

Hunger in New Mexico

LHHS Presentation – October 3, 2013

Lutheran Advocacy Ministry - NM

New Mexico Association of Food Banks

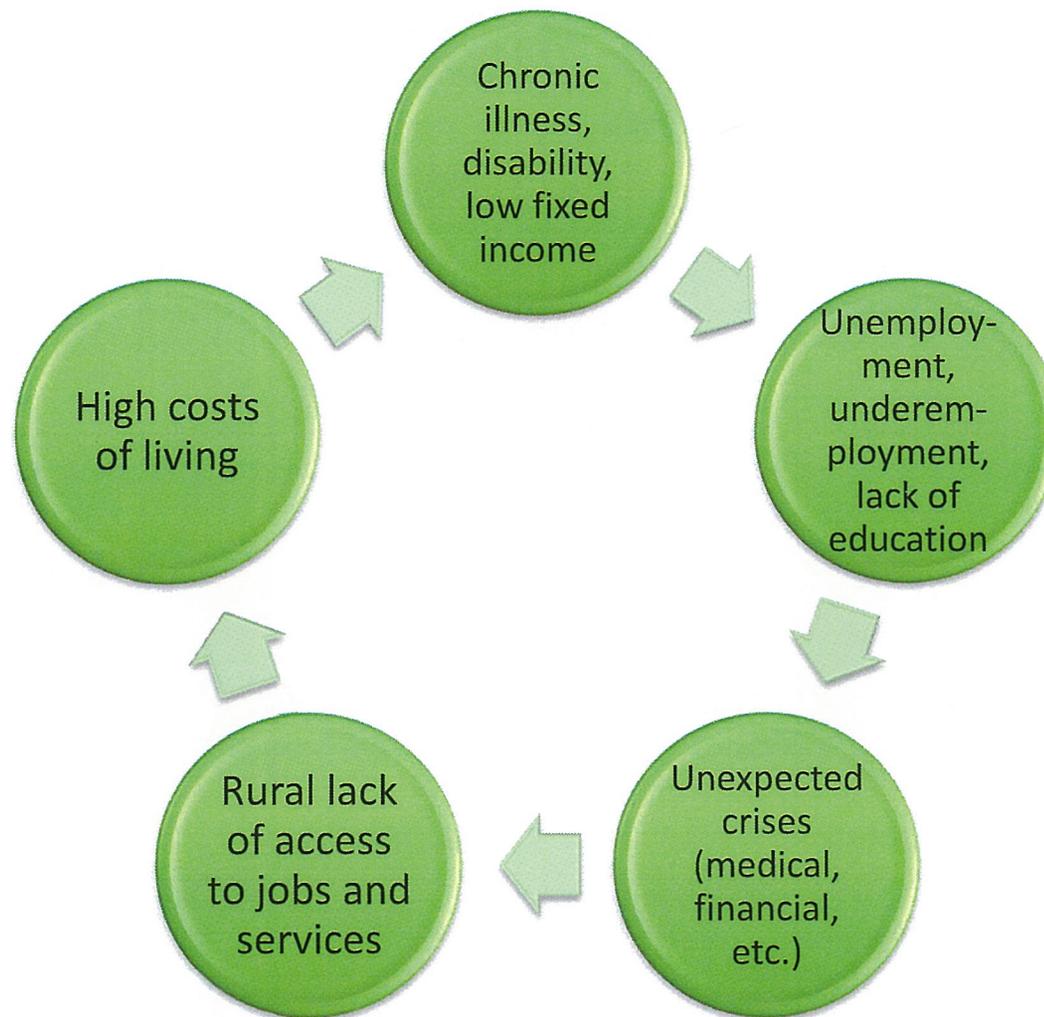
Since 1995, the USDA has been required by law to release an annual report about food insecurity.

In 2006, the descriptions of categories were revised to better describe food insecurity. Together, these 2 categories measure food insecurity—

- **Low Food Security:** People who have had to make changes in the quality or quantity of their food in order to deal with a limited budget
- **Very Low Food Security:** People who have struggled with not having enough food for the household, including cutting back or skipping meals on a frequent basis for both adults and children.

