

Policy Analysis Center

A partnership between The Horizon Foundation & the Association of Community Services

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Howard County, Maryland

Self Sufficiency Indicators Report

September 2010

The Policy Analysis Center was established in 2007 and became operational in June 2008 as a result of a joint partnership between the Association of Community Services (ACS) and the Horizon Foundation. This unique collaboration was designed to provide the community with a new capability to provide useful information to community-based organizations in the area of health and human services. The Center's overarching goal is to improve the community's ability to conduct analysis that addresses the needs of health and human service organizations throughout the County.

The Policy Analysis Center is guided by a Steering Committee co-chaired by Rich Krieg, President of the Horizon Foundation and Anne Towne, Executive Director of the Association of Community Services. Current members include Jim Truby, Shirley Collier, Roy Appletree, Jackie Eng, and Glenn Schneider.

This is the third annual update of the Self Sufficiency Indicators report and was compiled by Nancy Weber with the assistance of many members of the ACS Public Policy Committee and agencies who provide services in the areas covered by this report.

More information on the Policy Analysis Center and its reports can be found at www.policyanalysiscenter.org.

Howard County Maryland Self Sufficiency Indicators Report 2010

BACKGROUND

In 2008, the Policy Analysis Center issued a report entitled, *Measures for Assessing Material Hardship in Howard County* to identify the impact of economic conditions on the ability of all Howard County residents to meet the annual cost of living. In 2009, the report's title was changed to more accurately reflect the information content as well as coordinate with Howard County's efforts to promote self sufficiency in the community. In response to requests for updated information, the Policy Analysis Center has prepared the third annual *Self Sufficiency Indicators Report for 2010*.

In establishing the Self Sufficiency Indicators, a number of factors were explored. Based on the median household income for Howard County of \$102,540¹, it was determined that the Federal Poverty guideline (FPL) in 2010 of \$22,050 for a family of four, was a woefully inadequate measure of a family's ability to survive in Howard County. The FPL was developed in the 1960s based solely on the food budget necessary to meet basic nutritional needs since the average family at that time spent nearly one third of their budget on food. Clearly, there are many more costs associated with a family living today in Howard County. Depending upon family constellation, other costs include housing, transportation, child care, health care and taxes.

Table 1 – Surviving in Howard County

	One Adult	Two Adults	Two Adults One Infant	One Adult Two Teens	One Adult Two Preschoolers
<i>Major Monthly Costs</i>	<i>\$ Costs</i>	<i>\$ Costs</i>	<i>\$ Costs</i>	<i>\$ Costs</i>	<i>\$ Costs</i>
Housing ²	1,185	1,185	1,422	1,422	1,422
Child Care ³	0	0	940	0	1,765
Food ⁴	229	451	551	853	461
Transportation ⁵	260	502	508	260	266
Health Care ⁶	147	411	423	423	371
Miscellaneous ⁷	182	255	384	83	429
Taxes ⁸	623	732	1,066	699	1,286
<i>Self Sufficiency Annual Income</i>	<i>\$31,517</i>	<i>\$42,432</i>	<i>\$63,537</i>	<i>\$47,437</i>	<i>\$72,000</i>
<i>Federal Poverty Level (FPL)(2010)⁹</i>	<i>\$10,830</i>	<i>\$14,570</i>	<i>\$18,310</i>	<i>\$18,310</i>	<i>\$18,310</i>

Source: Center for Women's Welfare, 2007 *The Self Sufficiency Standard for Maryland*

¹ U.S. Census Bureau, 2008 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates, www.factfinder.census.gov/

² Includes Fair Market Rent (FMR) with utilities except for telephone and cable.

³ Market rate costs based on age of child and type of care (family child care, child care center)

⁴ Based on USDA Low Cost food plan which does not include take out, fast food or restaurant meals

⁵ Based on the average cost of owning and operating a car.

⁶ Assumes employer-sponsored health insurance for workers and their families and out-of-pocket expenses.

