

**NOTE IN THE POCKET
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**First-Ever National Survey of Clothing Banks Serving Children in Need
Illuminates the Growing Challenge of Clothing Insecurity**

**The Survey Results, Contained Here, Will Be the Focus of a National Virtual Forum,
Moderated by CNN's Erica Hill, on September 15, National Clothing Insecurity Awareness Day**

Raleigh-Durham, NC – September 10, 2026 – Two leading clothing nonprofits serving children and youth in need announced today the results of the first-ever national survey of such clothing banks. The survey – titled “First-Ever National Survey on Clothing Insecurity” – was conducted by The Sharing Shelf, a clothing bank serving Westchester County, NY and Note in the Pocket, a clothing bank serving Wake and Durham counties, NC.

The survey results reflect the responses of 30 organizations working to address clothing insecurity in 18 states. These organizations all provide free clothing to children and youth in need. The survey results, described below, will be the focus of a national virtual forum, moderated by CNN's Erica Hill, on September 15, National Clothing Insecurity Awareness Day. Note in the Pocket initiated National Clothing Insecurity Awareness Day last year. The Sharing Shelf initiated the survey this year to broaden awareness. The survey and forum add national programming to this year's recognition of the day.

Key findings of the survey include the following:

- Demand for clothing over the last five years has surged. The median increase in the number of children in need of free clothing is 78%. The six highest rates of increase range from 144% to 574%.
- The number of children in need of free clothing has nearly tripled – from 54,658 in 2021 to 140,612 in 2025, according to the 15 clothing banks that track this data.
- 27 of the 30 organizations surveyed rely on donated, gently used clothing to meet at least 50% of their clothing needs, with the remainder having to be purchased by the clothing banks. 19 of the 30 surveyed rely on donated, gently used clothing to meet at least 70% of their clothing needs.
- Clothing organizations are stretched thin, and their supplies, space, and funding are not keeping pace with the number of children and youth facing clothing insecurity. The challenges they cited most are: maintaining a consistent quality inventory; lack of sufficient funding, and limited space and capacity.

- The three hardest items for clothing banks to find and stock are the following: shoes and sneakers; pants and jeans; and, underwear. (Socks and underwear must always be new and, therefore, must be purchased.)
- The cost of living is cited as the dominant reported driver of demand for clothing, followed by food insecurity and housing instability.

The 30 participating clothing banks are as follows:

Amy's Armoire, Barre, VT
 Another Chance of Ohio, Cleveland, OH
 Boxes of Basics, Manassas, VA
 Cherie Hoffman, St. Paul, MN
 Clothes to Kids Denver, Denver, CO
 Clothes To Kids of Fairfield County, Fairfield County, CT
 Community Clothes Closet, Menasha, WI
 Compassionate Sharing, Yukon, OK
 Foggy's Closet, Winchester, VA
 Give Like A Mother, Cincinnati, OH
 Help Center Inc.- Sacks Thrift, Bozeman, MT
 Kids In Crisis, Cos Cob, CT
 Lilburn Coop, Lilburn, GA
 Little Hands Virginia, Richmond, VA
 Loaves and Fishes New Haven, New Haven, CT
 Nashville Dream Center, Nashville, TN
 Neighbor to Neighbor, Greenwich, CT
 Northland Clothing Center, Kansas City, MO
 Note in the Pocket, Wake and Durham counties, NC
 Presbyterian Social Ministries, Jacksonville, FL
 Project Ropa, Los Angeles, CA
 Seeds of Love Outreach, Fleming Island, FL
 Sharia's Closet, San Diego, CA
 Somebody Loves Me, Bristol, TN
 Teen & Kid Closet, Spokane, WA
 The Clothesline for Arlington Kids, Arlington, VA
 The Community Space, Whitewater, WI
 The Dressing Room, Ashland, KY
 The Sharing Shelf, Westchester County, NY
 Threads & Treads, Bothell, WA.

