

# Thinking About Taking Your Youth on a Mission Trip?

For pastors and youth leaders thinking about taking their youth on a mission trip, determining where to serve is one of the first decisions. The Appalachia region is one of the poorest in the United States.

What does rural poverty look like in the Appalachia region of the Baltimore Washington Conference?

This region is more economically vulnerable than many other rural areas. Rural Appalachian counties tend to have lower median household incomes and higher poverty rates than most other rural U.S. counties.

In Morgan County, West Virginia and Washington County, Maryland, approximately 18% of children live below the federal poverty level. This translates to roughly 1 in 6 children in the county experiencing poverty. Approximately 10% of seniors (age 65 and older) live below the federal poverty level.

High school and college completion rates lag behind rural counties outside the region. Labor force participation is lower and unemployment rates slightly higher than similar rural regions elsewhere. Rural Appalachia has higher rates of households without broadband internet and computers than other rural areas.

These factors combine to make rural poverty in Appalachia not just about income, but about limited access to jobs, education, transportation, and technology—which in turn shapes everyday life.



Christian Appalachian Mission Project – Joining Other Youth affectionately known as CAMP JOY provides a mission opportunity to serve in the Appalachian region of Maryland, West Virginia, and Pennsylvania, repairing homes and changing lives. It is a time of intensive, immersive experiences of community, lived out in the midst of God's good creation, which show participants how our lives and our faith intersect.

**CAMP JOY 2026 takes place the week of July 12-18, 2026.**

Join us at one of our zoom information sessions: Monday, January 26 or Monday, February 2 at 7 pm. Zoom link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/7749106935?omn=84254694446>

For more information on CAMP JOY, check out our webpage at [www.hancockumc.org/cj](http://www.hancockumc.org/cj) or contact Rev. Becki Wessinger at [pastorbecki@hancockumc.org](mailto:pastorbecki@hancockumc.org).