

# OHIO ASSOCIATION OF FOODBANKS

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## Nearly One in Five American Households Report Inability to Afford Enough Food During First Six Months of 2012

*Food Hardship Rate Continues to Hold Steady, Underscoring Need to Protect SNAP*

WASHINGTON, D.C. – New data [released yesterday by the Gallup organization](#) show the food hardship rate for the nation was 18.2 percent during the first six months of 2012. While a slight dip from the 2011 rate of 18.6 percent reported in a Food Research and Action Center (FRAC) analysis of previous Gallup data, FRAC noted this shows far too many Americans continue to report that there were times during the past 12 months when they did not have enough money to buy the food they or their families needed.

Families in all parts of the country continue to report their struggle to afford food. This makes especially destructive attempts in Congress to reduce eligibility and benefits in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). The Senate plan for the Farm Bill includes a cut of \$4.4 billion over 10 years to the program, a proposal that would trigger sizable reductions (averaging \$90/month) in SNAP benefits for an estimated 500,000 households a year. The House Agriculture Committee bill would make these same cuts plus end benefits totally for a minimum of 1.8 million people, cutting the program by \$16 billion.

“Food hardship continues to be far too high in this country. The numbers underscore the point that people still continue to struggle, and that cuts some in Congress are proposing to our nation’s nutrition safety net will only worsen a bad situation,” said FRAC President Jim Weill. “These cuts to SNAP will particularly harm seniors, children and working families, taking food away from the poorest and most vulnerable among us. Congress must reject these attempts to make false economies by taking from those who have the least.”

“Ohioans continue to struggle to secure the most basic necessity of food for themselves and their families,” said Ohio Association of Foodbanks executive director Lisa Hamler-Fugitt. “Cuts or changes to the structure of SNAP would further devastate the thousands of households who rely on nutrition assistance and emergency food programs to survive in our state.”

FRAC started tracking these food hardship data in 2010, and rates have been above 18 percent since the depths of the recession in 2009.

For the months of January through June 2012:

- Fifteen states had food hardship rates of 20 percent or higher – one in five or more of those surveyed experienced food hardship;
- Forty-three states had rates of 14 percent or higher – one in seven or more of those surveyed experienced food hardship; and
- Mississippi had the highest food hardship rate (24.9 percent), while North Dakota had the lowest (9.6 percent). Still, even with the lowest rate, North Dakota had nearly one in ten people reporting food hardship.
- Ohio’s food hardship rate of 18.8 percent is above the national average and ranks the state 17<sup>th</sup> in the nation

The food hardship question is being asked as part of a survey conducted by Gallup through the Gallup-Healthways Well-Being Index project. Gallup has been interviewing 1,000 households per day almost every day since January 2, 2008 for this project. Respondents are asked a series of questions on a range of topics, including emotional health, physical health, healthy behavior, work environment and access to basic services.

**About the Ohio Association of Foodbanks**

*The Ohio Association of Foodbanks is Ohio's largest charitable response to hunger, representing Ohio's 12 Feeding America foodbanks and 3,300 member charities including food pantries, soup kitchens, and shelters. In SFY 2011, the association and its member foodbanks were able to acquire and distribute over 150 million pounds of food and grocery items. Follow the association on [Twitter](#), stay connected on [Facebook](#), and visit them on the web at [www.ohiofoodbanks.org](http://www.ohiofoodbanks.org).*

**About the Food Research and Action Center**

*FRAC is the leading national nonprofit organization working to improve public policies and public-private partnerships to end hunger and undernutrition in the United States. Visit FRAC online at [www.frac.org](http://www.frac.org).*

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