Maryland Hunger Solutions

Ending hunger and promoting well-being

Addressing Food Insecurity in Maryland with Maryland Hunger Solutions

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Who We Are

- Founded in 2007 by the Food Research & Action Center (FRAC)
- Work to **end hunger** and **improve the nutrition, health, and well-being** of individuals, children and families in Maryland

What We Do

- Provide education
- Advocate for state and local public policies
- Conduct outreach, training, technical assistance, and support

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What is Food Insecurity?

- Without reliable access to the affordable and nutritious food needed to live a healthy and active life
- Usually measured at the household level
- Food insecurity ≠ Hunger

Are the following statements often, sometimes, or never true for (you/your household) in the last 12 months?

- I worried whether our food would run out before I got money to buy more.
- The food that I bought just didn’t last, and I didn’t have money to get more.
- I couldn’t afford to eat balanced meals.

In the last 12 months, did you or other adults in your household:

- Ever cut the size of your meals or skip meals because there wasn't enough money for food?
- Ever eat less than you felt you should because there wasn't enough money for food?
- Not eat when you were hungry because there wasn't enough money for food?

Why is there Food Insecurity?

Food security requires that food is:

- **Available**
- **Accessible**
  - Physically
  - Economically ($$)
- **Adequate**

More than an adequate amount of food in Maryland, but isn't always accessible to everyone.

Barriers to food access can include:

- Poverty
- Availability of grocery stores
- Transportation
- High cost of living
- Housing costs/availability
- Policies rooted in systemic racism
- Health and access to healthcare
- Disability
- Unemployment/low wages
- Childcare costs/availability

Food Insecurity in Maryland

- Maryland is a wealthy state but approximately 1 in 10 Marylanders living in poverty.
- As many as 1 in 3 experience varying levels of food insecurity
- With as many as 1 in 6 being children

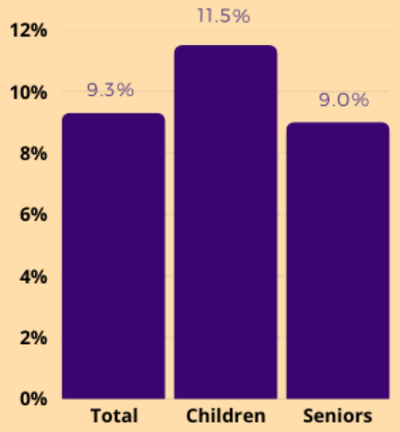
MARYLAND STATE

Population (2023)	
Total:	6,170,738
Children (under 18):	1,375,936
Seniors (over 65):	1,003,219

Median Household Income (2023)

$101,652

Percent of the Population Living Below Poverty Level (2023)



School Meal Programs

Student Enrollment (SY 2023-2024)[8]

Total Enrollment	Free and Reduced-Price* Meals Enrollment	Free and Reduced-Price* Percentage
893,241	500,155	55.99%

*All MD students enrolled to receive reduced-price meals receive meals for free.

Meal Participation (SY 2023-2024)[13, 14, 15]

Program	Total Meals Served	Average Daily Participation
School Breakfast	40,959,437	230,050
School Lunch	69,496,685	417,679
Summer Meals*	2,996,681	140,581

*Meals served through the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP).

Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) (SY 2023-2024)[8]

Total # of Schools	# of CEP Eligible Schools	# of School Participating in CEP
1,403	1,044	650

*Eligibility is determined on an individual school basis and does not include schools that could be or are made eligible through groupings.

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)[7]

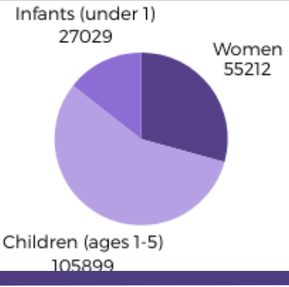
692,966 average participants/month*

*This number presents an average of monthly participation from July 2023-June 2024.

Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) (2023 SFY)[9]

74.79% of eligible people enrolled

188,140 total WIC participants



Consequences of Food Insecurity

- 57% more **upper respiratory infections** among ages 1-5
- 3 times more frequent **stomachaches** among ages 4-5
- 2½ times more frequent **headaches** among ages 4-5 years
- 30% more likely to be **hospitalized** among ages birth to 3
- Teenagers are 5 times more likely to have attempted **suicide**
- More likely to experience **depression** and **anxiety**
- 74% more likely to exhibit **disruptive behaviors** and have difficulty getting along with others (ages 6-16)
- 90% more likely to be in **“fair”** to **“poor” health** vs. “good” or “excellent” health among ages birth to 3
- Adults more likely to experience chronic diseases (diabetes, hypertension, kidney disease, osteoporosis)

*References included in slides 15-16

Maryland Hunger Solutions' Work:

Outreach:

- Tollfree SNAP application assistance

Education and Awareness:

- SNAP Trainings
- Technical Assistance
- Awareness campaigns

Advocacy:

- MD General Assembly
- Legislative Brainstorming Session
- Federal conversations

Coalitions and Partnerships

Federal Nutrition Programs

- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)
- Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)

School Meals:

- School Breakfast Program
- National School Lunch Program

Out-of-School Time:

- At-risk afterschool snack and supper
- Summer Food Service Program
- Summer EBT (Sun Bucks)

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Challenges and Barriers

- Barriers to Access
  - Stigma
  - Benefit adequacy (household of one could receive as little as $23/month)
  - Language access
  - Processes such as redetermination paperwork, in-person interviews, etc.
  - Lengthy applications
  - Cost (school meals), etc.

