



Rock County Equity Brief

January 2023

OBSERVE

National Poverty in America Awareness Month

January is National Poverty in America Awareness Month, and this holiday aims to recognize the severe poverty conditions that many live in. More than 40 million Americans live in poverty. Within the U.S., many are still deprived of three meals a day, quality education, and even clean and healthy drinking water. Many can't even afford warm clothes during winter. Hunger and malnutrition, limited access to education and other essential services, social discrimination and exclusion, disabilities, and restricted access to participation in the democratic process. These are just some of the many manifestations of poverty.

The question is, how can we end poverty? Well, you may not completely eradicate poverty, but you can help improve the living conditions of hundreds, if not thousands, of people. All you have to do is acknowledge the problem and devise ways to fix it. As Nelson Mandela said, "Like slavery and apartheid, poverty is not natural. It is man-made and it can be overcome and eradicated by the action of human beings."

January Day(s) Group, Culture or Cause Recognized

- 1 New Year's Day
- 1 Global Family Day/World Peace Day
- 4 World Braille Day
- 15 World Religion Day
- 16 Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
- 26 International Customs Day
- 27 [International Holocaust Remembrance Day](#)



For more information on National Poverty in America Awareness Month, visit

<https://www.census.gov/newsroom/stories/poverty-awareness-month.html>



RECOGNIZE

Shirley Chisholm

Shirley Chisholm was the first Black woman elected to the United States Congress, the first black candidate for a major party's nomination for President of the United States, and the first woman to run for the Democratic Party's presidential nomination. In her seven terms in Congress, Chisholm became a leader in anti-poverty and education reform policy. In addition to sponsoring numerous health, education, childcare, and employment-focused bills, she was also a member of the House Subcommittee on Equal Opportunity. During the 1970s, she was part of the fight to save the Office of Economic Opportunity and preserve the Economic Opportunity Act, which established the Community Action network and would eventually become the Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) that we know today. During her time in Congress, Chisholm repeatedly refused to vote for military funding as long as poverty existed in the United States and called for a national living wage.

Source:

<https://www.womenshistory.org/education-resources/biographies/shirley-chisholm>

LEARN

U.S. Poverty

From the U.S. Census Bureau, [Current Population Survey \(CPS\)](#), Annual Social and Economic Supplements (CPS ASEC), [Report P60-273: Income and Poverty in the United States: 2020-Current Population Reports \(September 14, 2021\)](#):

- The official poverty rate in 2020 was 11.4 percent, up 1.0 percentage point from 10.5 percent in 2019. This is the first increase in poverty after five consecutive annual declines.
- Between 2019 and 2020, the poverty rate increased for non-Hispanic Whites and Hispanics. Among non-Hispanic Whites, 8.2 percent were in poverty in 2020, while Hispanics had a poverty rate of 17.0 percent. Among the major racial groups examined in this report, Blacks had the highest poverty rate (19.5 percent), but did not experience a significant change from 2019. The poverty rate for Asians (8.1 percent) in 2020 was not statistically different from 2019.
- Poverty rates for people under the age of 18 increased from 14.4 percent in 2019 to 16.1 percent in 2020. Poverty rates also increased for people aged 18 to 64 from 9.4 percent in 2019 to 10.4 percent in 2020. The poverty rate for people aged 65 and older was 9.0 percent in 2020, not statistically different from 2019.
- Between 2019 and 2020, poverty rates increased for married-couple families and families with a female householder. The poverty rate for married-couple families increased from 4.0 percent in 2019 to 4.7 percent in 2020. For families with a female householder, the poverty rate increased from 22.2 percent to 23.4 percent.

Poor People's Campaign

Poor Peoples Campaign was started by Martin Luther King, Jr, and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference in Dec 1967. King felt that the challenges of human rights, not just civil rights, had to be addressed. He saw moral issues in the enduring poverty that hurt people across races, cultures, and regions. He planned for a great assembly of poor to come to Washington, DC, in the spring of 1968 to demand economic equity in work, education, housing, and other spaces. Though he was assassinated in April, the Poor Peoples Campaign mass assembly went forth in May and continued for 42 days. Unfortunately, significant anti-poverty legislation and restructuring of the economy to meet the needs of all were not met.

Poor Peoples Campaign was revived in 2018 under the leadership of Rev Dr William Barber and Rev Dr Liz Theoharris with partners from Repairers of the Breach and Kairos Center for Religion, Rights and Social Justice. Currently there are chapters in 43 states, including Wisconsin. It is a movement of people impacted by systemic racism, poverty, the war economy, and environmental devastation. It is built on the organized power of the poor coming together across issues and regions to transform political, economic, and moral structures. It is a non-partisan, non-violent, fusion campaign, joining with other organizations which have similar goals

Source:

<https://www.poorpeoplescampaign.org/committee/wisconsin/>



More than **40 million** people in the United States live in poverty

ACTION

Review Poor Peoples Campaign website (www.poorpeoplescampaign.org) for information on national, state, and local organizing events

Contact local coordinators to learn how you can help organize a movement led by impacted people in our region.

Sally McCoy, Rock Co Coordinator,
rockcopp@gmail.com

Danielle Thai, Dane Co Coordinator,
danecopp@gmail.com

Communicate how the medical debt, cost of housing, student debt and other financial challenges have affected you, your family or community. Post your 2-3 minute story on WI PPC “We Won’t Be Silent Anymore” site map. (Instructions for making a video on the website) By clicking a pin located at different parts of the state, viewers can hear how people across Wisconsin experience financial, physical, emotional, and social stressors.

Advocate for early childhood education programs which return \$7.30 in savings on reduced poverty, lower incarceration rates and better health outcomes for every \$1 spent. Support your local Head Start programs by asking them what they need to help more children and families. Consider volunteering your time or contributing to their emergency fund with diapers, food, gas cards or money for hotel rooms.

Join the Healthcare Action Day at the Capitol March 22. Consult the PPC website or email Sally or Danielle for more information.

Participate in “Healthcare is a Human Right” initiative of WI PPC, which demands Medicaid expansion as part of the budget process. Thirty-nine other states have made the expansion. In addition, the Initiative demands maintenance of healthcare coverage for thousands of people who would be uninsured when the federal Public Health Emergency is terminated. Begun during the pandemic, the Public Health Emergency provided for continuing coverage for eligible Wisconsin residents. Some estimate that as many as 300,000 people in our state will lose coverage when the Emergency ends. Sign online petition <https://tinyurl.com/wihealthcare> for the Joint Finance Committee making the requests for the expansion of healthcare access (poorpeoplescampaign.org/committee/wisconsin). The signed petitions will be delivered to the committee March 22.

Learn about the intersection of COVID, race and income under the LEARN tab of national PPC website. Developed by the UN Sustainability Development Solutions Network and Poor Peoples Campaign, the project represents every US county, providing information on income, racial composition, death rates from COVID, housing and police violence. An interactive map allows the viewer to look at any US county data.

Learn about EXPO, ex-incarcerated persons organizing and their WI Transformational Justice Campaign, promoting policies that prevent people from going to prison, provide justice within prisons, and help people returning from prison flourish in the community.

Contact Mark Rice, 608-843-0171, ricermark@gmail.com

Contact members of the Joint Finance Committee before or at their public hearings in April and let them know how inadequate healthcare coverage affects you, your family, and clients.

EVENTS



Martin Luther King Jr. Commemoration

*January 14th 2pm
Blackhawk Technical College
Central Campus – 6004 S County Rd G*

Rock County Black History Program

*February 15th 12pm-1pm
Daniel Hale Williams Resource Center
(DWRC)*