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Poverty on the Rise in Connecticut Over Decade, Census Data Show

City poverty, income, and uninsured estimates reported; fewer uninsured children; Connecticut Voices calls for maintaining state and federal supports

New Census data from the American Community Survey confirm that poverty has risen sharply over the decade due to the economic recession. In 2009, 9.4% of Connecticut residents (320,554) had incomes under the Federal Poverty Level, up from 7.3% in 2001. Among Connecticut children under age 18, 12.1% (96,893 children) lived in families with incomes under the Federal Poverty Level in 2009. (For a two-parent household with two children, the poverty level was \$21,756 in 2009.)

Poverty rates for residents of the city of Norwalk increased significantly between 2008 and 2009. The child poverty rate also significantly increased among residents of New London county between these years, and the poverty rate for Windham county residents decreased over this period.

Connecticut Voices for Children, a research-based think tank that analyzed the Census data, stated that poverty trends reflect the impact of the recession, which began in March 2008. While there was no statistically significant increase in statewide poverty rate between 2008 and 2009, Connecticut had already experienced the largest increase in poverty of any state between 2007 and 2008. There was a significant increase in poverty among all Connecticut residents between 2007 and 2009, rising from 7.9% to 9.4%.

In response to the findings, Connecticut Voices called upon state and federal policymakers to avoid state budget cuts that would worsen the impact of poverty and to maintain federal supports that CT Voices credited with helping to keep many families out of poverty.

“The worst thing we can do during a difficult recession is to undercut supports for Connecticut families,” said Jamey Bell, Executive Director at Connecticut Voices for Children. “We need a balanced approach to the state budget that includes new revenues to help support families when they need it most.”

Connecticut Voices argued that the impact of the recession would have been worse without the supports provided through the federal Recovery Act, including subsidized job placements, extended unemployment benefits, tax credits for working families, nutrition assistance, and increased federal Medicaid funds to states. Connecticut Voices called on federal policymakers to extend these supports, some of which are scheduled to expire in the coming months.

“As Connecticut struggles toward economic recovery, continued, targeted federal support is essential to ensuring that families do not slide further into poverty,” said Sharon Langer, Senior Policy Fellow at Connecticut Voices for Children.

Estimates of poverty rates varied significantly across Connecticut’s cities: Bridgeport (21.1%), Danbury (7.4 %), Hartford (31.9 %), New Britain (23%), New Haven (26.7%), Norwalk (15.1%), Stamford (12.9%), and Waterbury (22.8%). The percentage of children under 18 in poverty in Connecticut cities was also reported for Bridgeport (25.8%), Danbury (7.1%), Hartford (39.2%), New Britain (35.7%), New Haven (31.2%), Norwalk (18.9%), Stamford (19.8%), and Waterbury (33.8%). Poverty estimates are only available for cities with populations over 65,000. The American Community Survey also provided poverty estimates for Connecticut’s counties and Congressional districts. (See attached fact sheet for details.)

Statewide, the poverty rate for Hispanics (26%) and African Americans (19.9%) was significantly higher than the rate for White, non-Hispanic residents (5.6%).

With the establishment of the Child Poverty Council in 2004, Connecticut became the first state in the nation to set a goal of reducing child poverty -- by half by 2014. In 2003 (the baseline year for the Council), 10.8% of Connecticut’s children in families (“related children”) had incomes below the poverty line. The state set a goal of reducing the poverty rate to only 5% of children in 2014. Connecticut’s 2009 poverty rate for children in families (11.9%) has significantly worsened over the last decade (the 2001 rate was 9.7%). To meet the goal of reducing child poverty by half, Connecticut must reverse course dramatically, according to Connecticut Voices.

Nationwide, the American Community Survey estimated that 14.3% of all Americans (42.9 million) live in poverty, while 20% of children (14.7 million) live in poverty. There was a statistically significant increase in poverty among all Americans – from 13.3% in 2008 to 14.3% in 2009 – and among children under 18 – from 18.3% in 2008 to 20% in 2009.