⁷ Based on 10% of all costs and includes clothing, shoes, paper products, diapers, nonprescription medicines, cleaning products, household items, personal hygiene items, and telephone service

⁸ Includes federal and state income tax, payroll taxes (Social Security), and state and local sales taxes where applicable. Additionally, the Standard includes federal tax credits (the Earned Income Tax Credit, the Child and Dependent Care Tax Credit, and the Child Tax Credit)

⁹ FPL updated annually. For families with more than 8 persons, \$3,740 is added for each additional person.

In the 1990's, Dr. Diana Pearce of the Center for Women's Welfare, University of Washington, developed the Self Sufficiency Standard to provide a more realistic estimate of the cost of living for a modern family. In 2007, the Center for Women's Welfare prepared the Self Sufficiency Standard for Maryland counties for the Advocates for Children & Youth.

Table 1, from the Self-Sufficiency Standard for Maryland, reflects the amount of money needed by five types of families in Howard County: one adult, two adults, two adults with an infant, one adult with two teenagers and one adult with two preschool children. The FPL represents the 2010 income levels while the remainder of the data is from 2007 (most recently available).

The Self Sufficiency Annual Income is the amount a household must receive to be financially independent. It includes both wages and public assistance payments in order to more accurately reflect what low-income households are apt to receive during a given year while not materially affecting their ability to be self sufficient.

There is a significant disparity between the FPL for a family of one, two or three people and the Self Sufficiency Standard especially when considering the family constellation and whether it includes children requiring child care. There is an additional difference between the Maryland average and the average for Howard County. For example, the average monthly cost of child care for an infant is \$940 for Maryland. The approximate monthly average for center-based infant care in Howard County is \$1,208; for preschool care \$844. These fees vary by zip code and are lower for family-based care.¹⁰ If a family has one infant and one preschool child in child care, this can account for nearly 20% of the household income; the only household expense higher than child care is taxes at 25%.¹¹

While over 51% of Howard County households earn more than \$100,000 annually, there are a significant number of households barely meeting the Self Sufficiency Annual Income needed to survive in the County. This is particularly evident when considering that approximately 40% of County households include children younger than 18 years of age.¹² Table 2 reflects the number of households by income category for years 2005, 2006, 2007 and 2008.

Table 2 – Howard County Household Income

	2005	2006	2007	2008 ¹³
Household Income	Number (%)	Number (%)	Number (%)	Number (%)
Less than \$24,999	7,217 (7.5)	7,680 (7.7)	7,095 (7.2)	6,490 (6.5)
\$25,000 – \$49,999	15,611 (16.2)	14,082 (14.3)	12,006 (12.2)	11,783 (11.8)
\$50,000 – \$74,999	14,678 (15.3)	15,535 (15.7)	16,657 (16.8)	16,298 (16.4)
\$75,000 - \$99,999	15,946 (16.5)	15,048 (15.2)	12,475 (12.6)	13,549 (13.6)
	2005	2006	2007	2008¹⁴
Household Income	Number (%)	Number (%)	Number (%)	Number (%)
\$100,000 or more	42,926 (44.5)	46,584 (47.1)	50,633 (51.2)	51,545 (51.7)
Total	96,428 (100)	98,919 (100)	98,866 (100)	99,665 (100)

The shaded area of Table 2 indicates that 18.3% of all households (18,233 households) earn less than 50% of the median household income placing them at risk for achieving self-sufficiency in Howard County. A number of these households rely on entitlement program benefits to reach self sufficiency.

¹⁰ Howard County Office of Children's Resources Semi-annual report for weekly childcare costs, September 2010

¹¹ Idem

¹² U.S. Census Bureau, 2008 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates, www.factfinder.census.gov/

¹³ U.S. Census American Community Surveys for 2005, 2006, 2007 and 2008 (latest data available)

¹⁴ U.S. Census American Community Surveys for 2005, 2006, 2007 and 2008 (latest data available)

SELF SUFFICIENCY INDICATORS

In the 2008 Material Hardship report the following were defined as indicators of self-sufficiency:

