

Blank, Rebecca M. *It takes a nation: a new agenda for fighting poverty*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press; Russell Sage Foundation. 1997. 340pp. ISBN: 978-0-691-02675-6

Presenting facts gleaned from thirty years of social science research and program evaluation, the author examines why poverty in the United States has been so persistent and how effective poverty-related policies can be created. Overall economic growth during the past twenty years has failed to solve the problem of poverty, since wage rates for jobs created for less-skilled workers have not been high enough for the working poor to escape poverty. Blank describes the successes and failures of the major public assistance programs in the past twenty years and their recent changes. She emphasizes that many of the programs achieved the goals for which they were designed, i.e. to create a social safety net rather than to remove people from poverty. She discusses why the government must be involved in antipoverty efforts. Her pragmatic proposals for revisions of the system envision programs that balance work incentives with adequate income support, targeted programs with those for general support, the appropriate contributions at different government levels, and contributions from the public and private sectors.