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## **POVERTY IN YOUR COMMUNITY: DEVELOPING A COMMUNITY PROFILE**

Narrator:

What does poverty look like in your community? In your VISTA role, it is essential to understand the makeup of your community, as well as the challenges people living in poverty face. In this presentation, we'll direct you to resources that will help you create a community profile. Along the way, Stephen Pimpare, a national expert in poverty, will share his insights and reflections.

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## **HOW WILL YOUR COMMUNITY PROFILE HELP YOU AS A VISTA?**

- Learn about the people in your area
- Impact the design and delivery of your services
- Shape your partnering decisions
- Help with resource development
- Enlist supporters

Narrator:

Learning about community members in need, and their circumstances, can inform the services your organization provides, and the types of partnerships you pursue. You might discover factors, such as a high rate of single mother households living in poverty within your community, or a large disparity between income level and local housing costs. How would those findings impact your services? Listen to Stephen Pimpare talk about how a clear picture of local needs can support resource development and attract people to you work.

Dr. Stephen Pimpare:

"You should know what the poverty is not just in your region, not just in your state, but in the very particular community that you're working in and that you're serving. You should know that simply because that's useful, important information to have at your disposal. But it also might come in handy if you are charged with, say, helping put together grant applications, providing very particular kinds of data in order to justify the need for particular new funding for your agency, or

	<p>communicating with the community or others about the work that your agency is doing. If you can talk, with specifics, about the kind of need that is present in your area, you may have a much better chance of enlisting people, - whether it's donating time or energy or money - to the organizations that you're working with."</p>
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<p><b>YOUR COMMUNITY IN CONTEXT</b></p>	
<p>Who lives in poverty in the United States? According to the 2011 Census:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 15% of all people</li> <li>• 22% of children</li> <li>• 27% of African-Americans &amp; Hispanics</li> <li>• 25% of Hispanics</li> <li>• 31% of female-headed households</li> </ul>	<p>Narrator: National poverty data can help you see your community in context. This data sample from the Census provides an overview of poverty in the United States. You may also want to seek out state level data for comparison. Listen to Stephen Pimpare talk about national poverty data.</p> <p>Dr. Stephen Pimpare: "Poverty in the United States is common. Over this three-year period, almost half of all Americans were poor at least once. Long-term poverty in the United States is relatively uncommon. The line between poor, working poor, working class, and middle class in the United States is thin. It's permeable. Over time, people move in and out of poverty - sometimes poor one month, not poor for the next six months, poor again for three months, not poor again, et cetera - which is, I think, hugely important and something that we very often miss when we think about poverty because we're focusing so much of our attention on those snapshot numbers, that 15% in 2010."</p>

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<b>YOUR COMMUNITY PROFILE</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Download</b> your Community Profile form<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ <a href="#">PDF</a></li><li>▪ <a href="#">Word</a></li></ul></li></ul>	<p>Narrator: You'll now look at websites that include data you can use in creating a community profile. For each site you'll go through the same process of exploring the data, and recording it in your profile. The first step is to download the form you'll use to record your data. The form comes in PDF, and Microsoft Word formats. Choose the one that works best for you.</p>

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<b>WHAT DOES POVERTY LOOK LIKE IN YOUR COMMUNITY?</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Explore</b> census data for your county: <a href="#">American FactFinder</a></li></ul> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 10px; margin: 10px 0;"><p><i>Follow these steps to find your local data:</i></p><p>Select "Geographies" and then enter "county" as the geographic type. A "state" dropdown menu will appear. Enter your state. Then a "county" dropdown menu will appear. Enter your county. Now it's time to look for poverty-specific data.</p></div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Record</b> the data into your Community Profile</li></ul>	<p>Narrator: The second step is to explore data sets on the American FactFinder site. Click on the "Follow these steps" link for instructions on how to find the county-level data you'll need to fill out your profile.</p> <p>The third step involves recording your data as you explore. There are many data sets on this site, so don't get overwhelmed. Focus on those that best align with your site, and your VISTA role. You can always add more data to your profile, under the "additional data" heading.</p>

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<b>WHAT DOES POVERTY LOOK LIKE IN YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD?</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Explore</b> data in your location using: <a href="#">Mapping America: Every City, Every Block</a></li><li>• <b>Record</b> data into your Community Profile</li></ul>	<p>Narrator: Now let's take an even more focused view. This website - created by the New York Times - allows you to look at Census data at a neighborhood level simply by entering a zip code. After clicking the link, select the "view more maps" box, and search among the four categories. Record the findings in your Community Profile.</p>

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<b>LIVING IN POVERTY IN YOUR COMMUNITY</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Explore</b> <a href="#">Paycheck to Paycheck</a> to look at the wages and cost of housing in your community</li><li>• Serving outside of a metropolitan area? Follow <a href="#">these instructions</a> to create a tailored analysis of your community.</li><li>• <b>Record</b> the data into your Community Profile</li></ul>	<p>Narrator: This data source features housing statistics for your community. The Paycheck to Paycheck database focuses on metropolitan areas, but also provides step-by-step directions for compiling data for suburban and rural areas.</p>

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<b>LIVING IN POVERTY IN YOUR COMMUNITY</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Explore</b> the <a href="#">Basic Family Budget Calculator (EPI)</a> to learn about the costs of basic budget items in your community and the approximate wages needed to make ends meet</li><li>• <b>Record</b> the data into your Community Profile</li></ul>	<p>Narrator:</p> <p>This resource looks at how much a family needs to get by in your community. For the type of family you enter, for example, “one parent and two children,” you’ll learn how much a family needs to spend for basic necessities. This total is converted to an annual amount, which indicates how much income a family needs to make ends meet. Record your findings in your Community Profile.</p> <p>When you’re finished, take a moment to look back at the salary data you compiled from the Paycheck to Paycheck website. If the head of this household were employed in one of the occupations you examined, would they be able to get by? What challenges would they face?</p>

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<b>USING YOUR PROFILE</b>	
	<p>Narrator:</p> <p>The information you’ve put together for your Community Profile will inform your work, and serve as a resource that can help build the capacity of your organization. It can help you in designing programs, and developing partnerships, and in fundraising. In closing, Stephen Pimpare provides a good reminder of the role numbers play in assembling the big picture.</p> <p>Dr. Stephen Pimpare:</p> <p>“ ...averages can obscure. Think of it in human terms. No one you meet is an average. No one in your community is an average. No one your agency serves is an average. Each of them will have their own particular kinds of experiences.</p> <p>So, you should be able to describe the poverty rates in your area and how that varies from</p>

	neighborhood to neighborhood, from race to race, from gender to gender, from age to age. But don't make assumptions that everybody in need of assistance is going to neatly fit into what you identify to be their prescribed category."
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<p><b>ADDITIONAL RESOURCES</b></p>	
<p><b>Census Scope:</b> Features a wide array of datasets, searchable by county, that can give you unique insights into your community including segregation indices, migration, household &amp; family structure, and occupation. They may have tailored data and reports on your state and county.</p> <p><b>USDA:</b> Features county-level data that are searchable by poverty, population, unemployment and median household income, and education.</p> <p><b>USDA Rural Poverty:</b> Features resources on rural poverty and well-being.</p>	<p><b>Narrator:</b> Depending on your site and VISTA assignment, you may need to seek out specific data to better understand the needs of your community. These sites can provide in-depth data on a wide variety of poverty-related topics. You might also want to seek out data published by your state.</p> <p>Make additions to your Community Profile that make the most sense for your specific service and site. You'll create a comprehensive reference for your site, while informing your own service. It's a win-win!</p>