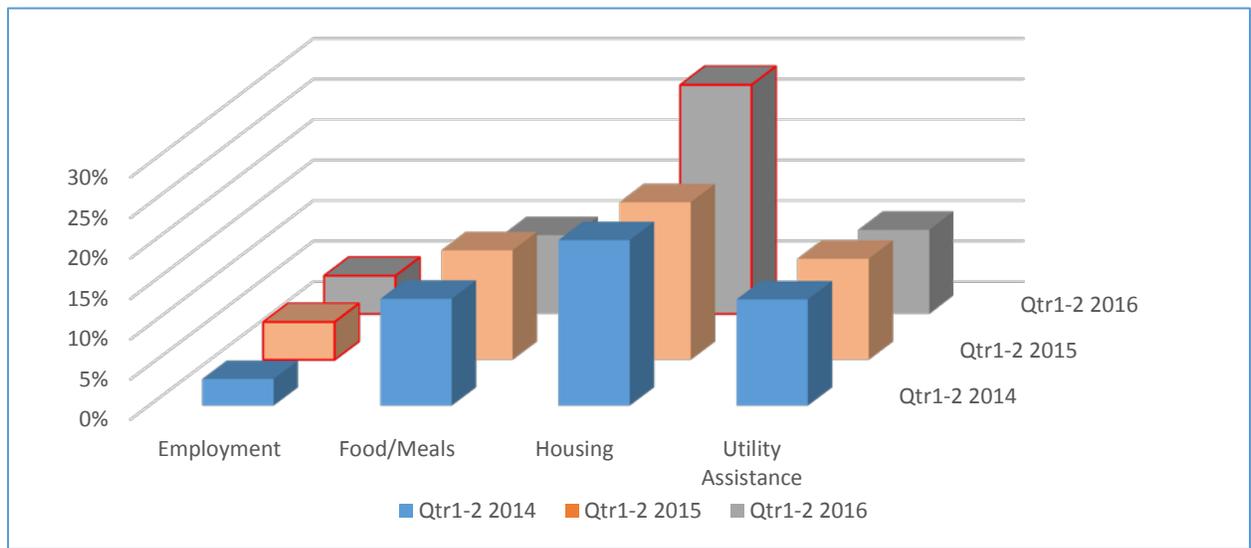


## Special Trends Report, July 2016

One of the important roles of 211 San Bernardino County is to continually analyze the data and report on notable trends. Two areas have captured our attention and run contrary to the media narrative that the recession ended in 2009 and that people are happily back to work.

The chart below shows a needs comparison for the first 6 months of each year over the past 3 years. We used the AIRS (airs.org) categories of need showing only those with the greatest trending change. Calls to 211 over the 3 6-month periods totaled 96,905.



**Employment.** Requests for employment resources increased dramatically (3% to 5% to 5%). Callers often indicate that they are working multiple jobs or working less than 40 hours and for less pay than prior to the recession. (See <http://www.usnews.com/news/the-report/articles/2015/08/23/the-part-time-economic-recovery>)

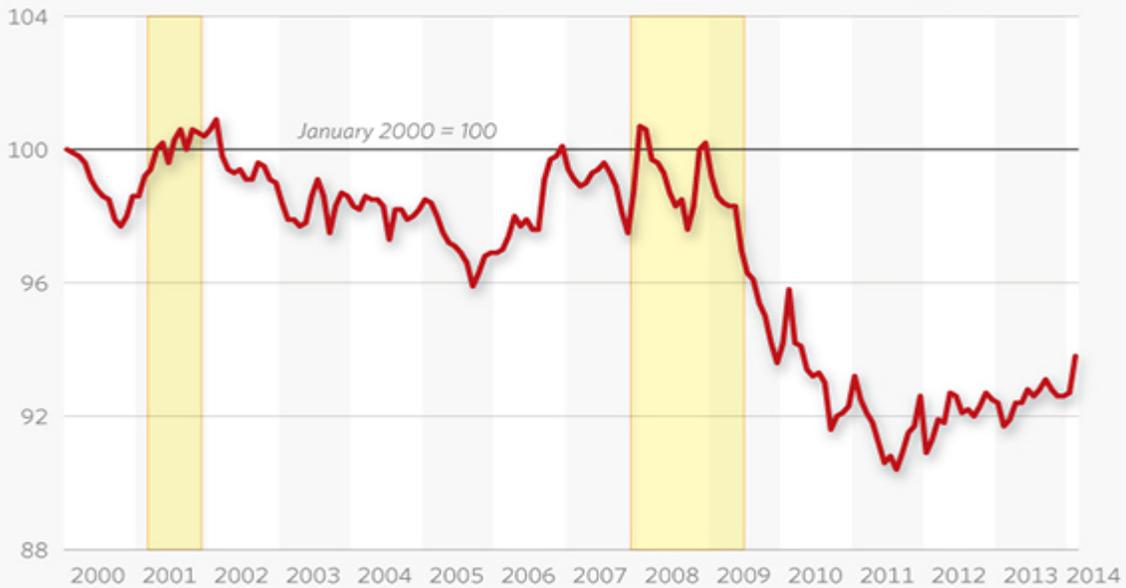
According to John Husing and others, economic indicators point to an impending high job growth in the I.E. (See <http://www.johnhusing.com/QER%20Reports/QER%20April%202016%20web.pdf>)

But if this follows the general direction, full employment can still mean underemployment. Measure of America indicates that “The culprit is the decline in earnings. California’s median earnings in 2005, \$33,305, were 16 percent higher than they were in 2012. Median earnings are the wages and salaries of the typical worker.” (See <http://www.measureofamerica.org/california2014-15/>)

## Middle class still waiting for recovery

Median household income plummeted from 2009 to 2011 and has grown only modestly in the two-and-a-half years since.

