

**Strategic Recommendations for Expanding
Opportunity and Reducing Poverty in Ohio**
The Ohio Anti-Poverty Task Force

The State of Poverty in Ohio

Bobbie Garber

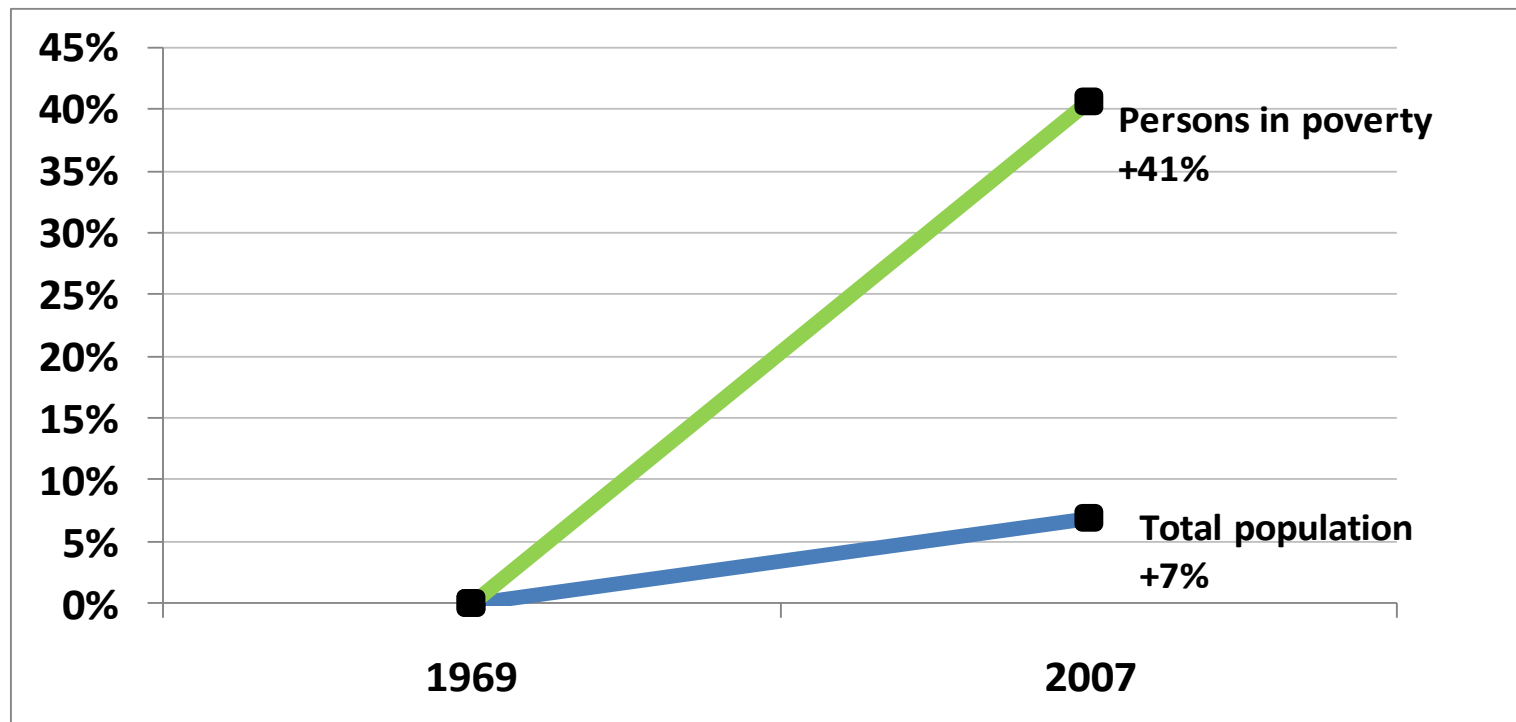
Executive Director

Community Research Partners

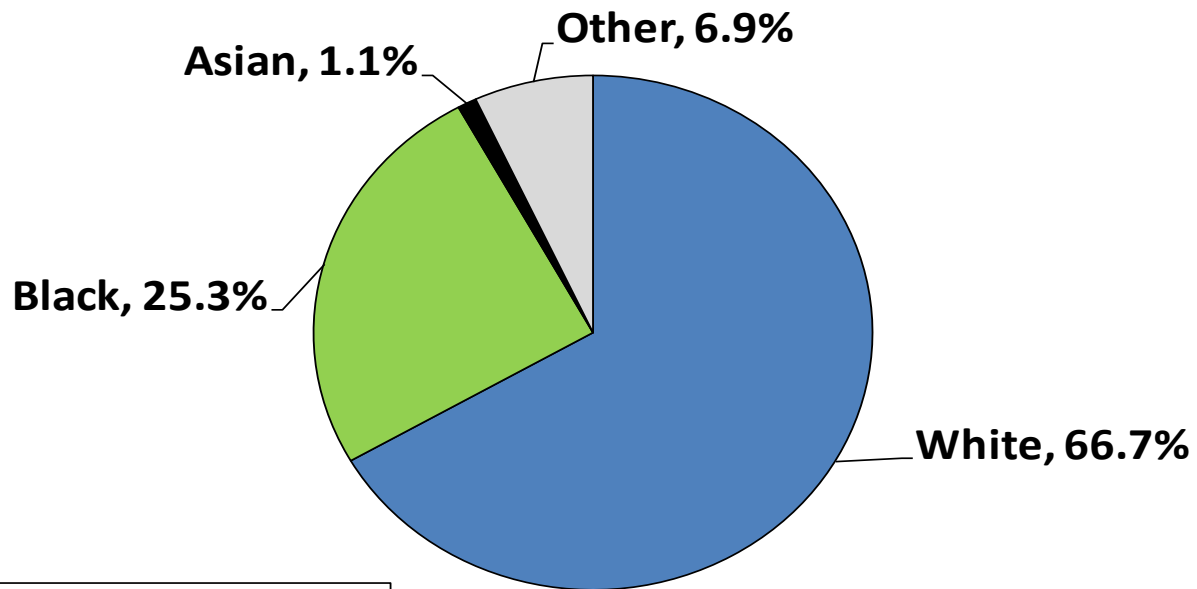
Poverty rates in Ohio

- 2007, 13.1% of Ohioans living in poverty
 - ▲ About 1.46 million people
 - up from 1.2 million in 1999
 - ▲ Above national rate (13.0%)
 - ▲ 10% rate when War on Poverty began in 1960s
- Current picture likely much worse
 - ▲ Unemployment rate
 - 2007: 5.7% Mar. 2009: 9.7%
 - ▲ Food Stamps recipients
 - Jan. 2007: 491,430 AGs Jan. 2009: 592,749 AGs

