Using Data, Information and Knowledge to Advocate for the New Faces of Poverty.

GIVE YOUR COMMUNITY A VOICE

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Objectives

1. To distinguish between data, information and knowledge.
2. To discuss how poverty is perceived and measured.
3. To draw upon anecdotal evidence and statistics to show that poverty has many angles and faces.
4. To discuss how poverty hurts Americans.
5. To highlight valuable lessons from the War on Poverty.
6. To discuss the social and economic benefits of reducing the poverty rate in the United States.
Data

- Unrefined numbers, words and symbols without any interpretation or analysis.
Information

-Information is data that has been put into the appropriate context.
The Knowledge Economy

- knowledge economy refers to the increased reliance of business, labor, and government on knowledge, information, and ideas-and information technology to put them to practical use.
- Adheres to the saying “brain over brawn”.
“While we cannot say that each person counted in the census would increase federal program dollars to a state or locality by a certain amount, census results are of utmost importance to distributing federal funding — and doing so equitably and prudently.”
(Counting for Dollars: Why It Matters, The Leadership Conference Education Fund)
The Decennial Census as an Advocacy Tool

**Data**
- People (Medicaid)
- Housing
- Communities (critical federal program dollars)
- Economy (income)

**Information**
- Identify and address current and future needs.
- Health care, education, housing, food and income security, access to transportation, broadband, etc.

**Knowledge**
- Access to more than $800 billion a year in governmental resources
- Protect human rights.
- Efficient and effective allocation of federal dollars/resources.
- Connect policies to communities.
What is the “Official” Definition of Poverty?

- Persons are considered poor if their family’s countable income is below its corresponding poverty threshold ($24,339 for a family of 4).

  **To the average American, the word “poverty” implies:**

  1. Significant material deprivation.
  2. An inability to provide a family with adequate nutritious food, reasonable shelter, and clothing.
Many Americans see little or no evidence of economic recovery in their own lives. Because they are struggling to save and get ahead.
Poverty Simulation

- A family of 4 is living in poverty if they are making less than $2,028.25 per month or $24,339/year (U.S. Census Bureau).

- HOW FAR WILL THIS TAKE YOU?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Basic shelter</td>
<td>$565</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utilities</td>
<td>$250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation</td>
<td>$345</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food</td>
<td>$356</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child care</td>
<td>$220</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Healthcare</td>
<td>$220</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$72.25

- Source: Consumer Expenditure Survey estimates, as cited by Living in Poverty USA.
Middle Class Economics

- How much annual income do you think a family of four would need to earn to be safely out of poverty and in the middle class?

• Pew, which defines middle class as adults whose annual household income is two-thirds to double the national median ($55,775 as of 2016), details the national middle-income range for various household sizes.

• "The income it takes to be middle-income varies by household size, with smaller households requiring less to support the same lifestyle as larger households," Pew explains.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Household Size</th>
<th>One</th>
<th>Two</th>
<th>Three</th>
<th>Four</th>
<th>Five</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>One</td>
<td>$24,042</td>
<td>$34,000</td>
<td>$41,641</td>
<td>$48,083</td>
<td>$53,759</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two</td>
<td>$72,126</td>
<td>$102,001</td>
<td>$124,925</td>
<td>$144,251</td>
<td>$161,277</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Root Causes of Poverty

1. Do the poor fail and/or refuse to avail themselves of the opportunities that are available to all?
2. Is poverty in our country a result of economic and/or external conditions that restrict opportunity for the poor?
OECD Better Life Index 2016

Material living conditions
- Per capita income
- Financial wealth
- Average earnings
- Housing conditions
- Time off

Health
- 87.5% of adults perceive their health as good.
- Life expectancy lies below the OECD average.

High educational attainment
- Low literacy and numeracy skills.
- Fourth highest level of educational deprivation.

Child well-being
- Child income poverty (20.5%).
- High infant mortality
- 21.1% of children report their health as poor or fair.
- Second highest child homicide rate.

Is America Falling Into Deeper Poverty?

1. Fourth highest income inequality in the world.
3. Children in Poverty (34/35).
4. People living below the poverty line (36/162).
5. Highest incarceration rate in the world.
6. Education and skills (16/23).
7. Internet speed and access (16/34).
8. Health (33/145).

