictionary.com

the state or condition of having little or no money, goods, or means of support; condition of being poor.

World Vision. What is Poverty?

Poverty, in the simplest sense of the word, is a state where one lacks access to basic needs such as food, clothing and shelter. It is also used to describe a person whose living conditions prevent them from being able to acquire education, seek medical help, secure a stable job, and participate in recreational activities due to a lack of money.

Compassion.com

"Poverty is hunger. Poverty is lack of shelter. Poverty is being sick and not being able to see a doctor. Poverty is not having access to school and not knowing how to read. Poverty is not having a job, is fear for the future, living one day at a time. Poverty is losing a child to illness brought about by unclean water. Poverty is powerlessness, lack of representation and freedom."

Different types of Poverty

Absolute vs Relative Poverty

World Vision: What is the difference between absolute poverty and relative poverty?

Absolute poverty refers to those whose incomes fall below a line set by a given country. Below this line people are unable to meet their basic needs for food, water and shelter. They also have no access to social services such as health care, education and utilities.

Relative poverty refers to people whose total incomes are less than a certain percentage—typically 50%—of the country's median income. Because the median income can vary as a result of economic growth, the line for relative poverty can change. When poverty is defined to include access to services and security critical to well-being—and not just income and consumption—[the global poverty rate increases by 50%](#).

United Nations

Absolute poverty measures poverty in relation to the amount of money necessary to meet basic needs such as food, clothing and shelter. **Relative poverty** defines poverty in relation to the economic status of other members of the society: people are poor if they fall below prevailing standards of living in a given societal context."

Absolute poverty is also known as extreme poverty.

<https://www.compassion.com/poverty/what-is-poverty.htm>

(Global definition of extreme poverty) The most widely held and understood definition of absolute poverty measures poverty strictly in economic terms — earning less than \$2.15 a day. By this measurement, anyone lacking enough financial resources falls below the poverty line and fails to meet a minimum standard of living. But to be poverty-stricken is more complex than not having enough money or having a low income.

From Wikipedia

(US definition of “deep” poverty) Single Americans with a daily income of about \$19.30 are considered to be living in **deep** poverty. (One half the poverty line in the US)

Who actually lives in Poverty? How Do We Measure Poverty

Poverty Level USA

Federal Poverty Level (FPL)		
Family size	2023 income numbers	2024 income numbers
For individuals	\$14,580	\$15,060
For a family of 2	\$19,720	\$20,440
For a family of 3	\$24,860	\$25,820
For a family of 4	\$30,000	\$31,200

[5 more rows](#)

 HealthCare.gov
<https://www.healthcare.gov/glossary/federal-poverty...>

Global Poverty Standard

From worldbank.org

The World Bank updated the global poverty lines in September 2022. The decision, announced in May, follows the release in 2020 of new purchasing power parities (PPPs)—the main data used to convert different currencies into a common, comparable unit and account for price differences across countries. The new extreme poverty line of \$2.15 per person per day, which replaces the \$1.90 poverty line, is based on 2017 PPPs.

