



## A truly life-or-death issue

On September 14, 2023, The Shared Humanity Project will hold its [second poverty forum](#) in Baltimore, Maryland. Last year in Baltimore there were approximately **three shootings every day**. Yesterday I read through the names and looked at the photos (when provided) of each of the people who did not survive the shootings - more than 300 in total. The first victim was 16 years old. The second was 17.

**Every victim was someone's child or parent.**

In Washington, D.C., where we held our first poverty forum, there has been a **72% increase** in homicides over the past six years. In fact, 2021-2022 was the first two-year period in nearly 20 years that the city has had back-to-back years of more than 200 homicides.

If there were three shootings in your town in one month, would you think there was a crisis? How about **three shootings per day**?

And if you saw that the greatest commonality among the victims - both those who survived and those who did not - was economic instability, the scarcity that comes with poverty, would you think **that** was a problem worthy of greater attention and action?

Of course, that is meant as a rhetorical question, as these numbers - these individuals we have lost - reveal to us that it is a major crisis, and it is one better addressed when you see the answer is not "out there" somewhere but rather acknowledge that it can be found in the mirror.

## What can you do?

You can start by deciding if you want to act alone or with your company or any group with which you are associated. [The National Plan to End Poverty](#) currently lists 33 actions to take in addressing safety in your community. As an individual, you will see three actions to take; if you want your business to get involved, there are three different actions. Your company can connect with anti-violence organizations such as [Institute for Nonviolence Chicago](#) and [Roca](#) to learn about what they do and see what they know about your town (Roca happens to be working in Baltimore).

If you are a health care provider, there are still other ways to engage, such as addressing the trauma that is prevalent any time violence is so pervasive in a community. Check out the work of [The Trauma-Informed Care Implementation Resource Center](#) to learn how health care providers can incorporate trauma-informed programs and strategies.

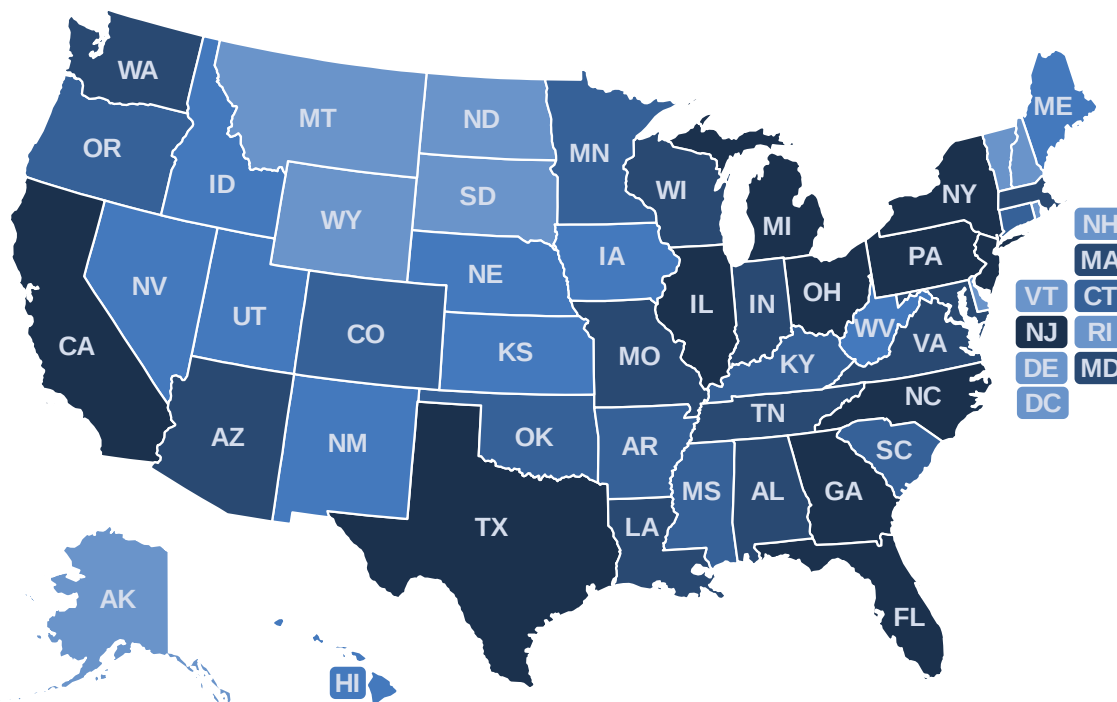
## Education outcomes also of significant concern

