

## Using the New Poverty Data

*How Much Progress?*

*Why Not More?*

September 9, 2015



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## Thanks to our generous funders

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## Jared Bernstein

**Jared Bernstein** has been a Senior Fellow at the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities since May 2011. From 2009 – 2011, he was Chief Economist and Economic Advisor to Vice President Joe Biden. His blog, *On the Economy*, is a model of clarity about complex and critical economic issues. He is a frequent commentator on CNBC and MSNBC and in the *New York Times*.



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## Deborah Weinstein

**Deborah Weinstein** has been executive director of the Coalition on Human Needs since 2003. Before that she was director of the Family Income Division at the Children's Defense Fund. Debbie has been helping advocates use Census and other data to combat poverty and hardship for more than two decades.




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## Ellen Teller, Moderator



**Ellen Teller** is Director of Government Affairs at the Food Research and Action Center (FRAC). She joined FRAC in 1986, and previously served as an attorney at the American Bar Association, Center for Science in the Public Interest and the Consumer Federation of America. She is the Board Chair of the Coalition on Human Needs.

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Poverty and income  
day:  
What to expect, what to  
look for

Jared Bernstein  
CBPP  
9/15

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### Let's talk about:

- What's in the Sept. 16 release?
- What do we expect in terms of changes in key variables?
- Why? What economic factors point in that direction?
- Is there anything important missing from the report?
- How might poverty and incomes be moving right now?

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### What's in the 9/16 release? (Really, what are the usual highlights? There's a lot more in this report.)

- The official poverty rate for 2014 (2013: 14.5%, 45 million)
- The child poverty rate for 2014 (2013: 19.9%, 15 million)  
[these measures by race, age, gender, family status]
- Median household income
- Some income inequality measures (income shares, "Gini")
- Health coverage, share uninsured.
- The SPM poverty rate (I'll explain what that means...)

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### Expectations/forecasts?

- I expect the poverty rate to fall a few tenths of a percent, leaving it well above pre-recession level of 12.5% in 2007.
- I expect median household income to go about 2% in nominal terms; given the inflation was about 1.5% in 2014, that's about a 0.5% real gain.

[Statistical significance: Poverty rate usually has to change by 0.2-0.3 pts to be significant; median income, by about 1% in real terms; also some sampling issues may be in play this year.]

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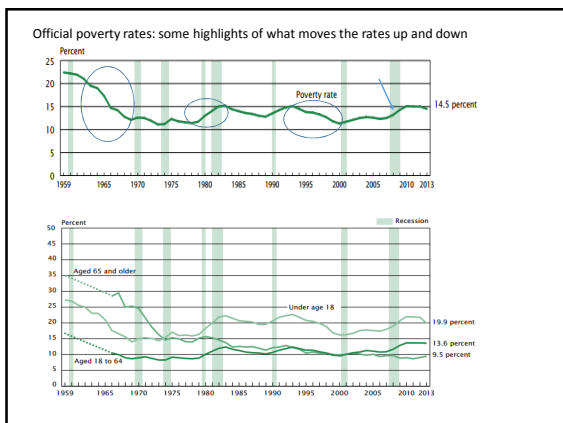
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## Key takeaways from official history

- Anti-poverty policy matters a ton...“we fought a war on poverty and much of what we’ve done has helped to reduce poverty rates.”
- Poverty is counter-cyclical, i.e., economy improves, it tends to go down (though inequality critical factor here).
- Full employment and its impact on wages are key.
- The official rate leaves out a lot of policy.

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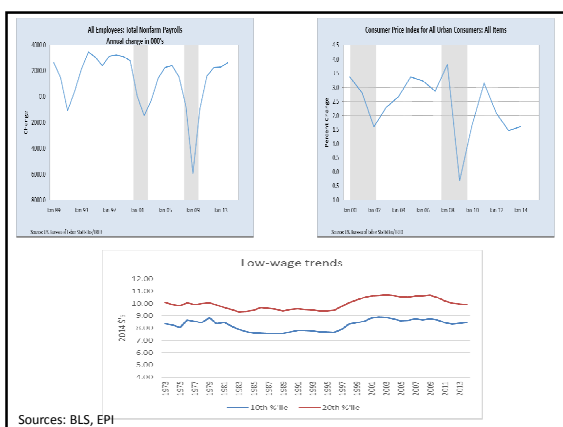
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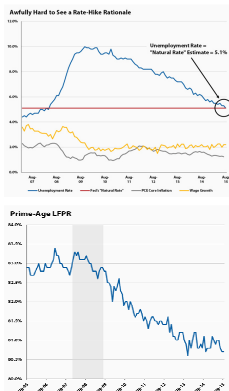
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Brief detour: is the current job market really that tight?