Global Poverty

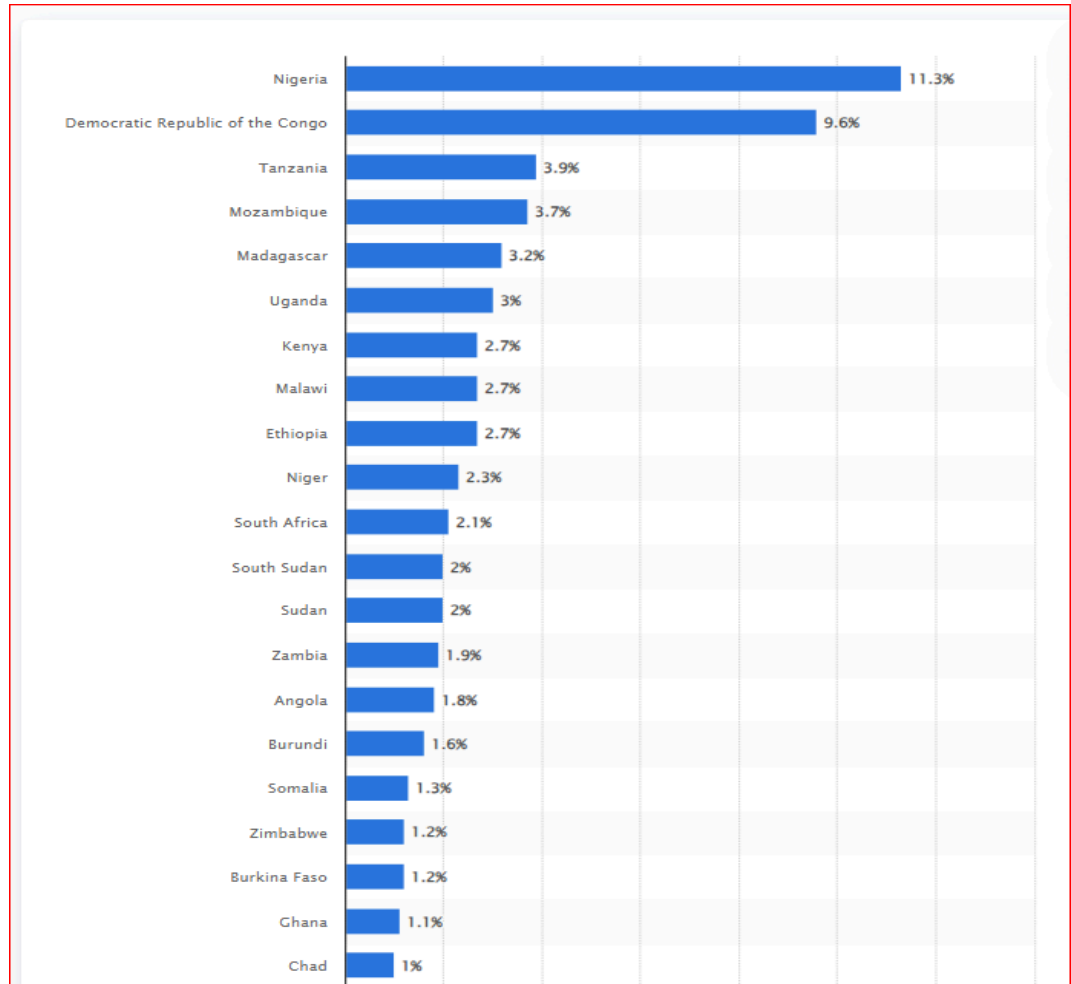
World Vision

Which places around the world are most affected by poverty?

According to the [World Poverty Clock](#), the global breakdown for the number of people living in "extreme poverty" per continent is:

- 430.3 million in Africa
- 120.3 million in Asia
- 3.2 million in Europe
- 12.4 million in North America
- 29 million in South America
- 3 million in Oceania

African Countries proportion of Global Population living below the extreme poverty line (from Statista)



Other countries with less than 1%: Chad, Cameroon, Rwanda, Central African Republic, Eritrea, Mali, Togo

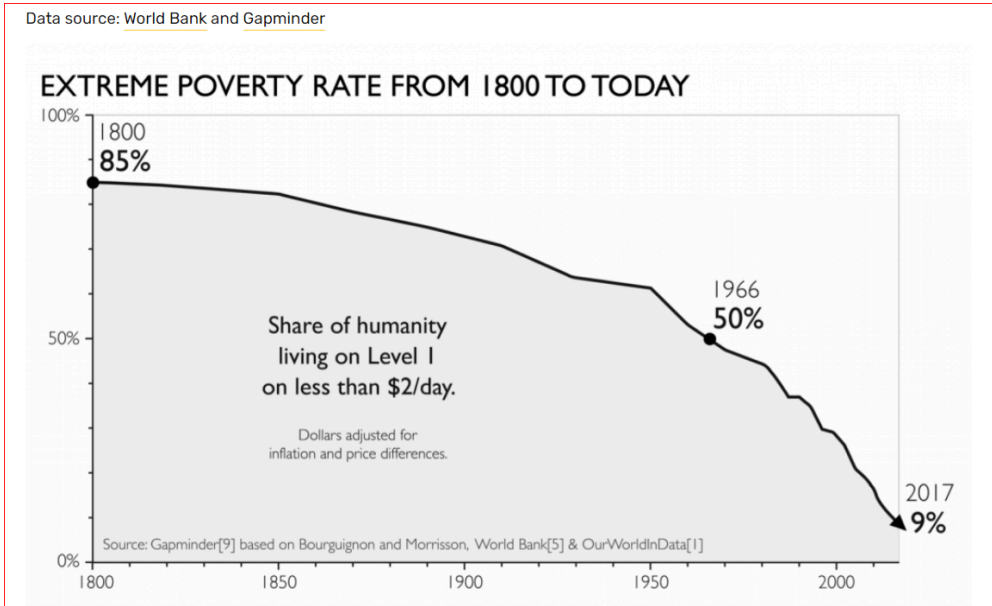
Poverty in the United State: U.S. Census Bureau

Official Poverty Measure:

