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FOOD INSECURITY ON THE RISE IN OHIO, WHILE DECLINING NATIONALLY
Ohio now ranks sixth for highest rate of food insecurity

COLUMBUS – [Household Food Security](#) research released today by the USDA Economic Research Service illustrates a widening gap in food security between Ohio and the rest of the country. The report found that 16.9 percent of Ohioans now live in food insecure households, ranking Ohio sixth nationally for highest rate of food insecurity behind only Mississippi, Arkansas, Louisiana, Kentucky and Texas.

“We have a serious crisis in Ohio,” said Lisa Hamler-Fugitt, executive director of the Ohio Association of Foodbanks. “More of our families than ever before are struggling to afford food, as the economic recovery fails to reach everyone in our state.”

Ohio’s 16.9 percent rate of food insecurity was up from 16.0 percent in 2013, while the national food insecurity rate declined from 14.3 percent in 2013 to 14.0 percent in 2014. Compared to the Midwestern region, the prevalence of food insecurity in Ohio was also significantly higher. Ohio’s 2014 food insecurity rate was over three percentage points higher than the Midwest average of 13.8 percent, and was the highest in the region.

“Food insecurity in Ohio has not only surpassed our fellow Midwestern states, but has skyrocketed compared to food insecurity nationally,” said Hamler-Fugitt. “We are on a dangerous trajectory, as more families and communities have come to regularly rely on our emergency food network for help when their stagnant wages can’t keep up.”

The report also captured rates of very low food security, when households reported disrupted eating patterns or hunger due to inadequate resources for food on multiple occasions during the year. It found that 7.5 percent of Ohioans lived in households with very low food security last year, tying Ohio for third nationally.

“Lack of access to adequate food has serious consequences, impacting educational achievement, health outcomes and worker productivity,” said Hamler-Fugitt. “We simply cannot afford policies that leave more than one in six of our residents hungry.”

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 2014, the association and its member foodbanks were able to acquire and distribute over 186 million pounds of food and grocery items. The association also serves as the home of The Ohio Benefit Bank and operates the state’s largest navigator program for the Affordable Care Act. Follow the association on [Twitter](#), stay connected on [Facebook](#) and visit them on the web at www.ohiofoodbanks.org.

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