- Medicaid recipients
- Maryland Child Health Insurance Program (MCHIP) recipients
- Head Start students
- Food Stamp recipients
- Food Bank recipients
- Free and Reduced Meals (FARM) students
- Temporary Cash Assistance (TCA) recipients
- Housing Energy Assistance recipients
- Housing Choice Vouchers (Section 8 Housing)
- Public Housing residents
- Eviction prevention assistance
- Unemployed
- Uninsured
- Uncompensated health care (Howard County General Hospital)

The Self Sufficiency Work Group selected additional indicators including: eviction data; transitionally housed; unemployment rate; and Women, Infants and Children's (WIC) Nutrition program. The indicators compare data from four fiscal years – 2007 through 2010. The data clearly reflect the impact that the economic downturn of the last several years. For many indicators, there has been a significant increase in utilization and applications. The following is a discussion of the indicators and their significance (Table 3).

Financial Support

The selected indicators of financial stability are Temporary Cash Assistance (TCA) and the unemployment rate. TCA, once known as Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) is a program of support for families with minor children. There has been a 27% increase in the number of households and a 36% increase in the number of individuals receiving assistance since FY 2007. Of the 1,299 individuals receiving assistance, 906 are children. Appendix A reflects the trend for financial assistance.

Maryland's unemployment rate was 5.5% in March 2010; Howard County's unemployment rate has steadily increased from 2.9% in July 2007 to 5.5% in March 2010 an increase of 89%¹⁵. Between 2008 and 2009, the County rate increased by 61.4% a slightly higher rate than the Maryland increase of 60.8%.

Food Support

The food support indicators include Food Stamps, Food Bank Grants, Free and Reduced Meals (FARMS) school nutrition program and Women, Infants and Children (WIC) nutrition program. Food Stamps (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)) are available for eligible individuals and families to purchase food with amounts based on a Thrifty Food Plan allotment for each family member. Since 2007, there has been a 79% increase in the number of households receiving SNAP and a commensurate 90% increase in the number of individuals in Howard County.¹⁶

¹⁵ <http://www.co.ho.md.us/DOA> (retrieved June 2010)

¹⁶ Howard County Department of Citizen Services, May 2010
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Howard County Food Bank Grants increased 85% between 2007 and 2010. These grants reflect the number of services provided and do not represent unduplicated clients or families.

The FARMS program provides nutritious breakfasts and lunches to eligible children enrolled in schools in the County. There has been a 31% increase in the number of children receiving FARMS since the 2006-2007 school year. The current percentage (14.5%) also indicates that, on average, every child attending public school in Howard County would have at least one child in his or her classroom benefiting from the FARMS program. Of the 7,374 students on FARMS during the 2009-2010 school year, nearly 77% (5,649) received free meals and 23% (1,725) received reduced meals.

The Women's Infants and Children's (WIC) nutrition program provides vouchers for specific nutritious foods for pregnant and nursing mothers as well as infants and children to age five. Unlike Food Stamps, WIC vouchers may only be used for nutritious foods such as baby formula, milk, eggs, cheese, fruits and vegetables, nutritious cereals, soy milk and tofu, whole wheat bread and peanut butter. Between FY 2008 and FY 2010, there was a 15% increase in the number of WIC participants. Appendix B reflects the trend for nutritional assistance.

Health Care Support

The Policy Analysis Center tracking of health care support indicators are: Community Medicaid, Maryland Children's Health Insurance Program (MCHIP) and Uncompensated Care. The Community Medicaid provides support for low income families and children, those receiving Temporary Cash Assistance, children in foster care and Supplemental Security Income (SSI). Since June 2007, in Howard County there has been a 19% increase in the number of individuals receiving Medicaid (Medical Assistance Community Care. As of March 2010, 14,025 Howard County residents were receiving Medicaid services including aging/disabled, Maryland Child Health Insurance Program (MCHIP), families and children, individual adults in addition to the Community Care Medicaid listed above.

MCHIP provides health insurance benefits to income eligible children and pregnant women. MCHIP data is difficult to capture because there are two agencies that conduct the eligibility screening; Howard County Department of Social Services (DSS) and Howard County Health Department (HCHD). Approximately two thirds of the applications are handled by DSS with the remainder being done at HCHD. There has been a 7% increase since 2007.