- Unemp rate is 5.1%, but...
- Labor force participation rate still low
- Lots of involuntary part-timers
- Wage and price trends flat! (relevant for Federal Reserve)




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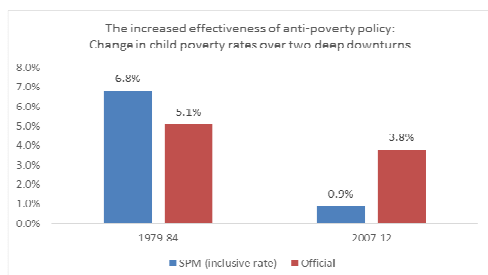
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The safety net has become more effective while the official measure has become less informative




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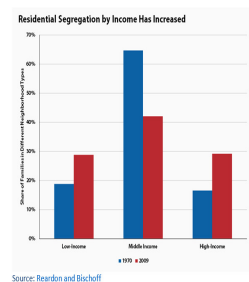
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Final issues

- Deep poverty (\$2-a-Day book)
- What's happening now re poverty/economy?
- What are the key poverty policy debates right now?
  - Budget, approps, EITC/CTC provisions
  - Concentrated poverty, residential segregation
  - Fed "liftoff," absence of full employment
  - Min wages, "Fight for \$15"
- Poverty and the campaigns—not hearing much...




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## The New Data: Finding and Using it

Deborah Weinstein




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### Questions the data can answer:

- **Poverty** – Poverty finally started to decline in 2013. Will progress continue in 2014? Do children, minorities, people with disabilities remain disproportionately poor?
- How much have SNAP, UI, tax credits reduced poverty?
- How many work but remain poor, or near poor?
- **Income** – has income continued to slide for most people? Has inequality continued to widen?
- **Health insurance** – signs of the impact of the Affordable Care Act?

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### More questions

- **Deep poverty** – how many are below half the poverty line?
- **Rent hardships** - how many people are paying more than 35 or 50 percent of their income on rent?
- **Food hardships** – are more people using SNAP? How many are food insecure?
- **Education** - of those who haven't finished high school, how many are poor? Unemployed?

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## How to Find the Answers

- On September 16 and 17, the Census Bureau will release survey data for 2014:
  - Sept. 16: **Current Population Survey (CPS)** – national data: poverty, income, health insurance. Also, **American Community Survey (ACS)** health insurance data.
  - New:** Supplemental Poverty Measure report out on the 16<sup>th</sup>.
  - Sept. 17: **American Community Survey (ACS)** – state, local data (including congressional district).
- USDA released **Household Food Security in the U.S. in 2014** (with state data) **today** (Sept. 9).

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*This just in...*

**Stubbornly high numbers of families remain unable to afford enough food**

**Household Food Security in the United States in 2014**  
([www.ers.usda.gov](http://www.ers.usda.gov))

- 17.4 million households (14%) were food insecure – difficulty at some point in the year affording enough food. Not significant change from last year. But down from 14.9% in 2011.
- 6.9 million households more severe food insecurity – going without food – unchanged from last year.
- Children: food insecure in 9.4% of households with children (3.7 million households) – not significantly reduced from 2013.

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## The New Data – Part 1

Tuesday, September 16: **Current Population Survey** release:

- Provides national picture re income, poverty, and health insurance.
- Will have state health insurance data from American Community Survey.
- Will release Supplemental Poverty Measure – will show people lifted out of poverty by SNAP, Social Security, tax credits, housing subsidies, etc.

### **Complication:**

- New income survey questions introduced.
- Split sample in 2013:
  - New questions: 30,000
  - Old questions: 68,000
- In 2014, full sample has new q's.
- Comparisons of 2013 to 2014 – okay – compare to 2013 sample with new questions.
- Comparisons of 2014 to prior years more complicated – they are working on ways to make accurate comparisons.
- No state data from CPS this year.

