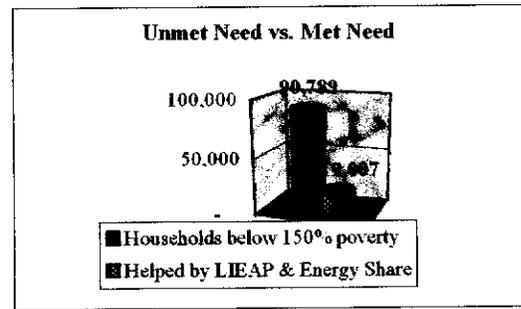
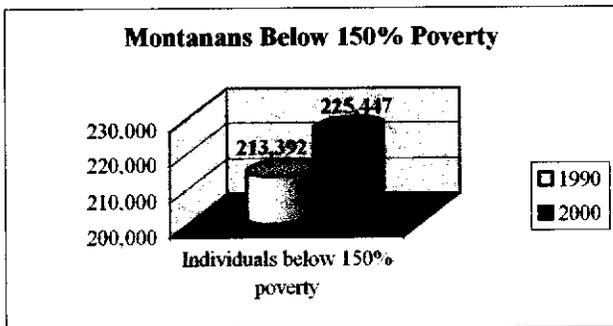


Fact Sheet on Montana's Poor and the Need for Low-Income Energy Assistance

According to the 2000 census figures there are 90,789 Montana households below 150% of poverty. Between Energy Share and LIEAP, only 21,772 households (20% of those below 150% of poverty) were helped in FY2004.



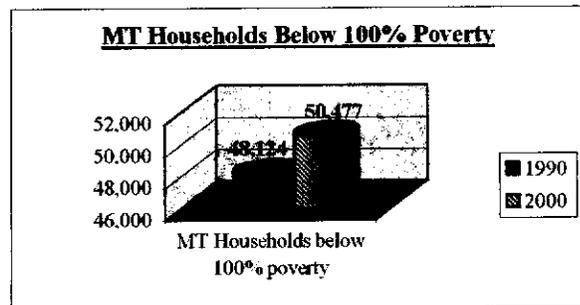
According to the 2000 Census, there are 225,512 children below 18 years of age in Montana. Of those, 42,912 live below the poverty level. Montana is ranked 38th nationally for the number of poor children – 19% of our children are poor.



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.

According to Department of Public Health and Human Services, in fiscal year 2004 the energy burden for LIEAP recipients was 12.8% of their annual income, up from 8.8% in fiscal year 2002. 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 \$3,800 a year or \$320 a month for energy costs.



The National Low Income Consortium did a study on how families at or below 125% of poverty coped with energy bills. 46% skipped meals sometimes or often; 45% skipped medications sometimes or often; and 54% used their oven for heat, an inefficient and expensive way to heat a home.

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.¹

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.²

¹Low Income Energy Assistance Program: Report to Congress FY 1987. DHHS, pp. 147-148; 152-154.

²The New York Times, "Study of Poor Children Shows a Painful Choice: Heat Over Food", Sept 9, 1992.