

# Food Insecurity

By Sarah Young

Arkansas State University

[Sarah.young1@smail.astate.edu](mailto:Sarah.young1@smail.astate.edu)

# What is food insecurity?

- Food insecurity can be defined as the lack of consistent access to enough food for a healthy lifestyle.
  - In 2018, it was estimated that 1 in 9 Americans were food insecure.
    - This means... over 37 million Americans are food insecure, including over 11 million children.
- How do hunger and food insecurity differentiate?
  - Hunger- a personal and physical sensation or discomfort
  - Food insecurity- lack of financial resources for food.



# Who does food insecurity effect?

- Food insecurity impacts every community around the United States.
- Seniors
  - Since 2001, the rate of senior citizens who are food insecure has grown by 45%
  - There are currently 5.5 million senior citizens that are facing food insecurity around the country.
  - One of the main problems senior citizens face... pay for groceries or pay for Medicare.
- Children
  - 1 in 7 children do not know where their next meal is coming from.
  - Children that are food insecure will be faced with the challenge of not having enough energy to learn and grow.
  - Children that are food insecure are more likely to face health problems such as anemia and asthma.

# Who does food insecurity effect?

- Rural communities
  - People who live in rural areas often face hunger the most.
  - People that live in a rural area run the risk of being miles and miles away from the nearest food bank.
  - Rural communities make up 63% of the United States food insecurity.
- African Americans
  - African Americans face a hunger rate that is twice the rate of a Caucasian.
  - 1 and 4 African American children are food insecure.
- Latinos
  - 1 in 6 Latino households are food insecure.
  - More than 18% of Latino children risk becoming food insecure.

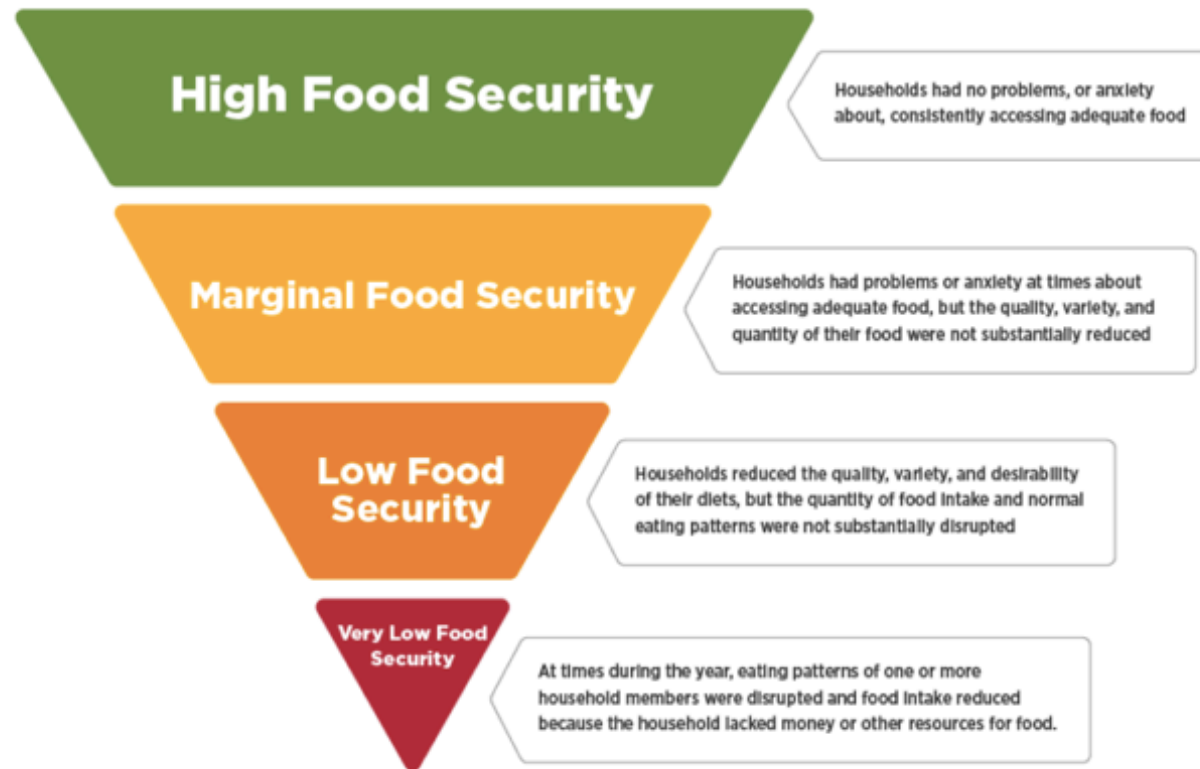
# Food insecurity in college students

- In 2018, researchers found that 36% of college students are food insecure.
- Why are rates of college students at a all time high now?
  - College tuition is at a high, and financial aid has not kept up with the pace.
  - 1 in 4 college students have children of their own to pay and provide for.
- How can food insecurity effect academics?
  - Studies have shown that students that are food insecure are more likely to have to withdraw from classes, less likely to attend classes and preform well academically.



