2017

2017 Community Assessment

CURRENT THEORIES & STUDIES RELATING TO THE CAUSES, CONDITIONS, & SOCIAL IMPACTS OF POVERTY ALIGNED WITH COMMUNITY ACTION INC's NEEDS ASSESSMENT.
PART 2 OF 3, THROUGH 2018.

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Executive Summary

In fulfilling the mission to move people and communities from poverty to prosperity, Community Action, Inc. has a responsibility to be mindful of the evolving needs of its service communities, to seek information on the causes and appropriate strategies for fighting poverty, and to serve local populations in ways that generate positive outcomes and improves lives. This Needs Assessment focuses and collaborates information on the complexities of poverty, the dynamic structures impairing or feeding into cycles of poverty, trends and diversity of low-income persons, and the best practices and evidence-based methods for anti-poverty agencies and advocates to inform efforts and allocate resources for desired outcomes.

Methods & Measures Utilized

Information for this assessment was compiled by Community Action's Performance Management Specialist with a collective team of contract researchers utilizing national, state, regional, and international resources when appropriate. For enhanced application and utility, our assessment draws data from a plethora of current sources, focusing on unbiased, evidence-informed publications and theories to present informed recommendations in a way that maximizes accuracy, completion, and comprehension. As part of our long term strategic planning and vision, we've targeted 9 subjects and needs to be addressed for our 26-county service region.
These subjects are:

1) Current Theories on the causes and conditions of poverty.
2) Case studies and strategies of effective and innovative anti-poverty programs.
3) Contributions of wage and income inequality on the state and conditions of poverty.
4) Factors and impacts of stress on low-income individuals and families.
5) Emerging trends and knowledge on Early Childhood education and its impacts on life-success.
6) Evidence-informed practices on addressing the relationship between immigration status and poverty.
7) Anticipating the social service needs of the growing elderly population.
8) Emerging, evidence-informed practices in successfully reducing energy cost burdens faced by low-income households.
9) The effects of homelessness on people and emerging, evidence-informed practices for combating homelessness.

Key Findings

UNDERSTANDING POVERTY

One dilemma in fighting poverty is the lack of expert uniformity on the definition and indicators of poverty. Most US governments and social entities choose to use an absolute measure such as the Official Poverty Measure, defining an individual in poverty, in 2017, making $12,060 salary or less. Still, there are many economic, social, and regional indicators left unaccounted for. By keeping attention to earned income alone, historical efforts correspond to fighting poverty by focusing primarily on jobs and wages,

ignoring other potential causes of economic and social disparity. In addition, the causes of poverty are still fiercely debated, making it difficult to identify where to direct efforts and delegate funding.[1]

Perceptions of poverty in America are more stigmatized and divided than most other developed nations, with 51% of Americans claiming poverty is a result of "laziness or lack of will" for individuals, rather than citing poverty as a structural issue. Nearly 58% of Americans also perceive that there is a "strong conflict" between the rich and the poor, reflecting notions that these groups are inherently separate and at odds. The impoverished are generally seen as not contributing equally to society, and as benefiting off the work of others.[2]

However, longevity studies on the perceptions of poverty in the US, show growing support for theories of structural causes of poverty and the government's role in helping its most vulnerable citizens. In 1994, 53% of Americans believed "Poor people have it easy, because they can get government benefits without doing anything," while only 39% argued "poor people have hard lives, because government benefits don't go far enough to help them." In 2014, these statistics switched to the majority (47%) citing government benefit don't do enough to help the poor and 44% claiming the poor still have it easy.[3]

A 2016 survey conducted by the American Enterprise Institute and Los Angeles Times found that a 65% majority of Americans believe that the poor are hard-working, and 64% believe the poor would rather earn their own living than stay on welfare. The same report found that 60% of Americans believe poverty is a long-term condition and 54% believe Welfare programs only encourage dependency and don't help people escape poverty. Most Americans, 66%, believe the poor are responsible for their own well-being and "have an obligation to take care of themselves. *The overall perspective in the US is that the poor are responsible for themselves and government agencies are failing to motivate these individuals to escape poverty, because they do not have effective knowledge to do so.* [4]

There's been an increasing push by anti-poverty programs to actively change US perceptions of Poverty from an invisible 'Other America' to showcase the conditions and issues affecting impoverished Americans, and introduce poverty as a national problem, and not just 'their problem'. A growing trend among programs is the implementation of poverty simulations[5] and focuses on engaging more low-income individuals in their communities to weaken the barriers that allow negative or false perceptions of

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[1] Walker, Robert (2014) *The Shame of Poverty.* New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

[2] Reingold, David (2014) The Stigmatization of Poverty in America. School of Public and Environmental Affairs. Retrieved from http://ai2-s2-pdfs.s3.amazonaws.com/f374/c06851861cddbe566e31795a943e47dde3d0.pdf

[3] Pew Research Center, 2014 Political Polarization and Typology Survey Final Topline, Pew Research (2014) http://assets.pewresearch.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/5/2014/06/2014-Polarization-Topline-for-Release.pdf

[4] Dora, Bowman, & O'Neil (2016) 2016 Poverty Survey : Attitudes Towards the Poor, Poverty, and Welfare in the United States. American Enterprise Institute and Los Angeles Times, Retrieved from http://www.aei.org/publication/2016-poverty-survey/

[5] Northrup, Angela (2015), *Research: Poverty Simulation- Empathy and Empty Wallets*., PACE University, Retrieved from https://www.pace.edu/mypace/research-poverty-simulation

poverty to thrive. Inclusion policies such as affirmative action, inclusionary housing, or group rights show promise in bringing disadvantaged populations into equal opportunities for success and social engagement, and removing stigma.[6] Dealing with misperceptions of poverty is considered by many experts to be a priority for getting communities engaged in allocating resources for successfully fighting poverty.

Changes in social perceptions regarding poverty may be occurring on a national scale due to the widening distributional income gap between individuals with high-income wages and those with middle or low-incomes – a gap defined by the wealthiest 1% obtaining 42% of the nation's total income in 2012, while the bottom 80% owns only 7%. Americans are far more likely now to see themselves falling into poverty than rising to the top 10%, as the chances of an average American family losing 50% of their income is nearly 3 times as likely to occur than it was in the 1970s.[7]

EFFECTIVE POVERTY PROGRAMMING

When it comes to providing active roles for the impoverished in their communities, a significant challenge is the lack of resources and accessibility to opportunities affordable to low-income persons and communities. Strategically aiding, educating, and organizing efforts for these communities, improves the likelihood of success for integrating change and encouraging social development. Programs need to be considerate of the readiness of low-income individuals in a community before taking on such efforts.

Individuals in poverty are also likely to be highly unengaged when it comes to politics at every level of government. In 2012, the turnout gap between the highest ($150,000 salary or more) and lowest ($10,000 salary or less) voters for federal elections was 33 points, highlighting a trend of voter turnout being consistently higher among the wealthy than those in poverty. States implementing voter ID laws and limiting registration periods, as well as voting days taking place on workdays -when low-income earners are least likely to have time available- all influence voter turnout in favor of individuals with higher income. Unless significant changes are made to improve this engagement, the existing demographics between voters and non-voters is unlikely to change, resulting in unchanged policies that prevent America's most vulnerable citizens from having a voice and role in affecting policy.[8]

More collaborative care efforts are needed to help individuals and families escape poverty, and/or improve living conditions often associated with poverty in a community. Programs that offer services to meet the multiple needs of low-income people, and work to mobilize efforts for meeting needs throughout the community tend to have better success and warrant more public support than those that

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[6] Milano, Brett (2016) Taking the Stigma out of Poverty. Harvard Gazette. Retrieved from https://news.harvard.edu/gazette/story/2016/11/taking-the-stigma-out-of-poverty/

[7] Jacobs, E.; Hacker, J. (2008) "The Rising Instability of American Fmily Incomes, 1969-2004" Economic policy Institute. Retrieved from: http://www.epi.org/publication/bp213/

[8] McElwee, Sean (2014) *Why the Voting Gap Matters & How to Reduce the Voting Gap,* Policyshop, Demos, Retrieved from http://www.demos.org/publication/why-voting-gap-matters ; and http://www.demos.org/blog/10/30/14/how-reduce-voting-gap

only account for select needs and limit channels for access to those needs. A program that utilizes 'home visits' and case-management strategies for example, as opposed to offices and transactional welfare services to improve their staff relationship and understanding of poverty, would be equipping families with better tools and services for achieving self-sufficiency.

WAGE INEQUALITY

The decline of unionization in the workforce has made it difficult for workers to pressure employers to keep wages stagnant with inflation. Unionized workers earn an average six dollars more per hour than non-unionized workers. Between 1978 and 2005, the number of unionized workers decreased by nearly 24%.

The rate of part-time and shift employment has increased drastically compared to full-time employment, particularly in areas of retail, foodservice, and hospitality. In addition, Jobs that are low-skill and low-wage tend to be in sectors where upwards mobility and earning potential are limited with inconsistent and unstable work hours and providing little or no benefits for employees. Employees need a voice in their workspaces, or in the political/legal sector, to bring attention to livable wages and necessary benefits.

POVERTY & STRESS

Poverty leads to hardship and stress, feeds isolation and exclusion, and has long-term impacts for children. 12% of Americans have reported not going to the doctor when they needed health care because of financial concerns. Families in poverty are more likely to see instances of divorce and have harder time providing quality childcare, often leading to hostile environments for children. People in poverty report experiencing more "bad stress" equating to lowered quality of living and more health issues.

Those in poverty are about five times as likely to report having poor to fair health compared to those with incomes at or above the 400% Federal Poverty Level. Stress from poverty can impact school readiness, social skills, cognitive functioning, and emotional health for children. Neighborhoods should be a concern for policy-makers. Housing and education have shown to be helpful programs for families. Sustainable housing is key as it provides a stable environment for families. Head Start programs have shown to be beneficial to reducing stress in children.

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATON

Early childhood education programs for low-income families have shown life-long impacts enabling children to better escape intergenerational poverty. Quality ECE affects developing neuro-pathways and brain structures of children, resulting in overall improvements in social, cognitive, health, and academic success. However, low quality ECE services are shown to have either no benefit or negative consequences on child development. While most results of the effects of ECE have been more positive than not in a child's development, more long-term studies of outcomes are needed to understand the lasting effects. Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement Systems (TQRIS) is a recent change to the ECE field in some states, refocusing standards of Education to measures that take into consideration: responsive adult-child interactions, staff development for improving quality, parent-accessible safe facilities, consistency of supervision, classroom sizes that allow for appropriate staff interaction, and appropriate curriculum with educational content.

Evidence shows focusing on improving the interactions between children, ECE staff, and other adult figures in their life, improves communication and cognitive functions for students. Healthy interactions between staff and parents has also shown to help children develop and increase likelihood for success outside of school. Stressed teachers and caregivers can lead to negative outcomes for childhood education. Currently, infant-toddler teachers are in the bottom 3% of all paid professions, while preschool teachers fall in the 19th percentile. Studies indicate low-paying jobs result in more stress and mental issues for individuals than higher paying jobs or unemployment. Continual coaching with individualized support and feedback are vital to prevent overstress and burnout from these positions.

IMMIGRATION

In 2015, 32.2% of immigrants came from Central America and Mexico, a percent which has declined since 2005 due to stricter immigration enforcement. Meanwhile, Asian immigrants from India, China, and the Philippines have grown to 20.3% of all reported immigrants. 65.2% of immigrants are reported in labor participation, compared to 62.3% of native-born citizens, and 57.1% of immigrants have only a high school diploma or less, putting most immigrants in low-wage, low-skill jobs. The poverty rate for long-residing immigrants (avg. 21 years) is 57% higher than for native-born adults.

Only half of the immigrant population is identified as English proficient, and most do not have enough soft and hard skills training or education to improve their current living conditions. Most immigrants are in desperate need of resources for obtaining citizenship, lacking any understanding of the processes, costs, and legalities involved. New legal immigrants often have no form of health insurance, and lack access to health services. Many immigrants and international refugees in the US require, but do not receive, the mental or physical help that they need to deal with abuses and traumas from their past. They also suffer from limited access to other basic services like transportation, safe and affordable housing, and childcare services.

Legal Immigrants are 10% more likely to start their own businesses than native-born citizens, which they often need financial support and guidance to initiate. The Immigrant Entrepreneur Development Program is an example of a program that provides training, financial development, and business planning support for these individuals. The Small Business Administration also offers microloans for immigrants interested in starting their own businesses. Microloans are much easier to get access to compared to traditional loans. Though they make a fraction of the total immigrants coming to the US, undocumented immigrants are most often seeking asylum from conditions of gang violence and poverty in their home countries, and while Mexico is often cited as the country of citizenship for these individuals, since 2015 central America and Asia have represented the majority.

In 2014, five percent of undocumented immigrants accounted for the national labor force in jobs that US citizens typically wouldn't want such as agriculture, construction, and manufacturing, often earning less than a livable wage, and paying billions in taxes. Many undocumented immigrants and workers are unaware of any processes to change their status for citizenship or become a legal resident. As a result, they are at risk for being deported back to their country of origin. They thus fall into a cycle of remaining constricted to their initial conditions when coming to the US, not seeking better employment opportunities, and thereby remaining in poverty. Programs like DACA and DAPA have helped some immigrants obtain legal status in the US, however the success of such programs is still debated.

Ethnic Community-Based Organizations (ECBO's) have proven to be very important for helping communities be more aware and open to immigrants and refugees, establishing connections between immigrants and local resources, and educating and advocating to the public through their members.

ELDERLY SERVICES

At the 2015 White House Conference on Aging, changing public perceptions of aging was identified as the 'Ultimate challenge', and it was concluded that redefining aging as contributing to society would help change stigma associated with elderly citizens, bringing about positive changes to social services. 14.3% of the US adult population offered unpaid care to family members aged 50 and older between 2014 & 2015.

Professional caregivers for seniors have a significantly high turn-over rate with 50% of direct service workers quitting within the first year, citing low-wages, limited or no benefits, and lack of professional development and advancement as the main causes. A Centers for Medicaid and Medicare Services summit prioritized expanding training opportunities, increasing economic securities, and advocating for social security and tax credits for caregivers as recommended programs for helping caregiver families avoid fiscal hardship.

80% of adults 45 and older prefer to stay in their local communities, but these areas generally lack quality accessible supports to sustain these individuals. The AARP Network of Age-Friendly Communities is a collaboration of communities that work together to improve the quality of livability locally through 8 identified domains: outdoor spaces, transportation, housing, social participation, respect and social inclusion, civic partnership and employment, communication and information, and health/community services. A 2017 report found that necessary food programs for the elderly could be improved through better collaboration and intercommunication of efforts.

In 2014 a 'Road Map' for responding to elder abuse was established through stakeholders and the Federal Departments of Justice and HHS. It's top five priorities are: increased public awareness, research cognitive and mental health, improve support and training for caregivers, quantify the economic costs of elder abuse, investing in resources and expanding knowledge to reduce elder abuse.

ENERGY EFFICIENCY

Energy costs are a significant burden to families in deep poverty. According to the Household Energy Insecurity Scale of the American Community Survey, homes in the Midwest reported financial burdens from energy and rent costs. 72% of families below 50% of the Federal poverty level identifying these as high needs. Rural families cited energy as a more significant burden, while metropolitan families focused more on rent.

Based on demographic statistics of energy cost burdens, it's been found that, in general, women tend to conserve more than men, Caucasians tend to conserve more than African Americans, single-parent female households suffered greater energy insecurity, and smaller families were better at conserving energy than larger families. However, there is clear correlation between households with high energy insecurities and low-income households in the US, which is accounted for by poorer housing conditions, inefficient insulation and appliances, and increased structural flaws.

Lack of a high school diploma, and the age of housing, are directly correlated to increased energy insecurities. Senior citizens are more likely to live in energy inefficient homes, due to most being in older housing units.

A 2015 pilot study of 20 households found that weatherization alone was insufficient to address low-income household energy issues, and the most common improvements cited by households were thermal comfort and reduced energy expenses, which were both tied to improved insulation and energy efficiency investments. Unfortunately, in the cases of landlords investing in these improvements, rental costs for tenants went up to cover capital improvements.

Researchers have found that 56% of energy insecure households have not received LIHEAP benefits, and that the LIHEAP program needs to be altered to more effectively target households needing benefits. Those households would ultimately benefit most from collaborations of both LIHEAP and Weatherization Assistance.

Policies need to focus on treating energy as a basic need, and should offer debt forgiveness or subsidized energy costs to protect low income households. Funding for the Weatherization Assistance Program should be consistent and be able to be utilized more in collaboration with other programs meant to improve energy efficiency in US households.

On-bill financing for efficiency improvements to low-income homeowners or landlords would minimalize personal debt and allow capital improvements to be added and maintained.

In Vermont, interviews with policy-makers and planners established 12 policy recommendations for decreasing the energy cost burdens of Low-income households: 1) Increase LI Weatherization Funding. 2) Continue supplementing federal programs. 3) Mandate energy efficiency labeling for homes. 4) Provide and prioritize energy efficiency audits and coaching. 5) Distribute energy conservation materials. 6) Ramp up educational awareness and outreach programs. 7) Train state agencies in energy efficiency. 8) Focus on improvements in multi-family housing. 9) Incentivize appropriate fuel switching. 10) Provide extra assistance for homes at-risk of energy disconnection. 11) Utilize on-bill financing for efficiency improvements. 12) Diversify fuel dealers into energy service companies.

HOMELESSNESS

The most at-risk populations of homeless in the US include: Veterans without children, chronically homeless individuals with children, and unaccompanied youth. The main causes of homelessness are reductions in available affordable housing, and increases in the number of impoverished individuals.

As of 2014, nearly one-in-five Americans lived in multigenerational housing as the result of high costs of sustainable housing and to avoid homelessness.

Homeless program providers overwhelmingly agree that homeless families and individuals require services in addition to housing such as childcare, job training, mental and physical health supports, and education. It's also recommended that services to address the issues of homelessness be provided continually to individuals from the point of entering a shelter to the time they obtain permanent housing.

There are clear connections between mental health and homelessness. In female, single-parent families, trauma is a common cause of homelessness, resulting from childhood or adult experiences of physical and/or sexual abuse. Mental and physical health issues are also a concern for children experiencing

homelessness, which often are unaddressed by school and social support services. In children, homelessness has led to decreased long-term feelings of safety, negative impacts on long-term physical, mental, and socioemotional health, decreased self-confidence, and severe difficulty maintaining relationships. Increasing Permanent Supportive Housing has been shown to significantly reduce chronic poverty in communities over time.

Public libraries have increasingly been involved in successfully assisting the homeless through engaging psychiatric social workers in library programming and hiring, distributing information on shelters and meals, partnering with other non-profit and homeless service agencies, advocating on behalf of homeless programming, providing free library cards to homeless shelter residents, offering job and tech training to homeless shelters and patrons, and more.

Some cities have introduced 'Street Papers' or non-profit 'newspaper' print organizations that are run by homeless and formerly homeless individuals. Street papers share information about the homeless conditions in the community and showcase local supports, services, and opportunities available to homeless people. These papers help individuals seeking affordable housing, job opportunities, and other local resources, while supporting provider collaborations and shrinking barriers between homeless and non-homeless individuals.

Community Land Trusts are another innovative strategy being utilized to combat homelessness. People and agencies come together and invest in properties to be shared by the community, highlighting their community values and acting as an asset for the community. Regarding homelessness, these focus on offering affordable homes, in safe and recreationally pleasing spaces.

Current Theories on the Causes and Conditions of Poverty in the United States

The War on Poverty: America's Longest War

In 1964, one in five Americans (almost 26% of the non-institutionalized population and 22% of families), were classified as poor or near poor[9] with incomes at or below the Social Security Administration's defined poverty or low-income level. Many of these individuals resided in the South. Many were either over the age of 65, resided in families without a father or in large intact families with young children. A large percentage of the poor were minorities. Unemployment was a serious concern, with many citing long-term illness or disability as a reason for being unemployed. [10]

It has now been over 50 years since the War on Poverty was declared, trillions of dollars have been spent, and over 92 programs have been created to address the most critical needs of individuals living in poverty: employment, education and job-training, food-aid, and housing.[11] However, we are far from declaring an end to the problem of poverty. We are the world's richest nation, yet even today, despite all our efforts, we have one of the highest rates of poverty in the developed world, especially among our children[12], and compared to other developed nations we spend far less on cash transfer programs to try to help them.[13]

The Poverty Line: The Measure of What It Means to Be Poor

What it means to be poor is a difficult concept to define, as there is no consensus as to how we should properly measure it. Sociologists and government policymakers like to view poverty in absolute or relative terms, creating thresholds or cut-off lines to determine who is in poverty and who is not.[14] To them, poverty is a measure of income and consumption.[15]

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[9] Orshnasky, M. (1966, May). More About the Poor in 1964. Retrieved from https://www.ssa.gov/policy/docs/ssb/v29n5/v29n5p3.pdf

[10] Orshnasky, M. (1965, January). Who's Who Among the Poor: A Demographic View of Poverty. Retrieved from https://www.ssa.gov/policy/docs/ssb/v28n7/v

[11] Budget.House.Gov (2014, March 3). The War on Poverty: 50 Years Later | Budget.House.Gov. Retrieved from https://budget.house.gov/waronpoverty/

[12] OECD (1 Sept. 2009.). OECD (2009) Doing Better for Children, OECD Publishing, Paris, DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264059344-en

[13] OECD (Jan. 2012) "Income inequality and growth: The role of taxes and transfers", OECD. Economics Department Policy Notes, No. 9. Oecd.org. Retrieved from http://www.oecd.org/eco/public-finance/49417295.pdf

[14] Poverty Analysis - Choosing and Estimating a Poverty Line. (2017). Web.worldbank.org. Rtrvd. 23 June 2017, from http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/TOPICS/EXTPOVERTY/EXTPA/0,,contentMDK:20242879~menuPK:435055~pagePK:148956~piPK:216618~theSitePK:430367,00.html

[15] N.a (19 Apr. 2011.). Poverty | United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. Unesco.org. Retrieved from http://www.unesco.org/new/en/social-and-human-sciences/themes/international-migration/glossary/poverty/

Poverty is traditionally understood to mean a deprivation in the amount of money or material resources needed to meet a person's basic needs such as housing, food, clothing, and transportation. It is typically based on whether a family's income is sufficient to meet their basic needs based on a federally established threshold. According to the World Bank, absolute thresholds are the best way to evaluate poverty regarding welfare, because it guarantees that the poverty comparisons are consistent and people on welfare are treated equitably.[16] In many cases, governments use an absolute measure of poverty to determine whether a person is poor. Absolute poverty thresholds establish a fixed standard of what households should be able to count on to meet their basic needs, regardless of living standards.[17] Except for adjustments in inflation, it generally remains a fixed amount regardless of regional differences in economy and standards of living.

The United States has been using the Official Poverty Measure (OPM) since 1963. It was developed by, Mollie Orshansksy, a staff economist in the Social Security Administration. Her research showed that the typical family in the 60's spent about one-third of their income on food, which she reasoned was a basic need for survival. Her threshold standard was therefore based on the cost of a minimum food diet multiplied times three. Although it has been updated annually to account for inflation using the Consumer Price Index and is also adjusted for family size, composition, and age of householder, it remains a fixed amount.[18] This threshold is then compared to a family's pretax cash income, excluding capital gains and noncash benefits to determine whether they are poor. Until recently it was the only measure that was used in the U.S. by policymakers, researchers, and advocates to create programs benefiting the poor and determine eligibility for benefits.[19]

A lot has changed since the 60's and life in the 21st Century is far different today, so in 2010, after assessing the shortcomings of the longstanding OPM, the National Academy of Sciences (NAS) released the Supplemental Poverty Measure (SPM) to provide another view of poverty in the United States that better reflected the social and economic conditions of the day. The SPM was not created to replace the OPM, but was to give policymakers and researchers another way to analyze poverty and policy priorities. Under the new measure, the definition of family has been broadened, and the measurement is not based on food consumption alone, but on clothing, shelter, and utilities, as well. Updates are based on a five-year moving average rather than the CPI, and income includes all cash and non-cash resources that families used to meet their needs for food, clothing, shelter, and utilities (FCSU),

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[16] Ravallion, M. (1998). Poverty lines in theory and practice. Documents.worldbank.org. Retrieved 23 June 2017, from http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/916871468766156239/Poverty-lines-in-theory-and-practice

[17] How should we measure poverty?. (2017). World Economic Forum. Retrieved 23 June 2017, from https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2014/11/how-should-we-measure-poverty/

[18] Bureau, U. (2017). How the Census Bureau Measures Poverty. Census.gov. Retrieved 23 June 2017, from https://www.census.gov/topics/income-poverty/poverty/guidance/poverty-measures.html

[19] Meyer, Bruce D. and Sullivan, J. (Sept. 2012.). Identifying the Disadvantaged: Official Poverty, Consumption Poverty, and the New Supplemental Poverty Measure. Journal of Economic Perspectives, American Economic Association. Aeaweb.org. Retrieved from https://www.aeaweb.org/articles?id=10.1257/jep.26.3.111

minus taxes, work expenses, out-of-pocket medical expenses, and child support.[20] It is still a fixed measurement, but it gives a better perspective on how our country is doing on the War on Poverty. When the two measures are compared it gives a different picture of what poverty looks like in America.

