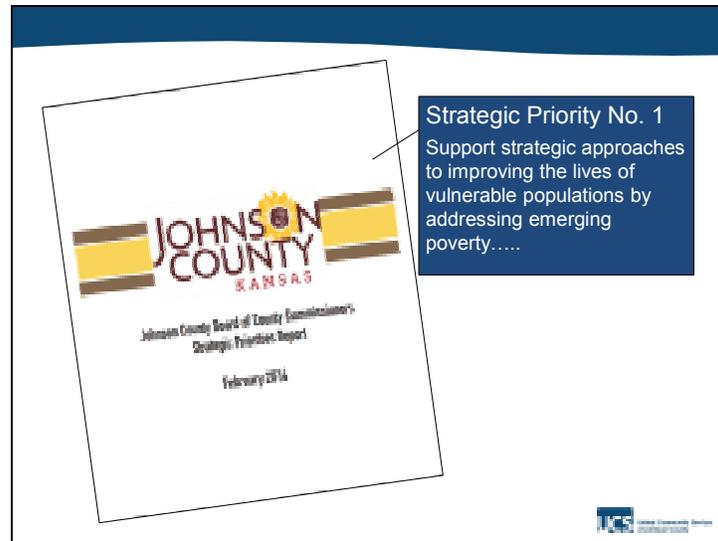


Slide 1



A year ago, the Board of County Commissioners adopted as its top strategic priority to improve the lives of vulnerable populations by addressing emerging poverty. Every county department is being asked to think about what it can do to more strategically to address poverty – from program modifications and enhancements, examination of policies and practices, to new collaborations or efficiencies.

Poverty is a complex issue, without a single solution. Research has identified any number of evidenced-based programs, policies and practices. Selecting the ones that are right for a particular department or agency first requires an understanding of who is affected by poverty in our community. This presentation is intended to start that learning process.

Slide 2



**UCS** United Community Services  
of Johnson County

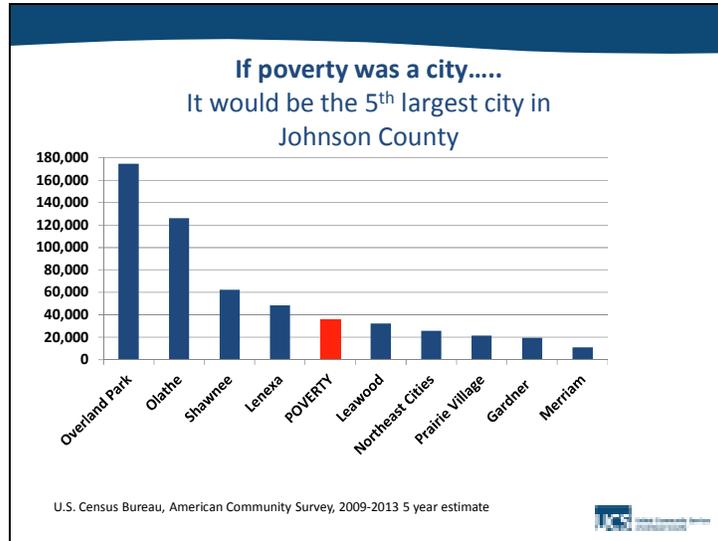
**Reduce Poverty and Increase Opportunity**

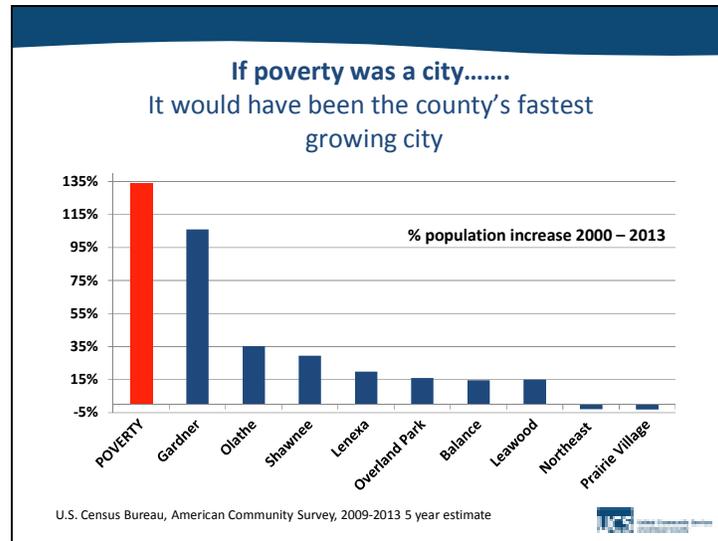
**Johnson County Poverty Trends**

Karen Wulfkuhle, Executive Director  
United Community Services of Johnson County  
12351 W 96 Terrace, Suite 200, Lenexa, Kansas 66215  
913-438-4764  
[ucsjoco@ucsjoco.org](mailto:ucsjoco@ucsjoco.org)