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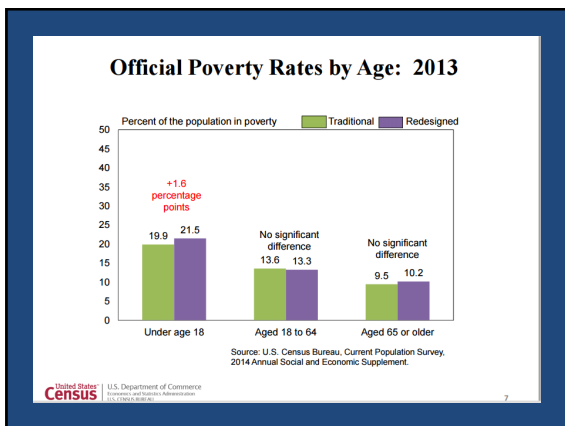
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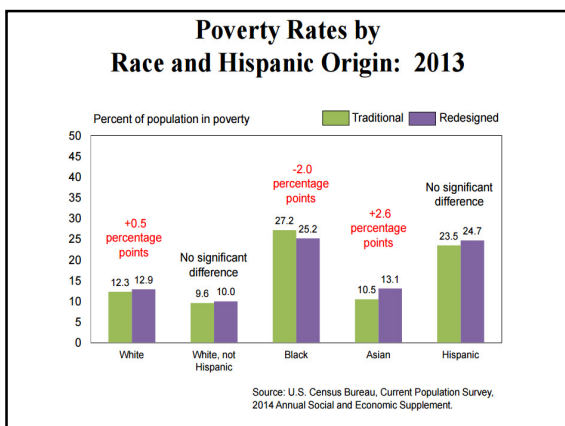
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## Finding the CPS Data on 9/16

Census Bureau Press Conf Online 10 a.m.

U.S. Department of Commerce | Home | About Us | Privacy | Policies

Search

**New** **World Population Clock Application**  
Supports data for more than 200 countries

**World Population Clock Updated with New Features**  
The U.S. Census Bureau recently updated its popular World Population Clock Web tool with features and information for 228 countries.

**Population Clock**  
U.S. Population: 318,000,000  
Last 10, 2015 10:27:07:044

**Quick Facts**  
Quick, easy access to facts about people, business, and geography.  
Select a state to begin.

**U.S. Census Bureau Economic Indicators**  
GDP: 15.1  
Unemployment: 5.3  
Consumer Spending: 14.1  
GDP: 15.1  
Unemployment: 5.3  
Consumer Spending: 14.1

**Latest News**  
Census Bureau to Launch New Web Application Census Business Builder  
September 24, 2015

**Stat of the Day**  
Traveler Accommodation  
Traveler Accommodation

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To find CPS report: after clicking on **"Topics"**, click on **"Income and Poverty"**

The screenshot shows the U.S. Department of Commerce website. The 'Topics' menu is open, and a red arrow points to the 'Income & Poverty' option. The website header includes the U.S. Department of Commerce logo and navigation links like 'Home', 'About the Bureau', and 'Newsroom'.

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Then click on **"Poverty"**, and you'll see **Income, Poverty and Health Insurance Coverage in the United States, 2014**

The screenshot shows the 'Poverty' page on the U.S. Department of Commerce website. A red arrow points to the 'Poverty' link in the 'Quick Links' section. The page title is 'Income, Poverty and Health Insurance Coverage in the United States, 2014'. The page content includes a 'Poverty Main' section with a description of the Census Bureau's poverty data and a 'Latest Releases' section with links to recent reports.

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You can get full report, press materials, or detailed tables

**Full Report:**  
(this is last year's)

The screenshot shows the cover of the 'Income and Poverty in the United States, 2013' report. The cover features a colorful abstract design with the title 'Income and Poverty in the United States, 2013' and the subtitle 'Current Population Reports'.

Note that detailed tables for 2013 include both the sample asked the "redesigned" questions and the sample asked the "traditional" q's.

**Poverty**

Home | Overview | Data | Methodology | Publications | Related Sites | Contact Us

The Census Bureau reports poverty data from several major household surveys and programs. The Annual Social and Economic Supplement (ASEC) to the Current Population Survey (CPS) is the source of official national poverty estimates. The American Community Survey (ACS) provides single and multi-year estimates for smaller areas. The Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP) provides longitudinal estimates. The Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates (SAIPE) program provides small area poverty estimates for counties and school districts. See [Description of Income and Poverty Data Sources](#) to determine which survey or program meets your specific needs.

