

- to make these areas more competitive as places to live, work, and invest; and
  - to bring people and capital into these areas in order to create mixed-income communities of choice.
- ✓ Encourage neighborhoods to organize against crime as one of the priority activities under the 2007 Community Assistance Program (CAP).

## REDUCE THE NUMBER OF POVERTY LEVEL FAMILIES

### A SNAPSHOT OF WINNEBAGO COUNTY POVERTY: 2005 CENSUS DATA

Every person in Illinois has a human right to healthcare, an adequate livelihood, and freedom from the constraints of poverty. However, newly released data from the U.S. Census Bureau, contained in the *Income, Poverty, and Health Insurance Coverage in the United States: 2005* report and the American Community Survey, indicate a very different reality for millions in our state – half a million Illinois children live in poverty, over one and a half million Illinoisans do not have health insurance, and hundreds of thousands struggle in extreme poverty, with incomes well under \$10,000 a year.

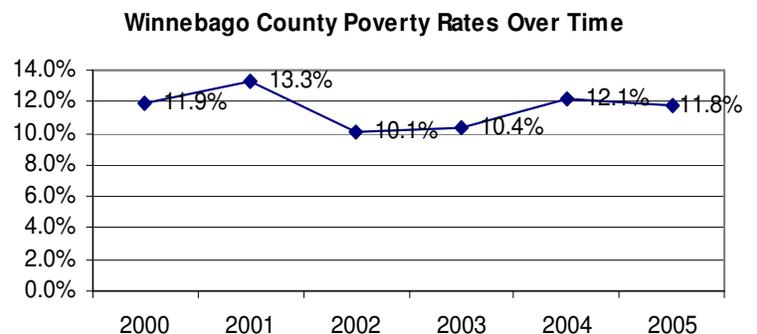
These problems are not limited to specific areas of the state; people are finding it difficult to make ends meet in cities, suburbs, small towns, and rural areas alike. The realities of state and national budget deficits, along with shifting priorities in recent years, have perpetuated the hardship faced by many in the state. These unmet needs require new attention and investments to turn the tide of opportunity for hundreds of thousands of Illinoisans.

### Poverty in Winnebago County did decrease...

The **Winnebago County poverty rate** decreased from 12.1 percent in 2004 to 11.8 percent in 2005. The actual number of people living in poverty decreased slightly from 34,131 in 2004 to 33,277 individuals in 2005. The **Rockford poverty rate** was 18.3 percent in 2005, with 25,409 people in Rockford living in poverty.

**Children** continue to be over-represented among those in poverty, making up 25.9 percent of the total Winnebago population but 41.4 percent of those in poverty in 2005. Overall child poverty in Winnebago County increased between 2004 and 2005. While 17.5 percent, or 12,744, of Winnebago County children lived in poverty in 2004, 18.8 percent, or 13,779, children lived in poverty in 2005.

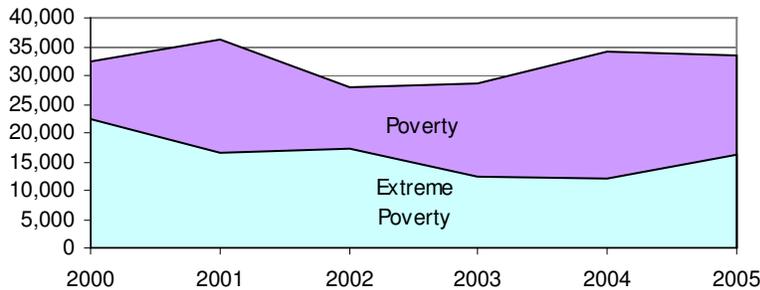
While the percent of Winnebago County households receiving **Food Stamps** decreased from 11.8 percent in 2004 to 10.3 percent in 2005, the number of recipients, 11,284 in 2005, is nearly double that of 2000 (6,340).



Winnebago County **median household income** also decreased in 2005. It was \$43,451, lower than the median household income in 2004 of \$45,002 and far below the 2000 median income of \$48,142, when adjusted for inflation. Additionally, **unemployment rates** in Winnebago County rose from 4.6 percent in 2000 to 6.4 percent in 2005.

## But, Thousands of Winnebago County residents lived in extreme poverty in 2005

**Number of Winnebago County Residents in Poverty and in Extreme Poverty Over Time**



– less than \$8,045 for a family of three in 2005.

Far too many Winnebago County residents live in extreme poverty, meaning they live at or below 50 percent of the federal poverty threshold. **Extreme poverty rates** for Winnebago County have risen from 4.2 percent in 2004 to 5.8 percent in 2005. This represents 16,301 people trying to make ends meet on an annual income that falls far short of meeting the cost of basic needs

## 2005 Profile of Winnebago County Residents

<i>Percent White non-Hispanic</i>	<i>Percent Black</i>	<i>Percent Asian</i>	<i>Percent Hispanic</i>	<i>Percent foreign-born</i>	<i>Percent of population over 25 that are not high school graduates</i>
<b>75.8%</b>	<b>11.0%</b>	<b>2.1%</b>	<b>9.7%</b>	<b>8.3%</b>	<b>15.3%</b>

The City of Rockford will continue to fund activities or work cooperatively with the agencies over the next year identified in Section IV of the Consolidated Plan. Those initiatives will include:

### **CDBG Funding**

- Administer the small business loan program, funded by CDBG funds, which provides dollars for business development and expansion. The number of jobs provided to low income is one full-time equivalent job for up to every \$15,000 in loans.
- Implement the Self-Employment Training (SET) Program, which provides free entrepreneurial training to low/mod – income residents of the City.
- Administer the Microenterprise Investment Match Program, which addresses the lack of equity among low/mod – income entrepreneurs.

