

# **Set Up to Fail: Barriers to Exiting Poverty (and a few bright spots)**

Carly Putnam,  
DHS Child Abuse Prevention Mini-Conference  
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[cputnam@okpolicy.org](mailto:cputnam@okpolicy.org)



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# Definitions & Key Concepts

## Relative

Merriam Webster's Definition

(a): the state of one who lacks a usual or socially acceptable amount of money or material possessions



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# Definitions & Key Concepts

## Resources vs. Needs

poor

*(adjective)*

when you have too  
much month at the  
end of your money.



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# Definitions & Key Concepts

## Central feature

Difficulty meeting basic  
human needs



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# Definitions & Key Concepts

## Federal Poverty Level

2014 POVERTY GUIDELINES FOR THE 48 CONTIGUOUS STATES  
AND THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

Persons in family/household	Poverty guideline
1	\$11,670
2	15,730
3	19,790
4	23,850
5	27,910
6	31,970
7	36,030
8	40,090
For families/households with more than 8 persons, add \$4,060 for each additional person.	



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# Definitions & Key Concepts

## Safety Net

- [Theory vs. Reality](#)

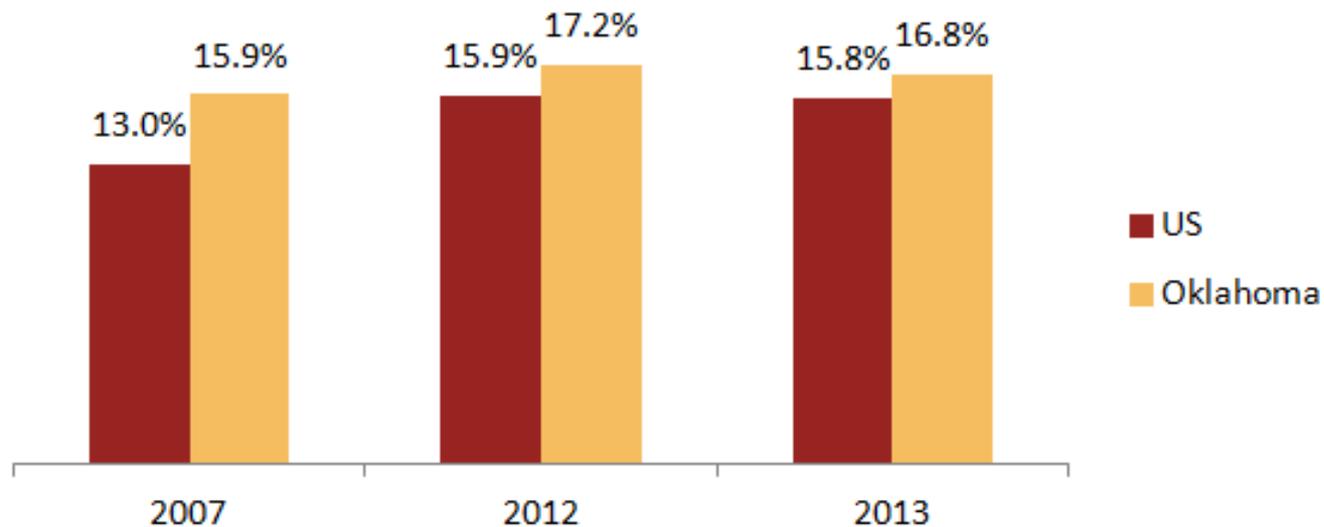


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# State-level Data & Trends

## Poverty

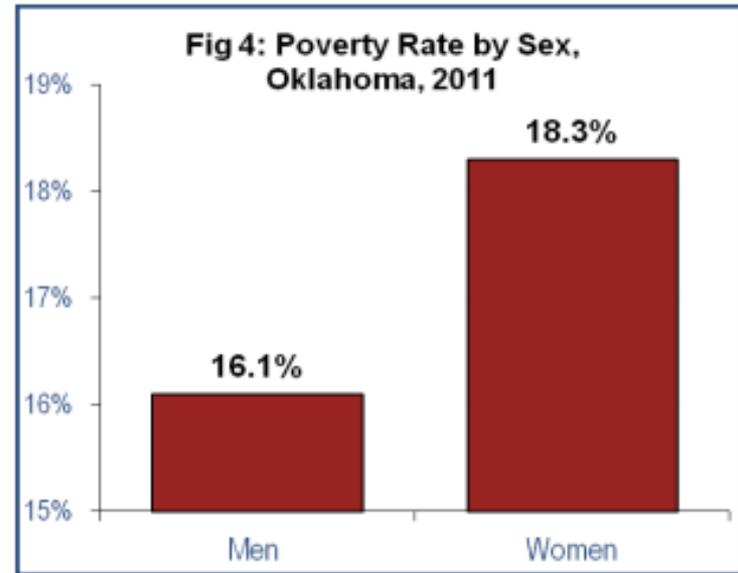
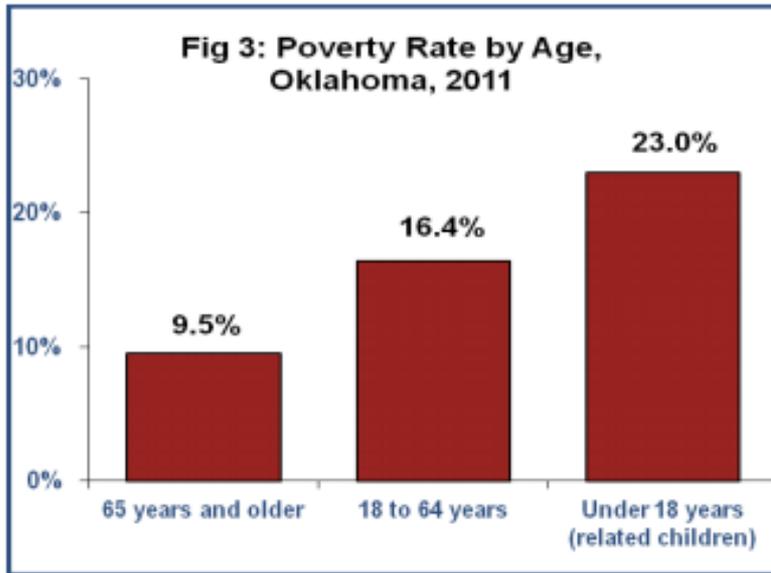
Poverty rate, US vs. Oklahoma, selected years



