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Indianapolis

## HUMAN NEEDS INDEX FACT SHEET

A joint partnership between The Salvation Army and Indiana University Lilly Family School of Philanthropy, the Human Needs Index (HNI) is the nation's only multidimensional measure of human need based on objective data from a nonprofit on the front lines of providing social services. With different indicators and less lag time than traditional government data, the HNI serves as a powerful tool to track basic human need in the United States.

### The Data

- The Salvation Army operates more than 7,500 centers in communities across the United States, and each collects high-quality data on a wide variety of poverty-related social services.
- To compile the Human Needs Index, researchers at the Indiana University Lilly Family School of Philanthropy, together with Salvation Army staff, reviewed 230 kinds of data to select the seven service categories that comprise the HNI.
- The seven variables chosen were determined through validation and testing to be the most representative of the basic needs people have for survival.

### The Variables

- Meals provided – served through a Salvation Army or other facility
- Groceries provided – food items provided by voucher or distributed through a food pantry or food bank
- Housing assistance – the number of rent or mortgage assistance payments to establish or maintain an individual or family in their own home
- Furniture provided – the number of furniture orders provided
- Clothing provided – the number of clothing orders provided
- Medical assistance – assistance with prescription medicines and volunteers/hours served in medically related roles
- Energy assistance – assistance with energy bills and volunteers/hours served in energy-related roles

### The Visualization

- The scale of the HNI begins at 0 – indicating a minimum level of need.
- The HNI can be viewed at the national level and at individual state levels.
- The Index is composed of state averages weighted by population so that each state is proportionately represented in the national average.