Even residents who have managed to keep their jobs or find other work during the recession have felt more economic strain due to stagnant wages in recent years. The median household income in Connecticut in 2009 was an estimated \$67,034 according to the Census data. There was no statistically significant change in median income in Connecticut from 2007 or 2008.

“The increase in poverty in Connecticut is not only bad news for our children and families but for the state’s economic future. The numbers show that the achievement gap is strongly correlated with poverty. Growing poverty will only widen the achievement gap and leave our state ill-equipped to compete in the global economy,” said Jim Horan, Executive Director of the Connecticut Association for Human Services.

"Community Action Agencies have been providing increased support to individuals and families as they struggle to survive in the worst economy our state has seen since the Great Depression," said Edith Karsky, Executive Director of the Connecticut Association for Community Action. She noted that these agencies have seen an increase in caseload of over 30% in the past two years.

"More than one in four Bridgeport children live in poverty and are at risk for poor health, poor school performance, violence, abuse and homelessness," remarked Mary Pat Healy, Executive Director, Bridgeport Child Advocacy Coalition. "State services to support these families are more important than ever to mitigate the damaging effects of poverty."

For the second year, the U.S. Census Bureau released state-, city-, county- and Congressional district-level estimates for health insurance coverage in Connecticut from the American Community Survey. In Connecticut, 8.8% (an estimated 305,210 persons) of all people in Connecticut were without health insurance at the time of the survey. This was not significantly different from the 2008 rate. An estimated 3.8% of children under 18 (30,433) were uninsured at the time of the 2009 survey, a significant decrease from 4.6% in 2008. Estimates for Connecticut city residents who were uninsured at the time they were surveyed for the American Community Survey in 2008 range from 11.7% in Norwalk to 19.8% in Bridgeport. Estimates for uninsured children range from 3.0% in New Britain to 10.6% in Danbury. The percentage of children who were uninsured in the Second Congressional District (represented by Rep. Courtney) significantly decreased from 5.2% in 2008 to 3.0% in 2009. There were no statistically significant changes in city or county uninsured rates between 2008 and 2009.

Connecticut Voices pointed to the lower uninsured rates for children as evidence of the state's success in enrolling uninsured children in the state's HUSKY health insurance program, and called on state policymakers to maintain support for HUSKY. In 2007 and 2008, income eligibility was increased for parents and pregnant women in the program. As a result of these eligibility expansions and the growing need for the program, enrollment of children, parents, and pregnant women in HUSKY increased by about 81,000 between July 2007 and July 2010.

"Clearly HUSKY is doing its job and decreasing the numbers of uninsured children during these difficult economic times," said Sharon Langer at Connecticut Voices. "We need to support what is working."

Statewide, the uninsured rate for Hispanics (21.3%) and African Americans (12.6%) was significantly higher than the rate for White, non-Hispanic residents (6.2%).

In 2009, 15.1 % (45.7 million) of Americans were uninsured at the time they were surveyed, according to the American Community Survey, a statistically significant increase from the 2008 rate of 14.6%. Among children in the U.S., an estimated 8.6% (6.4 million) were uninsured, a significant decrease from the 9.3% who were uninsured in 2008.

For the second year, the US Census Bureau has included a question in its annual American Community Survey (ACS) on health insurance coverage. The question asks whether the person

is currently covered by any type of insurance. The results are not directly comparable to data from the Current Population Survey (CPS), which asks whether respondents were uninsured for the entire previous year. The sample size for the ACS is much larger than the CPS, so estimates of insurance status are available through the ACS for cities and counties with population greater than 65,000. CPS estimates of the uninsured are available only at the national and state levels.

This news release and fact sheet, along with links to additional national, state, and local data on demographic, social, and housing indicators from the American Community Survey are available through the CT Voices site at www.ctkidslink.org/censuspoverty.html. **See the attached CT Voices fact sheet for detailed survey results for Connecticut, its counties, Congressional districts, and cities; evaluation of the statistical significance of changes in local, state, and national estimates; and background on the measures.** Note: **Unless a change in Census estimates over time is statistically significant, it is not accurate to say that poverty has increased or declined in a city, county, or state.**

Note on child poverty: “Related children,” who might also be considered “children in families,” are those related to the head of household. Because data collection methods for “all children” in poverty changed in 2006 for the American Community Survey, comparisons for all children in poverty should not be made between estimates after 2005 and earlier figures.