Absolute poverty thresholds have been criticized as a flawed measure of poverty because they fail to account for regional differences. As a result, an alternative way of defining the poverty line is gaining more attention and that is to view poverty in relative terms. It is a subjective-based analysis of poverty that boils down to a matter of inequality and establishes a threshold in relation to the overall distribution of income or consumption in a specific economy. In other words, it defines who is poor and who is not based on whether they have the means to maintain a minimum standard of living within the community they are living in. For example, you would be considered poor if you earned less than 60% of the median income. It is a threshold that usually works best within developed nations with a thriving economy. Several European countries have started using this measure. It is flawed in the sense that if a national crisis occurred and the standard of living for the general population went down, the poverty rates of all its citizens would change. [21] [22]

Theories on the Causes of Poverty

Theories of the causes of poverty are generally broken into 2 fields of thought: that poverty is the result of individual/behavioral deficiencies or that it is the result of broader structural failings and social conflicts[23]. While both these theories diverge into deeper complex subsets with varieties of underlying perspectives, conditions, and programming strategies, this report will focus primarily on the overarching views and historical programming utilized in respect to these two broad perspectives.

Poverty as a Personal Failing:

Through most of US History, poverty has primarily been viewed and treated as the result of failings and attributes of low-income individuals. This theory of poverty as a personal deficiency or failing is the oldest in recorded history, backed in ancient social and religious ideologies, with clear connections to biblical times and social perceptions of personal punishments stemming from lacking morality, having sin, and acting in opposition to ruling divinities.

Conservative views of poverty, primarily utilize the individual deficiency view to explain how those in poverty are responsible for their own conditions, and argue that working harder, making better life choices, and having fiscal responsibility could prevent or alleviate people from falling into poverty. This

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[20] How is poverty measured in the United States? | Institute for Research on Poverty | University of Wisconsin–Madison. (2017). Irp.wisc.edu. Retrieved 23 June 2017, from http://www.irp.wisc.edu/faqs/faq2.htm

[21] J, Nguyen, M. (24 Nov. 2014.). Relative versus absolute poverty headcount ratios: the full breakdown. The Data Blog. Retrieved from https://blogs.worldbank.org/opendata/relative-versus-absolute-poverty-headcount-ratios-full-breakdown

[22] Juan Feng (25 Nov 2014). How should we measure poverty?. World Economic Forum. Retrieved from https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2014/11/how-should-we-measure-poverty/

theory also attributes poverty for individuals as the result of genetic factors, such as mental or physical disabilities, or limited intelligence, which though not the fault of the individual still focuses the cause and necessary treatments for overcoming poverty on individuals.

Based on this view of poverty, programs focused on assisting specific families and individuals are perceived as being simultaneously beneficial, yet counter to helping people attain self-sustainability. Though this lens of self-cause, programs focused on education and welfare are necessary for lifting the impoverished to self-sufficiency. However, this view also gives conservative advocates the perspective that providing free services and welfare supports to individuals, enables them to avoid overcoming their conditions, perpetuating a cycle of social reliance, and harming self-improvement.

The 'self-help' narrative- a popular fable in US culture, reflecting the values of absolute self-capability in overcoming adversity- is a testament to this ideology that anti-poverty welfare programs are a crutch for low-income individuals, providing incentives for being in poverty, which can be theoretically abused to prevent people from taking personal responsibility and thereby improving their economic livelihood. By this reasoning, anti-poverty programs do not fail in under-performing, but in over-enabling conditions of poverty. Unfortunately, these narratives often limit the perspective of poverty to select instances or individual cases with single solutions, and do not account for the breadth of adversities and factors which we know influence families in poverty.[24]

Poverty as a Structural Failing

Though the view of poverty caused by personal failing is traditionally the most accepted in the US, the theory of poverty stemming from broader systemic deficiencies has gained more support in recent years. Just as Individual-cause theory has a variety of sub theories and recommendations for dealing with poverty, the structural perspective, by its very nature, has explanations for poverty that are still being debated and continually expanding in focus.

One focus of the Structural-Cause Theory is that poverty is caused by economic, political, and social distortions or discrimination. A social progressive view on poverty, this sub-theory of structural failing claims existing social systems are purposefully or unintentionally designed to keep people in poverty. By this view, it is our systems, not the individuals, who require drastic change and transformation to address and eliminate poverty.

Programs and literature with this view point to low-wages being a significant contributor to the causes of families experiencing poverty, and claim structural barriers keep these families from earning enough to reach self-sufficiency, especially single-parent households. Some of these barriers include limitations in the number of jobs available, lack of growth in job sectors requiring lower skills, the stagnant and sometimes declining incomes of lower and middle-class workers compared to the upper-class, and inflation of livable expenses. It's these barriers which prevent the transference of individuals between classes, and stifle economic growth in communities.

Finally, another case for the structural-cause of poverty is the social stigma often utilized for justifying groups of people in poverty, going unchecked and having no correlation to personal competency. For

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[24] Bradshaw, Ted K., (2006) *Theories of Poverty and Anti-Poverty Programs in Community Development.* Rural Poverty Research Center. Retrieved from http://www.rupri.org/Forms/WP06-05.pdf

example, while there are more white individuals in poverty in the US, the rates of minority racial groups in poverty are significantly higher in comparison, meaning those of minority race have greater odds of ending up in poverty. In these circumstances of structural discrimination, protecting the rights of minorities and changing public perceptions and attitudes of these groups are necessary to overcome such social barriers.

The Face of Poverty

It is easy to draw a line in the sand with respect to whether a household has enough income to meet their needs for survival. However, income, or the lack of it, is only a symptom of a global problem that has been a part of the human condition since time began. As the saying goes, "The poor will always be with us." But even today we cannot pin down the exact cause of poverty, because we find that there is not a one size fits all explanation, nor is there a one size fits all solution. The causes and conditions that lead to poverty are complex and difficult to define and regardless of where you look, the face of poverty will be different no matter where you go. It is found in the poorest as well as the richest nations in the world. It resides in big, prosperous cities and in remote rural regions of a country. It includes people who are employed; those who are eligible to work, but unemployed; and those who are not. It affects the children and the elderly and everyone in between. It affects men and women. It includes those who own houses and those who are homeless and those who have material possessions and those who have nothing.

There are several complex factors within nations, communities, households and even individuals themselves that all contribute to poverty. As history has proven, it is a multifaceted issue which is the result of a wide range of political, social, and economic processes that interact in ways that lead people to some form of deprivation.[25] For example, national factors would include political instability, or nations that suffer from devastating natural disasters. Communities may contribute to an increase in poverty due to their inability to provide such things as adequate health services, educational opportunities, job training, employment, healthy water, housing, or good transportation.

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[25] Dario Berrebi (08 Feb. 2011). Relative vs. Absolute Poverty: Why and How Do We Measure Poverty?. Poverties.org. Retrieved from https://www.poverties.org/blog/relative-vs-absolute-poverty

Community factors also include the availability of social institutions and networks which strengthen families and develop trust and cooperation that helps an economy grow.

Household and individual factors also impact whether a person is at increased risk of poverty. Demographics such as large households with young parents, families with single women as head of household, and households with many dependents, have statistically proven to be a contributing factor.

There are economic characteristics that play a role, such as employment of a household or individual and financial and material assets. We also find that social factors of individuals and households such as health, education level, and shelter can make a difference in the success of whether people can become self-sufficient. [26] [27]
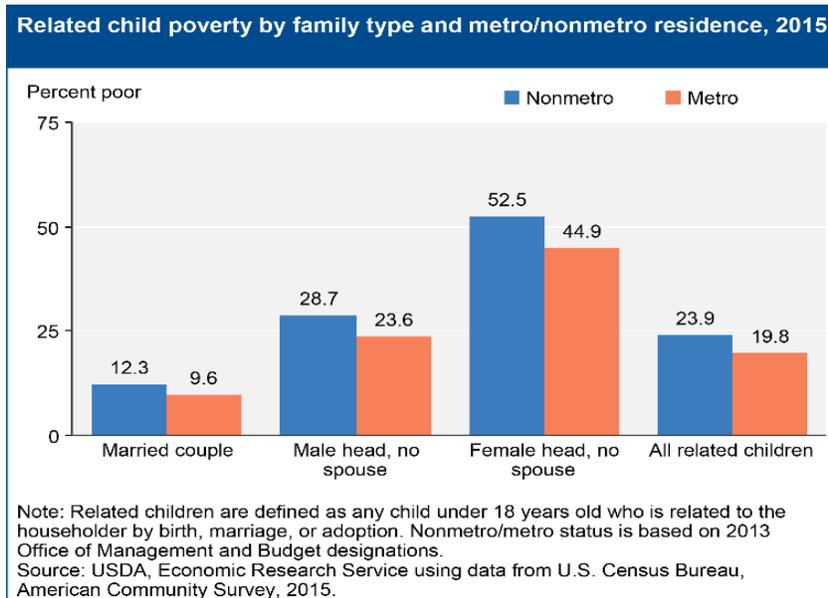
These are the primary causes and conditions that contribute to poverty worldwide, but what contributes to poverty in Europe or Africa will not match the face of poverty in the U.S. When addressing poverty in the U.S., it is important to understand the unique challenges that contribute to the problem in our nation, because regional differences cannot be ignored. This report aims to highlight the major poverty issues that are affecting our nation today.

Main Determinants of Poverty
Regional characteristics
• Isolation or remoteness, (less infrastructure and poor access to markets and services)
• Poor Resources (land availability and quality)
• Weather and environmental conditions (typhoons, droughts, or frequent earthquakes)
• Regional governance and management
• Inequality
Community characteristics
• Infrastructure (quality water, roads)
• Land distribution
• Access to public goods or services (schools, clinics)
• Social structure and social capital
Household characteristics
• Size of household
• Dependency ratio (unemployed old and young relative to orking-age adults)
• Gender of head, or of household adults on average
• Assets (typically including land, tools, and other means of production; housing; jewelry)
• Employment and income structure (proportion of adults employed; type of work)
• Health and education of household members
Individual characteristics
• Age
• Education
• Employment status
• Health status
• Ethnicity

Source: World Bank

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[26] N.a (17 Mar. 2016.). . Openknowledge.worldbank.org. Retrieved from https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/bitstream/handle/10986/11856/9780195211290_ch02.pdf

[27] Haughton and Khandker (2 Dec. 2009.). Understanding the Determinants of Poverty-Siteresources.worldbank.org. Retrieved from http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTPA/Resources/429966-1259774805724/Poverty_Inequality_Handbook_Ch08.pdf

Breakdown of the Family: Two are Better than One

Divorce and teen pregnancies are harsh realities in the U.S. Trying to navigate the challenges of life alone puts you at a greater risk for living in poverty than any other factor in the U.S., especially among minorities. Households maintained by women with no husband present had a median income of $37,797 in 2015, the lowest in the U.S. of household types. The situation gets worse when you consider risk factors such as low education, poor job opportunities, and children. In 2015, 28.5 % of households in poverty were headed by single mothers. The poverty rate for the children in these female-headed households was 52.5 % for nonmetro children and 44.9 % for metro children compared to the poverty rate for children in married-couple families, which was only 12.3 % for nonmetro children and 9.6 % for metro children.[28]

Related child poverty by family type and metro/nonmetro residence, 2015

Percent poor — Nonmetro / Metro

Family type	Nonmetro	Metro
Married couple	12.3	9.6
Male head, no spouse	28.7	23.6
Female head, no spouse	52.5	44.9
All related children	23.9	19.8

Note: Related children are defined as any child under 18 years old who is related to the householder by birth, marriage, or adoption. Nonmetro/metro status is based on 2013 Office of Management and Budget designations.
Source: USDA, Economic Research Service using data from U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2015.

Sometimes, even the services that are available to help single mothers, such as Women, Infants and Children (WIC) and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), become a burden in themselves due to the hassles of applying and the stigma associated with them. If recipients cannot find a job, they lose cash benefits. And if they do return to work they face high child care costs, transportation issues, and a risk of losing Medicaid. Even in the best situation, their circumstances place them in a high risk of unstable employment. Many of these women become "disconnected" from employment opportunities and services, relying instead on a social network of family and friends and other services. [29]

The Working Poor: Low Wages and High Cost of Living

In 2015, the poverty threshold for a family of four was $24,257 and based on this figure, the official national poverty rate was 13.5 % with 43.1 million people living in poverty. [30] It is true that people become poor when they do not work. What is not true is that people are poor because they are lazy and

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[28] USDA ERS - Child Poverty. (2017). Ers.usda.gov. Retrieved 23 June 2017, from
https://www.ers.usda.gov/topics/rural-economy-population/rural-poverty-well-being/child-poverty/

[29] Alana Semuels (1 Dec. 2015). How Poor Single Moms Survive. The Atlantic. Retrieved from
http://www.theatlantic.com/business/archive/2015/12/how-poor-single-moms-survive/418158/

[30] How is poverty measured in the United States? | Institute for Research on Poverty | University of Wisconsin–Madison. (2017). Irp.wisc.edu. Retrieved 22 June 2017, from http://www.irp.wisc.edu/faqs/faq2.htm

do not want to work. Those who are not working often include those who are not in the workforce due to age, illness, disability, institutionalization, or choice. But most people want to work.

The Economic Statistics Institute reported in 2013 that approximately 64% of poor people between the ages of 18 and 64 were eligible to work. The remaining 36%, the non-working poor in this age group, were students, retired individuals or disabled. Of the 64% that were eligible to work, 65% were employed either full-time or part-time.[31] In 2015, the Bureau of Labor Statistics, stated that there were an estimated 8.6 million individuals who were classified as being among the "working poor." The "working poor" are people who spent at least 27 weeks in the labor force (that is, working or actively looking for work), but whose incomes still fell below the official poverty level.[32] Most people who are poor can work and do find employment, but their incomes are unsustainable and do not lift them out of poverty without some assistance due to low wages, especially in economies with a high cost of living.

There are many factors that contribute to a disparity in income. Education plays a significant role in whether an income can keep up with the rising costs of living. In 2015, 16.2 % of individuals with less than a high school diploma had a higher working-poor rate than high school graduates with no college (7.6 %). The lowest working-poor rate was among those with a bachelor's degree or higher at 3.8 % and 1.7 %, respectively. Women were more likely than men to be among the working poor if their education was high school or below. And regardless of educational attainment, Blacks and Hispanics generally were more likely to be among the working poor than were Whites and Asians. The type of occupation one chooses makes a difference, as well. The highest percentage of the working poor were in service industries which typically require lower levels of education, accounting for 11.6 % of those in the labor force who were poor in 2015. In the management and professional fields only 1.8 % were poor. And as mentioned before, married couples had a lower likelihood of living below the poverty line (8.5 %) than families headed by a single woman who is working (23.9 %). Having dependents increased this risk.

Wages that keep up with the economy and employment opportunities that provide full- time employment have traditionally been thought to reduce the chances of falling into poverty[33] and states with the lowest wages have typically seen the highest percentage of poverty.[34] However, this trend is changing and in a stagnant economy with increasing costs for housing, transportation, childcare, utilities, healthcare and food, there is a growing number of full-time employed Americans who do not fall below the federal poverty line, but are still facing serious financial insecurity. They are struggling to afford the

[31] Gould, E. (19 May 2015) Poor People Work: A Majority of Poor People Who Can Work Do. (2017). Economic Policy Institute. Retrieved 22 June 2017, from http://www.epi.org/publication/poor-people-work-a-majority-of-poor-people-who-can-work-do/

[32] N.a (17 Apr. 2017.). A Profile of the Working Poor, 2015 : BLS Reports: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Bls.gov. Retrieved from https://www.bls.gov/opub/reports/working-poor/2015/home.htm

[33] Stevens, A., Marek Pihl, A. (2012). Labor Markets and Poverty in the US: Basic Facts, Policy and Research Needs - UC Davis Center for Poverty Research. Poverty.ucdavis.edu. Retrieved 22 June 2017, from https://poverty.ucdavis.edu/research-paper/labor-markets-and-poverty-us-basic-facts-policy-and-research-needs

[34] Who are the working poor in America? - UC Davis Center for Poverty Research. (2012). Poverty.ucdavis.edu. Retrieved 22 June 2017, from https://poverty.ucdavis.edu/faq/who-are-working-poor-america

necessities to meet their needs. This population group, which United Way has identified by the acronym A.L.I.C.E. (Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed) are hardworking Americans, critical to the economic infrastructure of our communities, but due to the rising costs of living, they are one crisis away from falling below the poverty line. [35] Many may have even experienced poverty at one time, and are in danger of slipping back in.

Extreme Poverty in America

Deep poverty is a complex problem in America. These are people living on less than 50% of the federal poverty line. In 2015, this meant a subsistence level of about $1,000 a month for a family of four.[36] An estimated 19.4 million people, or 6.1% of the total population and 45% of all people living in poverty were living in "deep poverty" struggling to survive on what calculates to be no more than $8 a day per person.[37] The Urban Institute analyzed 2012 Census Bureau Data and discovered that many of the individuals living in "deep poverty" in the U.S. were Black or Hispanic single mothers under the age of 25, and their children. They found that these individuals faced many challenges that contributed to their situation, such as unstable or unaffordable housing, homelessness, unreliable child care, lack of education or learning disabilities that limited job opportunities, criminal records, addictions, chronic health problems, and mental or physical disabilities that prevented them from working, but were not severe enough to qualify them for benefits. These were the non-working poor and for many they were unable to hold down a job for more than a year, creating a vicious cycle of unemployability.[38] Although anti-poverty programs served to sustain them, they were rarely found to bring them to a point of self-sufficiency.[39]

Deep poverty in America is a sobering concept, but it may come as a shock to most Americans that there are individuals in the United States who are living in what the World Bank describes as absolute poverty. Absolute poverty occurs when a person lacks the means to satisfy their most basic human needs, such as food, shelter, and clothing. It is a number that is the same regardless of place and remains fixed over time with periodic adjustments for inflation.[40] This standard of measurement, which was globally established by the World Bank, was set in 2015 to approximately $2 per day per person,[41] a shockingly low figure

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[35] United Way ALICE Project. (2017). Unitedwayalice.org. Retrieved 22 June 2017, from http://www.unitedwayalice.org/

[36] Tracey Farrigan (n.d.). USDA ERS - Poverty Overview. Ers.usda.gov. Retrieved from https://www.ers.usda.gov/topics/rural-economy-population/rural-poverty-well-being/poverty-overview/

[37] What is "deep poverty"? - UC Davis Center for Poverty Research. (2012). Poverty.ucdavis.edu. Retrieved 21 June 2017, from https://poverty.ucdavis.edu/faq/what-deep-poverty

[38] Austin Nichols (17 Sept. 2013.). Long-term unemployment and poverty produce a vicious cycle. Urban Institute.

[39] Serena Lei (15 Dec. 2013.). The Unwaged War on Deep Poverty. Urban Institute. Retrieved from http://www.urban.org/features/unwaged-war-deep-poverty

[40] Edin, K. J., & Shaefer, H. L. (2016). $2.00 a Day: Living on Almost Nothing in America. Boston: Mariner Books

[41] FAQs: Global Poverty Line Update. (30 Sept., 2015). World Bank. Retrieved 21 June 2017, from http://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/poverty/brief/global-poverty-line-faq

that is most often associated with conditions found only in developing nations. However, in their groundbreaking study, *$2.00 a Day: Living on Almost Nothing in America*, social scientists Kathryn Edin and Luke Shaefer found that America was home to approximately one and a half million households who were living on less than $2 per person per day, and this figure included about three million children.[42] Their data revealed a startling trend. Since 1996, the year Clinton made sweeping welfare reforms that set time limits on safety net programs, created strict work and training requirements for recipients, and gave states broad discretion on how the funds were spent,[43] far fewer people received welfare assistance,[44] even though extreme poverty appeared to be increasing.

The causes are directly linked to the issues already described above. A stagnant economy, a lack of employment opportunities with sustainable incomes, a high cost of living (food and shelter) and stress, which leads to health issues, disability and unemployment. These factors play together to create a cycle of poverty that is difficult to escape.

Breaking the Cycle of Poverty: A Child's Hope

Theorists argue that the cause of poverty is due to either individual/behavioral choices or structural/economic conditions.[45] However, it would be fair to say that individual/cultural choices that lead to poverty can be attributed to some breakdown in the society in which they are living, and these choices can lead to a culture of poverty that can last for generations. Teen pregnancy or divorce, which leads to an increased number of single mothers as the head of household; drug and alcohol abuse; criminal activity; a failing economy; and a lack of educational and employment opportunities can all contribute to a sense of hopelessness.   Hopelessness creates attitudes and behaviors that are passed down from impoverished adults to future generations through their children. This, in turn, creates a self-perpetuating cycle of poverty that produces further barriers to viable opportunities for success. [46] [47]

Statistics show that children in impoverished families are at highest risk of suffering from health problems, engaging in risky activity like drug abuse and early sexual activity. They do poorly in school and often drop out or fail. They often suffer from mental health problems and depression primarily due to the

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[42] Edin, K. J., & Shaefer, H. L. (2016). $2.00 a day living on almost nothing in America. Boston: Mariner Books.

[43] Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996, Pub. L. No. 104-193, sec. 103 (1996).

[44] Pam Fessler (21 Aug. 2016.). Welfare 'As We Know It' Ended In 1996. Did It Help Or Hurt?. NPR.org. Retrieved from http://www.npr.org/2016/08/21/490852973/20-years-since-welfare-reform-what-are-its-lasting-effects

[45] Jordan, G. (13 Feb. 2004.). The Causes of Poverty Cultural Vs. Structural: Can There Be A Synthesis? Asu.edu. Retrieved from https://www.asu.edu/mpa/Jordan.pdf

[46] Urban Ventures. (2017). Facts About Poverty. Urban Ventures. Retrieved 26 June 2017, from https://urbanventures.org/facts-about-poverty/

[47] Austin Nichols (17 Sept. 2013.). Long-term unemployment and poverty produce a vicious cycle. Urban Institute. Retrieved from http://www.urban.org/urban-wire/long-term-unemployment-and-poverty-produce-vicious-cycle

poor environments in which they are raised. [48] These are all conditions that make them vulnerable to the risk of poverty as adults.

In 2013, the National Center for Children in Poverty (NCCP) found that 44 % of children under age 18 lived in low-income families earning less than $45,000 per year and half of these children lived in poverty. To break the cycle, they recommend a two-generation approach through policy reforms that concentrate on parent-focused service provisions such as vocational, educational, parent training and health coaching, along with high-quality child-focused programming, such as quality childcare, home visiting, child health, and adolescent mentoring. [49]

Conclusion

Regardless of where one lives, there is one thing that is certain, poverty is not just a lack of income, or line you cross. Our perception as to who is poor and who is not affects our understanding of the causes and conditions that create poverty. Without a proper perspective of what it means to be poor and how to measure it, we will fail in any effort to try to alleviate it. But despite the complexity of it, poverty comes down to a matter of need that cries out for a helping hand. We must continue to work within our own local communities to identify needs and look for ways to strengthen families, improve health, encourage success and provide opportunities for the sake of our children and the future of our society.

