32 of Ohio’s 88 counties fall into the Appalachian region, and the six counties in Ohio with the highest poverty rates are all in the Appalachian region of the state (Athens, Scioto, Adams, Jackson, Pike & Meigs).


30 percent of Athens County residents live below the poverty line.


17 percent of Athens County Residents live in severe poverty, meaning their income is below 50% of the federal poverty line, compared to 6.5% in the state.

-2017 Ohio Poverty Report, Ohio Development Services Agency

2017 Federal Poverty Guidelines:
Family of 2: $16,240/year
Family of 3: $20,420/year
Family of 4: $24,600/year
Family of 5: $28,780/year


President Johnson’s “War on Poverty” began in Appalachia over 30 years ago with programs such as food stamps, Medicaid and Medicare. Today, 85% of the most persistently poor counties in the United States are rural.


One in five people living in Athens County experiences food insecurity.

-2016 report on the state of Athens County, the Athens Foundation

“The Appalachian Region, as defined in the Appalachian Regional Commission’s authorizing legislation, is a 205,000-square-mile region that follows the spine of the Appalachian Mountains from southern New York to northern Mississippi. It includes all of West Virginia and parts of 12 other states: Alabama, Georgia, Kentucky, Maryland, Mississippi, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Virginia. Forty-two percent of the Region’s population is rural, compared with 20 percent of the national population.”

-Appalachian Regional Commission, https://www.arc.gov/appalachian_region/TheAppalachianRegion.asp

Some of the big picture
Living in an area with widespread poverty affects access

Approximately one tenth the amount of philanthropic money is available per person to Ohioans living inside the Appalachian region of the state compared to to outside the region. (This includes scholarships and grants awarded.)

- Foundation for Appalachian Ohio, appalachianohio.org

50% of homes in Appalachia do not have broadband internet.


“In 2015, 28 Appalachian counties [in Ohio] were formally designated as
• Suffering an acute shortage of dentists...
• Twenty-one counties face an acute shortage of primary care physicians, and
• 28 counties have an acute shortage of mental health professionals.”


57.2% of households in Athens County are considered cost burdened renter households, meaning they are paying more than 35% of their income on rent.

- 2014 State of Poverty Report, Ohio Association of Community Action Agencies

Why have Kentucky and West Virginia lost 38,000 coal jobs since 1983? For one, coal mining has become increasingly automated in recent decades, particularly as companies have shifted to techniques such as mountaintop-removal mining, which are less labor intensive.

- Here’s why Central Appalachia’s coal industry is dying, Brad Plumer November 4, 2013, Washington Post

“For many, Appalachia is synonymous with coal, an industry whose decline has impacted the area for decades

“Coal, gas, and other mining” make up 1.1% of all employment in Appalachia. Coal mining itself makes up only 0.4% of all employment in Appalachia.

- Appalachian Region Industry Report 2014, Appalachian Regional Commission, arc.org

THE VISION OF GOOD WORKS is to create and sustain a COMMUNITY OF HOPE with and for people who are struggling with poverty and homelessness in rural Appalachia. As a Christian community, we are seeking to grow in our love for God and for our neighbor. We offer contexts through which people in need can experience biblical hospitality, access practical assistance, and share their gifts / abilities with others. In doing so, we facilitate ways for people from all walks of life to build relationships of love and service with their neighbors.

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