

POVERTY REDUCTION TALKING POINTS

Poverty Measure

The current poverty measure used by the US Census Bureau and the California Department of Finance is based on family size and composition. For two-person families, thresholds are set higher due to higher fixed costs. Thresholds for unrelated individuals are calculated as a fixed proportion of the corresponding threshold for two-person families. Thresholds are revised annually to allow for changes in the cost of living as reflected in the Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers. Current rates for CCASSC member counties are included on the reverse page.

Poverty Indicators

The use of relevant, measurable indicators can provide a picture of current conditions and allow for tracking of future changes. In the context of poverty measurement, some of the commonly used community indicators include:

- unemployment rates
- rates of free or reduced lunches in schools
- homelessness
- income levels compared to federal standards
- utilization of public health, mental health and social services
- adult literacy
- educational attainment
- infant mortality rates
- food security

Sample Strategies for Poverty Reduction

In the United States, as in many countries throughout the world, purposeful planning is being done to address poverty at multiple levels. The programs below represent examples of strategies that can be implemented at community or neighborhood levels.

- **Bridges Out of Poverty** and **Getting Ahead in a Just-Getting-By World** (<http://www.ywca.org/atf>)
 - nationally recognized programs addressing root issues of generational poverty, both systemically and individually
 - **Bridges** provides community strategies to address economic systems that keep individuals in poverty.
 - **Getting Ahead** is a partly peer-led curriculum to help individuals in generational poverty to understand and adopt successful life strategies, and function effectively in the middle class environment of education and employment.
- The **Central Valley Partnership for Citizenship** organizes legal assistance, education, social service agencies, media, youth empowerment, and applied research organizations of California's Central Valley (<http://www.citizenship.net>)
- The **Salinas and Pajaro Valley Small Business Initiative** addresses the effects of migrant workers remaining in the Pajaro Valley during non-agricultural seasons, by providing support to business entrepreneurs in the rural economy (<http://www.elpajarocdc.org/en/salinas-pajaro-valley-small-business-initiative>).
- The **Rai\$ing Change Initiative** is a public-private initiative in South Monterey County attempting to restructure the rural economy through employment and business ownership opportunities that provide a living wage and upward mobility, affordable housing, financial literacy education, and job training for indigenous, isolated non-Spanish-speaking farm worker populations that tend to be poor (<http://www.nrfc.org/redesign/raising.asp>).

CCASSC Counties Poverty Rate Estimates

County	All People	All Families	All Families w/ related children under 18 years.	Families with female householder, no husband present.
National	13%	9.5%	14.9%	28.2%
California	12.4%	9.3%	13.7%	23.9%
Calaveras*	11.8%	8.7%	13.2%	26.4%
Fresno	20%	15.6%	23.3%	36.7%
Kern	18.1%	15.4%	21.2%	32.8%
Kings	15.1%	11.3%	15.2%	30.7%
Madera	14.5%	11.4%	18.3%	25.9%
Mariposa*	14.8%	10.5%	16.4%	23.5%
Merced	19.4%	16.3%	22%	33.1%
San Joaquin	14.1%	11.3%	15.4%	27.8%
San Luis Obispo	11.8%	5%	8.9%	17.2%
Santa Barbara	11.9%	7.6%	12%	27.9%
Stanislaus	13.5%	9.4%	14.1%	26.6%
Tulare	23.7%	19.4%	27.3%	40.2%

Source: US Census Bureau, 2007 American Community Survey (ACS)

*2007ACS data not available, figures from 2000 US Census Bureau.