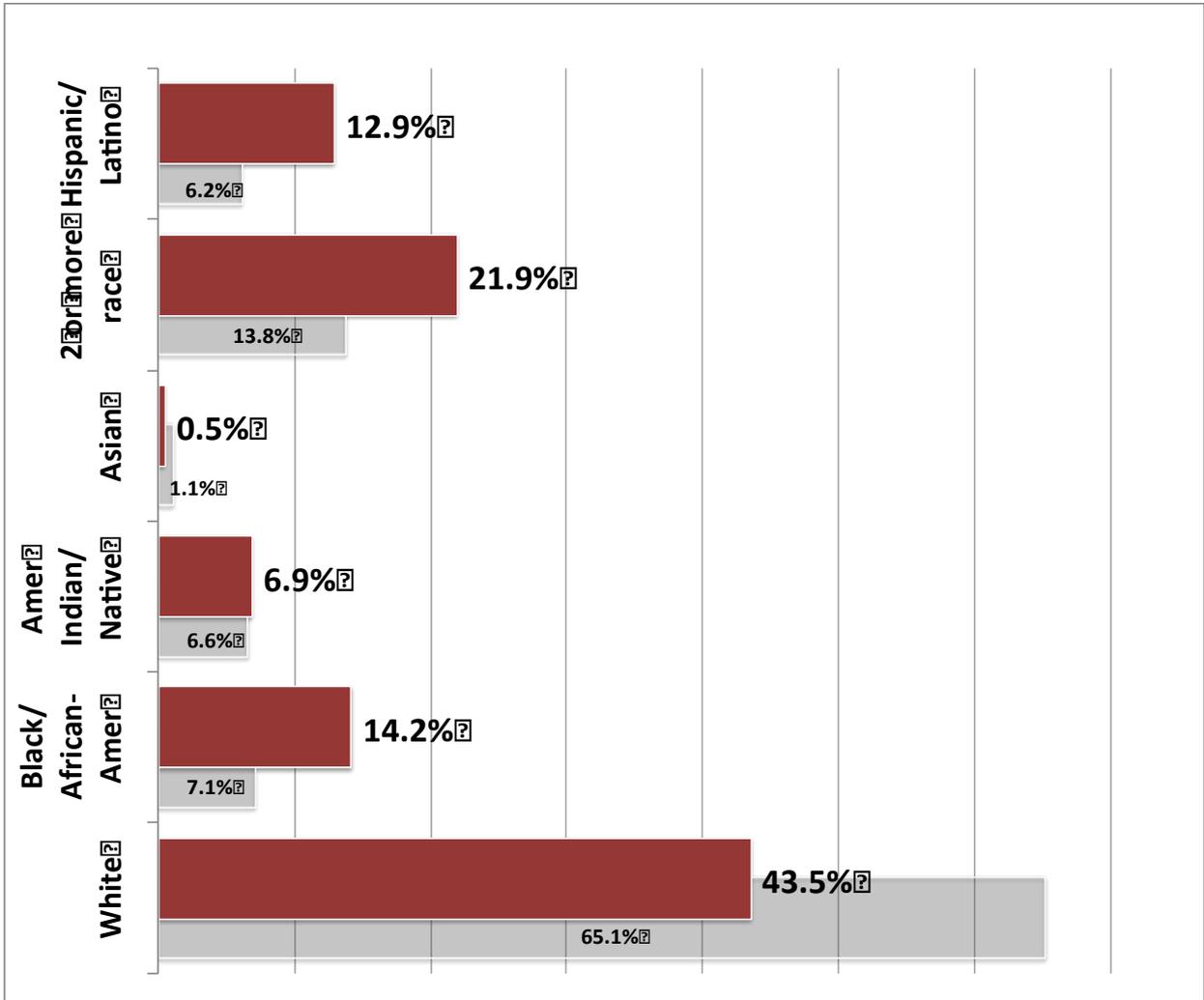
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# State-level Data & Trends

## Poverty



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# Causes & Consequences

## 1. Underemployment & Low-wage Work

- People in eastern Oklahoma and people of color are unemployed at disproportionately higher rates
- Nearly 1 in 3 jobs are in occupations where the median pay is below poverty, and these jobs comprise an ever-increasing share of the labor market (2011, WFPF)
- The state consistently tops the nation for the share of adult workers that are not fully employed
- 73% of Oklahoma families <200% of poverty work

