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LIFE GETS HARDER FOR HUNGRY PEOPLE IN NORTH TEXAS

According to Study, 1 out of every 6 Residents of North Texas Struggle with Hunger

DALLAS – May 4, 2017 – The North Texas Food Bank announced the release of *Map the Meal Gap 2017*, the latest report by Feeding America® on food insecurity and the cost of food at both the county and congressional district level. *Map the Meal Gap 2017* reveals that food insecurity exists in every county in the North Texas Food Bank’s service area. Overall, food insecurity ranges from a low of 13.6 percent of the population in Rockwall County up to 22.1 percent in Lamar County. The national average food insecurity rate across all counties is 14 percent.

The study also finds that people currently facing hunger are likely falling further behind as they continue to struggle to buy enough food to meet their needs. Food-insecure individuals now face, on average, a food budget shortfall of \$504 per person annually, rising almost \$100 since 2011 when the average shortfall was \$410.

“While the Food Bank is making strides in the fight against hunger, we know that there are still so many people that don’t have access to nutritious foods,” said Simon Powell, interim president and CEO of the North Texas Food Bank. “The data gleaned from Map the Meal Gap over the years has helped inform our programming and decision making as we work to fill the hunger gap and provide 92 million meals annually by 2025.”

The North Texas Food Bank is one of 200 food banks in the Feeding America network that collectively provides food assistance to 46 million Americans struggling with hunger. The Food Bank operates a feeding network of more than 200 Partner Agencies on the front lines of hunger. Together the NTFB and its partners helped provide access to 70 million meals during fiscal year 2016.

“It is disheartening to realize that millions of hardworking, low-income Americans are finding it increasingly difficult to feed themselves and their families at the same time that our economy is showing many signs of improvement, including a substantial decline in the number of people who are unemployed,” said Diana Aviv, CEO of Feeding America. “This study underscores the need for strong federal nutrition programs as well of the importance of charitable food assistance programs, especially the food pantries and meal programs served by the Feeding America network of food banks.”

Map the Meal Gap 2017 uses data from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, U.S. Census Bureau, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics and food price data and analysis provided by Nielsen (NYSE: [NLSN](#)), a global provider of information and insights. The study is supported by founding sponsor [The Howard G. Buffett Foundation](#), [Conagra Brands Foundation](#) and [Nielsen](#).

Key local findings:

- The average rate of food insecurity for the NTFB service area is 17.3 percent (1 in 6)
- While the food insecurity rate is finally dropping off after a long plateau during the recession, the intensity of the need among those who remain food insecure continues to increase with clients noting an even larger food budget shortfall

Dr. Craig Gundersen, Professor of Agricultural and Consumer Economics at the University of Illinois, Executive Director of the National Soybean Research Laboratory and a member of Feeding America's Technical Advisory Group is the lead researcher of *Map the Meal Gap 2017*.

A summary of the findings, an interactive map of the United States, and the full report are available at map.feedingamerica.org.

Join the conversation about *Map the Meal Gap 2017* on Twitter using [#MealGap](#).

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About the North Texas Food Bank:

The [North Texas Food Bank](#) (NTFB) is a top-ranked nonprofit hunger-relief organization with its primary distribution center in Southwest Dallas and administrative headquarters located in the Dallas Farmers Market. Each day, NTFB provides access to more than 190,000 meals for hungry children, seniors, and families through a network of more than 1,000 programs and more than 200 Partner Agencies. In fiscal year 2016, NTFB provided access to some 70 million nutritious meals. While NTFB is making steady progress toward closing the hunger gap, much work remains to be done to reach the organization's 10-year goal of providing 92 million nutritious meals annually by 2025.

About Feeding America

Feeding America is a nationwide network of 200 food banks that leads the fight against hunger in the United States. Together, we provide food to more than 46 million people through food pantries and meal programs in communities throughout 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.