

THE AMERICAN HUMAN DEVELOPMENT PROJECT AND UNITED WAY RELEASE

## ***COMMON GOOD FORECASTER™***

Online Tool Ties New Census Data to Education's Impact In Local Communities On  
Health, Civic Engagement, Crime and Other Factors

(March 31, 2011)—The American Human Development Project and United Way today announced the revamping, with the latest U.S. Census Bureau data, of their Common Good Forecaster™. This web-based tool illustrates the ripple effect that education and graduation rates have on well-being and access to opportunity across a variety of indicators. In the current economic climate, when national, state and local education budgets are under threat, this fact-based tool enables stakeholders to understand how investments in education can dramatically improve outcomes in life expectancy, civic engagement, employment, earnings; and reductions in obesity, crime, and incarceration rates: [www.measureofamerica.org](http://www.measureofamerica.org).

Starting with a community's current educational levels and using the latest official government statistics, the Common Good Forecaster™ shows ten indicators: life expectancy, children's reading proficiency, earnings, the rate of babies born with low birth weights, obesity, murder, unemployment, poverty, incarceration, and voting. Users can then change the level of educational attainment in a specific county or state, to see how these important economic, social, and political variables would change in response. For example:

- Today in Cook County, IL., **17 percent of adults did not graduate from high school.** *If all adults had at least a high school diploma, there would be 71 fewer murders; nearly 135,000 more people would vote; and 58,000 fewer people would be living in poverty.*
- In Los Angeles County, **one in four adults did not graduate from high school.** *If all of them had finished high school, over 9,000 more people would have jobs and earnings would increase by nearly \$2,000.*
- **If all adults in New Jersey were to move up one educational level** (for instance, high school dropouts completed high school, high school graduates attended at least some college, etc), then: *over 150,000 fewer adults would be obese; average life span would increase by 1.5 years; and 20,000 fewer people would be in prison.*

"The new data in the Common Good Forecaster show the concrete benefits, state by state and county by county, of investing in education to areas that go well beyond better jobs and bigger paychecks," said American Human Development Project co-founder Sarah Burd-Sharps. "Policymakers at all levels of government should consider the costs of *not* investing in education, because, as the Common Good Forecaster makes clear, these costs are unaffordably high—premature death, more crime, more people behind bars, and more people living in poverty—in human and economic terms," added Kristen Lewis, co-founder of the American Human Development Project.

To learn more about the Common Good Forecaster and to try it out for yourself, please visit:  
[www.measureofamerica.org/forecaster](http://www.measureofamerica.org/forecaster).

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The American Human Development Project is an initiative of the Social Science Research Council ([SSRC](#)). It provides easy-to-use yet methodologically sound tools for understanding the distribution of well-being and opportunity in America and stimulates fact-based dialogue about issues we all care about: health, education, and living standards.

The hallmark of this work is the American Human Development Index, an alternative to GDP and other money metrics that tells the story of how ordinary Americans are faring. The Index is comprised of health, education, and income indicators and allows for well-being rankings of the 50 states, 435 congressional districts, county groups within states, women and men, and racial and ethnic groups.

Through national and state reports, thematic briefs, and the project's interactive website, the American Human Development Project aims to breathe life into numbers, using data to create compelling narratives that foster greater understanding of our shared challenges and greater support for people-centered policies.

The American Human Development Project is made possible through the generous support of the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation. For more information, visit [www.measureofamerica.org](http://www.measureofamerica.org).