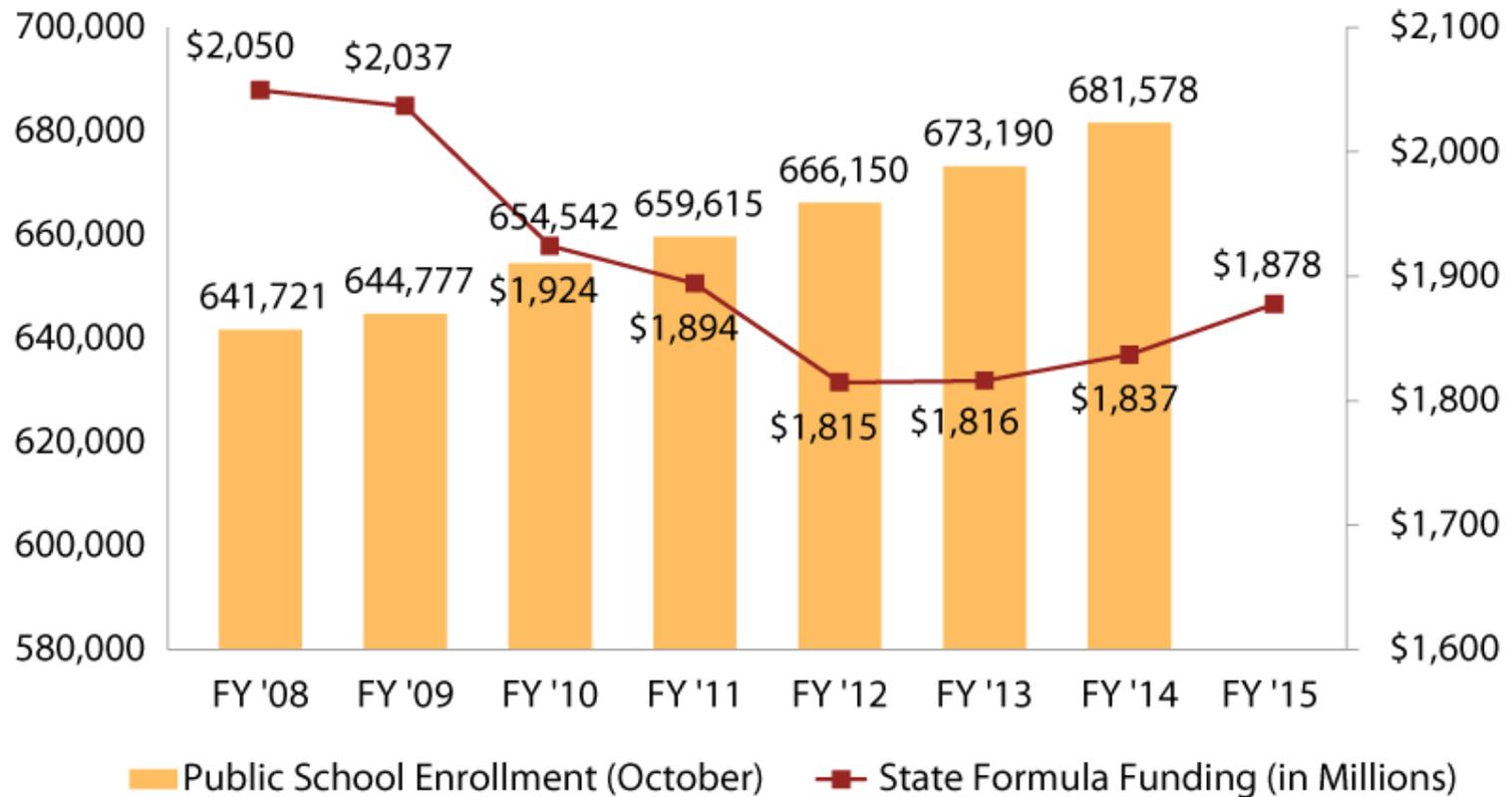


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# Causes & Consequences

## 2. Low Educational Attainment

**Public School Enrollment and State Formula Funding (in millions),  
FY 2008 to FY 2015**



Note: State Funding excludes money allocated for textbooks

# Causes & Consequences

## 3. Mass Incarceration

- Incarceration takes a lifelong toll on an individual's earning capacity
- There are significant barriers to stable employment and financial stability for felons and ex-offenders
  - Employment discrimination
  - The state denies certification for certain occupations and requires regular payments (fees, court costs, restitution, etc.)



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# Causes & Consequences

## 4. Hunger and poor health

- 7.5% of households went hungry at some point during the year because they couldn't afford food
- Over 600,000 residents are uninsured
- Malnutrition, poor health, or untreated illness stunt a worker's capacity to earn and drains their assets.
- Unhealthy people are more likely to miss work, lose their job, accumulate debt



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# Causes & Consequences

## 5. Inequality

### Women

- Violence is pandemic. More women living in Oklahoma have been raped, stalked, or abused by a partner than in any other state.
- The only state where the life expectancy for women declined during the past decade
- Nearly the lowest percentage of female state legislators

### People of color

- Have been unemployed at nearly twice the rate of Whites since WWII
- Are arrested, prosecuted, and imprisoned at alarmingly high rates