- Implement and administer the Rehabilitation & Development Assistance Program, which addresses job creation for low-income persons and investments in designated target areas.
- Provide Community Assistance Program (CAP) funds to community based and/or neighborhood based organizations for projects that address an identified need in a certain sector of the community. Giving priority to projects located or serving identified focus areas as well as those that demonstrate a collaborative effort may further define the program.
- Staff boards, which assist those in poverty to help ensure appropriate distribution of funds, such as the FEMA Board.
- Continue Focus Area rehabilitation programs in strategic areas and create decent, affordable housing units.
- Provide match funds for the City of Rockford Human Services Department's Get the Lead Out! Program to reduce the lead paint hazards in lower income homes in which a child with a high EBL level has been identified.

### **HOME Funding**

- Continuation of a property standards type program for lower- income households and providing funds to local non-profits who serve persons in need of decent, safe, and affordable housing with any carryover from previous year programming.
- Create housing by funding activities such as Lincolnwood II, HOPE VI, and Emerson Estates.

### **ESGP Funding**

- Administer the Emergency Shelter Grants Program, giving priority to projects falling under the category of homeless prevention.

### **Other Funding and Initiatives**

- Continue to administer the Family Self-Sufficiency Program through the Rockford Housing Authority.
- Work with the Rockford Housing Authority to continue to provide subsidized housing for those transitioning from housing assisted through homeless grants.
- Continuation of the YouthBuild Program through Comprehensive Community Solutions, Inc. which provides mentoring and employment opportunities to youth.

## City of Rockford's Human Services Department

- Continue the Head Start program, which teaches income eligible pre-school children educational skills and social classroom skills. Head Start gets kids on the right track emotionally and educationally. While they are learning, their parents are provided access to employment and social services. Head Start serves over 600 children per year at three Rockford locations. All locations are located in lower income neighborhoods with two located in public housing developments and noted below:
  1. Henrietta Site, 200 North Johnston Street
  2. Fairgrounds Site, 910 Acorn Street (located at a PHA development site)
  3. Orton Keyes Site, 653 Ranger Road (located at a PHA development site)
- Community Services assists persons who are homeless or are in danger of becoming homeless through FEMA Emergency Food and Shelter funds, Illinois Department of Human Services Homeless Prevention funds, Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) funds and Rockford Township Condemnation funds. These funds assist low-income persons with one month's rent, utility assistance, deposits and mortgage assistance.
- Continuation of the Summer Lunch program funded by the Illinois State Board of Education, which provides free, nutritious lunches to eligible children aged 3-18.
- The continuation of a partnership with the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services which provides advocacy, counseling, budgeting and support to normal class families and youth leaving the foster care system.
- Support and guidance in developing grassroots organizations including faith based organizations.
- The provision of grassroots training which provides low-income citizens with the tools necessary to advocate for themselves and their community.
- Continue to provide intensive, long-term case management services to families and seniors to increase their skills, improve their income and strengthen family connections.
- Continue administering the Low Income Heating Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP). This program assists income eligible households in making an annual one-time payment towards low-income households heating bill. It also assists with the repair/replacement of furnaces. The Energy Division also offers the Weatherization program, which assists household in making their homes more

energy efficient in an effort to reduce heating costs and the Energy Conservation Housing Rehabilitation program, which provides rehabilitation to homes that will result in energy conservation.

- Continue the Weatherization and the Get the Lead Out! Programs.
- Continue to administer an Economic Development Loan Program that provides loans to businesses that agree to create jobs for low-income persons. For every \$20,000 loaned, a job must be created that is filled by a low-income person. .
- Continue to operate an Individual Development Account Program to increase the resources available for homeownership, higher education, or entrepreneurial activities for participating low/moderate-income residents. The program also provides intensive classes in financial literacy, home buying, small business start-up and educational counseling.
- Resurrection of the Neighborhood Network to create a neighborhood umbrella organization who is charged with:
  1. Coordinating the exchange of information among citizens, neighborhood organizations and City staff and;
  2. Providing technical assistance to neighborhood groups and leaders.

## **DEVELOP THE INSTITUTIONAL STRUCTURE**

The City will continue to promote coordination in the identification of resources and implementation of programs to meet the needs of this community. Several actions are expected over the next program year.

- The City will work with and strengthen neighborhood groups to achieve the goals of focus area plans.
- The City has established working relationships with a number of neighborhood business development organizations, such as the Seventh Street Area Development Council, Inc. (also known as Mid Town District), SouthWest Ideas For Today and Tomorrow, Inc. (SWIFTT), the State Street Business Association (West State Street), North End Commons, and Neighborhood Networks. City staff will continue to provide technical assistance and guidance to these organizations in order to enhance and develop their capacity to serve their neighborhood business districts. The City is also beginning to work with emerging groups to identify and address the issues facing other commercial areas, such as the N. Main Street & W. Riverside area. The city will also continue to work closely with the Northern Illinois Minority Companies Association (NIMCA) in an effort to strengthen minority- and woman-owned businesses in the Rockford area.