

## **Texas Ranks Second in the Nation in Number of Older Adults Facing Hunger**

*New data from Feeding America shows that 22% of the 5 million people facing hunger in Texas are 50 and older.*

**August 1, 2024 (Dallas, TX)** –[The North Texas Food Bank](#) (NTFB) reported today that new research from Feeding America finds that Texas is second in the nation in the number of adults 50 and older facing hunger, with 1,098,400 older and senior adults experiencing food insecurity in the Lone Star State. More than 22% of the 5 million people facing hunger in Texas are 50 and older. Texas has a food insecurity rate of 15.4% among older adults who are 50 - 59 and a rate of 9.8% among seniors who are 60 and older.

Nationally, 6.9 million out of 79 million seniors were food insecure in 2022, the most recent year for which data is available. That same year, 4.9 million out of 41 million older adults in the U.S. were food insecure. Nearly 12 million adults ages 50 and older struggle to make ends meet. These estimates show how food insecurity—or having limited access to enough food to live a healthy life— impacts individuals in these two groups.

“Food insecurity is so closely tied to health, which becomes especially critical as we age. Addressing hunger among seniors helps reduce chronic health conditions and could result in healthier communities overall,” said Trisha Cunningham, President and CEO of the North Texas Food Bank. “The aging population in North Texas is growing each year, so it is more important than ever to work together to ensure seniors have access to the food they need to thrive and to eliminate barriers preventing older Texans from accessing food assistance.”



Across the country, seniors and older adults of color experience food insecurity at disproportionately higher rates compared to their white counterparts, according to the new estimates. In 2022, Black and Latino seniors experienced rates of food insecurity 2.7 times higher than white seniors, with rates for Black and Latino older adults being twice as high. While these estimates do not include separate food insecurity estimates for other racial and ethnic groups, it has been shown through other analyses that individuals who identify as Native Americans, Pacific Islanders, and some Asian subgroups also have disproportionately high rates of food insecurity.

Additional key findings include:

- In Texas, 551,600 older adults (age 50-59) face hunger, which equates to a food insecurity rate of 15.4% (or 1 in 6). Texas ranks No. 1 in hunger among older adults.
- Additionally, 546,800 seniors (age 60 and older) face hunger, which equates to a food insecurity rate of 9.8% (or 1 in 10). That is up from 8.5% in 2021 and puts Texas third (behind California and Florida) for the number of seniors experiencing food insecurity.
- Together, 1,098,400 older and senior adults in Texas experience food insecurity, putting Texas second in the nation (behind California) for hunger among adults 50 and older.
- More than 22% of the 5 million people facing hunger in Texas are adults 50 and older.
- Seniors and older adults experiencing food insecurity live in all 50 states and Washington, D.C. However, nine of the 10 states with the highest rates of food insecurity for seniors and seven of the 10 states (including Texas) for older adults were in the South.
- Food insecurity exacerbates many of the unique health, economic, mobility and nutritional challenges that can come with aging. This is especially true for those with disabilities. Seniors with a disability had food insecurity rates over twice as

high as seniors without disabilities. For older adults, the disparity is even greater. Older adults with disabilities had food insecurity rates more than three times as high as older adults without disabilities.



Many older adults living on fixed incomes struggle to cover essential expenses like housing, healthcare, utilities, and groceries, particularly as inflation increases financial strain. Nutrition is crucial for their health, as older adults face higher risks of chronic diseases. A nutritious diet is vital for both preventing and managing these conditions.

Food assistance programs serve as critical support for seniors combating food insecurity. However, many eligible seniors do not participate due to various barriers and stigmas. Some are unfamiliar with the application process and find it daunting, while others feel ashamed about seeking public assistance.

The North Texas Food Bank works to combat hunger among older adults and provided seniors access to more than 26 million nutritious meals in the 2023 fiscal year through its main feeding programs, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and its dedicated Senior Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP), which is run in partnership with the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Through CSFP alone, NTFB provided access to an average of 7,750 CSFP boxes per month, including around 1,800 delivered to homebound seniors via a partnership with DoorDash and Plano Superbowl. For more information on the CSFP program, visit <https://ntfb.org/our-programs/senior-programs/>.

SNAP (food stamps) is the largest hunger relief program in the nation, providing benefits via a Lone Star Card, which allows recipients the flexibility to choose groceries that meet their dietary needs and lifestyle. Many older adults don't realize they might be

eligible for SNAP benefits even if they also receive Social Security benefits. Approximately 25% of people eligible for SNAP benefits don't apply, underscoring the need to ensure that all seniors who could benefit from SNAP receive the support they require. For more information or assistance in applying for SNAP, visit <https://ntfb.org/snap-information/>.

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### **About Feeding America**

Feeding America is committed to an America where no one is hungry. We support tens of millions of people who experience food insecurity to get the food and resources they say they need to thrive as part of a nationwide network of food banks, statewide food bank associations, food pantries and meal programs. We also invest in innovative solutions to increase equitable access to nutritious food, advocate for legislation that improves food security and work to address factors that impact food security, such as health, cost of living and employment.

We partner with people experiencing food insecurity, policymakers, organizations, and supporters, united with them in a movement to end hunger. Visit [www.FeedingAmerica.org](http://www.FeedingAmerica.org) to learn more.

### **About the North Texas Food Bank**

The North Texas Food Bank (NTFB) is a top-ranked non-profit hunger-relief organization that sources, packages and distributes food through a network of about 500 Partner Agencies and organizations across 13 North Texas counties. The organization also provides food to children, seniors and families through various direct-delivery programs, including mobile pantries.

In its last fiscal year, the NTFB provided access to more than 144 million nutritious meals or nearly 400,000 meals a day, a 5% percent increase over the prior year. The North Texas Food Bank is designated a 4-Star Exceptional organization by Charity Navigator based on its governance, integrity and financial stability, and is ranked 89<sup>th</sup> on *Forbes* 2023 Top 100 Charities in America. NTFB is a member of Feeding America, the nation's largest hunger-relief organization. For more information, [www.ntfb.org](http://www.ntfb.org).

MEDIA CONTACT:  
Jeff Smith  
[Jeff.smith@ntfb.org](mailto:Jeff.smith@ntfb.org)  
469-891-7022