

***THE OTHER SIDE OF "IT":
Facts on Poverty in Nashville, Tennessee, and Beyond***

NASHVILLE/DAVIDSON COUNTY

- More than one in six persons in Davidson County lived in poverty in 2017. The poverty rate of 14.5% is near the pre-recession level of 14.9% in 2007.
- Poverty increased for many portions of the population in Davidson County from 2016 to 2017, rising 12.8% to 13.5% in 2017. The percent of persons and families in poverty in Davidson County was higher than that for the U.S. in 2017. More than one in ten families (10.9%) in Davidson County lived in poverty in the past year.
- The poverty rate for African Americans in Davidson County is roughly 8 times higher than the poverty rate for whites. Over half of all families living in poverty in Davidson County in 2017 were single-parent households headed by a female. About half of these female-headed family households included children under the age of 5.
- Nearly one in five Davidson County households (18.7%) have income less than \$25,000 annually, and more than one in ten (10.3%) have incomes under \$15,000 a year. Median household and family incomes are lower in Davidson County than in the U.S.
- The city of Nashville needs almost 31,000 affordable or low-income units by 2025 to counter the affordable housing it is losing to rising gentrification, displacement, and homelessness. According to Realtor.com, Nashville is number six in the top ten U.S. cities that are gentrifying the fastest.
- According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, 346,000 employees in the Nashville region work in occupations where the median hourly wage is less than \$15.15 per hour.
- While the food insecurity rate for Davidson County declined slightly between 2015 and 2016, over 100,000 individuals in Davidson County are considered food insecure.
- In 2017, 50,644 renter households in Davidson County who earned under \$50,000 paid more than 30% of their earnings for housing and thus were cost burdened.
- The Metropolitan Development and Housing Agency (MDHA) serves over 7,000 families with Housing Choice Vouchers. As of September 2018, there were 15,029 applicants on a waiting list for Vouchers.
- The national minimum wage is \$7.25. It has not increased since 2009. The minimum wage for tipped employees is \$2.13. The median hourly wage in the Nashville region increased by only 40-cents per hour between 2010 and 2017 when controlling for inflation. According to the Department of Labor, in that time span food preparation occupations grew from 63,330 to 90,070 with a median wage of \$9.46. If the minimum wage grew commensurate with published Wall Street bonuses it would be \$33 per hour.
- Davidson County residents need an annual income of \$74,018 in order to buy an average house. Thirty percent of white males in Davidson County earn \$75,000 or more compared to 18.3% for white females, 10.8% for African American males, 6.9% for African American females, 0.5% for Hispanic males, and 3.7% for Hispanic females.

TENNESSEE AND BEYOND

- According to 2016 government statistics, 40.6 million people, including 15.3 million children, lived in poverty. 21.3 million lived in deep poverty, and 95 million close to poverty. Twelve percent (15.6 million) of U.S. households were food insecure, meaning that they had difficulty providing food for all family members due to a lack of resources.
- During the recent government shutdown, nearly 80% of workers furloughed claimed to live paycheck-to-paycheck and only 29% had enough savings to last a month. The Chair of the Federal Reserve noted that far too many are struggling as evidenced by retail sales declining at the fastest rate in history, 7 million Americans having fallen

- behind on their car payments, and the U.S. having the lowest labor participation rate among advanced countries with nearly 2 million workers giving up on looking for work.
- A majority of older working Americans will not have sufficient savings to retire full-time at age 65. The average Social Security income for new retirees in 2017 was about \$1,460 a month, or \$17,520 annually, according to Social Security Fast Facts. For most people, this is much less than the commonly recommended retirement income goal of 70%-80% of pre-retirement earnings. Without Social Security the elderly poverty rate would be 39%. With Social Security the elderly poverty rate is 9%.
 - Fifteen percent of Tennesseans had incomes below the poverty level in 2017 - the 9th highest in the U.S. Nearly 7% of Tennesseans (450,000) do not have health coverage because our state has not adopted Medicaid expansion. Tennessee had the third highest percentage of households that used high cost, high risk forms of credit to make ends meet in 2015.

Sources: 2017 Nashville Social Services Community Needs Report, Center for American Progress, U.S. Treasury, U.S. Census Bureau, Federal Reserve, Talk Poverty, and various others.