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[48] Child Trends (n.d.). Children in Poverty - Child Trends. Child Trends. Retrieved from
https://www.childtrends.org/indicators/children-in-poverty/

[49] (18 Sept. 2015.). Breaking the Cycle of Poverty in Young Families-Two-Generation Policy Recommendations. Retrieved from http://www.nassembly.org/Uploads2/Resources/BreakingTheCycleOfPovertyInYoungFamilies.pdf

Successful Programs & Strategies for Addressing Poverty

According to the World Bank Organization, "[P]overty is a situation people want to escape. So poverty is a call to action – for the poor and the wealthy alike – a call to change the world so that many more may have enough to eat, adequate shelter, access to education and health, protection from violence, and a voice in what happens in their communities."[50] By this understanding, what should government's role be in eradicating poverty? The UN posits that "Governments' main role should be to deliver inclusive, pro-poor growth. In this approach, both the quantity and quality of a country's growth are decisive in empowering poor people, both directly, in terms of liberating them from hunger and want, and indirectly, by providing them with the means to acquire education, voice and agency."[51]

In his article on Theories of Poverty and Anti-Poverty Programs in Community Development (2006) Ted Bradshaw identifies 5 major theories of the causes of poverty, and examines community development program strategies that match their defined causes. While each of these theories provide their own explanation for the causes and best treatment strategies of poverty, the five theories that Bradshaw addresses are: Individual Deficiencies, Cultural Belief Systems, Social Distortions or Discrimination, Geographical Disparities, and Cumulative & Cyclical Interdependencies.[52] This report will utilize program case studies, and showcase their implementation and success in addressing some of these theorized causes of poverty in respective communities.

Programs for Poverty from Individual Deficiencies

The first Theory on Individual deficiencies focuses on individuals being in poverty based on their own choices, disabilities, or even lack of morals. There is much debate on poverty in this theory alone, as advocates of social programs claim more safety nets are necessary to help these individuals overcome their individual struggles, while conservative followers tend to believe these programs offer too much incentive keeping people in poverty, and preventing them from attaining self-sufficiency. At this level, programs traditionally focus on getting individuals back to work, but this fails to address the 63% of individuals currently identified as "the working poor". [53] The most successful benefits to those suffering from poverty at the individual level are those safety nets of food, shelter, energy, and educational supports and resources to enable them to set a foundation for personal and economic stability.

One conclusion of researchers has been that a key component in improving outcomes for poor people, and in turn lifting them out of poverty, is by engaging them more in their own communities. Programs focused on getting individuals involved in opportunities outside the home not only provided them with improved incomes, but also endowed a sense of purpose, status, and provided a time structure for individuals to manage themselves, as well as opportunities for improved social engagement, giving them a stake place of value in their community. Still, many critics argue that these endeavors do not account for the structural limitations and problems that low-income people face in their own communities, making it far more difficult for them to be engaged.

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[50] Government of New Brunswick, (2009) *What is Poverty,* Overview and Background, Retrieved from http://www2.gnb.ca/content/gnb/en/departments/esic/overview/content/what_is_poverty.html

[51] Duncan Green, Paper prepared for the Expert Group Meeting on "Policies and strategies to promote empowerment of people in achieving poverty eradication, social integration and full employment and decent work for all", organized by the Division for Social Policy and Development of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 10-11 September 2013, New York

[52] Bradshaw, Ted K., (2006) *Theories of Poverty and Anti-Poverty Programs in Community Development.* Rural Poverty Research Center. Retrieved from http://www.rupri.org/Forms/WP06-05.pdf

[53] Gould, E. (2015) Poor People Work: A Majority of Poor People Who Can Work Do. (2017). Economic Policy Institute. http://www.epi.org/publication/poor-people-work-a-majority-of-poor-people-who-can-work-do/

If programs expect poor people to be involved in their communities, there are four essential principles they must follow for the best results. First, residents of poor communities need to feel authenticity in their community engagement. They need to be affirmed that it is *their* community which is being impacted and improved by *their* actions, and have ownership of the outcomes. Individuals involved need to be innovative in their strategies, and ultimately take on roles that fit well to their community, which can be a difficult balance to maintain, but is possible through additional supports from community development experts and leaders. One example of this type of innovation is 'the Vine City Parent Patrol' in Atlanta, where ten parent volunteers in low-income neighborhoods, were provided radios, and reflective vests, and they utilized designated safety routes to help children get home from school or after events. While these parents received additional equipment and supports, at the start they were all originally parents walking their kids home to school, but now the impact of their efforts has grown. This program has now gained sustainable funding, becoming a lasting group for safety and advocacy within that community.

A third principle for community involvement of low-income people is understanding and identifying how ready individuals in a community are ready to take on opportunities. Their capacity for action is often not as much as middle or upper-class communities, and therefore it's important to have those involved at the table and willing to talk about their limitations and any obstacles they foresee with getting involved. Finally, at the heart of any attempts to successfully increase individual involvement in communities is collaborations. The best way to improve the capacity of low-income individuals in their communities is through supports and opportunities from grander institutions such as schools, churches, libraries, or other local government agencies. Only through these efforts can programs help those in poverty go beyond their current capacity and transcend their existing state of poverty.[54]

Programs for Poverty from Cultural Belief Systems and Subcultural Poverty Supports

Poverty as the result of Cultural Belief Systems and Sub-Cultural Supports of Poverty, takes some aspects of the Individual Deficiency theory, in that individuals maintain their status in poverty, but states they do so without intention, based on cultural norms and functions passed down through generations, and tends to focus the lens of poverty more on the subcultures found in ghettos, or poor regions. According to this theory, it is the limited perspective that individuals develop over time, living in an ongoing state of poverty, and never truly learning to adapt to additional resources or opportunities. The ultimate tool anti-poverty programs can utilize in this area to be successful is education and policy.

Utilizing education and policy to address and change cultural cycles of poverty, should be implemented across generations to ensure outcomes at all levels of those embedded in the culture, and they should utilize different agents to act as educational leaders and guides from helping individuals and groups out of poverty (i.e. parents, teachers, law enforcement, program staff, and even modern technology). Policy should be used as a means of reinforcing positive attributes and supporting investments to improve accessibility and utility of resources within a culture of poverty.

Targeted learning programs also show promise. One program piloted in New York called Big Math for Little Kids is having positive impacts not only in New York, but in Paraguay: "The study found that the program helped narrow learning gaps between low- and high-performing students, and between students with trained and under-trained teachers. Moreover, the program improved learning equally among both Guaraní- and Spanish-speaking students." Children that have a better educational experience are more likely to be positioned for a successful post-high school transition into the work force. Besides smaller class sizes, there are other opportunities to enhance students' educational experience. One proven approach is through after-school programs. This becomes particularly important as children advance from grade school into middle school.

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[54] Hyman, James B., (2008), *Engaging the Poor and People of Color in Organized Service: Challenges and Opportunities*, Corporation for National and Community Service, Retrieved from https://www.nationalservice.gov/resources/member-and-volunteer-development/engaging-poor-and-people-color-organized-service-0

Community partnerships are a huge benefit to changing the lives of families in poverty with education. In Pennsylvania, Pequea Valley Intermediate school changed its Title I spending formula and partnered with a local faith-based non-profit, The Factory Ministries, to focus and engage parents in their Getting Ahead Program.[55] Prior relationships with these families and the school system were often hostile, with parents seeing Getting Ahead as more of a punishment required for underperforming students, and so by utilizing the Factory Ministries Program, parents were given an unbiased scope and were introduced to the opportunities they and their children could have by taking part in Getting Ahead. Since these changes have occurred, the school has reported decreased rates of absenteeism, better student behavior, and overall improved engagement of students in the classroom.[56]

Middle school is a critical time in child development. Middle schoolers are given a higher level of freedom and more ability to create their own structures and habits. Research has shown that after-school programs can help guide children in the right direction – especially at-risk children who would otherwise be left unsupervised for the hours immediately following the school day. "Afterschool programs for middle school students are a prime example of the multiple benefits youth of all ages can gain through learning experiences outside the classroom. Whether through supplying middle schoolers with homework help, science learning, opportunities for recreation or paths to higher education, the potential impact of afterschool programs goes far beyond the widely recognized benefit of providing safe, supervised environments in the hours after school." Technology improvements can also create opportunities to reduce poverty-caused educational gaps (Gulati, 2008): "It is widely suggested that online technologies can help address issues of educational equity and social exclusion, and open up democratic and accessible educational opportunities."

Just as requirements change from grade school to middle school, so do they change from middle school to high school. In high school, effective programming for at-risk youth should shift to mentorship as students approach a transition to college, trade school, or the work force. "Specifically, after participating in mentoring programs, some youth have reported improvements in self-esteem; better parental and peer relationships; greater connectedness to school; improved academic performance; and reductions in substance use, violence, and other risky behaviors (Cavell et al., 2009)." One objective of mentoring should be to move children into training or community college programs that allow for skills development and higher-paying jobs (Haskins, 2015) "There is now a large and growing literature on how skilled jobs that require a certificate, a license, or a two-year degree, often from a community college, can help young people from poor and low-income families qualify for good jobs with higher incomes."

Programs for Poverty from Economic, Political and Social Distortions or Discrimination

Bradshaw's third theory of poverty is a complete flip from the Individual view, where instead of focusing on how to improve "the players in a game" this theory focuses on how to "improve the game for the players." Much of this view on poverty is backed by evidence showing a lack of correlation between individual competency and poverty, and the clear connections between factors of race, ethnicity, gender, family status, and additional misrepresentations of groups entering poverty.

If poverty is in fact the result of deficiencies in overarching systems, then programs utilized to successfully address these issues need to impact changes in the systems themselves. Bradshaw identifies three levels of programming worth utilizing for implementing these systemic changes: Grassroots, Institutional, and Policy (2006). Defined by social movement, the Grassroots approach focuses on unifying and mobilizing individuals or groups to exert mass pressures and influence those in power to change the system. Movements like the women's movement, the unionization of workers,

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[55] Pattillo, Chase, (2015), *Success Stories in Fight Against Poverty Serve as Case Studies for What Works*, Aha Process, Inc. Retrieved from https://www.ahaprocess.com/success-stories-fight-poverty-serve-case-studies-works/

[56] Aha Process, Inc. (2014), *Bridges out of Poverty Champion Series- Helping Pequea Valley Parents Get Ahead*. Bridges out of Poverty, Chuck Holt & Sharon Ray from Pequea Valley,YouTube, Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9YAfghmaHts&list=PLihWkYFy34kzYvDqLCE7RXcq0lLCEaGGp&index=2

and the civil rights movement are all examples of successful pushes for community change and equality through a Grassroots strategy. The second method of implementing alternative Institutional changes requires either the creation of new institutions or changes to those in existence to provide the opportunities and resources necessary to meet the needs of low-income people that are going unmet by overall systems. Community development corporations and agencies often utilize this method, either through direct supports or through partnerships with private organizations.

Finally, policy changes can be implemented for increasing jobs and incentives for higher wages, improving and expanding low-income access to safety nets and living necessities, increasing accessibility to medical care and childcare supports, or alternative to enforce greater protections of minorities and civil rights. While policy is often perceived as the highest level of structural change programs can attempt, these are also the hardest to influence as they require substantial public interest and engagement with various community sectors and leaders. For that reason, these changes often come about as the result of existing Grassroots or Institutional efforts, rather than through policy efforts alone.

Since the War on Poverty began, one of its biggest victories has been the expansion of healthcare for the elderly and those disabled in poverty, through the implementation of Medicare and Medicaid. According to Katherine Swartz of Harvard University, "The best evidence shows that these programs increased access to health care for America's elderly and spurred major social, fiscal, and technological changes, mostly beneficial, in the entire U.S. health system."[57]

It was this active change in policy, providing expanded health security to the individuals who needed it most. Since the enactment of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act in 2014, these services have expanded even more to states who opted for expanding their Medicaid program. Unfortunately, resistance to healthcare expansion has come in many forms, such as limitations in providers willing to serve as Medicaid beneficiaries, negative opinions of public insurance programs in conservative regions, and some providers even argue that serving low-income patients could lead to increased rates of lawsuits by patients desperate to improve their personal incomes.[58] While implementing such a change to improve these systems would be significant outcome for any poverty fighting agency, getting individuals and community sectors to recognize and work to changing policies is a long and arduous journey, with many small steps along the way, and the players with the most at stake, are those who also tend to be least involved in the game.

[57] Swartz, Katherine (2013), *How the War on Poverty Expanded Care for the Elderly and Chaned the U.S. Health System,* Harvard University. Scholar Strategy Network. Retrieved from http://www.scholarsstrategynetwork.org/brief/how-war-poverty-expanded-care-elderly-and-changed-us-health-system

[58] Allen, et al (2014) *The Role of Stigma in Access to Health Care for the Poor*, The Milbank Quarterly, National Center for Biotechnology Information, Retrieved from https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4089373/

People in poverty are often highly withdrawn when it comes to the political issues that affect their overall well-being and growing need for resources and opportunities. We live in an era, where the disconnect between people in poverty and those in political office is greater than ever before. According to the Center for Responsive Politics, "For the first time, more than half of the members of Congress are millionaires." (2015).[59] This showcases a significant mismatch o representation for the American masses, but it also highlights the deepening divide between those in poverty, and those in power. Low-income individuals tend to be less involved in politics and political discussions at all levels, they tend to be the most vulnerable when it comes to their interests being represented, and they have the lowest rates of voters and membership in political activities (Weeks, 2014).[60]

Figure 1. Voter Turnout, by Household Income, 2008 - 2012

Source: Census Data, Supplemented by SESA 2013
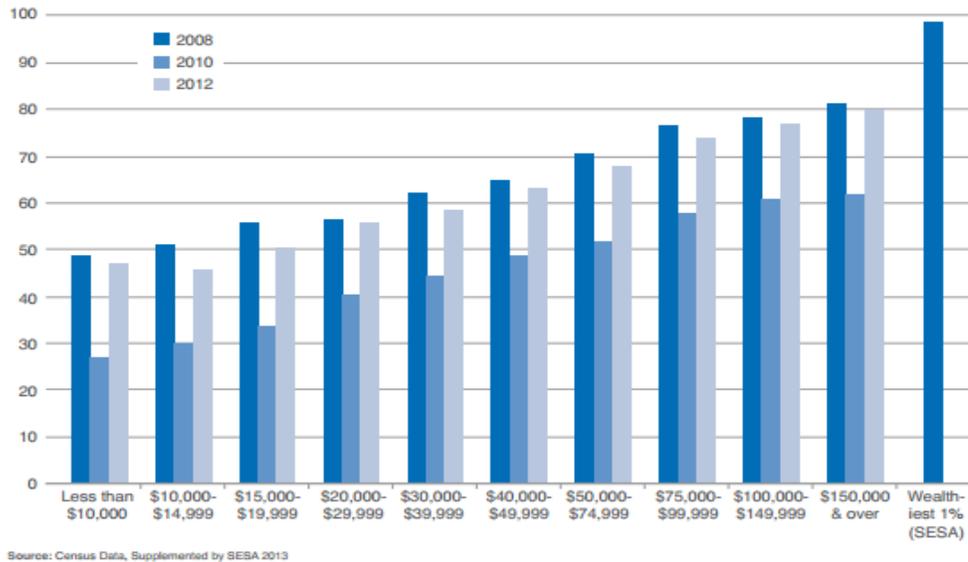
So how should programs engage the poor in political discussion? Primarily by focusing on the issues that matter most to their communities. Catherine Coleman Flowers, an advocate for racial minorities and the impoverished of Lowndes County, saw and heard people talking about the problems of poor infrastructure, like only 18% of residents having access to the city sewer systems. She acted and got people involved in speaking-out about these issues and the impact it had on their lives, and got them involved in community coalitions to help find solutions to the infrastructure problems- along with other social issues of the area, delivering them with firsthand community supports. [61] Though Flowers' and the work of other advocates for engaging the voice of poverty in politics is always a work-in-progress, it's worth remembering that the supportive systems they create, or change are the real lasting impact to their cause.

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[59] Center for Responsive Politics, (2015) Richest Members of Congress, Personal Finances, Combined Federal Campaign. Retrieved from https://www.opensecrets.org/personal-finances/

[60] Weeks, Daniel, (2014), Why are the Poor and Minorities Less Likely to Vote? The Atlantic, Retrieved from https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2014/01/why-are-the-poor-and-minorities-less-likely-to-vote/282896/

[61] Light, John (2017) *Poor People Aren't Involved in Politics. Can Activists change that?,* Moyers & Company, Retrieved from http://billmoyers.com/story/poor-people-arent-involved-in-politics/

Programs for Poverty from Geographic Disparities

Observing poverty from a geographical perspective focuses on the "lack the objective resources needed to generate well-being and income" in select areas of the country and communities (Bradshaw. 2006. Page 12). Based on what we know of spatial characterizations of poverty, social factors often aligned with poverty can be identified in poorer regions and communities, as impoverished areas tend to have higher rates of crime, have overall poorer health rates and diminished expected lifespans, lower education levels, and other disparities compared to wealthier communities. In addition stigmas and prejudices such as racism or political indifference have significant influences on maintaining and/or worsening the economic and social sufficiency of these areas.

Just as Catherine Flowers advocated for the improved access to sanitation and changes in infrastructure for the those oppressed in Lowndes County, bringing the disparities and conditions requiring improvement in the community to the forefront of public discussion and partnerships is crucial to changing the lives and moving communities to become self-sustainable for residents. Some of the strategies Bradshaw highlights for sustainable change in these geographic communities includes: "Improving local industry competitiveness through cluster development, building creative communities, establish tax based or redevelopment incentives for channeling local private investments, improving inclusionary zoning through affording housing and similar programs that place conditions development, revitalize downtowns and civic improvements that increase amenities and make areas more attractive for stimulating revenue and employment, and investing in infrastructures like highways, parks, schools and other public facilities. (p. 13-14)" Many of these strategies often require amendments or additions to policy to refocus funding for authentically sustainable systems.[62]

When it comes to rural communities in America, the problem of poverty is magnified through the decreasing investments and industries being brought into the community, diminishing population growth, and directly weakening local economic growth. Unfortunately, efforts to move low-income individuals from rural to urban environments does nothing to help personal economic status and conditions, and only weakens the sustainability of shrinking rural communities further. Instead, investments in new technologies and Social Assistance Programs are providing improved opportunities and outcomes for rural communities and their inhabitants.

As technology use and capability grows at an exponential rate, its utilization provides a sustainable outlet for new and improved access to education, inter-regional communication, and industry enhancements across sectors. In Piedmont City, Alabama the school system there has been working to improve conditions of poverty through providing tech resources to students and families in the community, 25% who have less than a high school diploma and 9% reporting as unemployed. The initiative was originally to provide laptops for every child in fourth grade and older through Federal funding, but after 5 years of implementation and changes, soon students in first through third grade were provided laptops as well, and the school received grant funds for a "high-speed wireless network over the town"- closing existing information gaps for students and providing new tools for teachers to deliver materials and engage pupils. While these resources haven't changed much of the community's economic stability yet, it has had positive impacts on how struggling students are being better identified and equipped with curriculum to meet their cognitive, psychological, and socioemotional needs, improving their grades and overall learning engagement.[63]

Technology doesn't just need to be implemented through schools or for educational purposes. Other organizations that work with individuals in poverty can utilize wi-fi and other online tools to change the ways traditional

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[62] Bradshaw, Ted K., (2006) *Theories of Poverty and Anti-Poverty Programs in Community Development.* Rural Poverty Research Center. Retrieved from http://www.rupri.org/Forms/WP06-05.pdf

[63] Mader, Jackie (2014) *Can a School's Tech Porgram Take a Rural Town out of Poverty?,* The Atlantic, Retrieved from https://www.theatlantic.com/education/archive/2014/12/can-schools-tech-program-take-a-rural-town-out-of-poverty/383632/

industries or communications are managed. Unfortunately, these enhancements and their capabilities are often expensive to start, and require sustainable sources of funding to maintain and manage. Therefore, improving technology resources in such communities can often be determined through multi-agency collaborations with specific focuses aimed to help those in the community utilize the most-useful technology for improving the existing limitations and disparities facing the area or community in poverty.

Additionally, increasing community supports through Social Assistance Programs, and investing in overall community economic growth have shown to be beneficial practices for the sake of bringing quality resources for communities and their low-income residents.

Programs for Poverty from Cumulative & Cyclical Interdependencies

Of all Bradshaw's examined theories on the causes of poverty, that which stems from Cyclical Interdependencies is the most complex and hardest to attribute successful programming towards. The Cycle of Poverty focuses on the interdependent relationships between the factors impacting poverty and how a crisis of any of these can lead to an ongoing cascade of deterioration of individual and community independence and negative consequences. An example of this at the community level could be illustrated by unemployment leading to emigration from a community, which leads to business closing, which leads to declining revenues and taxes, which leads to lower incomes for schools, which leads to reductions in education, which leads to an unskilled/untrained workforce, which leads to businesses being unable to invest in growth and new technologies, and continues into more job loss. An example at the individual level might look like a person lacks the income to improve to afford a degree, which they need to improve their job skills, which the need to earn higher wages, which they need to improve their income. This theory of poverty can be illustrated through diverse relationships between individual and community characteristics that all have an impact on people's prosperity, and that're influenced by the factors of poverty outlined in the other theories, making the movement to poverty a difficult and complicated pattern to break away from.

Bradshaw identifies 6 elements of self-sufficiency that need to be established within communities and for individuals to avoid poverty. By working to protect these elements, and supporting their value in communities, poverty programs could eliminate the cyclic nature of these elements, making poverty a far more preventable issue. These Elements are:

- Income and Economic Assets
- Education & Skills
- Housing & Surroundings
- Access to Healthcare and other necessary services
- Close Personal Ties and Networks to others
- Personal Resourcefulness & Leadership abilities

Still, there are no clear means to prevent or break the cycle of poverty for everyone. Attempts to do so require collaborations of private and public agents working together to implement sustainable community infrastructures focused on effectively preventing and alleviating poverty.

Recently, more and more poverty-fighting and social service programs have moved to address poverty through collaborative care efforts, working more directly with customers and addressing the cycle of poverty at the community and individual level. Child First is a 'home visiting' program based in Connecticut where case managers visit the homes of their customers on a regular basis, and work with them directly in their own homes to better understand their conditions and help them reach self-sufficiency. They do this by first focusing on tangible issues in the household, addressing mental and physical health issues, and identifying poor housing/living conditions. The case manager then works directly with the family, focusing on strengthening the relationship between household members- primarily parents and children- all the while, sharing information on additional local resources and services available to the families for their improvement.

While they are limited on the number of customers they can serve at a time, the program has shown to have significant successes for the families it's helped, and has received bipartisan support from legislators and private donors alike.[64]

Conclusion

From what we know of poverty today, there is no one-size-fits-all solution. Whether it stems from the individual, their culture, their environment, or a mix of factors, the causes of poverty and best strategies for fighting it are still widely debated and undeniably a mystery. Essentially, the issues associated with poverty are multi-faceted and require community collaboration and purposeful strategies for developing sustainable systems to eliminate the causes and negative factors of poverty at multiple levels. Technology has shown to be a useful tool for poverty fighting programs, and the engagement of customers through political and social engagements has improved these efforts.

The War on Poverty may turn out to be an endless fight, but by focusing on always improving the conditions that low-income find themselves in, the battles they fight will be easier victories.

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[64] Cohn, Jonathon (2015) This May be the Most Effective Anti-Poverty Program in America, Huffington Post, Retrieved from https://www.huffingtonpost.com/2015/04/20/anti-poverty-programs_n_7087622.html

Wage and Income Inequality

Income inequality is not a recent phenomenon; the first half of the 20th century was marked by extensive inequality infused throughout the economic infrastructure of the United States during an era marked by substantial industrial development and corresponding advancements in manufacturing and production technology. Income and wealth inequality, after attenuating in the years following World War II, has steadily increased and reached an upper limit comparable to the elevated levels occurring late in the Roaring Twenties.

Peaking in 1928, distributional income inequality was characterized by large gaps between the share of income received by the wealthiest Americans as opposed to those households at the middle or low end of the income spectrum. For example, in the late 1920s, the top decile – the top 10% of earners - acquired nearly half of all income, while the top 1% obtained 19.6% of the nation's income.[65] Nine decades later, the trend is recurring; as Saez and Zucman compellingly illustrate, "the share of wealth owned by the top 1% of families has regularly grown since the late 1970s and reached 42% in 2012. Most of this increase is driven by the top 0.1%, whose wealth share grew from 7% in 1978 to 22% in 2012, a level comparable to that of the early 20th century" (p. 520).[66]

As upper tier income shares have increased substantially throughout the past 30 years, that of the bottom 90% have concomitantly decreased, contributing to greater wealth inequality and an economic mobility gap with significant implications for the incidence and prevalence of poverty. Higher income inequality creates a context of poverty vulnerability for a large proportion of the population, and hinders poverty reduction.[67] Further, while the historical perspective on poverty is that it is a fixed state, increasingly poverty is understood to be a dynamic condition. Poverty is not static in nature, but rather reflects a temporally fluid state, with individuals and families entering and exiting poverty across varied points in time. However, despite this fluidity, research indicates that poverty creates conditions that increase the probability of recurrence, as longer duration experiences of poverty are associated with decreased likelihood of permanent exit,[68] while the occurrence of a period of poverty for an individual or family has been found to be associated with re-entry within a four-year timeframe.[69]

A combination of structural transformations within the United States have critically influenced the current context and conditions of poverty which include the emergence of significant factors associated with income inequality. More specifically, key shifts in the economic structure include: 1)

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[65] Picketty, T., & Saez, E. (2003). Inequality in the United States, 1913-1998. The Quarterly Journal of Economics, 118 (1), 1-41

[66] Saez, E. & Zucman, G. (2016). Wealth inequality in the United States since 1913: Evidence from capitalized income tax data. The Quarterly Journal of Economics, 131 (2), 519-578.

