



MEDIA RELEASE

Press release for Arkansas Hunger Relief Alliance. For immediate release.
For more information, contact Nancy Conley, Communications Director,
nconley@arhungeralliance.org

U.S. Households Experiencing Food Insecurity Declines Significantly in 2015 *Arkansas remains well above the national average*

LITTLE ROCK, AR (September 8, 2016) – The US Department of Agriculture released its [Household Food Security in the United States in 2015](#) report yesterday. The percentage of U.S. households that were food insecure decreased from 14.0 percent in 2014 to 12.7 percent in 2015. Despite significant improvements, food insecurity remains above pre-recession levels (11.1 percent in 2007), with income being the strongest determining factor in food insecurity.

Although Arkansas's food insecurity rate declined from 19.9 percent (2014) to 19.2 (2015), Arkansas is one of 12 states (AL, KY, LA, ME, MS, NC, OH, OK, OR, TN and TX) where food insecurity remains higher than the national average. "We were happy to see that overall food insecurity in Arkansas has decreased. The Alliance and our Feeding America food bank members have worked diligently to increase access to food for low-income Arkansans," said Kathy Webb, Arkansas Hunger Relief Alliance executive director. "On the national level, the rate of households with food-insecure children dropped to below pre-recession levels, but there are still too many food insecure children in Arkansas," Webb continued. "This report and others show that what we're doing to make sure Arkansas kids get the nutritious food they need is making a difference. That's very gratifying." Feeding America's [Map the Meal Gap 2016](#) released in January on 2014 data showed 26.3 percent of Arkansas children are food insecure, down from 28.4 percent the previous year.

Other national findings from the USDA report include:

- The rates of food insecurity were substantially higher than the national average for households with children headed by single women or single men, women and men living alone, and Black- and Hispanic-headed households.
- About 59 percent of food-insecure households participated in one or more of the three largest Federal food and nutrition assistance programs (SNAP, National School Lunch Program and WIC).
- The number of individuals in households that faced the deepest struggles with hunger – "very low food security" – was 4.6 percent in 2015.

- The number of children living in food-insecure households in 2015 improved by more than 2 million, declining from 15.3 million in 2014 to 13.1 million in 2015, with the rate among children declining from 20.9 percent to 17.9 percent.
- Households in more rural areas are experiencing considerably deeper struggles with hunger compared to those inside metropolitan areas, with higher rates of food insecurity (15.4 percent compared to 12.2 percent), higher rates of food insecurity in households with children (20.5 percent compared to 15.9 percent), and higher rates of very low food security (6.1 percent compared to 4.9 percent).

Due to small sample sizes, further state-by-state breakdowns were not part of the report.

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About the USDA Report

The United States Department of Agriculture, using data from surveys conducted annually by the Census Bureau, has released estimates since 1995 of the number of people in households that are food insecure. Food-insecure households are those that are not able to afford an adequate diet at all times in the past 12 months. The report also includes food-insecurity rates for each state, but for states it uses three-year averages to give a better estimate of the number of households experiencing food insecurity.

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 480 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 is dedicated to reducing hunger through direct relief, education and advocacy. We invite you to visit www.ARhungeralliance.org for details on hunger relief programs, donor and volunteer opportunities.