Healthy Howard, a health insurance alternative developed in partnership with Howard County Government and the Horizon Foundation, is currently serving 900 individuals who are between 200 – 300% of the federal poverty level.¹⁷ Moreover, it has helped to identify and enroll over 2,500 residents, mostly children, eligible for other insurance programs such as Maryland Children's Health Insurance program (MCHIP) and the Primary Adult Health Care program (PAC)

Uncompensated care is medical treatment provided to an individual by a physician or other health care professional that is not paid by the patient, the government, or an insurance carrier. HCGH has experienced an 18.1% increase in the amount of uncompensated care it provided between 2007 and 2009. This increase may reflect an increase in the number of Howard County residents who have lost health insurance coverage or cannot afford it initially. Appendix C reflects the trend in health care assistance.

¹⁷ Healthy Howard, 7/19/2010
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Housing Support

The Policy Analysis Center selected Indicators of self sufficiency in the housing arena are: Home Energy Assistance Program grants; Section 8 (Housing Choice) Voucher Program applicants; waiting lists for federal and locally funded public housing units; eviction prevention assistance; transitionally housed individuals and families; and eviction filings and warrants.

A striking indicator of challenges to self-sufficiency in the County is reflected in Home Energy Assistance Program data. The number of grants provided has grown 224% since FY 2007. Households are eligible to receive assistance monthly, so the number of grants may represent more families in need of assistance or that families may need more frequent assistance. For the same period, the energy assistance funding has grown 480%. While the increase may reflect the increase energy costs in the region, the nearly five fold increase in funding since 2007 likely indicates increased need as well.

The availability of both Housing Choice Vouchers and public housing Units is fairly static. The Policy Center, therefore, chose the number of people on the waiting lists as a de facto indicator of the need for public or supported housing. The waiting lists reflect all applications, but have not been screened for eligibility. In FY 2010, there 3,987 on the waiting list for Housing Choice Vouchers compared approximately 5,000 on the waiting list for the public housing units. The waiting lists are purged each year indicating an increase in need rather than continuation of a long term waiting list. In addition to the federally funded Public Housing Units, Howard County Housing Commission and HCDHCD own and operate 647 housing units. The Howard County Housing Commission and HCDHCD should be commended as this represents a 248% growth in the number of units available

There has been a 82% increase in the number of eviction prevention grants between FY 2007 – FY 2010. There has also been an increase in the amount of funding during the same period of approximately 77% from \$94,494 to \$167,877.

To capture information reflecting the homeless and precariously housed population, the Policy Center used transitional housing indicators: individuals and families residing in emergency and transitional housing; the motel shelter program; and a count of unsheltered individuals and families. Three agencies provide transitional housing in the County; Grassroots, Bridges to Housing Stability (Bridges) (formerly Congregations Concerned for the Homeless) and the Domestic Violence Center (DVC). While the number sheltered has remained fairly constant due to fixed agency capacity, all three agencies report increased numbers of people on their waiting lists and significant numbers of turnaways, despite Grassroots' 2008 expansion of their shelter capacity at the main facility and the 2007 Bridge's increase in availability of transitional housing units. In January 2010, a Howard County survey found the total number of homeless persons (both sheltered and unsheltered) in the County was 141. An additional 88 were without formal shelter; an increase of 200% from 2009.

The main homeless service providers, Grassroots and Bridges, turned away people for lack of space more 4,200 last year. This is a substantial increase (41% for two years) over 3,300 in 2009 and 2,500 in 2008.

The National Alliance to End Homelessness states that nonpayment of rent is an indicator of financial issues that lead to housing instability. The Policy Analysis Center therefore uses eviction filings, warrants and evictions as de facto indicators of individuals and families facing economic challenges. A filing is completed in District Court by the landlord after he has made unsuccessful attempts, including in writing to collect past rent due. If the Court finds in favor of the landlord, a warrant of restitution is issued to the Sheriff's Department five days later to carry out the eviction order. At any time prior to the serving of the order, a tenant can pay the past rent due and the eviction order is canceled. In Howard County, from fiscal year 2008 to fiscal year 2009, eviction filings are on pace to increase 40%, warrants by 65%, and actual evictions for 2009 are expected to be

below 2008 by 11% though evictions will still higher than 2007 by 11.6% in 2009. Appendix D reflects the trend in housing assistance.

