



# National Association for State Community Services Programs

## ***FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE***

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September 14, 2011

### **Poverty Rate Increases: NASCSP Calls for Bold Action to End Poverty**

On September 13, 2011, the Census Bureau released its annual *Income, Poverty and Health Insurance Coverage report*, confirming a continued poverty rate increase over the majority of the last decade. In 2010, the poverty rate increased to 15.1 percent from 14.3 percent in 2009. Even more troubling is the 3% increase in poverty over the last decade. In 2010, 46.2 million Americans lived in poverty, the highest level on record in 52 years. Additionally, families across the nation lost ground as the median income dropped in 2010, widening the wealth gap. Most disturbing is that poverty continues to spread for the most vulnerable in our society, with one in five children, one in 11 seniors, and more than one in three female-headed households with children under 18 living below poverty in 2010.

“The progress we’ve made over the last half century in lifting Americans out of poverty has almost entirely vanished in just a decade,” said Steve Payne, Managing Director, Housing Improvements and Preservation within the State of Washington’s Department of Commerce and the President of the National Association for State Community Services Programs (NASCSP), “Not only do we need to pass the American Jobs Act, but funding of the Community Services Block Grant and the Weatherization Assistance Program at current or higher levels becomes increasingly more important.”

NASCSP calls on Congress and the Administration to reject cuts to economic and energy security programs such as the Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) and the Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP). These are programs that help alleviate the conditions of poverty for families and help create a sustainable future for all citizens. To mitigate the suffering illuminated by the Census data, and jump-start the economy, NASCSP urges Congress to invest in programs that empower low-income families to attain economic security and help relieve the disproportionate energy burden on these families - programs that promote both economic and energy security nationwide. CSBG and WAP successfully combine Federal, State and local investment and involvement, as well as leverage significant private funds, to deliver measurable results for low-income Americans.

The nation can do better and more must be done to end poverty in America. Investments in poverty eliminating programs such as CSBG and WAP are needed more than ever. America’s economic future depends on achieving economic and energy security for all citizens. In the coming weeks, Congress will debate President Obama’s American Jobs Act and Congress will pass the 2012 Budget. The funding and policy decisions that are on the table will determine how much and for how long poverty continues to increase.

“It’s unconscionable to allow so many of our fellow Americans to remain in poverty, threatened by hunger, sickness, and thwarted by blocked opportunities,” said Payne. “The poverty report is a wake-up call for urgent investments in proven economic and energy initiatives like CSBG and WAP so that people can get back to work and America can fulfill its promise of prosperity for all.”

For more information on CSBG and WAP, please visit [www.nascsp.org](http://www.nascsp.org)

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