[67] Ravallion, M. (2004). A poverty-inequality trade off? The Journal of Economic Inequality, 3 (2), 169-181

[68] Iceland, J. (1997). Urban labor markets and individual transitions out of poverty. Demography, 34 (3), 429-441.

[69] Stevens, A. H. (1999). Climbing out of poverty, falling back in: Measuring the persistence of poverty over multiple spells. Journal of Human Resources 34 (3), 557-588.

declines in unionization and union membership,[70] 2) wage stagnation and wage erosion[71] concurrent with shifts to temporary, contingent, or non-traditional employment characterized by low pay, limited or non-existent benefits, irregular schedules, and limited job security,[72] 3) movement from manufacturing-based employment to the rise of service-sector employment[73] 4) decreased accessibility and availability of jobs due to movement of manufacturing from cities to suburbs,[74] and 5) technological developments, including automation and robotics, necessitating increased education and skill levels for workers.[75]

Further, although poverty is frequently associated with social constructs such as age, race, gender, ethnicity, geographic location, family structure, and community structure which increases vulnerability, it should be noted that these variables are also confounded with income inequality, and do not exist in isolation.[76] Additional attributes associated with vulnerability to poverty also include households with high dependency ratios (i.e., the ratio of young dependent household members to adult working age household members), minimal household assets, lack of access to sources of income, and social constraints and disadvantages.[77] While the literature does delineate poverty-decreasing factors, such as educational attainment and income growth, income inequality has been identified as a key poverty-increasing factor.

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[70] Card, D., Lemieux, T., & Riddell, W. C. (2004). Unions and wage inequality. Journal of Labor Research, 25 (4), 519-559.

[71] Bivens, J., Gould, E., Mishel, L., & Shierholz, H. (2014). Raising America's pay: Why it's our central economic policy challenge. Economic Policy Institute, Briefing Paper No, 378.

[72] Hipple. S. (1998). Contingent work: results from the second survey. Monthly Labor Review, 121 (11), 22-35.

[73] Mishel, L., Berstein, J., & Allegretto, S. (2006). The state of working America 2006/2007. Economic Policy Institute. Ithaca, New York: ILR Press.

[74] O' Connor, A. (2000). Poverty research and policy for the post-welfare era. Annual Review of Sociology, 26, 547-562.

[75] Berman, E., Bound, J., & Griliches, Z. (1994). Changes in the demand for skilled labor within U.S. manufacturing: Evidence from the annual survey of manufacturers. The Quarterly Journal of Economics, 109 (2), 367-397.

[76] Wratten, E. (1995). Conceptualizing urban poverty. Environment & Urbanization, 7 (1), 11-38.

[77] Chronic Poverty Research Centre (2004). The chronic poverty report 2004/2005. Manchester: University of Manchester.

1. Income Inequality as a Function of Declines in Unionization

The decline in union membership and the erosion of union coverage in the United States has had considerable impacts on wage structure and has been identified as a significant contributor to rapid increases in income inequality. Unionization offers wage protection for workers, while low unionization reduces the pressure on employers to increase wages and offer benefits.
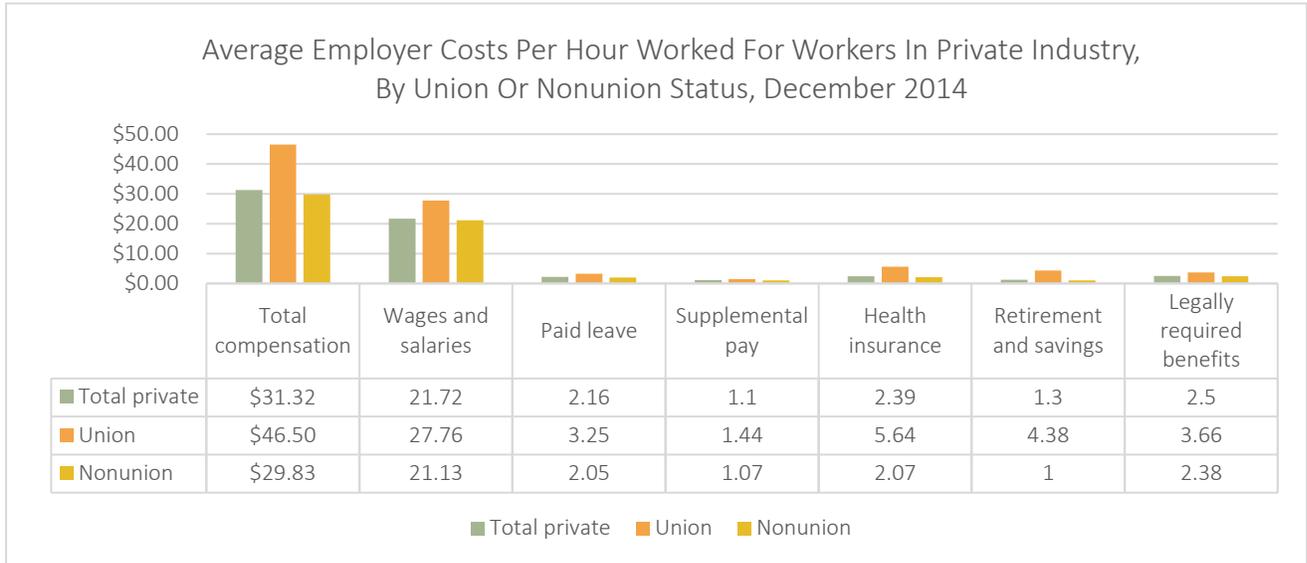
Average Employer Costs Per Hour Worked For Workers In Private Industry, By Union Or Nonunion Status, December 2014							
	Total compensation	Wages and salaries	Paid leave	Supplemental pay	Health insurance	Retirement and savings	Legally required benefits
Total private	$31.32	21.72	2.16	1.1	2.39	1.3	2.5
Union	$46.50	27.76	3.25	1.44	5.64	4.38	3.66
Nonunion	$29.83	21.13	2.05	1.07	2.07	1	2.38

■ Total private   ■ Union   ■ Nonunion

Figure 1: Bureau of Labor Statistics. (2014) https://www.bls.gov/opub/ted/2015/employer-costs-for-union-and-nonunion-workers-in-december-2014.htm

Unionization provides employees collective bargaining voice to improve working conditions and opportunity to earn salaries and benefits necessary to help them maintain costs of living. Union workers receive higher average wages as compared to non-union workers, often to the benefit of workers with lower education levels, or those individuals from minority populations. However, Mishel, Berstein, and Allegretto indicate that although the estimated variance between union versus non-union wages range between 14.7% to 28.1%, the extent of unionization has decreased over a span of almost 30 years from 43.1% of workers unionized in 1978, to 19.2% by the year 2005.

2. Income Inequality as a Function of Wage Stagnation and Wage Erosion

Employed but paid non-living wages; that is the reality facing a large proportion of the individuals and households vulnerable to poverty and functioning within the constraints of persistent income inequality. Heathcote, Perri, and Violante observe that: "in the 1980s, unions weakened with the decline of the manufacturing sector, while the real value of the federal minimum wage was eroded by inflation" (p. 26). The current federal minimum wage has been calculated to be insufficient to protect a family of four from poverty. When available jobs are concentrated in low-skill occupations with stagnant or suppressed wages, less than optimal working conditions, and variable and inconsistent schedules, employment alone is insufficient to prevent entry into poverty, or permit exit from poverty.[78] As Lichter

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[78] Heathcote, J., Perri, F., & Violante, G. (2010). Unequal we stand: An empirical analysis of economic inequality in the United States: 1967-2006. Review of Economic Dynamics, 13 (1), 15-51.

and Eggebeen compellingly state: "the problem is not finding a job, but rather a job that pays well enough to lift the family (and its children) out of poverty."[79]

Despite increasing productivity and economy growth, increasing inequality has become the status quo for the majority of Americans at the middle or low-end of the income distribution, with economic gains concentrated at the upper end of the income distribution; this inequality has manifested as sluggish or stagnated hourly pay and wage growth since the late 1970s, and reflects a trend that has remained unchanged. This persistent and pervasive wage inequality has been described as a function of a constellation of intentional strategies, which include reductions in collective bargaining, prioritization of low inflation over low unemployment, and lagging hourly pay rates (Bivens et al., 2014).

3. Income Inequality as a Function of Shifts to Service Sector Employment

The growth of inequality in the United States over the past four decades is also associated with the proliferation of low-income jobs and positions with low wage ranges concurrent with a decrease in availability of employment within heavy industry, manual jobs, and manufacturing. Many of these lower-wage positions are within the service sector, and according to Iceland, represents the most conspicuous and consequential shift in employment occurring in urban areas across the U. S. - with resultant limitations on upward mobility and earnings potential – and disproportionate impacts on less-skilled workers. This has been found to be particularly salient in metropolitan or regional areas affected by substantial deindustrialization.

As job availability and employment opportunities are increasingly distributed within the service sector (e.g., retail, leisure, hospitality) or are part-time, temporary, contingent, or subcontracted positions, the results of this tertiary sector employment are most challenging for those individuals and families at or near poverty; such jobs generally pay within a range proximal to minimum wage, offer few benefits (e.g., health insurance, sick leave, vacation time), and may have high layoff or rates of turnover, in addition to fluctuating or irregular schedules that take a toll on households already strained at the lower end of the income distribution (Hipple, 1998).[80]

These qualities are consistent with the characteristics Kalleberg, Reskin, and Hudson (2000) identified with "bad jobs" (p. 26), - i.e., low wages, lack of benefits such as the provision of health insurance or pension coverage – and a growing body of literature suggests that this greater use of part-time labor in large part reflects a preference among employers, rather than a preference among employees, for less than full-time employment.[81] Golden describes the extent of this issue, reporting that

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[79] Lichter, D. T., & Eggebeen, D. J. (1994). The effect of parental employment on child poverty. Journal of Marriage and the Family, 56, 633-645.

[80] Presser, H. B., & Cox, A. G. (1997). The work schedules of low-educated American women and welfare reform. Monthly Labor Review, 120 (4), 25-35.

[81] Kalleberg, A. L., Reskin, B. F., & Hudson, K. (2000). Bad jobs in America: Standard and nonstandard employment relations and job quality in the United States. American Sociological Review, 65 (2), 256-278.

6.4 million workers in 2015 indicated wanting full-time employment, and that "involuntary part-time work is increasing almost five times faster than part-time work and about 18 times faster than all work" (p. 3).[82]

The resultant effect of this shift in employment from full-time jobs to part-time or temporary positions has had a deleterious effect on households – particularly those vulnerable to poverty – as increased income inequality broadens the gap between living expenses and what households can afford to pay (Burtless, 1999).[83] Such costs subsume essentials including transportation, child care, and medical care, and contribute to housing and food insecurity, to the detriment of poor families, especially those households with young children.

4. Income Inequality as a Function of Manufacturing Shifts and Geographic Barriers

Job availability is also a function of access and proximity; movement of jobs from metropolitan areas and urban cores to suburban areas has decreased both the number and quality of jobs available to residents in concentrated poverty areas – a shift that has been particularly damaging to the opportunities and economic prospects for workers, especially minority workers in those neighborhoods.[84] Ihlanfeldt and Sjoquist determined that across comparative metropolitan areas (Philadelphia, Chicago, and Los Angeles) poor job access played a significant role in joblessness and the probability of employment of youth, irrespective of age, educational enrollment, or housing situation (e.g., living alone or at home). Compounding the challenges associated with employment proximity are issues related to time and money; more specifically, jobs that are less proximal (i.e., located in suburban areas as opposed to urban areas) necessitate higher travel costs in relation to earnings, and are accompanied by increased travel time to work sites, especially if slower modes of public transportation – such as by bus or train – are involved, or other modalities are utilized (e.g., walking or bicycling).[85]

5. Income Inequality as a Function of Technology, Robotics, and Automation

Poverty, within the context of rising inequality and economic polarization between the wealthiest and the poorest, diminishing or stagnating wages, and the deteriorating accessibility and availability of jobs, is also influenced by the issue of shifts in the economic structure that favor those with higher levels of education and technological capacity and skill. Not only is there a dearth of high-wage employment opportunities in general – or even jobs within a reasonable wage structure – there is a scarcity of well-paying jobs for those individuals with lower levels of education in particular. As summarized by DiPrete: "The general pattern is clear: Low-skill workers earn lower wages and have less secure positions than do high-skill workers." (p. 613).[86]

Rapid advances in technology and the computer revolution have been considered key variables in the shift in job toward skill-biased employment, and predicated the need for higher-levels of education –

[82] Golden, L. (2016, December 5). Still falling short on hours and pay. Economic Policy Institute. Retrieved from http://www.epi.org/files/pdf/114028.pdf

[83] Burtless, G. (1999). Growing American inequality: sources and remedies. The Brookings Review, 17 (1), 31-35.

[84] Rees, A. (1986). An essay on youth joblessness. Journal of Economic Literature, 24, 613-628.

[85] Ihlanfeldt, K. R., & Sjoquist, D. L. (1990). Job accessibility and racial difference in youth employment rates. The American Economic Review, 80 (1), 267-276.

[86] DiPrete, T. (2007). What has sociology to contribute to the study of inequality trends? A historical and comparative perspective. American Behavioral Scientist, 50 (5), 603-618.

particularly an increased demand for post-secondary degrees, to the detriment of workers with lower levels of educational attainment.[87] Although there have been observable economic and industrial shifts associated with technology, automation, and robotics that have been advantageous for more skilled or more highly-educated workers, Mishel, Shierholz, and Schmitt (2013) make the case for overall income inequality as a driver both within and across educational groupings, stating that "Even among college graduates, there has been a significant pulling away of the very top. The 50th percentile wage among those with a bachelor's degree has fallen by 3.0% since 2000, while the 95th percentile wage of those with a bachelor's degree rose 40.6% over the same period" (p. 15). It is, in a sense, wage inequality manifesting not just between education groups, such as those with a high school education in contrast to workers with college degrees, but rather another expression of extant income inequalities encountered despite varying levels of education, while the condition of poverty itself poses barriers to education.

Income Inequality and the Gender Wage Gap

Regardless of the nature of the work, wage structure, availability of jobs, and other economic drivers associated with income inequality, women are much more likely to earn lower wages than men – even when industry, education, and experience as variables are held constant. Compared to men's wages, the median wage among women is nearly 20% lower - $12.82 versus $15.64 – than that of men (Mishel, Berstein, & Allegretto, 2006), and women are more than 30% more likely to be poor than men (Casey, 2014),[88] a circumstance that is further exacerbated for women of color. Further, among female-headed households, disproportionate levels of lower income, employment constraints due to caregiving accountabilities, and fewer aggregate hours worked (in households with one adult earner) work in tandem to create conditions contributing to sustained economic disparities.

While the persistence and extent of the gender wage gap is well documented, Davis and Gould (2015) observe that this pay inequality between men and women appears to be narrowing, but at a broader societal cost: "Over 2000-2015, the gender wage gap at the median fell, with median women's wages rising from 78.0% to 83.3% of median male wages. Unfortunately, 40% of the closing of the gender wage gap since 1979 has been because of falling men's wages" (p. 5).[89]

Economic disparity lingers as a persistent social issue with profound implications for the quality of life, health, and well-being of individuals and families across America. Despite declaration of a "War on Poverty" and calls to action in the service of reducing income inequalities, the reality is that economic drivers must be acknowledged for their role in fueling the conditions that create poverty. The public perception and language of poverty tends to focus on individual empowerment, education, and "bootstrapping," when in reality the condition of income inequality that underlies the wide gaps in wealth distribution must be addressed, if poverty is to be meaningfully and sustainably redressed. By focusing on inequality, it focuses attention on the contribution of the suppression of worker pay to maximize

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[87] Krueger, A. B. (1993). How computers have changed the wage structure: evidence from microdata, 1984-1989. The Quarterly Juornal of Economics, 108 (1), 33-60.

[88] Casey, T. (2014). Women's poverty in the United States, 2013. New York, NY: Legal Momentum & The Women's Legal Defense and Education Fund. Retrieved from http://www.scribd.com/doc/240058539/Legal-Momentum-Poverty-Report-2013

[89] Davis, A. & Gould, e. (2015). Closing the pay gap and beyond: A comprehensive strategy for improving economic security for women and families. Economic Policy Institute Briefing Paper #412. Retrieved from http://www.epi.org/files/2015/closing-the-pay-gap.pdf

profits within the workforce, constrained job creation in the service of optimizing productivity, decreased worker leverage through diminished collective bargaining, and ever-increasing pay for executives and shareholder dividends at the expense of line workers, and creates an opportunity for dialogue around the structures and systems that enable and perpetuate poverty.

Greatest Stress Factors for Low-Income Households

Income deprivation can be a significant cause of stress in low-income households. Stress, in turn, can cause problems ranging from health issues, educational disparities, and even issues with cognitive development. These results can in turn foster behaviors and decision-making that deepens the cycle of poverty. Anti-poverty policy in the United States should take these stress factors into account and work to alleviate them to alleviate the cycle of poverty.

Stressors on Low-Income Families

The American Psychiatric Association, in its 2015 study, *Stress in America,* reported that "Stress about money and finances appears to have a significant impact on many Americans' lives. Some are putting their health care needs on hold because of financial concerns. Nearly 1 in 5 Americans say that they have either considered skipping (9%) or skipped (12%) going to the doctor when they needed health care because of financial concerns. Stress about money also impacts relationships: Almost a third of adults with partners (31%) report that money is a major source of conflict in their relationship."[90]

<div align="center">The Family Stress Model:</div>
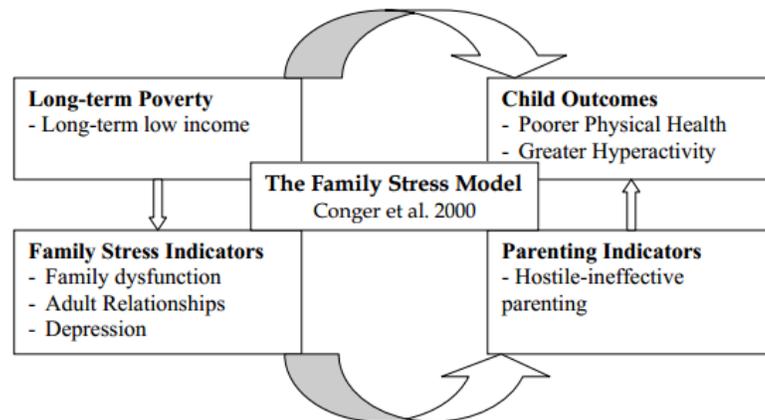
The Family Stress Model (Conger et al. 2000) is a visual representation often utilized by social workers and health care providers to explain the relationship between stress, its causes, and impacts such as depression and family dysfunction. This model also highlights loner-term poverty as a significant factor to causing family dysfunction, weakening relationships, and resulting in negative outcomes for children.[91]

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[90] American Psychological Association, "American Psychological Association Survey Shows That Money Stress Weighing On Americans' Health Nationwide," 2015, http://www.apa.org/news/press/releases/2015/02/money-stress.aspx

[91] Ahmed, Zahid S. (2005) "Poverty, Family Stress, and Parenting". http://www.humiliationstudies.org/documents/AhmedPovertyFamilyStressParenting.pdf

There are three essential impacts that poverty has relating to family stressors:

1. Hardship & Stress
2. Isolation & Exclusion
3. Longer-term impacts for children as adults

Hardship and Stress corresponds to the difficulty families and individuals have in meeting basic needs as a result of poverty. This includes struggling to pay for food, having safe housing and accommodations, clothing, accessibility to education and healthcare, reliable energy and utilities, reliable transportation, and physical and mental recreation. Financial uncertainty, and continually having to fight and juggle resources to meet basic survival needs pits low-income families against their abilities and opportunities for meeting psychological and social needs for handling and overcoming stressors, leading to a continual cycle of hardship and added stress over time.

Families in poverty tend to show internalized feelings of being different and less worthwhile than higher income-earning families, with higher instances of depression and other emotional traumas. This, and the elements of hardship impoverished families face, affects relationships both within and outside the household. Feelings of low self-worth influence weakened engagements with others outside the household, which in turn reduces opportunities for receiving supports to help alleviate hardships associated with poverty. More detrimental though is the consequence these feelings have within the household, resulting in increased instances of divorce, inability to care for other family members, neglect, and sometimes even abuse. Depending on the intensity of poverty a family experiences, their access to healthier environments and opportunities will vary, but compared to higher-income families those in poverty tend to live in poorer quality neighborhoods, be less engaged with friends and social activities, and stay immobile and unable to experience vacations or expand their personal horizons/experiences.

When it comes to stress in the workplace, low-income workers are often exposed to higher stress-related environments. Even in cases where the work is physically healthier for the individual, comparisons between low-income earners and high-income earners show a strong correlation between high frequencies of chronic stress and low income.[92] In a 2017 study of 1,000 participants by the University of Manchester, it was found that low-income workers reported higher levels of chronic stress and poor mental health, than those who were unemployed.[93]

The stressors of poverty tend to be cyclical and have impacts influencing many interdependent elements of a person's life and well-being. Parents in poverty tend to have a harder time providing quality care for children, being unwillingly unable to understand or improve their capabilities for childcare. Children, as a result, tend to grow up with higher levels of stress and have greater risks for long-lasting health issues, increasing the likelihood that they be in poverty too as adults. In addition, increased likelihood of abuse or neglect can have far more serious consequences on the psychological and emotional state of a child, influencing their behavior and diminishing their chances of economic success (Ahmed, 2005).

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[92] Booker, Karene (2011) "Chronic Stress appears to be linked to low-income achievement gap." Cornell University. Retrieved from: http://news.cornell.edu/stories/2011/01/chronic-stress-seems-linked-achievement-gap

[93] Chandola, Tarani (2017) "Having a Bad Job Can Be Worse for Your Health" University of Manchester. Retrieved from: http://www.manchester.ac.uk/discover/news/having-a-bad-job/

While the Relationship between poverty and stress is becoming clearer and clearer with new research and perspectives, the need for social programs to prevent and assist in alleviating stress for impoverished families continues to expand.

Impacts of Stress

The Brookings Institute found that the poor experience more stress, and more "Bad" stress, than other sectors: "the U.S. poor reporting the highest levels of stress of all cohorts. 'Stress' is a complex phenomenon, however: "Good" stress is associated with the pursuit of goals, while "bad" stress is associated with struggling to cope. Bad stress, which is associated with an inability to plan ahead, lower life satisfaction levels, and worse health outcomes, is more common at the bottom of the distribution."[94]

One impact of this stress is a shorter lifespan with a lower quality of life due to health issues, as the Urban Institute discovered: "Poor adults are almost five times as likely to report being in fair or poor health as adults with family incomes at or above 400 % of the federal poverty level, or FPL, (in 2014, the FPL was $23,850 for a family of four) and they are more than three times as likely to have activity limitations due to chronic illness. Low-income American adults also have higher rates of heart disease, diabetes, stroke, and other chronic disorders than wealthier Americans."[95]

While the Brookings study was self-reported, The International Journal of Obesity found instead that" Although individuals with permanent stress tended to be slightly more obese, there was no overall independent effect and no evidence that abdominal obesity or its consequences (hypertension, diabetes) increased with higher levels of stress or depression. This study does not support a causal link between psychosocial factors and abdominal obesity."[96]

Other studies show that health impacts can be seen during infancy, in terms of low birth weight, asthma, and other health issues: "Rates of low birth weight are highest among infants born to low-income mothers. Children in poor families are approximately four times as likely to be in poor or fair health as children in families with incomes at or above 400 % of the FPL. Lower-income children experience higher rates of asthma, heart conditions, hearing problems, digestive disorders, and elevated blood lead levels. In 2006–08, the prevalence of asthma was 8.2 % among nonpoor children but 11.7 % among poor children and 23.3 % among poor Hispanic children. Poor children also have more risk factors for disease, such as childhood obesity, which is a strong predictor of obesity as an adult." (Woolf et al, 2015).