Educational Support

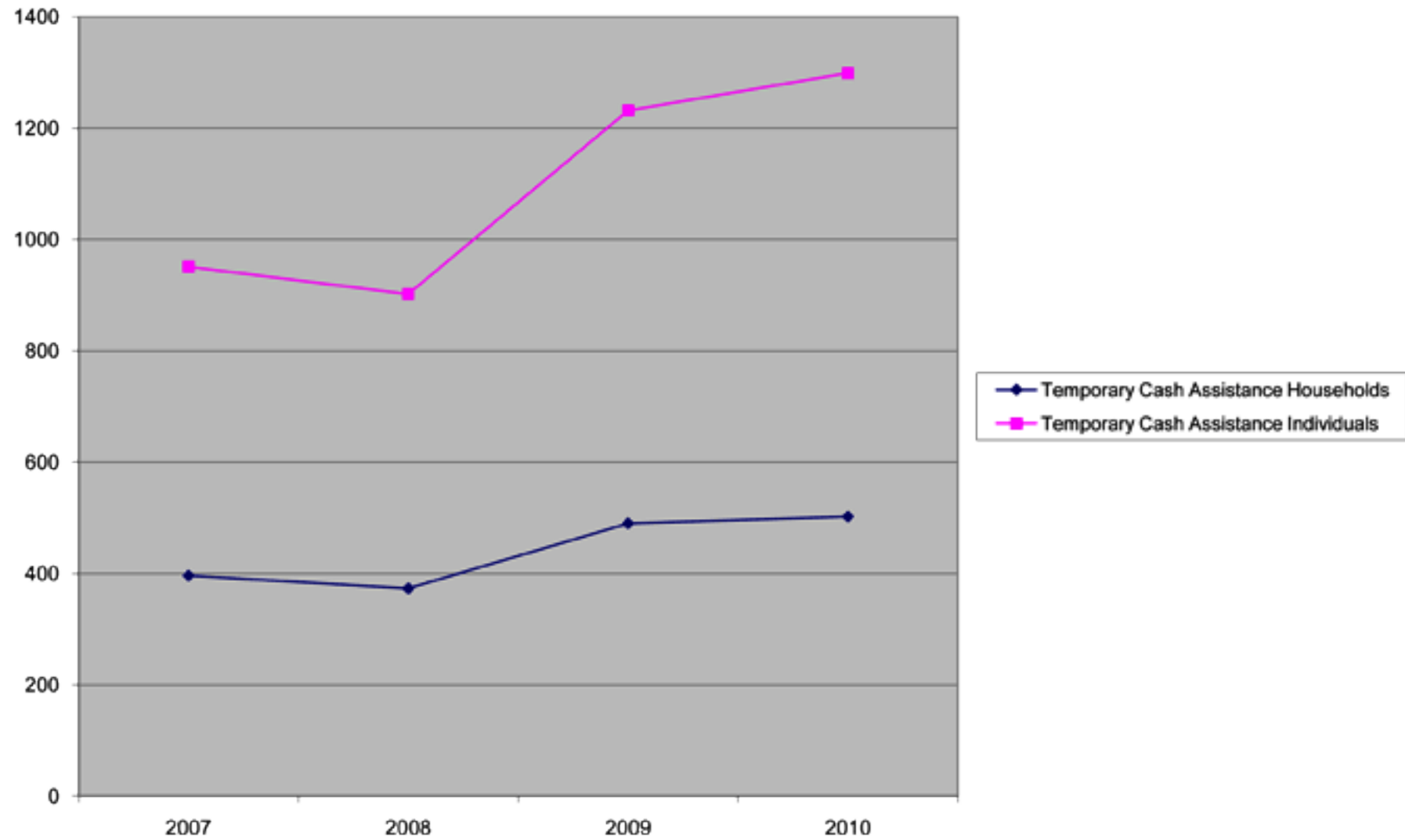
Head Start data was selected as the indicator as it is a financial eligibility based program to provide child development and education to children living in poverty. The number of Head Start slots available is fixed at 264 due to funding limitations. Over the last three years the waiting list, comprised of eligible children only, has nearly doubled (87%) since FY 2007 from 40 to 75 in FY 2010.

