

WELFARE 101:

busting myths about welfare



myth:

Welfare recipients only live in poor, urban areas, not the suburbs or wealthier areas of the state.

fact:

Michigan residents are struggling to put food on their tables and pay their bills in communities statewide. The Michigan Department of Human Services has seen an unprecedented increase in the number of families seeking temporary assistance, including in Michigan's more affluent suburban communities.

Today, it is more likely than ever before that your relative, friend or neighbor is receiving benefits because that pain is being felt everywhere.

Here is a comparison of city-suburb benefit recipients from July 2008 to September 2010:

| County | City | Medicaid Recipients | | | Food Assistance Recipients | | |
|----------------|---------------|---------------------|--------|-------|----------------------------|--------|-------|
| | | Jul-08 | Sep-10 | % Chg | Jul-08 | Sep-10 | % Chg |
| Allegan | Plainwell | 1,944 | 2,504 | 28.8% | 1,490 | 2,164 | 45.2% |
| Alpena | Alpena | 4,231 | 5,075 | 19.9% | 3,831 | 4,834 | 26.2% |
| Alpena | Ossineke | 381 | 431 | 13.1% | 287 | 343 | 19.5% |
| Antrim | Elk Rapids | 217 | 276 | 27.2% | 149 | 218 | 46.3% |
| Berrien | Benton Harbor | 10,128 | 13,882 | 37.1% | 11,752 | 13,789 | 17.3% |
| Berrien | Stevensville | 709 | 981 | 38.4% | 579 | 793 | 37.0% |
| Berrien | St. Joseph | 1,276 | 1,741 | 36.4% | 738 | 1,207 | 63.6% |
| Calhoun | Albion | 2,656 | 3,778 | 42.2% | 2,951 | 3,636 | 23.2% |
| Calhoun | Battle Creek | 16,577 | 23,493 | 41.7% | 18,421 | 22,084 | 19.9% |
| Calhoun | Marshall | 1,419 | 1,954 | 37.7% | 1,160 | 1,667 | 43.7% |
| Charlevoix | Charlevoix | 1,046 | 1,324 | 26.6% | 669 | 1,049 | 56.8% |
| Crawford | Grayling | 1,824 | 2,400 | 31.6% | 1,556 | 2,149 | 38.1% |
| Delta | Escanaba | 3,198 | 4,016 | 25.6% | 2,700 | 3,678 | 36.2% |
| Delta | Gladstone | 1,264 | 1,616 | 27.8% | 890 | 1,343 | 50.9% |
| Dickinson | Iron Mountain | 2,722 | 3,234 | 18.8% | 1,741 | 2,489 | 43.0% |
| Eaton | Grand Ledge | 1,307 | 1,701 | 30.1% | 1,059 | 1,585 | 49.7% |
| Emmet | Petoskey | 2,147 | 2,661 | 23.9% | 1,559 | 2,258 | 44.8% |
| Genesee | Flint | 43,682 | 62,173 | 42.3% | 56,282 | 65,502 | 16.4% |
| Genesee | Flushing | 2,213 | 3,242 | 46.5% | 1,741 | 2,777 | 59.5% |
| Genesee | Grand Blanc | 3,218 | 5,323 | 65.4% | 2,457 | 4,566 | 85.8% |
| Grand Traverse | Interlochen | 750 | 1,081 | 44.1% | 612 | 926 | 51.3% |
| Grand Traverse | Kingsley | 1,161 | 1,518 | 30.7% | 893 | 1,212 | 35.7% |
| Grand Traverse | Traverse City | 8,091 | 9,391 | 16.1% | 6,226 | 8,151 | 30.9% |
| Ingham | Lansing | 29,404 | 38,441 | 30.7% | 31,186 | 38,730 | 24.2% |

Defining the scope and effectiveness of public assistance is difficult when people are unfamiliar with programs and services. Misunderstandings lead to myths; we prefer to discuss the facts.

