



- I. What is NCAM?
 - a. **National Community Action Month** in May was developed by the Community Action Partnership to reinforce Community Action Agencies' role in helping low-income individuals and families achieve economic stability.
 - b. This year's theme is **"Rooting out Poverty: Building an economy that Works for Everyone."**

- II. What we are doing and why?
 - a. We feel it is important to bring attention to the issues that individuals who live in poverty have to deal with.
 - b. Two of our staff members are going to spend three weeks living at 100% of the poverty level.
 - c. There are a lot of misconceptions about poverty, and so we decided to engage in this exercise to experience at least a part of what more than 254,000 Utahns who live at or below the federal poverty line. We will not be feeling the emotional and stressful aspects of poverty, but will certainly see what the financial aspects can feel like.

- III. What is poverty?
 - a. In the United States, we measure poverty by what a poverty threshold established by the federal government. This measure recognizes poverty as a lack of those goods and services commonly taken for granted by members of mainstream society. The official threshold is adjusted for inflation using the consumer price index.
 - b. Each year the U.S. Census Bureau releases the Poverty Thresholds for the United States; these numbers are used for statistical estimations of the number of people who live in poverty. The US Department of Health and Human Services actually establishes the Federal Poverty Guidelines (FPL) using these thresholds. The Poverty Guidelines are used for administrative purposes in determining eligibility for different government assistance programs.

**The 2009 Poverty Guidelines for the
 48 Contiguous States and the District of Columbia**

Persons in family	Poverty guideline
1	\$10,830
2	14,570
3	18,310
4	22,050
5	25,790
6	29,530
7	33,270
8	37,010
For families with more than 8 persons, add \$3,740 for each additional person.	

i. This means that Jessie will be living as if she has an annual income of \$10,830. That would be \$902.50 a month, or \$624.81 for the three weeks. That is \$29.67 a day, but once she pays all of her expenses, she only has \$141.06 to spend on food and all other incidentals (gas, toilet paper, bus fare, etc) for the three weeks, that is \$6.72 a day. (A person making minimum wage has \$37.33 a day to spend, as compared to \$29.67 a day).

ii. Shawn and his family then will be living as if they have an annual income of \$18,310, since they are a family of three. That would be \$1525.83 a month, or \$1056.35 for the three weeks. That is \$50.16 a day, but once they pay off all of their expenses they are actually in the whole \$256.90, since their expenses are \$1313.25 a month. In order to make ends meet, they would need assistance from the government for childcare and food. They would qualify for an estimated \$287.25 under the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, called Food Stamps in Utah) and \$268.26 a month under the Child Care Subsidy. That leaves them \$298.61 to live on. However, \$287.25 of that are SNAP dollars, which are severely restricted, and can only be used on unprepared food. That means they have \$11.36 for the whole three weeks for any incidentals such as bus fare, toilet paper, bandaids, etc. (The median household income reported in the Census Bureau ACS for Utah is \$51,373. Therefore, the median household in Utah has \$140.75 a day as compared to Shawn and his families \$50.16 a day.)

IV. What the numbers tell us:

- a. The average hourly wage for a person living at 100% of the poverty level is \$5.21 an hour, if working full-time. The minimum wage in Utah currently is \$6.55 an hour (annual full-time salary of \$13,624). This will increase to \$7.25 an hour on July 24, 2009 (annual full-time salary of \$15,080).
- b. These guidelines are also used to determine eligibility for government assistance programs. Here is a list of the eligibility caps for different programs, and the maximum benefit available in Utah (where applicable):
 - i. Head Start – can’t make more than **100%** of the FPL
 - ii. Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) – no more than **150%** of the FPL
 - I. \$875 maximum annual benefit for heating assistance.
 - iii. Child Care Subsidy (less than **200%** of the FPL).
 - I. Maximum monthly allowance is \$495.
 - iv. Legal Services for the Poor (**125%** of the FPL).
 - v. National School Lunch Program (for free meals can’t make more than **130%** and for reduced-price meals can’t make more than **185%** of FPL).
 - vi. Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, called Food Stamps in Utah) (**100 – 130%** of FPL)
 - I. Maximum Monthly Benefit:

People in Household	Max. Monthly Allotment
1	\$200
2	\$367
3	\$526
4	\$668

vii. Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) – can't make more than **185%** of the FPL

- I. Maximum Monthly Allowances – these are not based on dollar amounts, but on how much product someone can buy.

FOODS	Infants 0-3 mo	Infants 4-12 mo	Children/ Women with Special Dietary Needs	Children 1-5 yrs.	Pregnant & Breastfeeding Women (up to 1 year postpartum)	Nonbreastfeeding Postpartum Women (up to 6 months postpartum)	Breastfeeding Women Enhanced Package ¹
	(I)	(II)	(III)	(IV)	(V)	(VI)	(VII)
Infant Formula (concentrated liquid) ²	403 fl. oz.	403 fl. oz.	403 fl. oz. ³				
Juice (reconstituted frozen) ⁴		96 fl. oz. ⁵	144 fl. oz.	288 fl. oz.	288 fl. oz.	192 fl. oz.	336 fl. oz.
Infant Cereal		24 oz.					
Cereal (hot or cold)			36 oz.	36 oz.	36 oz.	36 oz.	36 oz.
Milk ⁶				24 qt.	28 qt.	24 qt.	28 qt.
Cheese ⁶							1 lb.
Eggs ⁷				2-2½ doz.	2-2½ doz.	2-2½ doz.	2-2½ doz.
Dried Beans/Peas and/or Peanut butter				1 lb. or 18 oz.	1 lb. or 18 oz.		1 lb. and 18 oz.
Tuna (canned)							26 oz.
Carrots (fresh) ⁸							2 lbs.

