
Poverty Learning Center



RESOURCES ON POVERTY

WELCOME

Poverty is a common thread across the lives of the children and families involved in the child welfare system. Its impact can have deep and long lasting impact and consequences. In most states, neglect cannot be established if failure to provide for a child's needs is due only to poverty. Poverty may still contribute to neglect indirectly. For example, a poor family may lack necessary resources to buffer other risks.

Did you know?:

- Children from poor households are also more likely to suffer from chronic health conditions, including asthma, diabetes, hearing, vision and speech delays.
- Low-income families are at a disproportionately high risk of child maltreatment, and living in poverty is associated with poor parenting and child outcomes.
- Income instability is shown to be negatively associated with school engagement in adolescents and positively associated with suspensions and expulsions.
- Poverty is seen as a significant obstacle for families involved with the child welfare system.

The **Poverty Learning Center** is tool to support you in exploring the relationship between poverty and child abuse and neglect, and the resources available to the children and families we serve. Please add it to your advocacy toolkit.

Included are links to academic institutions and organizations working in the field of poverty, books, documentaries, and podcasts. While this is not a comprehensive list, we have thoughtfully vetted these resources.

Thank you for your willingness to expand your knowledge, particularly about topics that may affect the children and families we serve. This resource will be updated periodically.

ACADEMIC INSTITUTIONS AND ORGANIZATIONS

[Ascend at the Aspen Institute](#)

Ascend at the Aspen Institute is the national hub for breakthrough ideas and collaborations that move children and the adults in their lives to educational success, economic security, and health and well-being. We take a two-generation approach to our work, focusing on children and the adults in their lives together, and we bring a gender and racial equity lens to our analysis. In everything we do, we draw on the expertise and experience of



families. [Learn more.](#)

[Center on Poverty & Social Policy at Columbia University](#)

The Center on Poverty and Social Policy at Columbia School of Social work produces cutting-edge research to advance our understanding of poverty and the role of social policy in reducing poverty and promoting opportunity, economic security, and individual and family wellbeing in New York City and the United States. [Learn more.](#)

[Child Welfare Information Gateway](#)

A service of the [Children's Bureau](#), Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, the Child Welfare Information Gateway provides access to print and electronic publications, websites, databases, and online learning tools for improving child welfare practice, including resources that can be shared with families. [Learn more.](#)

[Eviction Lab](#)

The Eviction Lab at Princeton University has built the first nationwide database of evictions. Find out how many evictions happen in your community. Create custom maps, charts, and reports. Share facts with your neighbors and elected officials. [Learn more.](#)

[Georgetown Law Center on Poverty and Inequality](#)

The Georgetown Center on Poverty and Inequality's (GCPI) Economic Security & Opportunity Initiative's mission is to expand economic inclusion for all of the United States through rigorous research, analysis, and ambitious ideas to improve programs and policies. [Learn more.](#)

[Institute for Research on Poverty \(IRP\) at University of Wisconsin-Madison](#)

IRP is a nonpartisan research institution dedicated to producing and disseminating rigorous evidence to inform policies and programs to combat poverty, inequality, and their effects in the United States. We do this through the orchestration of a national [research](#), [training](#), and dissemination agenda (see our [resources](#) and [events](#) pages) grounded in extensive collaboration among researchers, policymakers, and practitioners. [Learn more.](#)

[Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion: Healthy People 2020](#)

Healthy People 2020 organizes the social determinants of health around five key domains: (1) Economic Stability, (2) Education, (3) Health and Health Care, (4) Neighborhood and Built Environment, and (5) Social and Community Context. [Learn more.](#)

[Poor People's Campaign: A National Call for Moral Revival](#)