**Latest Releases**

- [Notes on National Income and Poverty Estimates for Calendar Year 2013](#)
- [Event Schedule on Income, Poverty, and Health Insurance](#)
- [Poverty Tables by County, 1990-2013 \(PL90-16\)](#)
- [Database of Economic Well-Being: Poverty 2009-2012](#)
- [Income and Poverty in the United States, 2012 \(PIU-12\)](#)
- [Poverty, 2012 and 2013 \(ACS-11-11-01\) \(PDF - 108K\)](#)
- [Changes in Area with Concentrated Poverty, 2000 to 2010](#)
- [Income and Poverty in the United States, 1995-2013 \(PIU-13\)](#)
- [The Census Bureau's Poverty Information: Source: U.S. Census Bureau](#)
- [The History of Administrative Information: Source: U.S. Census Bureau](#)

**2013 Poverty Table of Contents**

These data come from the 2013 Annual Social and Economic Supplement, known as the March Supplement. These data come from the 2013 Annual Social and Economic Supplement, known as the March Supplement. These data come from the 2013 Annual Social and Economic Supplement, known as the March Supplement.

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## A few examples of detailed tables:

- **POV01:** Shows people below 50% FPL, below 100%, below 200%, etc. White, Black, Asian, Hispanic (may be of any race).
- **POV06:** Families by number of working family members and family structure
- **POV22:** Work experience by age, sex, household relationship, poverty status
- **POV29:** Years of school by poverty status – age, sex, nativity

## This year, the Supplemental Poverty Measure will also be released on 9/16

Important analysis showing how the proportion of people in poverty declines because of Social Security, low-income tax credits, SNAP, UI, housing subsidies, etc.

May be written up in [Random Samplings](#) blog, [blogs.census.gov](#)

Table 1a  
Effect of Individual Elements on SPM Rates: 2013

Based on the CPS ASEC, sample of 48,000 addresses. Confidence intervals (CI) in percentage points. Percent of people as of March of the following year. For information on confidentiality protection, sampling error, nonsampling error, and definitions, see [POV0102 Census.gov/poverty/data/tables/tables.cfm#pov0102](#).

Elements	All people		Under 18 years		18 to 64 years		65 years and over	
	Estimate	CI (1-3)	Estimate	CI (1-3)	Estimate	CI (1-3)	Estimate	CI (1-3)
<b>SPM</b>	19.4	0.3	19.4	0.3	19.4	0.3	19.4	0.3
<b>ADDITIONS</b>								
Social Security	29.1	0.4	19.4	0.3	19.4	0.3	19.4	0.3
Refundable tax credits	19.4	0.4	22.8	0.5	17.2	0.4	19.4	0.3
SNAP	17.7	0.3	19.2	0.2	16.0	0.4	19.4	0.3
Unemployment insurance	16.2	0.3	17.3	0.5	16.0	0.4	19.4	0.3
HOPE	16.2	0.3	17.3	0.5	16.0	0.4	19.4	0.3
Private insurance	16.2	0.3	17.3	0.5	16.0	0.4	19.4	0.3
Credit support received	16.2	0.3	17.3	0.5	16.0	0.4	19.4	0.3
Spousal health	16.2	0.3	17.3	0.5	16.0	0.4	19.4	0.3
Medicaid Assistance	16.2	0.3	17.3	0.5	16.0	0.4	19.4	0.3
Medicare	16.2	0.3	17.3	0.5	16.0	0.4	19.4	0.3
Workers' compensation	16.2	0.3	17.3	0.5	16.0	0.4	19.4	0.3
<b>SUBTRACTIONS</b>								
CMS support costs	16.2	0.3	17.3	0.5	16.0	0.4	19.4	0.3
Capital income tax	16.2	0.3	17.3	0.5	16.0	0.4	19.4	0.3
Wage increases	16.2	0.3	17.3	0.5	16.0	0.4	19.4	0.3
MOOP	16.2	0.3	17.3	0.5	16.0	0.4	19.4	0.3

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, 2013 Annual Social and Economic Supplement.

## For a wealth of state and local data, wait for Part 2: The American Community Survey, 9/17

The screenshot shows the U.S. Census Bureau website. At the top, there's a navigation bar with links like 'U.S. Department of Commerce', 'Blogs', 'Index', '2', 'Databases', 'Privacy', and a search bar. Below the navigation bar, there's a large banner for the '2015 National Content Test'. The banner text says: 'The 2015 National Content Test is being conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau to test content, questionnaire content, and to obtain nationwide representativeness of responses for the 2015 American Community Survey. The test census began on August 24.' Below the banner, there's a 'Population Clock' showing 'World Population' and 'U.S. Population'. To the right, there's a 'Quick facts' section with a map of the United States and a list of statistics: 'U.S. Census Bureau Estimates', 'U.S. Population: 321,000,000', 'U.S. GDP: \$16.5 trillion', 'U.S. GDP per capita: \$51,000', 'U.S. GDP growth: 1.7%', 'U.S. GDP growth: 1.7%', 'U.S. GDP growth: 1.7%'. At the bottom, there's a 'Latest News' section with a link to 'Census Bureau to Launch New Web Application Census Business Builder' and a 'Stat of the Day' section with a link to 'Traveler Accommodation'.



