



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, 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:

- In 2009, the poverty threshold for a family of four was an annual income of \$21,954. Less than half of that is considered extreme poverty.
- Over 43 million people in the U.S. lived in poverty in 2009, nearly 44 percent in extreme poverty, the highest numbers in the U.S. Census Bureau's history.
- Between 2004 and 2007, nearly a third of Americans fell into poverty at least once for two or more months.
- Eleven percent of families were in poverty in 2009.
- More than six million people were added to the ranks of poverty during the recent recession, a larger rate increase than during the recession that lasted from 1973 to 1975.
- The ranks of the “new poor” grew during the recession as the overall household median income fell nearly five percent and the bottom tenth of earners saw income shrink by nine percent.
- Over 36 million Americans experience food insecurity each year, which means they do not have enough food due to lack of financial resources.
- 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).
- 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.
- The numbers of people without health insurance surpassed 50 million for the first time in 2008. In fact, every 30 seconds someone in the United States files for bankruptcy in the aftermath of a serious health problem.

Sources: [U.S. Census Bureau](http://www.census.gov), [U.S. Department of Agriculture](http://www.usda.gov), [Habitat for Humanity](http://www.habitat.org), [National Coalition on Health Care](http://www.nationalcoalitiononhealthcare.org)

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 155 affiliates in 30 states, representing a network of more than 9,000 churches, 7,000 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.