

# Poverty in America/Financial Literacy



Poverty in America seems like a difficult thing to comprehend and visualize. The reality of poverty is a true sad state of affairs that impacts a great number of people, and the numbers sadly continue to rise amid the pandemic. There are several factors that contribute to poverty and there are people that have abruptly found their lives in poverty due to changes in employment status, marital status and also health implications that span the gamut. It is important that we understand that for so many the root causes of poverty are very directly tied to the circumstances under which someone is born. People living in underserved communities without access to adequate food, education and healthcare have often impossible odds to face. Many times these deficits are most apparent within the school system where teachers and school community are the lifeline. Recently, poverty has been new to many which has caused new levels of compassion for those that have been living in poverty for longer periods of time. Many people that have found themselves operating and living at and below the poverty line never thought they would be there. There are generous people and organizations that fight against poverty by donating services and basic needs that help people as they are working to move out of poverty. Locally, there are food, clothing, and mental health resources available for those in need in our community. We would like to Highlight Ed White High School for their Family and Community Engagement efforts. The Launch Pad link is available to submit a request for specific needs in the resource section.

The Giving Closet is another basic need resource available to our community. They are “Clothing Our Most Vulnerable Youth”. You can see their work by visiting the webpage provided in the resource section. When students log into their FOCUS accounts, there is information about free mental health services available. Currently all DCPS students are eligible to receive free breakfast and lunch. Special thank you to each of the individuals and organizations that are working to combat poverty and positively address meeting the basic needs of our community.

Financial Education is a practical strategy that can fight against poverty once the basic needs are sustainably met. It in no way is the sole answer to some of the tragic and abrupt things that have led some individuals to the state of poverty. It is a tool that can help move out and hopefully prevent people from entering poverty. We live in a time that information is plentiful and access to this information can be retrieved through the internet, public libraries, credit unions and banking institutions. Financial literacy information can be retrieved at low to no cost for members. Many of these institutions host community events to share financial strategies for adults and teens. Topics include budgeting, credit, debt, investing, and retirement. These are all beneficial to promote healthy financial literacy and equip people to proactively fight against financial poverty. Whether we are working to leave the realm of poverty or fighting not to enter it two important things to have with us are compassion and education. Showing compassion to others and ourselves despite financial standing as well as receiving the education needed to help ourselves and others get a clear understanding of the impacts of financial health to impactfully decrease poverty.

Overall awareness and compassion within our communities is so vitally important. People want to do well for themselves and their families. Where they can't, let us step up and be their neighbor.

Resources:

<https://givingclosetproject.org/>

## **LAUNCH PAD**

<https://feedingnefl.org/findfoodnow/>

<https://www.treasury.gov/resource-center/financial-education/documents/ofe-cfap-resources.pdf>

<https://www.nea.org/professional-excellence/student-engagement/tools-tips/resources-teaching-financial-literacy>