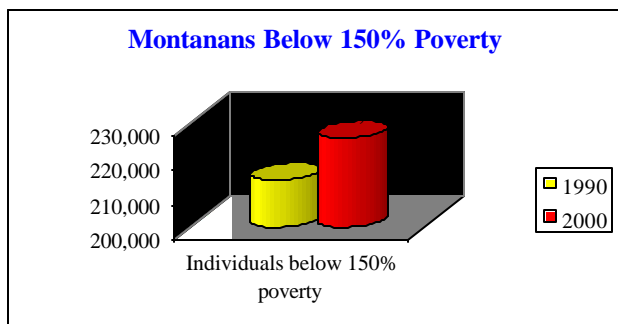
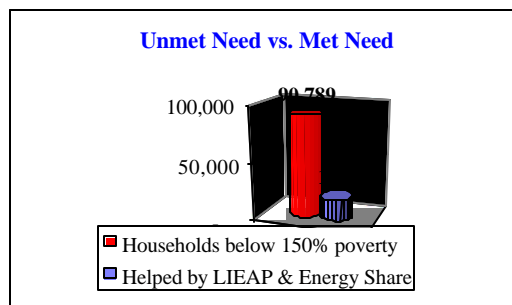


Fact Sheet on Montana's Poor and the Need for Low-Income Energy Assistance

According to the 2000 census figures there are 90,789 Montana households below 150% of poverty. Between Energy Share and LIEAP, only 19,025 households (21% of those below 150% of poverty) were helped in 2003.

According to the 2000 Census, there are 225,512 children below 18 years of age in Montana. Of those, **42,912 live below the poverty level**. Montana is ranked 38th nationally for the number of poor children – **19% of our children are poor**.

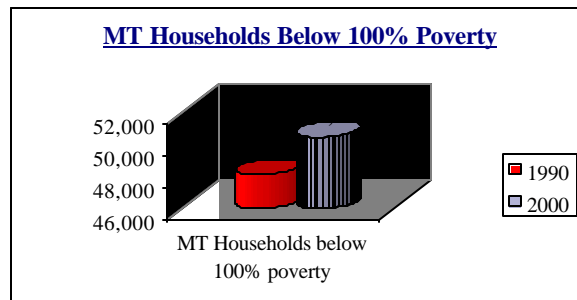


In 1990 Montana's population of individuals who are below 150% of poverty was 213,392. According to the 2000 Census, that number has grown over 12,000 to 225,447.

Looking at a 3-year average for 1999-2001, Montana ranks 42nd among all states for the percentage of population in poverty. According to 2000 census figures, **Montana has the 10th highest poverty rate among the 50 states**.

Montana households below 50% of the federal poverty guidelines pay 37% or more of their annual income for home energy bills.¹ If you take a household that makes a more average income of \$30,000 and they had the same energy burden, they would be paying over \$11,100 a year or \$925 a month for energy costs.

A survey of energy assistance recipients by the Iowa Department of Human Rights found that over 12 percent of the surveyed recipients went without food to pay their home heating bill; more than one in five went without medical care to pay for heating bills. This included not seeking medical assistance when it was needed, not filling prescriptions for medicine when a doctor had prescribed it, and/or not taking prescription medicines in the dosage ordered by the doctor.²



Nationally, 55% of the low-income households that had financial heat interruptions were non-welfare poor households and 69% were households with children. When households experienced a heat interruption, 54% went without heat, 39% heated 1-2 rooms with fireplaces, cooking stoves and/or portable heaters. Cooking stoves, which 1.8 million households reported using to keep warm, are dangerous, expensive and ineffective home heaters.³

A study by Boston City Hospital shows that the number of emergency room visits by underweight children increased by 30% after the coldest months of the year, demonstrating the "Heat or Eat" dilemma many families face each winter.⁴

¹ Home Energy Affordability Gap – Montana State Data, Handout for Roger Colton's Presentation Feb. 2002 at the Energy Consumer Summit, Helena, MT.

² FSC's Home Energy Affordability Gap – Montana State Data, Handout for Roger Colton's Presentation Feb. 2002 at the Energy Consumer Summit, Helena, MT.

³ Low Income Energy Assistance Program: Report to Congress FY 1987. DHHS, pp. 147-148; 152-154.

⁴ The New York Times, "Study of Poor Children Shows a Painful Choice: Heat Over Food", Sept 9, 1992.