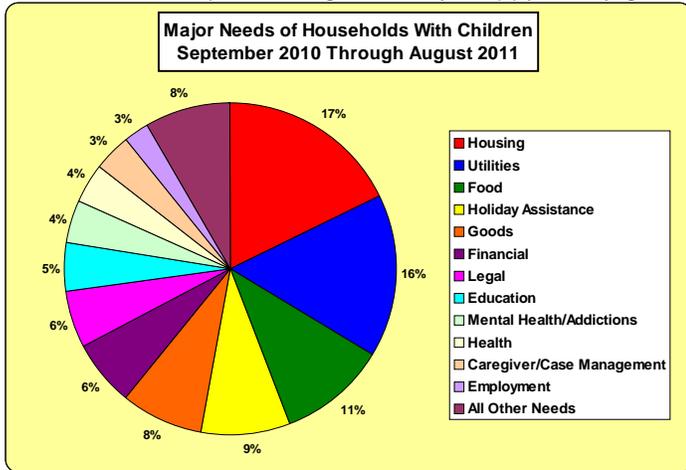


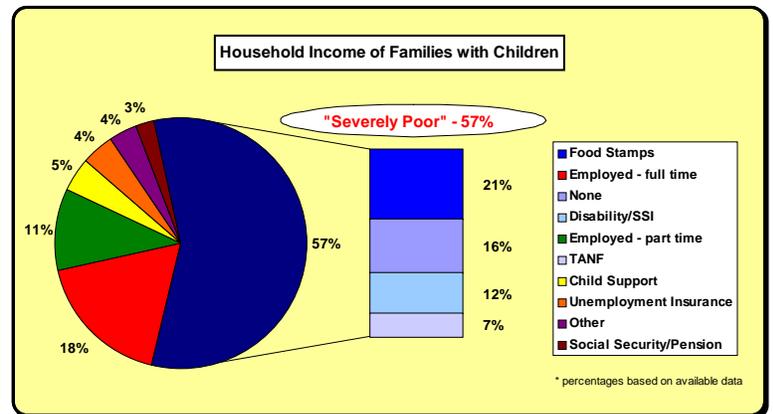
Kids Suffer as Economy Sours

According to **American Community Survey (ACS)** data released by the *U.S. Census Bureau* on September 22, 2011, **Indiana's poverty rate increased to 15.3% in 2010 (compared to 14.4% in 2009)**. This translates into tough living conditions for **Hoosier children: 21.7% (342,172) live in poverty**. The economy continues to sputter as the unemployment rate hovers near 9%. Without a job, raising a healthy, happy family goes from challenging to nearly impossible.



- From September 2010 through August 2011, Connect2Help responded to calls for help from people with more than **303,000 children** living in their households.
- Meeting basic needs, such as paying for **housing, utilities and food**, were the biggest challenges for families with children.
- These needs are primary for families at all income levels. However, nearly **a third of these households (32%) had at least one family member who was unemployed**; this is a 29% increase compared to the same time period in 2006/2007, before the "Great Recession" began.
- Another 6%, more than **4,300 families**, reported that their **hours and/or income had been recently reduced**.

- Fifty-seven percent (57%*)** of the families had income only from public assistance benefits or no income at all, putting them into a category the ACS describes as the "**severely poor**." These are households earning below half of the Federal Poverty Guidelines, which is \$9,155 or less for a family of three. **ACS data** indicate that almost **7% of all Hoosiers** fall into this category.
- The majority of the households (**65%**) were **single-parent families**, a demographic linked with higher poverty levels; 24% were two-parent families; and 11% were extended families or families who were "doubled-up and sharing."



- For more than **4,800 families**, "doubling-up and sharing" was not even an option; they made the tough decision to move into **emergency shelter**. However, even after making this difficult choice, **14% (700 families) were not accepted** into shelter. The main reason was a lack of space.
- For those fortunate to remain in their homes, paying for utilities became the next challenge. There were more than **15,500 requests for help paying an electric, gas or water bill**. Unfortunately, **14% were not able to receive assistance**. The main reason was that the household did not meet the requirements for an existing resource; this included those who had already received help from a resource once during the year and could not get help a second time. **Nearly a third (32%) of those seeking utility help were not able to get it because there were simply no resources left in the community**.
- Even something that seems so simple, **providing nutritious family meals, was a struggle for nearly 10,000 households with 33,000 children**. Emergency food pantries are largely volunteer-driven entities that vary widely in geographic coverage, open availability and eligibility requirements. While 92% of those seeking emergency food received referrals to food pantries to help feed their families, **8% of the households with 9,778 children** did not. The main reason was that there was no resource on the day that the family needed the referral. This data is in line with **Feeding America's** recently released "**Map the Meal Gap**," which reveals that 16.2% of Hoosiers are "food insecure." For Hoosier children, the insecurity rate is 24.5%
- The reality is, in a tough economy, resources to aid even those most in need are stretched thin. As a single-point of entry into the human services delivery system, Connect2Help 2-1-1 will work to ensure that these precious resources are maximized to their fullest potential, by getting the right person to the right agency in the shortest amount of time.