



April 25, 2014
For Immediate Release



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Study Shows Connecticut's Food Insecurity Rate Nearly 14%

Map the Meal Gap study reveals more than 155,000 Connecticut children are at risk of hunger

East Haven, CT – April 25, 2014 --- Connecticut Food Bank and Feeding America, the nation's largest domestic hunger-relief organization has released the 2014 "Map the Meal Gap" study, which offers a detailed look at the food budget required to meet the needs of families struggling with hunger here in Connecticut.

According to the study, 13.9 percent, or 498,460 of Connecticut's residents are food insecure, and it would take more than \$255 million to meet the needs of Connecticut's food insecure population, or \$16.87 per week for each food insecure person. Although 2013 data showed a 14.5 percent food insecurity rate, there is a \$16 million food budget shortfall increase this year. The average cost of a meal in Connecticut increased from \$2.82 to \$2.92 or an extra \$1.71 per week for each food insecure person.

Fairfield County has among the highest food costs in Connecticut (\$3.31 per meal), with New Haven County having the highest (14.4%) food insecurity rate in the state. In Connecticut 45.7 percent of the food insecure population does not qualify for food stamps or other federal food assistance programs.

Child Food Insecurity Rate

In Connecticut, the child food insecurity rate is 19.6 percent, or 155,380 children. County-level child food insecurity data ranges from a low of 15.3 percent in Middlesex County, to a high of 21.4 percent in Windham County. Nationally, the child food insecurity rate is 21.6 percent.

"Each year, the Map the Meal Gap data confirms what Connecticut Food Bank and our member soup kitchens, food pantries and shelters see each and every day," said Nancy L. Carrington, Connecticut Food Bank's President and CEO. "More people than ever before are turning to the food-assistance network to feed themselves and their families. And it's been particularly

difficult for low-income people with the recent reduction in food stamp benefits, and the expiration of long-term unemployment.”

Last year Connecticut Food Bank distributed more than 20 million pounds of food, or 16 million meals, to more than 700 food assistance programs in Fairfield, Litchfield, Middlesex, New Haven, New London and Windham Counties.

Map the Meal Gap also provides food insecurity rates by Congressional District. The study further analyzes each district’s food insecure population to determine their income eligibility for federal nutrition assistance.

Map the Meal Gap provides the following data by state and county in an [interactive map format](#):

- ✓ The percentage of the population that is **food insecure**.
- ✓ The percentage of the food insecure population that qualify based on income for **SNAP (Foods Stamps)** and other federal nutrition programs.
- ✓ The percentage of the food insecure population who **do NOT qualify for federal nutrition programs** and often must rely on charitable food assistance programs and who also need better wages and employment opportunities to help them meet their basic needs.
- ✓ The average price per meal based on new research by The Nielsen Company.

Map the Meal Gap food insecurity rates are determined using data from the 2002-2012 Current Population Survey on individuals in food insecure households; data from the 2012 American Community Survey on median household incomes, poverty rates, homeownership, and race and ethnic demographics; and 2012 data from the Bureau of Labor statistics on unemployment rates. The study was generously supported by the Howard G. Buffett Foundation and The Nielsen Company.

A summary of the findings, an interactive map of the United States, and the full report are available on Feeding America's website at www.feedingamerica.org

For more information on Connecticut Food Bank’s response to hunger in the state, visit www.ctfoodbank.org.

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Connecticut Food Bank serves nearly 700 local emergency food assistance programs in six of Connecticut's eight counties: Fairfield, Litchfield, Middlesex, New Haven, New London and Windham. Connecticut Food Bank distributes an average of 40 tons of food every business day.

About Feeding America

Feeding America is a nationwide network of more than 200 food banks that leads the fight against hunger in the United States. Together, we provide food to more than 37 million people through 61,000 food pantries, soup kitchens, and shelters in communities across America. Feeding America also supports programs that improve food security among the people we serve; educates the public about the problem of hunger; and advocates for legislation that protects people from going hungry. Individuals, charities, businesses and government all have a role in ending hunger. Donate. Volunteer. Advocate. Educate. Together we can solve hunger. Visit <http://www.feedingamerica.org/>. Find us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/FeedingAmerica or follow us on Twitter at www.twitter.com/FeedingAmerica.