Human Flourishing

Hunger & Poverty: What It Is, Why It Matters, and What You Can Do

THE ISSUE

Food insecurity is the lack of consistent access to nutritious food. It can mean uncertainty about where the next meal will come from, leading to skipping meals altogether.

Several factors can contribute to food insecurity including income, health-related problems, cost of living, and access to resources within a community.

To help address food insecurity, the federal government began the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), which provides eligible individuals and families with financial assistance to buy food.

HOW IT IMPACTS TEXANS

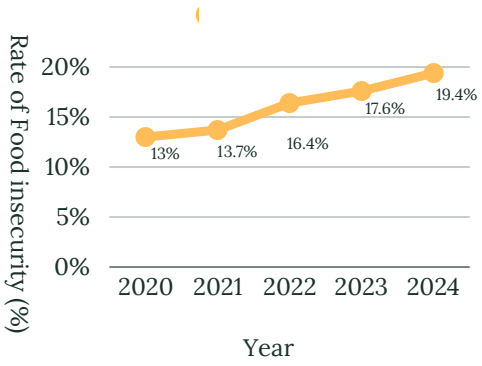
In Texas, nearly 6 million people experience food insecurity with children and older adults enduring the highest rates.

Food insecurity can negatively impact emotional, physical, and intellectual health, particularly among children making it difficult for them to concentrate, which may increase the risk of social and behavioral challenges.

Vulnerable Texans need support to help close the gap and ensure they have consistent access to nutritious food.

Food Insecurity Among Texans: A Five-Year Look

2020-2024



3.7 million food insecure Texans in 2020 → 6 million food insecure Texans in 2024

(Feeding Texas 2026)

QUICK FACTS

Texas has the highest rate of senior food insecurity in the nation, with 1 in 7 seniors at risk of hunger.

(Feeding Texas 2026)

Nearly 2 million children in Texas experience food insecurity.

(Feeding Texas 2026)

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A CLOSER LOOK

The problem is too big for churches and private charity to handle alone. For every dollar a private charity (like a church) provided in food assistance, federal nutrition benefits provided twenty. For example, in 2013, federal nutritional assistance totaled $102.5 billion compared to $5.2 billion provided by private charities to combat hunger. Churches can help fill the gaps by serving those at risk for hunger because their income exceeds federal program eligibility.

WHY CHRISTIANS CARE

"For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me.' Then the righteous will answer him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? And when did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? And when did we see you sick or in prison and visit you?' And the King will answer them, 'Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me.'"
Matthew 25:35-40, ESV

"By this we know love, that he laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers. But if anyone has the world's goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God's love abide in him? Little children, let us not love in word or talk but in deed and in truth."
1 John 3:16-18, ESV

Scripture calls God's people to care for the hungry and the vulnerable.

TAKE ACTION

1. **Learn** how current policies affect Texans. For more information on hunger rates in Texas, visit www.feedingtexas.org.
2. **Pray** for wisdom and compassion for the leaders and communities affected by this issue.
3. **Participate** in the process. Work with the CLC by speaking to your elected official about protecting and strengthening existing nutrition programs like SNAP. Texas officials should improve access to these programs, especially for vulnerable Texans. Share this guide with someone in your church.
4. **Give to The Texas Baptist Hunger Offering** grants 100% of its collections to hunger relief projects and initiatives. For more information, contact hungeroffering@txb.org

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