



Texas one of three states with highest rate of child hunger

Feeding America report reveals new state-level data on food insecurity among children

Fort Worth, TX – July 6, 2010 – **One in four children in Texas** is on the brink of hunger. Texas is one of three states where more than 24 percent of children are experiencing food insecurity, according to new research released recently by Feeding America and funded by the ConAgra Foods Foundation, Feeding America’s Leadership Partner in the Fight to End Child Hunger.

Child Food Insecurity in the United States: 2006-2008 reveals that 24.4 percent of children in Arkansas, 24.3 percent in Texas and 24.2 percent in Arizona live in households without the resources to consistently provide enough nutrition for a healthy, active life.

Children under age 18

In Texas, 1.63 million children under age 18 are food insecure. This is an 11 percent increase in the number of the state’s children facing hunger since the 2005-07 study was released last year. The 2005-07 study reported 1.47 million Texas children, or 22.1 percent, were food insecure.

Although Arkansas ranks first in the rate of child hunger, the state’s small total population compared to Texas includes only a little over 166,000 children in food insecure households. In Arizona, 408,000 children are food insecure.

Children under age 5

The 2006-08 study also reveals regional data on food insecurity for children under the age of 5. In the South Census Region, which includes Texas, more than one in five children, or nearly 22 percent of young children, is food insecure—the highest rate in the nation.

The Western region of the country has the second highest rate of young child food insecurity at nearly one in five, or 19.6 percent. The Midwest has a rate of more than one in six, or 18.6 percent; and the Northeast has a rate of not quite one in seven, or 13.7 percent.

USDA food insecurity reports

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) releases an annual report on the state of food insecurity in the United States, which focuses on the general population in each state. This new report delves deeper into the data in order to bring the child hunger statistics to the forefront.

While the recent 2009 USDA food insecurity report revealed that nationally, nearly one in four children is food insecure, determining detailed, state-level estimates on child food insecurity requires looking at a three-year average to increase accuracy and reliability. Though high, these estimates are expected to rise over the coming years as the full impact of the economic downturn is taken into account.

Researcher John Cook, Ph.D., Boston Medical Center

Through the support of the ConAgra Foods Foundation, Feeding America contracted nationally-recognized researcher John Cook, Ph.D. to analyze the USDA’s food insecurity raw data in order to provide state-level child food insecurity estimates.

“Research over the past 12 years shows conclusively that food insecurity and hunger are serious threats to children’s health, growth and development, and may even harm young children’s brain architecture,” Cook said.

The states with the **highest rates** of child food insecurity for children under the age of 18 include:

State	Rate
Arkansas	24.4%
Texas	24.3%
Arizona	24.2%
District of Columbia	23.7%
Missouri	23.2%
Mississippi	22.7%
Georgia	22.5%
Maine	21.1%
South Carolina	21.1%
Florida	20.8%
Oregon	20.8%

Read the full report, including a complete list of all 50 states, at http://www.taafb.org/documents/ChildFoodSecurity2006-2008_Report.pdf.

About Tarrant Area Food Bank

Tarrant Area Food Bank collects and distributes donated, purchased and prepared foods through a network of hunger-relief charities in 13 North Texas counties. Each month, this network of pantries and meals and snack programs distributes emergency groceries to 43,000 families and serves more than 565,000 meals and snacks on charities' sites. In the past 11 months (July 2009 through May 2010), the Food Bank has distributed more than 21 million pounds of groceries, equivalent to nearly 17 million meals. Founded in 1982, Tarrant Area Food Bank is a certified member of Feeding America. For more information, visit www.taafb.org, find us on Facebook at [facebook.com/tafoodbank](https://www.facebook.com/tafoodbank) or follow us on Twitter at twitter.com/TAFoodBank.

About Feeding America

Feeding America provides low-income individuals and families with the fuel to survive and even thrive. As the nation's leading domestic hunger-relief charity, our network members supply food to more than 37 million Americans each year, including 14 million children and 3 million seniors. Serving the entire United States, more than 200 member food banks support 61,000 agencies that address hunger in all of its forms. For more information on how you can fight hunger in your community and across the country, visit. Find us on Facebook at [facebook.com/FeedingAmerica](https://www.facebook.com/FeedingAmerica) or follow our news on Twitter at twitter.com/FeedingAmerica.

About ConAgra Foods Foundation

The ConAgra Foods Foundation, through its Nourish Today, Flourish Tomorrow platform, is dedicated to raising awareness of the nearly 17 million children in America who are at risk of hunger and don't have enough food to live active, healthful lives. It aggressively pursues sustainable solutions in the fight against child hunger. And the Foundation is committed to building a community of people who are passionate about ensuring that all kids have access to the food and facts they need to eat nutritiously while living balanced lifestyles and succeeding in school and life. ConAgra Foods Foundation invests in national and local partnerships with high-impact, not-for-profit organizations, such as Feeding America, that take an innovative approach to addressing needs in the core areas of hunger and nutrition education. For more information, please visit www.conagrafoodsfoundation.org or www.facebook.com/ConAgraFoodsFoundation. The ConAgra Foods Foundation is funded solely by ConAgra Foods.