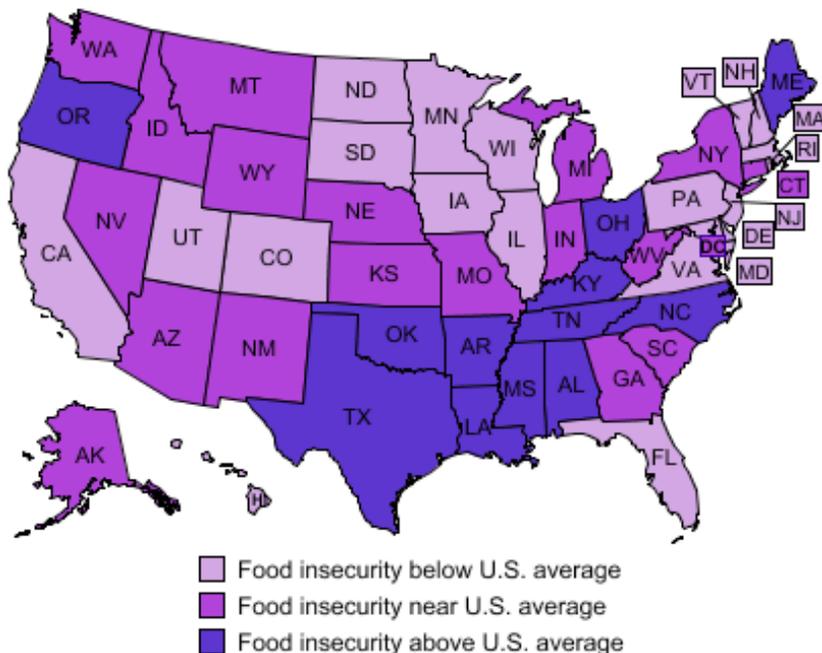


Hunger and Food Assistance in Maine

6 out of 10 SNAP participants in Maine are families with children struggling with hunger.

The rate of hunger in Maine is **increasing** at a time when the rate of hunger is **decreasing** in the rest of the country.¹

Prevalence of food insecurity, average 2013-15



Source: Calculated by ERS, USDA, using data from the December 2013, 2014, and 2015 Current Population Survey Food Security Supplements.

- ✓ Maine has the **3rd highest rate** of "very low food security" in the country. **Only Mississippi and Louisiana are doing worse** than we are when it comes to hunger.
- ✓ **48% of Maine schoolchildren** are **eligible** for **free** or **reduced lunch** because of low family income.³ Despite participation in the free/reduced lunch program, too many Maine families have ongoing concerns about whether they will be able to feed their children.
- ✓ **Maine seniors 60 and older suffer the 13th highest rate of food insecurity in the nation**, with nearly **17 percent**⁵ experiencing the threat of hunger, compared with the 15.75 percent national average.

Investing in food assistance to ensure that Maine families have enough food to eat so they can be healthy is an investment in people and communities that is well worth it.

Policy decisions that result in more people going hungry have taken our state in the wrong direction and it's time to address these troubling trends. With the rising costs of

essentials, like housing, food and heat, too many Maine families do not have the means to stretch their income to cover their basic needs.

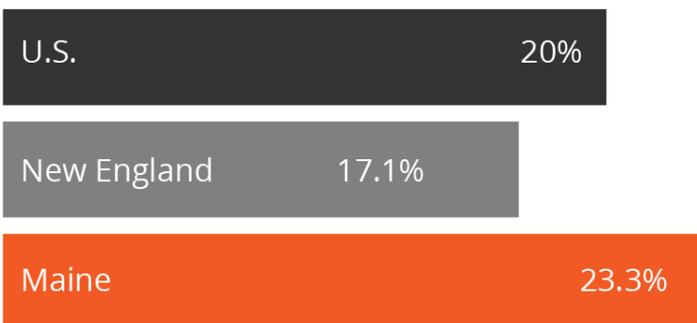
Food Assistance: Maine's strongest anti-hunger strategy is helping fewer Mainers

- ✓ Food Assistance (SNAP) has served as the **first line of defense against hunger for 40 years**. Food Assistance can only be used to pay for food products and not for non-food goods like toothpaste or toiletries.
- ✓ The **federal government**, through the Department of Agriculture, **pays for the entire cost of the food benefits themselves delivered to eligible households**. The administrative costs for SNAP are split equally between the state and federal government.
- ✓ The **average SNAP benefit per person per meal: \$1.25** – this is **not enough** to fully provide for peoples' nutritional needs, but acts as a critical support when it comes to putting some food on the table.
- ✓ SNAP guards against hunger and its consequences and works to **lift families out of poverty**.
- ✓ **SNAP kept 47,000 people out of poverty in Maine, including 16,000 children, per year between 2009 and 2012, on average.**
- ✓ Despite **strong evidence of SNAP's benefits**, over the last 5 years the Administration has acted to **cut off food assistance for 42,600 Mainers** who needed it, pushing people into deeper poverty and causing more Mainers to go hungry.

What is "food insecurity"?

Food insecure families **completely run out of food**, skip meals, or constantly worry about how they will put food on the table.

Children with food insecurity:



FACT: **6 out of 10** SNAP participants in Maine (63%) are in **families with children**.⁶

FACT: **4 out of 10** SNAP participants in Maine (43%) are in **families with members who are elderly or have disabilities**.⁷

FACT: **14 percent of Maine seniors** experience food insecurity.⁴

Ensuring that Maine families have **enough to eat** is an **investment** in the wellbeing of Maine families, children, older Mainers, and our communities.

¹<https://www.ers.usda.gov/webdocs/publications/79761/err-215.pdf?v=42636>; https://www.ers.usda.gov/webdocs/publications/45020/30967_err141.pdf?v=41165

Coleman-Jensen, A. "U.S. Food Insecurity Status: Toward a Refined Definition." Social Indicators Research, Vol. 95, No. 2, January 2010

²USDA Economic Research Service, Maine: <https://www.ers.usda.gov/data-products/state-fact-sheets.aspx>

³<http://mekids.org/assets/files/databooks/2017/2017MEKidsCount.pdf> page 15

⁴National Foundation to End Senior Hunger

⁵<http://www.nfesh.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/State-of-Senior-Hunger-in-America-2014.pdf>

⁶CBPP analysis of data from USDA Food and Nutrition Service, FY 2015

⁷Id.

⁸CBPP analysis of FY 2015 USDA SNAP Household Characteristics data

⁹<https://www.fns.usda.gov/pd/supplemental-nutrition-assistance-program-snap>