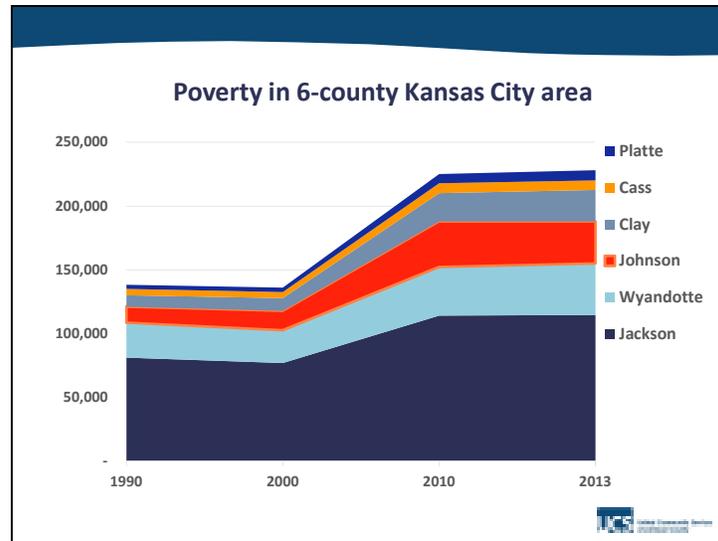
United Community Services of Johnson County is a nonprofit planning agency serving this community for nearly 50 years. The agency was asked to work with the County on the poverty component of this strategic priority.

This presentation is based primarily on data from the U.S. Census Bureau.





If growth continues at the same rate during over the next 13 years, more than 80,000 county residents would be poor by 2026. Or 1 in 8 of the county's population.



As part of the big picture, it's important to understand that growing poverty is not just an issue that affects Johnson County. About 225,000 people in our six county metropolitan area have income below the federal poverty level. "Suburbanization of poverty" means a growing proportion of the this nation's poor are now living in the suburbs, rather than urban centers or rural areas. During the 1990s, about 1 in 5 of the metro-area poor lived in non-urban counties. Today, it's 1 in 3.

While Jackson and Wyandotte Counties account for the largest share of the poor, since 2000 their combined number of poor increased by 50%, compared to a 120% increase for the 4 suburban counties combined – that's Platte, Cass and Clay in Missouri and Johnson County. Johnson County was home to 1 in 11 of the region's poor in 1990, today's it's home to 1 in 7 of the KC area poor.

The experts tell us that this growth in the suburbs is due to a variety of factors. Some of the growth in poverty is due to people with lower incomes moving to the suburbs from urban areas, or rural areas. They move here for the same reasons our grandparents, parents, or we moved here - good jobs, safe neighborhoods and quality education. But the growth in poverty cannot be attributed solely to people moving into the county. People with poverty level incomes have always lived in Johnson County. And in the past few years, many long-time suburban residents have seen their income slide with the recession, or their wages have not increased to keep up with inflation, or available jobs don't pay high enough wages, or individuals have experienced other barriers or challenges to being employed.



### How is poverty defined? 2014 Poverty Guidelines

Persons in family/household	<50% FPL	<100% FPL	<200% FPL
	Extreme Poverty	Poverty	Low-Income
1	\$5,835	\$11,670	\$23,340
2	\$7,865	\$15,730	\$31,460
3	\$9,895	\$19,790	\$39,580
4	\$11,925	\$23,850	\$47,700
Each additional person add	\$2,030	\$4,060	\$8,120