Source: Hershey H. Friedman, a business professor at Brooklyn College – City University of New York. 12 signs America is on the decline. by Jill Hamburg Coplan
The Perceived Faces of Poverty

- Homeless people.
- The unemployed.
- Foodbank recipients.
- Minorities.
- Immigrants.
- High school dropouts.
- Disabled people.
- Single mothers.

“I’m white and now living a middle-class life, and I’m pretty sure my picture doesn’t come to mind when newspapers write about the “urban poor” on government assistance or benefiting from affirmative action.”

Source: direct quote from Hey, Media: White People Are Poor, Too by Rachel D. Godsil.
The Real Faces of Poverty

• Elderly people.
• Single working parents.
• Underemployed.
• Veterans (63,000 are homeless and rely on predatory lending).
• High school and college graduates (with debt).
• People with mental or physical disabilities.
• Working Poor (low-wages, minimum wage, no benefits, no financial safety net).
• Millennials (13.5 million living in poverty, the poor generation).
• Children and those kids who age out of foster care each year and there is just nowhere else for them to go.
• Victims of domestic violence.
The Working Poor?

JOBS LIKE:
- Security guards
- Childcare workers
- Educational assistants
- Nurses’ aides
- Ambulance drivers
- Bank tellers
- Pharmacy assistants
- The likelihood of being poor is the highest in two decades.
- Low-wage, low-reward positions.

Meet Bob

This is Bob. Like the majority of minimum wage workers, he is over 20 and works full-time. He also has a family that he needs to provide for.
Four Ways That Poverty Hurts Americans’ Long-Term Health
BY SY MUKHERJEE (JULY 30, 2013)

1. Poverty prevents Americans from buying healthy food.
2. Poor people are more likely to smoke.
3. The poor live in regions with worse air quality.
4. Economic insecurity has devastating consequences for both physical and mental health.

Even those who break the cycle of poverty might have to deal with the stress they had to endure to escape poverty!

“IS POVERTY A DEATH SENTENCE?”
Anti-Poverty Initiatives Do Have Bipartisan Support

- Quality child care.
- Nutrition assistance.
- Universal pre-kindergarten.
- Scholarships for college.
- Increase the minimum wage.
- Expand tax credits to families with low-wage jobs (EITC and CTC).
- Affordable health coverage.
- Subsidized jobs for long-term unemployed workers.
- Extend unemployment benefits (lower level of support).
- Financial Education


http://growamericastronger.org/poll
What has happened to poverty since The Other America?

- The poverty rate went down, and stayed down.

- The decline in poverty is largely due to programs that have had bipartisan support.
- These programs continue to keep millions of Americans out of poverty.
- These programs serve as an incentive to work and provide economic mobility opportunities.
- Anti-poverty programs touch millions of Americans at some point in their lives.
- While there is more work to do, we can say with confidence that the War on Poverty has made a real and lasting difference for many Americans.

Sources: Matthews, Dylan. Poverty in the 50 years since 'The Other America,' in five charts (July 11, 2012).
Meet Jorge Dominguez

• “I would get off work at like 12 pm, drive to Cruces, sleep, go to (financial literacy) class the next day and then drive back to Silverton right after.”
Anti-Poverty Advocacy Resources

1. Prosperity Now (formerly known as the Corporation for Enterprise Development—CFED).
   - Successful economic development policies.
   - Data
   - Best practices.
   - Assets and Opportunity Scorecard
   - Technical assistance.
   - Peer-to-peer learning opportunities.
   - Program design templates, tools, literature, etc.
   - Blueprints for designing new programs and scaling existing ones.

http://money.cnn.com/interactive/economy/middle-class-households-map/?iid=EL

http://money.cnn.com/infographic/economy/what-is-middle-class-anyway/


2. Other sources:
   - Living in poverty USA.
   - U.S. Census Bureau.
   - Community Action Partnership (CAP).
   - Local CAAs, CBOs.
   - DOL, other government agencies.
   - Consumer Expenditure Survey
   - American Community Survey
Closing Remarks

1. There just isn’t one face of poverty.

2. Official poverty statistics underestimate the real problem at hand.

3. The social and economic case for fighting poverty.

4. We need anti-poverty policies that empower people to take control of their lives. Asset-building programs do work!

5. Rely on partnerships!

6. Draw upon a combination of statistics, anecdotal evidence, case studies, etc.

Poverty is the worse form of a death as poverty kills a person everyday before his death.

- Zaroon Khan Nasar
Thank you!

Any Questions?

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