



THE ATLANTA
WOMEN'S
FOUNDATION
Breaking Cycles. Building Women.

Generational Poverty Defined

Who it is

- Single, Female, Head of Household with children.
- Living in Fulton (98,139), DeKalb (71,582), Gwinnett (69,560), Cobb (46,014), & Clayton (33,898).¹
- The working poor earning an income at 200% of the poverty line or less (Family of four is \$48,500).
- 88% of Atlanta's poor live in the suburbs and between 2000-2011 Atlanta's suburban poor population grew by 159%.²

	Metro Atlanta	State of Georgia	Nationwide
Living in Poverty	320,000 ³ (Women & Girls)		70 Million ⁴ (Women & Children)
Unemployment Rate	6.4% ⁵	7.7% ⁶	5.8% ⁷
Average Income (2013)	\$55,733 ⁸	\$47,829 ⁹	\$52,250 ¹⁰

¹ Poverty Status in the Past 12 Months. (2011). *U.S. Census Bureau*.

² Semuels, A. (2015, January 7). Suburbs and the New American Poverty. Retrieved February 18, 2015, from <http://www.theatlantic.com/business/archive/2015/01/suburbs-and-the-new-american-poverty/384259/>

³ 11 Surprising Facts About Women and Poverty From the Shriver Report. (n.d.). Retrieved February 26, 2015, from <http://time.com/2026/11-surprising-facts-about-women-and-poverty-from-the-shriver-report/>

⁴ 11 Surprising Facts About Women and Poverty From the Shriver Report, February 26, 2015.

⁵ Eging, T. (2014, December 7). Atlanta – a tale of two cities – rich thrive as poor continue to struggle. Retrieved February 26, 2015.

⁶ Eging, Atlanta – a tale of two cities – rich thrive as poor continue to struggle

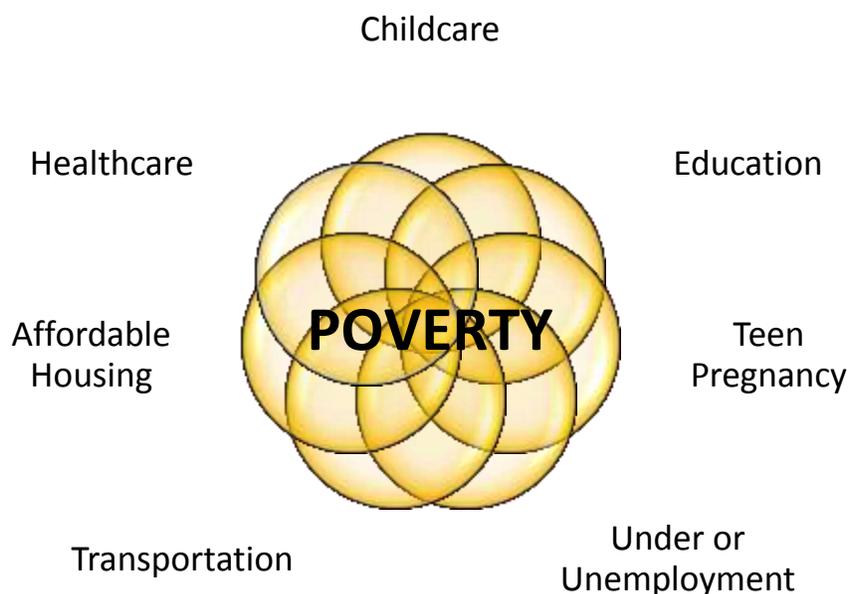
⁷ Eging, Atlanta – a tale of two cities – rich thrive as poor continue to struggle

⁸ Atlanta-Sandy Springs-Marietta Georgia Household Income. (n.d.). Retrieved February 26, 2015, from <http://www.deptofnumbers.com/income/georgia/atlanta/>

⁹ Atlanta-Sandy Springs-Marietta Georgia Household Income, February 26, 2015.

¹⁰ Atlanta-Sandy Springs-Marietta Georgia Household Income, February 26, 2015.

