About the Center

The Stanford Center on Poverty and Inequality is committed to providing research, policy analysis, and training on issues of poverty and inequality.

Why was the Center founded?

In 2006, Stanford University committed to a new program of research, training, and policy analysis on poverty and inequality, a commitment that reflects Stanford University’s recognition that universities have a special obligation to provide leadership on the most pressing problems of our time. The backdrop to this new initiative is a recognition that poverty and inequality have become an unprecedented threat and that the great universities of the world must address this threat with all the resources and initiative that we have applied in the past to other major social problems.

Poverty and inequality as threats

If poverty and inequality were treated in the past as simple moral problems, now they are appreciated as problems with more profound consequences and threats for the world than those of moral discomfit. It is increasingly problematic in this context to regard poverty and inequality as soft social issues that can safely be subordinated to more important interests in maximizing total economic output. Rather, social policy must simultaneously be oriented to increasing economic output and restraining the rise of debilitating and counterproductive forms of inequality, a rather more complicated maximization problem.

Our funding

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Site credits
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