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## Revisiting The Recession's Impact on Maryland Families

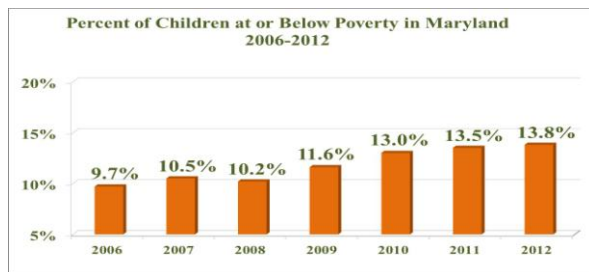
*New Poverty Data Shows Rates Stabilizing But at Higher Pre-Recession Level*

### Background

Recently released American Community Survey (ACS) figures show that the percentage of Maryland children living in poverty has begun to stabilize after steady increases since 2006. While it is good news that the increase has leveled, the disconcerting fact is that it is 42.3 percent higher than pre-recession levels<sup>1</sup>. The recession of 2007-2009 has played an undeniable role in these increases. However, the slow growth of the economy and polarizing politics continue to further destabilize programs and resources aimed at protecting individuals from—and ultimately reducing—poverty.

### Measuring the Impact

Analysis of poverty data from 2006 to 2012 shows a steady increase in the percentage of children living at or below the poverty level in Maryland.



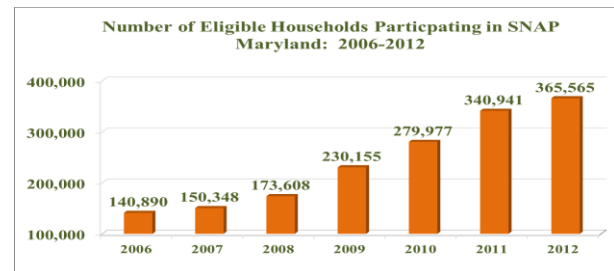
While the rates have stabilized, they do so at considerably higher rates which nullify the progress made pre-2006. If the trend continues at this pace, it will take over a decade to return to the 2006 baseline of slightly less than 10 percent.

One of the major contributors to this increase has been the lack of gainful employment for parents or caretakers. From 2008 to 2012, the share of all children under age 18 living in families with one unemployed parent increased from 5 to 9 percent<sup>2</sup>—an 80 percent increase over four years. Looking deeper into those statistics from 2011 to 2012, the figures are flat at 9 percent for both years. These figures are on par with the national average of 9 percent for 2012.

<sup>1</sup> Source| Analysis of ACS Age by ratio of income to poverty level past 12 months universe data:2006-2012

<sup>2</sup> Source| Population Reference Bureau analysis of monthly Current Population Survey files.

Additionally, the number of eligible families receiving Supplemental Nutrition and Assistance Program (SNAP), a key program in ensuring nutritious meals reach hungry families, increased by 159 percent or 140,890 recipients in 2006 to 365,565 recipients in 2012<sup>3</sup>.



While it is important that poor and low-income families have access to proven poverty fighting programs like SNAP, the large increase is just another reminder of how difficult shaking the effects of the Great Recession have been.

### Discussion

The effects of growing up in poverty are damaging. Adults who experienced poverty as children typically earn less, have higher levels of poor health, and achieve lower levels of education. They also have increased chances of contact with the criminal justice system than their peers who did not grow up in poverty<sup>4</sup>.

With calls to reduce federal spending and close deficits, safety-net programs have been in the cross hairs. However, with the increases in SNAP participation and unemployment in Maryland still above 7 percent<sup>5</sup>, any cuts to these programs will further impact the economic well-being of already distressed families as well as pushing more families to the brink of economic distress.

<sup>3</sup> Source| Analysis of State Level SNAP participation data provided by USDA/FNS 2006-2012

<sup>4</sup> Source| Lewit, E. M., Terman, D. L., & Behrman, R. E. (1997). Children in poverty: Analysis and recommendations. *The Future of Children: Children and Poverty*, 7(2), 4-22.

<sup>5</sup> Source: Department of Labor Statistics; Dec. 2010 unemployment figure