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[94] Carol Graham, the Brookings Institute, "The High Costs of Being Poor in America: Pain, Stress, and Worry," https://www.brookings.edu/blog/social-mobility-memos/2015/02/19/the-high-costs-of-being-poor-in-america-stress-pain-and-worry/

[95] Woolf et al (2015) "*How Are Income & Wealth Linked to Health Longevity*." The Urban Institute. Center on Society and Health. http://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/publication/49116/2000178-How-are-Income-and-Wealth-Linked-to-Health-and-Longevity.pdf

[96] Rosengren, et Al. (2005) "Psychosocial factors and obesity in 17 high-, middle-, and low-income countries: the Prospective Rural Epedimiologic Study." International Journal of Obesity. https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4766924/

While health issues connected with stress in infancy are significant, it's perhaps more significant that poverty-caused stress can impair childhood cognitive development. "Income was logarithmically associated with brain surface area. Among children from lower income families, small differences in income were associated with relatively large differences in surface area, whereas, among children from higher income families, similar income increments were associated with smaller differences in surface area. These relationships were most prominent in regions supporting language, reading, executive functions and spatial skills; surface area mediated socioeconomic differences in certain neurocognitive abilities. These data imply that income relates most strongly to brain structure among the most disadvantaged children."[97]

Building on this, researchers Evans, Brooks-Gunn, and Klebanov researched the effects of poverty-caused stress on childhood cognitive development and found "…evidence for a new, complementary pathway that links early childhood poverty to high levels of exposure to multiple risks, which in turn elevates chronic toxic stress. This cascade can begin very early in life. Even young babies growing up in low-income neighborhoods already evidence elevated chronic stress. This stress then accounts for a significant portion of the association between poverty and working memory, a critical cognitive skill involved in language and reading acquisition."

The stress factors of poverty can also impact school readiness in children, thus increasing the chances of the children repeating the cycle: "A child's home has a particularly strong impact on school readiness. Children from low-income families often do not receive the stimulation and do not learn the social skills required to prepare them for school. Typical problems are parental inconsistency (with regard to daily routines and parenting), frequent changes of primary caregivers, lack of supervision and poor role modelling."[98]

Even one's surroundings can exacerbate the poverty-caused stress. Many of the neighborhoods themselves increase stress and perpetuate the cycle of poverty through the reinforcement of behaviors and habits that can contribute to income disparity.

"It is important to understand the role of neighborhoods in the development of depression for at least three reasons: (a) People often do not realize that they are affected by the context around them and thus mistakenly blame themselves for the invisible stressors that affect their well-being; (b) outsiders also fail to realize that residents of adverse neighborhoods are influenced by their surroundings (high rates of mental health problems in poor neighborhoods may be blamed on the personal characteristics or race of residents rather than on the neighborhoods themselves); and (c) when threats to public health are caused by characteristics of entire communities, it is more efficient to address these threats at the

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[97] Noble, Kimberly et al (2015) "Family Income, Parental Education, and Brain Structure in Children and Adolescents," Nature Neuroscience. NBI.
http://www.nature.com/neuro/journal/v18/n5/full/nn.3983.html?foxtrotcallback=true

[98] Ferguson, Bovaird, Mueller, (2007) "The Impact of Poverty on Educational Outcomes for Children,"Journal of Paedeatric Child Health, https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2528798/

community level rather than to treat each affected individual separately. Thus, it is important to raise public awareness of the mental health risks that accompany adverse neighborhoods."[99]

Recommendations for Programs

Alleviating "Neighborhood Effects" should be a key concern of policymakers: "The term 'neighborhood effects' is used to describe the simultaneous presence of neighborhood socioeconomic disadvantage with other social problems, including high rates of unemployment, crime, adolescent delinquency, teenage childbearing, social and physical disorder, single-parent households, child maltreatment, high levels of mobility, poor child and adult health and mental health, and poor developmental outcomes for children and adolescents (Coulton, Korbin, Su & Chow, 1995; Policy Link, 2002; Roosa et al., 2003; Sampson, 2001, Sampson , Morenoff, & Gannon-Rowley, 2002)."[100]

Programs aimed at helping children alleviate the stress factors included in both housing and education have been proven to work, and should be enhanced. "In addition, housing assistance eliminates several factors that can impair children's academic achievement, such as frequent moves and school transitions as well as homelessness. Pell Grants reduce the likelihood that low-income students will drop out of college. Long-term studies that followed children who participated in Head Start have found that it raises school completion rates and improves other outcomes years later."[101]

Public policy should not only aim at providing income support, but also at providing psychological and social support to reduce stress as much as possible. Policies aimed at enhancing prenatal care, mental health counseling, and improving the quality of life in low-income neighborhoods, appear to have an excellent chance of improving outcomes. To do otherwise is to inadvertently continue the cycle of poverty.

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[99] Cutrona, Wallace, Wesner, (2008) "Neighborhood Characteristics and Depression." Current Directions Psychological Science. NCBI. https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2186297/

[100] Austin et al., (2004) "Serving Low-Income Families in Poverty Neighborhoods Using Promising Programs and Practices: Building a Foundation for Redesigning Public and Nonprofit Social Services," Berkley Edu. http://cssr.berkeley.edu/pdfs/lowIncomeFam.pdf

[101] Sherman, Trisi, and Parrott. (2013) "Various Supports For Low-Income Families Reduce Poverty and Have Long-Term Positive Impacts on Families and Children." Center on Budget and Policy Priorities. https://www.cbpp.org/research/various-supports-for-low-income-families-reduce-poverty-and-have-long-term-positive-effects

Early Childhood Education:
Best Practices, Emerging Trends, and Impact

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) (2016), early childhood education (ECE) sets the trajectory for a child's development. Early childhood experiences impact the structures of the brain and neurobiological pathways, meaning positive early childhood experiences can have results that last a lifetime in the areas of overall social and cognitive development, well-being, academic success, and health.[102] Children from disadvantaged backgrounds, such as those experiencing poverty, reap the largest benefits from early childhood interventions.[103] To achieve the maximum benefits from ECE services for the nation's children, ECE professionals and administrators in today's environment must be prepared to focus on quality, support positive interactions with children, implement effective curricula, support teachers and staff with professional development, involve parents and families in teaching and learning, and be prepared for increased scrutiny and research on the outcomes of ECE interventions.

Quality in ECE Programs

Assessing ECE Quality

Not all ECE programs result in positive results for children. While high quality ECE interventions produce positive benefits for children from disadvantaged circumstances, low quality ECE services are shown to have either no benefit or worse, negative consequences for children (Melhuish, 2015). Children in high quality ECE environments enjoy cognitive benefits that can continue through adolescence (Melhuish, 2015).

The link between quality ECE programs and the benefits for young children has resulted in significant changes in the ECE field in the last several years, most notably through the revision and expansion of state Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement Systems (TQRIS) funded through the federal government's Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) grants administered to twenty states.[104] A TQRIS allows a state to assess the quality of an ECE program, and consists of tiered program standards that differentiate levels of quality in ECE programs; monitoring of programs in relation to these standards; a system of supports to improve quality; and public quality ratings for programs evaluated (U.S. Department of Education & U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2016).

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[102] Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2016). *Helping children develop to their full potential and live healthier lives*. Retrieved from https://www.cdc.gov/policy/hst/hi5/earlychildhoodeducation/index.html

[103] Melhuish, E., Ereky-Stevens, K., Petrogiannis, K., Ariescu, A., Penderi, E., Rentzou, K., Broekhuisen, M. (2015). *A review of research on the effects of early childhood education and care (ECEC) on child development*. Retrieved from http://ecec-care.org/fileadmin/careproject/Publications/reports/CARE_WP4_D4__1_review_of_effects_of_ecec.pdf

[104] U.S. Department of Education, & U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. (2016). *Race to the top early learning challenge 2015 progress update.* Retrieved from https://www2.ed.gov /programs/racetothetop-earlylearningchallenge/2015apr/ 2015progressfinal.pdf

Common markers of quality included in TQRIS' typically include the following:

1. Adult-child interaction that is responsive, affectionate and readily available

2. Well-trained staff who are committed to their work with children

3. Facilities that are safe and sanitary and accessible to parents

4. Ratios and group sizes that allow staff to interact appropriately with children

5. Supervision that maintains consistency

6. Staff development that ensures continuity, stability and improving quality

7. A developmentally appropriate curriculum with educational content (Melhuish, 2015, p. 4).

Emerging Trends for ECE Programs

Impact of Interaction

Administrators seeking to improve outcomes for children, especially children with high needs or those from disadvantaged backgrounds, often find themselves focusing on the adults in a child's life. Increasingly child care advocates and researchers are moving from a focus on the physical environment of an ECE program and instead focusing on the interaction between ECE teachers and staff and the children. Higher levels of communication and responsiveness from teachers in the ECE setting are linked to higher language development for the children in care (Melhuish, 2015). Phillips et al (2017) note that "serve-and-return" interactions between teachers and children, when consistent and responsive, deepen a child's ability to focus and deepen his or her learning. They argue that "the use of (1) curricula that are known to build foundational skills and knowledge, coupled with (2) professional development and coaching that enable teachers (3) to create organized and engaging classrooms" enable these types of interactions (p. 23).[105]

Curricula

Although curricula are commonly cited as one of the most important components of ECE interventions, there are wide variations amongst professionals and researchers on what types of curricula lead to positive childhood outcomes. Furthermore, emerging evidence is changing the field's understanding of which curricula lead to positive childhood outcomes. ECE programs commonly use whole-child curricula, such as the Creative Curriculum or HighScope Curriculum, over skill-specific curriculum.[106] Whole-child curriculum is child-centered learning, where children learn by interacting with the teachers, equipment, materials, and other children in their classroom environment; whereas skill-specific curricula focus on a specific academic or socioemotional skill with sequenced and explicit teaching. Although whole-child curricula are the most commonly used, recent research indicates it is no more effective at promoting school readiness than typical ECE activities and less effective than skill-

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[105] Phillips, D. A., Lipsey, M. W., Dodge, K. A., Haskins, R., Bassok, D., Burchinal, M. R., . . . Weiland, C. (2017). *Puzzling it out: The current state of scientific knowledge on pre-kindergarten effects. A consensus statement.* Washington, DC: The Brookings Institution. Retrieved from https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/ duke_ prekstudy_final_ 4-4-17_hires.pdf

[106] Marcus Jenkins, J., & Duncan, G.J. (2017*). Do pre-kindergarten curricula matter? A consensus statement.* Washington, DC: The Brookings Institution. Retrieved from https://www.brookings.edu/ wp-content/uploads/2017/04/duke_prekstudy_final_4-4-17_hires.pdf

specific curricula. Skill-specific curricula do not result in gains or losses in other developmental areas (such as math lessons increasing socioemotional skills) and thus may be a better investment in ECE classrooms (Marcus Jenkins & Duncan, 2017).

Professional Support and Development

Positive childhood outcomes are not possible without teachers and classroom support staff. Positive interactions with children require teachers and staff who are trained and supported. Teachers who are stressed negatively impact childhood outcomes.[107] According to Bustamante et al (2017), "infant toddler teachers are paid in the bottom 3 % of all workers; preschool teachers are in the 19th percentile" (para. 6). However, paying teachers and support staff a living wage is not enough to prevent stress and burnout. Just as the power of individualized instruction is recognized for children, the field must recognize the power of individualized feedback and support for teachers and support staff. Working with a coach can improve teacher-child interactions (Bustamante et al., 2017). Offering professional development and ongoing learning can help teachers and staff implement curricula and classroom instruction successfully, improving child outcomes (Marcus Jenkins & Duncan, 2017).

Parent and Family Involvement

A child's outcomes are not only based on what happens in the classroom. Involving parents and families in the teaching and support of their child can lead to positive and lasting results. Melhuish (2015) noted high quality childcare with associated home visits appears to be an effective package of services. According to Bustamante et a. (2017), this is especially true for children aged 0-3; several programs providing home visits and coaching to parents with low-incomes with children aged 0-3 produced significant lifelong benefits to those children. Given that a parent or guardian is a child's primary caregiver and there is a positive correlation between caregiver attachment and a child's learning, it only makes sense to include the parent or guardian in the child's learning and development (Melhuish, 2015).

Long-Term Impact of ECE Interventions

Although recent studies found evidence that the benefits of ECE programs can dissipate over the course of elementary school, long-term studies show positive impacts later in life for children served by quality ECE programs (Bustamante et al., 2017). Long-term impacts of ECE cannot be assessed in isolation, as subsequent years of school experiences affect a child's academic and social achievements (Phillips et al., 2017). ECE interventions prime a child for a successful academic and social school career, but cannot guarantee it. Looking to the future, focus on early elementary experiences must be included in the continuum of early care interventions, as these interventions are essential to continued childhood success (Phillips et al., 2017). Improved alignment (such as by building on the math and literacy skills gained in ECE settings) between ECE and early elementary reduces the "fade-out" effects often cited (Bustamante et al., 2017). Research indicates the field of ECE should anticipate further long-term studies of outcomes as children served in the new generation of ECE programs age and develop into adults.

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[107] Bustamante, S., Hirsh-Pasek, K., Lowe Vandell, D., & Michnick Golinkoff, R. (2017). *Realizing the promise of high quality early childhood education*. Retrieved from https://www.brookings.edu/blog/education-plus-development/2017/03/27/realizing-the-promise-of-high-quality-early-childhood-education/

Conclusion

ECE services can set the trajectory for a child's development and success in life. High quality ECE services are essential, especially for children with low incomes. ECE professionals and administrators in today's environment must be prepared to focus on quality, support positive interactions with children, implement effective curricula, support teachers and staff with professional development, involve parents and families, and be prepared for increased scrutiny and research on the outcomes of ECE interventions. Focusing on these vital elements of ECE programming can equip today's children for tomorrow's challenges.

Relationships Between Immigration Status and Poverty in America And Emerging, Evidence Informed Practices in Successfully Combatting or Preventing Poverty Within Immigrant Populations

The United States has a longstanding history of welcoming immigrants to our shores, primarily because our founding fathers recognized that we were a nation built by scores of people fleeing their countries due to persecution, economic hardship, war, poverty, and even starvation, to find a better life. Many of our nation's early immigrants came from Europe, but as political and economic circumstances changed, America has become home to a diverse mix of ethnic groups, religions, languages, and cultures that have all contributed their hard work and ingenuity toward making this country into the great nation it is today.[108] They are taxpayers and business owners, and many of them are entrepreneurs who have started major Fortune 500 companies, employing thousands of people.[109] [110]

However, the "land of opportunity" has not been favorable for all people and the issue of immigration and naturalization has resulted in heated and divisive debate as policymakers and citizens consider how immigration impacts our economy, national security, educational systems, and our labor force. The urgency in answering these concerns has recently led to an increased demand for immigration reform. One pressing issue in the 21st century is whether unabated immigration to the U.S. is contributing toward an increase in the number of people living in poverty in our nation.[111]

Changes in immigration policy over the last 50 years have reshaped the ethnic and racial make-up of our nation's population and resulted in a dramatic increase in the numbers of immigrants coming to the U.S. American Community Survey Data shows that there were an estimated 43.3 million immigrants living in

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[108] Francine D. Blau and Christopher Mackie, eds., (2017/ "The Economic and Fiscal Consequences of Immigration" (Washington: National Academies of Science, Engineering, and Medicine, 2016), Retrieved 14 July 2017, from https://www.nap.edu/catalog/23550/the-economic-and-fiscal-consequences-of-immigration.

[109] N.a (n.d.). Immigrant Entrepreneurship. Kauffman.org. Retrieved from http://www.kauffman.org/key-issues/immigrant-entrepreneurs

[110] Rose Leadem (4 Feb. 2017.). The Immigrant Entrepreneurs Behind Major American Companies (Infographic). Entrepreneur. Retrieved from https://www.entrepreneur.com/article/288687

[111] Opinion, G., & Opinion, G. (2015). Stop Importing Poverty, America Has Enough | ImmigrationReform.com. ImmigrationReform.com. Retrieved 14 July 2017, from http://immigrationreform.com/2015/08/05/stop-importing-poverty-america-has-enough/

the U.S. in 2015, representing 13.5% of the nation's population.[112] Of these, 17.3%, or 1 in 5, were living in poverty, higher than the native-born population at 14.3%.[113]

Immigration Facts

The 1965 Immigration and Nationality Act, an immigration reform bill that was signed into law by President Johnson, released national origin quotas which favored immigrants of European descent to one that opened the door to more Latin Americans and Asians coming into the U.S. With its emphasis on family reunification, the legislation also allowed for more immigrants to enter based on kinship ties rather than on skills and education.[114] Later, President George Bush passed the Immigration Act of 1990 which opened the door even further, increasing quotas, giving preference to countries that have had low admission numbers in the past, and rewriting exclusions that previously prevented entry into our borders.[115] Since that time annual immigration into the U.S. has climbed into the millions.[116]

Unlike America's early history, where the immigrant population was mostly from Europe, immigrants today come from all over the world. Data from the Migration Policy Institute shows that 32.2% of the immigrants residing in the U.S. in 2015 were from Central America, with Mexico still ranking at the top in percentage. However, the number of immigrants from Mexico has been steadily decreasing since 2005, and more immigrants are now coming from Asia with the top three countries of origin being India, China, and the Philippines. (See the following table)[117]

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[112] Jie Zong and Jeanne Batalova (8 Mar. 2017.). Frequently Requested Statistics on Immigrants and Immigration in the United States. migrationpolicy.org. Retrieved from http://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/frequently-requested-statistics-immigrants-and-immigration-united-states

[113] The Facts on Immigration Today: 2017 Edition (2017). Center for American Progress. Retrieved from https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/immigration/reports/2017/04/20/430736/facts-immigration-today-2017-edition/

[114] migrationpolicy.org (15 Oct. 2015.). Fifty Years On, the 1965 Immigration and Nationality Act Continues to Reshape the United States. migrationpolicy.org. Retrieved from http://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/fifty-years-1965-immigration-and-nationality-act-continues-reshape-united-states

[115] George Bush: Statement on Signing the Immigration Act of 1990. (2017). Presidency.ucsb.edu. Retrieved 13 July 2017, from http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=19117

[116] 2015 Yearbook of Immigration Statistics (2017). Table 1. Persons Obtaining Lawful Permanent Resident Status: Fiscal Years 1820 to 2015 Dhs.gov. Retrieved 26 July 2017, from https://www.dhs.gov/immigration-statistics/yearbook/2015/table1

[117] Largest U.S. Immigrant Groups Over Time, 1960-Present. (2013). migrationpolicy.org. Retrieved 14 July 2017, from http://www.migrationpolicy.org/programs/data-hub/charts/largest-immigrant-groups-over-time

Top Ten Largest U.S. Immigrant Groups, 2015				
Origin	Country	Number of Immigrants	Percentage	Total %
Central America	Mexico	11,643,298	26.90%	32.20%
	El Salvador	1,352,357	3.10%	
	Guatemala	927,593	2.10%	
Asia	India	2,389,639	5.50%	20.30%
	China (exc. Hong Kong and Taiwan)	2,065,431	4.80%	
	Philippines	1,982,369	4.60%	
	Vietnam	1,300,515	3.00%	
	Korea	1,060,019	2.40%	
Latin America	Cuba	1,210,674	2.80%	5.30%
	Dominican Republic	1,063,239	2.50%	
Other Nations	Other Nations	18,294,512	42.30%	42.30%
Source: Migration Policy Institute (MPI) Tabulation of data from U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 and 2015 American Community Surveys (ACS)				

The decline in Mexican immigrants has been primarily due to stricter immigration enforcement, an improved Mexican economy and a decreased demand for low wage workers following the Great Recession, especially in construction, agriculture and other industries that hire many undocumented workers. At the same time, the U.S. has experienced a greater demand for high-skilled workers in the information technology industry and other high-skilled occupations which has drawn many immigrants from India and China.

In 2015, the states with the highest population of immigrants were California (10.7 million), Texas (4.7 million), New York (4.5 million), Florida (4.1 million), New Jersey (close to 2 million) and Illinois (1.8 million).[118] The six largest metropolitan areas that immigrants resided in were: New York-Newark-Jersey City; Los Angeles-Long Beach-Anaheim, CA; Houston-The Woodlands-Sugar Land, TX; Dallas-Fort Worth-Arlington, TX; Miami-Fort Lauderdale-West Palm Beach, FL; and Chicago-Naperville-Elgin, IL.[119]

Immigrant Status: Risks for Poverty and Evidence-Based Solutions

According to the Census Bureau, an immigrant (or foreign-born resident) is anyone living in the United States who was not a U.S. citizen at birth. Immigrants includes naturalized citizens, lawful permanent residents (LPRs), temporary migrants (e.g., persons on student or work visas), refugee or asylum seekers, and undocumented persons illegally residing in the United States.[120] (see table below) For this report,

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[118] migrationpolicy.org (2015.). Immigrant Population by State, 1990-Present. migrationpolicy.org. Retrieved from http://www.migrationpolicy.org/programs/data-hub/charts/immigrant-population-state-1990-present

[119] Passel, J., Cohn, D., Passel, J., & Cohn, D. (2017). 20 metro areas are home to six-in-ten unauthorized immigrants in U.S.. Pew Research Center. Retrieved 31 July 2017, from http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2017/02/09/us-metro-areas-unauthorized-immigrants/

[120] Us Census Bureau (6 Jul. 2016.). Foreign Born: About this Topic. Census.gov. Retrieved from https://www.census.gov/topics/population/foreign-born/about.html

however, we will be focusing on three categories of immigrants who are at the greatest risk for poverty: Lawful Permanent Residents, Refugees/Asylum Seekers, and Undocumented Immigrants.

Key Terms	
Immigrant (also referred to as Foreign-Born Resident) is anyone living in the U.S and not a U.S. Citizen at birth.	
Naturalized Citizen	A foreign-born resident who has met requirements to become a legal citizen of the U.S.
Lawful Permanent Residents (LPR/Green Card Holder)	Non-citizens legally authorized to live and work in the U.S. on a permanent basis. Visas are primarily granted for three major reasons: ❖ Family reunification for those meeting certain requirements ❖ Employment (based on labor need, extraordinary skills, or advanced degrees of the applicants) ❖ Diversity laws as determined by the Attorney General
Temporary Migrants	A nonimmigrant who is granted temporary residence in the U.S. usually for educational pursuits, temporary work, or tourism
Refugees/Asylum Seekers:	People fleeing conflict, danger, or persecution and must not be returned to situations where their life and freedom are at risk. (Asylum seekers are already in the United States or are seeking admission at a port of entry.)
Undocumented (Illegal Immigrants)	An individual who has entered the U.S. illegally and is deportable if apprehended, or who entered the United States legally, but who has fallen "out of status" and is deportable
Source: Association of States and Territorial Health Officials (ASTHOS), [121]	

Lawful Permanent Residents

In 2015, over 1 million immigrants obtained Lawful Permanent Resident (LPR) status. LPRs are eligible to sponsor spouses, minor children, and unmarried adult children for permanent residency. And in three to five years, when they become naturalized citizens, they can sponsor their parents, married adult children, and siblings. Of the total number of LPRs in 2015 the majority were based on family ties where 44% were immediate relatives of U.S. citizens and 20% were accepted on a family-sponsored preference. Only a small percentage (14%) came on an employment-based visa. [122]

In 2016, the labor participation rate for immigrants was 65.2 % compared to 62.3 % for native-born Americans. Most immigrants are employed and are hard-working contributors to the American economy. However, statistics show that 57.1 % of the foreign-born labor force over 25 only had a high school diploma (24.7%) or less (22.4%), compared to 30.1 % of natives (4.5% with no high school, 26.1 % with a high school diploma). Statistics also show that many were employed in low paying jobs in the following industries: service occupations (23.5 %); production, transportation, and material moving occupations (14.8 %); and construction and maintenance occupations (13.6 %). [123]

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[121] Anon (2017). Astho.org. Retrieved 31 July 2017, from http://www.astho.org/Programs/Access/Immigration-Definitions/

[122] Yearbook 2015 | Homeland Security. (2017). Table 6. Persons Obtaining Lawful Permanent Resident Status By Type And Major Class Of Admission: Fiscal Years 2013 To 2015 Dhs.gov. Retrieved 2 August 2017, from https://www.dhs.gov/immigration-statistics/yearbook/2015

[123] Bureau of Labor Statistics Newsletter (18 May 2017.). Foreign-Born Workers: Labor Force Characteristics — 2016 Bls.gov. Retrieved from https://www.bls.gov/news.release/pdf/forbrn.pdf

Because it is difficult for immigrants with limited education to work in anything but low paying jobs, it places them at increased risk of poverty. Language barriers further complicate their situations. In 2015, only a little more than half of all immigrants were English proficient.[124] They were also more likely to lack health insurance, use welfare, and have lower rates of home ownership. And it is not just an issue of people who have just arrived, trying to get established and finding their way in a new country. Statistics show that many of these first-generation immigrants have often lived in the U.S. for an average of 21 years and were unable to close the gap on poverty compared to their native peers. In fact, the poverty rate for long-residing immigrants is 57 % higher than for adult natives.[125]

The children of these immigrants are also affected. In 2015, 29.4 million children in the U.S under age 18 lived in poverty (i.e., with family incomes below 200 % of the federal poverty threshold) and almost 9.4 million (or 32 %) were children of immigrants, according to data from the Migration Policy Institute.[126]

The greatest priority for these immigrants is to help them successfully integrate into their new surroundings and a major component of this is to help them learn the English language. Not only does this bridge the cultural barrier by helping them gain a better understanding of how to access services, but it is a requirement for citizenship which opens many more opportunities for local, state, and federal assistance. [127] Learning the language not only improves their employment opportunities, but will increase their educational success not only for themselves, but also for their children.

