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**For Immediate Release**

## **NEW DATA SHOW HUNGRY KENTUCKIANS ACROSS THE COMMONWEALTH ARE INELIGIBLE FOR FEDERAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE**

***30% of Residents of Kentucky Who Are Food Insecure May Only Be Able to Turn to Charitable Food Programs for Help***

**BEREA, STATE – May 2, 2018** – The Kentucky Association of Food Banks announced the release of *Map the Meal Gap 2018*, 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 2018* reveals that food insecurity exists in every county in Kentucky. Additionally, 30% of residents of Kentucky who are food insecure are likely ineligible for federal nutrition assistance under current program requirements just as Congress looks at further restricting eligibility for these programs through the Farm Bill.

Overall food insecurity in Kentucky ranges from a low of 8% of the population in Oldham County up to 24% in Magoffin County.

The analysis also finds that in 18 counties across Kentucky, more than a third of people facing hunger are unable to participate in federal nutrition programs. In Oldham County, 63% of people struggling with hunger may not qualify for food assistance.

“The Map the Meal Gap study shows that there continues to be an appallingly large number of people who are facing hunger in Kentucky,” said Tamara Sandberg, Executive Director of the Kentucky Association of Food Banks. “It provides further evidence that the federal nutrition programs should be strengthened through the Farm Bill, not cut. We are committed to closing the meal gap in Kentucky.”

The Kentucky Association of Food Banks is comprised of seven Feeding America food banks that reach all 120 counties of Kentucky and serve an estimated 1 in 7 of all Kentuckians annually. Last year, its members distributed 63 million meals in partnership with more than 800 charitable feeding agencies such as pantries, soup kitchens, and shelters.

“The Feeding America nationwide network of food banks works hard to deliver more than 4 billion meals annually to people facing hunger, yet the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) serves 12 meals for every one meal provided through our network,” said Matt Knott, president of Feeding America. “As Congress debates legislation like the 2018 Farm Bill, programs like SNAP must be protected and strengthened so that people facing hunger and trying to make ends meet have the essential food resources they need.”

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*Map the Meal Gap 2018* 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 [The Howard G. Buffett Foundation](#), [Conagra Brands Foundation](#) and [Nielsen](#).

Key local findings:

- Food insecurity exists in every county in Kentucky.
- Children are at a higher risk of food insecurity; 19 percent of Kentucky's children are food-insecure. Five Kentucky counties have childhood food-insecurity rates of 30 percent or higher: Magoffin (34.9%); Wolfe (31.9%); Knott (30.6%); Clay (30.4%); Elliott (30.2%).
- The 5th Congressional District has the highest food insecurity rate of Kentucky's congressional districts, at 19.3 percent.
- The Food Budget Shortfall – the additional dollars food-insecure Kentuckians report needing to meet their food needs – was \$316,518,000.

The study's findings underscore the depth of need that remains in communities in Kentucky and across the U.S., despite national measures from the USDA that indicate overall improvement. Food insecurity is a measure defined by the USDA as lack of access, at times, to enough food for an active, healthy life for all household members.

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 2018*.

This is the eighth consecutive year that Feeding America has conducted the *Map the Meal Gap* study.

The *Map the Meal Gap 2018* [interactive map](#) allows policymakers, state agencies, corporate partners, food banks and individual advocates to develop integrated strategies to fight hunger on a community level.

A summary of the findings, an interactive map of the United States, and the full report are available at [map.feedingamerica.org](http://map.feedingamerica.org).

Join the conversation about *Map the Meal Gap 2018* on Twitter using [#MealGap](#).

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**About the Kentucky Association of Food Banks**

The Kentucky Association of Food Banks is comprised of seven Feeding America food banks that reach all 120 counties of Kentucky and serve an estimated 1 in 7 of all Kentuckians annually. Last year, its members distributed 63 million meals in partnership with more than 800 charitable feeding agencies such as pantries, soup kitchens, and shelters. For more information on how you can fight hunger in your community, visit [kyfoodbanks.org](http://kyfoodbanks.org).



### **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](http://www.facebook.com/FeedingAmerica) or follow us on Twitter at [www.twitter.com/FeedingAmerica](http://www.twitter.com/FeedingAmerica).

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