

## Marriage Reduces Child Poverty

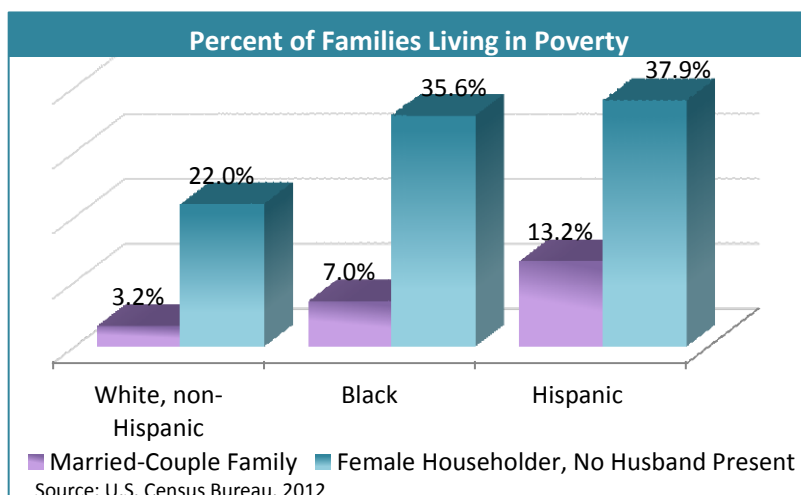
**Issue:** Intact, married families with a mother and father<sup>1</sup> are essential to stimulating the upward mobility of children out of economic poverty. Marriage both prevents and alleviates child poverty rates.

### Marriage Decreases Poverty

- A child's likelihood of living in poverty is reduced by 82 percent if he is raised in a married two-parent family.<sup>2</sup>
- Intact married families have the largest annual income of all family structures with children under 18.<sup>3</sup>

### Marriage Demographics

- Marriage is associated with lower rates of poverty, independent of race. Consider:



- The poverty rate for white married-couple families was almost seven times lower than for white non-married families.

- The poverty rate for black married-couple families was five times lower than for black non-married families.

- The poverty rate for black married-couple families was three times lower than for white non-married families.<sup>4</sup>

### Marriage Promotes Child Well-Being

- Married couples are less likely to receive welfare,<sup>5</sup> and children raised in a home headed by their married biological mother and father are dramatically less likely to end up on welfare as adults.<sup>6</sup>
- Children raised in single-mother families, intact cohabiting families,<sup>7</sup> and (biological father or mother) cohabiting stepfamilies are significantly more likely than children from married families to receive most forms of welfare, including TANF, food stamps, and Medicaid.<sup>8</sup>
- Family intactness in a geographic area negatively influences the fraction of minors receiving public healthcare and positively influences the fraction of minors receiving private healthcare within that area.<sup>9</sup>

**Conclusion:** The intact, married family delivers fundamental benefits to all of its members. MARRI research available online<sup>10</sup> shows that marriage is a natural remedy to the child poverty crisis.

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<sup>1</sup> “Married two-parent families,” “married-couple families,” and similar terms within this document all refer to families in which there is a married mother and father present. Note, according to the US Census Bureau, “Family households and married-couple families do not include same-sex married couples even if the marriage was performed in a state issuing marriage certificates for same-sex couples.”

<sup>2</sup> Robert E. Rector, “Marriage: America’s Greatest Weapon Against Child Poverty,” *Special Report No. 117, The Heritage Foundation*: Washington, D.C. (5 September 2012). Accessed 30 July 2014.

<sup>3</sup> Survey of Consumer Finance, 2007. As cited in Patrick F. Fagan, Andrew J. Kidd, and Henry Potrykus, “Marriage and Economic Well-Being: The Economy of the Family Rises or Falls with Marriage,” (May 2011). Available at <http://marri.frc.org/get.cfm?i=RS11E03>. Accessed 20 July 2011.

<sup>4</sup> United States. Bureau of Labor Statistics and the Census Bureau. “POV02. People in Families by Family Structure, Age, and Sex, Iterated by Income-to-Poverty Ratio and Race.” *Current Population Survey, 2011 Annual Social and Economic Supplement*. Washington: US Census Bureau, 2011. Web. 30 Jul. 2014.  
<[http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/cpstables/032011/pov/POV02\\_100.htm](http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/cpstables/032011/pov/POV02_100.htm)>.

<sup>5</sup> Daphne Hernandez and Kathleen M. Ziol-Guest, “Income Volatility and Family Structure Patterns: Association with Stability and Change in Food Stamp Program Participation,” *Journal of Family and Economic Issues* 30, no. 4 (2009): 366. As cited in Patrick F. Fagan, Andrew J. Kidd, and Henry Potrykus, “Marriage and Economic Well-Being: The Economy of the Family Rises or Falls with Marriage,” (May 2011). Available at <http://marri.frc.org/get.cfm?i=RS11E03>. Accessed 20 July 2011.

<sup>6</sup> Patrick F. Fagan, Robert E. Rector, Kirk A. Johnson, Ph.D., and America Peterson, *The Positive Effects of Marriage: A Book of Charts* (Washington, D.C.: The Heritage Foundation, April 2002), at <http://www.heritage.org/Research/Features/Marriage/index.cfm>.

<sup>7</sup> An “intact cohabiting family” consists of a biological father and mother who reside together in a household with the child(ren), but are not legally married.

<sup>8</sup> Henry Potrykus and Patrick Fagan, “U.S. Social Policy Dependence on the Family, Derived from the Index of Belonging,” (Washington, D.C.: Marriage and Religion Research Institute, 2013), 40. Available at <http://marri.us/policy-2013>.

<sup>9</sup> Henry Potrykus and Patrick Fagan, “U.S. Social Policy Dependence on the Family, Derived from the Index of Belonging,” (Washington, D.C.: Marriage and Religion Research Institute, 2013), 47-48. Available at <http://marri.us/policy-2013>.

<sup>10</sup> <http://marri.us/home> For example, “164 Reasons to Marry”, “The Effects of Divorce on Children”, and “U.S. Social Policy Dependence on the Family Derived from the Index of Belonging”