Connecticut Voices for Children is a research-based policy think tank that works to advance strategic public investment and wise public policies to benefit our state’s children, youth and families.

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Poverty, Median Income, and Health Insurance in Connecticut: Summary of 2009 American Community Survey Census Data

September 28, 2010

Poverty Estimates in Connecticut and the Nation – 2009

Poverty Indicator	Connecticut	United States	
	2009 % and #	2009 % and #	2008 % and #
Persons with income less than Federal Poverty Level*	9.4% (320,554)	14.3% (42.9 million) Significant increase	13.3% (39.3 million)
All Children under 18** with income under Federal Poverty Level	12.1% (96,893)	20.0% (14.7 million) Significant increase	18.3%
Related children under 18 with income under Federal Poverty Level	11.9% (94,650)	19.7% (14.4 million) Significant increase	18.0%
All Children with income under 200% Federal Poverty Level ***	26.1% (208,902)	41.9% (30.7 million)	____ ****
Families with income below Federal Poverty Level	6.7% (59,484)	10.5% (8 million) Significant increase	9.8%

Data from the U.S. Census American Community Survey (ACS). **Unless specifically noted, comparisons between 2009 data to other years are not statistically significant.** Census revised some of its 2008 poverty estimates and has not released counts for some populations, only 2008 percentages are included above for some groups.

* In 2009, the federal poverty level was set to \$21,756 for a two-parent household with two children.

** “All persons” and “children in poverty” are more inclusive groups than “related children under 18” in poverty. All persons and children in poverty include some people living in “group quarters.” “Related children,” who might also be considered “children in families,” are those related to the head of household.

*** The 200% federal poverty level roughly corresponds to Connecticut’s Self-Sufficiency Standard -- a measure, created by the state of Connecticut, of the income necessary for a family to meet basic needs.

**** Revised 2008 national estimate of children under 200% of the federal poverty level has not yet been released.

Poverty Levels in Connecticut

Poverty Indicator	Connecticut 2009 % and #	Connecticut 2008 % and #	Connecticut 2007 % and #	Connecticut 2001 % and #
Persons with income less than Federal Poverty Level	9.4% (320,554) Significant increase from 2007 and 2001 No significant change from 2008	9.3% (316,619)	7.9% (268,880)	7.3% (242,421)
All children under 18 under Federal Poverty Level	12.1% (96,893) No significant change from 2007 or 2008	12.6%	11.1% (89,373)	--*
Related children under 18 under Federal Poverty Level	11.9 (94,650) Significant increase from 2001 No significant change from 2007 or 2008	12.2%	10.6% (85,530)	9.7% (77,251)
Families with income below Federal Poverty Level	6.7% (59,484) Significant increase from 2007 and 2001 No significant change from 2008	6.8%	5.7% (50,353)	5.3% (46,935)

Data from the U.S. Census American Community Survey (ACS). One-year comparisons are valid for ACS data. **Unless specifically noted, comparisons between 2009 data to other years are not statistically significant.** The Census revised some of its 2008 poverty estimates and has not released counts for some populations, only 2008 percentages are included above for some groups. “Related children,” who might also be considered “children in families,” are those related to the head of household.

* Because data collection methods for “all children” in poverty changed between 2001 and 2007, comparisons were not made between the 2001 estimate and data from recent years.

Income Estimates for Connecticut and the Nation – 2009

Income Indicator	Connecticut			United States	
	2009	2008	2007	2009 % and #	2008 % and #
Median household income in 2009 dollars (ACS)	\$67,034 No significant change from previous years	\$68,283	\$68,284	\$50,221 Significant decrease from 2008	\$51,726

Data from the U.S. Census American Community Survey (ACS). **Unless specifically noted, changes in median income estimates between 2008 and 2009 are not statistically significant.**

Poverty Rates and Median Income in Connecticut Cities in 2009

Estimate and range included. Range is estimate +/- the margin of error.