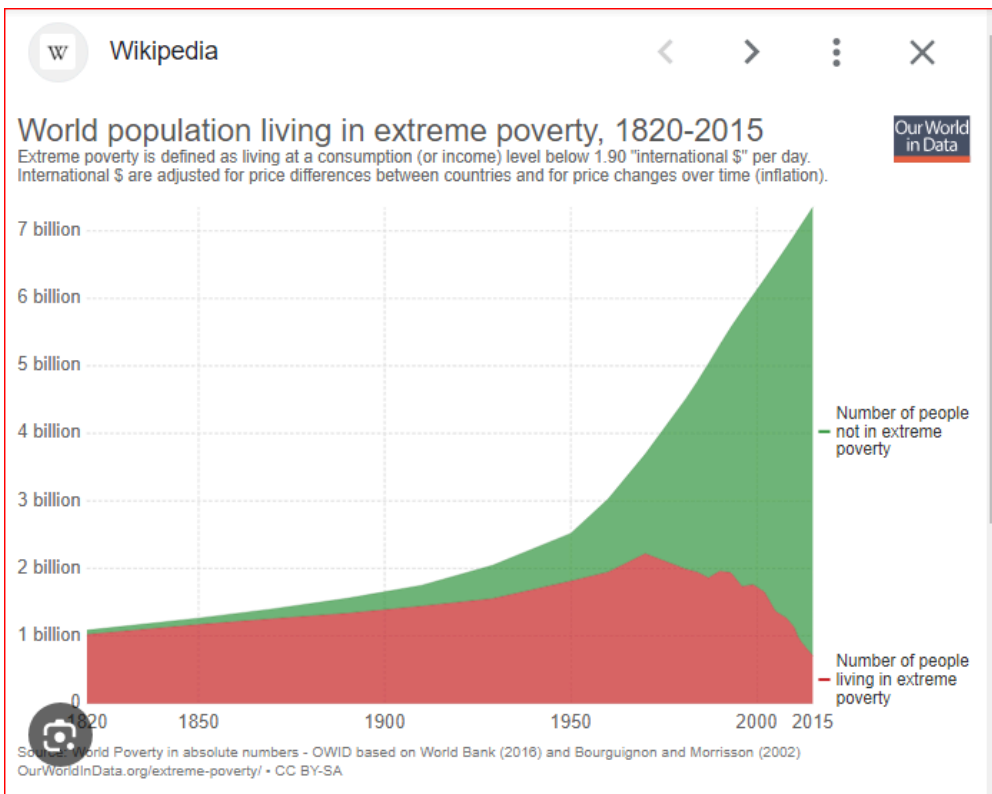
The official poverty rate in 2022 was 11.5 percent, with 37.9 million people in poverty. Neither the rate nor the number in poverty was significantly different from 2021

Is Poverty Changing?