Just as safety is a major focus for us, so is education. (There are [37 different actions](#) you can take when it comes to addressing educational issues related to poverty.)

In Baltimore, education issues are also at a crisis point - in need of action by people from every sector. Only **7 out of every 100 students** in Baltimore City public schools can do math at grade level. In 23 Baltimore schools, not one student - in the whole school - can do math at grade level. Zero percent. *How would that sit with you if it were your kids' school?*

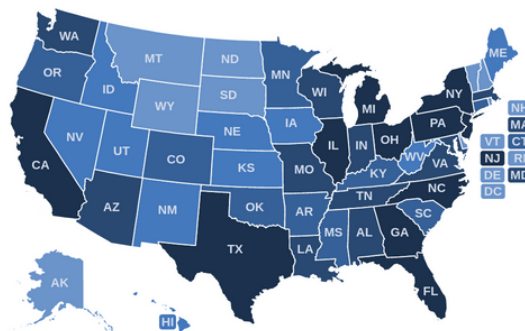
The children in these schools are largely born into poverty - more than half are officially listed as being economically disadvantaged, but the measurements used to determine that often underestimate what families truly need to have financial stability [see below].

What has been well documented is that a large percentage of children born in poverty in Baltimore remain in poverty their whole lives. And beyond the falling academic achievement, the number of young children not in school at all has increased.



## How do we measure economic stability?

Learn how The Shared Humanity Project measures economic stability and explore some related demographic data on [The National Plan to End Poverty](#) website. Clicking on the map to the right will take you to an interactive map where you can access and download income standards for every county in the United States.



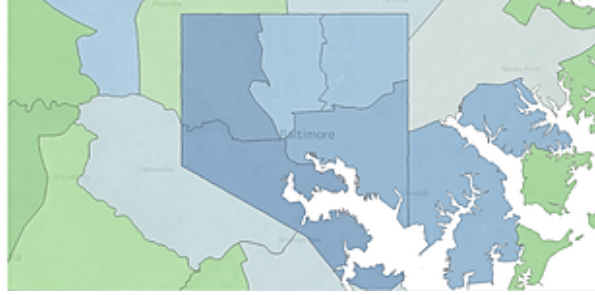
## What can we do?

If we are going to better support these children and their families, we have to **challenge the status quo approach to poverty**. The longer it takes, the more lives we lose, whether to violence or to the short- and long-term effects of educational outcomes such as what we see before us today. The two cities above are no different than many others across this country. And the poverty in rural and suburban America has similarly dangerous and deleterious effects as urban poverty.

Our National Plan offers **hope and solutions**. The actions we recommend are informed by thorough research and sound data. Implement one, two, or more in your area and you will see outcomes. And if you have better ideas or actions to take than what you find in the plan, we will add them to it.



## Baltimore Poverty Forum



If you live in Baltimore, join us on **September 14** and be part of something special ([https://baltimore\\_poverty\\_forum.eventbrite](https://baltimore_poverty_forum.eventbrite)).

Every aspect of poverty includes opportunities for you to engage. And no matter what anyone says, it IS your business, even if you just find ways to support organizations or individuals working directly on the issues.

If you want to learn more about hosting or being part of a forum in your town, email me at [mark@sharedhumanityproject.org](mailto:mark@sharedhumanityproject.org).

Sending my best,

The Shared  
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