Generational Poverty Barriers



Top 7 Barriers

1. *Childcare*

What: Lack of child care provides a challenge to obtain and keep a job.

Why: About 176,000 poor single mothers in Georgia raise children, which can take priority over the decision to work outside the home. In a study of low-income households, "Taking care of home or family" was cited most often by female heads of household as the reason they did not work. Low-income families are also more likely to work non-standard hours than other families, which also require different child care solutions. Sixty percent of workers with non-standard hours outside of 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. earn wages below the typical American worker and 40 percent earn less than 75 percent of all workers. Child care presents a unique challenge for these families because child care centers are not open early enough in the morning or late enough in the evening to accommodate parents' schedules and is often unaffordable for these families.

Limited child care alternatives at non-standard hours also keep workers, particularly single mothers, from accepting work that takes place during non-standard hours. Low-income single mothers working non-standard hours tend to rely more on the informal care provided by relatives and others. These informal care arrangements can break down easily when providers have a conflict. This inconsistency can also lead to employee absenteeism and job loss for low-income workers.¹¹

The Numbers: Families living in poverty in the U.S. spend about 30 percent of their income on child care, while middle- and upper-income families spend an average of less than 7 percent of their income on

¹¹ Johnson, M. (2013). Recovery or Bust: Georgia's Poor Left Behind. *Georgia Budget & Policy Institute*, 7.

child care. Average childcare costs in Georgia can easily swallow 40 percent of a low-income family's budget.¹²

2. Education

What: Higher educational attainment and higher wages are directly correlated, yet children in poverty without access to high-quality early education begin their lives less likely to achieve postsecondary credentials.¹³

Why: Lower levels of educational attainment among poor Georgians inhibit their ability to keep jobs, earn higher wages and obtain the jobs of the future. Lower levels of academic performance for poor Georgians continues past grade school. Poor Georgians are less likely to obtain higher education. Lower education levels leave the poor more at risk during a weak labor market. The unemployment rate for Georgians without a high school education was 17.4 percent in 2012, compared to 9.5 percent for people with some college and 4.9 percent for people with a bachelor's degree or higher.¹⁴

Lower education levels among poorer Georgians inhibits their ability to get higher-paying jobs and exit poverty. The median salary for a college graduate in Georgia is \$51,979, nearly twice the median salary for a high-school graduate. Georgians with higher education are less likely to lose jobs and more likely to earn higher wages, while poor Georgians with less education are more likely to stay in poverty.¹⁵

The Numbers: Without a college degree, 45 percent of the children from families in the bottom fifth of income will remain there.¹⁶

The four-year graduation rate for Atlanta Public School was 51% in 2012.¹⁷

3. Teen Pregnancy

What: Teen pregnancy makes it more difficult to complete schooling, places a new burden on the whole family and sets all of them – the teenager, her family and the new baby on a path likely to keep all 3 generations trapped in poverty.

Why: Adolescent pregnancy and parenthood are closely associated with a host of social and economic issues that affect teen parents, their children and society. Teenage mothers are less likely to finish high school and are more likely than their peers to live in poverty, depend on public assistance, and be in poor health. Their children are more likely to suffer health and cognitive disadvantages, come in contact with the child welfare and correctional systems, live in poverty, drop out of high school and become teen parents themselves. According to the National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy, the annual public cost of teen childbearing—due to higher costs of public health care, foster care, incarceration and lost tax revenue—is nearly \$9.4 billion.¹⁸

¹² Johnson, M. (2014). Child Care Assistance: An Underused Tool to Strengthen Georgia's Working Families and Economy. *Georgia Budget & Policy Institute*, 3.

¹³ Johnson, Recovery or Bust: Georgia's Poor Left Behind, 8.

¹⁴ Johnson, Recovery or Bust: Georgia's Poor Left Behind, 9.

¹⁵ Johnson, Recovery or Bust: Georgia's Poor Left Behind, 9.