City	Persons with income less than Federal Poverty Level	Children under 18 under Federal Poverty Level	Median household income in 2009 dollars
STATEWIDE	9.4% (8.9%-9.9%)	12.1% (11.1%-13.1%)	\$ 67,034
Bridgeport	21.1% (17.7%-24.5%)	25.8% (19.2%-32.4%)	\$ 39,949
Danbury	7.4% (4.7%-10.1%)	7.1% (2.2%-12%)	\$ 64,534
Hartford	31.9% (27.9%-35.9%)	39.2% (31.6%-46.8%)	\$ 28,300
New Britain	23% (18.3%-27.7%)	35.7% (26.3%-45.1%)	\$ 39,805
New Haven	26.7% (22.2%-31.2%)	31.2% (23.6%-38.8%)	\$ 38,279
Norwalk	15.1% (11.5%-18.7%) Significant increase*	18.9% (11.6%-26.2%)	\$ 72,752
Stamford	12.9% (9.2%-16.6%)	19.8% (10.8%-28.8%)	\$ 75,765
Waterbury	22.8% (18.6%-27%)	33.8% (25.5%-42.1%)	\$ 33,750 Significant decrease*

Data from the U.S. Census American Community Survey (ACS). **Unless specifically noted, comparisons between 2008 and 2009 data are not statistically significant.**

* Indicates change over time in the poverty rate was statistically significant:

- In Norwalk, the percentage of all people in poverty increased from 9.5% in 2008 to 15.1% in 2009.
- In Waterbury, the median household income decreased from \$42,819 in 2008 to \$33,750 in 2009.

The numbers reported in ACS surveys are estimates because only a sample of the entire population is surveyed. The margin of error estimates the range of values within which the population's actual uninsured rate is likely to fall. Because sample sizes for a survey at the city level (and particularly for subgroups like children) can be small, the margins of error can be quite wide, and differences between cities should be interpreted with caution.

Uninsured Estimates for Connecticut and the Nation – 2009

Uninsured Indicator	Connecticut		United States	
	2009 % and #	2008 % and #	2009 % and #	2008 % and #
All persons uninsured (point in time estimate)	8.8% (305,210) No change	8.8%	15.1% (45.7 million) Significant increase	14.6%
All children under 18 uninsured (point in time estimate)	3.8% (30,433) Significant decrease	4.6%	8.6% (6.4 million) Significant decrease	9.3%

Data from the U.S. Census American Community Survey (ACS). The Census began gathering uninsured estimates through the American Community Survey in 2008. The Census revised some of its previous 2008 uninsured ACS estimates, so the newly revised 2008 rates must be used for comparison to 2009.

Uninsured in Connecticut Cities, 2009

Estimate and range included. Range is estimate +/- the margin of error.

	Uninsured	
	All persons uninsured (point in time estimate)	All children under 18 uninsured (point in time estimate)
Connecticut	8.8% (8.5%-9.2%)	3.8% (3.2%-4.3%)
Bridgeport	19.8% (17.2%-22.4%)	7.1% (3.1%-11.0%)
Danbury	17.9% (14.6%-21.1%)	10.6% (5.1%-16.1%)
Hartford	16.9% (14.5%-19.3%)	5.5% (2.9%-8.2%)
New Britain	12.9% (10.7%-15.2%)	3.0% (0.8%-5.1%)
New Haven	14.4% (11.5%-17.4%)	8.7% (3.1%-14.3%)
Norwalk	11.7% (8.7%-14.7%)	4.9% (1.8%-7.9%)
Stamford	19.7% (16.6%-22.7%)	7.4% (3.7%-11.1%)
Waterbury	12.3% (9.8%-14.9%)	3.5% (0.3%-6.6%)

Data from the U.S. Census American Community Survey (ACS). **Unless specifically noted, comparisons between 2008 and 2009 data are not statistically significant.**

The numbers reported in ACS surveys are estimates because only a sample of the entire population is surveyed. The margin of error estimates the range of values within which the population's actual uninsured rate is likely to fall. Because sample sizes for a survey at the city level (and particularly for subgroups like children) can be small, the margins of error can be quite wide, and differences between cities should be interpreted with caution.