Note * While the word hunger has been removed from the descriptions used in these surveys, it should not be interpreted to mean that there has been a major shift in the incidence of hunger.

Why New Mexicans are Hungry...



Poverty – New Mexico vs. US

Total NM

▶ 21.5%

Total US

15.0%

NM Children

▶ 30.7%

US Children

21.9%

NM Seniors

▶ 15.0%

US Seniors

8.7%

Note *Poverty levels for a family of 3: \$19,090 (100%)-\$24,817 (130%)-
\$35,317 (185%)

Food Insecurity in New Mexico vs. US

Total NM

▶ 20.1%

NM Children

▶ 30.6%

NM Seniors

▶ 21.0%

Total US

16.4%

US Children

22.4%

US Seniors

8.4%

The face of hunger in New Mexico -

- ▶ Every week, nearly **40,000** New Mexicans seek food assistance. That's the equivalent of a city the size of Farmington needing emergency assistance four times every month.
- ▶ 40% of the members of households seeking food assistance are children under the age of 18. 7% of those children are under the age of 5.
- ▶ 13% of the people seeking food assistance in New Mexico are senior citizens.
- ▶ 41% of households needing food assistance report having at least one member in poor health.
- ▶ 70% of food pantry programs in New Mexico rely entirely on volunteers.
- ▶ The average monthly income for a household seeking food assistance is \$900/month.

Map the Meal - 2011

2011 FOOD INSECURITY & FOOD COST IN THE US

New Mexico



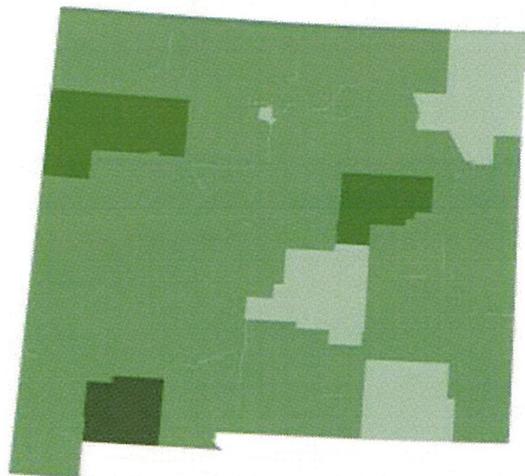
FOOD INSECURITY RATE



INCOME BANDS WITHIN FOOD INSECURE POPULATION

CHARITABLE RESPONSE	24%	Above 185% Poverty
REDUCED PRICE SCHOOL MEALS, WIC	7%	165% to 185% Poverty
SNAP, FREE SCHOOL MEALS, CSFP (SENIORS)	68%	Below 165% Poverty

AVERAGE COST OF A MEAL



TOP counties with the highest food insecurity rates

- Luna
- Mc Kinley
- Guadalupe
- Torrance
- Cibola

Food Insecurity Rates



Hunger exists in every corner of the United States, but as Feeding America's Map the Meal Gap study shows, food insecurity looks different from one county to the next. In addition to providing data about the prevalence of food insecurity at the local level, Map the Meal Gap estimates the share of food insecure individuals who are income-eligible for federal anti-hunger programs and provides local variations in food costs. The study finds that many food insecure individuals do not qualify for federal nutrition programs and must rely on charitable food assistance, suggesting that complementary programs and strategies are necessary to reach food insecure individuals at different income levels. By providing information about hunger at the local level, Map the Meal Gap can help policymakers and service providers identify strategies to best reach those in need of assistance.