The Poor People's Campaign: A National Call for Moral Revival has picked up this unfinished work. From Alaska to Arkansas, the Bronx to the border, people are coming together to confront the interlocking evils of systemic racism, poverty, ecological devastation, militarism and the war economy, and the distorted moral narrative of religious nationalism. We understand that as a nation we are at a critical juncture — that we need a movement



that will shift the moral narrative, impact policies and elections at every level of government, and build lasting power for poor and impacted people. [Learn more.](#)

Share Our Strength

Share Our Strength's mission is to end hunger and poverty in the U.S. and abroad. Through their campaigns, like No Kid Hungry, which will end childhood hunger in the United States, and Cooking Matters, which helps low-income families learn to shop and cook healthier. [Learn more.](#)

Stanford Center on Poverty & Inequality

The Stanford Center on Poverty and Inequality is committed to providing research, policy analysis, and training on issues of poverty and inequality. [Learn more.](#)

The Hamilton Project

Launched in 2006 as an economic policy initiative at the Brookings Institution, The Hamilton Project offers a strategic vision and produces innovative policy proposals on how to create a growing economy that benefits more Americans. The Project's strategy reflects a judgment that long-term prosperity is best achieved by fostering economic growth and broad participation in that growth, by enhancing individual economic security, and by embracing a role for effective government in making needed public investments. [Learn more.](#)

Urban Institute

The Urban Institute is a trusted source for unbiased, authoritative insights that inform consequential choices about **the well-being of people and places** in the United States. We are a nonprofit research organization that believes decisions shaped by facts, rather than ideology, have the power to improve public policy and practice, strengthen communities, and transform people's lives for the better. [Learn more.](#)

BLOGS

We invite you to learn from thought leaders in the field of poverty.

Annie E. Casey Foundation [Read here.](#)

Census Bureau: Poverty Blogs [Read here.](#)

Children in Poverty – Poverty and Its Effects on Children [Read here.](#)

Poverty Next Door, presented by Microsoft News in partnership with [Spotlight on Poverty and Opportunity](#)
[Read here.](#)

Urban Wire: The blog of the Urban Institute [Read here.](#)

BOOKS

***Broke in America: Seeing, Understanding, and Ending U.S. Poverty* by Joanne Samuel Goldblum and Colleen Shaddox**

Nearly 40 million people in the United States live below the poverty line—about \$26,200 for a family of four. Low-income families and individuals are everywhere, from cities to rural communities. While poverty is commonly seen as a personal failure, or a deficiency of character or knowledge, it's actually the result of bad policy. Public policy has purposefully erected barriers that deny access to basic needs, creating a society where people can easily become trapped—not because we lack the resources to lift them out, but because we are actively choosing not to. Poverty is close to inevitable for low-wage workers and their children, and a large percentage of these people, despite qualifying for it, do not receive government aid. Every chapter features action items readers can use to combat poverty—both nationwide and in our local communities, including the most effective public policies you can support and how to work hand-in-hand with representatives to affect change. [Learn more here.](#)

***Educated: A Memoir* by Tara Westover**

Born to survivalists in the mountains of Idaho, Tara Westover was seventeen the first time she set foot in a classroom. Her family was so isolated from mainstream society that there was no one to ensure the children received an education, and no one to intervene when one of Tara's older brothers became violent. When another brother got himself into college, Tara decided to try a new kind of life. Her quest for knowledge transformed her, taking her over oceans and across continents, to Harvard and to Cambridge University. Only then would she wonder if she'd traveled too far, if there was still a way home. [Learn more here.](#)

***Evicted: Poverty and Profit in the American City* by Matthew Desmond**

Eviction, which involves poverty and the loss of everything that a person once knew, has an enormous emotional impact on a person. When someone loses their home it is hard, if not impossible, to continue on living, because there are many things which inevitably follow and none of them are positive. The shelter, or home, is something that all of us want to have and something that we are ready to defend even with our lives. For this reason, when people lose their home, it creates a huge impact on them. Some of them recover and eventually find a job and a new life, but some people never recover and remain homeless. [Learn more here.](#)

