**Feeding America Calls for Immediate Action to Address Large Increase in Food Insecurity**

USDA’s Household Food Security Report for 2022 Shows People Living in Food Insecure Households Increased by 10 Million to 44 Million People

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The number of people living in food insecure households in the United States in 2022 increased to 44 million, including 13 million children, according to a report released today by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). This is an increase of 31% for all individuals and 44% for children from the previous year, the highest rate and number of individuals and children since 2014 and the largest one-year increase in food insecurity since 2008. The USDA report confirms what Feeding America heard from people facing hunger in its [2023 Elevating Voices: Insights Report](https://www.feedingamerica.org/research/community-solutions-hunger), where people surveyed agreed that federal and local governments should treat food insecurity as an urgent crisis despite headlines asserting an improving economy and lower unemployment rates.

“The USDA released data showing that 1 in 7 people, including 1 in 5 children, in the U.S live in food insecure households,” said Claire Babineaux-Fontenot, Feeding America CEO. “This news is heartbreaking, but sadly, it is not surprising. People facing hunger have shared with us that the end of pandemic-era relief efforts and the high cost of food have impacted their ability to make ends meet. I see the long lines myself as I travel across the country. Food banks have been reporting that they are operating under increasing pressure from both sides: the growing number of people experiencing food insecurity and a diminished supply of nutritious food to distribute. Food donations and fundraising have decreased since the pandemic, and while we know the USDA has been working to help, it simply has not been enough.”

The increase in food insecurity reinforces what the Feeding America network reports seeing in its food bank pulse survey data. Responding food banks reported a continued need with 90% seeing demand for food assistance increase or stay the same in August 2023 compared to July. In 2022, 49 million people turned to the charitable food sector for help with the Feeding America network of food banks distributing more than 5.3 billion meals to neighbors facing hunger.

“This marked increase in people experiencing food insecurity comes alongside reports of lower unemployment and an improved economy,” said Babineaux-Fontenot. “How can this be true? People facing hunger have been answering this question for us, and there are two important factors. First, food insecurity does not happen in a vacuum. Housing prices and other cost of living increases create a gap in income, and food is often the first place where families can cut corners to make ends meet. Second, increases in income often cause low-income families to lose benefits, like childcare subsidies and housing subsidies, which leaves families with higher expenses at the end of the month and less to spend on groceries than before their income increased.”

According to the USDA report:

* Food insecurity among single mothers was nearly 34%, an increase of 37% compared to 2021.
* Notably, food insecurity among households receiving SNAP benefits also increased, with nearly 47% reporting they experienced food insecurity.
* Food insecurity increased for Black, white, and Latino individuals. However, food insecurity rates continue to be higher for and disproportionately impact people of color, showing the effect of racial disparities on communities:
	+ Black individuals saw a 15% increase in food insecurity and were nearly 2.4 times more likely to face hunger than white individuals.
	+ Latino individuals saw a 29% increase in food insecurity and were 2.2 times more likely to face hunger than white individuals.
	+ White individuals saw a 43% increase in food insecurity in 2022.

Neighbors experiencing food insecurity have outlined what they need to thrive: Hunger relief today and an end to food insecurity for good will require continued partnership across sectors, geographies and politics.

“These are solvable problems when we all work together and make sound policies a priority,” said Babineaux-Fontenot. “We know this because we saw it work during the pandemic. Today’s data confirms that and reinforces the imperative that Congress must pass a strong farm bill that invests in nutrition programs - especially TEFAP that moves healthy food from farms to food banks - and strengthening SNAP so people experiencing food insecurity have greater purchasing power at their local grocery store. Congress must also work together to honor our service members in uniform and all federal employees and ensure there is no government shutdown. We demonstrated during the pandemic that we are capable of coming together to make positive change for the people in our country, and we can all agree that no one in the U.S. should go hungry. The time to come together and act with that shared conviction is now.”