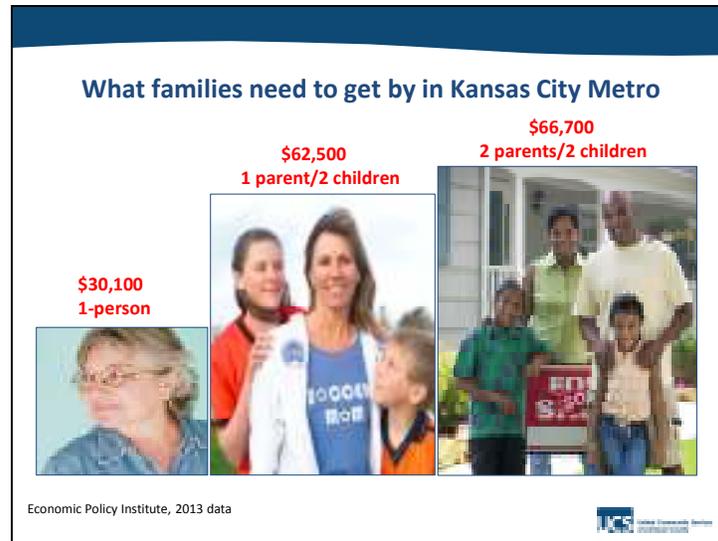
Source: U.S. Census Bureau



The official definition of poverty is based on a model created in the 1960s. It is intended to serve as a measure of the number and proportion of the population who are economically deprived. The income thresholds set by the US Census Bureau are the same for the contiguous United States, and adjusted annually.

The Census Bureau measures not only those who fall below the 100% of the poverty threshold, but it also measures those with income that is less than half, or 50% of the federal poverty level, as well as the number that have income that is up to 2 times the federal poverty level.

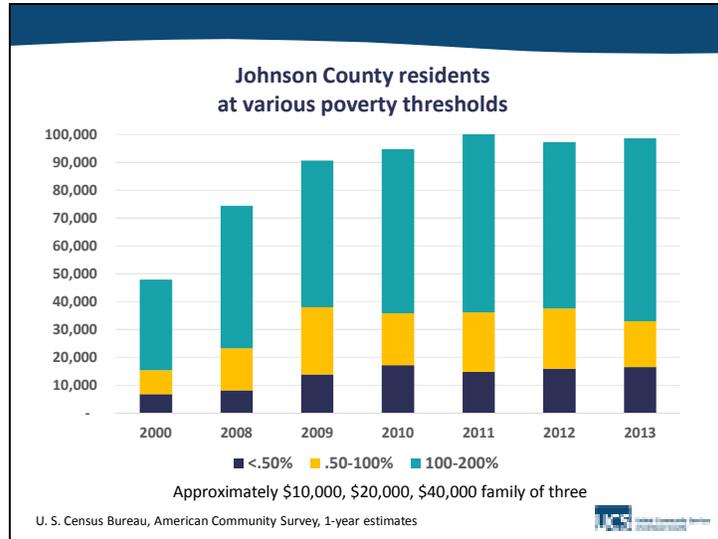
The poverty threshold has multiples purposes: The federal government uses it to allocate funds to states and communities; federal, state and local programs use it to establish program eligibility; and it helps our country and local communities understand the scope and trends overtime related to income insufficiency, although it is a rather inadequate measure, when compared to what it actually costs to live in a specific community



According to calculations by the Economic Policy Institute, what it takes to maintain an economically secure household far exceeds even the 200% of poverty threshold. In the Kansas City metro, it requires more than \$60,000 a year to meet the basic needs of a family of three or four, which equals a salary of about \$30.00 an hour. For a one person household, the estimate is about \$30,000, or close to \$15.00 an hour.

Nearly 40% of the jobs in the metro area pay less than \$15 an hour. Only about 20% of jobs pay more than \$30.00 an hour. So the poverty conversation has to also be a conversation about good jobs.