¹⁶ Haskins, R. Combating Poverty: Understanding New Challenges for Families. (2012, June 5). Retrieved February 18, 2015, from <http://www.brookings.edu/research/testimony/2012/06/05-poverty-families-haskins>

¹⁷ Davis, E. B. (Director) (2013, August 13). Honoring Our Legacy, Building Our Future. *9th Annual State of the Schools in Atlanta*. Lecture conducted from Atlanta Public Schools, Atlanta, GA

¹⁸ Teen Pregnancy Prevention. (2014, July 11). Retrieved February 18, 2015, from <http://www.ncsl.org/research/health/teen-pregnancy-prevention.aspx>

The Numbers: In 2009, one in 5 babies born within the five metro Atlanta counties was born to a mom still in high school or without a diploma. One in five of those moms have a second baby before age 20.¹⁹

4. Under or Unemployment

What: The single most important way to exit poverty is to obtain a job that pays enough to sustain a family. Landing such a job remains out of reach for many Georgians. Standing in the way are lower wages, a rise in part-time work and high long-term unemployment.²⁰

Why: Wage rates are a work-associated factor that has a major impact on poverty. In 2007, wages at the 10th percentile were about \$8 per hour, more or less where they were in 1979 if inflation is taken into account. Working at this wage for 35 hours a week year round, a person would earn \$14,560, \$2,145 under the poverty level for a family of three. It is an amazing mathematical fact that 10 percent of all workers will always be at the 10th percentile of earnings or below. Thus, if wages do not improve at the bottom, all single parents with two or more children at or below the 10th percentile – and even many above the 10th percentile – will always be in poverty if earnings are their only income.²¹

AWF research finding report that the unemployment rate for our region was over 10% in 2011– it has doubled in the last 4-years. Nearly one out of every 10 children in Clayton County resides in a household where no parent is in the labor force. Jobs provide a consistent source of money that can be used to provide for a family and save up for a rainy day. Women who have been living in generational poverty often have trouble finding employment opportunities that suit their unique needs and pay a living wage.²²

The Numbers: 40% - 60% of homeless people work. SOURCE: Metro Atlanta Task Force for the Homeless²³

48% of all the children in Atlanta in poverty live in families with annual incomes of less than \$15,000 a year. SOURCE: Metro Atlanta Task Force for the Homeless²⁴

5. Healthcare

What: Many families in poverty do not have healthcare, which can be a deterrent from seeking medical help. Many experts also reported that mental health is one of the most important, and overlooked areas where women and girls in poverty need help.²⁵

Why: Marginalized groups and vulnerable individuals are often worst affected, deprived of the information, money or access to health services that would help them prevent and treat disease. Very poor and vulnerable people may have to make harsh choices – knowingly putting their health at risk because they cannot see their children go hungry, for example. The cost of doctors' fees, a course of

¹⁹ Breaking the Cycle of Generational Poverty in Metro Atlanta. (n.d.). *The Schapiro Group*, 25.

²⁰ Johnson, Recovery or Bust: Georgia's Poor Left Behind, 6.

²¹ Haskins, R, Combating Poverty: Understanding New Challenges for Families.

²² Breaking the Cycle of Generational Poverty in Metro Atlanta, 16.

²³ Peachtree Pine Works. (n.d.). Retrieved February 18, 2015, from <http://atlantataskforceforhomeless.org/>

²⁴ Peachtree Pine Works, February 18, 2015.

²⁵ Breaking the Cycle of Generational Poverty in Metro Atlanta, 27.

drugs and transport to reach a health center can be devastating, both for an individual and their relatives who need to care for them or help them reach and pay for treatment.²⁶

The Numbers: An estimated 36 percent of low-income adult Georgians went without medical care due to cost in 2011, which ranks as the 4th highest rate in the nation.²⁷

6. Transportation

What: Access to reliable transportation is also a barrier to poor Georgians trying to exit poverty. Without reliable transportation, most Georgians cannot work, attend college, or train for jobs.²⁸