***Maid: Hard Work, Low Pay, and a Mother's Will to Survive* by Stephanie Land**

At 28, Stephanie Land's plans of breaking free from the roots of her hometown in the Pacific Northwest to chase her dreams of attending a university and becoming a writer, were cut short when a summer fling turned into an unexpected pregnancy. She turned to housekeeping to make ends meet, and with a tenacious grip on her dream to provide her daughter the very best life possible, Stephanie worked days and took classes online to earn a college degree, and began to write relentlessly. Her compassionate, unflinching writing as a journalist gives voice to the "servant" worker, and those pursuing the American Dream from below the poverty line. *Maid* is Stephanie's story, but it's not her alone. It is an inspiring testament to the strength, determination, and ultimate triumph of the human spirit. [Learn more here.](#)

***Poorly Understood: What America Gets Wrong About Poverty* by Mark Robert Rank, Lawrence M. Eppard, and Heather E. Bullock**

Few topics have as many myths, stereotypes, and misperceptions surrounding them as that of poverty in America. The poor have been badly misunderstood since the beginnings of the country, with the rhetoric only ratcheting up in recent times. Mark Robert Rank, Lawrence M. Eppard, and Heather E. Bullock powerfully demonstrate that the realities of poverty are much different than the myths; indeed in many ways they are more disturbing. The idealized image of American society is one of abundant opportunities, with hard work being rewarded by economic prosperity. What if poverty is an experience that touches the majority of Americans? What if hard work does not necessarily lead to economic well-being? What if the reasons for poverty are largely beyond the control of individuals? And if all of the evidence necessary to disprove these myths has been readily available for years, why do they remain so stubbornly pervasive? [Learn more here.](#)

***The Lines Between Us: Two Families and a Quest to Cross Baltimore's Racial Divide* by Lawrence Lanahan**

Mark Lange and Nicole Smith have never met, but if they make the moves they are contemplating—Mark, a white suburbanite, to West Baltimore, and Nicole, a black woman from a poor city neighborhood, to a prosperous suburb—it will defy the way the Baltimore region has been programmed for a century. It is one region, but separate worlds. And it was designed to be that way. In this deeply reported, revelatory story, duPont Award-winning journalist Lawrence Lanahan chronicles how the region became so highly segregated and why its fault lines persist today. Mark and Nicole personify the enormous disparities in access to safe housing, educational opportunities, and decent jobs. As they eventually pack up their lives and change places, bold advocates and activists—in the courts and in the streets—struggle to figure out what it will take to save our cities and communities. This eye-opening account of how a city creates its black and white places, its rich and poor spaces, reveals that these problems are not intractable; but they are designed to endure until each of us—despite living in separate worlds—understands we have something at stake. [Learn more here.](#)

***\$2.00 A Day: Living on Almost Nothing in America* by Kathryn J. Edin and H. Luke Shaefer**

Description: Jessica Compton's family of four would have no income if she didn't donate plasma twice a week at her local donation center in Tennessee. Modonna Harris and her teenage daughter, Brianna, in Chicago, often have no food but spoiled milk on weekends. After two decades of brilliant research on American poverty, Kathryn Edin noticed something she hadn't seen before — households surviving on virtually no cash income. Edin teamed with Luke Shaefer, an expert on calculating incomes of the poor, to discover that the number of American families living on \$2.00 per person, per day, has skyrocketed to one and a half million households, including about three million children. Through this book's eye-opening analysis and many compelling profiles, moving and startling answers emerge. [Learn more here.](#)

DOCUMENTARIES

Growing Up Poor in America

The documentary, "Growing Up Poor in America", follows three children and their families in the battleground state of Ohio as the COVID-19 pandemic amplifies their struggle to stay afloat. [Watch here.](#)



