"CHILD POVERTY: THE INVISIBLE FACE OF POVERTY IN CALIFORNIA"

MARCUS BELGROVE FOR THE YOU SAVED ME FOUNDATION

October 27, 2023

For the past seven years, San Diego has been my home. While the city boasts stunning natural beauty, it is also home to a heart-wrenching poverty issue that drives thousands of individuals into homelessness every year. Most residents are members of the working poor, living only one or two paychecks away from the streets or "safe parking lots" where tents become homes and individuals become invisible to politicians and the super wealthy. The middle class is all but extinct, with residents classified as wealthy, working poor, or homeless. Taxes are high, wages are stagnant, and rent is astronomical – the highest in the country.

This issue is particularly significant for children, who are disproportionately affected by poverty. In this article, we will explore the latest poverty statistics in California and discuss ways to escape or prevent falling into poverty in the Golden State.

Child Poverty in California: Insights from the Public Policy Institute. The Public Policy Institute recently released data revealing that one fourth of young children in California live in poverty. Poverty rates vary based on region, ranging from approximately 20 percent in the Bay Area, Sacramento, and Northern regions to nearly 30 percent in the Central Coast and Los Angeles County. Furthermore, Latino children and children with immigrant, young, or single parents are disproportionately affected by poverty statewide.

Challenges Faced by Low-Income Families with Young Children in Certain Californian Counties. While earning more, low-income families in Bay Area, Orange County, and San Diego County with young children are more likely to be housing-burdened, meaning their housing expenses surpass half of the family's total resources. Additionally, they are also more prone to living in overcrowded housing than those in northern and inland regions.

Geography of Child Poverty in California

One-quarter of young children across the state live in poverty. In inland regions, reducing child poverty requires efforts to improve job opportunities. In many...

Public Policy Institute of California / Aug 20, 2021

A LOOK AT THE NUMBERS

- On average, poor families with young children have resources that total about two-thirds (67.7%) of the poverty line. For the average young child in poverty, this means that their family has total resources, including earnings and safety net benefits, below $26,100 per year for a family of four.

- About 172,600 young children (5.7% of all children age 0-5) are in deep poverty across the state. Among families with young children in deep poverty, resources average $12,500 per year for a family of four, or under a third of the poverty line.

- Among young children, those who are Latino and who have immigrant, non-English-proficient, young (under 25), or single parents are more likely to be poor. Poverty rates in these demographic groups are between 34 and 42 percent, about 9-17 points higher than the statewide rate of 25 percent.

- 47 percent of resources for poor families with young children come from earnings (pre-tax income from wages and salaries). The remainder is made up of assistance from large-scale social safety net programs-including CalFresh, CalWORKs, and the federal EITC and other, relatively small, sources of income.

FOR IMMEDIATE ASSISTANCE IN SAN DIEGO COUNTY

Call 211 or visit You Saved Me Foundation online at www.yousaved.me/events for a community distribution near you in San Diego County

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Poverty in The Fast Lane: California

THE FASTEST 4 WAYS TO ENTER POVERTY IN CALIFORNIA

1. Housing Instability
High rent and housing prices make it easy for individuals to fall into poverty due to housing instability. Evictions, foreclosure, or simply struggling to make rent can lead to financial distress.

2. Healthcare Costs
Without health insurance, medical expenses can quickly drain savings and lead to financial instability. Utilizing state programs like Covered California can provide access to affordable health coverage.

3. Unemployment and Job Loss
California's economy is dynamic, but job loss is a common trigger for poverty. Maintaining job skills, networking, and having a financial safety net can mitigate the risks of unemployment.

4. Inadequate Financial Management
Poor financial choices, such as accumulating debt, overspending, or not saving for emergencies, can lead to financial crises.

CA POVERTY AVERAGED 13.2% IN SPRING 2023

Safety nets play a crucial role in reducing child poverty, particularly in Central Valley and Sierra, where poverty rates would be 24 percentage points higher without them. However, the safety net does not account for the cost of living, resulting in difficulties for struggling families in more expensive areas to qualify for aid, as seen in the 8-9 percentage points increase in poverty rates in Bay Area and Orange County.

FASTEST 4 WAYS TO ESCAPE POVERTY IN CALIFORNIA

1. Education & Professional Development:
In California, education and professional skills are key to accessing well-paying jobs. Pursuing higher education, certifications, and training programs can significantly improve job prospects.

2. Affordable Housing Solutions
High housing costs are a significant challenge in California. Exploring affordable housing options and taking advantage of local housing assistance programs can ease financial burdens.

3. Entrepreneurship and Innovation
California is a hub for innovation and startups. Entrepreneurship can offer opportunities for financial success, but it also involves risks. A strong business plan, access to capital, and market research are essential for those looking to start their own business.

4. Utilizing Social Services
California offers a range of social support programs, such as CalFresh (California's SNAP program) and Medi-Cal, for healthcare assistance. Accessing these resources can help individuals and families facing financial hardship.

TO APPLY FOR SERVICES IN CA

www.cdss.ca.gov/benefits-services