World Poverty Level Change

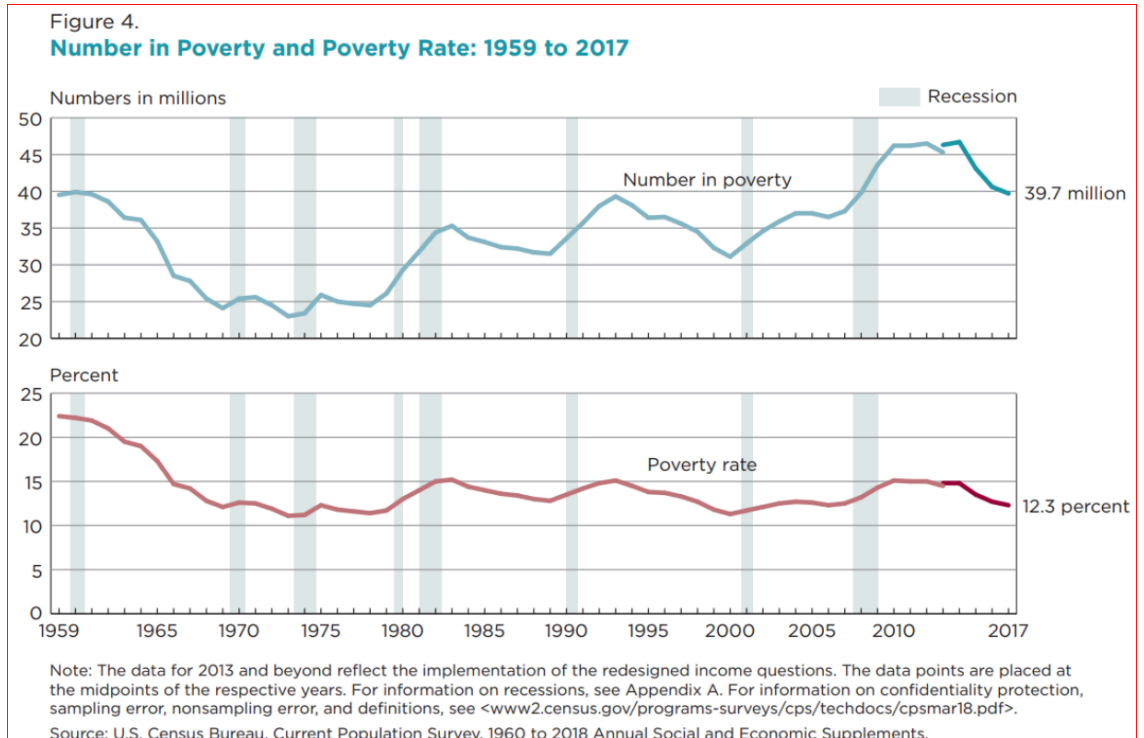


<https://www.gapminder.org/questions/gms1-3/>



https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Extreme_poverty

US Poverty Level Change



[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Poverty_in_the_United_States#/media/File:Number in Poverty and Poverty Rate, 1959 to 2017.png](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Poverty_in_the_United_States#/media/File:Number_in_Poverty_and_Poverty_Rate,_1959_to_2017.png)

What are the Human Effects/Outcomes/Dimensions of Poverty?

Poverty and Homelessness: <https://caufsociety.com/poverty-and-homelessness/>

How Poverty Causes Homelessness (The following data are from 2016)

Along with unemployment and lack of affordable housing, it is touted as one of the most crucial reasons for homelessness. A very strong correlation exists between poverty and homelessness. Consider the following statistics from Family Promise:

- Almost 40 million people in the US live below the poverty line
- Over 15 million children under age 18 in the US are poor
- A worker with a family of four needs to earn \$12.73 per hour just to reach the poverty level
- Median rent increased by 61% from 1960 to 2016, while median renter income only rose by 5% in that period
- The US faces a shortage of over 7.2 million rental home affordable to very low-income households

Poverty strips an individual of the resources necessary to afford a decent shelter for the long term. Poor individuals or families can only spend so much. Between food and having a roof above their heads, most people prefer the former. Therefore, homelessness often precedes hunger. Thus, homelessness results from not having enough financial resources to afford rent and other housing costs.

Note: Officially 653,104 people were homeless in the USA in 2023 (from <https://www.security.org/resources/homeless-statistics/#:~:text=653%2C104%20people%20experienced%20homelessness%20in,homes%20in%20America%20last%20year>)

Food Insecurity

What is Food Insecurity:

<https://www.feedingamerica.org/hunger-in-america/food-insecurity>

Food insecurity is an official term from the USDA. It's when people don't have enough to eat and don't know where their next meal will come from. It's a big problem in the United States, where over 44 million people, including 13 million children, experience food insecurity annually. However, many more people, including millions who do not meet the definition of food insecure—turn to the charitable food sector for support

Ranges of Food Security

The Ranges of Food Insecurity

According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), there are 4 tiers to food security. Being classified as “food secure” consists of the top 2 tiers - high food security and marginal food security. Being considered “food insecure” consists of the bottom 2 tiers - low food security and very low food security.

Each household is placed somewhere within those [four tiers](#). Here's how it's broken down:

- **Very Low Food Security:** households in this tier reported eating patterns were disrupted by one or more household members due to a lack of money and resources to access adequate food.
- **Low Food Security:** households in this tier reported reduced quality and variety of foods, but their access to an adequate amount of food was not significantly impacted.
- **Marginal Food Security:** households in this tier reported some uncertainty of access to food at some point, but ultimately the quality, variety, and amount of food they had access to weren't substantially impacted.
- **High Food Security:** households in this tier reported having consistent access to adequate food.

In 2021, 89.8% of households were classified as food secure households. 6.4% of households were classified as low food security, and very low food security households were at 3.8%.