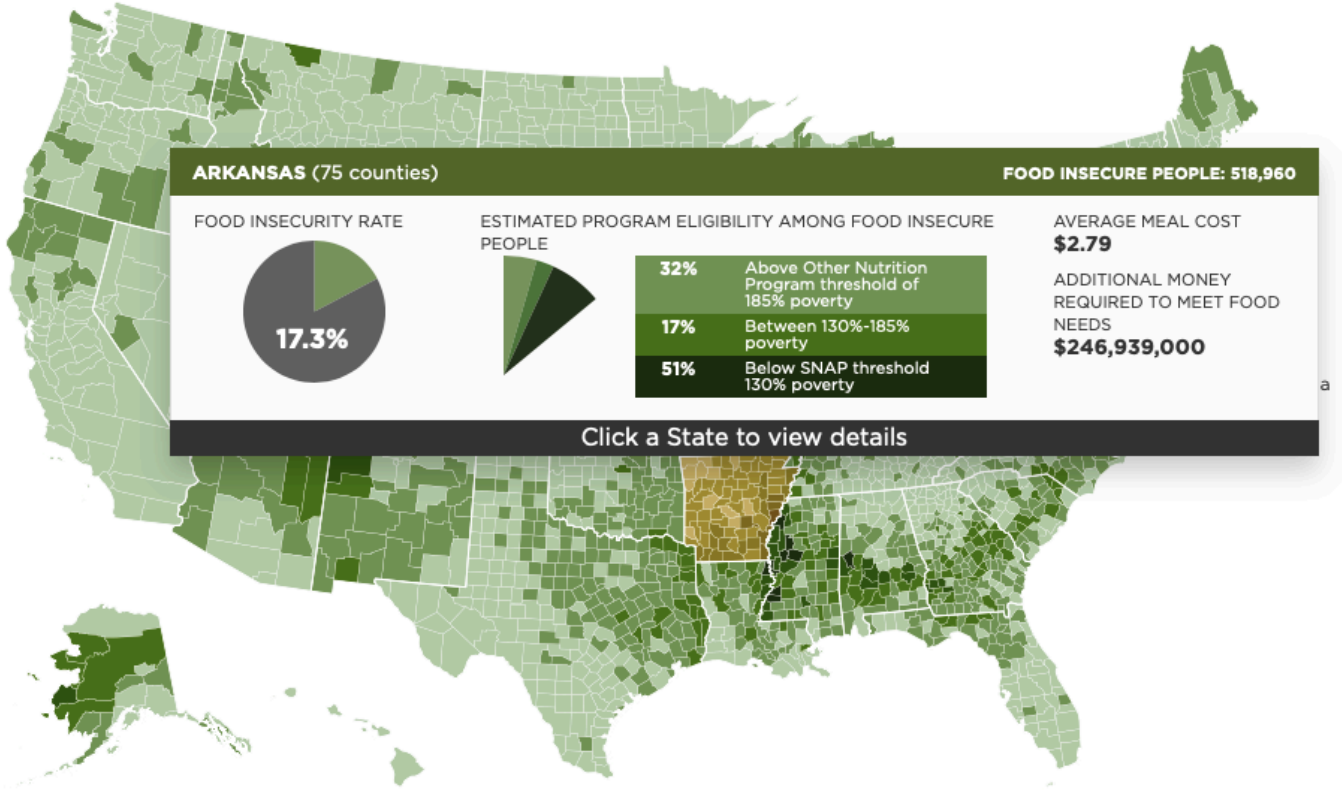
# Levels of food insecurity

- There are four levels of food security based on households experiences of gaining access to food.
  - High food security
    - Families are able to gain access to food no problem
  - Marginal food security
    - At times families face problems accessing adequate food
  - Low food insecurity
    - Families meals are reduced in quantity, variety and desirability, but food intake remained normal for the most part.
  - Very low food security
    - All throughout the year food patterns are interrupted due to lack of money and resources.



# Food insecurity statistics in Arkansas

The United States



Food Insecurity Rates: 4-14% 15-19% 20-24% 25-29% 30% +

1 in 6 people



struggles with hunger.

**1 in 4**  
**children**

struggles with hunger.

People facing hunger in  
Arkansas  
are estimated to report needing

**\$246,939,000**

more per year to meet their food needs.



# Food programs found in the United States

- Child nutritional programs
  - Summer Food service program
    - Ensures that children have access to nutritious meals and snacks when school is out for the summer.
  - National school lunch program
  - Special milk program
    - Provides milk to children in schools and institutions.
  - School breakfast program
  - Team nutrition
    - Team nutrition supports the child nutrition programs through training and technical assistance for food service, and nutrition education or children
  - Fresh fruit and vegetable program

# Ways to get involved in your community

- Volunteer. Find local food pantries that are helping people in your community not go hungry.
- Donate. There are many great organizations that share a common goal of ending food insecurity.
- Advocate. Bring awareness to your community and local officials.
- Tell. Share what you have learned with others as a way to better spread awareness.

# Organizations you can get involved in:

- [Feeding America](#)
- [Meals on Wheels](#)
- [Feed my Starving Children](#)
- [Tacos 4 Life- mobile packs](#)
- [Arkansas Foodbank](#)

# References

- [Feedingamerica-understanding food insecurity](#)
- [Food Security in College Students](#)