Poverty and Uninsured Rates by Race/Ethnicity in Connecticut, 2009

	Persons with income less than Federal Poverty Level	All persons uninsured (point in time estimate)
White, non-Hispanic	5.6% (138,373)	6.2% (156,979)
African American	19.9% (63,651) Significantly higher than White, non- Hispanic	12.6% (41,020) Significantly higher than rate for White, non-Hispanic
Hispanic	26% (109,432) Significantly higher than White, non- Hispanic	21.3% (90,657) Significantly higher than rate for White, non-Hispanic

Data from the U.S. Census American Community Survey (ACS); calculations by Connecticut Voices for Children.

Poverty Rates and Median Income in Connecticut Counties in 2009

Estimate and range included. Range is estimate +/- the margin of error.

County	Persons with income less than Federal Poverty Level	Children under 18 under Federal Poverty Level	Median household income in 2009 dollars
STATEWIDE	9.4% (8.9%-9.9%)	12.1% (11.1%-13.1%)	\$67,034
Fairfield	8.3% (7.4%-9.2%)	9.5% (7.7%-11.3%)	\$79,063 Significant decrease*
Hartford	10.2% (9.3%-11.1%)	14.0% (11.9%-16.1%)	\$62,030
Litchfield	6.4% (4.6%-8.2%)	7.6% (4%-11.2%)	\$67,835
Middlesex	5.3 % (4%-6.6%)	4.9% (2.5%-7.3%)	\$74,947
New Haven	12.1% (11%-13.2%)	16.5% (14.4%-18.6%)	\$60,601
New London	7.8% (6.6%-9%)	11.5% (8.7%-14.3%) Significant increase*	\$64,148 Significant decrease*
Tolland	7% (5.2%-8.8%)	5.8% (3.2%-8.4%)	\$80,078 Significant increase*
Windham	9.4% (7.3%-11.5%) Significant decrease*	13.4% (8.8%-18%)	\$58,459

Data from the U.S. Census American Community Survey (ACS). **Unless specifically noted, comparisons between 2008 and 2009 data are not statistically significant.**

* Indicates change over time in the poverty rate that was statistically significant:

- In New London County, the percentage of children in poverty increased from 7.1% in 2008 to 11.5% in 2009.
- In Windham County, the percentage of all people in poverty decreased from 14.4% in 2008 to 9.4% in 2009.
- In the Fairfield County, the median income decreased from \$83,389 in 2008 to \$79,063 in 2009.
- In the New London County, the median income decreased from \$69,195 in 2008 to \$64,148 in 2009.
- In the Tolland County, the median income increased from \$73,814 in 2008 to \$80,078 in 2009.

Poverty Rates and Median Income in Connecticut Congressional Districts in 2009

Estimate and range included. Range is estimate +/- the margin of error.

Congressional District	Persons with income less than Federal Poverty Level	Children under 18 under Federal Poverty Level	Median household income in 2009 dollars
STATEWIDE	9.4% (8.9%-9.9%)	12.1% (11.1%-13.1%)	\$67,034
1 st Congressional District (Rep. Larson)	10.2% (9.2%-11.2%)	13.7% (11.4%-16%)	\$60,467
2 nd Congressional District (Rep. Courtney)	6.9% (6.2%-7.6%)	8.8% (7.3%-10.3%)	\$70,453
3 rd Congressional District (Rep. DeLauro)	10.7% (9.6%-11.8%)	13.3% (11.1%-15.5%)	\$61,902
4 th Congressional District (Rep. Himes)	9.5% (8.4%-10.6%)	11.1% (8.9%-13.3%)	\$81,775 Significant decrease*
5 th Congressional District (Rep. Murphy)	9.7% (8.7%-10.7%)	13.7% (11.6%-15.8%)	\$64,701

Data from the U.S. Census American Community Survey (ACS). **Unless specifically noted, comparisons between 2008 and 2009 data are not statistically significant.**

* Indicates change over time in the poverty rate that was statistically significant:

- In the 4th Congressional District, the median income decreased from \$86,985 in 2008 to \$81,775 in 2009.