Visit feedingamerica.org/mapthegap for more information.
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*Due to rounding, totals range from 99-101%

Map the Meal Data

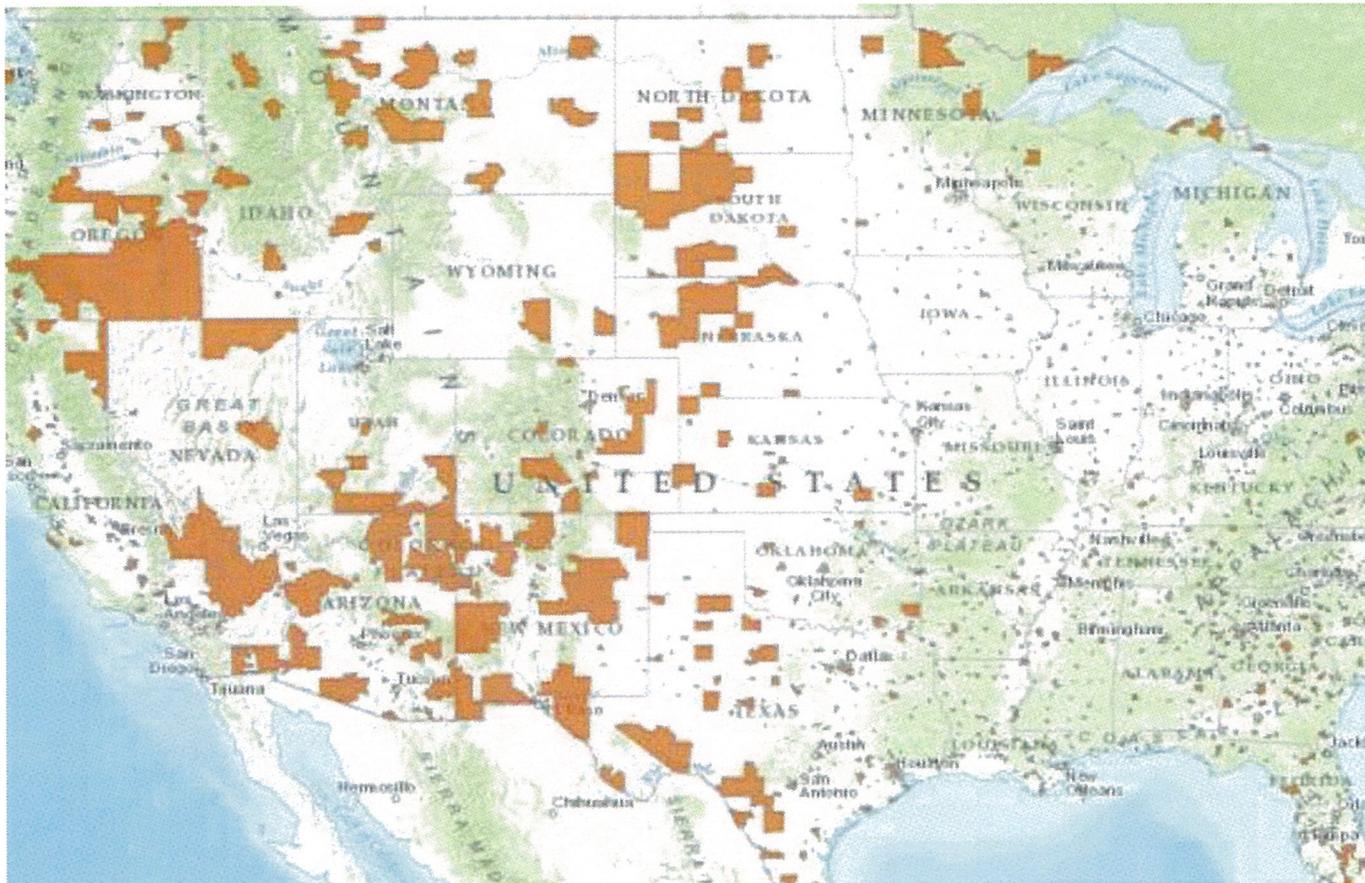
For additional information, including Map the Meal data by congressional district or county, please contact Kathy Komoll, New Mexico Association of Food Banks.

505-217-1066
nmafb@aol.com

What are food deserts?

