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IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Economic Summit Takes on Poverty in Wisconsin *UW-Madison researchers exchange ideas with policymakers and providers*

Madison, Wis., – UW–Madison researchers, policymakers, educators, private nonprofit organization representatives, and other concerned citizens are joining forces against poverty at [the Wisconsin Economic Summit: From Poverty to Financial Security](#) on Wed., Oct. 26, in Kohler, Wis.

Launching the event, organized by Rehabilitation for Wisconsin (RFW), is researcher Julia B. Isaacs, who will share the more accurate, timely, and localized snapshot of poverty in counties throughout the state afforded by the new Wisconsin Poverty Measure developed at the [Institute for Research on Poverty \(IRP\)](#).

Isaacs—IRP Visiting Scholar, Affiliate, coauthor of the annual *Wisconsin Poverty Report*, and Child and Family Policy Fellow at [Brookings Institution](#)—will provide evidence-based proof of what works to combat poverty, and explain the factors behind what's being described as [the worst poverty situation in 30 years](#) and the impact it's having on Wisconsin citizens and communities.

Other summit speakers include Reggie Newson, [Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development](#) Deputy Secretary; Howard Garber, President, [Milwaukee Center for Independence](#); Rick Terrien, Executive Director, [Iowa County, Wis., Area Economic Development Corporation](#); Dean Loumos, Executive Director, [Housing Initiatives](#); and Marijo Upshaw, Leader of Financial Services for [Goodwill Industries of North Central Wisconsin, Inc.](#)

IRP Director Timothy Smeeding notes, “Now more than ever, with so many economic forces creating hardship for Wisconsin families, we know that researchers, policymakers, and providers must share their respective perspectives in order to bring economic self-sufficiency within reach. This Summit is a fine example of the continued vitality of the Wisconsin Idea.”

Official poverty statistics released last month indicate that the poverty rate in Wisconsin is the second highest since data collection began, just a few percentage points lower than the record set in 1959, according to the [U.S. Census Bureau](#). That means approximately 731,500 state residents live below the poverty line.

Wisconsin Poverty Measure statistics tell a similar story – poverty is increasing -- but with better detail because the new measure takes a broader view of both resources and expenses than does the official, federal measure. For example, the new measure helps policymakers gauge the effectiveness of antipoverty programs because it includes administrative data on such programs as FoodShare food assistance and tax credits.

“We created the Economic Summit to encourage collaboration among a variety of stakeholders, and we’re thrilled to have such well-respected thought leaders share their ideas for new directions to combat poverty,” said RFW Executive Director Thomas Cook.

Rehabilitation for Wisconsin hosts education events around issues that impact people with disabilities and economic disadvantages in Wisconsin. Visit www.rfw.org to register for the Summit.

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