In addition to English classes, agencies need to make sure they are following local, state, and federal laws which require them to provide language access services. This includes hiring bilingual employees and translators and interpreters to provide better methods of communicating with immigrants who are not yet proficient in English so that they are able to access services.[128]

Many immigrants also lack health insurance. LPRs under 21 or pregnant qualify for the State Children's Health Insurance Program. However, all other lawful permanent residents must wait five years after their arrival to the U.S. to apply for public health insurance. Due to high health care costs and language barriers they have limited access to basic health care. The consequences of this can lead to poor health, which

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[124] Pew Research Center's Hispanic Trends Project (3 May 2017.). English proficiency among U.S. immigrants, 1980-2015. Pew Research Center's Hispanic Trends Project. Retrieved from http://www.pewhispanic.org/chart/english-proficiency-among-u-s-immigrants-1980-2015/

[125] S. Camarota & K. Zeigler (3 Oct. 2016). Immigrants in the United States. Center for Immigration Studies. Retrieved from https://cis.org/Immigrants-United-States

[126] Frequently Requested Statistics on Immigrants and Immigration in the United States. (2017). migrationpolicy.org. Retrieved 1 August 2017, from http://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/frequently-requested-statistics-immigrants-and-immigration-united-states#Children

[127] N.a (n.d.). Public Benefits for Green Card Holders | uscitizenship. Uscitizenship.info. Retrieved from https://www.uscitizenship.info/articles/index.html%3Fp=590.html

[128] LEP.gov (May 2011) Language Access Assessment and Planning Tool for Federally Conducted

and Federally Assisted Programs Lep.gov. Retrieved from https://www.lep.gov/resources/2011_Language_Access_Assessment_and_Planning_Tool.pdf

impacts them socially as well as economically. Poor health impacts one's ability to work.

Due to limited English proficiency and limitations in education and skills, immigrants often work in low paying jobs. However, even highly educated, and skilled immigrants face challenges that prevent them from earning high wages. Approximately 50% of them enter the U.S. with 12 or more years of formal education, yet face limited job opportunities when their foreign credentials or certifications do not transfer to their new country. Services are needed to help them get the certifications they need to continue their careers. In addition to English classes, they also need job training in both hard and soft skills, and cultural orientation classes to transition successfully into the labor force.

Compared to native born Americans, immigrants are 10% more likely to start businesses, contributing billions to the national economy and providing jobs that would otherwise not exist.[129] However, raising capital can be difficult. The Small Business Administration (SBA) has a microloan program available for immigrants which provides small loans, up to $50,000, for small business owners who may not qualify for traditional loans, which can be used for working capital, or the purchase of furnishings, business supplies and equipment. Training and technical assistance is also provided to help them successfully start or grow their business. [130]

Successful programs like the Immigrant Entrepreneur Development Program, of the Michigan-based Access Growth Center, and Minnesota's Neighborhood Development Center (NDC) serve immigrants and other low-income individuals who would like to start or expand their own companies by providing training, financial development, and business planning support for immigrant entrepreneurs. They also help them identify financial resources and other local business resources and partners. [131]

Another important process in helping immigrants successfully integrate is providing resources to help them become citizens of the U.S. The process is often difficult and expensive, yet there are few resources available. One program, the Washington New Americans Program, works in partnership with both One America, a non-profit advocacy group for immigrant and refugee communities, and the American Immigration Lawyers Association (AILA) to assist immigrants in the naturalization process. They hold citizenship days across the state and provide free information and services which includes application assistance, legal help and representation [132]

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[129] Immigrant Businesses Start with More Capital than Others Do. (2012). Minority Business Development Agency. Retrieved 2 August 2017, from https://www.mbda.gov/news/news-and-announcements/2012/05/immigrant-businesses-start-more-capital-others-do

[130] SBA Builds Opportunity for Immigrant-Owned Entrepreneurs | The U.S. Small Business Administration | SBA.gov. (2017). Sba.gov. Retrieved 2 August 2017, from https://www.sba.gov/offices/district/wv/clarksburg/success-stories/sba-builds-opportunity-immigrant-owned-entrepreneurs

[131] National Immigration Forum (8 Nov. 2016). Getting Opportunities in The Hands Of New Americans Striving For The American Dream Immigrationforum.org. Retrieved 2 August 2017, from http://immigrationforum.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/i2020-Opportunities.pdf

[132] Washington New Americans - Washington New Americans. (2017). Washington New Americans. Retrieved 2 August 2017, from https://wanewamericans.org/

Successful integration for lawful permanent residents ensures better outcomes for immigrants in the transition to their new communities. However, unlike refugee programs, there has been limited effort to establish a formal integration policy for immigrants through federal programs. Yet, despite these obstacles and limited funding, state, and local efforts to address the needs of immigrants have continued to improve. [133]

Undocumented Immigrants

Despite immigration reforms, many undocumented immigrants began entering the U.S. due to lax border enforcement and failure to enforce laws that prohibited their employment. In 2015 there were an estimated 11 million residing in the U.S. Many were entries without inspection (EWI), but in recent years the vast majority of illegal immigrants have come over on temporary visas and stay past the date they were required to leave. In 2014, the Center for Migration Studies (CMS) reported that 42% of the total population of undocumented immigrants were overstays, and of those who had arrived in 2014, 66% of them were overstays. Although the annual number of undocumented immigrants overall is decreasing, the number of overstays has been increasing every year since 2007. [134]

In the past, many came from Mexico, but today these immigrants crossing our southern border no longer represent the majority of undocumented immigrants in the U.S, as an increasing number are coming from Asia and Central America. [135] Many newer arriving migrants are surging across our borders, seeking asylum from gang violence and poverty in Central America. In 2016, 408,870 undocumented immigrants were apprehended, and although many of them were individuals (66%), an increasing number of them are families (mostly women with children) and unaccompanied children. [136]

In 2014, undocumented workers accounted for 5% of the national labor force, working primarily in jobs that U.S.-born workers typically don't want, in agriculture, construction, service, and manufacturing. [137]

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[133] Jiménez, Tomás R. (1 May 2011.). Immigrants in the United States: How Well Are They Integrating into Society?. migrationpolicy.org. Retrieved from http://www.migrationpolicy.org/research/immigrants-united-states-how-well-are-they-integrating-society

[134] Robert Warren (6 Mar. 2017.). The 2,000 Mile Wall in Search of a Purpose: Since 2007 Visa Overstays have Outnumbered Undocumented Border Crossers by a Half Million | Warren | Journal on Migration and Human Security. *Jmhs.cmsny.org*. Retrieved from http://jmhs.cmsny.org/index.php/jmhs/article/view/77

[135] Passel, J., & Cohn, D. (2017). As Mexican share declined, U.S. unauthorized immigrant population fell in 2015 below recession level. Pew Research Center. Retrieved 26 July 2017, from http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2017/04/25/as-mexican-share-declined-u-s-unauthorized-immigrant-population-fell-in-2015-below-recession-level/

[136] Statement by Secretary Johnson (18 Oct. 2016) United States Border Patrol Southwest Family Unit Subject and Unaccompanied Alien Children Apprehensions Fiscal Year 2016 | U.S. Customs and Border Protection. (2017). Cbp.gov. Retrieved 30 July 2017, from https://www.cbp.gov/newsroom/stats/southwest-border-unaccompanied-children/fy-2016

[137] Jeffrey S. Passel And D'vera Cohn (3 Nov. 2016.). 2. Occupations of unauthorized immigrant workers. Pew Research Center's Hispanic Trends Project. Retrieved from http://www.pewhispanic.org/2016/11/03/occupations-of-unauthorized-immigrant-workers/

They pay taxes and contribute billions of dollars to the nation's Gross Domestic Product (GDP). If immigration reform is passed to deport them, it would adversely affect our nation's economy, especially in the agriculture industry where many are employed, and would create labor shortages across our nation.[138]

Like many immigrants, they enter the country with little to no education beyond a high school diploma and have limited English proficiency. As a result, undocumented immigrants and their children are at the greatest risk for poverty. In 2014, approximately 49% lived at or below 100% of the poverty line. Approximately 49% of the undocumented immigrants five years and older spoke only a little English or not at all, with Spanish being the predominant language spoken at home. Approximately 75% only had a high school education or less.[139]   Their undocumented status puts them at risk of being exploited and discriminated against in jobs that often pay wages over 40% lower than those paid to legal workers with identical characteristics.[140]

The clear goal for law abiding, hard-working undocumented workers should be to give them permanent legal status with a green card and ultimately, citizenship. But this is a controversial issue. Opinions are widely divided on how to handle undocumented immigrants in the U.S. Some states and local jurisdictions have chosen not to cooperate with federal efforts to deport undocumented immigrants. Many are becoming what is known as "sanctuary states," such as California, where undocumented workers can apply for drivers' licenses, receive in-state tuition at universities and access benefits that improve their lives. They are also protected from deportation.[141]

Under the Obama administration, two immigration policies, the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) and the Deferred Action for Parents of Americans and Lawful Permanent Residents (DAPA) were created to defer action against deportation and provide a road for these immigrants to obtain legal status. Under DACA, undocumented immigrants who entered the country as minors can receive a renewable two-year period of deferred action from deportation and eligibility for a work permit. DAPA provides a three-year renewable deferment from deportation for eligible undocumented parents of U.S. citizens and/or lawful permanent residents. Most of these recipients earn low-wages, have high rates of poverty and low rates of health insurance, yet many speak English well, have strong family ties, long tenure in the U.S., and high employment rates. [142]

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[138] Immigration Reform (23 Apr. 2014.). Illegal immigrants benefit the U.S. economy. TheHill. Retrieved from http://thehill.com/blogs/congress-blog/foreign-policy/203984-illegal-immigrants-benefit-the-us-economy

[139] migrationpolicy.org (n.d.). Profile of the Unauthorized Population - US. migrationpolicy.org. Retrieved from http://www.migrationpolicy.org/data/unauthorized-immigrant-population/state/US

[140] Fottrell, Quentin (19 Apr. 2017.). The earnings of these undocumented immigrants soared during the Obama years. MarketWatch. Retrieved from http://www.marketwatch.com/story/earnings-of-undocumented-workers-are-rapidly-catching-up-with-everyone-else-2017-03-13

[141] Mike Blake/reuters (n.d.). The U.S. Immigration Debate. Council on Foreign Relations. Retrieved from https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/us-immigration-debate-0?gclid=CjwKCAjwzYDMBRA1EiwAwCv6Jts59_nYsHtBso_4HIXHjDszAj8_mGhuOUpvhRzVh0dxmdqQU16ScBoCUhAQAvD_BwE

[142] Kerwin, D., & Warren, R. (9 Mar. 2016.). Potential Beneficiaries of the Obama Administration's Executive Action Programs Deeply Embedded in US Society Journal on Migration and Human Security. Jmhs.cmsny.org. Retrieved

Studies show that these programs, particularly DACA, have been successful in helping people out of poverty. In 2014, the Center for Immigration Studies reported on findings from the National UnDACAmented Research Project which revealed that DACA recipients have strong work ethics, go on to receive postsecondary education and benefit from an increase in economic opportunities. An estimated 60% obtained new jobs, 45 % increased their earning, 57 % obtained a driver's license, 21% were accepted as interns to gain additional training, 21% got health insurance, and 49% were able to open their first bank account. The program has reduced the challenges that many of these undocumented immigrants have faced to achieve economic and social stability. Community-based organizations, legal clinics, schools, and religious organizations must work together to address barriers to accessing benefits, such as cost, application assistance and access to resources and information.[143]

DAPA recipients also benefit from deferred action against deportation. In a 2016 report from the Migration Policy Institute there are almost 10 million undocumented immigrants which includes 4.3 million children under 18 and the majority of their children (85%) are U.S. citizens. The poverty rate for DAPA households is 36 %, compared to 22 % for all immigrant families and 14 % for household where both parents are U.S. citizens. The study shows that DAPA could increase the family's income by as much as 10%, which can significantly improve their financial situation. The greatest advantage of the program, however, is that it would prevent the financial burden that deportation of the father would have on the family and the associated psychological, social, and developmental stress that families of undocumented parents experience.[144]

Many undocumented workers are unaware of their eligibility to change their immigration status and do not have the information to access resources. If they are at risk of deportation, studies show that undocumented immigrants with representation fared far better in immigration hearings, showing that there is a need for the establishment of more public defender systems for poor immigrants who are facing deportation.[145]

Giving law abiding, undocumented workers the opportunity to gain legal status to work and ultimately to obtain citizenship would provide more opportunities for immigrants to find better paying jobs with more

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from http://jmhs.cmsny.org/index.php/jmhs/article/view/59?gclid=CjwKCAjw8IXMBRB8EiwAg9fgMJbsA6Vw96eZr2x9LPVLqej7obEJIzdni-dcObbZIV5ywRXSShHQchoCeagQAvD_BwE

[143] Roberto G. Gonzales (16 Jun. 2014.). Two Years and Counting: Assessing the Growing Power of DACA. American Immigration Council. Retrieved from https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/research/two-years-and-counting-assessing-growing-power-daca

[144] Julia Gelatt, et al (24 Feb. 2016.). Deferred Action for Unauthorized Immigrant Parents: Analysis of DAPA's Potential Effects on Families and Children. migrationpolicy.org. Retrieved from http://www.migrationpolicy.org/research/deferred-action-unauthorized-immigrant-parents-analysis-dapas-potential-effects-families

[145] Eagly, Ingrid V. and Shafer, Steven, A National Study of Access to Counsel in Immigration Court. 164 University of Pennsylvania Law Review 1 (2015); UCLA School of Law Research Paper No. 15-10; Criminal Justice, Borders and Citizenship Research Paper No. 2581161. Available at SSRN: https://ssrn.com/abstract=2581161

security, access benefits, and receive Social Security when they retire. [146]

Refugees and Asylum Seekers

The United Nations Refugee Agency's (UNHCR) latest statistics show that there are approximately 21.3 million refugees in the world today, yet less than 1% of them are resettled in third countries.   The United States is host to almost two-thirds of those who are resettled, taking in the largest number of all resettlement countries combined.[147] In addition to asylum seekers, those who are either already in the U.S. (sometimes illegally) or are seeking asylum at a point of entry,[148] the number of refugees who were granted entry into the U.S. has been steadily increasing under the Obama administration.[149]   The Refugee Act of 1980 created the Federal Refugee Resettlement Program through the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR), a department of the US Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). It established the current standard for screening and admitting refugees into the U.S. and since then approximately 3 million refugees have been resettled in the U.S. In 2016, the U.S. admitted 84,995 refugees, which is the highest since 1999.[150]

The countries of origin have varied over the years, depending on the political climate of various nations. Over the past ten years, most refugees came from Burma and Iraq. However, the leading country of origin for 2016 was from the Democratic Republic of Congo, which accounted for 16,370 refugees, followed by Syria (12,587), Burma (aka Myanmar, with 12,347), Iraq (9,880) and Somalia (9,020). Asylum Seekers, coming from China, El Salvador, and Guatemala, accounted for 40 % of the total with numbers coming from Syria increasing yearly.

Refugees and asylum seekers flee their home countries due to fear of persecution or torture. Many have experienced such traumatic events as violence, torture, rape, imprisonment, or forced displacement and many have languished in refugee camps for as many as ten to twenty years without employment or any type of education. Due to the traumatic stress related to their past experiences, the losses they have experienced, and the stresses of adjusting to a new culture, they have unique challenges that make integration into their host country more difficult. Studies have shown that they are at increased risk of mental health issues, including anxiety, depression, and post-traumatic stress disorder, often for years

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[146] N.a (n.d.). Should the Government Allow Immigrants Who Are Here Illegally to Become US Citizens? - Illegal Immigration - ProCon.org. Immigration.procon.org. Retrieved from http://immigration.procon.org/view.answers.php?questionID=001362

[147] Refugee Admissions. (2017). State.gov. Retrieved 1 Aug. 2017, from https://www.state.gov/j/prm/ra/index.htm

[148] Vivian Yee, Kenan Davis And Jugal K. Patel (6 Mar. 2017.). Here's the Reality About Illegal Immigrants in the United States. Nytimes.com. Retrieved from https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2017/03/06/us/politics/undocumented-illegal-immigrants.html

[149] migrationpolicy.org (7 Mar. 2017.). Frequently Requested Statistics on Immigrants and Immigration in the United States. migrationpolicy.org. Retrieved from http://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/frequently-requested-statistics-immigrants-and-immigration-united-states

[150] migrationpolicy.org (5 Jun. 2017.). Refugees and Asylees in the United States. migrationpolicy.org. Retrieved from http://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/refugees-and-asylees-united-states

after their arrival in their host community, making it more difficult to maintain long term employment.[151] It is critical that refugee programs understand the importance of recognizing, assessing, and treating mental health disorders in this population. Program staff need to be trained to use culturally appropriate mental health screening tools and develop referral procedures so that refugees can receive timely and appropriate services.[152]

Refugees often face economic insecurity. Many left their homes with little or nothing, leaving behind assets, property, and capital, as well as basic documentation such as birth certificates, passports, identification, or proof of educational credentials. Due to their limited English proficiency, discrimination, and the adjustments to new customs, laws, and languages, they have difficulty navigating the complex process of attending school, finding work, locating affordable housing, getting transportation, and accessing services.[153]   When they are resettled, they often have to start over from nothing. Assistance to the refugee and asylee populations is provided by the federal Refugee Resettlement Program through a broad network of over 250 nonprofit programs in over 49 states and the District of Columbia. In 2016, California, Texas and New York together resettled 20,738 refugees followed by Michigan, Ohio, Arizona, North Carolina, Washington, Pennsylvania, and Illinois who accepted at least 3,000.

The primary goal of refugee resettlement is to help them become self-sufficient as soon as possible. Through the Refugee Resettlement Program, the difficult task of adjusting to their new country is achieved through a three-step process that includes Security Clearance, Reception and Placement (typically a 30-90 day process that includes cultural orientation classes) and Transition Services. These services include English classes, and specialized job readiness and employment services,[154] as well as cash and medical assistance through two federal programs, The Refugee Cash Assistance Program (RCA) and the Refugee Medical Assistance program for period of eight months from their arrival.[155]

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[151] R. Ater, (18 Nov. 1998.). Mental Health Issues of Resettled Refugees — EthnoMed. Ethnomed.org. Retrieved from https://ethnomed.org/clinical/mental-health/mental-health

[152] Simmelink, J. and Shannon, P. (16 Aug. 2012.). Evaluating the Mental Health Training Needs of Community-based Organizations Serving Refugees | Simmelink | Advances in Social Work. Journals.iupui.edu. Retrieved from https://journals.iupui.edu/index.php/advancesinsocialwork/article/view/1963

[153] Heartlandalliance.org (14 Feb. 2017.). Refugees--Fact Sheet . Retrieved from https://www.heartlandalliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/Fact-Sheet-Refugees.pdf?gclid=Cj0KCQjwqvvLBRDIARIsAMYuvBF3vkzp369jR6YwOjeqqQ1GDNMWxhMPyhYb5Wrj7MXIuHvhkxUHUZcaAvVcEALw_wcB

[154] Office of Refugee Resettlement | ACF (n.d.). The U.S. Refugee Resettlement Program – an Overview. Office of Refugee Resettlement | ACF. Retrieved from https://www.acf.hhs.gov/orr/resource/the-us-refugee-resettlement-program-an-overview

[155] Refugee Cash Assistance | DSHS. (2017). Dshs.wa.gov. Retrieved 31 July 2017, from https://www.dshs.wa.gov/esa/community-services-offices/refugee-cash-assistance

Once the admission process is completed, representatives from local agencies meet them on arrival in the receiving state and help them with housing and access to resources that can help them get established in their new community.[156]   Additional services beyond eight months can be provided as needed. Mental health services are provided through the Survivors of Torture Program, which includes rehabilitative, social and legal services to victims of torture[157]. The Micro-Enterprise Development

Program helps refugees start their own businesses and become financially independent [158] and the Individual Development Accounts Program matches funds in their savings account to help them with home purchases, small business development, postsecondary education, or training and/or automobile purchases (for employment purposes).[159]

Children often adjust better to the transition than older refugees, as they can learn the English language quicker and learn new skills to help them adapt. However, in communities with large numbers of refugees, educators must consider the unique needs these refugees have as they try to integrate into the school system. Teachers must be trained to address the cultural, behavioral, and language barriers that they may encounter when working with refugee children and develop programs to work with parents to improve communication and ensure that students have a successful educational experience.[160]

Studies have shown that active participation by the refugees themselves is also necessary for successful integration. That is why community building programs like the Ethnic Community-Based Organizations (ECBOs) are so important. These are non-profit organizations, funded by the federal Ethnic Community Self-Help (ECSH) Program, that are founded and led by current or former refugees and whose board consists of at least 60% current or former refugees.[161]

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[156] Office of Refugee Resettlement | ACF (n.d.). The U.S. Refugee Resettlement Program – an Overview. Office of Refugee Resettlement | ACF. Retrieved from https://www.acf.hhs.gov/orr/resource/the-us-refugee-resettlement-program-an-overview

[157] Office of Refugee Resettlement (2012). Who We Serve - Survivors of Torture. | ACF. Retrieved 1 August 2017, from https://www.acf.hhs.gov/orr/resource/who-we-serve-survivors-of-torture

[158] Office of Refugee Resettlement (2016). | Microenterprise Development. ACF. Retrieved 1 August 2017, from https://www.acf.hhs.gov/orr/programs/microenterprise-development

[159] Individual Development Accounts. (2016). Office of Refugee Resettlement | ACF. Retrieved 1 August 2017, from https://www.acf.hhs.gov/orr/programs/ida

[160] Newland, Tanaka, & Barker (1 Jun. 2007.). Bridging Divides: The Role of Ethnic Community-Based Organizations in Refugee Integration. migrationpolicy.org. Retrieved from http://www.migrationpolicy.org/research/bridging-divides-role-ethnic-community-based-organizations-refugee-integration

[161] Acf.hhs.gov (11 Apr. 2016.). 2016-2019 Guidelines for ECSH Program Acf.hhs.gov. Retrieved from https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/orr/2016_2019_guidelines_for_ecsh_program.pdf

The ECBO goal is to connect new arrivals with established refugees to share information on resources, ease the cultural adjustment, improve civic participation and educate the public.[162] In a 2007 report by The Migration Policy Institute, "Bridging Divides," they served as advocates for the refugee community to successfully address both the short- and long-term goals of the immigrant population. They provided legal assistance, English classes, support in adjusting to the host community, vocational training and job placement, and guidance in changing their immigrant status to a legal permanent resident or even citizenship.[163]

However, despite the successes, there were still many barriers to upward mobility and self-sufficiency among refugees. These included limited access to transportation, a lack of affordable childcare services, and barriers to long-term employment due to limited English proficiency, low education levels, as well as occupational downgrading. Not only did employers not hire them nor provide training due to not having a 9th grade education or above, but highly educated refugees that had foreign-earned credentials were often forced to work in jobs requiring lower skills than they had abroad. Discrimination was another issue that they faced, with many refugees facing rejection due to either race, gender, or lack of experience. English classes, that were critical for them to successfully integrate, were often not provided in areas that were convenient for them to get to, due to issues with transportation, or they were not offered during hours that corresponded to their work schedules. Housing is another critical issue. Many refugees are relocated in densely populated cities with high rental costs. Even if they are provided subsidized housing, many fear that if their income rises above qualifying income levels they would be forced to abandon their affordable housing situation, making it disadvantageous to advance to higher income levels. Also, they are often clustered in areas with other refugees like themselves, which makes it less attractive for them to integrate with the broader community.