“No single organization can tell the story of clothing insecurity in America, but when organizations across the country bring their local data and experience together, a much clearer picture emerges,” said Megan Steinke-Chase, Executive Director of Note in the Pocket. “The need is growing, and communities are working hard to meet it. Sharing what we know helps make this

often-overlooked basic need—and what we believe is every child’s right—more visible. It helps us learn from one another and strengthens our collective ability to ensure every child has clothes that fit, shoes that don’t pinch, and clothing that keeps them warm in winter and comfortable in the heat.”

“This survey is a historic first and an important first step. It not only sheds a new light nationally on clothing insecurity but also brings the community of clothing banks across the country together in a collective voice to tell the country what is happening,” said Deborah Blatt, Founder and Executive Director of The Sharing Shelf. “Clothing is an essential, and the lack of clothing and related essentials like shoes, socks and underwear impacts and negatively affects America’s children and teens. Clothing insecurity, food insecurity and housing instability walk hand in hand, but too often they are seen separately when they are inseparable. I look forward to the discussion of the survey results at the national virtual forum on September 15, National Clothing Insecurity Awareness Day, and we’re thrilled that Erica Hill, a renowned journalist, will moderate the forum and help us draw attention to this pressing national need.”

The national virtual forum on clothing insecurity will take place at noon ET by Zoom on Tuesday, September 15, National Clothing Insecurity Awareness Day. The free event – titled “The Missing Basic Need: What Clothing Insecurity Reveals About America’s Affordability Crisis” – will be co-hosted by The Sharing Shelf and Note in the Pocket.

Moderating the forum will be CNN’s [Erica Hill](#), Anchor and National Correspondent for CNN, whose coverage of poverty in America has previously been recognized by the Peabody Awards. The centerpiece of the forum will be a conversation with the leaders of the two co-hosting clothing banks: Deborah Blatt, Founder and Executive Director of The Sharing Shelf, and Megan Steinke-Chase, Executive Director of Note in the Pocket. Questions will be taken from representatives of other clothing banks as well as the general public.

Clothing insecurity is a national challenge affecting an [estimated 2 in 5 children](#) in America. Clothing insecurity is a lack of sufficient, clean, seasonal, and size-appropriate apparel. It is often overlooked on the theory that as long as one has some kind of clothes, the problem does not exist, but clothing insecurity has a detrimental impact on children. It erodes their self-confidence, contributes to bullying and negatively impacts their school attendance. A child or teen does not just need something to wear. To feel good about themselves and to ensure they attend school – and stay in school – they need to have sufficient clean clothes in the right size, that are appropriate to the season, and that reflect their personality.

The full report on the survey is here: [“First-Ever National Survey on Clothing Insecurity.”](#)

To register in advance to attend the national virtual forum from noon until 1:00 pm ET on September 15, go [here](#).

For more information or to speak with Megan Steinke-Chase or Deborah Blatt, contact Henry Miller at 917-921-8034 or hmiller@highimpactpartnering.com

About Note in the Pocket

Note in the Pocket is a North Carolina nonprofit addressing clothing insecurity by providing quality, school-appropriate clothing to children and families with dignity and love. Working alongside schools, volunteers, donors, businesses and community partners, we help ensure children have the clothing they need to attend school, participate fully and grow with confidence. As clothing insecurity grows, Note in the Pocket works with organizations across the country to raise awareness, share learning and strengthen the collective response to this often-overlooked need.

About The Sharing Shelf

The Sharing Shelf is a nonprofit clothing bank serving Westchester County, NY. Founded in 2009, it operates a warehouse in Port Chester, where new and gently used clothes are collected, volunteers screen the clothes for quality, and the clothes are distributed for free to low-income children and teens through social-service agencies, schools, and other nonprofits. The Sharing Shelf also opened in 2024 (adjacent to the warehouse) a Teen Boutique, where teens in financial need, referred by schools and nonprofit organizations, can select their own clothing at no cost in a private and dignified setting that has the look and feel of a real boutique. In every case, the ultimate recipient is a child or teen in need – from newborn to age 19. The clothing is both age- and season-appropriate, fits properly, and boosts the individual's esteem and confidence.