



THE UNITED STATES CONFERENCE OF MAYORS

1620 EYE STREET, NORTHWEST
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20006
TELEPHONE (202) 293-7330
FAX (202) 293-2352
URL: www.usmayors.org

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REVISING THE FEDERAL MEASURE OF POVERTY

WHEREAS, the federal poverty threshold, was established in 1963-1964 based on the cost of only one of life's necessities, food; and

WHEREAS, in the 1960's families spent about one-third of their income on food, while today food accounts for about one-seventh of an average household's total expenditures while other necessities, particularly housing, account for a larger proportion of family income; and

WHEREAS, the federal poverty threshold has only been adjusted for inflation and is the uniform standard for cities and rural areas alike throughout the nation; and

WHEREAS, a single federal standard does not address the different cost of living for families across our Nation; and

WHEREAS, the current federal poverty line no longer represents the income that families must earn to meet the basic costs of daily life; and

WHEREAS, the current poverty measure only counts pre-tax cash as the income available to families to meet their needs, thus ignoring the value of tax credits and in-kind benefits; and

WHEREAS, at the request of Congress, the National Academy of Sciences has made specific recommendations for an improved poverty measure that have created a wide consensus for change; and

WHEREAS, an accurate calculation of the federal poverty rate is important to understanding the dimensions of the nation's economic needs; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that The United States Conference of Mayors urges the federal government to revise the formula for calculating the federal poverty line so that it better reflects the amount that families must earn to meet the basic costs of daily life across America, and that it include non-cash resources that help families meet those needs in its measure of family resources, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the U.S. Bureau of the Census re-vamp its American Community Survey so that it can provide an improved measure of poverty for cities across the nation.

Projected Cost: Unknown