**HOWARD COUNTY MARYLAND SELF-SUFFICIENCY INDICATORS
FY 2007 – FY 2010**

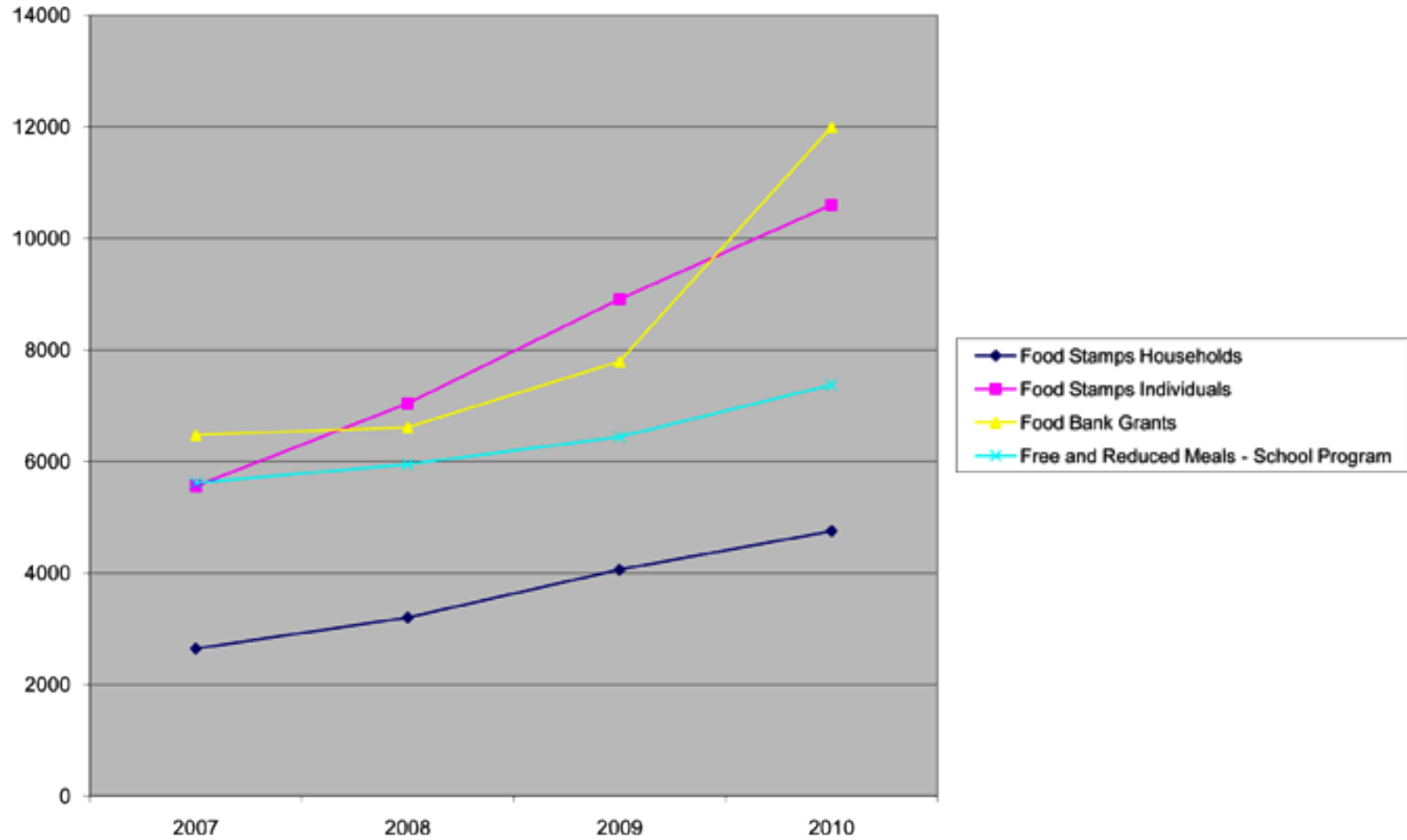
PROGRAM	Eligibility Criteria (% FPL)	FY 2007	FY 2008	FY 2009	FY 2010	Cumulative Change (%)	DATA SOURCE
FINANCIAL							
Temporary Cash Assistance (TCA)	Based on family size and net income after approved deductions						<i>Howard Co. Dept. of Social Services 9/09(DSS)</i>
Households		396	373	490	502	27%	
Individuals		951	902	1,232	1,299	36%	
Unemployment Rate	Not Applicable	2.9 (07/07)	3.5 (07/08)	5.7 (07/08)	5.5 (3/10)	89%	<i>U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics</i>
FOOD							
Food Stamps - Households	130%						<i>DSS 9/09</i>
Individuals		2,646	3,199	4,059	4,752	79%	
		5,556	7,038	8,912	10,599	90%	
Food Bank Grants	175%	6,478	6,614	7,791	12,000	85%	<i>Community Action Council, Howard County (CAC)</i>
Free/Reduced Meals (FARMS)	185%						<i>Howard County Public School System</i>
# of Students		5,617	5,949	6,442	7,374		
Percentage		11.6%	12%	13%	14.5%	31%	
WIC	185%	Not Available	3,217	3,469	3,730 (5/10)	15%	<i>Howard County Health Dept.(HCHD)</i>