There is a shortage of studies examining the success of various interventions in working with refugees and asylum seekers in the literature. However, evidence supports the current need for holistic, culturally sensitive programs that address the psychological, educational, financial, and social needs of diverse refugee groups.[164] The overall success of ECBOs will depend on adequate funding not only from federal programs, but also through state government grants, foundations, corporate donations, individual donors, and other partners, as well as fee-based services, which ensure the financial stability of these programs.

ECBOs also must develop and implement effective programs to serve their population and look for improved methods of educating the broader community about their services. Successful ways these organizations can achieve this is by using mainstream media; educating the public through cultural activities, events, and festivals; building boards that included diverse members from the community and

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[162]About Ethnic Community Self-Help. (2016). Office of Refugee Resettlement | ACF. Retrieved 1 August 2017, from https://www.acf.hhs.gov/orr/programs/ethnic-community-self-help/about

[163] Newland, Tanaka, & Barker (1 Jun. 2007.). Bridging Divides: The Role of Ethnic Community-Based Organizations in Refugee Integration. migrationpolicy.org. Retrieved from http://www.migrationpolicy.org/research/bridging-divides-role-ethnic-community-based-organizations-refugee-integration

[164] Sm., Weine (30 Jul 2013.). Review of Refugee Mental Health Interventions Following Resettlement: Best Practices and Recommendations. PubMed Central (PMC). Retrieved from https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3727171/

from other ethnicities and backgrounds; as well as working with local universities, schools, and colleges. Also, studies show that states that encourage the development of nonprofit organizations through seminars, workshops and technical assistance have helped grassroots refugee organizations like ECBOs become more successful.

Overall, the success of the Refugee Resettlement Programs can be seen in a 2015 Fact Sheet from the Migration Policy Institute entitled "Ten Facts About US Refugee Resettlement," which shows that refugees, although they start out with nothing and are initially dependent on public assistance, they have a eventually have a high rate of employment. Within five to ten years after arrival, most of them quickly achieve self-sufficiency.[165]

Conclusion

In summary, it is important to remember the vast contributions that our immigrant population has made to our country. Effective integration policies will require a cooperative effort from local, state, and federal programs which can effectively address their cultural, financial, social, and psychological needs to help them reach their goals and become successful, self-sufficient members of our society.

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[165] Ten Facts About U.S. Refugee Resettlement. (2015). migrationpolicy.org. Retrieved 2 August 2017, from http://www.migrationpolicy.org/research/ten-facts-about-us-refugee-resettlement

Anticipating the Social Service Needs of the Growing Elderly Population

Supporting Family Caregivers

An estimated 34.2 million caregivers, 14.3% of the U.S. adult population, have provided unpaid care to a family member or friend age 50 or older in the past 12 months.[166] Family caregivers may help with personal needs such as bathing and dressing, household chores, managing finances, arranging for outside services, and visiting to see how the person is doing. About six in 10 also help with medical/nursing tasks such as tube feedings and catheter care. One in five caregivers report a high level of physical strain from caregiving, and about two in five say caregiving is emotionally stressful.

A Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services summit explored ways to build capacity for both family caregivers and paid caregivers.[167] For family caregivers, one recommendation was to expand training opportunities, such that family caregivers have the option of getting the training they need when they need it. A recommendation for both family caregivers and paid caregivers was to enact policies to increase their economic security. Specific ideas include expanding access to tax credits, health insurance, opportunities to earn Social Security credit for caregiving work, and hotlines that provide counseling about social services and supports. Other recommendations included involving caregivers as equal partners on care teams and expanding peer support opportunities for caregivers to support each other.

Strengthening the Direct Service Workforce

Direct service workers provide older adults and people with disabilities with a range of services, including assistance with bathing, dressing, medication management, and cooking.[168] They also help people to stay healthy and increase their independence. The Bureau of Labor Statistics reports that by 2024 the nation will need about a million new jobs in direct care, such as home health aides, nursing assistants, and personal care aides.[169]

One in two direct service workers leave their job within 12 months, citing low wages as they primary reason. Other reasons for the high turnover include poor supervision, limited benefits, strenuous workloads, and few opportunities for career advancement (Espinoza, 2017). The median wage for

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[166] AARP Public Policy Institute and National Alliance for Caregiving (June 2015). *Caregiving in the U.S.* Research Report. http://www.caregiving.org/caregiving2015/

[167] Direct Service Workforce Resource Center, The. (2011). *Building Capacity and Coordinating Support for Family Caregivers and the Direct Service Workforce: Common Goals and Policy Recommendations Emerging from the CMS Leadership Summit on the Direct Service Workforce and Family Caregivers*. Washington, DC: Author. https://www.medicaid.gov/medicaid/ltss/downloads/workforce/cms-leadershiip-summit.pdf

[168] Lewin Group, The (2008). *A synthesis of direct service workforce demographics and challenges across intellectual/developmental disabilities, aging, physical disabilities and behavioral health.* Washington, DC: Author. http://rtc.umn.edu/docs/Cross-DisabilitySynthesisWhitePaperFINAL.pdf

[169]Espinoza, R. 8 Signs the Shortage in Paid Caregivers is Getting Worse (February 2017). Issue brief. PHI. https://phinational.org/sites/default/files/articles-commentaries/workforce-shortages-phi60issues01.pdf

personal care aides in the U.S. was $10.09 in 2015. About one in four (24%) direct care workers were without health insurance in 2014, compared to 12% of all U.S. workers.[170]

One approach to strengthening the direct care workforce is to improve training. The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services worked with stakeholders to develop a recommended set of core competencies for direct service workers.[171] U.S. Department of Labor has developed Registered Apprenticeship programs for four direct service occupations: certified nursing assistant, direct support professional, health support specialist, and home health aide.[172] Another strategy to strengthen the direct service workforce is to create advanced roles for aides. For example, New York recently passed legislation to create an Advanced Home Health Aides occupation.[173]

Livable Communities

With the growth of the older population, many communities are not prepared to meet the growing need for quality, affordable, and accessible housing that provides the option for people to age in their homes and communities.[174] Eighty % of adults age 45 and older say they would prefer to stay in their local communities for as long as possible.

One program that can help cities, towns, and other localities to address the housing and other needs of residents of all ages is the AARP Network of Age-Friendly Communities.[175] The program operates under the World Health Organization's Age-Friendly Cities and Communities Program. Communities that join the program commit to improvement in eight domains that the World Health Organization has identified as influencing the health and quality of life of older adults. The "eight domains of livability" are: 1) outdoor spaces and buildings, 2) transportation, 3) housing, 4) social participation, 5) respect and social inclusion, 6) civic participation and employment, 7) communication and information, and 8) community support and health services.

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[170] PHI (2017b). State Data Center (webpage). https://phinational.org/node/17265/median-hourly-wages

[171] University of Minnesota Research and Training Center on Community Living (August 5, 2013). *Road Map of Core Competencies for the Direct Service Workforce*. Prepared for Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS). https://www.medicaid.gov/medicaid/ltss/downloads/workforce/dsw-core-competency.pdf

[172] PHI (2017b). Apprenticeships in Long-Term Services and Supports (webpage). https://phinational.org/workforce/resources/apprenticeships-long-term-services-supports

[173] PHI (June 21, 2016). New York Legislature Passes Advanced Home Health Aide Legislation. https://phinational.org/blogs/new-york-legislature-passes-advanced-home-health-aide-legislation

[174] Guzman, S., Viveiros, J., & Salomon, E. (July 2017). *Housing Policy Solutions to Support Aging with Options*. AARP Public Policy Institute. http://www.aarp.org/ppi/info-2017/housing-policy-solutions-to-support-aging-with-options.html

[175] AARP (accessed August 18, 2017). The AARP Network of Age-Friendly Communities website. http://www.aarp.org/livable-communities/network-age-friendly-communities/

Food and Nutrition Assistance

More than 10 million, or about one in six, older Americans face hunger each year.[176] Multiple programs run by federal agencies, states, and community based organizations provide food assistance. These include the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, congregate meals and home-delivered meals provided through the Older Americans Act Nutrition Program, food banks, and many others. A recent report found that these programs and advocates could better meet older adults' nutrition needs by improving collaboration, communication, and integration (Lloyd, 2017).

Elder Justice

About 1 in 10, as many as 5 million, Americans age 60+ have experienced some form of elder abuse.[177] Elder abuse takes many forms, including physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, neglect, financial exploitation.

In 2014, a national initiative involving 750 stakeholders developed a "road map" for responding to elder abuse. The initiative identified many priorities spanning four domains: direct services, education, policy, and research. The top five priorities were 1) increase public awareness, 2) conduct research and increase focus on cognitive (in)capacity and mental health, 3) improve support and training for unpaid caregivers and paid caregivers, 4) quantify the economic costs of elder abuse, and 5) invest more resources in services, education, research, and expanding knowledge to reduce elder abuse.[178]

Changing Perceptions of Aging

At the 2015 White House Conference on Aging, which takes place once a decade, changing the perception of aging arose as "the ultimate challenge and charge" for the next decade. Participants agreed that we need to re-define aging as contributing to society in a meaningful way, rather than focusing on the problems of aging. By fostering that cultural change in Americans' attitudes toward aging, we can help everyone enjoy longer and better lives.[179]

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[176] Lloyd, J.L. (February 2017). *Hunger in Older Adults: Challenges and Opportunities for the Aging Services Network.* Developed for Meals on Wheels America, funded by AARP Foundation and Caesars Foundation. http://www.mealsonwheelsamerica.org/theissue/research/hunger-in-older-adults

[177] National Council on Aging (NCOA). (Webpage accessed August 18, 2017). Elder abuse facts. https://www.ncoa.org/public-policy-action/elder-justice/elder-abuse-facts/

U.S. Department of Justice and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (2014). *The Elder Justice Roadmap.* https://www.justice.gov/elderjustice/file/829266/download

[179] 2015 White House Conference on Aging Final Report (2015). https://archive.whitehouseconferenceonaging.gov/2015-WHCOA-Final-Report.pdf

EVIDENCE-INFORMED PRACTICES FOR REDUCING ENERGY BURDENS OF U.S. LOW-INCOME HOUSEHOLDS

From a variable-based approach, Chen, Zu, and Day (2017) explored the intentions of LIHH's to conserve heating and cooling energy. Predicting conservation intent from demographics and climate zones alone showed that women tend to conserve more than men and that heating is more important than cooling. The predictive role of demographics and climate zones disappeared after accounting for the theory of planned behavior and other social-psychological variables, suggesting that energy concern and frugality attitudes were less important than bill consciousness and thermal comfort. Energy-conservation campaigns would do well to emphasize a balance between thermal comfort and money-saving.[180]

Among Native American communities with high degrees of economic and energy poverty, energy resource management needs to involve a participatory process of integrating cultural values with energy technology advances by understanding cultural values before developing technological models.[181] Importantly, potential economic benefit does not allay concern about the environment. Energy development must minimize water consumption and land transformation (e.g., pursuing small-scale, distributed systems instead of large windmill farms).

In a study of resilience during electrical outage, Liévanos and Horn (2017) found that neighborhoods with a higher portion of disadvantaged Native Americans experienced longer outage. In the case of U.S. Electric, decision-making rules resulted in not recognizing unequal resilience of electrical grids for neighborhoods with increased percentages of Native Americans. The authors posit that "inequalities appear to be due to bureaucratic rule decisions" (p. 208). Blindly following such rules hinders the ability of organizations and policy-makers to recognize how their behaviors foster reproduction of systemically-based inequalities. Without recognizing differences among energy poor, needs and vulnerabilities may remain hidden or neglected in policy formation.[182]

To explore the impact of energy efficiency upgrades on Long Island, Hernández and Phillips (2015) conducted a mixed method pilot study among a convenience sample of 20 households. All pilot participants "had either undergone weatherization and energy efficiency upgrades within the past year," or were in the process of having upgrades finalized (p. 57). Surveys and interviews among heads of a variety of household types and interviews with landlords of recently-upgraded buildings served as sources of information. Results included direct and indirect benefits, negative consequences, and issues outside the scope of energy efficiency. Specifically, weatherization alone was insufficient to address all LIHH

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[180] Chen, C.-f., Xu, X., & Day, J. K. (2017). Thermal comfort or money saving? Exploring intentions to conserve energy among low-income households in the United States. *Energy Research & Social Science*, 26, 61-71. doi:10.1016/j.erss.2017.01.009

[181] Necefer, L., Wong-Parodi, G., Jaramillo, P., & Small, M. J. (2015). Energy development and Native Americans: Values and beliefs about energy from the Navajo Nation. *Energy Research & Social* Science, 7, 1-11.

[182] Liévanos, R. S., & Horn, C. (2017). Unequal resilience: The duration of electricity outages. *Energy Policy*, 108, 201-211. doi:10.1016/j.enpol.2017.05.058

issues. The most common improvement was thermal comfort, followed by decreased energy expenses, even in the face of increasing state electricity prices.

The relationship between thermal comfort and energy use was found to be close. When heat and insulation were adequate, homes required less energy through secondary heating equipment or boilers, which in turn reduced energy bills while increasing health and safety. As a result of upgrades, landlords experienced significant savings, primarily "due to lower heating fuel prices, even with the 25% up-front costs" (Hernández & Phillips, 2015, p. 62). One landlord's monthly fuel bill decreased from $20-$30 thousand dollars to $8-$10 thousand dollars a month after installing a new boiler. However, landlords did not necessarily pass their savings onto tenants. In fact, landlords may have increased rent to cover capital improvements, in which case upgrades may have decreased housing affordability and stability. Qualitative findings showed that low-income home-owners had more ability to control their thermal environment but also encountered greater cost burdens for "home maintenance, repairs and heating/cooling costs" (p. 63). In contrast, low-income renters did not have the responsibility of maintenance but were at the mercy of landlords who at times sacrifice[d] tenant comfort to save costs," by such means as regulating boilers remotely and automatically (p. 63). In spite of mostly positive effects of energy efficiency upgrades for both tenants and landlords, elements of relational discord persisted. [183]

Fact-Driven Understanding

Crossing fact-driven and human-centered understanding are empirical studies that have considered topics related to energy burden for various intersecting demographic groups. To estimate the impact of the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) on levels of energy insecurity, Murray and Mills (2014) statistically modeled data from LIHHs among a subset of U.S. representative participants from a 2005 residential energy consumption survey. The authors found that only 44% of households rent their homes. They also found significantly higher energy insecurity among black than white heads of household and no significant difference between Hispanic and non-Hispanic heads of household.

As expected, households with larger families were significantly more energy insecure. Contrary to LIHEAP's goal of targeting vulnerable populations (i.e., households with young children or elderly members), such households were no more energy insecure than other households. However, households headed by single mothers were more energy insecure than other households. Presence of a household member at home during the day did not impact energy insecurity. Households that lived in a single-family home were more energy insecure than those that lived in an apartment complex or mobile home, between which energy insecurity was comparable. Households with air conditioning were more energy insecure than those without (p.10) and rural households were significantly more insecure (p.10) than suburban households, perhaps because rural households live in their dwellings for longer periods of time, "making household energy efficiency improvements less costly on an annualized basis" (p. 820). Households that needed heat more days per year were significantly more energy insecure than those

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[183] Hernández, D., & Phillips, D. (2015). Benefit or burden? Perceptions of energy efficiency efforts among low-income housing residents in New York City. *Energy Research & Social Science*, 8, 52-59. doi:10.1016/j.erss.2015.04.010

who needed fewer days of heat; however, the number of days on which a household needed to cool their residence did not increase insecurity.[184]

Also studying energy insecurity, Hernández (2015) found that economic energy insecurity led to structural energy insecurity comprised of physical deficiencies such as inefficient appliances, poor insulation, drafty windows, and faulty heating and cooling systems. Structural insecurity then led to behavioral energy insecurity, which included "extreme energy conservation, seeking fuel assistance, and improvisational heating alternatives such as space heaters and ovens" (p. 154). To further understand energy insecurity, systematic large-scale surveys and more policy recognition are needed.[185]

Turning from energy insecurity to LIHEAP participation, Murray and Mills (2014) found that race did not play a statistically significant role in LIHEAP participation, a surprising result given that race did significantly affect SNAP participation. Although larger residences required more energy for heating and cooling, this factor did not seem to affect the decision to participate in LIHEAP. Likewise, per kilowatt cost of electricity did not affect participation. Households living in a less energy efficient residence were 11% more likely to participate than more energy efficient residences. Both rural and urban households were less likely than suburban households to apply for LIHEAP benefits.

To understand the joint burden of rent and utilities among multiple sets of demographic groups, Hernández, Jiang, Carrión, Phillips, and Aratani (2016) applied multivariate analysis and multinomial logistic regression to such data as the American Community Survey and the Household Energy Insecurity Scale. They found that the U.S. West inclined toward a rent burden alone whereas the Northeast, Midwest, and South inclined toward a double burden of rent and energy. Not surprisingly, across the income spectrum, about six in ten (62%) families with income between 150-200% of the federal poverty line faced neither rent nor energy burdens; about seven in ten (72%) of families below 50% of the federal poverty line faced a double burden. Metropolitan families faced more rent burden than did rural families. Analyzing race and immigration-related variables for rent and energy burdens indicated that foreign-born immigrants inclined particularly toward rent burden (e.g., foreign-born whites were 66% more likely than native-born whites to encounter rent burden). Native-born African Americans were more likely to experience a double rent and energy burden than were other intersections of ethnic/racial and immigrant status, regardless of urban or rural area. Relative to other groups, native-born Hispanics encountered similar levels of rent burden & energy insecurity; however, in urban and rural settings, native-born Hispanics encountered a double burden less often.[186]

[184] Murray, A. G., & Mills, B. R. (2014). The impact of low-income home energy assistance program participation on household energy insecurity. *Contemporary Economic Policy*, 32(4), 811-825. doi:10.1111/coep.12050

[185] Hernández, D. (2015). Sacrifice along the energy continuum: A call for energy justice. *Environmental Justice*, 8(4), 151-156. doi:10.1089/env.2015.0015

[186] Hernández, D., Jiang, Y., Carrión, D., Phillips, D., & Aratani, Y. (2016). Housing hardship and energy insecurity among native-born and immigrant low-income families with children in the United States. *Journal of Child Poverty*, 22(2), 77-92. doi:10.1080/10796126.2016.1148672

Although "energy conservation and efficiency retrofit programs" have been successful, lack of ability to distinguish high consumption from high inefficiency households has halted systemic approaches to effectively focusing conservation and efficiency programs.[187]

To more holistically understand residential energy dynamics in Detroit, Bednar et al. (2017) investigated relationships between "residential energy consumption, efficiency, race/ethnicity and socioeconomic status" (p. 26). For heating consumption, number of household members, type of housing unit, and primary heating fuel were statistically significant (p<=.05). For energy use intensity, "housing unit type, primary heating fuel, number of household members, housing unit size" were statistically significant (p<=.05; p. 30). Within census block groups, heating consumption increased as median household income increased (r=.28) and as percentage of homeowners increased (r=.56). Heating consumption decreased as number of households in poverty increased (r=-.25) and slightly decreased as percentage of adults without a high school diploma increased (r=-.07). Heating consumption did not relate in a statistically significant way to race or ethnicity. In contrast, energy use intensity increased as percentage of adults without a diploma increased (r=.32). Energy use intensity also increased as percentage of African American (r=.24) and Hispanic household members (r=.16) increased. To summarize these findings, African American and Hispanic households in Detroit tended to live in areas where homes consumed energy less efficiently.

Comparing fuel-poor and non-fuel-poor seniors who lived in detached houses heated with natural gas, Kwon and Jang (2017) showed that, for each increase in the year in which a house was built, the ratio of heating cost to housing size decreased less among fuel-poor than among non-fuel-poor households.[188]

Fuel-poor seniors were more likely to be older, female, widowed, living in single-person households, and in poorer health. They also tended to live in houses 10 years older, 138 square foot smaller, and with worse building envelope quality than non-fuel-poor seniors, which in turn impacted heating cost. One of the main reasons U.S. seniors experience fuel poverty is because their incomes fall just above the requirements for energy support programs. A Michigan-based study of elderly residents found for that, among those living alone in homes built before 1960, green space mitigated the effects of extreme heat.[189]

Economic and Policy Considerations

By simulating changes in LIHEAP funding and alternative LIHEAP targeting strategies, Murray and Mills (2014) found that eliminating the program would decrease the number of energy secure households by

[187] Bednar, D. J., Reames, T. G., & Keoleian, G. A. (2017). The intersection of energy and justice: Modeling the spatial, racial/ethnic and socioeconomic patterns of urban residential heating consumption and efficiency in Detroit, Michigan. *Energy and Buildings*, 143, 25-34. doi:10.1016/j.enbuild.2017.03.028

[188] Kwon, H. J., & Jang, M. (2017). Housing quality, health and fuel poverty among U.S. seniors. *Indoor and Built Environment*. doi:10.1177/1420326X17710807

[189] Gronlund, C. J., Berrocal, V. J., White-Newsome, J. L., Conlon, K. C., & O'Neill, M. S. (2015). Vulnerability to extreme heat by socio-demographic characteristics and area green space among the elderly in Michigan, 1990–2007. *Environmental Research*, 136, 449-461. doi:10.1016/j.envres.2014.08.042

over 17%. Not only would this negatively effect LIHHs but also negatively effect utility companies due to missed, late, or reduced payments. Considering the opposite scenario, increasing LIHEAP would not necessarily drastically improve the number of households that are energy insecure because LIHEAP appears to help marginally-insecure more than severely-insecure households. Without additional assistance, providing the current level of LIHEAP benefits to only the most severely-insecure households would not maximize the number of energy-insecure households because current benefit levels are not enough to sufficiently improve the insecurity of those households.

Among households who received LIHEAP benefits, Murray and Mills (2014) identified some as energy secure because of those benefits and some who would be secure even without benefits. They also found that 56% of energy insecure households did not receive LIHEAP benefits. If the LIHEAP program were able to identify: 1) households that are receiving benefits but were already energy secure without benefits and 2) those that are not receiving benefits but are energy insecure, funds could be more effectively redirected. Murray and Mills (2014) also noted that households with less energy efficiency residences would be more effectively served by participating in the DOE's Weatherization Assistance Program than in LIHEAP.

Rather than necessarily targeting LIHEAP to households with young children or elderly members, the authors suggested that states use a checklist approach. In addition to considering region of the country, the checklist would include:

- Head of household is a single-mother

- Household receives other cash or noncash benefits

- Household rents or resides in a mobile home rather than in an apartment complex

Murray and Mills (2014) also stress that their models did not identify all unobserved characteristics of LIHEAP participants.

The split-incentive issue involves the reality that beneficiaries of energy efficiency programs may not be responsible for paying energy bills.[190] Given this, targeting energy efficiency improvements proves difficult. A program evaluation during the second year of Midwest Energy's How$mart Program provided key lessons and challenges from on-bill financing programs. The program was patterned after the Energy Efficiency Institute's Pay-As-You-Save® Program and to minimize the gap between tenants and landlords by encouraging installation of long-term energy efficiency measures. In 2006-2007, Hays, KS experienced high natural gas prices. Midwest Energy's franchise tax revenues then became unexpectedly high, resulting in high residential energy bills. City administrators offered to apply above-budget tax dollars to help pay utility bills of low-income residents. Residents were required to have an energy audit by Midwest Energy, often duplicating previous audits for customers who lacked the capital and ability to incorporate energy efficiency improvements. Midwest Energy was the first company globally to voluntarily take on the Pay-As-You-Save® concept, which they tailored to fit the unique needs of their service area. Midwest

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[190] Johnson, K., Willoughby, G., Shimoda, W., & Volker, M. (2012). Lessons learned from the field: Key strategies for implementing successful on-the-bill financing programs. *Energy Efficiency*, 5(1), 109-119. doi:10.1007/s12053-011-9109-7

Energy also "allowed investment in efficiency measures to result in How$martSM charges" that amounted to 90% of estimated savings. How$martSM required that efficiency measures be permanently attached to a foundation, in effect requiring that all improvements relate to space or water conditioning. Landlords of small multi-family buildings are interested in the program to improve their rental properties without raising tenant rent. Customers learned about the program when they contacted Midwest Energy with complaints or concerns. Alternatively, social service agencies or contractors could refer customers who had encountered challenges with financing high efficiency equipment. The results of auditing the program led to a Conservation Plan that recommended efficiency improvements, estimated corresponding costs, and provided energy savings. Customers solicited contractors to provide bids for recommended improvements. The Conservation Plan then finalized costs, estimated utility savings as well as the How$martSM charge that will be added to each month's utility bill.

