



## Three Large Ohio Cities among Nation's Poorest: Grim Census Data Point to Importance of Balanced Approach to Closing State Budget Shortfall

By Emily Campbell, Policy and Planning Associate  
September 29, 2009

(Cleveland, OH) In Ohio's cities, the ranks of those living in poverty are growing, according to Census Bureau data released today. Nearly one-third of Cleveland residents eke out an existence below the poverty line, making it the second poorest city in America. The poverty threshold for a family of four is \$22,050.

Ohio has the dubious distinction of being the only state with more than one large city among the 10 poorest in America. Cincinnati ranked seventh with 25.1 percent in poverty, and Toledo ranked eighth with a poverty rate of 24.7 percent.

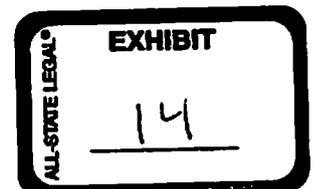
A total of 75 American cities have populations greater than 250,000 residents. Columbus rounds out Ohio's large cities with a poverty rate of 20.1 percent, ranking 22<sup>nd</sup> overall.

Census data also showed that Ohioans were more likely to be poor in 2008 than when the last recession bottomed out in 2001.

The overall poverty rate rose from 13.1 percent in 2007 to 13.4 percent in 2008, and remained above its 2001 level of 11.1 percent. Roughly one in 10 families and one in six children in Ohio lived in poverty in 2008. Figures for Ohio's major urban areas were much worse.

These figures show that a growing share of Ohio families is struggling to make ends meet. Yet, our state's policymakers continue to cut critical services like preschool for low-income children, mental health services, and financial aid for low-income college students just when Ohio's families need them most.

Ten Poorest Cities in America, 2008	
	Poverty Rate
Detroit, MI	33.3 %
<b>Cleveland, OH</b>	<b>30.5 %</b>
Buffalo, NY	30.3 %
Newark, NJ	26.1 %
Miami, FL	25.6 %
Fresno, CA	25.5 %
<b>Cincinnati, OH</b>	<b>25.1 %</b>
<b>Toledo, OH</b>	<b>24.7 %</b>
El Paso, TX	24.3 %
Philadelphia, PA	24.1 %



In short, today's numbers are a reminder that poverty affected a substantial share of Ohio's individuals, families, and children, even before the worst part of the recession hit. Ohio's policymakers will continue to face tough decisions about how to balance the state's budget as mid-year gaps emerge and federal recovery dollars run out. They should avoid making cuts to programs that are critical to the well-being of struggling families and should look to additional revenue-generating measures to help fill shortfalls.

*The Center for Community Solutions is a private, independent, nonprofit organization focused on policy and system reform. It provides strategic leadership to improve targeted health, social, and economic conditions. Established in 1913, it is a United Way agency.*

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## Detroit is poorest big city in U.S.

BY MEGHA SATYANARAYANA and KRISTI TANNER  
FREE PRESS STAFF WRITERS

Detroit is the poorest large city in the country, according to the 2007 U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey, released Tuesday.

The number of poor people in the city grew slightly, from 32.5% in 2006 to 33.8% in 2007. Detroit was compared with other cities of 250,000 or more.

But the city was not the only place that grew poorer. Michigan was the only state in the nation to see any increase in its poverty level, from 13.5% in 2006 to 14% in 2007. The increase means there are now 1,377,000 people living below the federal poverty line, which is defined as \$20,650 annually for a household of four.

• [Click here to see a chart measuring poverty in Michigan](#)

Other findings reinforce the stark difference between urban and suburban life in Michigan. For example, West Bloomfield's median household income of \$98,832 ranked it among the highest in the country for communities with populations of 65,000 to 250,000. Flint's median household income ranked among the bottom 10 at \$26,143, barely above poverty. Troy's poverty rate was

among the lowest in the nation at 3.1%.

The American Community Survey is a yearly survey that provides economic, social, demographic and housing information for the nation. The data can be found at [www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov).

The survey also showed that almost one in five Michigan children lives in poverty, but in Detroit, Pontiac and Flint, nearly half the children are poor.

• [Click here to see a chart measuring kids living in poverty.](#)

Michigan also bucked the national trend in median income, dropping 1.2% from 2006. Overall, the United States saw a slight boost in income at 1.9%. On the local front, Macomb County saw a slight increase in median income, while Wayne and Oakland counties fell slightly.

This is a call for help, said Sharon Parks, the Michigan League for Human Services president and chief executive officer.

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"We know that many families are struggling harder and harder just to get by, and more vulnerable people are turning to public services for help," Parks said.

She and officials from other community organizations said the Earned Income Tax Credit

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needs to be strengthened to help families deal with rising costs and lower earnings.

The fault lies with high unemployment, despite higher earnings by those who are working, said Ken Darga, state demographer.

In response to the survey, Republican presidential hopeful John McCain stressed his economic plan.

"To improve the lot of working families, we need to dedicate ourselves to the path of economic growth," McCain said in a statement.

"My economic plan is designed from the ground up to create jobs, opportunity and economic growth by keeping taxes low, providing tax relief for American families, fighting rising energy prices and encouraging innovation."

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### Measuring poverty in Michi

The number of individuals living below po increased slightly from 2006. The povert as \$20,650 or less in annual income for a

	Median household income in 2007	Percent change from '06 to '07*
United States	\$50,740	1.9%
<b>MICHIGAN</b>	<b>\$47,950</b>	<b>-1.2%</b>

BY COUNTY		
Macomb	\$55,101	0.2%
Oakland	\$66,483	-2.8%
Wayne	\$42,470	-1.2%

BY COMMUNITY		
Ann Arbor	\$53,587	3.9%
Canton	\$79,494	-0.7%
Clinton Township	\$49,665	3.0%
Dearborn	\$49,044	1.4%
<b>DETROIT</b>	<b>\$28,097</b>	<b>-3.7%</b>
Farmington Hills	\$73,026	8.1%
Flint	\$26,143	-8.9%

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YES, at least she's dressed!

NO, I have some rules!

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### Kids living in poverty

The figures shown are for people younger '07 is defined as \$20,650 or less in annual

Number of children below poverty in 2007

#### BY COUNTY

Macomb	20,898
Oakland	33,882
Wayne	164,483

#### BY COMMUNITY

Ann Arbor	1,324
Canton	2,373
Clinton Township	3,950
Dearborn	11,126
<b>DETROIT</b>	<b>110,703</b>
Farmington Hills	2,371
Flint	13,737
Grand Rapids	16,758
Kalamazoo	5,100

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