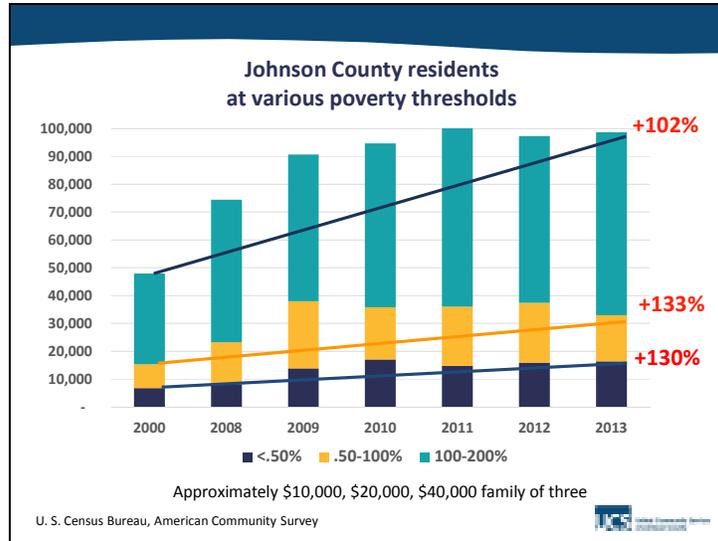
Slide 8



The data on the charts represent people; people who live in our community and have insufficient income to sustain their household.

This chart shows the cumulative totals for three poverty thresholds: <less than 50%, 100% and 200% of the federal poverty level.

The bottom dark blue represents those with income < 50% of the federal poverty level. The middle gold represents those between 50 and 100%, and the top bar shows the number between 100 and 200% of the federal poverty level.



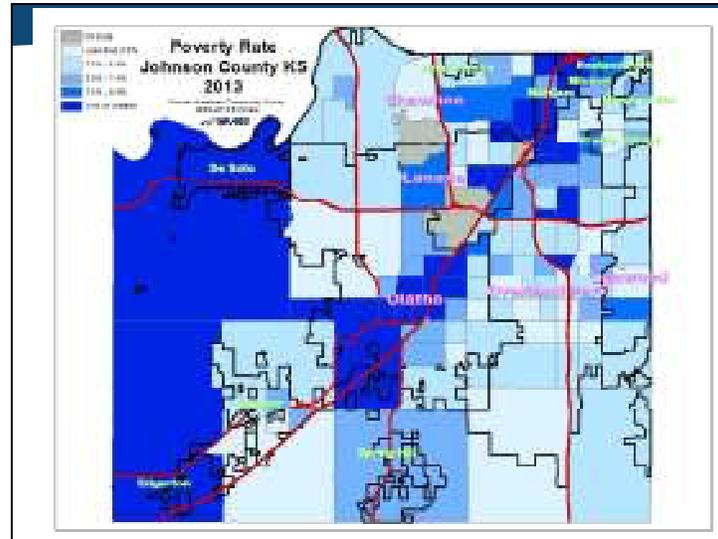
By 2013, nearly 100,000 people have income below 200% of the federal poverty level. To put that in perspective – that number of people would almost fill both Arrowhead and Kauffman stadiums.

Poverty as measured at all three thresholds more than doubled since 2000. As a comparison, the general population went up 26% during these 13 years.

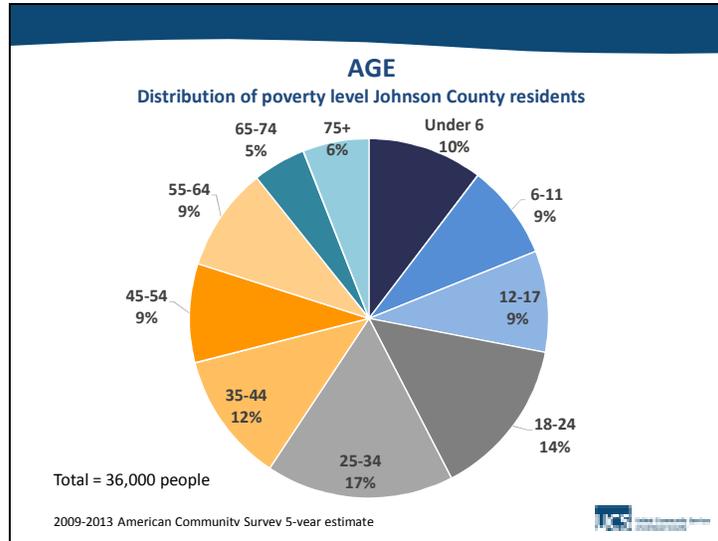
Changes in Johnson County from 2000 to 2013				
	2000		2013	
	Number	Poverty Rate	Number	Poverty Rate
People below 50% of poverty <b>Extreme poverty</b>	6,810	1.5%	15,720	2.9%
People below 100% of poverty <b>Poverty</b>	15,330	3.4%	35,810	6.5%
People below 200% of poverty <b>Low-income</b>	48,300	10.8%	97,520	17.8%
U.S. Census Bureau: 2000 Census; American Community Survey 5-year estimates, 2009-2013				

The numbers on this chart summarize the change in financial well-being since 2000.

