



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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**Census Bureau Data Released Today Reflect Growing Crisis for Low-Income Ohioans  
2009-2013 American Community Survey statistics reveal increase in Ohioans eligible for help  
from Ohio foodbanks statewide and in every Metropolitan Statistical Area**

**COLUMBUS** –2013 5-year American Community Survey estimates released today show an increase in the number of individuals living in households with incomes at or below 200 percent of the federal poverty level in every Metropolitan Statistical Area in the state, when compared to 2009 5-year estimates. This income threshold is considered the standard at which households can reach self-sufficiency—about \$39,580 for a family of three.

The Ohio Association of Foodbanks and its members are mandated to serve households with incomes at or below that threshold. So it's no surprise that five years out from the end of the Great Recession, Ohio's 12 Feeding America foodbanks and their 3,300 member food pantries, soup kitchens and shelters are providing help with food to more Ohioans than ever before.

"This new data from the American Community Survey reflects what we are seeing in our service statistics in every area of the state," said Lisa Hamler-Fugitt, executive director of the Ohio Association of Foodbanks. "In spite of the so-called economic recovery, two million Ohioans sought help from our hunger relief network last year, even though half of the households we serve are employed."

Individuals in Households with Incomes at or Below 200% of the Federal Poverty Level		
Metropolitan Statistical Area	2013 5-year estimates	2009 5-year estimates
Akron	31.98% (200,489)	29.25% (200,241)
Canton-Massillon	34.5% (136,132)	30.96% (123,140)
Cincinnati	29.78% (618,218)	26.85% (560,726)
Cleveland-Elyria	32.45% (658,550)	29.59% (609,293)
Columbus	31.79% (596,116)	28.48% (487,645)
Dayton	35.01% (270,292)	30.46% (247,031)
Lima	39.24% (39,875)	33.54% (33,768)
Mansfield	37.19% (43,187)	32.68% (38,767)
Springfield	39.79% (53,425)	34.47% (47,016)
Toledo	37.61% (222,528)	32.70% (213,910)
Youngstown-Warren-Boardman	37.13% (201,669)	34.26% (189,192)
<i>Statewide</i>	<i>34.14% (3,833,950)</i>	<i>30.93% (3,462,181)</i>

\*U.S. Census Bureau S1701 2009-2013 ACS 5-Year Estimates and U.S. Census Bureau S1701 2005-2009 ACS 5-Year Estimates (see attached tables)

In some Metropolitan Statistical Areas, including Springfield and Lima, nearly four in ten Ohioans are now living in households at or below 200 percent of the federal poverty level. In the Columbus Metropolitan Statistical Area, 108,471 more people were living in households below this threshold in 2013 than in 2009—that’s a startling growth of more than 22 percent, in spite of a population growth of just nine percent over that same timespan.

Compounding the continued high prevalence of household poverty are harmful changes to the first line of defense against hunger, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, also known as food stamps or food assistance). Low-income Ohioans have lost access to nearly 200 million meals as a result of numerous federal and state policy changes to food assistance that began in November 2013. These changes represent the loss of over \$265 million in direct, federally funded food assistance. Additionally, nearly 100,000 Ohioans have lost their food assistance benefits over the last eleven months.

“Something has to give. These are working families, children, seniors, and people living with disabilities,” said Hamler-Fugitt. “Because of recent changes to food assistance in Ohio, unemployed adults without children can’t even get benefits for more than three months every 36 months. Let’s stop disparaging low-income Ohioans with untrue rhetoric. We must acknowledge the greater costs of hunger and lack of nutrition to our state’s economy and wellbeing. Every Ohioan deserves the basic right to nutritious food for themselves and their family.”

The Ohio Association of Foodbanks is requesting \$20 million per year (\$40 million over the biennium) in the 2016-17 state biennial budget to support Ohio’s foodbanks as they struggle to keep up with growing demand in the wake of across-the-board cuts to food assistance and continued high poverty rates. To learn more or to sign the petition to support Ohio’s foodbanks, go to [www.ohiofoodbanks.org/advocacy](http://www.ohiofoodbanks.org/advocacy).

#### **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](http://www.ohiofoodbanks.org).*

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