| County | City | Medicaid Recipients | | | Food Assistance Recipients | | |
|-------------|------------------|---------------------|---------|-------|----------------------------|---------|--------|
| | | Jul-08 | Sep-10 | % Chg | Jul-08 | Sep-10 | % Chg |
| Ingham | Okemos | 1,056 | 1,462 | 38.4% | 836 | 1,364 | 63.2% |
| Jackson | Brooklyn | 846 | 1,190 | 40.7% | 657 | 1,035 | 57.5% |
| Jackson | Jackson | 16,681 | 23,194 | 39.0% | 16,735 | 22,433 | 34.0% |
| Jackson | Spring Arbor | 261 | 343 | 31.4% | 176 | 265 | 50.6% |
| Kalamazoo | Kalamazoo | 23,876 | 31,880 | 33.5% | 26,305 | 34,131 | 29.8% |
| Kalamazoo | Portage | 4,191 | 5,906 | 40.9% | 3,815 | 5,423 | 42.1% |
| Kent | Grand Rapids | 56,782 | 78,984 | 39.1% | 54,802 | 70,905 | 29.4% |
| Kent | Grandville | 1,974 | 3,043 | 54.2% | 1,392 | 2,326 | 67.1% |
| Kent | Rockford | 1,992 | 3,111 | 56.2% | 1,434 | 2,360 | 64.6% |
| Leelanau | Suttons Bay | 521 | 680 | 30.5% | 383 | 516 | 34.7% |
| Macomb | St. Clair Shores | 4,142 | 6,373 | 53.9% | 3,139 | 5,913 | 88.4% |
| Macomb | Sterling Heights | 15,510 | 21,731 | 40.1% | 10,917 | 18,455 | 69.0% |
| Macomb | Warren | 20,047 | 30,140 | 50.3% | 18,415 | 30,065 | 63.3% |
| Marquette | Ishpeming | 1,738 | 2,083 | 19.9% | 1,246 | 1,655 | 32.8% |
| Marquette | Marquette | 2,866 | 3,823 | 33.4% | 2,511 | 4,348 | 73.2% |
| Marquette | Negaunee | 846 | 1,065 | 25.9% | 566 | 745 | 31.6% |
| Montmorency | Hillman | 806 | 974 | 20.8% | 583 | 808 | 38.6% |
| Montmorency | Atlanta | 733 | 840 | 14.6% | 652 | 798 | 22.4% |
| Muskegon | Fruitport | 680 | 894 | 31.5% | 604 | 813 | 34.6% |
| Muskegon | Montague | 832 | 1,145 | 37.6% | 813 | 1,037 | 27.6% |
| Muskegon | Muskegon | 24,139 | 36,219 | 50.0% | 29,743 | 35,917 | 20.8% |
| Muskegon | Whitehall | 1,033 | 1,459 | 41.2% | 934 | 1,184 | 26.8% |
| Oakland | Bloomfield Hills | 202 | 340 | 68.3% | 89 | 235 | 164.0% |
| Oakland | Farmington | 5,405 | 7,844 | 45.1% | 3,402 | 6,316 | 85.7% |
| Oakland | Pontiac | 17,669 | 24,163 | 36.8% | 19,477 | 23,566 | 21.0% |
| Oscoda | Mio | 967 | 1,151 | 19.0% | 953 | 1,147 | 20.4% |
| Otsego | Gaylord | 2,966 | 4,452 | 50.1% | 2,470 | 3,882 | 57.2% |
| Ottawa | Grand Haven | 2,403 | 3,443 | 43.3% | 1,731 | 3,012 | 74.0% |
| Ottawa | Holland | 1,016 | 15,356 | 39.4% | 9,116 | 12,752 | 39.9% |
| Ottawa | Zeeland | 1,774 | 2,580 | 45.4% | 1,006 | 1,799 | 78.8% |
| Saginaw | Birch Run | 994 | 1,329 | 33.7% | 792 | 1,234 | 55.8% |
| Saginaw | Frankenmuth | 389 | 495 | 27.2% | 202 | 300 | 48.5% |
| Saginaw | Saginaw | 27,995 | 38,174 | 36.4% | 31,409 | 37,703 | 20.0% |
| Saint Clair | Marysville | 740 | 1,110 | 50.0% | 616 | 958 | 55.5% |
| Saint Clair | Port Huron | 9,892 | 13,172 | 33.2% | 10,959 | 12,829 | 17.1% |
| Saint Clair | Saint Clair | 969 | 1,391 | 43.6% | 751 | 1,178 | 56.9% |
| Schoolcraft | Manistique | 1,127 | 1,323 | 17.4% | 876 | 1,105 | 26.1% |
| Washtenaw | Ann Arbor | 7,823 | 10,675 | 36.5% | 6,670 | 10,506 | 57.5% |
| Washtenaw | Saline | 745 | 1,229 | 65.0% | 441 | 868 | 96.8% |
| Washtenaw | Ypsilanti | 4,509 | 20,882 | 43.9% | 15,624 | 21,551 | 37.9% |
| Wayne | Dearborn | 19,247 | 27,640 | 43.6% | 15,843 | 23,868 | 50.7% |
| Wayne | Dearborn Hts. | 8,079 | 13,204 | 63.4% | 6,114 | 11,208 | 83.3% |
| Wayne | Detroit | 199,106 | 287,974 | 44.6% | 254,326 | 297,216 | 16.9% |
| Wayne | Livonia | 4,417 | 7,062 | 59.9% | 2,447 | 5,021 | 105.2% |
| Totals | | 661,551 | 933,764 | 41.1% | 712,901 | 907,900 | 27.4% |