



Michaella Kumke
Communications Director
Food Bank of Lincoln
4840 Doris Bair Circle, Ste. A Lincoln, NE 68504
402.466.8170, ext. 108
LincolnFoodBank.org
MKumke@LincolnFoodBank.org



Brian Barks
Director of Philanthropy
Food Bank for the Heartland
10525 J Street Omaha, NE 68127
402.331.1213
FoodBankHeartland.org
BBarks@FoodBankHeartland.org

For Immediate Release

NEW DATA SHOWS HUNGRY AMERICANS, INCLUDING MANY NEBRASKANS, ARE INELIGIBLE FOR FEDERAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE

44% of Nebraskans Who Are Food Insecure May Only Be Able to Turn to Charitable Food Programs for Help

Lincoln, Neb. (May 3, 2018)—Food Bank of Lincoln and Food Bank for the Heartland announced the release of *Map the Meal Gap 2018*, the latest report by Feeding America® on food insecurity and the cost of food at both the county and congressional district level. *Map the Meal Gap 2018* reveals that food insecurity exists in every county in Nebraska. Additionally, 44% of Nebraskans who are food insecure are likely ineligible for federal nutrition assistance under current program requirements just as Congress looks at further restricting eligibility for these programs through the Farm Bill.

Overall food insecurity in Nebraska ranges from a low of 5.1% in Colfax County up to 14% in McPherson County. According to the new data, an estimated 227,350 Nebraskans are food insecure; including 82,070 are children under the age of 18. The overall total has decreased slightly from 233,350 since last year's report.

“While the number of food insecure Nebraskans has gone down, we still have thousands of children, families, seniors and veterans who struggle every day in our state,” said Susan Ogborn, president and CEO of Food Bank for the Heartland. “Food insecurity exists in every Nebraska county. We remain committed to working with Food Bank of Lincoln and our community of supporters to help our neighbors in need.”

The analysis also finds that in 14 counties across Nebraska, half or more of the people facing hunger are unable to participate in federal nutrition programs. In Washington County 59% of people struggling with hunger may not qualify for food assistance.

“Nebraska’s two Food Banks remain committed to helping our neighbors in partnership with the Federal government, and the State of Nebraska,” said Scott Young, Food Bank of Lincoln Executive Director and Feeding America Board Member. “These numbers indicate the importance of all of us working together to make sure all Nebraskans have enough healthy food to eat.”

The Food Bank of Lincoln and Food Bank for the Heartland are two of 200 food banks in the Feeding America network that collectively provide food assistance to 46 million Americans struggling with hunger. Combined, in fiscal year 2017, Nebraska’s Feeding America member food banks connected neighbors to more than 30 million meals.

(Continued)

HUNGRY NEBRASKANS/Pg. 2

“The Feeding America nationwide network of food banks works hard to deliver more than 4 billion meals annually to people facing hunger, yet the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) serves 12 meals for every one meal provided through our network,” said Matt Knott, president of Feeding America.

“As Congress debates legislation like the 2018 Farm Bill, programs like SNAP must be protected and strengthened so that people facing hunger and trying to make ends meet have the essential food resources they need.”

Map the Meal Gap 2018 uses data from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, U.S. Census Bureau, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics and food price data and analysis provided by Nielsen, a global provider of information and insights. The study is supported by [The Howard G. Buffett Foundation](#), [Conagra Brands Foundation](#) and [Nielsen](#).

The study’s findings underscore the depth of need that remains in Nebraska and across the U.S., despite national measures from the USDA that indicate overall improvement. Food insecurity is a measure defined by the USDA as lack of access, at times, to enough food for an active, healthy life for all household members.

Dr. Craig Gundersen, Professor of Agricultural and Consumer Economics at the University of Illinois, Executive Director of the National Soybean Research Laboratory and a member of Feeding America’s Technical Advisory Group is the lead researcher of *Map the Meal Gap 2018*.

This is the eighth consecutive year that Feeding America has conducted the *Map the Meal Gap* study.

The *Map the Meal Gap 2018* [interactive map](#) allows policymakers, state agencies, corporate partners, food banks and individual advocates to develop integrated strategies to fight hunger on a community level.

A summary of the findings, an interactive map of the United States, and the full report are available at map.feedingamerica.org.

Join the conversation about *Map the Meal Gap 2018* on Twitter using [#MealGap](#).

###

About Food Bank of Lincoln:

Since 1982, the mission of Food Bank of Lincoln has been to alleviate hunger in Southeast Nebraska. Last year, the Food Bank of Lincoln connected neighbors in its 16-county service area to more than 10 million meals in partnership with more than 140 school and agency partner. For more information, visit www.LincolnFoodBank.org.

About Food Bank for the Heartland (a member of Feeding America):

Food Bank for the Heartland is a private 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization in Omaha, Nebraska, that acts as a central clearinghouse distributing food to more than 530 network partners across 77 counties in Nebraska and 16 counties in western Iowa. Food Bank for the Heartland has distributed 22 million meals in FY 2017 helping thousands of children, families, seniors, veterans, disabled individuals and others in need. For more information, visit www.FoodBankHeartland.org.

About Feeding America

Feeding America is a nationwide network of 200 food banks that leads the fight against hunger in the United States. Together, we provide food to more than 46 million people through food pantries and meal programs in communities throughout America. Feeding America also supports programs that improve food security among the people we serve; educates the public about the problem of hunger; and advocates for legislation that protects people from going hungry. Individuals, charities, businesses and government all have a role in ending hunger. Donate. Volunteer. Advocate. Educate. Together we can solve hunger. Visit <http://www.feedingamerica.org/>. Find us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/FeedingAmerica or follow us on Twitter at www.twitter.com/FeedingAmerica.

Contact: [Zuani Villarreal](#), Feeding America | 312.641.6532