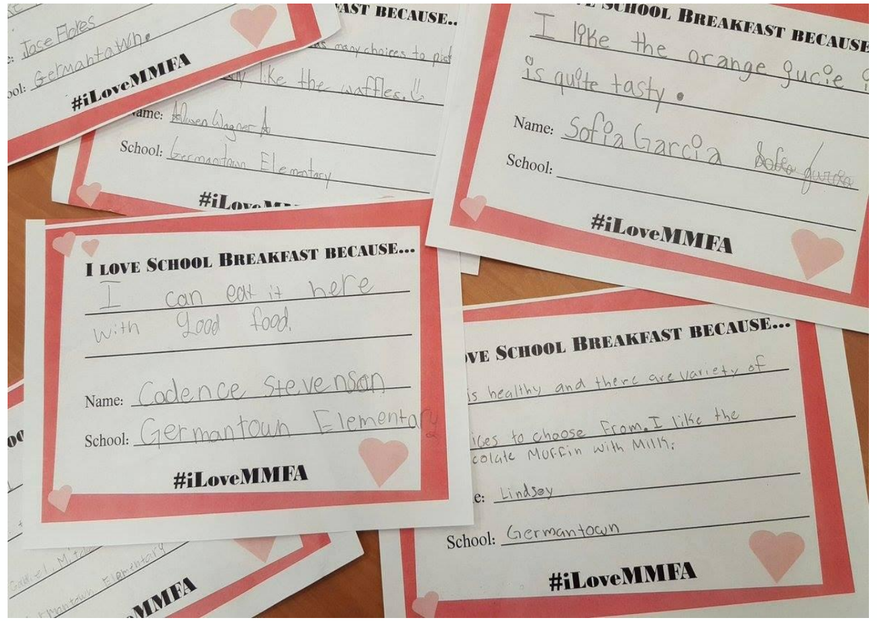
- Policy Challenges
  - Federal program cuts
  - State budget

Outreach and Education

- **SNAP Application Assistance – tollfree number**

- **Paper Apple Campaign and MMFA Day**
  - Send templates to schools
  - Have students share why they love school breakfast
  - Collect and share with legislators

- **Hear the Maryland Crunch!**
  - Social media campaign held during NSBW
  - Share photo or video crunching into an apple with #HearTheCrunch
  - Add messaging around current legislative priority(MMFA funding, HSMFA, etc.)



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Advocacy: Policy Solutions

- **MD Market Money** – Provides matching dollars to SNAP users at farmers markets
- **Restaurant Meals Program** – Allows for older adults, disabled persons, and people who are unhoused to use their benefits at participating restaurants
- **Supplemental Benefit** – MD provides an increased minimum benefit to those 62+ ($23 federal minimum to $40 state minimum)
- **Maryland Meals for Achievement** – Funds free school breakfast after the bell in high poverty schools
- **Hunger-Free Schools Act** – Allowed more eligible schools to provide school meals for free through the Community Eligibility Provision
- **Maryland Cares for Kids Act** – Provided free school meals for over 52,000 students by eliminating the reduced-price copay
- **Healthy School Meals for All** – ongoing campaign

Partnerships and Coalitions

- Maryland Food System Resiliency Council (FSRC)
- Local Food Councils
  - Montgomery County Food Council
  - Prince George's County Food Equity Council
  - Baltimore City Food PAC
  - Newer and developing food councils: Anne Arundel County, Baltimore County, Eastern Shore
- State Agencies (MSDE, DHS, MDH)
- Schools and Higher Education Campuses
- Food Banks and charitable sector
- Legislators
- Researchers
- Anti-poverty partners

Recap:

When Marylanders have access to the resources and support they need to thrive, it promotes better health and wellbeing as well as ensures a brighter future for them and their families.

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Connect With Us!

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Sources:

FRAC Resources:

- The Connections Between Food Insecurity, the Federal Nutrition Programs, and Student Behavior
- The Impact of Poverty, Food Insecurity, and Poor Nutrition on Health and Well-Being

- 57% more **upper respiratory infections** among ages 1-5; More frequent **stomachaches** and **headaches** among ages 4-5 years; and 30% more likely to be **hospitalized** among ages birth to 3
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- Teenagers are 5 times more likely to have attempted **suicide**
  - Alaimo, K., Olson, C. M., & Frongillo, E. A. (2002). Family food insufficiency, but not low family income, is positively associated with dysthymia and suicide symptoms in adolescents. *The Journal of nutrition, 132*(4), 719–725. https://doi.org/10.1093/jn/132.4.719
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