Poverty increased by nearly 6 times state population growth

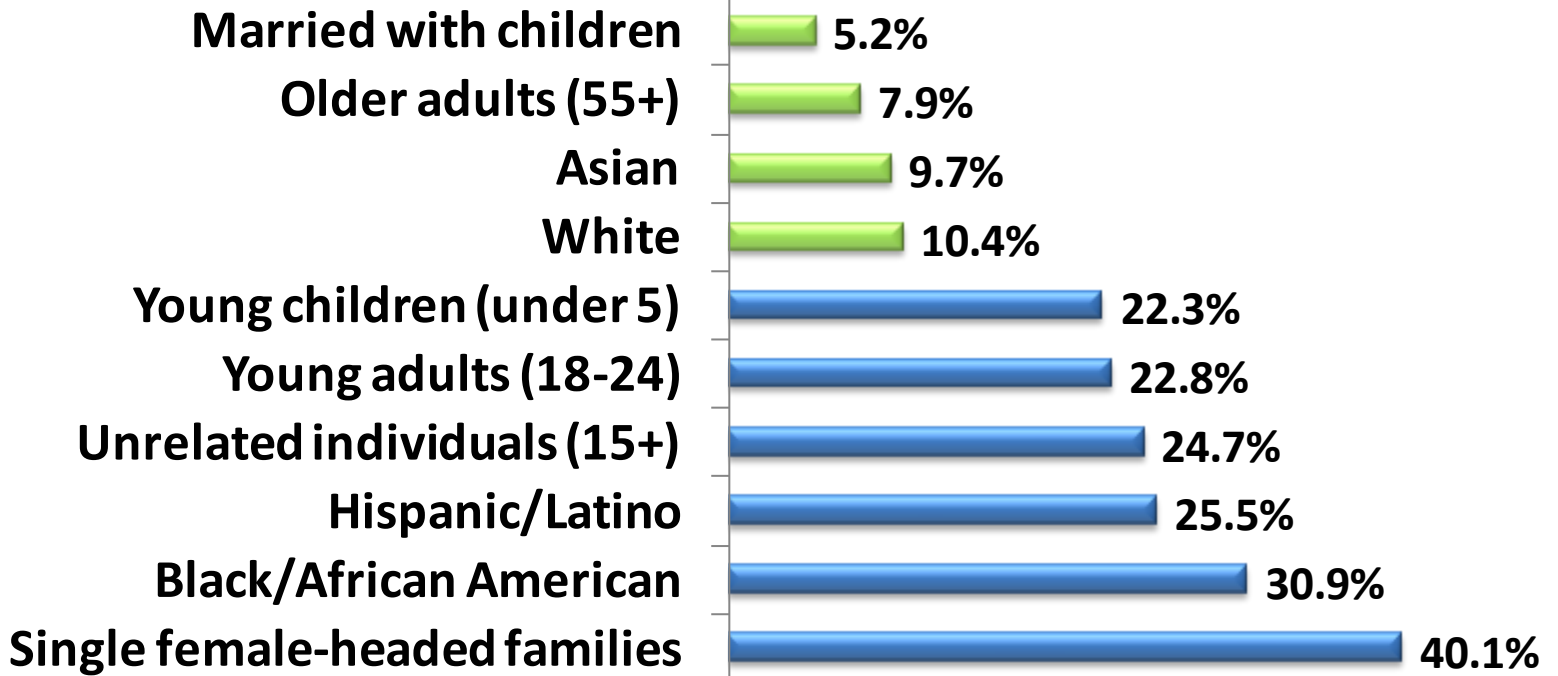


2 of 3 persons in poverty are white



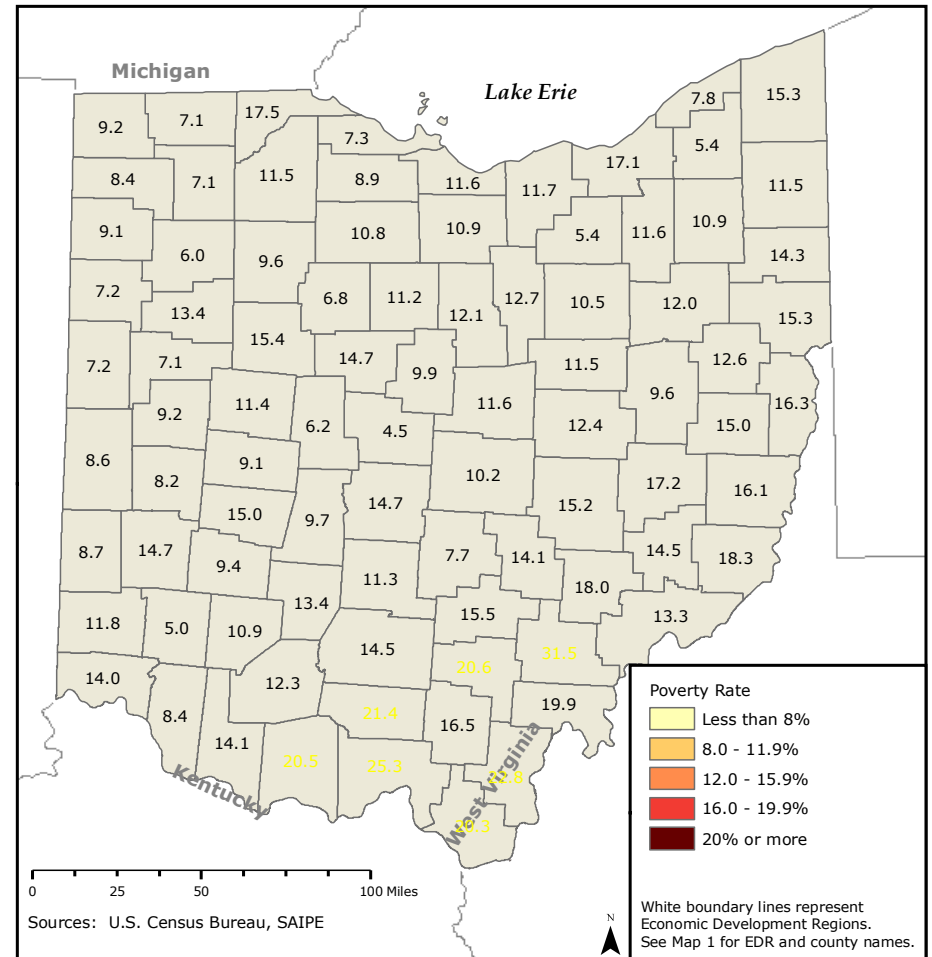
1.46 million persons

Poverty rates vary among groups

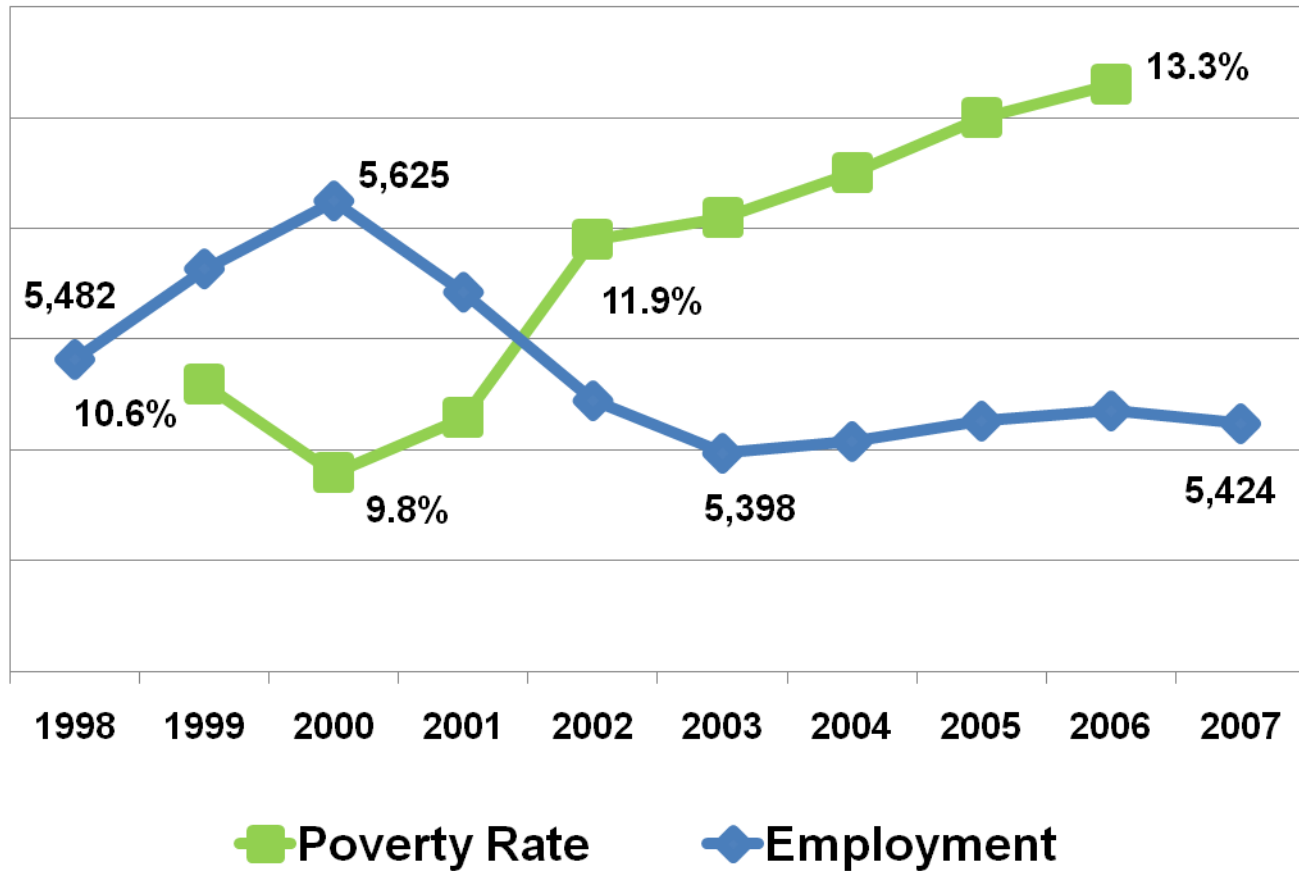


The geography of poverty in Ohio

- Largest concentrations in Northeast and Central regions
- Highest rates in Southern and Southeast
- Poverty moving to the suburbs



Divergent job and poverty trends



About the Task Force and the Conversations on Poverty

Phil Cole

Executive Director

Ohio Association of Community Action Agencies

The Task Force

- Governor Ted Strickland signed an executive order on May 28, 2008 to create the Ohio Anti-Poverty Task Force (Task Force) to develop practical shorter term and longer term strategic recommendations.
- Thirty members were appointed including state agency representatives, faith-based and community non-profit leaders, Ohioans living in poverty, business and labor leaders, and key anti-poverty stakeholders from around the state.

The Task Force

