

The South Carolina Poverty Study: Understanding Root Causes and Identifying Innovative Solutions

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Introduction

Approximately 1 in 7 South Carolina families experience poverty, defined as a having insufficient resources to fully engage in society.

Children, women, people of color, rural-dwelling, and those with disability have higher risks of poverty.

By elevating the voices of people with lived experience (PWLE) and poverty serving professionals (PSP), this project is working to identify key drivers and community-generated solutions to reduce poverty.

Methods

Our work is guided by an advisory council comprised of state and local poverty-fighting leaders.

Currently, our study is using purposive sampling to hear from PSP (n=17) and PWLE (n=18) who have a range of circumstances and experiences. PWLE each received \$50 for their participation. Interviews are transcribed and analyzed using an inductive approach.



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Results Our preliminary analysis identified the following emergent themes:

Key Challenges

COMMUNITIES IN A COLLECTIVE STATE OF POVERTY

POOR HOUSING, NO TRANSPORTATION SYSTEMS, FOOD DESERTS, LACK OF JOBS AND CHILDCARE



SYSTEMS LEVEL CHALLENGES

"You get welfare and they try and keep you on welfare...and you do need it, but if you get \$5.00 over the limit, you can no longer get it. It's like, 'Wait. I still need it.' You should make it lower, but not cut me off so that now I can't get to the next level."

THE STRESS OF POVERTY

"I get a lot of anxiety. I need to know that there's a place that I can land. because if not, I'm constantly anxious, like, 'Is somebody gonna come kick us out? I'm gonna be evicted.' There's nothing as humiliating as somebody putting your things out and everybody is watching. That's not something I want to experience all the time."

Promising Strategies and Solutions

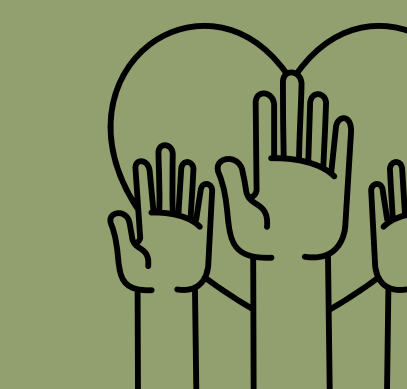
INVESTING IN PARTNERSHIPS

"[Those impacted by poverty] need to have a position of power at that table and when you're creating policies that affect people who live in places where you don't live."

INCREASE PROGRAMS TO BUILD RELATIONSHIPS, COACHING, & SUPPORT SYSTEMS



COMMUNITY NON PROFITS, SCHOOLS, AND FAITH-BASED ORGANIZATIONS ARE CRITICAL RESOURCE CONNECTORS



FEDERAL SAFETY NET PROGRAMS ARE ESSENTIAL FOR WELL BEING

"Now WIC and SNAP have been very helpful to me, very, very helpful."

Conclusions

Challenges to addressing poverty in SC are rooted in social determinants. Systems level changes are needed, including policy solutions, enhanced collaboration, and building capacity within communities. Data collection and analysis is ongoing to hear additional voices of PWLE and facilitate development of solutions to address poverty in SC.

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