How does Johnson County compare to the state of Kansas or US? Our poverty rate is lower, the Kansas poverty rate is 13.7%, and the national 15.4%, compared to Johnson County at 6.5%. But the increase since 2000 in both number and rate, has been much more dramatic in Johnson County.

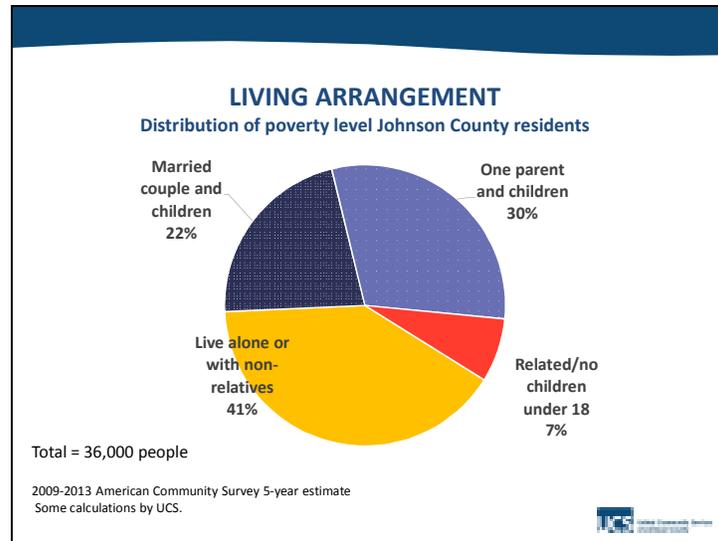


While the County's poverty rate is 6.5%, this map divided by census tracts demonstrates that it can be higher or lower depending on location in the county. It also demonstrates that people with poverty level incomes live all across the county. Nearly 20% of the census tracts in the county have poverty rates higher than 13% (or twice the county-wide average). Seven tracts are higher than 20%.



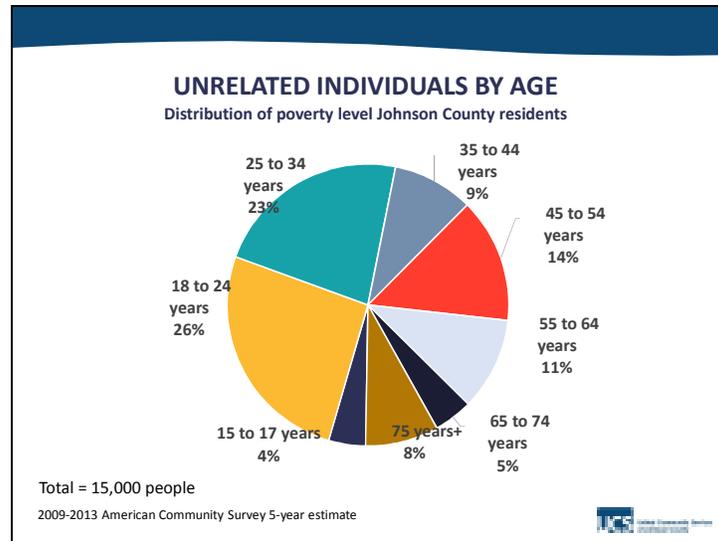
The Census Bureau provides a large amount of detail about people who live in poverty, but most is only available for those below the 100% threshold. All the charts going forward describe people at the 100% level of poverty. And these charts look at the proportion of the poor that fit a certain characteristic, rather than the poverty rate. Of the 36,000 people who are poor, 10% are under age 6, 9% are ages 6-11, 9% are ages 12-17, and so on around the pie. This is not the same as the percentage of an age group that is below the poverty level – that number would represent the poverty rate. The goal with this presentation is to show distribution of the poor in order to hone in on the largest groups that are experiencing poverty in order to better target resources and strategies.

While people at all ages are struggling financially, the younger population groups account for the largest number of the poor. Children and youth under 18 represent 3 in 10 of the poor. Ages 18-34 account for another 3 in 10. That's 6 in 10 of the poor that are under age 35.



