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For Immediate Release

STUDY SHOWS CHILDREN IN NEBRASKA MORE LIKELY TO FACE HUNGER THAN OVERALL POPULATION ACROSS AMERICA

Child food insecurity rates in Nebraska are higher than overall food insecurity rates

Lincoln, Neb. (May 1, 2019)– Food Bank of Lincoln and Food Bank for the Heartland announced the release of *Map the Meal Gap 2019*, the latest report by Feeding America® on food insecurity and the cost of food at both the county and congressional district level. It is the only study that provides food insecurity data at the local level.

Map the Meal Gap 2019 reveals that food insecurity exists in every county in Nebraska. It also shows that children are more likely to be food insecure, with the child food insecurity rate at 17.4% compared to 11.6% for the overall population for Nebraska.

“There isn’t a single state or county in America free from child hunger, and it is within our collective power to change that and ensure that today’s children are tomorrow’s leaders,” said Claire Babineaux-Fontenot, chief executive officer of Feeding America. “The Feeding America nationwide network of food banks is investing in our nation’s future by helping to provide over 146 million meals to children every year. Still, *Map the Meal Gap* highlights that more must be done. Together food banks, corporations, policymakers, donors, volunteers and advocates can solve hunger.”

“I encourage everyone to visit the website, map.feedingamerica.org to find out what hunger looks like in their community and get involved to be part of the solution,” Babineaux-Fontenot continued. “One way is to tell Congress to invest in kids during Child Nutrition Reauthorization legislation and increase access to food for kids during the summer. Your voice matters and we can make a difference.”

Overall food insecurity in Nebraska ranges from a low of 5.1% of the population in Colfax County up to 18.9% in Thurston County.

“Feeding America’s *Map the Meal Gap* numbers continue to reveal a nutrition crisis for our state’s children and families. Nebraska’s Food Banks are feeding thousands of our kids, but along with our partners we remain committed to finding more solutions for more families and school communities. Working to make sure Nebraska’s kids are thriving is work we must all do,” said Scott Young, Food Bank of Lincoln executive director and Feeding America board member.

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The analysis also finds that 44% of residents in Nebraska who are food insecure are likely ineligible for federal nutrition assistance under current program requirements. This means that many households must rely even more on charitable food assistance such as programs offered by the Food Bank of Lincoln and Food Bank for the Heartland.

“While the number of food insecure Nebraskans has decreased, we still have thousands of children and families who struggle every day in our state,” said Brian Barks, president and CEO of Food Bank for the Heartland. “Food insecurity exists in every Nebraska county. Food Bank for the Heartland has been part of this community for 38 years, and we remain committed to working with Food Bank of Lincoln and our extraordinary supporters to provide meals to our neighbors in need especially those who are still reeling from the historic flooding in the Heartland. We will be here providing emergency and supplemental food throughout the lengthy cleanup and rebuilding process.”

Food Bank of Lincoln and Food Bank for the Heartland are members of Feeding America’s hunger-relief network comprised of 200 food banks and 60,000 food pantries and meal programs that together provides food assistance to more than 40 million people in the U.S. struggling with hunger.

Map the Meal Gap 2019 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](#).

The study’s findings underscore the extent of need that remains in Nebraska communities and across the U.S., despite national measures from the USDA that indicate overall improvement.

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 2019*.

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

The *Map the Meal Gap 2019* [interactive map](#) allows policymakers, state agencies, corporate partners, food banks and 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](#).

Join the conversation about *Map the Meal Gap 2019* on Twitter using [#MealGap](#).

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About Food Bank of Lincoln:

The Food Bank of Lincoln serves 16 counties with a mission to alleviate hunger in Southeast Nebraska. During FY 2018, the Food Bank of Lincoln served an average of 10,000 individuals per week, connecting neighbors to more than 10 million meals in collaboration with more than 140 partner school and community agencies. For more information, visit [www.LincolnFoodBank.org](#).

About Food Bank for the Heartland (a member of Feeding America):

Food Bank for the Heartland is a private 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization in Omaha, Nebraska that acts as a central clearinghouse distributing food to nearly 600 network partners across 77 counties in Nebraska and 16 counties in western Iowa. Food Bank for the Heartland distributed approximately 22 million meals in FY 2018 helping thousands of children, families, seniors, veterans, and others in need. For more information, visit [www.FoodBankHeartland.org](#).

About Feeding America

Feeding America® is the largest hunger-relief organization in the United States. Through a network of 200 food banks and 60,000 food pantries and meal programs, we provide meals to more than 46 million people each year. Feeding America also supports programs that prevent food waste and 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. Visit [www.feedingamerica.org](#), find us on [Facebook](#) or follow us on [Twitter](#).