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Detailed tables provide lots of options:  
Want to know how many children (or other age groups)  
are below half the poverty line?

Advanced Search - Search all data in American FactFinder

1 Advanced Search 2 Table View

Read 6 of 6 VIEW ALL RESULTS

Table View

Actions: Monthly Table Add/Remove Geographies Bookmark/Save Print Download Create a Map

View Geography Notes View Table Notes

Although the American Community Survey (ACS) produces population, demographic, and housing unit estimates, it is the Census Bureau's Population Estimates Program that produces and disseminates the official estimates of the population for the states, counties, cities and towns and estimates of housing units for states and counties.

Version of this table are available for the following years	Estimate	Margin of Error
2012	1,111,401	±1,217
2011	1,111,401	±1,217
2010	1,111,401	±1,217
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1802	1,111,401	±1,217
1801	1,111,401	±1,217
1800	1,111,401	±1,217
1799	1,111,401	±1,217
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1741	1,111,401	±1,217
1740	1,111,401	±1,217
1739	1,111,401	±1,21

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- When Census uses race/ethnicity categories in summary tables, these are the categories they use:
  - » White alone
  - » White alone, not Hispanic
  - » Black/African American alone
  - » American Indian and Alaska Native alone
  - » Asian alone
  - » Hispanic, may be of any race
- But in a given state, may not be enough in each category to include.

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### Geographic Comparison Table to Show Percent Without Health Insurance

**Note:** 17.1% of Arizonans had no health insurance in 2013.

But **31.9%** of people in Arizona's 7<sup>th</sup> CD had no health insurance.  
*(more than ¼ of district is foreign born.)*

[illegible]

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## Using the Data to Make the Case for Investments

## SNAP, UI, Tax credits lift millions out of poverty:

➔ **Expand, make tax credit improvements permanent, don't cut!**

The more education, the less poverty:

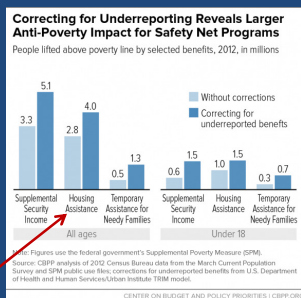
➡ *Invest, don't cut!*

States using ACA and Medicaid expansion have fewer uninsured.

➡ **Take ACA Medicaid option!**

Huge numbers are paying 30%  
50% or more of their income  
on rent.

➡ **Stop cutting rental vouchers!**



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## Poverty costs too much

## Children who have

- Head Start
  - Nutritious food
  - Secure housing
  - Health care
- Families who have
- Stable jobs
  - Secure income

*contribute to  
shared economic growth*

But Congress may let sequestration and other bad choices cut Head Start, housing, nutrition programs, job training, public health, education, tax credits...



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## Time to be heard



### Use the data:

- In letters or tweets to your Rep and Senators
- Blog posts; comment on blogs ([www.chn.org/blog](http://www.chn.org/blog))
- In letters to the editor
- In a Tweet chat: **MomsRising**, Sept. 18, 1-2 p.m. Eastern
- Posts, links on your Facebook page
- In meetings with members of Congress or staff

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## Join the Tweetchat!

**Who:** @MomsRising @CoalitiononHN @NWL

**What:** #FoodFri tweetchat to discuss the USDA hunger data and U.S. Census poverty and healthcare data and how they relate to the upcoming budget and sequester debates.

**When:** Friday, September 18th from 1-2pm ET

Please use #FoodFri to join the conversation!

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## Comment, Share ...

- State groups will release reports in 16+ states tying Census, other data to need to end sequester cuts while protecting and investing in anti-poverty programs: AR, CO, CT, FL, IL, IN, MA, ME, MI, NH, OH, PA, TN, VA, WA, WI
- If you're in any of those states, or have networks there, use social media to share press about the report.
- Make your own press – blog, LTE, op-ed...
- Share link to report with members of Congress.

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## We'll send you...

- These slides and the webinar recording
- Quick key points
- State tables (*thank you, Center on Budget and Policy Priorities!*)
- Links to Census Bureau tables with the data we've discussed
- Analyses by other expert organizations
- CHN national report and state reports
- Infographics you can use and share
- Suggested tweets, sample letters to the editor, etc.

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## Thanks!

Debbie Weinstein  
dweinstein@chn.org



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