Government-provided social service assistance began after the Civil War to help widowed mothers faced with poverty. Poverty is being unable to have a standard level of food, water and/or shelter. Poverty exists in every country. The United States is considered one of the richest countries in the world, yet millions live in poverty.

Social Service Usage (SSA)
Two out of every 100 Americans get social service assistance, and those who use it typically do so for less than two years.

- 16.4 Million American children live in poverty
- 37 Million Americans received food program assistance in 2009
- 21.4 Million Americans received food program assistance in 1997

Child Poverty
The 2016 federal poverty level was $24,339 for a family of four. Children living in families with incomes below that level are considered poor.

Homelessness
Children were homeless in 2013-2014

Food Program Assistance
- 1.3 Million Children received food assistance in school in 2013-2014.

Sources
- $2.00 A Day: Living on Almost Nothing in America by Kathryn J. Edin and J. Luke Shaefer
- National Low Income Housing Coalition, https://nlihc.org/housing-needs-by-state