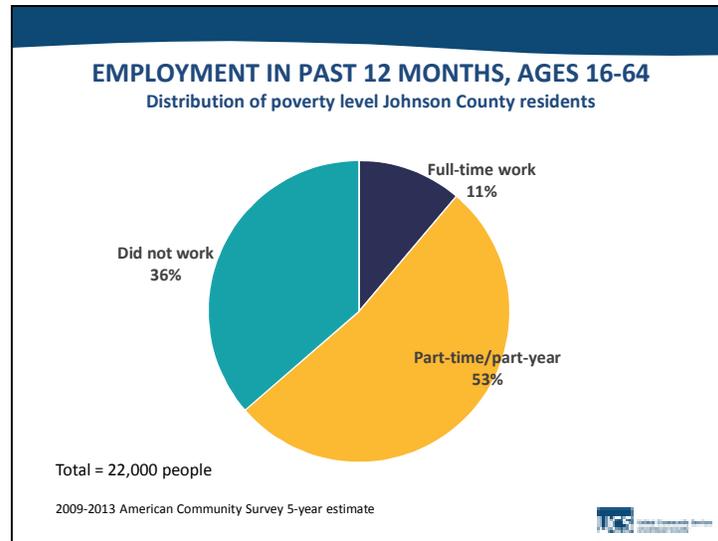
This slide looks at living arrangement for people with income below the poverty level. This isn't household units, rather the total number of people and where they live. What this slide tells us is that slightly more than half of the poor live in family households that include children under 18. Of those, a little less than half live in a married couple family and a little more than half live in a family headed by an unmarried parent. This parent is more often divorced, rather than never married. On the other side of the pie are people that don't have children living with them – these are mostly adults who live alone or with non-relatives.

The largest category living with income below the federal poverty level is what the census bureau calls unrelated individuals. The gold slice represents individuals ages 16 and older who do not live with a relative. This group accounts for 2 in 5 of the poor. In the total population, this group accounts for about 2 in 12 of the population, and is therefore highly overrepresented in the poverty population.



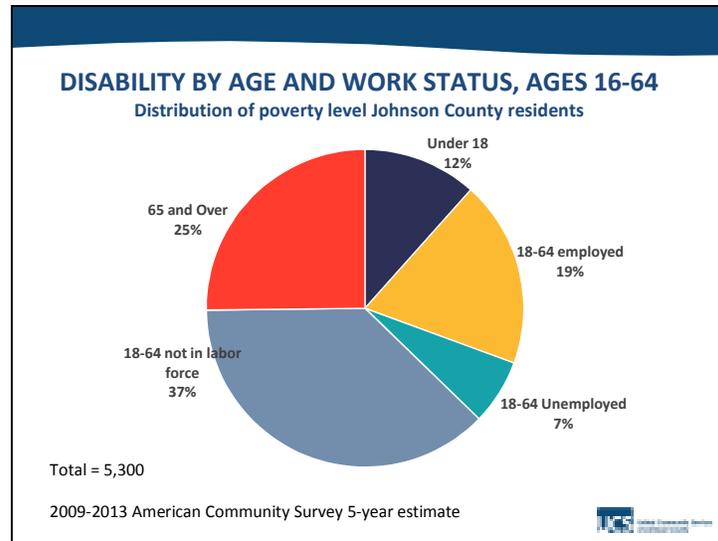
Because the category of “Unrelated Individuals” is so large it warrants a closer look. These individuals account for nearly ½ of the poor. Unrelated individuals have a 16% poverty rate, a rate that is almost triple the county’s overall poverty rate. This category has grown dramatically. And while you might think that the majority are young adults or elderly, 60% are between ages 25 and 64, and more often females.

While safety net services are sparse for families with children; few if any safety net supports exist for adults without children, unless the person is disabled.