- Accessibility to sources of healthy food, as measured by distance to a store or by the number of stores in an area.
- Individual-level resources that may affect accessibility, such as family income or vehicle availability.
- Neighborhood-level indicators of resources, such as the average income of the neighborhood and the availability of public transportation.
- Many areas of New Mexico are food deserts:
 - Economic Research Service (ERS), U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). Food Access Research Atlas, <http://www.ers.usda.gov/data-products/food-access-research-atlas.aspx>.

Food Deserts in New Mexico -



What programs exist now?

- ▶ SNAP – Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program
- ▶ TEFAP – The Emergency Food Assistance Program
- ▶ Federal/state school breakfast/lunch programs
- ▶ WIC – food assistance for mothers with children
- ▶ Child and Adult Care Food Program
- ▶ Commodity Supplemental Food Program
- ▶ FDPIR – Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations
- ▶ Summer meal programs (private sector, CYFD/PED)
- ▶ Senior programs – state SNAP supplement, congregate meals, home delivered meals
- ▶ Homeless shelters
- ▶ Food Banks – statewide network of more than 400 agencies

Examples of program eligibility/service (full spreadsheet included in handout) -

Program	Administering Agency/Funding Source	Eligibility	Current Served
SNAP	HSD/USDA	165% of poverty to apply; 100% poverty or below to receive benefits	443,784 individuals in June 2013 (197,621 were children)
TEFAP	HSD/USDA	185% of poverty	43,643 per month January 2012-December 2012
CSFP	100% Federal Funds	185% of poverty (WIC); 130% of poverty (Seniors)	16,428 seniors (60+) and women and children (up to age 6)
School Breakfast	USDA/PED	Free (130% of poverty); Reduced (185% of poverty)	888 schools

And yet,

- ▶ with all these private and public programs, New Mexico still has one of the highest rates of hunger in the country.....

What can be done to reduce hunger in New Mexico?

- ▶ Increase state SNAP supplement so the elderly and people with disabilities receive additional monthly SNAP benefits
- ▶ Advocate to protect SNAP from cuts
- ▶ Increase state funding for the Fresh Produce Initiative
- ▶ Increase the minimum wage
- ▶ Encourage economic development that provides well paying jobs

Actions (continued)

- ▶ Enact stronger enforcement of the wage theft law
- ▶ Fund the Individual Development Account program to help low-income families build their financial assets
- ▶ Improve public transportation
- ▶ Implement effective early childhood education
- ▶ Increase Medicaid outreach and facilitate enrollment
- ▶ Increase access to Adult Basic Education, job training and ESL classes

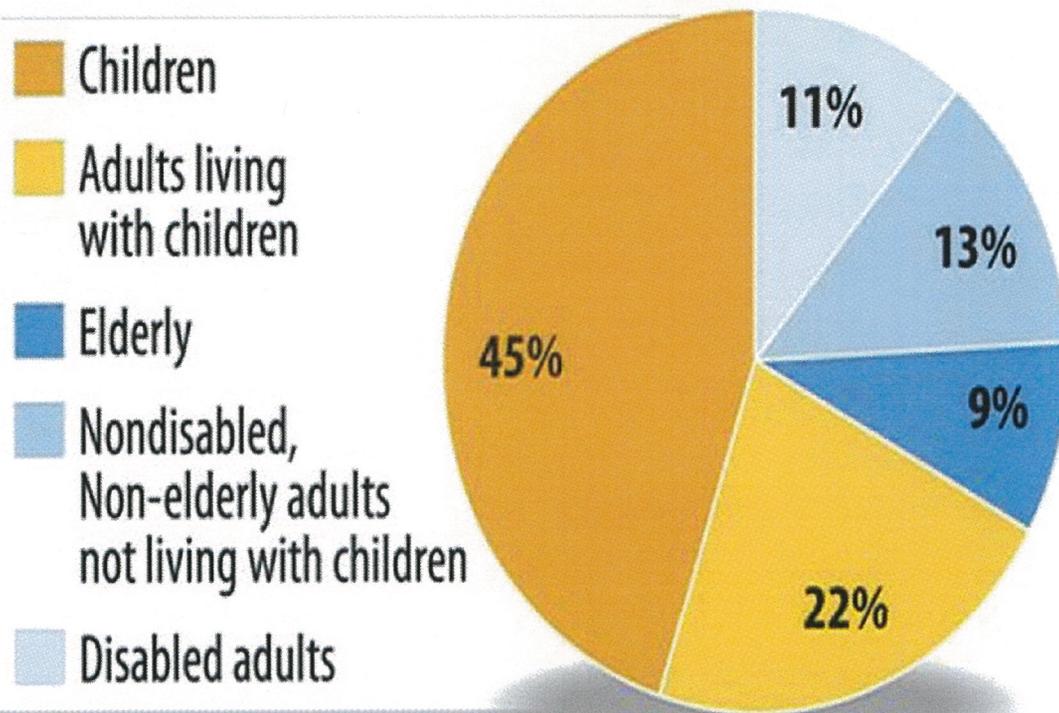
Actions (continued)

