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April 12, 2016

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Advocates Estimate 191,000 Ohioans Living On Almost Nothing
800,000 Ohioans in "Deep Poverty"

COLUMBUS – During a statewide conference on homelessness and housing Tuesday, advocates revealed new research indicating that about 191,000 individuals living in Ohio are surviving on incomes of \$2 a day or less.

The Center for Community Solutions borrowed an approach used in the 2015 book "\$2 a Day" to estimate the number of Ohioans living at a level of extreme poverty more often associated with the developing world.

Luke Shaefer, who co-authored "\$2 a Day," and Community Solutions' Tara Britton explored the implications of Ohio's shift to a low-wage economy during a panel discussion at *Housing Ohio 2016*, the annual conference hosted by the Coalition on Homelessness and Housing in Ohio (COHHIO).

Using data from the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey, the non-partisan research group also estimated about 800,000 Ohioans are living in "deep poverty," or 50% or less of the federal poverty level, which is about \$10,000 for a family of three.

"Community Solution's analysis shows that 20 years after the passage of welfare reform federal and state policies are failing to help thousands of Ohio families, many of them with children," Britton said.

In their book, Shaefer and his co-author Kathryn Edin took the novel approach of applying the World Bank's metric for assessing global poverty in the developing world and determined that about 1.5 million households in the U.S. are living at the \$2 per day level

During his speech at the conference, Shaefer described how the nation's social services are increasingly lagging behind the economy's shift from middle-class manufacturing jobs to low-wage service jobs.

"The government safety net was built in an era when full-time employment meant a stable, reliable living wage. But that's no longer the case for millions of Americans who are scraping together a meager living from two or more part-time, minimum- or near-

minimum wage jobs,” he said. “The number of Americans living on \$2-a-day poverty has more than doubled since Congress overhauled welfare in 1996.”

During the panel discussion, Rev. Karen Cook, of Church and Community Development for All People, described her experience serving Columbus’s Southside residents who are having difficulty keeping up with the rising cost-of-living.

“People are working more hours and earning less pay, and meanwhile rents just keep going up,” she said. “We’re doing everything we can to help, but the low-wage economy is a bigger problem than the faith-based community can solve alone.”

COHHIO Executive Director Bill Faith drew attention to the increasing disparity between average median income, which has decreased 16% since 2000 when adjusted for inflation, and housing rents that have soared 55% nationally during the same time period.

“While Ohio’s foreclosure crisis has eased somewhat in recent years, the number of eviction filings has barely budged since the height of the recession,” he said. “With 7 percent of Ohio’s 1.5 million renter households facing court-ordered eviction each year, there’s thousands of families living constantly on the verge of homelessness.”

During the conference, advocates outlined a number of recommendations to ease the burden of extreme poverty in Ohio, including:

- Redesigning federal cash assistance to create a functioning safety net that successfully catches people when they fall.
- Making the state Earned Income Tax Credit refundable.
- Expand the Ohio Housing Trust Fund to increase support for homeless, disabled and extremely low-income families.

Community Solutions’ analysis of the data is available on the group’s blog:

http://www.communitysolutions.com/index.php?option=com_lyftenbloggie&view=entry&year=2016&month=04&day=03&id=14%3Aextreme-poverty-in-ohio-how-many-people-in-ohio-live-on-less-than-2-00-per-day-&Itemid=255