



Advocates for Ohio's Future

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HEALTH CARE COVERAGE EXPANDS, HOUSEHOLD INCOME DECLINES

Investments in Vital Public Services are needed to Strengthen Communities

COLUMBUS – Household income declined nationally, even though more young people now have access to health care according to Census Bureau figures released today on income, poverty, and health insurance. 46.2 million Americans remain in poverty across the nation.

The median household income for the nation was \$50,100 in 2011, declining 1.5 percent from 2010. In 2011, 15 percent of all Americans and nearly 22 percent of American children lived in poverty.

“The census figures released today highlight how critical public investments in human services and workforce supports are for struggling families and communities in Ohio,” said Gayle Channing Tenenbaum, Co-Chair of Advocates for Ohio's Future. “All Ohioans should have economic security and access to opportunity, but we continue to see families struggling to recover from the recession.”

There are a number of reasons for the decrease in household income. In the last decade, wages have not kept up with prices for basic necessities. Americans make nearly \$3,200 less than they did in 1999. Over the same time, prices for basic needs, including rent, gasoline, tuition, health care and child care costs, all increased. In addition, state and federal budget cuts have attributed to public sector job loss and the expiration of unemployment benefits. Unemployment insurance payments fell by \$32 billion in 2011 and 385,000 Americans lost jobs in the public sector, primarily in state and local government.

One bright spot in the census data is that more Americans gained access to health coverage, partly due an increase in access to health insurance through provisions the Affordable Care Act for young adults 18-26 years old. Roughly 540,000 more young people were insured in 2011.

There is still much more work to be done in the area of affordable health insurance coverage. Mark Davis, Co-Chair of Advocates for Ohio's Future, stated, “We're pleased that more Ohioans have access to affordable health coverage, but we still have a long ways to go. Ohio should continue its focus on investment in jobs and the workforce to support families and communities.”

Advocates for Ohio's Future will release information on the state of Ohio once The Census Bureau's American Community Survey data is released on September 20th. The American Community Survey provides the detailed information about poverty and unemployment at the state level.

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Advocates for Ohio's Future is a statewide coalition of over 300 local and statewide organizations that works to maintain vital public services – health, human services, and early care & education – at a level that meets people's basic needs and protects our state's most vulnerable populations.