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Community Solutions' Legislative Fact Sheets Show Concerning Statistics Before Pandemic Started

*Disparities in Food Insecurity, Housing and Internet Access Even **Before** the Pandemic*

CLEVELAND, OH – The Center for Community Solutions' newly-released legislative fact sheets look at health, social and economic conditions across Ohio, but since the most recent data available is from 2019, the fact sheets serve as a concerning baseline – it's safe to assume conditions are now worse.

For example, in order to qualify for foodbank assistance, Ohioans must have incomes below 200 percent of the federal poverty line – which is about \$43,000 for a family of three. In 2019, 3.5 million Ohioans qualified and that was well before COVID-19 hit.

“Before the pandemic, nearly 1-in-3 Ohioans were eligible for foodbank assistance, and in some districts that number was nearly double,” said Tara Britton, Community Solutions' Director of Public Policy. “We hope that pulling together this data from before the pandemic, and combining it with the reality we see today of historically long foodbank lines around the state, will help policymakers make thoughtful and informed decisions for all Ohioans.”

Affordable housing and access to the internet were two other indicators that stood out to our researchers.

The data shows, before the pandemic nearly 1 in 5, or 18 percent, of Ohioans did not have internet access. This baseline is concerning, since the pandemic has made the internet even more of a lifeline.

Housing affordability is another concern, especially as households that spent a high percentage of their income on rent, mortgage and utilities are more vulnerable to lose that housing if there's a financial emergency. Nearly half of all Ohio renters had housing costs that were more than 30 percent of their incomes.

“An emergency like a job loss or a health problem can completely turn someone's life upside down,” said Taneisha Fair, a research assistant at Community Solutions who compiled the data. “We know that the situation is likely much worse now that so many families are struggling with sometimes several of these emergency situations at once.”

To speak with Warren about these fact sheets as a resource now and into the future please call or text Dani Carlson at 216-282-4583 or email at dcarlson@communitysolutions.com.

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