- ▶ Increase availability of affordable housing by funding the State Housing Trust Fund and permanent supportive housing services
- ▶ Fund state child care assistance at 200% of the poverty line
- ▶ Increase Working Families Tax Credit (at least 5%)
- ▶ Increase the Low Income Comprehensive Tax Rebate
- ▶ Visit a mobile or other food pantry in your district

Every week, 40,000 New Mexicans are faced with the uncertainty of not knowing where their next meal is coming from. The challenge of meeting that need is more than the private sector can handle. The public and private sector must continue to work together to create solutions and build systems that put food on **every table.**

Additional Information

Who currently receives SNAP?



Facts about SNAP -

- ▶ **33% of SNAP participants are children, elderly or disabled, people one would not expect to work. The majority of able-bodied adult SNAP participants are working or trying to work.**
- ▶ **SNAP program structure provides a strong incentive to work. SNAP program rules place strict time limits on those who are not working.**
- ▶ **The House nutrition-only farm bill would eliminate waivers that allow states to provide food assistance when jobs are scarce, shifting burden to charities and state and local governments at a time of high unemployment and historic need.**

Facts about SNAP (cont.)

- ▶ While we can all agree that jobs are the best solution to hunger and poverty, jobs remain elusive for many low income families.
- ▶ The SNAP cuts proposed in the House farm bill would lead to 15 billion lost meals for low-income families.
- ▶ Congress should reject cuts to SNAP. SNAP participation and spending will go down as the economy recovers, without the need to cut food assistance for low-income people.

(For additional information on these points, please refer to SNAP Program Overview, SNAP Facts Myths and Realities, and SNAP and Work Talking Points in your resource guide.)

Research on Hunger in New Mexico

Map the Meal Gap:

- ▶ Uses Census data from the Current Population Survey (CPS) in which people are actually surveyed about whether they ran out of food and how much more money they needed to meet their household food needs
- ▶ CPS Data used to arrive at weekly budget shortfalls
- ▶ Localized (county level) average meal costs calculated from data provided by Nielsen which collects data about all food items scanned in the country in 26 different food categories by age and gender of purchaser
- ▶ Food Insecurity determined by complex formula which takes into account poverty, unemployment, median income, home ownership, ethnicity and affirmative answers to certain questions on the CPS
- ▶ All Feeding America research accompanied by technical briefs that explain methodology and sources of data (see sample attached)

Hunger Research (continued)

Hunger Study:

- ▶ Conducted nationwide every four years by virtually all Feeding America food banks in the United States
- ▶ Food banks collect data according to a strict data collection protocol dictated by the national research firm contracted by Feeding America for the purpose
- ▶ Research firm for data we use now was Mathematica Policy Research
- ▶ One part of the study involved collection detailed surveys from virtually every emergency food provider (food pantries, shelters and soup kitchens) in the United States; 37,000 surveys were collected in 2009
- ▶ The second part of the study is random interviews of clients at randomly selected emergency food sites; in 2009 62,000 random, anonymous client interviews were obtained in the U.S.
- ▶ Data collection for 2013 has been completed working with research firm Westat; results will be released in the spring of 2014 (looks like it will be May)

Notes: