



Office for
Human Life
Catholic Diocese
of Cleveland

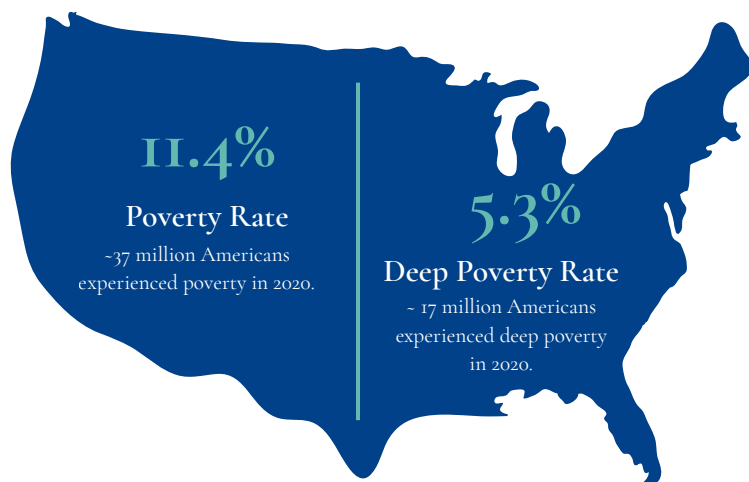
Beyond the Numbers

*A closer look at poverty, human dignity, and
the people behind the statistics.*

Seeing the person who experiences poverty—not simply the “poor person.”

Poverty is more than a number on an income chart. It can affect access to food, housing, healthcare, education, stable employment, and transportation, and can take a serious toll on physical and mental well-being. Catholic teaching calls us to recognize that **although poverty can undermine a person’s social dignity, it can never erase the inherent dignity given by God.**

Poverty in the U.S.A.



\$25,701

Poverty Line for a 4-person
household in 2018.

\$12,870

Deep Poverty for a 4-person
household in 2018.

Federal Poverty Line

The federal poverty line is the minimum annual income established by the federal government to determine whether an individual or family is considered to be living in poverty and eligible for certain public assistance programs.

“Deep Poverty”

Deep poverty is a term used to describe individuals or families living below **50% of the federal poverty line**. It often means living one emergency away from eviction, hunger, utility shutoffs, or the loss of transportation, with few resources available to recover from a setback.

Poverty in Ohio:



Ohio's poverty rate
is higher than the
national rate.

Ohio's Poverty Rate

14.0%

U.S. Poverty Rate (2020)

11.4%

Source: PovertyUSA
U.S. Census Bureau

OHIO OVERVIEW

14.0%

Poverty Rate

1,588,343 people experienced
poverty in 2019.



Deep Poverty Rate

6.3 %

People living in a
household with a total
cash income below 50%
of the federal poverty
threshold



% of Women in
Poverty

15.2%

Percentage of women
experiencing poverty in
Ohio.



Adults with
Disabilities

21.6%

Percentage of adults
with disabilities who
experienced poverty
in Ohio.



Children (under 18)

21.6%

Percentage of children
under age 18 who
experienced poverty in
Ohio.

Data Source & Acknowledgement

The poverty metrics featured in this handout are sourced from PovertyUSA.org, an educational initiative and anti-poverty apostolate of the Catholic Campaign for Human Development (CCHD) under the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB). Unless otherwise noted, data reflects the most recent 2019–2020 reporting period. Please remember that behind every statistic and data point represents a real person, family, and neighbor, possessing the same God-given dignity as every member of the human family.

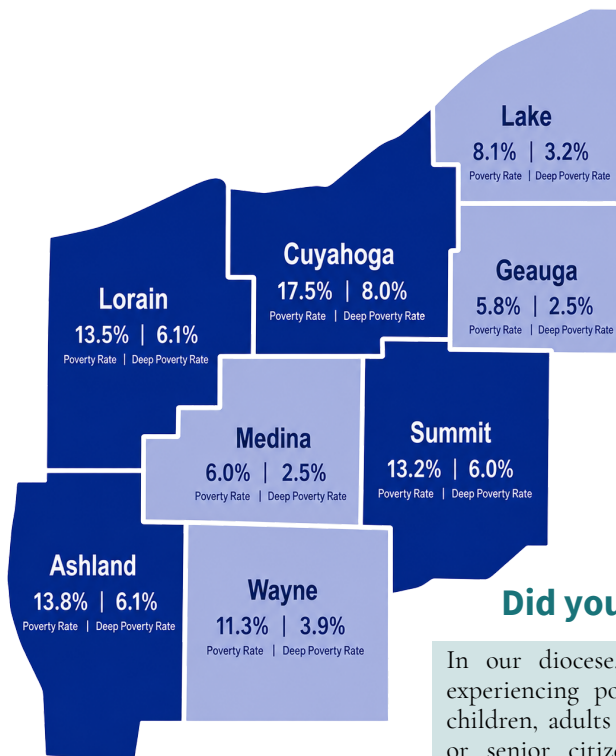


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Poverty in our Diocese:



Did you know?

In our diocese, 235,160 people experiencing poverty are either children, adults with disabilities, or senior citizens. This group accounts for 62.3% of the total poverty number in the Cleveland Diocese.

Who Experiences this Poverty?



Children (under 18)

16.1%

of children across our eight counties. Rates are as high as 1 in 4 children in Cuyahoga County, and 1 in 5 children in Ashland & Lorain Counties.



Women

212,005

women across our diocese. Put another way, 56.1% of people experiencing poverty in the Diocese of Cleveland are women.



People of Color

191,972

people of color across our diocese. In Lorain County, 35% of Black residents experience poverty; in Cuyahoga County, 28.4% of Hispanic residents experience poverty.

DIOCESE OF CLEVELAND OVERVIEW

13.9%

Combined Diocesan
Poverty Rate
(377,641 people)

6.3%

Combined Diocesan
Deep Poverty Rate
(169,253 people)

KEY INSIGHTS ABOUT POVERTY IN OUR DIOCESE



56.6%

of all people experiencing poverty live in **Cuyahoga County**.



Of those experiencing poverty in Cuyahoga County, **approximately 47%** experience deep poverty.



75.1%

of all those experiencing poverty in our diocese live in 1 of 3 counties: **Cuyahoga, Lorain, and Summit**.



The hidden reality of rural poverty.

Rural counties—especially **Ashland**—have higher rates of deep poverty than the national average.



Wayne County has the highest rate of people without health insurance (13.0%).

(People under 65 and below 138% of the poverty line who were uninsured at any time in the year.)



Even in our relatively affluent counties (Geauga and Medina), **nearly 1 in 40** residents live in deep poverty.

Wealthier counties overall may have less poverty, but that doesn't mean acute hardship doesn't exist.

A person experiencing poverty is not a problem to be solved, but a neighbor to be encountered.

No Christian can regard the poor simply as a societal problem; they are part of our “family.” They are one of us...

~Dilexi Te, no. 104

PRAY

Include intercessions for people and families experiencing poverty in your community. Consider incorporating the Church's *Liturgy of the Hours* into your day, joining with the Church in prayer for the poor & vulnerable.

LEARN

Read Pope Leo XIV's Apostolic Exhortation, **On Love for the Poor (Dilexi Te)**. Consider having the Social Action Office lead your parish or ministry group through a poverty simulation.

SERVE

Support parish and community ministries accompanying people in hardship. Go beyond giving when possible: build relationships and encounter the people experiencing poverty.

ADVOCATE

Support policies at the local, state, and national level that protect human dignity and strengthen families. Follow the *Catholic Conference of Ohio (CCO)* and the *USCCB* to stay up to date on action alerts and policy initiatives.