



Brian Barks
Director of Development & Communications
Food Bank for the Heartland
10525 J Street Omaha, NE 68127
402.331.1213
FoodBankHeartland.org
BBarks@FoodBankHeartland.org



Michaella Kumke
Communications Director
Food Bank of Lincoln
4840 Doris Bair Circle, Ste. A Lincoln, NE 68529
402.466.8170, ext. 108
LincolnFoodBank.org
MKumke@LincolnFoodBank.org

News Release

HUNGER REMAINS PREVALENT IN NEBRASKA

Food Bank for the Heartland and Food Bank of Lincoln Committed to Helping

Omaha, Neb. (April 14, 2015) – Nebraska families continue to struggle with hunger, according to new data released today by Feeding America. The report concludes approximately 246,960 individuals across the state of Nebraska, or 13.2 percent of the population, are food insecure; included in that total are 97,080 children.

Food Bank for the Heartland and Food Bank of Lincoln are part of the Feeding America network, the nation's leading domestic hunger-relief organization that issued the findings in its "Map the Meal Gap" study. The study estimates the rate of food insecurity for both the general population and for children under the age of 18. Food insecurity means those affected do not know when or from where their next meal will come. The estimates are calculated at both the county and congressional-district level for the entire U.S.

Across the Food Bank of Lincoln's 16-county service area, one-third of the 60,350 people defined as food insecure are children. "All the research we see indicates ongoing increases in kids and families living with food insecurity," said Food Bank of Lincoln Executive Director Scott Young. "Reversing these trends will require holistic solutions, which the state's food banks are pursuing, while continuing to try and grow our food distribution systems," Young added.

Despite extensive work by Food Bank for the Heartland and Food Bank of Lincoln, the total number of food insecure people in the area has remained the same. Last year's "Map the Meal Gap" study found 248,100 people in Nebraska, or 13.4 percent of the population, to be food insecure. The local trend is similar what is being seen at the national level, according to the research. According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, more than 50 million people nationwide are food insecure.

"While the economy may be in recovery mode, far too many hard working Nebraskans are being left behind," said Susan Ogborn, president & CEO of Food Bank for the Heartland. "We cannot let stand the fact nearly 250,000 of our friends and neighbors along with one in five children know what it's like to be hungry."

This is the fifth year that Feeding America has conducted the "Map the Meal Gap" study. The findings of "Map the Meal Gap" are based on statistics collected by the U.S. Census Bureau and the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics; food price data and analysis were provided by Nielsen, a global information and measurement company providing insights into what consumers watch and buy. The study was generously supported by the Howard G. Buffett Foundation, Nielsen and The ConAgra Foods Foundation.

Map the Meal Gap 2013 county-level child food insecurity data and general population food insecurity data for Nebraska can be found at www.FeedingAmerica.org/MapTheGap.

About Food Bank of Lincoln:

Since 1982, the mission of Food Bank of Lincoln has been to alleviate hunger in Southeast Nebraska. Last year, the Food Bank of Lincoln distributed more than six million meals to more than 56,000 food insecure children, families and seniors. 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 that acts as a central clearinghouse through which the food industry and community may donate surplus food to feed hungry individuals, families and children. Food is distributed to more than 225 member agencies in 77 counties in Nebraska and 16 counties in western Iowa. Food Bank for the Heartland distributed 15.5 million pounds of product in 2014 and served over 250,000 different people in need in the heartland. For more information, visit www.FoodBankHeartland.org.

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