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# Causes & Consequences

## 5. Inequality: Moving up the ladder?

- Lowest absolute mobility in Oklahoma
- Lowest relative upward mobility
- Among the *highest* in terms of downward mobility
  - 33% of residents move down 10 or more percentiles of the earnings distribution during their working years



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# State-level Data & Trends

## Safety Net

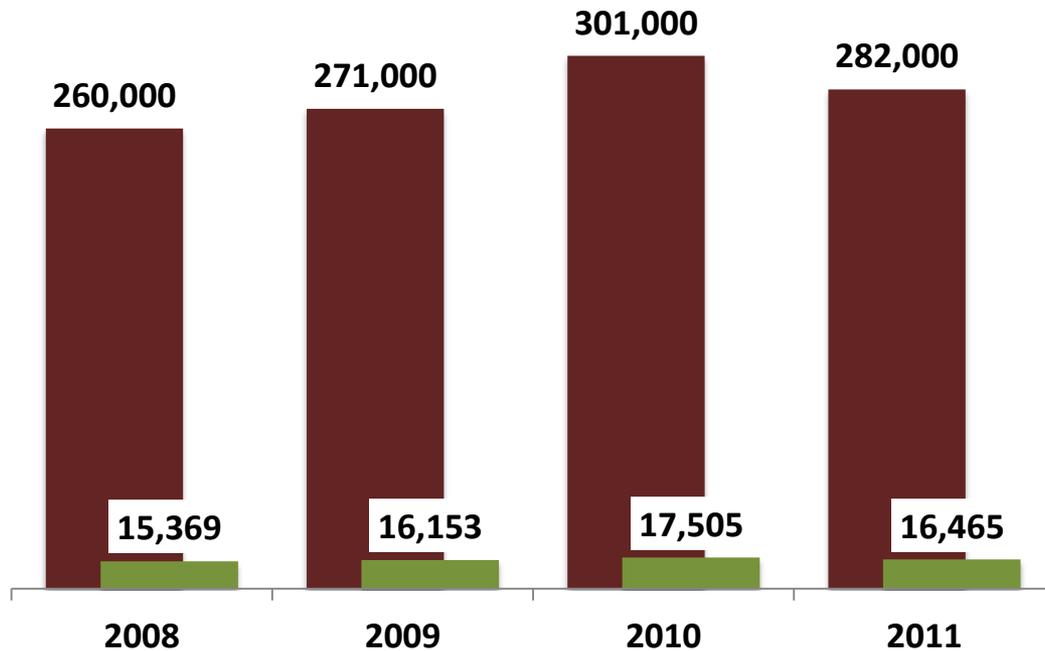
- TANF ('welfare')
- SNAP ('food stamps')
- Medicaid
- EITC



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# TANF

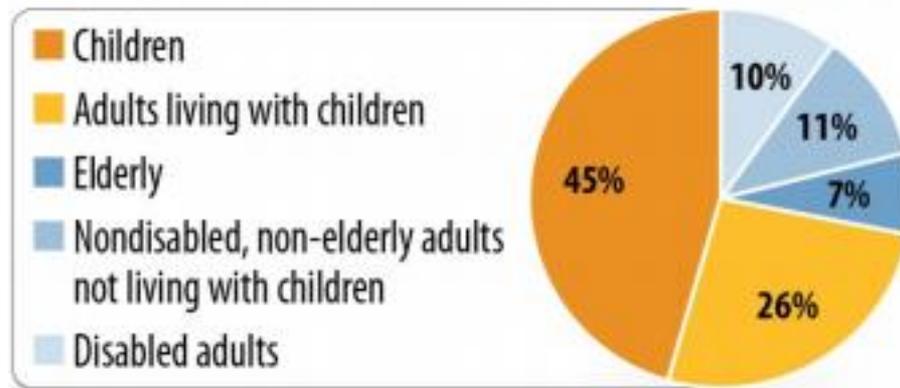
- Oklahoma Children Living In Families Where No Parent Has Full-Time, Year-Round Employment
- Children in Oklahoma receiving TANF



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# SNAP

Over Two-Fifths of Those Who Receive SNAP Benefits in Oklahoma Are Children; Over One-Quarter Are Adults Living With Children