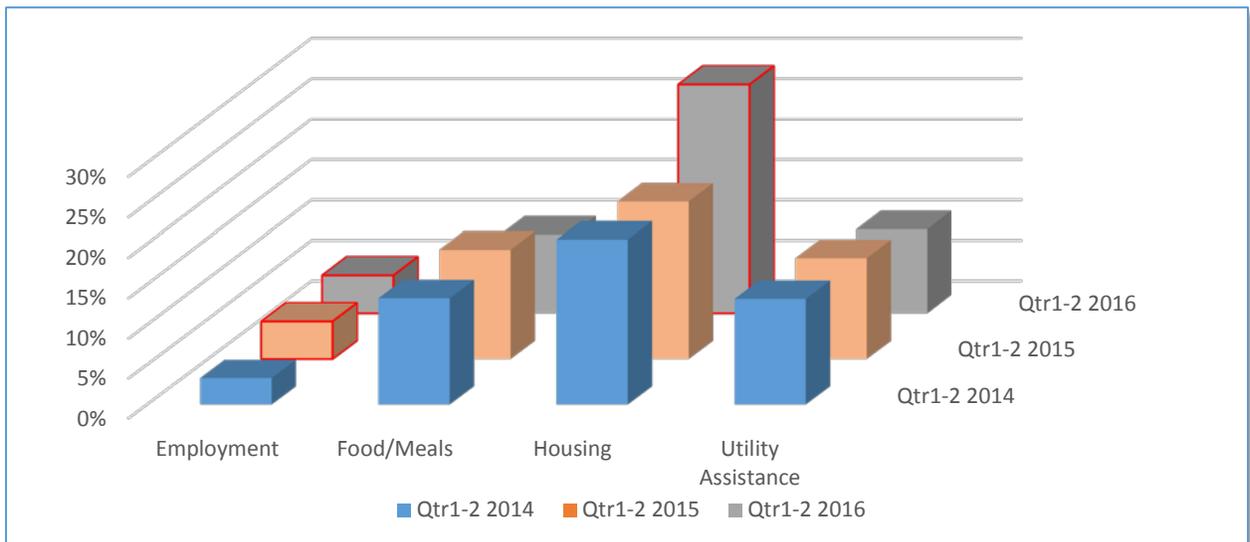
MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME INDEX, SEASONALLY ADJUSTED



Source: Sentier Research LLC estimates of annual household income using data from the U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey.

heritage.org

**Housing** As serious as employment and wages are, they seem to be completely overshadowed by the shocking leap in requests for housing (21%, 19%, 28%).



Our 211 CRAs (Community Resource Advisors) can offer hundreds of anecdotal examples of callers indicating that they are homeless, in danger of becoming homeless, or in many cases, doubled or tripled up in a single family residence, or even living in a garage.

A database of housing affordability statistics created by The Associated Press shows that among the 40 largest U.S. metro areas the Inland Empire had the fourth-highest percentage of financially stressed homeowners and ranked the I.E. second for rent-stressed households. (See <http://www.pe.com/articles/percent-806684-housing-inland.html>) A recent meeting with the California Apartment Association confirmed that there is less than 3% vacancy rate with ‘turn-around’ times of 2-3 days.

The fact is that we have fewer homes than people needing them. A 2015 report by California's Legislative Analyst's Office (See <http://www.lao.ca.gov/reports/2015/finance/housing-costs/housing-costs.pdf>) indicates that the housing shortage in LA County alone is over 1 million units. And our own County school system counted more than 34,000 homeless students (McKinney-Vento definition of homelessness) during the recent school year. (For the McKinney-Vento definition of homelessness see <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/family/family/Homelessness/hmls/definition/definition-legal.html>)

**Conclusion** It seems a terrible irony that this current state of inadequate income and insufficient housing inventory is occurring during in a time when, at least for San Bernardino County, there is more money, manpower, collaboration, and ideas coalescing into a monumental project to end homelessness than has ever happened before. (See <http://www.sbcounty.gov/dbh/sbchp/>)

The importance of housing people should be understood in light of the words of former Secretary of HUD, Shaun Donovan, that it's "...cheaper to solve homelessness... Because, at the end of the day, it costs, between shelters and emergency rooms and jails, it costs about \$40,000 a year for a homeless person to be on the streets." (March 5, 2012, The Daily Show with Jon Stewart)

Although we've made fantastic progress in housing our veterans (See <http://www.sbsun.com/opinion/20160202/what-san-bernardino-county-can-teach-others-about-ending-veteran-homelessness>), our fear is that the ‘double whammy’ of what overall is being dubbed a “jobless recovery” coupled with a shrinking supply of affordable housing will overtake our efforts in the same way that the tide works so quickly and effortlessly to leave no trace of the finest sand castles that took hours to build.

Perhaps there has never been a more important time for local government, non-profits, foundations and other funders, and businesses to combine their assets and energies towards the high ideals embedded in the County Vision, <http://cms.sbcounty.gov/cao-vision/home.aspx>.

~ Gary Madden, Director  
United Way's 211 San Bernardino County