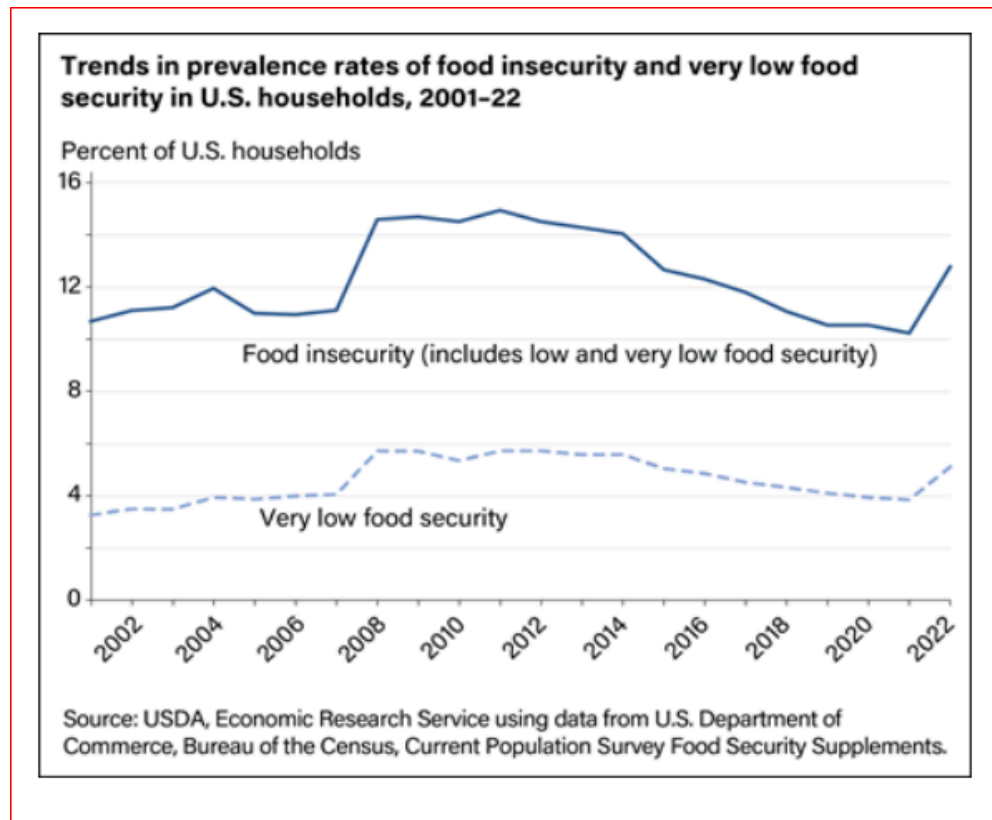
Data on Food Insecurity

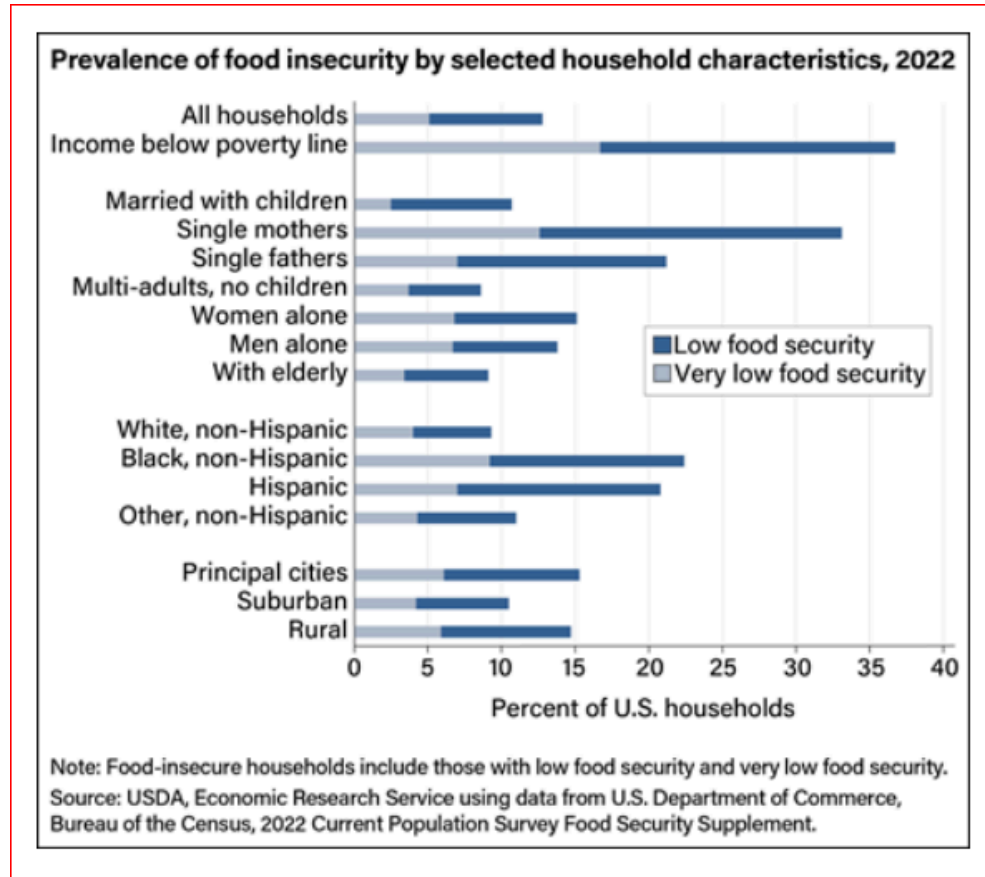
Food Security and Nutrition Assistance- USDA -