Poor Kids

This 2017 documentary explores what poverty means to children in America through the stories of three families. Travel to the Quad Cities, a great American crossroads along the border of Iowa and Illinois, to explore the lives of children living in the suburbs of the nation's heartland and growing up poor. Told from the point of view of the children themselves, this one-hour documentary offers perspective on the impact of unemployment, foreclosure and financial distress as seen through the eyes of the children affected. [Watch here.](#)

Poverty in America

The documentary "Poverty in America" filmed in 2017 aims to analyze the real situation with affordable housing programs in the United States. [Watch here.](#)

Poverty, Politics and Profit

In a nine-month investigation that takes FRONTLINE and NPR from Dallas to Miami, NPR's Laura Sullivan and FRONTLINE's Rick Young find that just one in four households eligible for Section 8 assistance are getting it, and the nation's signature low-income housing construction program is costing more and producing less. The team investigates the inseparability of race and housing programs in America, tracing a legacy of segregation and discrimination that began more than 80 years ago. [Watch here.](#)

The Line: Poverty in America

Poverty in America is probably not what you think. Emmy Award-winning producer Linda Midgett shows us in this groundbreaking documentary a new face of poverty in America. About 50 million people in the United States live below the poverty line (In 2014- \$23,850 for a family of 4) and one in four American children lives in poverty. But what is poverty in America? What defines "the line" and how can the church and community make a difference? [Watch here.](#)

This guaranteed income experiment looks to reverse 'history of judgement' on people in poverty

Many cities across the country are beginning to experiment with the idea of a guaranteed income: an amount of money meant to address the basic needs of a person living in the U.S., distributed on top of regular income. In Hudson, NY, a small city of just over 6,000, a guaranteed income pilot has been running since October 2020. [Watch here.](#)

Two American Families

This 2013 documentary raises questions about the U.S. economy and the declining middle class through the stories of the Neumanns and the Stanleys, which began when the breadwinners in both families lost their well-paying factory jobs. For more than two decades, Correspondent Bill Moyers documented their struggle to keep their homes, their health insurance and their dignity. [Watch here.](#)

NATIONAL CASA/GAL ASSOCIATION BOOK CLUB

National CASA/GAL offers a quarterly book study for CASA/GAL staff and volunteer advocates. Beginning in



August, 2021 and going through much of 2022, book club participants will be invited to participate in multiple 6-week experiences. Throughout the period, participants will engage in independent reading on books related to poverty, dialogue with other group members in chats within the book club platform and in facilitated small group discussions, and be invited to events with the authors. [Register here.](#)

ONLINE POVERTY-RELATED ACTIVITIES AND SIMULATIONS

Confronting Poverty: Tools for Understanding Economic Hardship and Risk

[Confronting Poverty](#) provides a set of tools for learning more about poverty and inequality in the United States. Join the hundreds of thousands of visitors from over 200 countries who have explored the website. We hope that you are able to use these tools to create a positive change in confronting and addressing poverty. [Visit here.](#)

Spent: Online Poverty Simulator

Spent is an online poverty simulation tool created by Urban Ministries of Durham to educate people about poverty and homelessness. It is an immersive online experience that challenges participants to survive poverty and see first-hand that homelessness is just a shortfall away. [Visit here.](#)

OTHER MEDIA

Chasing the Dream: Poverty and Opportunity in America

Chasing the Dream is a multi-platform project from The WNET Group in New York, reporting on poverty, jobs, and economic opportunity in America. **Chasing the Dream: Poverty and Opportunity in America** explores the human stories of poverty and showcases promising solutions. A few decades ago, if you had a job, you probably did not live in poverty. But today, full-time, well-paying manufacturing and blue-collar jobs that were once a ticket to upward mobility have disappeared, and income disparity is growing. Increasingly, people working full-time in low wage jobs are living in poverty, and today, more and more of those making minimum wage are adults trying to support families. Our goal is to better inform with facts that go beyond personal biases, media narratives, and presumptions about the American Dream. [Learn more.](#)

