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1 in 3 Mississippi families fails to make ends meet

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A report released today by the Mississippi Economic Policy Center shows that nearly one in three Mississippi households is unable to make ends meet.

The report, "Overlooked and Undercounted: Struggling to Make Ends Meet in Mississippi," finds that even working families are not earning enough money to cover basic living expenses.

The findings drew on U.S. Census data from 2007, before the nation's economy had entered a recession.

"Even if you look at the numbers from pre-recession, they are high, and startling in many cases," said Ed Sivak, executive director of the Mississippi Economic Policy Center, an independent initiative that advocates for low- to moderate-income families.

The study shows that a lack of adequate income impacts a disproportionate number of African Americans, households headed by women, and families with young children, but all household types are affected.

"In spite of working hard, many Mississippians are struggling to make ends meet, probably now more than ever in my lifetime," said Bill Bynum, CEO of the Enterprise Corporation of the Delta (ECD) and Hope Community Credit Union.

"This report gives a better picture of who they are, and should lead to the development of policy decisions to address the problem."

Sivak and others called for such solutions as better-paying jobs, increased job training initiatives and raising the education level of Mississippians.

The study was authored by Dr. Diana Pearce, director of the Center for Women's Welfare, University of Washington School of Social Work, with support from the ECD, the Mississippi Economic Policy Center, the William Winter Institute of Racial Reconciliation, the Women's Fund of Mississippi and the Insight Center for Community and Economic Development.

The report is available online at www.mepconline.org.
