



Love INC
Love In the Name of Christ

POVERTY IN AMERICA

Love In the Name of Christ ■ www.loveinc.org

America is the wealthiest nation on earth. Yet in our land of plenty, there are millions of people living in poverty, unable to meet their own basic needs. Poverty exists in every state across the country—in urban, suburban, and rural areas—and its reach crosses every barrier—age, race, gender, and family situation. Poverty can be situational (people experiencing a crisis such as illness, divorce, or unemployment), generational (families living in poverty for two or more generations), or relational (isolated people without a support network to turn to). People in poverty experience not only a lack of income or material possessions, but a lack of such things as life choices, physical and emotional security, stable relationships, social participation, and self-esteem. Poverty is teaching millions of Americans that they are not valued, that failure is to be expected, and that hope is futile.

Consider these facts:

- Nearly 40 million people in the U.S. live in poverty—that's nearly one out of every seven Americans.¹
- Most Americans, over 58 percent, will spend at least one year below the poverty line at some point between the ages of 25 and 75.²
- Many American families living in poverty—16.8 million in 2006—have at least one member who is employed but simply does not earn enough to support the family.³
- The severely poor in America are individuals living on \$5,250 a year or less; families of three (two adults and a child), \$6,922 or less; families of four, \$10,222 or less.⁴
- The number of severely poor is growing rapidly. In 2007, 43 percent of persons in poverty were severely poor by national standards—the highest rate in 32 years.⁵
- The poverty rate for children in America is higher than for any other age group. Nineteen percent of all children (nearly one in five) are poor, representing over 35 percent of the total number of Americans in poverty.⁶
- Over 49 million Americans experienced food insecurity last year, which means they did not have enough food due to lack of financial resources.⁷
- Over 95 million people, one third of the nation, experience housing issues such as excessive cost burdens, overcrowding, severe physical deficiencies (no hot water, no electricity, no toilet, or no bathtub or shower), and homelessness (including families who are sleeping in cars or abandoned buildings, or constantly on the move from friend to friend).⁸
- There is not one county in the U.S. in which a full-time minimum wage worker can afford a one-bedroom apartment at fair market rent.⁹
- In 2007, nearly 46 million Americans had no health insurance.¹⁰ In fact, every 30 seconds someone in the United States files for bankruptcy in the aftermath of a serious health problem.¹¹

About Love In the Name of Christ

For more than 30 years, Love INC has been mobilizing the Church to transform lives and communities In the Name of Christ. Love INC has over 140 affiliates in 30 states, representing a network of more than 9,000 churches, 6,000 community-based organizations, and 300,000 volunteers meeting more than one million needs each year.

To find out how you can make a difference in the lives of people in need, visit www.loveinc.org.

Poverty in America: A Fact Sheet

Reference

- 1 U.S. Census Bureau, *Income, Poverty, and Health Insurance Coverage in the United States: 2008*, September 2009, p. 13, <http://www.census.gov/prod/2009pubs/p60-236.pdf> (September 18, 2009).
- 2 Wikipedia, "Poverty in the United States," http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Poverty_in_the_united_states#cite_note-Hacker-2 (July 23, 2009).
- 3 Feeding America, "Low Income Families," <http://feedingamerica.org/faces-of-hunger/hunger-101/low-income.aspx> (July 23, 2009).
- 4 Dr. Amy K. Glasmeier, "The Nation We've Become," February 26, 2007, Poverty in America, <http://www.povertyinamerica.psu.edu/> (July 23, 2009).
- 5 Ibid.
- 6 U.S. Census Bureau, *Income, Poverty, and Health Insurance Coverage in the United States: 2008*, September 2009, p. 15, <http://www.census.gov/prod/2009pubs/p60-236.pdf> (September 18, 2009).
- 7 United States Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service, "Food Security in the United States: Key Statistics and Graphics," http://www.ers.usda.gov/Briefing/FoodSecurity/stats_graphs.htm#how_many (November 17, 2009).
- 8 Habitat for Humanity, "U.S. Statistics and Research," http://www.habitat.org/how/why/us_stats_research.aspx (July 23, 2009).
- 9 Ibid.
- 10 National Coalition on Health Care, "Health Insurance Coverage," <http://www.nchc.org/facts/coverage.shtml> (July 23, 2009).
- 11 National Coalition on Health Care, "Health Insurance Costs," <http://www.nchc.org/facts/cost.shtml> (July 23, 2009).