2021/2022 Prevention Resource Guide

The 2021/2022 Prevention Resource Guide recognizes that there are actions we can take as a society and within communities, organizations, and families to address the root causes of child abuse and neglect. The child abuse prevention guide seeks to highlight the innovative ways that communities around the country are doing purposeful prevention work to help children and families thrive. The [protective factors](#) have always been central to the Resource Guide. A protective factors approach focuses on positive ways to engage families by emphasizing their strengths, in addition to identifying areas where they have room to grow with support. Focusing on protective factors helps children, youth, and families build resilience and contributes to positive outcomes. [Learn more.](#)

Spotlight on Poverty and Opportunity: The Source for News, Ideas and Action

Spotlight on Poverty and Opportunity: The Source for News, Ideas and Action is a non-partisan initiative



that brings together diverse perspectives from the political, policy, advocacy and foundation communities to find genuine solutions to the economic hardship confronting millions of Americans. Through the ongoing exchange of ideas, research and data, **Spotlight** seeks to inform the policy debate about reducing poverty and increasing opportunity in the United States. [Learn more.](#)

TED TALKS

It's the challenge of our age: How do we end poverty? These TED Talks – from economists, philanthropists, activists – share ideas and results from around the world. [Learn more.](#)

PODCASTS

Breaking the Cycle of Poverty Through Employment with SEE Change magazine, featuring Maria Kim of Cara.

Since 1991, Chicago-based organization, [Cara](#), has been helping people experiencing poverty and homelessness move toward self-sufficiency by assisting them in finding jobs and opportunity. Over the course of conversation Maria highlights the challenges Cara and its social enterprises have endured over the years, particularly during the pandemic – and how their unique approach has helped them rise above. [Listen here.](#)

Busting Myths About Poverty: A Conversation with Mark Rank

Aaron Freiwald, Managing Partner of Freiwald Law and host of the weekly podcast, Good Law | Bad Law, is joined by author and professor, Mark Robert Rank, of Washington University in St. Louis, to discuss poverty, the myths surrounding economic inequality and myth perpetuation, the notion of hard work, and effective approaches to “fixing” our poverty problem. Aaron and Mark also discuss Professor Rank’s newest co-authored book on the topic, *Poorly Understood: What America Gets Wrong About Poverty*. [Listen here.](#)

Center for Poverty & Inequality Research Podcasts

This podcast series, produced by the Center for Poverty & Inequality Research at University of California-Davis, brings together experts in their fields to discuss new poverty research and public policy. [Listen here.](#)

Child Welfare Information Gateway Podcast Series

This podcast series, produced on behalf of the Children's Bureau, presents a series of interviews and group conversations intended to provide beneficial information for busy child welfare and social work professionals. The podcasts cover a wide range of topics and provide perspectives from communities served by child welfare agencies along with tips and stories from professionals about implementing new services and programs, working across agencies, and improving practice. [Listen here.](#)

Poverty, Homeless, Minimum Wage & Measurement by the University of Texas-Austin

This podcast discusses poverty, homelessness, the minimum wage, and measurement issues. [Listen here.](#)



The Poverty Research & Policy Podcast

The Poverty Research & Policy Podcast is produced by the University of Wisconsin-Madison's Institute for Research on Poverty (IRP) and features interviews with researchers about poverty, inequality, and policy in the United States. [Listen here.](#)

RESEARCH STUDIES & ARTICLES

Estimating the Economic Cost of Childhood Poverty in the US by Michael McLaughlin and Mark Rank
[Learn more here.](#)

2020 Kids Count Data Book: State Trends in Child Well-being [Learn more here.](#)

Recommendations to Increase Opportunity and Decrease Poverty in America by National Council of Young Leaders/Opportunity Youth United [Learn more here.](#)

From Paycheck to Pantry: Hunger in Working America [Learn more here.](#)

For any questions or comments, please email professionaldevelopment@nationalcasagal.org.