<https://www.ers.usda.gov/data-products/ag-and-food-statistics-charting-the-essentials/food-security-and-nutrition-assistance/#:~:text=The%20prevalence%20of%20food%20insecurity,of%20a%20lack%20of%20resources>.

In 2022, 12.8 percent of U.S. households were food insecure at least some time during the year, meaning they had difficulty providing enough

food for all their members because of a lack of resources. The 12.8 percent of food-insecure households (17.0 million households) includes 5.1 percent (6.8 million) that experienced very low food security, a more severe form of food insecurity in which the food intake of some household members was reduced, and normal eating patterns were disrupted. The 2022 prevalence rates for both food insecurity and very low food security were statistically significantly higher than the rates recorded in 2021 (10.2 percent and 3.8 percent).





Clean Water

Spotlight on Water and Opportunity

<https://spotlightonpoverty.org/spotlight-exclusives/how-americas-hidden-water-poverty-is-costing-the-u-s-economy-over-8-5-billion-each-year/#:~:text=The%20United%20States%20has%20a,their%20communities%2C%20and%20our%20country>

The United States has a **hidden crisis: over 2.2 million people live without running water or proper sanitation at home**. Life without taps and toilets has a tangible economic impact for American families, their communities, and our country. Our team at DigDeep uncovered the real costs of water poverty in *Draining: The Economic Impact of America's Hidden Water Crisis*.

Each household without this basic infrastructure loses an average of \$15,800 per year in higher healthcare costs, money spent on bottled water, decreased earnings from time lost at work, and even premature death. It's no surprise that low-income families bear the brunt of these costs. But these economic consequences ripple outwards into their communities and society at large. In aggregate, this 'water access gap' costs the American economy an astonishing \$8.58 billion each year it remains unaddressed.

Sanitation

National Library of Medicine:

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7483119/#:~:text=The%20JMP%20reports%20that%2028,further%20300%20000%20rely%20on>

Access to water and sanitation is reported as near universal in the urban United States, but the human rights to water,²³ sanitation,²³ and housing²⁴ remain unmet for people experiencing homelessness and those living in homes without adequate water and sanitation. The JMP reports that 28 000 people in the urban United States lack access to at least basic sanitation; however, when we accounted for residents experiencing homelessness and residents in substandard housing, we found that at least 630 000 are without sustained access to a flush toilet and a further 300 000 rely on shared sanitation. The 930 000 people without access to at least basic sanitation services in the urban United States—while a low overall percentage—is a large absolute number in a high-income country where resources exist to address the issue.

Health

Limited Access: Poverty And Barriers To Accessible Health Care - National Health Council

<https://nationalhealthcouncil.org/blog/limited-access-poverty-and-barriers-to-accessible-health-care/#:~:text=People%20who%20live%20in%20poverty,liver%20disease%2C%20and%20kidney%20disease>

Poverty is directly correlated with poor health outcomes, and it is important to acknowledge the impact that financial and social limitations can have on one's health and quality of life. Although other life factors such as educational attainment and employment status can affect important decisions regarding chronic disease management, the availability and quality of health care resources are heavily dependent on a patient's financial situation. If not addressed, poor finances can cause a vicious cycle of poverty and poor health outcomes over time.⁴

People who live in poverty tend to have higher disease burden. Across the U.S., poverty at the county level was associated with mortality for certain chronic conditions such as heart disease, liver disease, and kidney disease.^{5,6,7} Other studies have also shown a relationship between low income and dental complications across all ages.⁸ During the COVID-19 pandemic, poverty became a stronger predictor of infection risk, negative health outcomes, and mortality.²

Poverty plays a vital role in patient experience, hindering adequate access to health care and resources. In low-income areas, methods of transportation may be unreliable and impede a patient's ability to attend medical appointments. Lack of health insurance can impact health outcomes, as chronic diseases and disabilities often require long-term care and management, leading to financial strain when making medication or treatment decisions.