HEALTH CARE							
Medicaid - Community	100% along with other eligibility criteria	6,341	6,876	7,289	7,551	19%	<i>DSS 8/10</i>
Maryland Children's Health Insurance Program (MCHIP)	200% Children 250% Pregnant Women	3,200 (12/07)	3,300 (6/08)	3,348 (10/09)	3,426 (4/10)	7%	<i>HCHD</i>
Uncompensated Care Howard County General Hospital	Annual cost of under/ uncompensated care	\$10.7 million	\$11.9 million	\$13.1 million		18.1%	<i>Howard County General Hospital</i>
HOUSING							
Home Energy Assistance Households	175%						<i>CAC</i>
Funding		2,051 \$1,032,730	2,100 \$1,605,449	4,811 \$5,167,595	4,611 \$4,964,865	224% 480%	
HCVP (Formerly Section 8) Vouchers	30% median income	735	735	721	693	- 6%	<i>How. County Dept. of Housing & Community Development (HCDHCD)</i>
Waiting List		1,206	1,206	3,399	3,987	330%	
Public Housing Units	50% median income	50	50	50			<i>HCDHCD</i>
Waiting List		5,116	5,116	469			
Howard County Owned & Managed Units		Not available	Not Available				<i>HCDHCD</i>
# of units				260	647	248%	
# on waiting List				3091	2089	33% decrease	

