



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

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(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 22nd 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 %
Cleveland, OH	30.5 %
Buffalo, NY	30.3 %
Newark, NJ	26.1 %
Miami, FL	25.6 %
Fresno, CA	25.5 %
Cincinnati, OH	25.1 %
Toledo, OH	24.7 %
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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