

Facing the Facts: Many in Morgan County Still Need Help

Data released by the U.S. Census Bureau on September 17, 2013 reveal that poverty has increased despite the economic “recovery” following the “Great Recession.”

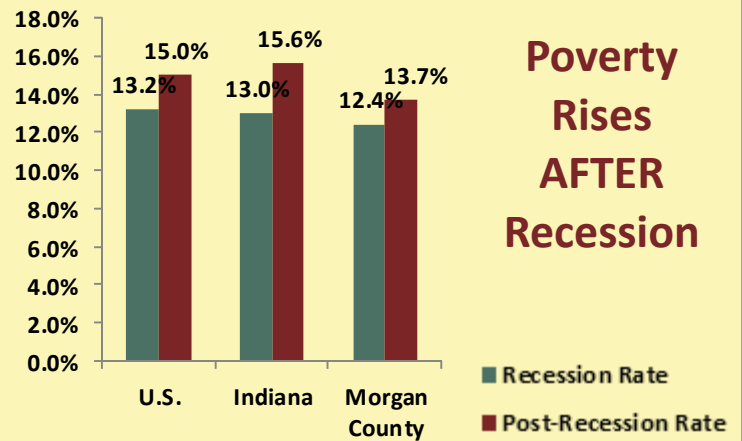
“The Great Recession may be over for people and corporations at the top. According to a recent analysis, income for the top 1 percent rose 31.4 percent over the past three years. But for everyone else, progress is painfully slow. For the remaining 99 percent, incomes grew by a fraction of a percent (0.4 percent). And 15 percent of our people are poor for the second year in a row – up from 13.2 percent in the Great Recession year of 2008.” (Coalition on Human Needs statement released 9/17/2013)

Economic “recovery” is a relative term.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau report: “Household Income: 2012,” Indiana is included in the top 5 states with the largest declines in income from 2000 to 2012.

Largest Declines in Income

1. Michigan (19.1%)
2. Mississippi (15.0%)
3. Georgia (13.7%)
4. Indiana (13.2%)
5. Tennessee (12.2%)



Poverty Rises AFTER Recession

The Center for American Progress (www.americanprogress.org) notes: “This disturbing trend [in declining income] is related in part to the explosion of low-wage and part-time work. In 2012, more than 40 percent of job growth took place in low-wage sectors such as hospitality, retail, and health and education services.”



Low wages make it extremely difficult to afford housing. According to the *National Low Income Housing Coalition's "Out of Reach 2012"* report, Morgan County renters need the equivalent of 2.0 full-time jobs at minimum wage to afford a 2-bedroom fair market rent apartment.

Low wages also make it difficult to meet basic food needs. According to “Map the Meal Gap,” (www.feedingamerica.org) 12.3% of Morgan County residents (8,470 people) are food “insecure.”



Data from Connect2Help 2-1-1 reveal a similar picture. From October 2012 through September 2013, 1,942 Morgan County residents called 2-1-1 for help and received 3,560 referrals to community resources. Another 1,370 searched for community resources on our website, www.Connect2Help.org. 8% of the needs reported by Morgan County callers were recorded as “unmet” by 2-1-1 Specialists.

Top Needs

1. Housing - 17%
2. Utilities - 14%
3. Food - 11%
4. Financial - 10%
5. Health - 8%

Top Unmet Needs

1. Housing - 25%
2. Utilities - 22%
3. Transportation - 9%
4. Food - 7%
5. Holiday Assistance - 7%

In many cases, the needs presented by Morgan County callers were symptoms of a larger (often economic) issue.

Unemployed/Laid-Off - 25%



Illness/Disability - 21%



Homeless/Doubled-Up - 9%



Every person has a role to play in helping Morgan County thrive. Dial 2-1-1, or visit www.Connect2Help.org, to see how you can get involved.