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## **Report Predicts Sharp Increases in Poverty Due to Recession, Especially Among Children**

The recession is expected to increase the number of West Virginia children living in poverty by more than a third, according to new report by the West Virginia Center on Budget and Policy. An estimated 130,585 children (34.4 percent) are or will soon be living below the poverty line. The total number of people across all age groups estimated to be headed toward poverty is 438,326 (24.9 percent). The Center's analysis is based on an examination of unemployment and poverty rates during previous recessions and was modeled after a recent national study.

"The annual poverty rates released this month by the U.S. Census Bureau won't reflect the dramatic downturn of West Virginia's economy since the beginning of this year," said Paul Miller, policy analyst at the Center and author of the report. "The Census poverty rates are based on calendar year 2008, when the state's unemployment rate was only 4.5 percent."

Numerous studies have shown the detrimental effects of long-term poverty on children, including health problems, lower educational achievement, social and emotional difficulties, and lower wages as adults. Recent research has also revealed that even the temporary poverty related to recessions has a harmful and lasting impact on child development.

"The research highlights the importance of preventing families from falling into poverty during economic downturns, as well as reducing the number who are already poor," said Miller. "States need a variety of strategies that respond to diverse family situations, ranging from temporary assistance for experienced workers who are between jobs to longer-term support for individuals who face significant obstacles to employment."

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*The West Virginia Center on Budget and Policy is a policy research organization that is nonpartisan, nonprofit, and statewide. It focuses on how policy decisions affect all West Virginians, especially low- and moderate-income families. The full report can be viewed and downloaded at [www.wvpolicy.org](http://www.wvpolicy.org).*