FACTS ABOUT POVERTY IN THE U.S.

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- Examining the last six years, there were 36.5 million people in poverty (12.3 percent) in 2006 increasing to 46.2 million people (15.1%) in 2011. (1)
- ➤ The official poverty rate in 2011 was 15.0 percent, up from 14.3 percent in 2009 (a proportional increase in one year of more than 5%). (1)
- After four straight years of increased poverty levels in the U.S. the 2011 poverty rate was essentially unchanged from that of 2010. (1)
- ➤ 2011 represents the second highest total of U.S. citizens below the poverty line in the 52 years of official federal statistics kept on poverty, though in proportionate numbers 1959 (first year of poverty statistics) had the highest rate of impoverishment during this time period. 2010 had the highest number in poverty since 1959, with 96,000 more people than 2011 below the poverty line (no statistically significant change). (1)
- ➤ In 2011, the poverty rate for non-Hispanic Whites was 9.8% (19.2 million people), for Blacks 27.6% (nearly 11 million people), for Hispanics 26.5% (13.2 million people), and Asians 12.3% (2 million people). (1)
- As defined by the Office of Management and Budget and updated for inflation using the Consumer Price Index, the average poverty threshold for a family of four in 2012 was \$23,050; for a family of three, \$19,090; for a family of two, \$15,130; and for unrelated individuals, \$11,170. (2)
- In 2011 the poverty rate among U.S. children under 18 years of age was 21.9%. (1)
- Poverty among Americans aged 18 to 64 years was 13.7% in 2011. (1)
- Among Americans aged 65 years 8.7% were below the poverty line in 2011, representing 3.6 million seniors. (1)

Number and Percentage of People in Poverty in Selected States 2009-2010 (Estimates)^a

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State	Below Poverty	Below Poverty	Change in Poverty
	Line in 2009	Line in 2011	(2010 less 2009)
Delaware	109,000 (12.3%)	123,000 (13.7%)	14,000 (1.4%)
Maryland	543,000 (9.6)	537,000 (9.3)	-6,000 (-0.3)
New Jersey	806,000 (9.3)	988,000 (11.4)	182,000 (2.1)
Pennsylvania	1,376,000 (11.1)	1,604,000 (12.6)	228,000 (1.5)
Virginia	831,000 (10.7)	907,000 (11.4)	76,000 (0.7)
Washington D.C	107,000 (17.9)	123,000 (19.9)	16,000 (2.0)

^a Source: http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/poverty/data/historical/people.html

Country-wide, the portion of Americans who were in extreme poverty —those who earned less than half of the official U.S. poverty threshold — increased from 5.2 percent in 2007, to 6.3 percent in 2009, to 6.6 percent in 2011. This translates into 21,365,000 Americans living in extreme poverty last year — more than the combined populations of Maryland, Massachusetts and New Jersey combined! (3)

➤ Only three states had estimated poverty rates lower than 10 percent in 2011 — North Dakota (9.9%), Maryland (9.3%), and New Hampshire (7.6%). On the other side of the distribution, states with estimated poverty rates at or above 17 percent in 2011 (10) is double that of 2009 (5) — Arizona (17.2%) Arkansas (18.7%), Georgia (18.4%), Louisiana (21.1%), Mississippi (17.4%), New Mexico (22.2%), South Carolina (19.0%), Texas (17.4%), and West Virginia (17.5%). (3)

The families in the Community Action Poverty Simulation are real families with real problems. They are facing ...long-term unemployment ... low wage jobs ... limited job skills ... non energy efficient housing ... high utility bills ... housing that needs repairs ... unreliable transportation ...health problems without insurance ... deserted by a spouse ... drug problems ... limited or no assets ... no telephone ... lack of quality child care ... unaffordable medication ... incarcerated children/parents.

The Community Action Network (simulation creators) and the Sociology Program at Washington College want people to gain through this simulation a better understanding of what it is like to live without enough money to meet their basic needs. We want community leaders and the general public to be inspired to find solutions to poverty issues. We want all Americans to be engaged in ending poverty.

Sources of Statistics Presented in this Fact Sheet

- 1) U.S. Census Bureau. 2012. "Income, Poverty, and Health Insurance Coverage in the United States: 2011." Located 09.21.11 at http://www.census.gov/prod/2011pubs/p60-239.pdf
- 2) Department of Health and Human Services. 2012. "2012 HHS Poverty Guidelines." Located 09.18.12 at http://aspe.hhs.gov/poverty/12poverty.shtml
- 3) U.S. Census Bureau. 2012. "Historic Poverty Tables People." Located 09.20.12 at http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/poverty/data/historical/people.html