PROGRAM	Eligibility Criteria (% FPL)	FY 2007	FY 2008	FY 2009	FY 2010	Cumulative Change (%)	DATA SOURCE
Eviction Prevention Assistance Grants Funding	50% median income	179 \$94,494	298 \$173,173	298 \$126,878	326 \$167,877	82% 77%	CAC
Transitionally Housed Sheltered Unsheltered		170* 23^		174* 47^	133* 88^	22% decrease 200%	<i>Howard County Point in Time HUD January survey</i> * Includes Grassroots residents and motel residents, Cold Weather shelter, DVC & CCH ^ Includes outdoors, cars, places unfit for human habitation and other places
Evictions Eviction filings	Not Applicable	342 Not Available	433 3,747	437 4,638*	334 Not Available	2% decrease 24%	<i>Howard County District Court</i> <i>Howard County Sheriff's Dept.</i>
EDUCATION							
Head Start Waiting List	100%	264 40	264 29	264 73	264 75	87%	CAC

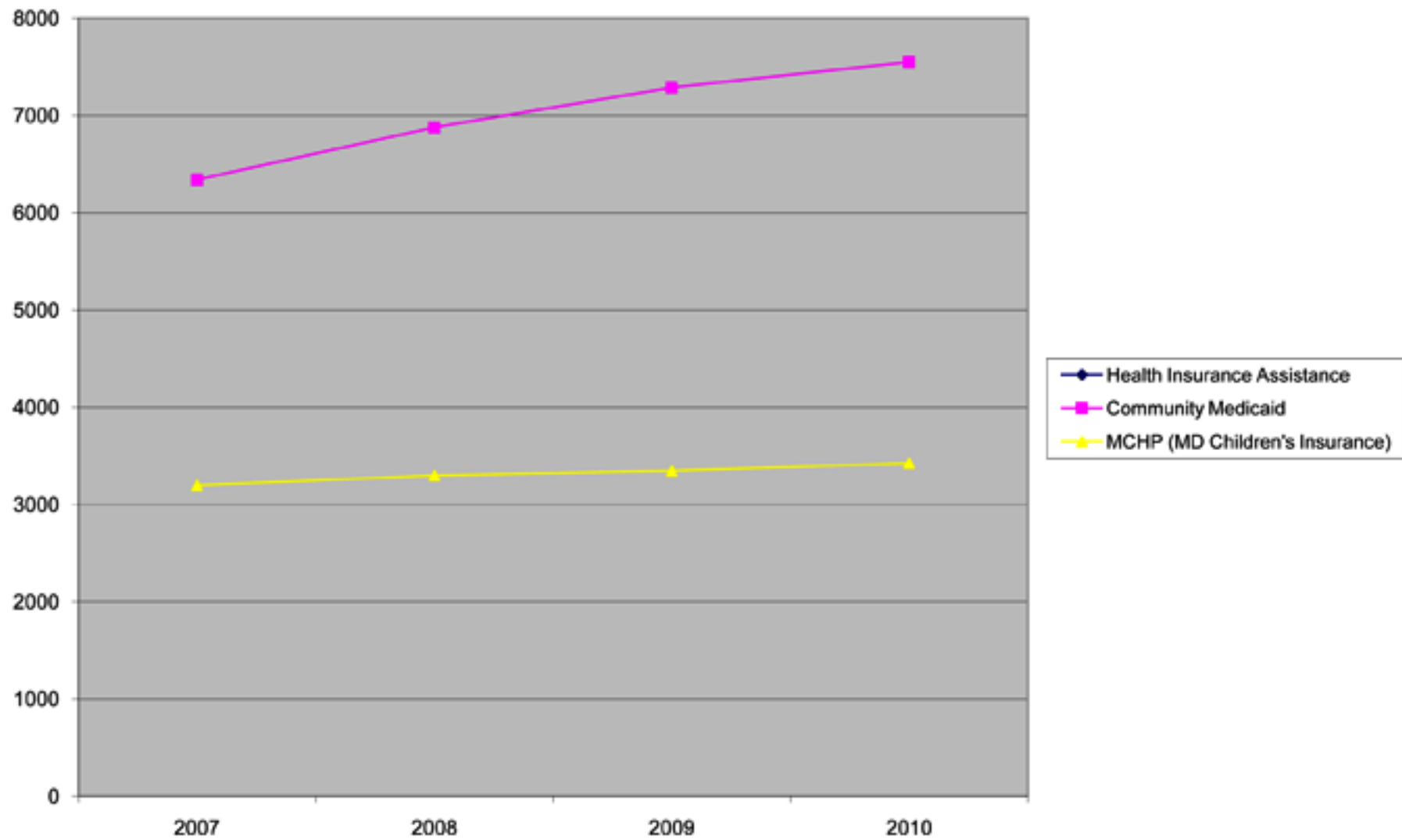
Howard County Financial Assistance Trend FY 2007 - FY2010



Howard County Nutrition Assistance Trends FY 2007 - FY 2010



Howard County Health Care Assistance Trend FY 2007 - FY 2010



Howard County Housing Assistance Trends FY 2007 - FY2010