Findings from the evaluation of Midwest Energy's program include that about eight of ten (88%) of applicants had been homeowners rather than landlords or renters. Midwest Energy provided free walk-thru audits but charged for such analyses as infrared scans or air infiltration tests. Midwest Energy charged no fee if they find no improvements that would reduce the bill without upfront capital. Midwest Energy also provided additional funds for energy efficiency improvements. For improvements that may not have been economic, building owners could contribute to the project cost; in exchange, bill savings may have reached at least an additional 10%.   Lessons learned from the Midwest Energy endeavor include:

- keeping the focus on the rental market;

- keeping the application process simple;

- allowing programs to be voluntary for flexibility and long-term success; and

- maintaining strong contractor relationships.

To avoid broad-based policies failing those with greatest need, energy policies need to identify distinct social inequalities in residential energy efficiency. Spatial concentration of vulnerable Black and Hispanic block groups called for proactively targeting energy efficiency assistance programs at a community level rather than relying on self-referral. Energy assistance programs need to target community-based approaches to overcome socio-cultural barriers to participation and to effectively deliver services in vulnerable areas. Public health agencies would do well to focus on indoor protection from the cold for Blacks aged 80 years or older. Modeling intensity of energy use rather than total energy consumption would allow more meaningful analysis of disparities and would enable "targeting the most appropriate intervention to the appropriate location" (p. 557).[191]

In the case of Kansas City's Green Impact Zone (GIZ) initiative for low-income energy efficiency, even when financial hindrances to energy efficiency had been accounted for, an array of other barriers to program participation were present.[192] Barriers included public priorities and public distrust (social

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[191] Reames, T. G. (2016a). Targeting energy justice: Exploring spatial, racial/ethnic and socioeconomic disparities in urban residential heating energy efficiency. *Energy Policy*, 97, 549-558. doi:10.1016/j.enpol.2016.07.048

[192] Reames, T. G. (2016b). A community-based approach to low-income residential energy efficiency participation barriers. *Local Environment*, 21(2), 1449-1466. doi:10.1080/13549839.2015.1136995

barriers), "information gap and split incentive" (market barriers) and "pre-weatherization repairs and previous weatherization ineligibility" (regulatory barriers) (p. 1455). Even after attending to social and market barriers, bureaucratic realities resulted in trying to "do things in a new way with old rules" (p. 1460). Owners who knew their homes needed maintenance prior to weatherization feared an energy audit and hence avoided applying for GIZ, not knowing that another program could help with minor repairs. GIZ' community-based nature provided the capacity to realize the extent of the barriers' effects and to creatively overcome them. A key lesson was that "effective implementation requires a policy framework flexible enough to allow for the unique physical, social, and institutional environments of target communities" (p. 1463).

Returning to their mixed methods pilot study on Long Island, Hernández and Phillips (2015) recommended that policies treat energy as a basic need and that they offer debt forgiveness or subsidized energy costs to protect LIHHs. They also recommended increasing or maintaining consistent funding for the Weatherization Assistance Program, even though that program alone is insufficient.

Teller-Ehlsberg, Sovacool, Smith, and Laine (2016) found that allowing low-income homeowners or landlords to use on-bill financing or Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE) billing for efficiency improvements (e.g. improved boilers or thermal efficiency) also minimized personal debt and allowed "infrastructure or capital improvements that will remain with the house or apartment" (p. 90). Based on interviews among planners and policy makers, the authors made 12 policy recommendations. The first three addressed the Vermont legislature:

1. Increase funding for low-income weatherization;
2. Continue supplementing federal programs; and
3. Mandate energy efficiency labeling for homes

For social service agencies and community groups:

1. Provide and prioritize energy efficiency audits and coaching;
2. Distribute energy conservation and efficiency materials; and
3. Ramp up educational awareness and outreach programs

For other state agencies:

1. Train staff in energy efficiency;
2. Focus on improvements in multi-family housing; and
3. Incentivize appropriate fuel-switching, cold climate heat pumps, and heat pump water heaters (p. 89).[193]

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[193] Teller-Elsberg, J., Sovacool, B., Smith, T., & Laine, E. (2016). Fuel poverty, excess winter deaths, and energy costs in Vermont: Burdensome for whom? *Energy Policy*, 90, 81–91.

For Vermont utilities and fuel providers:

1. Provide extra assistance for those about to be disconnected;

2. Utilize on-bill financing or PACE for efficiency improvements; and

3. With regard to fuel dealers, diversify into energy services companies.[194]

   The following Table provides a preliminary energy justice checklist concerning temporal, economic, sociopolitical, and technological domains.

Preliminary Energy Justice Checklist (adapted from Sovacool & Dwarkin, 2015)

Domain	Questions
Temporal	• Does a decision to subsidize a certain energy industry add to the cost of externalities [social and environmental costs]? (p. 462)
Economic	• How does energy affect the distribution of wealth? • Does the mix of electric generation facilities match the actual demand? • Does switching to a more sustainable energy mix disproportionately affect poor members of the society? • To what extent does the construction of an electrical generation facility account for a long-term increase in electricity prices? (p. 462)
Sociopolitical	• How transparent is the allocation of energy revenues? (p. 462)
Technological	• What is the vertical distribution of energy efficiency capacity? [e.g., Do low-income households spend more on heating due to the age of their homes?] • Does a technological solution intended to improve reliability reach the end user regardless of her income level? • Do potential accident zones disproportionally affect low-income communities? • Have appropriate consultations taken place … to ensure … acceptance of accident risk [among vulnerable groups]? (p. 46)[195]

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[194] Sovacool, B. K. (2014). What are we doing here? Analyzing fifteen years of energy scholarship and proposing a social science research agenda. *Energy Research & Social Science*, 1(1), 1-29

[195] Sovacool, B. K., & Dworkin, M. H. (2015). Energy justice: Conceptual insights and practical applications. *Applied Energy*, 142, 435-444.

Hernández and Phillips (2015) suggested capturing the long-term implications of upgrades. Hernández et al., (2016) recommend the following:

- comparing housing/living conditions of low-income immigrant to native-born families;

- studying the relationship of housing to immigrant behavioral/coping strategies retained from home countries and transferred to new settings;

- studying the "influence of age and family structure" (p. 86) on energy insecurity; and

- further studying the double burden of rent & energy.[196]

Homelessness: Its Impact and Ways Forward

As defined by the U.S Department of Housing and Urban Development, a homeless individual is "a person who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence." (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), 2016)

According to HUD, on a single night in January 2016, 549,928 people were experiencing homelessness in the United States. A majority (68%) was staying in emergency shelters, transitional housing programs, or safe havens, and 32 % were in unsheltered locations. Over one-fifth of people experiencing homelessness were children (22%), 69 % were over the age of 24, and nine % were between the ages of 18 and 24. The HUD report further identified the numbers of homeless people by subpopulation:

On that night

- 39,471 veterans were experiencing homelessness – with nearly all (97%) homeless in households without children (as individuals);
- 77,486 individuals and 8,646 people in families with children with chronic patterns of homelessness were homeless;
- 35,686 unaccompanied youth were homeless. Most (89%) were between the ages of 18 and 24. The remaining 11 % were unaccompanied children, under the age of 18.

The *chronically homeless*, a population of concern to HUD, to service providers and to the homeless advocacy community, is defined by HUD as an individual – or the head of a family with a disability who has been continuously homeless for 1 year or more or has experienced at least four episodes of homelessness in the last 3 years where the combined length of time homeless in those occasions is at least 12 months.[197]

These figures are generally viewed as underestimates by experts in the field, as they are based on data from one point in time and do not consider people doubling up in housing ("couch surfing), or living in abandoned housing. It would be very difficult to enumerate the numbers of homeless people living in their vehicles or in encampments, even if such tabulations are estimated. Exploration of the world of homelessness is a journey leading in multiple directions as people experiencing homelessness are not a uniform population – the reasons for their homelessness differ, the duration is varied as is the impact of homelessness upon them, their nuclear and extended families and their larger communities.

A wide array of typologies exist, some focusing on *time aggregation* – transitional, episodic or chronic homelessness – and focusing on frequency and duration of homelessness. This categorization has been largely applied to Individuals. Family homelessness has been categorized by other/additional variables encompassing *risk factors* and *family characteristics. Risk factors* include: economic vulnerability, health/social problems, disaster displacement, migration. Family characteristics can be described as situationally distressed, new homeless, chronically mentally ill. Youth Homelessness

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[197] U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Office of Community Planning and Development (2016, November). The 2016 Annual Homeless Report (AHAR) to Congress. Part 1: Point-in-Time Estimate of Homelessness, [Electronic version] 1-3. Retrieved August 22, 2017 from http://bit.ly/2g0itdv

constitutes a further important category – analyzed, as well, through diverse lenses, variously highlighting the reasons for leaving home, personal roles and traits.[198]

Addressing the homelessness experienced by these different populations calls for diverse responses meeting the special needs presented by the varied groups, as noted below – yet a constant across the differences is the need for affordable or subsidized housing, employment (and training or retraining, when needed), and often affordable or subsidized child care.

Shelters are not always accessible to the homeless. The shelters may have reached capacity; they may have specific restrictions on admission of individuals with alcohol or opioid addictions or with mental health problems. Shelters may refuse admission to lesbian, gay, bisexual or admit transgender people.[199] Individuals housed temporarily in shelters may face unpleasant conditions within the shelter -- little privacy, assaults, robbery – and may choose to remain on the street or in encampments rather than enter a shelter.[200]

But living on the streets brings a host of problems of their own, including the threat of incarceration. Criminalization of homelessness, a growing phenomenon, has multiple consequences for individuals and communities. A 2016 report by The National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty, surveying the ordinances of 187 cities for the last 10 years, found an increase in the criminalization of the homeless during this period. Homeless individuals jailed for such actions as camping or sleeping in public places, living in vehicles, panhandling, or loitering find themselves with criminal records, making it even more difficult for them to access housing (public or privately owned), and employment. They may well face abuse in prison, be recruited into criminal activity upon release from incarceration and be unable to provide assistance to family members or neighbors depending on them. The report finds that since 2006, citywide bans on loitering, loafing, and vagrancy increased by 88%, on sitting and lying down in certain public places increased by 52%, on panhandling grew by 43%, on camping increased by 69%, and on sleeping in public increased by 31%.[201]

The challenges faced by many homeless families were explored in a national study published in 2015 conducted by the Massachusetts-based Bassuk Center on Homeless and Vulnerable Children and Youth. Surveying providers who work with homeless families, the researchers found that "[m]ost of the 907 providers who completed the survey agreed that to move into and remain in stable housing,

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[198] National Health Care for the Homeless Council. (January 2013). *Typologies of Homelessness: Moving Beyond a Homogeneous Perspective. In Focus: A Quarterly Research Review of the National HCH Council*. [Electronic version []], 1-3. Retrieved August 22, 2017, from: www.nhchc.org.

[199] Rooney, C., Durso, E., & Gruberg, S. (January 7, 2016). *Transgender Women Seeking Access to Homeless Shelters.*[Electronic version] A report by the Center for American Progress and the Equal Rights Center. Retrieved August 22, 2017, from https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/lgbt/reports/2016/01/07/128323/discrimination-against-transgender-women-seeking-access-to-homeless

[200] Schapiro, A. (host). (2012, December 6*) Why Some Homeless Choose the Streets Over Shelters*. Talk of the Nation (radio broadcast), Washington, DC: National Public Radio. Retrieved August 23, 2017 from http://www.npr.org/2012/12/06/166666265/why-some-homeless-choose-the-streets-over-shelters

[201] National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty (2016). *Housing Not Handcuffs: Ending the Criminalization of Homelessness in U.S. Cities.* [Electronic version] 9-10. Retrieved August 21, 2017, from http://bit.ly/2fTafUJ

homeless families needed services in addition to housing." The reason for such services, the providers stated, was as a result of the trauma and mental health conditions prevalent among the homeless families. Trauma experienced by mothers has been found to be a common cause of homelessness, with mothers who have experienced physical and/or sexual abuse as children having post-trauma responses as adults.

More than 90 % of the providers recommended the following services for homeless families: services should start when families enter an emergency shelter and continue when they are permanently housed assessments of each family member are needed, assessments should focus on child well-being, education, job training, and income supports are necessary, and case management to help families secure housing and benefits is necessary.[202]

The situation of children in homeless families has received considerable attention from researchers. A June 2016 report by Civic Enterprises and Hart Research Associates, *Hidden in Plain Sight: Homeless Students in America's Public Schools,* details the scope of mental and physical health challenges homeless students face issues that are largely unseen and ineffectively addressed by school support services. The impact of homelessness on children will vary depending on the specific circumstances of their families (if they were, indeed, with at least one parent and/or siblings) – the causes of their homelessness, where (and if) they are being sheltered and the duration of their homelessness. The Civic Enterprises study does provide a powerful testament to the impact of the homeless experience on school age young people, however it expresses itself.[203]

44 interviews were conducted with currently homeless youth in cities and in rural areas, and 158 previously homeless 18 to 24-year-olds were also surveyed. Homelessness took a severe toll on the mental and physical health of the young people who were currently or had previously been homeless. Some 82 % of formerly homeless youth indicated that being homeless had a big impact on their life overall. More specifically:

- 72 % of the respondents noted the impact of homelessness on their ability to feel safe and secure;
- 71 % indicated the impact of homelessness on their mental and emotional health and 62 % on their physical health;
- 69 % cited the impact on their self-confidence.
- 68 % stated that homelessness made it difficult to maintain relationships with their own families;
- and 57 % cited the same challenge with friends.

What, then, in the face of the many challenges and obstacles to support for the homeless, are some promising developments on the road to combatting homelessness?

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[202] Bassuk, E., DeCandia, C., Richard, M. (2015). *Services Matter: How Housing & Services Can End Family Homelessness.*[Electronic version], 16-17, A report by the Bassuk Center on Homeless and Vulnerable Children and Vulnerable Youth. Retrieved August 22, 2017, from http://bit.ly/1kwChFW

[203] Ingram. E., Bridgeland, J., Reed, B., & Atwell, M. *Hidden in Plain Sight: Homeless Students in America's Public Schools.* (2016). {Electronic version), 5-6. A report by Civic Enterprises and Hart Research Associates. Retrieved August 22, 2017, from http://civicenterprises.net/MediaLibrary/Docs/HiddeninPlainSightOfficial.pdf

Government agencies, social service organizations, faith-based institutions and other entities active in working with the homeless are increasingly turning toward those they serve to give voice to their needs and advocate for what best supports them in exiting homelessness. Homeless and formerly homeless men, women and youth are now specifically sought to serve on governing bodies and advisory councils of provider organizations.

Providers of services to homeless individuals and families have increasingly moved to a model of *Housing First* – looking to minimize the stay of the homeless in shelters and in other transitional arrangements so as to reduce the impact of continuing dislocation and instability. To this end, *Rapid Rehousing* is an important tool, providing diverse forms of assistance to enable individuals or families to access housing as rapidly as possible so that recipients can focus on securing employment, address health concerns and meet other pressing concerns. In a break with previous practice, some providers are no longer requiring individuals to be free of their addictions prior to being admitted to housing. For those individuals with particular vulnerabilities, be it alcohol or opioid addiction or significant mental health needs, *Permanent Supportive Housing* is now viewed as optimal. Through this approach, case management through a social worker, addiction counselor and other specialists is provided, while simultaneously meeting the individual's pressing housing needs. Resource constraints, however, significantly limit the availability of this opportunity.[204]

A study by a team of researchers affiliated with the University of Pennsylvania, published in 2014, demonstrating the impact of increasing investment in Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) on decreasing chronic homelessness has been widely viewed as providing definitive evidence of the efficacy of this approach. Using data from 372 Continua of Care areas between 2007 and 2012, the research team found a statistically significant reduction in the number of chronically homeless people as communities invest in additional PSH units. This relationship is more pronounced over time. When controlling for shelter availability and community characteristics, the study predicted that an increase of one PSH unit per 10,000 adults can be associated with a 2% decrease in the unsheltered rate of chronically homeless people in the initial year, with a stronger effect on decreasing homelessness over time. While the study only examined individuals, not chronically homeless families, it has served as a national catalyst in expanding Permanent Supportive Housing.[205]

More encompassing support for the homeless has been coming, as well, from the U.S Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH) -- which brings together the heads of 19 federal agencies each of which has programs that in some way addresses homelessness. In December 2015, the Council determined that going forward, it would focus its efforts on better coordinating homeless services systems with mainstream programs, such as early childhood, education, and welfare programs, to meet the broad array of housing and service needs of families experiencing homelessness. Toward this end, USICH and its member agencies agreed to increase mainstream programs awareness and understanding of families

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[204] Giraud, J (2017, July 19) *Host Homes, E-Mentoring: How the UK is Helping Homeless LGBTQ Youth Rebuild Their Lives*. Retrieved August 23, 2017, from http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/host-homes-e-mentoring-how-the-uk-is-helping-homeless_us_596e2574e4b05561da5a5ac8

[205] Bryne, T., Fargo, J., Montgomery, A., Munley, E., & Culhane, D. (2014). *The Relationship between Community Investment in Permanent Supportive Housing and Chronic Homelessness* [Electronic version]. Social Service Review 88.2, 234-263, Retrieved August 21, 2017, from http://works.bepress.com/dennis_culhane/D140

experiencing homelessness, provide federal guidance and technical assistance to improve coordination between homelessness assistance and mainstream programs, and ensure local communities have the capacity to provide the appropriate level of services tailored to meet the specific needs of families.[206]

Public libraries are increasingly aiding homeless patrons, as well as special services geared to their needs. In 2008, the San Francisco Public Library became the nation's first public library to hire its own, full-time psychiatric social worker. The library then went on to hire four health and safety advocates, formerly homeless themselves, who reach out to homeless patrons in the library and distribute information on where to find shelter, showers and hot meals. The library also organizes a resource fair that it hosts in partnership with Project Homeless Connect.

Public libraries in other cities, including San José, Madison, Philadelphia, and Salt Lake City, also have social workers in-house, often helping patrons find housing and jobs and apply for food stamps, as well as providing more general support. Some libraries, such as the Atlanta-Fulton Public Library allow patrons to use a shelter address when applying for a library card. The Baltimore County (MD) Public Library in cooperation with the Baltimore County Communities for the Homeless, through its Street Card provides information on employment, food and emergency assistance, health, financial support, legal issues, and shelter. Information is available in print and online. A number of public libraries such as the Denver (CO) Public library and the Queens (NY) Pubic Library provide outreach services to homeless shelters, offering technology training, job interviewing techniques schedule and in the case of the Traverse (MI) Area Library District an on-site book group.[207]

The American Library Association, the field's premier professional organization, has been addressing the special needs of homeless library patrons and has published a toolkit "*Extending Our Reach: Reducing Homelessness through Library Engagement.*" This resource is meant to enhance librarians' abilities to advise homeless library users on the diverse array of services available to them, such as rental assistance, help applying for government benefits, and health programs.[208]

Innovative programs have developed across the U.S. (and internationally, as well) combining earning opportunities for the currently or formerly homeless, along with education and training programs, often supplemented by an array of cultural events. In Washington, DC, *Street Sense*, a twice-monthly newspaper –often termed a "street paper" -- provides both economic opportunities for vendors who sell the newspaper, as well as opportunities to serve as writers, editors and artists for the paper. In addition, *Street Sense* provides literacy training, writing workshops, computer training and courses in wellness for the vendors of is papers. The organization's Digital Hope program teaches students a core competency in a digital area with a certificate and client based project work to help build their profile and

[206] Hayes, J. (1/04/2016), *Council Adopts Additional Strategies to Advance Progress on Preventing & Ending Family Homelessness.* Newsletter*,* U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness. Retrieved August 22, 2017, from https://www.usich.gov/news/council-meeting-update-december-2015?utm_source=January+7+News+from+USICH&utm_campaign=Jan+7+News+from+USICH&utm_medium=email

[207] Ruhlmann, E.(2014, November 24), *A Home to the Homeless.* American Libraries Magazine. Retrieved August 22, 2017, from https://americanlibrariesmagazine.org/2014/11/24/a-home-to-the-homeless

[208] American Library Association, Office of Literacy and Outreach Services (2012). *Extending Our Reach: Reducing Homelessness Through Library Engagement.* {Electronic version], 6. Retrieved August 22, 2017, from http://www.ala.org/aboutala/offices/extending-our-reach-reducing-homelessness-through-library-engagement

work experience. The areas of digital focus are based on top skills demanded in the current and future job market such as online marketing and web development.[209]

Papers like Street Sense, focusing on homelessness, and poverty, more generally, are published across the United States in many of America's major cities – Philadelphia, Los Angeles, Chicago, and Detroit all have street papers, as do Oklahoma City, Denver, Charlotte and Toledo. The exact number of the street papers is hard to pin down, as papers do come and go. Estimates have gone as high as 48 (Personal Communication, M. Hustings, 2017); 23 street papers based in the US are members of the International Network of Street Papers (described below) – with other papers active in their communities but not members of the network.

Street papers are published internationally in 35 countries and in more than 600 town and cities. Some 110 street papers are members of a global association – the International Network of Street Papers. Indeed, there is an annual Global Street Paper Summit– in 2017, it took place in Manchester, UK from August 22-24. The INSP, with its headquarters in Glasgow, Scotland, supports new street papers to help them get started and through a team of 119 volunteer translators who work in 24 languages, provides international content on homelessness and poverty issues to its member newsletters across the world. For street papers to become members of the Network, they must meet a number of criteria. For example, "they must empower vendors and marginalized people to help themselves and re-integrate into society" and that "any profit made: must be reinvested back into the street paper and or associated projects that work for the benefit of the vendors and marginalized people."[210]

An initiative with a broader reach and the potential to significantly affect the provision of affordable housing for the homeless and those at risk of homelessness due to unaffordable rents for decent housing is the movement toward the development of community land trusts (CLTs).

Picture the Homeless, a New York City-based organization advocating on behalf of the homeless, has played a leading role in promoting the development of (CLTs) to meet the housing needs of homeless individuals and families. Picture the Homeless defines a CLT as "a nonprofit corporation that develops and stewards affordable housing, community gardens, civic buildings, commercial spaces and other community assets on behalf of a community. CLTs balance the needs of individuals to access land and maintain security of tenure with a community's need to maintain affordability, economic diversity and local access to essential services." An activist with Picture the Homeless, Althea York, observed, "This will help curb spiraling rent increases that tenants face every year, because CLTs won't have rent increases every year like we see in NYC. The communities will have more control over land, and landlords won't profit from us anymore."

A promising development, worth monitoring and potentially replicating in other localities, was the allocation by New York City's Department of Housing Preservation and Development in July 2017 of $1.65 million to expand permanently affordable housing via community land trusts. Two of the groups

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[209] Street Sense. Retrieved August 22, 2017 from http://www.streetsense.org/

[210] International Network of Street Papers. Retrieved August 22, 2017, from https://insp.ngo/what-we-do

receiving funding were co-founded by Picture the Homeless: the New York City Community Land Initiative and the East Harlem/Barrio Community Land Trust.[211]

Through a broad array of local, state, regional, national and international networks researchers, advocates for the homeless (with an increasing number of homeless and formerly homeless in their ranks), service providers, philanthropists and government officials, are increasingly sharing information, research findings, news of best practices and fast-breaking developments. Prominent US national non-governmental organizations active in this arena include: The National Alliance to End Homelessness, The National Coalition on the Homeless, the Low-Income Housing Coalition, and the National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty.

International exchanges, such as the Transatlantic Practices Exchange Program, sponsored by the U.S. Oak Foundation, seed new program ideas for U.S. homeless advocates and service providers. Recent exchange participants learned of a British pilot e- mentoring program, InterAKT, for LGBTQ youth which enables young people in need of services to go online and choose a trained mentor from a list of Website profiles. They can then contact mentors electronically or by phone and find guidance in locating food, temporary shelter and clothing (Giraud, 2017). These international linkages, catalyzed by information technologies, as well as through conferences and exchanges, provide promising opportunities for diffusion of innovative approaches and strategies for combating homelessness.

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[211] Picture the Homeless, *The Power of "Good Ideas & Great Organizing" BIG VICTORY for Community Land Trusts* (2017). Retrieved on August 22, 2017, from http://picturethehomeless.org/major-victory-community-land-trusts