Uninsured in Connecticut Counties, 2009

	Uninsured	
	All persons uninsured (point in time estimate)	All children under 18 uninsured (point in time estimate)
Connecticut	8.8%	3.8%
Fairfield County	10.9%	4.7%
Hartford County	8.1%	3.0%
Litchfield County	8.5%	3.1%
Middlesex County	6.8%	2.9%
New Haven County	8.7%	4.0%
New London County	7.6%	4.4%
Tolland County	5.1%	2.5%
Windham County	10.0%	2.8%

Data from the U.S. Census American Community Survey (ACS). Unless specifically noted, comparisons between 2008 and 2009 data are not statistically significant.

Uninsured in CT Congressional Districts, 2009

Congressional District	All persons uninsured (point in time estimate)	All children under 18 uninsured (point in time estimate)
Connecticut	8.8%	3.8%
1 st Congressional District (Rep. Larson)	8.5%	3.4%
2 nd Congressional District (Rep. Courtney)	6.9%	3.0% Significant decrease*
3 rd Congressional District (Rep. DeLauro)	8.9%	4.5%
4 th Congressional District (Rep. Himes)	10.9%	4.2%
5 th Congressional District (Rep. Murphy)	9.0%	3.7%

Data from the U.S. Census American Community Survey (ACS). Unless specifically noted, comparisons between 2008 and 2009 data are not statistically significant.

* Indicates change over time in the uninsured rate for Connecticut Congressional Districts that was statistically significant:

- In the 2nd District, the percentage of all children who were uninsured decreased from 5.2% in 2008 to 3.0% in 2009.

Technical Notes on the Data

Data Source. The United States Census Bureau released poverty estimates from the American Community Survey (ACS) on September 28, 2010.

Comparing Data Over Time. Unless specifically noted in the comparison charts above, there were no statistically significant changes in Census estimates between 2009 data and other years as calculated at the 90% confidence interval. The numbers reported in ACS surveys are estimates because only a sample of the entire population is surveyed. For this reason, estimates reported by the ACS are published with additional data that allow us to estimate the range of values within which the population’s actual poverty or uninsured rate is likely to fall. This enables us to determine whether or not the change in an estimate from one time period to the next is large enough to conclude that a change in the population has occurred, or whether the change in the estimate may have been due to random chance. For example, in the field of opinion polling, the “margin of error” of a poll helps to assess whether there has been a significant change in polling results over time. **A change in Census estimates is called “statistically significant” if it is unlikely to have occurred by chance** (this term describes the statistical evidence of change, not whether it is important or meaningful). **Unless a change in Census estimates over time is statistically significant, it is not accurate to say, for example, that poverty rates have increased or declined.** Statistical significance tests were conducted for poverty and uninsured rates, rather than numbers of people in poverty or numbers uninsured.

Household Income Comparisons. ACS data for median household income is comparable over time. Median income figures are in 2009 dollars (inflation adjusted), so they would not match estimates in earlier reports.

Health Insurance Coverage. In 2008, the US Census Bureau began including a question in its annual American Community Survey (ACS) on health insurance coverage. The question asks whether the person is **currently covered** by any type of insurance. The results are not directly comparable to data from the Current Population Survey (CPS), which asks whether respondents were uninsured for the **entire previous year**. The sample size for the ACS is much larger than the CPS, so estimates of insurance status are available through the ACS for counties, Congressional Districts, and cities with population greater than 65,000. CPS estimates of the uninsured are available only at the national and state levels. See the table below for comparisons of these estimates.

Understanding Census Bureau Estimates of the Uninsured		
	American Community Survey (ACS)	Current Population Survey (CPS)
When are 2009 estimates are released?	September 28, 2010	September 16, 2010
What does the survey measure?	Uninsured at time of survey	Uninsured for entire previous year
Are comparisons possible over time?	Yes, comparing one-year estimates for 2008 and 2009	Yes, by using two-year averages (not single-year estimates)
Are national and state level estimates available?	Yes	Yes
Are estimates available for cities with greater than 65,000 population?	Yes	No

CT Voices’ use of ACS data is informed by the guidance of analysts at the Census Bureau, Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, and Coalition on Human Needs.