Mental Health

The Recovery Village

<https://www.therecoveryvillage.com/mental-health/mental-illness-and-poverty/>

In recent years, the deaths of successful entertainers showed that the rich and famous are not impervious to mental health problems. Mental illness played a role in the deaths of [Robin Williams](#), [Kate Spade](#), Anthony Bourdain and [Chester Bennington](#). All three were adored by countless fans. All three were millionaires. All three were depressed.

However, mental illness is more closely associated with poverty. Yet, when poor people experience [depression](#), post-traumatic stress disorder or a range of other mental health disorders, these individuals do not make headlines. They simply become a statistic.

Multiple studies have examined the role poverty plays in mental illness. These reports often come to similar conclusions: Depression significantly affects people in poverty. The combination of mental health problems and poverty can increase the risk of developing [addiction](#), which amplifies the importance of seeking treatment.

Living below the poverty line while dealing with mental health problems creates serious challenges. For example, adults with mental illness who are living in poverty often face decreased productivity, higher health care costs and poor overall health.

A low income causes people to struggle to pay for [housing, food, childcare and healthcare](#), and having a mental health disorder makes completing everyday tasks more difficult. Grappling with poverty and mental illness can also increase the chances of experiencing [homelessness](#).

Addiction

Addiction and Low Income Americans - The Addiction Center

<https://www.addictioncenter.com/addiction/low-income-americans/#:~:text=Addiction%20is%20a%20disease%20that,a%20higher%20risk%20for%20addiction>

Addiction does not discriminate based on socioeconomic status, but someone with a stable income is less likely to have an addiction than someone with no financial security. Years' worth of data shows that addiction rates are twice as high among the unemployed than among those who have jobs; in many cases, the stress of unemployment leads to substance abuse. Addiction also increases the likelihood that a person will have problems performing at work, and this can lead to job loss and even lower income. Being fired for job performance can make it more difficult to find new employment, increasing overall stress and risk of substance abuse. Low-income Americans who struggle with drug or [alcohol dependence](#) may also struggle with job security, making it harder to escape the cycle of addiction.

Mortality

Poverty is a Major Public Health Crisis. Let's Treat it Like One. Vox

<https://www.vox.com/future-perfect/23792854/poverty-mortality-study-public-health-anti-poverty-america-deaths-poor-life-expectancy>

"We need a whole new scientific agenda on poverty and mortality," said David Brady, a professor of public policy at the University of California Riverside, whose recent [co-authored study aims to jump-start that agenda](#) by asking just how many Americans die from poverty each year.

Brady — alongside sociologist [Hui Zheng](#) at Ohio State University and Ulrich Kohler, a professor of empirical social research at the University of Potsdam — [published their](#)

study in April in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*. Their results find poverty is **America's fourth-leading risk factor for death**, behind only heart disease, cancer, and smoking. A single year of poverty, **defined relatively** in the study as having less than 50 percent of the US median household income, is associated with 183,000 American deaths per year. Being in "cumulative poverty," or 10 years or more of uninterrupted poverty, is associated with 295,000 annual deaths.

Child Development and Education

Mental health effects of poverty, hunger, and homelessness on children and teens – American Psychological Association

<https://www.apa.org/topics/socioeconomic-status/poverty-hunger-homelessness-children>

What are the effects of poverty on children and teens?

The [impact of poverty on young children](#) is significant and long lasting. Poverty is associated with substandard housing, hunger, homelessness, inadequate childcare, unsafe neighborhoods, and under-resourced schools. In addition, low-income children are at greater risk than higher-income children for a range of cognitive, emotional, and health-related problems, including detrimental effects on executive functioning, below average academic achievement, poor social emotional functioning, developmental delays, behavioral problems, asthma, inadequate nutrition, low birth weight, and higher rates of pneumonia.

Psychological research also shows that [living in poverty is associated with differences in structural and functional brain development in children and adolescents](#) in areas related to cognitive processes that are critical for learning, communication, and academic achievement, including social emotional processing, memory, language, and executive functioning.

Children and families living in poverty often attend [under-resourced, overcrowded schools](#) that lack educational opportunities, books, supplies, and appropriate technology due to local funding policies. In addition, families living below the poverty line often live in school districts without adequate equal learning experiences for both gifted and special needs students with learning differences and where [high school dropout rates are high](#).

Transportation

University of Michigan study finds 1 in 4 four adults experience transportation insecurity

<https://news.umich.edu/u-m-study-finds-1-in-4-four-adults-experience-transportation-insecurity/>

More than a quarter of adults age 25 and older in the United States experience transportation insecurity, meaning they are unable to move from place to place in a safe or timely manner.

The [Transportation Security Index](#), a novel measure of transportation insecurity recently developed by University of Michigan researchers, offers new insights into the experience of this form of material hardship.

