



## MEDIA RELEASE

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### Food Insecurity Declines but Arkansas Still Ranks 2nd

LITTLE ROCK, AR (May 11, 2017) - In [Map the Meal Gap 2017](#), released last week, Feeding America reports that food insecurity in Arkansas declined in 2015 (the most recent year for which data is available.) Overall household food insecurity fell to 18.4 percent from 19.1 percent, which is well above the national average of 13.4 percent. While that's certainly good news, Arkansas still ranks second in the nation behind Mississippi. Child food insecurity in Arkansas also declined, falling 1.3 percent. Again, good news, but that's still **one in four children** (25 percent) who are unsure where they will find their next meal.

According to Feeding America, food insecure individuals now face, on average, a food budget shortfall of \$527.19 per person per year. This is an increase of 13 percent since 2008, which was the first full year of the Great Recession. This suggests that people facing hunger are likely falling further behind as they continue to struggle to buy enough food to meet their needs.

"Clearly our efforts, along with the recovering economy, are having a positive impact on reducing hunger in our state. We must continue advocating for better food policy, continued commitment to nutrition assistance and education for low income families as well as higher wages to enable everyone to participate in the recovering economy. The stock market may be at an all time high, but too many Arkansans (more than 549,000 people) are still struggling to put food on the table," said Alliance Executive Director Kathy Webb.

The Arkansas Hunger Relief Alliance and Arkansas's six Feeding America food banks are committed to further reducing food insecurity in Arkansas by providing improved access to nutritious food, providing tools and resources, empowerment, advocacy education and research.

Refer to the Map the Meal Gap 2017 [interactive map](#) to see the county x county food insecurity figures for overall households and child hunger.

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#### About the Arkansas Hunger Relief Alliance

Arkansas Hunger Relief Alliance, lead partner in Arkansas for the No Kid Hungry campaign, is a non-profit collaborative network of more than 400 hunger relief organizations across Arkansas. Our founding members include the Arkansas Foodbank in Little Rock, the Food Bank of Northeast Arkansas in Jonesboro, Harvest Regional Food Bank in Texarkana, Food Bank of North Central Arkansas in Norfolk, Northwest Arkansas Food Bank in Bethel Heights and River Valley Regional Food Bank in Fort Smith. The Alliance mission is to reduce hunger and improve access to nutritious food by providing tools and resources, empowerment, advocacy, education and research. We invite you to visit [www.ARhungeralliance.org](http://www.ARhungeralliance.org) for details on hunger relief programs, donor and volunteer opportunities.

#### About Map the Meal Gap

Map the Meal Gap 2017 uses data from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, U.S. Census Bureau, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics and food price data and analysis provided by Nielsen, a global provider of information and insights. The study is supported by founding sponsor The Howard G. Buffett Foundation, Conagra Brands Foundation and Nielsen.

#### About SNAP Outreach

SNAP Outreach staff and volunteers assist low income Arkansans who qualify for nutrition assistance to complete their applications for SNAP (formerly known as food stamps) benefits. These food assistance benefits help Arkansas seniors, veterans, children and families who are struggling to afford food. SNAP benefits provide economic stimulus to local communities. Each dollar in SNAP benefits is the equivalent of \$1.70 in economic input. SNAP Outreach efforts are funded in part through a grant from the Walmart Foundation.

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