



For Immediate Release

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Poverty Increases Across Virginia, But Strikes Some Geographic Areas Hardest

New report shows increase in poverty in Virginia and includes new locality-by-locality poverty numbers

RICHMOND, VA - About 157,000 Virginians have joined the ranks of the poor since the recession began, according to a new report by The Commonwealth Institute for Fiscal Analysis, and children are 47 percent more likely than adults to live in poverty in Virginia. In 2009, more than one in 10 Virginians lived in poverty.

“The recession threw huge numbers of workers out of their jobs in the past few years, which has resulted in high poverty rates across Virginia,” says Michael Cassidy, President and CEO of The Commonwealth Institute. “Now more than ever, it’s crucial that Virginia maintain important public services for those most impacted by the recession while also investing in Virginia’s future in order to build the foundation for shared prosperity.”

The new report digs further into U.S. Census data and examines poverty in Virginia over time, as well as looking at poverty rates by age, race, education, and geographic area. The report also includes an appendix with total poverty, child poverty, and deep poverty rates for every city and county in the state.

Among the report’s key findings:

- Although poverty disproportionately affects Virginia’s racial minorities, more than half of Virginians living in poverty are white.
- Poverty rates are growing fastest for Virginians with college degrees.
- While statewide poverty rates in Virginia are lower than national averages, the new report shows that in six metropolitan statistical areas in the southern and western parts of the state, poverty rates are actually higher than the national average.
- In 2009, more Virginians fell into deep poverty, which for a family of four meant living on less than \$11,025 a year.
- Almost 23 percent of Virginia’s workers earned wages too low to support a family of four above the 2009 poverty threshold.

“By providing data on poverty rates in specific metropolitan areas and localities, this report documents the extremely high levels of poverty in Virginia’s struggling southern and western areas,” says Cassidy.

The complete report is available online at www.thecommonwealthinstitute.org.

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About The Commonwealth Institute

The Commonwealth Institute for Fiscal Analysis provides credible, independent and accessible information and analyses of fiscal and economic issues with particular attention to the impacts on low- and moderate-income persons.

Our products inform fiscal and budget policy debates and contribute to sound decisions that improve the well-being of individuals, communities and Virginia as a whole. Visit www.thecommonwealthinstitute.org for more information.

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