“Transportation security is an essential element of economic mobility, individual well-being and understanding how to address poverty.”

Their analysis found the experience of transportation insecurity as reported on a 2018 nationally representative survey is closely linked to income level. More than half of people living below the poverty line experience transportation insecurity, which is higher than the rate of food insecurity among people in poverty.

“Transportation security is an essential element of economic mobility, individual well-being and understanding how to address poverty,” said [Alexandra Murphy](#), U-M assistant professor of sociology. “If people don’t have the ability to move from place to place, they’re going to struggle to get to work, health care appointments, school, grocery stores and social services. They will also find it challenging to stay connected to important sources of social support, including friends and family.”

Recreation

How Leisure Education Can positively affect youth Living in Poverty- Youth Development Through Recreation and Sport

<https://youthdevelopmentthruerecreation.wordpress.com/2020/10/30/how-leisure-education-can-positively-affect-youths-living-in-poverty/#:~:text=We%20also%20know%20that%20youth%20living%20in,recreation%20activities%20than%20youth%20from%20higher%20income>

Youth living in poverty or youth living in impoverished areas face many barriers to participating in sport, recreation and leisure, they also face many barriers when it comes to their overall development. For example, according to Statistics Canada, children living in poverty are less likely to succeed in school, are at higher risk of health issues, developmental delays and behavioral disorders (Fleury, 2008). We also know that youth living in poverty are less likely to participate in sport and recreation activities than youth from higher income backgrounds. This can be for a multitude of reasons, such as, program fees, program locations, equipment access, transportation, availability or lack of knowledge of sponsorship funds, and many more barriers that low-income families face to participation in sport and recreation

Generational Poverty

Facts About Poverty – Urban Ventures

<https://urbanventures.org/facts-about-poverty/#:~:text=Generational%20Poverty%20is%20defined%20as,Generational%20Poverty%20and%20Situational%20Poverty>

What is Generational Poverty? How does it affect our community?

Generational Poverty is defined as a family having lived in poverty for at least two generations. It is important to understand the difference between Generational Poverty and Situational Poverty.

A person/family can experience Situational Poverty when their income and support is decreased due to a specific change—job loss, divorce, death, etc. While there can be a domino effect caused by this one significant change, families experiencing Situational Poverty tend to remain hopeful, knowing that this is a temporary setback. This typically is not so with generational poverty.

Key Factors Associated with Generational Poverty

1. Hopelessness

Most people think of poverty as lacking financial resources to meet basic living requirements. Families dealing with Generational Poverty are also challenged with three other forms of poverty:

- Educational Poverty
- Parental Poverty
- Spiritual Poverty

The cumulative effect of these different forms of poverty sometimes creates the most damaging outcome of Generational Poverty—the constant presence of Hopelessness.

Hopelessness is the key factor in creating the cycle—one generation to the next. Without hope and the belief that life can be better, the motivation and energy needed to break the cycle are very low.

2. Surviving vs. Planning

People caught in the cycle of Generational Poverty are focused on surviving. They are focused on the issue/challenge facing them today. It may be money for food, finding a place to live, dealing with family member's issues, unresolved health issues, etc. This is a daily experience—each day presenting itself with another issue, another challenge. All of this is done under the cloak of urgency. The concept of planning typically doesn't exist, due in part because planning is tied to the belief that the individual has sufficient control of their life.

3. Values and Patterns

The values of those caught in the Generational Poverty cycle are very different from those who have grown up middle class. Generational Poverty values will center more on survival and short-term outcomes. In comparison, generally, middle class values encompass education, work and being perceived as a productive member of society. In Generational Poverty, it is also possible that counterproductive traditions are passed down such as low emphasis on education.

What can we do about Poverty?

Resources:

League of Women Voters of Moscow:

Poverty in Latah County LWVM Study Position Statement approved April 21 2024

World Vision: What is poverty? It's not as simple as you think

<https://www.worldvision.ca/stories/child-sponsorship/what-is-poverty>

Our World in Data: Extreme poverty: How far have we come, and how far do we still have to go?

<https://ourworldindata.org/extreme-poverty-in-brief>

Homelessness in America: Statistics, Analysis, and Trends

<https://www.security.org/resources/homeless-statistics/#:~:text=653%2C104%20people%20experienced%20homelessness%20in,homes%20in%20America%20last%20year.>

Video: Firsthand: Living in Poverty

First video is of Gary Ladehoff

<https://kcts9.pbslearningmedia.org/resource/gary-ladenhoff-firsthand-video-gallery/gary-ladenhoff-video-gallery-firsthand-living-in-poverty/>