Why: Heavy reliance on public transportation limits opportunities for low-income Georgians. Low-income Georgians are more likely to rely on public transportation to get to work. Households without cars in metro areas like Atlanta and Augusta are more likely to earn low incomes and need public transportation to get to work. Low-income Georgians living in the suburbs are more likely to be cut off from jobs in other suburbs because of a lack of public transportation. While the majority of metro area jobs and most job growth was in the suburbs over the last ten years, suburban jobs are less accessible to metro area labor pools than city jobs because of transit system routes. Low-income Georgians relying on mass transit to commute to work in cities are still at a disadvantage when the typical job in cities such as Atlanta and Augusta is out of reach of most mass transit.²⁹

The Numbers: 18 percent of jobs are accessible by transit for metro Atlanta residents, 33 percent for those living in the city.³⁰

7. Affordable Housing

What: The collapse of the housing market and rising rents that followed likely contributed to many low-income Georgians becoming housing cost-burdened. Families are considered housing cost-burdened when they spend 30 percent or more of their income on housing.³¹

Why: Spending such a high share of a family's income on housing leaves little room to pay for life's basic necessities. A family of four earning \$20,000 per year is housing cost-burdened if they spend \$500 per month on rent. That leaves them less than \$1,200 for the month to pay for food, transportation, child care, medicine and doctor's visits, and other basic necessities.³²

The Numbers: "In Atlanta, 79 percent of housing vouchers were used in the suburbs by 2009, up from 66 percent in 2000."³³

²⁶ Key Facts: Poverty and Poor Health. (n.d.). Retrieved February 26, 2015, from <http://www.healthpovertyaction.org/policy-and-resources/the-cycle-of-poverty-and-poor-hea>

²⁷ Johnson, Recovery or Bust: Georgia's Poor Left Behind, 12.

²⁸ Johnson, Recovery or Bust: Georgia's Poor Left Behind, 10.

²⁹ Johnson, Recovery or Bust: Georgia's Poor Left Behind, 10.

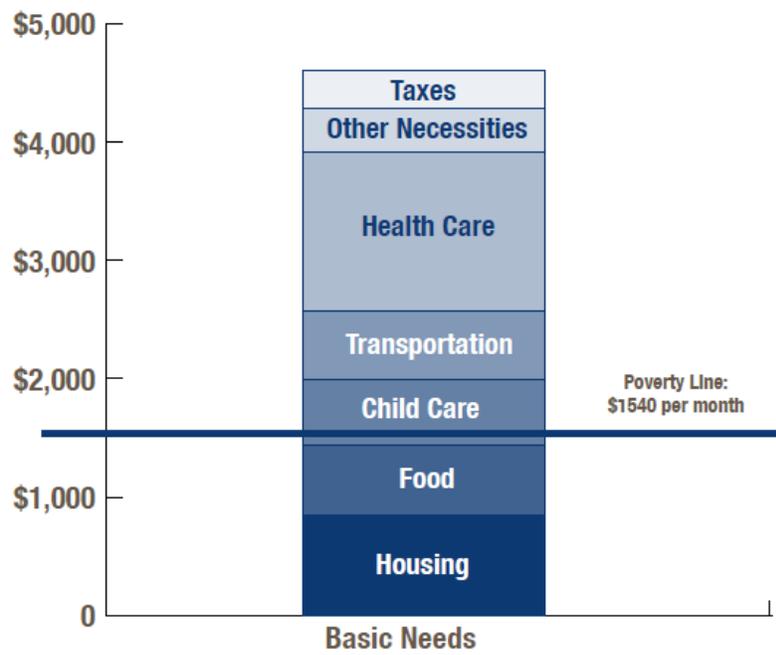
³⁰ Hunt, A. (2015, January 28). MARTA official right about limited options. *Atlanta Journal Constitution*.

³¹ Johnson, Recovery or Bust: Georgia's Poor Left Behind, 11.

³² Johnson, Recovery or Bust: Georgia's Poor Left Behind, 11.

³³ Johnson, Recovery or Bust: Georgia's Poor Left Behind, 11.

Poor Metro Atlanta Families Cannot Meet Basic Needs



Source: Economic Policy Institute Family Budget Calculator; U.S. Census Bureau. Based on a family makeup of two parents and one child. "Other necessities" include clothes, personal care products, and education.

³⁴ Johnson, Recovery or Bust: Georgia's Poor Left Behind, 2.