

OHIO ASSOCIATION OF FOODBANKS

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New Data Shows Prevalence of Food Insecurity in Ohio on the Rise *Ohio Tied for 3rd in the Nation for Very Low Food Security; Polling Data Continues to Indicate Public Support for SNAP*

COLUMBUS – New data [released today by the United States Department of Agriculture Economic Research Service](#) indicated the continued prevalence of food insecurity in Ohio, especially when compared to food security nationally. On average between 2010 and 2012 nationally, 14.7 percent of American households were food insecure at least some time during the year, meaning that food intake was reduced and eating patterns were disrupted because the household lacked money and other resources for food. Over that same time period in Ohio, 16.1 percent of households were food insecure, including 7.1 percent who experienced very low food security.

From 2000 to 2012, low food security has risen in Ohio by 6.3 percent, the third largest percentage increase for any state over that time period. The data raises serious concerns for the Ohio Association of Foodbanks, Ohio's largest charitable response to hunger, as potentially destructive cuts and changes to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, formerly known as food stamps) continue to be considered.

"We already know that many households relying on SNAP to help feed their families will soon see a reduction in their food purchasing power November 1 when a temporary benefit increase from the 2009 economic recovery act expires," said Lisa Hamler-Fugitt, executive director of the association. "With the potential for even more harmful cuts and changes on the horizon, our emergency food network will not be able to respond to the increased demand for help with this basic necessity."

Key points from the *Household Food Security in the United States in 2012* report:

- Ohio's low food security rate of 16.1 percent (2010-2012 average) is above the national 2010-2012 average of 14.7 percent and ranks the state 10th in the nation ([see Table 5](#)).
- Ohio's very low food security rate of 7.1 percent (2010-2012 average) is above the national 2010-2012 average of 5.6 percent and ties the state for 3rd in the nation ([see Table 5](#)).
- Nationally, 59 percent of all food insecure households participated in one or more of the three largest federal nutrition programs (SNAP, Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) and the National School Lunch Program) during the month prior to the survey.
- Nationally, the typical food-secure household spent 26 percent more for food than the typical food-insecure household of the same size and composition, *including* food purchased with Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits (formerly called food stamps).

Food Research and Action Center (FRAC) [polling data](#) continues to demonstrate overwhelming public support for SNAP. Nearly three-quarters (73 percent) of American voters indicated that the food stamp program (SNAP) was either very or fairly important for the country, and seven in 10 voters said cutting the food stamp program is the wrong way to reduce government spending.

According to the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services, in June 2013, 1,815,343 Ohioans—or 15.73 percent of the state's population—relied on SNAP benefits to supplement their food purchasing

resources, receiving an average monthly benefit of \$132. Yet many of those households still struggled to secure adequate amounts of food.

“Our network of Ohio’s 12 Feeding America foodbanks and more than 3,300 food pantries, soup kitchens, shelters and other hunger-relief agencies cannot respond to the severity of this growing crisis alone,” said Hamler-Fugitt. “Federal nutrition programs like SNAP are vital to nearly one in six people in our state. Without SNAP benefits, our charitable network would crumble under the demand for basic help and many Ohio households would go hungry. It is unacceptable that so many in Congress want to cut SNAP and harm the most vulnerable among us—seniors, working families and children. We urge Congress to reject any changes that would damage the strong structure of SNAP.”

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 2012, the association and its member foodbanks were able to acquire and distribute over 164 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.

About the United States Department of Agriculture Economic Research Service (ERS)

The ERS mission is to inform and enhance public and private decision making on economic and policy issues related to agriculture, food, the environment, and rural development. The ERS is a primary source of economic information and research in the [U.S. Department of Agriculture](#). Visit ERS online at www.ers.usda.gov.

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.

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Contact: Lisa Hamler-Fugitt, Executive Director for the Ohio Association of Foodbanks at 614-221-4336 ext. 222 or 614-271-4803 (cell)

or

Joree Jacobs, Director of Communications and Grants Management for the Ohio Association of Foodbanks at 614-221-4336 ext. 265