

DECADES

◀ WHAT THE TRENDS TELL US ▶

Human Services Severely Damaged Infrastructure



By Richard Knopf
Director, Partnership for Community Development
Arizona State University

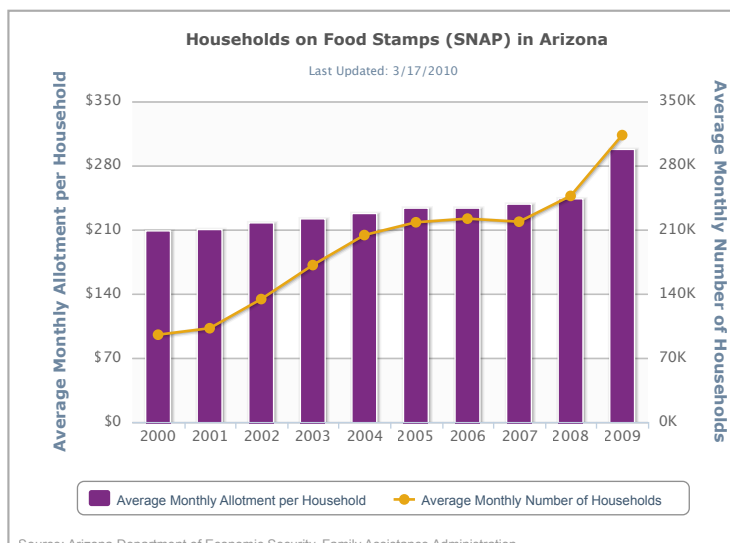
Q: What were the most interesting and important trends in Arizona human services that occurred in the previous decade? What is the significance of these trends and what insights can we apply to the new decade?

A: Human services provide an important safety net for Arizonans and help many achieve self-sufficiency. A strong safety net ensures the stability, safety, health and vitality of the communities in which we live, work and play.

During the decade, the safety net was strengthened by the expansion of government services and activities of the nonprofit sector, faith communities, and foundations. The expansion, coupled with a strong economy, created relative stability and sometimes positive advances for many of the core human services indicators, such as unemployment insurance payments, reports of child abuse, foster care, cash assistance programs, and homelessness.

But by the close of the decade, the infrastructure was severely damaged by the recession – with shrinking resources at all levels of government, and across the entire spectrum of nonprofit organizations including faith communities. At the same time, unemployment climbed and the demand for services was unparalleled in the history of Arizona. Over a quarter million Arizona households were receiving supplemental assistance for nutrition (formerly, food stamps) – up from only 95,000 households in 2000. Homeless counts, while relatively stable throughout the decade, skyrocketed 20% in Maricopa County in one year at the close of the decade.

As we move into the next decade, the essentiality of a strong human service infrastructure must be recognized by public policy. It is one of the non-negotiable elements as Arizona competes globally for high profile businesses offering high paying jobs. It is not only true that Arizonans want to live in communities that have stability, safety, health and vitality. Business requires it.



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Arizona Indicators is an online information resource and analysis tool that centralizes data about the state and its communities. Arizona Indicators presents interactive visualizations, clear data descriptions, and public opinion data in a broad range of content areas.

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For more information, contact Andrea Whitsett at (602) 496-0217 or andrea.whitsett@asu.edu.

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411 N Central Ave
Suite 900
Phoenix, Arizona
85004-0692
(602) 496-0900 Main
(602) 496-0964 Fax
MorrisonInstitute.asu.edu