

EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT—OFFICE OF ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY

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INTRODUCTION

The Economic Opportunity Act of 1964 has as its purpose the mobilization of the human and financial resources of the Nation to combat poverty in the United States. The act recognizes that while the United States as a whole has achieved economic prosperity surpassing all other nations there are many Americans who have not yet shared in this prosperity. In 1964 there were about 34 million people in our population of 190 million who were classed as poor. The pamphlet, "Dimensions of Poverty in 1964," included as appendix I, provides a detailed breakdown of the poor population by age, sex, and location.

TABLE 1.—Trends in poverty population, 1959-64

	Total population	Persons in poverty	Percent of population in poverty
	<i>Millions</i>	<i>Millions</i>	
1959.....	176.5	38.9	22.1
1960.....	179.5	40.1	22.3
1961.....	181.4	38.1	21.1
1962.....	184.4	37.0	20.1
1963.....	187.2	35.3	18.9
1964.....	189.7	34.1	18.0

The above table shows that poverty in America is declining when measured both in absolute terms as numbers of poor people and when measured relative to the total population. It also indicates that the