- Over three hundred Ohioans participated in five work groups: Working Poor, Children and Young Adults, Multiple Barriers to Employment, Seniors, and Benchmarks, Measures and Implementation.
- The work of the Task Force was completed in two phases:
 - The first phase produced twenty-three shorter term recommendations that were submitted on September 10, 2008.
 - The second phase resulted in the series of longer term recommendations submitted to the Governor on April 28, 2009.

Conversations on Reducing Poverty

- Led by the Ohio Association of Community Action Agencies (OACAA) and the Ohio Community Action Agency network, twenty-two Regional Conversations on Reducing Poverty were held throughout the state.
- Over 1800 Ohioans, many of whom are low-income, participated and their input informed and strengthened the Task Force's longer term recommendations.

Strategic Recommendations

Presented by Task Force Members:

Bill Kitson, CEO, United Way of Greater Toledo

Rodney Reasonover, President, Ohio Urban Resource System

Joe Gauntner, Director of Employment, Family Services Cuyahoga County

Joyce Probst MacAlpine, Manager Housing and Homelessness Solutions, Montgomery County Office of Family and Children First

Pauline Edwards, Board of Trustees, Columbus-Franklin County Community Action Agency

Executive Summary

- Focused on new ideas proven effective elsewhere and affirming action being considered in Ohio
- A comprehensive four-pronged, multi-year approach:
 - I. Pursuing aggressive and sustained efforts to create job opportunities for low-income Ohioans
 - II. Ensuring foundation stability is in place so individuals and families can take advantage of employment opportunities
 - III. Strengthening investments in children and young adults in an effort to reverse the tide of generational poverty
 - IV. Ensuring transparency, accountability, and leadership in order to effectively implement recommendations

I. Create Opportunities for Economic Advancement

Strategy A: Ensure Public Works Initiatives Provide Jobs for Low-Income Ohioans

- Recommendations:

1. Utilize public works resources to build skills and experience of entry-level and low-income workers.
2. Encourage public works projects to hire low-income and entry-level workers.

