



September 10, 2009

More Poor, More Uninsured in 2008

- **The number of poor people is the highest it has been since 1960.** There were 39.8 million poor people in the U.S. in 2008, 2.5 million more poor in just one year. The poverty rate, 13.2 percent, is the highest since 1997.
- **Children remain disproportionately poor.** Nineteen percent of all children were poor in 2008, up from 18 percent in 2007. The number of poor children increased by nearly 750,000 in one year.
- **Child poverty is becoming more harsh.** Nearly 6.3 million children were living below *half* the federal poverty line in 2008, or 8.5 percent of all children. For a family of three, the poverty line was \$17,163; half that is only \$8,581. In 2007, 7.8 percent of children were so deeply poor; in 2000, 6.4 percent.
- **With far more unemployed this year, poverty is likely to be worse in 2009 than the 2008 data show.** In 2008, unemployment averaged 5.8 percent. The Economic Policy Institute assumed an average 2009 unemployment rate of 9.3 percent, and based on that projects total poverty in 2009 at 14.7 percent (up from 13.2 percent in 2008). High unemployment will take a disproportionate toll on children and African Americans, whose poverty rates for 2009 are estimated to climb to 25 percent and 30.4 percent, respectively.
- **Poverty continues to be higher for racial and ethnic minorities.** In 2008, nearly one in four African Americans were poor (24.6 percent). More than one-third of African American children lived in poverty (33.9 percent). The poverty rate for Hispanics was 23.2 percent (for Hispanic children, 30.6 percent). For Asian Americans, the poverty rate was 11.6 percent (13.3 percent of Asian American children were poor). For non-Hispanic whites, the poverty rate was 8.6 percent (10.6 percent of non-Hispanic white children lived in poverty).
- **The number of people without health insurance continues to grow.** There were 46.3 million uninsured people in 2008, up from nearly 45.7 million the year before. In 2000, 13.7 percent Americans were uninsured.
- **Fewer and fewer people get insurance through work.** In 2000, 64.2 percent had health coverage through their employers. In 2008, only 58.5 percent had insurance through work. The proportion of uninsured working 18-64 year olds rose from 18.1 percent in 2007 to 18.7 percent in 2008.

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