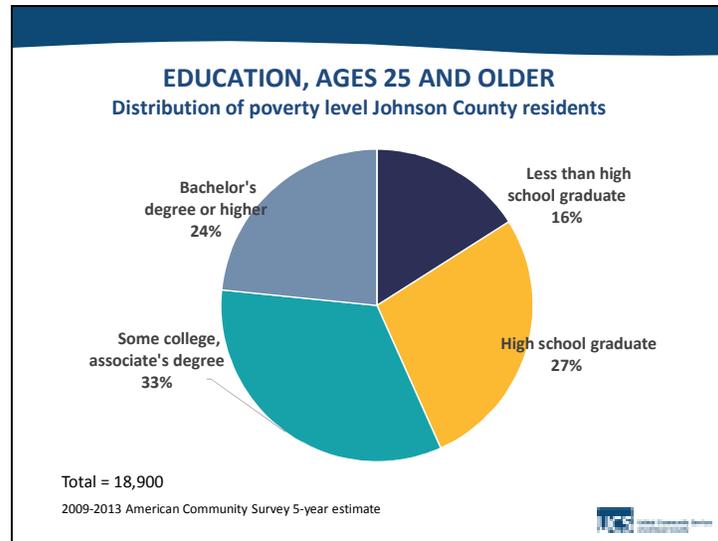
This chart looks at adults with income below the poverty level by work status.

This represents about 22,000 people, or slightly more than half of the poor. What the data tell us is that most of the working age poor are doing just that -- working, yet they do not work enough hours or earn high enough wages to rise above the poverty level. More than 1 in 10 poor adults worked full time, year-round yet their full time wages still kept them below the federal poverty level. More than half worked part time or part year. The 36% that didn't work includes people with disabilities who have self-reported that they are unable to work.



About 5,000 of the county's poor have a disability, defined by the Census Bureau as a long-lasting physical, mental, or emotional condition. This condition can impede a person from being able to work at a job or business.

The disabled are twice as likely to be poor as the non-disabled population. Most who have a disability and live in poverty are between the ages of 18 and 64. Almost half in that age group are in the labor force, although not all are employed. The largest portion of the disabled who are poor are either not able to work or older than 65. So for the largest portion of this population, workforce strategies are probably not an option.



Another factor that can influence poverty and employment is education. While we know that poverty rates are higher for those without a high school or college degree – the data show that of adults over age 25 and living in poverty, the majority has at least some college – with 1 in 4 having a bachelor’s degree or higher. So, education is not the key strategy for many poor adults.

### Johnson County residents who are poor

- The majority are white.
- The majority are U.S. citizens.
- The majority of poor families do not receive cash public assistance benefits.
- The majority of poor families include at least one worker.
- The majority of poor adults have at least some college education.

U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2009-2013 5-year estimate



**National data trends**

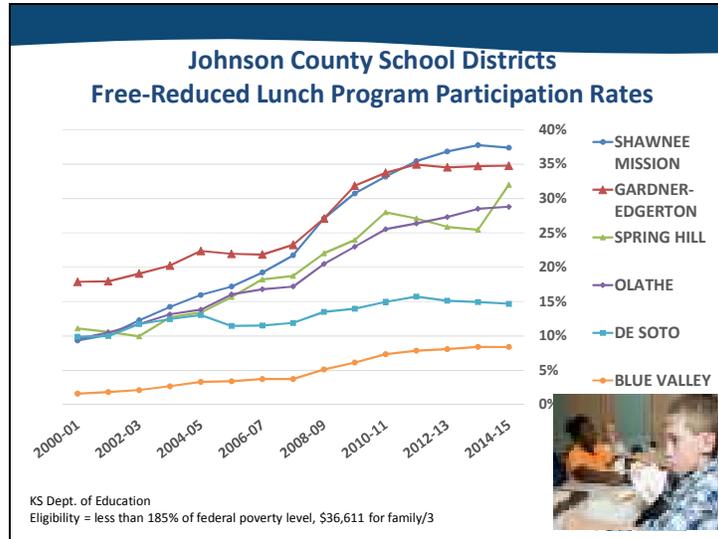
- Significant numbers of people move into poverty throughout their lives.
- People cycle in and out of poverty over the course of their lives.
- Most people who become poor do not spend a long time in poverty.
- The likelihood of becoming poor is higher for blacks, Hispanics, those in households headed by women, and those with lower levels of education.
- Job losses or pay cuts most often trigger poverty spells.
- Job gains and pay raises most often lift a household out of poverty.

Source: The Urban Institute



The data from the census bureau can tell us a lot, but there are some things that it doesn't tell us. It tells us about the people estimated to be below the poverty threshold during a certain reporting period; but it doesn't tell us if they are the same people that were counted in a previous period.

So we turn to national longitudinal research to help us understand a little more about poverty.