Source: CBPP analysis of data from USDA Food and Nutrition Service, FY 2011

[A Place at the Table](#)



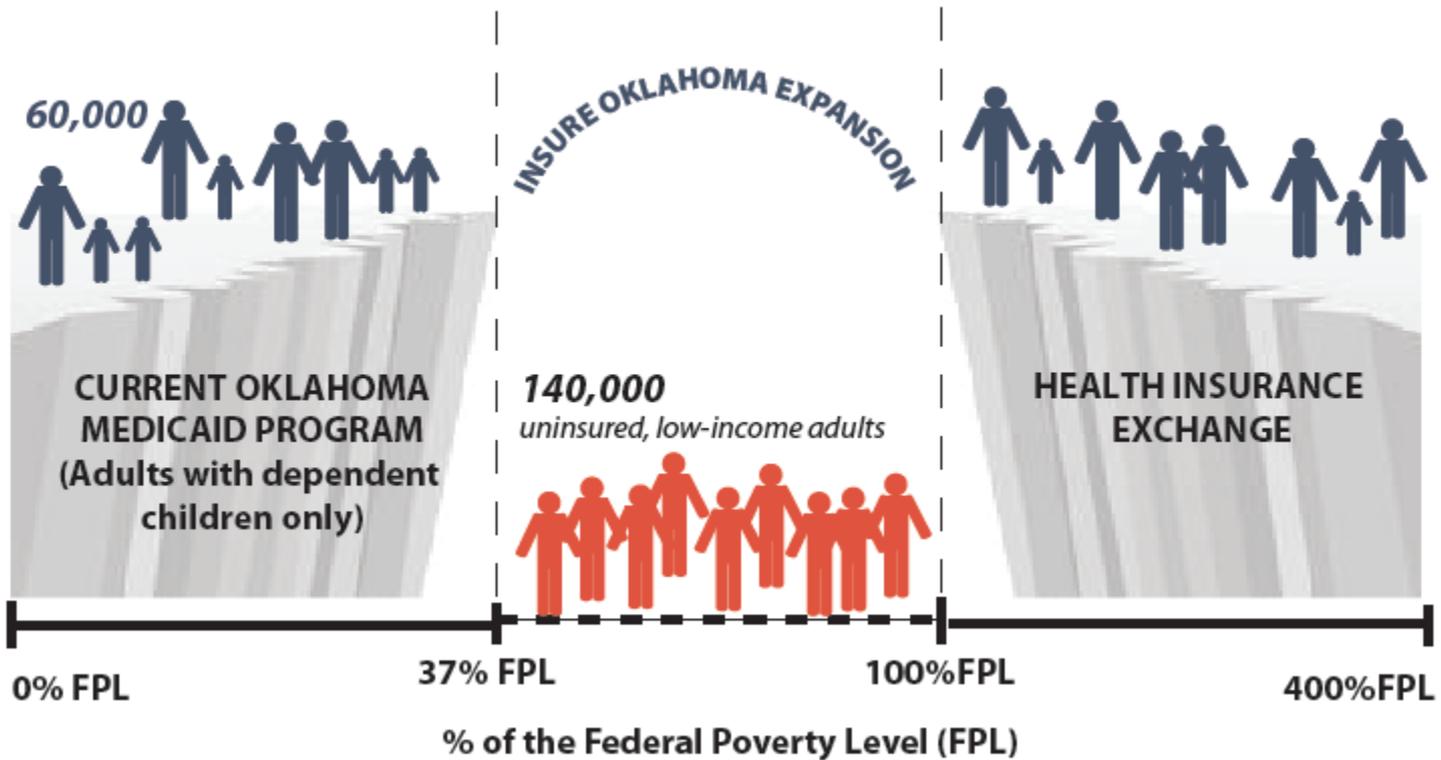
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# WIC



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# Medicaid



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# EITC



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# Questions?

Carly Putnam

918 794 3944

[cputnam@okpolicy.org](mailto:cputnam@okpolicy.org)



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