I. Create Opportunities for Economic Advancement

Strategy B: Expand Transitional Jobs Programs

- Recommendations:
 1. Expand Transitional Jobs programs through partnerships with state contractors.
 2. Establish a Transitional Workers Initiative to encourage and increase utilization of the Transitional Jobs model.

Strategy C: Expand Social Entrepreneurship

- Recommendations:
 1. Establish a Social Entrepreneurship Initiative to serve as a clearinghouse for funding and central point of contact for technical support and training curriculum.

I. Create Opportunities for Economic Advancement

Strategy D: Maximize the benefit of federal workforce development funds to provide training for low-income populations

- Recommendations:
 1. Establish an interagency strategy for drawing down Food Stamp Employment and Training (FSET) funds.
 2. Implement policies and strategies to assure that the workforce development system is targeting resources to the needs of low-income Ohioans.
 3. Assist local workforce boards to address administrative barriers to effective use of WIA funds and implement innovations and best practices.

I. Create Opportunities for Economic Advancement

Strategy E: Foster and Expand Community Development Financial Institutions and Lending in Low-to-Moderate Income Communities

- Recommendation:
 1. Explore the possibilities of how Community Development Bank and Community Development Credit Union models could be adopted and implemented in various communities and conduct research on successful models in order to guide interested parties on how to adopt and implement a CDB/CDCU model.

Strategy F: Expand the Accessibility and Use of Individual Development Accounts (IDAs) and Promote Financial Literacy Programs

- Recommendation:
 1. Strengthen the savings ability of the working poor through collaboration with financial institutions.

II. Establish Foundational Stability

Strategy A: Strengthen the Safety Net and Maximize Support Packages for Ohioans

- Recommendations:
 1. Strengthen state investments in housing, healthcare, mental health and addiction services, and food assistance.
 2. Strengthen federal advocacy for housing, food assistance, and work-related tax credits.
 3. Streamline and simplify the process for accessing work supports and other benefits.
 4. Coordinate outreach across relevant state agencies and establish data sharing policies to increase access to work supports and public benefits.

II. Establish Foundational Stability

Strategy A: Strengthen the Safety Net and Maximize Support Packages for Ohioans

- Recommendations:
 5. Establish a statewide 2-1-1 information and referral system.
 6. Improve access to needed supports for seniors and disabled Ohioans.
 7. Utilize the Ohio Family Resource Simulator.
 8. Endorse and expand Ohio's 21st Century Transportation Priorities Task Force's recommendations to improve transportation coordination.
 9. Protect families in crisis and ensure they have access to basic utilities including gas, electric, water, and telephone service.

II. Establish Foundational Stability

Strategy B: Strengthen Ohio Work Incentives and Rewards

- Recommendations:
 1. Establish steps to eliminate the Cliff Effect.
 2. Establish a state Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC).
 3. Establish a refundable Child and Dependent Care Tax Credit in Ohio.
 4. Increase Support for Volunteer Tax Preparation Programs.
 5. Reform tax refund anticipation loans (RALs) in Ohio.

II. Establish Foundational Stability

Strategy C: Expand the Use of Informal Supports

- Recommendations:
 1. Expand the Circles Campaign in Ohio.
 2. Expand youth mentoring in Ohio.

III. Invest in Children and Young Adults

- Strategies:
 - A. Pursue strategies to keep children in school.
 - B. Expand efforts to reduce teen pregnancy.
 - C. Strengthen after school and summer programs for children.
 - D. Increase participation in child nutrition programs.
 - E. Continue to invest in early childhood development strategies for children 0-6.
 - F. Establish tax incentives to attract and retain high-quality teachers and other school staff.

IV. Ensure Transparency, Accountability, and Leadership

- Strategies
 - A. Establish Ongoing Interagency Leadership in Implementation
 - B. Track Progress Using Key Indicators
 - C. Establish a Universal System for Measuring State Investments
 - D. Launch Tracking Web Site and Require Annual Report on Progress

Thank You

The Ohio Anti-Poverty Task Force