To this point, the data has come from the Census Bureau –data that is based on estimates. This chart represents local data available on an annual basis. This is the free and reduced school lunch program. The table shows the percentage of children enrolled by district. It demonstrates the same dramatic increase in people that are struggling financially starting in the early 2000s and accelerating through the recession, and for most school districts, the numbers continue to climb.

Enrollment for free lunch is based on 135% of poverty, less than \$27,000 and reduced lunch program is 185%, or less than \$37,000 for a family of three.

County-wide, more than 1 in 4 students participates in the program, up from about 1 in 10 a decade ago. 24,000 students are enrolled this school year. Every district has seen their own participation rate double or triple in the past 10 years.

**What will it take to reduce poverty  
and increase opportunity?**

**Good jobs with ready workforce**

- Jobs that offer competitive wages, predictable work schedules, paid leave and opportunities for advancement
- Skill-building via workforce and vocational training, apprenticeships and enhanced higher education curricula



 Tarrant County Community College  
TARRANT COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Strategies in the three areas researchers have identified as the most effective to reduce poverty and increase opportunities: Good Jobs

As national and local data show, most poor adults work, yet they are still poor. Work should pay enough to ensure that workers and their families can avoid poverty. And, wages aren't the only important consideration. Other factors, in addition to wages, make a job a good job. Things like paid leave, predictable and responsive work schedules and advancement opportunities. These factors, along with adequate wages, allow workers to meet their families' needs and save for the future.

Preparing the workforce is another area for attention. For workers without the necessary skills for today's jobs, programs are needed that build skills for the jobs that are in demand today and in the future.

**What will it take to reduce poverty  
and increase opportunity?**

**Opportunities for healthy development and learning**

- Early learning programs to give infants and toddlers a good start in life
- School success
- Development of skills that are in demand



The image contains three photographs. The first shows two young children playing with colorful blocks. The second shows a group of children sitting at a table, looking at a book together. The third shows a young woman wearing a graduation cap and gown, holding a diploma.



The logo for United Way Community Services is located in the bottom right corner of the slide.

Strategies in the three areas researchers have identified as the most effective to reduce poverty and increase opportunities: Health development and learning.

Helping children have a good start in life, helping children and youth be successful in school, and helping young adults develop skills in demand in the workplace are central to reducing poverty. Quality education from birth through post secondary is critical to reducing poverty and increasing opportunity today and in the future.

**What will it take to reduce poverty  
and increase opportunity?**

**Safety Net and Work Supports**

- Public and community resources to meet basic needs, and promotion of health, wellness and safety
- Supports to stabilize individuals and families when they work, or sustain them when they cannot work



Strategies in the three areas researchers have identified as the most effective to reduce poverty and increase opportunities: Safety Net and Work Supports.

No one should fall into poverty when they cannot work or work is not available or pays so little that they cannot make ends meet. Safety net and work support programs can help build individuals' skills, address impediments to long term employment, and provide short term assistance to fill gaps between economic instability and stability. The safety net and work supports can also provide long-term support for those who lack the ability to care for themselves.

This category includes the mainstream federal and state programs such as social security, Supplemental Security Income, Temporary assistance for needy families and Kancare. It also includes supports like child care, an essential support for working parents, Earned Income Tax Credit, preventive health care, and emergency assistance for basic needs

Safety Net and Work Supports		
WORK SUPPORTS	BASIC NEEDS	HEALTH, WELLNESS AND SAFETY
Child Care	Emergency Aid	Child/Adult Abuse
Job Training	Housing	Child Welfare
Social Security	Nutrition	Medicaid / Medicare
SSI / SSDI	Utility	Health Care
Temporary Assistance to Needy Families	Assistance	Mental/Behavioral Health
Earned Income and Child Care Tax Credits		Physical/Developmental Disabilities
Unemployment Insurance		Substance Abuse
Vocational Rehabilitation		



This table offers a broad outline of Safety Net and Work Supports.

The majority of safety net programs are primarily funded by government, but many are delivered through community organizations. Philanthropic and faith community efforts supplement the work in many of these areas, but they cannot replace the role of government in providing a safety net for our most vulnerable residents.

### Discussion Questions

- What does the data tell us that can help inform decision-making?
- What actions could be taken to **prevent** people from experiencing poverty?
- What actions could be taken by this department to **assist** people who are already experiencing poverty?
- What actions could be taken toward **long-term solutions**?