

Hunger Facts

The United States has one of the highest poverty rates among industrialized nations.

What do hunger and food insecurity mean in the United States?

USDA defines food insecurity by households that do not have adequate access to healthy food for an active, healthy lifestyle. Food insecurity with hunger means that families go without food for some days out of the month and in severe cases children go without food for one or more days a month. It is the lack of access to enough food to fully meet basic needs at all times due to lack of financial resources. Some people may find themselves skipping meals or cutting back on the quality or quantity of food they purchase at the stores. This recurring and involuntary lack of access to food can lead to malnutrition over time and other debilitating effects.

US Hunger and Poverty Stats

- In 2021, 37.9 million people (11.6%) were in poverty.
- In 2021, 20.9 million of people aged 18-64 (10.5%) were in poverty.
- In 2021, 11.1 million children under the age of 18 (15.3%) were in poverty.
- In 2021, 5.8 million (10.3%) seniors 65 and older were in poverty.
- The overall 2021 poverty rate according to the Supplemental Poverty Measure was 7.8%. Federal stimulus payments and the Child Tax Credit program had a significant, **but temporary**, impact on poverty rates during Covid.

Under the Supplemental Poverty Measure, there are more than 30 million people living in poverty.

NH does not measure hunger directly – hunger and food insecurity are measured by proxy utilizing poverty statistics.

In 2021,

- Over 97,000 people in NH lived below federal poverty line; 7.2% of NH households experience food insecurity – not knowing whether they will be able to access enough food throughout the year.
- The federal poverty income guideline for a family of four in 2021 was \$27,949.
- 10,400 people (6.7%) were living in poverty in Merrimack County in 2021.
 - **14% were children under the age of 18**
 - **6.9% were seniors**

Other facts:

- Majority of NH poor and food insecure work
- Competing basic human needs, food, shelter, clothing cannot be met with low wage jobs

This Hunger Facts summary reflects data and information collected during COVID-19.

Sources: US Department of Agriculture, US Census Bureau, Feeding America, Food Research and Action Center