

MORE SENIORS FACING HUNGER TODAY THAN BEFORE THE GREAT RECESSION DESPITE ECONOMIC IMPROVEMENTS

Two-thirds of Food-Insecure Seniors Have Incomes Above Poverty Line

DALLAS – May 17, 2018 – The North Texas Food Bank (NTFB) announced today the release of *The State of Senior Hunger in America in 2016*, a study about food insecurity among seniors in the United States published by Feeding America® and The National Foundation to End Senior Hunger (NFESH). The report shows that 4.9 million seniors age 60 or older (7.7 percent) were food insecure in 2016 across the U.S. In Texas, the food insecurity rate for seniors is 9.5 percent.

Nationally, seniors with the lowest income are most at risk of being food insecure, yet about two-thirds of food-insecure seniors have income above the federal poverty line. As a result, many seniors do not qualify for federal nutrition programs like the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) or the Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP).

“It’s hard to believe that when you work hard your entire life and reach your golden years, that you don’t have enough money to eat a healthy meal,” said Trisha Cunningham, President and CEO of North Texas Food Bank, a member of Feeding America. “Our seniors are one of our most vulnerable populations – often one illness or crisis away from needing extra help to make ends meet. The North Texas Food Bank and our Partner Agencies serve thousands of seniors every month that would not have otherwise access to the nutritious food necessary for better health.”

The issue of food insecurity among the elderly is larger than the lack of access to nutritious food alone. Research also demonstrates that food insecure seniors are at a greater risk of being diabetic, suffering from depression, having congestive heart failure, experiencing a heart attack or having asthma than food-secure elders.

“Many Older Americans encounter a myriad of issues the general population does not face, including health conditions, transportation challenges, and physical limitations,” said Feeding America President Matt Knott. “At Feeding America, we are looking at ways address food-insecure seniors’ unique needs, so that they can live fuller, more food-secure lives, with as much dignity and independence as possible.”

This latest report documents the characteristics of seniors who struggle to meet their nutritional needs. Specifically, in 2016, researchers found:

- Seniors who are racial or ethnic minorities, low-income or younger vs. older (age 60-69 vs. age 80+) were most likely to be affected by some level of food insecurity.
- Seniors who reported a disability were disproportionately affected, with 24 percent reporting food insecurity.
- Senior food insecurity rates vary by state, ranging from a very high food security rate of 3.4% in North Dakota, to a very low food security rate of 14.1% in Louisiana. Texas, with a rate of 9.5% of seniors being food insecure, falls in the high end of that range.
- Seniors living in the South are more likely to experience food insecurity than seniors living in other parts of the country.

The State of Senior Hunger in America in 2016 was produced by Feeding America in partnership with NFESH. The study was conducted by researchers Dr. James Ziliak and Dr. Craig Gundersen and

is the source for national- and state-level information about food insecurity among seniors age 60 and older. The full report can be found [here](#).

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Food Bank Media Contact

Liana Solis
Liana.solis@ntfb.org
(214) 367-3115

About the North Texas Food Bank

The North Texas Food Bank (NTFB) is a top-ranked nonprofit hunger-relief organization, serving 13 counties. The Food Bank's administrative headquarters is located in the Dallas Farmers Market, and its new distribution and volunteer center – the Perot Family Campus – is set to open in Collin County in the late summer of 2018. 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 2017, NTFB provided access to almost 70 million nutritious meals. While the 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.

www.ntfb.org

About Feeding America

Feeding America® is the largest hunger-relief organization in the United States. Through a network of 200 food banks and 60,000 food pantries and meal programs, we provide meals to more than 46 million people each year. Feeding America also supports programs that prevent food waste and 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 www.feedingamerica.org, find us on [Facebook](#) or follow us on [Twitter](#).