



Bear River Association of Governments
Community Action Services & Food Bank
Family Connection Center
Five County Association of Governments
Ogden-Weber Community Action Partnership
Salt Lake Community Action Program
Six County Association of Governments
Southeastern Utah Association of Governments
Uintah Basin Association of Governments
Utahns Against Hunger

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**POVERTY RATE SPIKED IN 2010 TO 15.1 PERCENT – HIGHLIGHTING THE NEED TO
RECOMMIT TO PROTECT EFFECTIVE PROGRAMS THAT ASSIST LOW-INCOME
UTAHNS**

Salt Lake City, UT – “The nation’s official poverty rate in 2010 was 15.1 percent, up from 14.3 percent in 2009,” the U.S. Census Bureau reported today. The number of people in poverty in 2010 was 46.2 million, which is the largest number in the 52 years for which poverty estimates have been published. This is an increase of 2.6 million people, which is approximately the **entire** population of the state of Utah. In real terms, this means more families and individuals living at income levels where basic needs like housing, food, and transportation costs continue to be an extreme burden, if not completely out of reach.

A family of four living in Utah would be classified as living in poverty if its annual cash income, before taxes, is \$22,113 or less. As the Census Bureau reports, median household income for the nation has declined 2.3 percent from 2009, showing more households are moving closer to the poverty line. The median household money income for the nation was \$49,400, down from \$50,600.¹

Utah’s poverty fighting network, the Community Action Agencies, have seen during the recent recession many of Utah’s families “doubling-up.” This is a way for people to cope with challenging economic circumstances by combining their households with other families. The Census reports that in Spring of 2007, double-up households totaled 19.7 million. By Spring 2011, the number of doubled-up households had increased by 2.0 million to 21.8 million, and the percent of households doubled-up had increased by 1.3 percentage points from 17.0 percent to 18.3 percent.²

Unfortunately, this reality of an increase in poverty, coupled with federal and state budget cuts of low-income programs, equals devastating possible consequences to Utahns living near or below poverty. Using the alternative resource measures, published by the U.S. Census, it shows that these programs have been proven to keep people out of poverty. The alternative resource measure calculates the number of people in poverty using alternative impacts on income. It calculates in tax credits, housing, and energy assistance, and subtracts child support paid, childcare paid, other work expenses, taxes, and medical out of pockets expenditures. If the alternative resource measure were used as the official poverty calculation, the Earned Income Tax Credit would have shown to lift 5.4 million people out of poverty in 2010. On the other hand, if the cash income that comes from Unemployment Insurance Benefits were taken out of the official poverty calculation another 3.2 million people would have been in

¹ U.S. Census Bureau, Income, Poverty, and Health Insurance Coverage in the United States: 2010.

² Id.

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poverty. Along with another 20.3 million people would have been in poverty if Social Security Income were not available.³ This shows the vital importance of programs that are proven to keep people out of poverty.

These numbers should also be a wake-up call to policymakers that we cannot have a shared economic recovery while such a large segment of our citizens are left behind. With so much poverty, we need to invest in creating jobs and opportunities for those Utahns living near or below poverty. “It is imperative that Congress and the administration take immediate action to reverse this troubling trend, and rebuild the middle class and assist those in poverty in their pursuits of self-sufficiency,” said Drew Martinez, Policy Analyst for Community Action Partnership of Utah.

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Community Action Partnership of Utah’s mission is to advocate for, support, and train Utah's CSBG funded agencies, utilizing our collective strength to eradicate poverty.

³ U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, 2011 Annual Social and Economic Supplement. Unpublished data.

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