



3414 One Place
P.O. Box 2097
Jonesboro, AR 72402

(870) 932-3663 Ph
(870) 933-6639 Fx



Contact: Christie Jordan
Phone: 870-932-3663 ext. 103
Email: cjordan@foodbankofnea.org

For Immediate Release

STUDY SHOWS CHILDREN MORE LIKELY TO FACE HUNGER THAN OVERALL POPULATION ACROSS AMERICA

***Child food insecurity rates in Northeast Arkansas service area are higher
than overall food insecurity rates***

Jonesboro, AR – May 1, 2019 – The Food Bank of Northeast Arkansas announced the release of *Map the Meal Gap 2019*, the latest report by Feeding America® on food insecurity and the cost of food at both the county and congressional district level. It is the only study that provides food insecurity data at the local level.

Map the Meal Gap 2019 reveals that food insecurity exists in every county in the Food Bank of Northeast Arkansas' service area. It also shows that children are more likely to be food insecure, with the child food insecurity rate at 25.2% compared to 19.4% for the overall population for Northeast Arkansas.

"There isn't a single state or county in America free from child hunger, and it is within our collective power to change that and ensure that today's children are tomorrow's leaders," said Claire Babineaux-Fontenot, chief executive officer of Feeding America. "The Feeding America nationwide network of food banks is investing in our nation's future by helping to provide over 146 million meals to children every year. Still, *Map the Meal Gap* highlights that more must be done. Together food banks, corporations, policymakers, donors, volunteers and advocates can solve hunger."

"I encourage everyone to visit the website, map.feedingamerica.org to find out what hunger looks like in their community and get involved to be part of the solution," Babineaux-Fontenot continued. "One way is to tell Congress to invest in kids during Child Nutrition Reauthorization legislation and increase access to food for kids during the summer. Your voice matters and we can make a difference."

Overall food insecurity in Northeast Arkansas ranges from a low of 15.1% of the population in Greene County up to 25.7% in St. Francis County.

foodbankofnea.org

The Food Bank of Northeast Arkansas provides hunger relief to people in need by raising awareness, securing resources, and distributing food through a network of non-profit agencies and programs.

Affiliations: Arkansas Hunger Relief Alliance, Feeding America, and United Way.

The analysis also finds that 26% of residents of Northeast Arkansas who are food insecure are likely ineligible for federal nutrition assistance under current program requirements. This means that many households must rely even more on charitable food assistance such as the Food Bank of Northeast Arkansas and its partner food pantries and soup kitchens.

According to Christie Jordan, CEO for the Food Bank of Northeast Arkansas, food insecure families experience an average budget shortfall of \$15.48 each week.

“When you look at the budget shortfall food-insecure families are facing each year in Northeast Arkansas, it is the equivalent of 12.6 Million meals missing from families’ tables,” Jordan said. “One in four of the individuals who are food insecure in our area are not eligible for federal nutrition programs and must rely on our network of food pantries and soup kitchens for food assistance. We are very concerned that many of our neighbors still struggle with hunger every day.”

Jordan said the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance program (SNAP) provides twelve meals for every meal distributed by Feeding America food banks across the nation.

The Food Bank of Northeast Arkansas is a member of Feeding America’s hunger-relief network comprised of 200 food banks and 60,000 food pantries and meal programs that together provides food assistance to more than 40 million people in the U.S. struggling with hunger.

Map the Meal Gap 2019 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, a global provider of information and insights. The study is supported by [The Howard G. Buffett Foundation](#), [Conagra Brands Foundation](#) and [Nielsen](#).

The study’s findings underscore the extent of need that remains in communities in Northeast Arkansas and across the U.S., despite national measures from the USDA that indicate overall improvement.

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 2019*.

This is the ninth consecutive year that Feeding America has conducted the *Map the Meal Gap* study.

The *Map the Meal Gap 2019* [interactive map](#) allows policymakers, state agencies, corporate partners, food banks and advocates to develop integrated strategies to fight hunger on a community level.

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 2019* on Twitter using [#MealGap](#).

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About the Food Bank of Northeast Arkansas

The Food Bank of Northeast Arkansas provides hunger relief to people in need by raising awareness, securing resources, and distributing food through a network of non-profit agencies and programs. The Food Bank of Northeast Arkansas provides the equivalent of 113,000 meals each week to individuals at risk of hunger in twelve counties. The Food Bank is a member of Feeding America and the Arkansas Hunger Relief Alliance, and because we work in collaboration, we can provide 4 meals for every \$1 donated. For additional information on the Food Bank of Northeast Arkansas, please visit www.foodbankofnea.org. You can also find the Food Bank of Northeast Arkansas on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram.

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. Visit www.feedingamerica.org, find us on [Facebook](#) or follow us on [Twitter](#).