viii. Medicaid in Utah (**40-68%** of the FPL)

- I. Medicaid does have a co-pay and covers the costs of most medically necessary services like in- and outpatient hospital services, labs and x-rays, nursing facility care, home health care, physician services, etc. Most optional services are not covered in Utah – dental care, vision, clinic services, personal care, clinic services, therapy, etc.

ix. Utah's Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) (**100-133%** of the FPL).

- I. CHIP does have a co-pay and covers well-child exams, immunizations, doctor visit, hospital and emergency care, prescriptions, hearing and eye exams, mental health services and dental care.

c. Programs that do not use the FPL, but still have income eligibility thresholds:

- i. Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF, known as the Family Employment Program (FEP) in Utah) – must have children to qualify for this program, and must participate in at least 30 hours a week in some kind of work related program or training/education.

TANF/FEP Eligibility and Benefit Limits

Household Size	Monthly Gross Income	Cash Assistance Amount
1	\$608	\$288
2	\$843	\$399
3	\$1050	\$498
4	\$1230	\$583
5	\$1400	\$663

- ii. Public Housing and Section 8 low-income housing assistance – People who qualify for Section 8 housing must pay 30% of their monthly income to rent, Section 8 will subsidize the rest. The current wait period for the program is 12 – 24 months. To qualify, families and individuals cannot make more than 50% of the area median income (\$61,350 currently).
- iii. General Assistance – provides limited financial assistance to individuals with short- or long-term physical or mental disabilities. The maximum monthly benefit is \$261 and an individual cannot make more than \$500 a month to qualify.
- iv. Federal Earned Income Tax Credit – a single person cannot make more than **\$12,880** a year to qualify for this credit.

V. Statistics:

- a. The most accurate determination of the poverty rate is calculated by the US Census Bureau through their American Community Survey (ACS). Because of the way the survey is administered, the most current data available is from calendar year 2007. So, the poverty rate for Utah and the U.S. are not accurate, as they do not take into account the recent economic downturn.
 - i. Poverty Rate:
 - 1. The 2008 ACS (which reports 2007 data) puts **Utah's Poverty Rate at 9.8%** . That is a **total of 254,385** Utahns living at or below the federal poverty threshold.
 - 2. The **poverty rate is higher for Utah's children at 11.3%**, with **at least 91,064 kids** living in poverty.
 - ii. Unemployment
 - 1. The March 2009 unemployment rate for Utah was 5.2%, with an estimated 71,000 Utahns out of work. That is a 37% increase in the number of unemployed just since November 2008, and a 58% increase over March of last year.
 - 2. More than 25,000 Utahns have lost their job over the past year.
 - iii. Asset Poverty
 - 1. 26.8% of Utahns are asset poor, meaning they do not possess enough belongings to survive 3 months without a job at least at the poverty line.
 - 2.
 - iv. Healthcare
 - 1. 72% of uninsured Utah children lived below 200% of the Federal Poverty Level
 - 2. Utah Medicaid has grown by nearly 15% since January 2008 to 185,341 enrollees as of March 31, 2009.
 - 3. CHIP enrollment has grown by over 17% since January 2008 to 37,792 as of April 1, 2009.
 - v. Food and Nutrition
 - 1. Prices for food prepared at home increased by 6.4 percent in 2008.
 - 2. Food Stamp usage increased by more than 30 percent in the 12 months from February 2008 to February 2009. About 73,000 Utahns were using the program in February 2009.
 - 3. The number of WIC recipients increased by 10 percent from February 2008 to February 2009. More than 72,000 Utahns were utilizing WIC in February 2009.

4. Nearly 1 in 3 school age children in Utah rely on free or reduced-price school lunch.
- vi. Homelessness
 1. As of January 28, 2009, there were 3,507 men, women and children who were homeless. This is an increase of 5.8% from 2008.
 2. There were 10,388 homeless school children on January 28, 2009

VI. Blog/Website/Luncheon

- a. The three-week poverty experiment will culminate at the 2nd Annual NCAM Luncheon, May 21st at 11:30 am at the Memorial House in Memory Grove. To follow us as we experience life in poverty, please visit our website at www.utahcap.org, and click on the links to our blogs.

Effective April 2009 Percentage of the Poverty Level Monthly Amounts				
Number in Fiscal Group	Column 1 100%	Column 2 150%	Column 3 185%	Column 4 200%
1	903	1354	1670	1805
2	1215	1822	2247	2429
3	1526	2289	2823	3052
4	1838	2757	3400	3675
5	2150	3224	3976	4299
6	2461	3692	4553	4922
7	2773	4159	5130	5545
8	3085	4627	5706	6169
9	3397	5095	6283	6793
10	3709	5563	6860	7417
For each additional person add	312	468	577	624