

HUNGRY IN MONTANA

Factors Contributing to Emergency Food Needs



2016 REPORT SUMMARY

Hungry in Montana 2016 is the Montana Food Bank Network's seventh report on the prevalence of hunger in Montana. The study is conducted every other year to identify and examine the underlying reasons for the persistence of hunger in our state and to illustrate the impact of hunger on the daily lives of the families we serve. The findings are based on in-depth surveys conducted with 252 food pantry clients across Montana. We hope the data in this report will improve awareness and understanding of the issue of hunger, demonstrate the tremendous importance of both public and private food programs, and inspire communities and policy makers to make ending hunger a priority.

FACTORS IMPACTING HUNGER

72%

Households living below poverty

53%

Delayed medical care because unable to afford

44%

Households with employment

27%

More than one family living together

PUBLIC FOOD & NUTRITION PROGRAMS



57%

of households were receiving SNAP or FDPIR



45%

of those not participating in SNAP did not know they may be eligible

72%

of households with school-age children were participating in Free or Reduced Price School Breakfast and Lunch

60%

of households with children under age five or a pregnant household member were participating in WIC

20%

of households with children were participating in the Summer Food Service Program



COPING WITH FOOD INSECURITY



51%

Adults skip meals or cut portions due to lack of food



51%

Households had to pay for other necessities over food

Number of Visits to the Food Pantry in the Last Year

	First Time Clients	1-6 Visits	7-12 Visits	More than 12 Visits
Non-Senior Households	10%	48%	40%	3%
Households with a Senior	4%	22%	64%	10%

CHALLENGES ACCESSING NUTRITIOUS FOOD

64% responded that an overall lack of money for food is the biggest challenge to accessing a healthy diet

78% felt that healthy options are more expensive and harder to afford than less nutritious foods

32% have a difficult time getting to the grocery store because of distance, gas costs, or lack of a vehicle

TAKE ACTION

Advocate: Talk to Montana's elected officials about hunger. Urge them to strengthen household economic security by increasing access to education and job training opportunities, encouraging job growth, improving wages, strengthening SNAP and other public assistance programs, and by increasing access to affordable housing, health care and child care.

Community Engagement: Increase awareness of the prevalence of hunger and its impact on our state. Ensure resources such as the Summer Food Service Program and Backpack exist in your community. Support programs to connect low-income families to local foods such as community gardens, double SNAP incentives, and CSAs. Strengthen charitable food distribution. Advocate for policies that bring sustainable, long-term solutions to hunger and poverty.

Health Community: Screen patients for food insecurity, provide on-site gardens and food pantries, talk to lawmakers about the connections between hunger and health.

Business Community: Support wages and benefits that allow families to meet basic needs. Sponsor a Backpack program or donate supplies to a local Summer Food Service Program. Talk to lawmakers about the need for strong anti-hunger initiatives that support our economy and strengthen our workforce.

The complete *Hungry in Montana* 2016 report is available online at www.mfbn.org/research or contact the Montana Food Bank Network at 406-721-3825

