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IMPROVEMENTS SEEN IN FIGHT AGAINST HUNGER IN KENTUCKY

According to Study, 16% of Residents of Kentucky Struggle with Hunger

Berea, KY – May 4, 2017 – The Kentucky Association of Food Banks announced the release of *Map the Meal Gap 2017*, the latest report by Feeding America® on food insecurity and the cost of food at both the county and congressional district level. [Map the Meal Gap 2017](#) reveals that food insecurity exists in every county in Kentucky. Overall food insecurity ranges from a low of 8 percent of the population in Oldham County up to 23 percent in Wolfe County. Kentucky's overall food insecurity rate of 16 percent decreased slightly from the previous year's rate of 17 percent. The national average food insecurity rate across all counties is 14 percent.

The study also finds that people currently facing hunger are likely falling further behind as they continue to struggle to buy enough food to meet their needs. Food-insecure individuals now face, on average, a food budget shortfall of \$15.79 per food insecure person each week, up from \$15.35 last year.

"Though far too many Kentuckians continue to struggle to put healthful food on the table, we are encouraged by the movement in the right direction on hunger in Kentucky," said Tamara Sandberg, Executive Director of the Kentucky Association of Food Banks. "Kentucky is a leader in the nation for our strong public-private partnerships, such as the Kentucky Agriculture Commissioner Quarles's Hunger Initiative and the Kentucky Legal Food Frenzy sponsored by Attorney General Andy Beshear. We are committed to implementing creative solutions to the problem of hunger until the day when no Kentuckian has to go to bed hungry."

Comprised of the seven Feeding America food banks, the Kentucky Association of Food Banks (KAFB) is the state's largest charitable response to hunger. Members of the association distributed the equivalent of 58 million meals last year in partnership with over 800 partner agencies such as soup kitchens and shelters. KAFB feeds 1 in 7 Kentuckians each year in all 120 counties in Kentucky.

"It is disheartening to realize that millions of hardworking, low-income Americans are finding it increasingly difficult to feed themselves and their families at the same time that our economy is showing many signs of improvement, including a substantial decline in the number of people who are unemployed," said Diana Aviv, CEO of Feeding America.

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“This study underscores the need for strong federal nutrition programs as well of the importance of charitable food assistance programs, especially the food pantries and meal programs served by the Feeding America network of food banks.”

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 (NYSE: [NLSN](#)), a global provider of information and insights. The study is supported by founding sponsor [The Howard G. Buffett Foundation](#), [Conagra Brands Foundation](#) and [Nielsen](#).

Key local findings:

- Food insecurity exists in every county in Kentucky.
- The 5th Congressional District has the highest food insecurity rate of Kentucky’s congressional districts, at 19.2 percent.
- Children are at a higher risk of food insecurity; 20 percent of Kentucky’s children are food- insecure. Three Kentucky counties have childhood food-insecurity rates of 30 percent or higher: Wolfe (32.4 percent); Magoffin (30.7 percent); and Clay (30.2 percent). This represents a decrease from the previous year, when 11 Kentucky counties had childhood food-insecurity rates of 30 percent or higher.
- 27.3 percent of Kentuckians in food-insecure households have incomes above 185 percent of the poverty line, making them likely ineligible for most federal nutrition assistance programs.
- The “Food Budget Shortfall” – the additional dollars food-insecure Kentuckians report needing to meet their food needs – was \$334,999.00

Dr. Craig Gundersen, Professor of Agricultural and Consumer Economics at the University of Illinois, Executive Director of the National Soybean Research Laboratory and a member of Feeding America’s Technical Advisory Group is the lead researcher of *Map the Meal Gap 2017*.

A summary of the findings, an interactive map of the United States, and the full report are available at map.feedingamerica.org.

Join the conversation about *Map the Meal Gap 2017* on Twitter using [#MealGap](#).

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About the Kentucky Association of Food Banks

The Kentucky Association of Food Banks is Kentucky’s largest charitable response to hunger, representing Kentucky’s 7 regional Feeding America food banks (Dare to Care Food Bank; Facing Hunger Foodbank; Feeding America, Kentucky’s Heartland; Freestore Foodbank; God’s Pantry Food Bank; Purchase Area Development District; and Tri-State Food Bank) and over 800 member charities including food pantries, soup kitchens and shelters. Last year its members distributed the equivalent of 58 million meals to 1 in 7 Kentuckians across the commonwealth.

About Feeding America



Feeding America is a nationwide network of 200 food banks that leads the fight against hunger in the United States. Together, we provide food to more than 46 million people through food pantries and meal programs in communities throughout America. Feeding America also supports programs that improve food security among the people we serve; educates the public about the problem of hunger; and advocates for legislation that protects people from going hungry. Individuals, charities, businesses and government all have a role in ending hunger. Donate. Volunteer. Advocate. Educate. Together we can solve hunger. Visit <http://www.feedingamerica.org/>. Find us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/FeedingAmerica or follow us on Twitter at www.twitter.com/FeedingAmerica.