



# Hunger News & Hope

...a Seeds of Hope publication

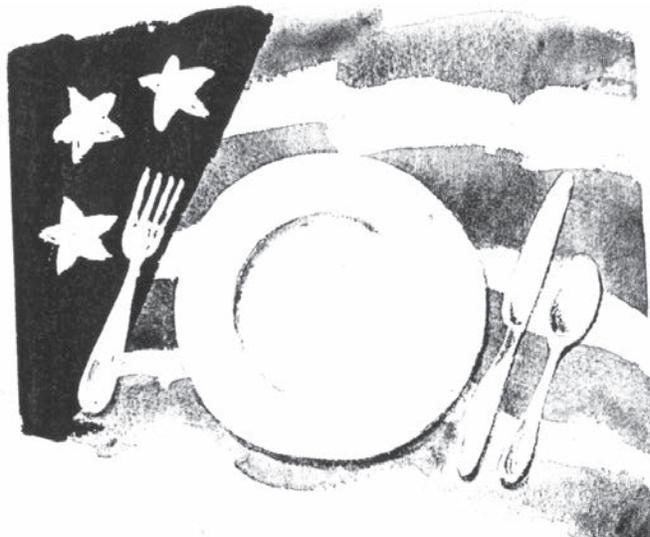
## How the Proposed Federal Budget Will Affect People in Poverty

On May 23rd, US President Donald Trump formally released the final version of his proposed Federal budget for Fiscal Year 2018. It was no surprise to anyone that this document severely slashed funding for hunger programs at home and abroad. David Beckmann, president of Bread for the World, described it as an assault on poor and hungry people everywhere.

You have probably seen the numbers. The budget plan cuts more than US\$1.7 trillion from safety-net programs in the US. The administration wants to decrease foreign aid spending by one-third and fold the US Aid to International Development department (USAID) into the State Department. This will, without any doubt, take food out of the mouths of children, elderly people and disabled people.

In the Spring 2017 issue of *Hunger News & Hope*, we told you about the famines looming in Somalia, Nigeria, South Sudan and Yemen, facing what United Nations called “the largest food crisis since 1945.” In this issue, we will endeavor to describe some of the realities facing millions of people in the United States. We will include some information about the programs that are at risk under the proposed budget. These are huge, complicated issues, and we are only brushing the surface, but we hope this will give you an idea about the moral choices we and our leaders face in the coming months.

—lkc



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# Special Report:

## US Poverty, Food Security & the Federal Budget

by Linda Freeto

*Picture this: The day is hot. Waves of heat rise from the street. A young boy walks down past the old baseball field with a popsicle. He had a little bit of money, and Manny's Stop & Shop is the closest store to his house. The popsicle is cool and tastes good, but it won't give him much in the way of nutrients. In a little while, he will be really hungry. Where will this child get the good, nutritious food he needs? What else will he eat today?*

*Now picture this: The day is cold. The bitter wind blows through the gap between the front door and the doorframe. The woman sits alone, waiting for the Meals on Wheels (MOW) driver to knock on the door. She is homebound, unsteady on her feet and unable to prepare her own meals, and the MOW volunteer always stops a few minutes to chat and ask if she needs anything. If the funding for this program goes away, what will she do? Where will her food come from? Who will check on her well-being?*

**W**hat do the child and the woman have in common? They are currently being assisted through programs that the present leaders in the US government consider unimportant. And those are just two examples out of millions. They are food-insecure, and they are in danger of losing what help they have been receiving.

In my own neighborhood, I see people pushing rolling grocery carriers down a heat-stricken street, trying to ignore the harsh glare of the sun—or I see them shuffling to the store in the dead of winter. This is because the nearest store that carries nutritious food is miles away. I see others in neighborhoods not too far from mine, trudging along with all of their worldly possessions in shopping carts or sleeping in the doorways of abandoned buildings, or

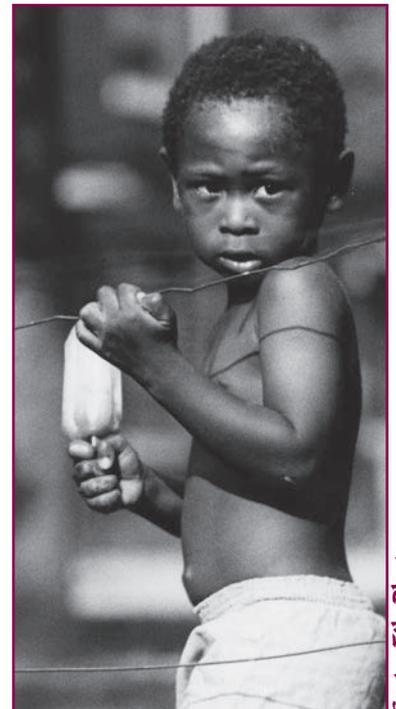
sitting patiently in the yard of a homeless shelter, waiting for the doors to open.

You've seen them. We imagine what their lives must be like. But it doesn't take long to forget them once we've driven by, does it? We fall into thoughts of our own troubles and concerns and their reality blurs in the rear-view mirror.

Let's take a few moments now to turn and take a closer look.

### ***Food Insecurity and Food Deserts***

The latest definition of *food security*, as defined by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations, is as follows: "Food security is a situation that exists when all people, at all times, have physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food that meets with their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life."<sup>1</sup>



Seeds File Photos

The FAO outlines *food insecurity*, on the other hand, as “a situation that exists when people lack secure access to sufficient amounts of safe and nutritious food for normal growth and development and an active and healthy life.”<sup>2</sup>

Whether a community is food-secure or food-insecure depends on the word *access*. Does the community have access to good, safe, nutritious food? We are not talking about the corner gas station that carries sodas, chips and sugary products. We are not talking about the convenience store where dry sausages or hot dogs go round and round in a heated warmer. Access means a grocery store with a good selection of fruits and vegetables, where meat is put on the shelf new each day, and dairy products include a wide assortment from which to choose.

If people want to provide healthy food to their families, most (more than you think) have to travel a long distance to get to the nearest grocery store that has an adequate selection of nutritious food. For example, I live in a fairly affluent community, but it is approximately four miles from the nearest grocery store. There are people in my community for whom getting to the store is difficult. They may have to depend on a family member or neighbor to get them to the store. Or they may have to walk. Food security analysts and anti-hunger activists refer to zones like this as “food deserts.”

All Americans want access to enough food to maintain a healthy, active life. All parents want their children to grow up with enough healthy food so they can play and interact with other children, learn in school and go to bed at night without the pangs of hunger. However, anyone can fall into a food-insecure zone. And it can happen very quickly.

According to the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Economic Research Service, food-insecurity zones exist in every county, city, town and congressional district in the United States.<sup>3</sup> According to the last USDA count, 49 million Americans lived in food-insecurity zones.<sup>4</sup> That many people in the United States do not have access to enough food to provide an active, healthy life.

The reality is that almost 50 million men, women and children do not have access to healthy food and struggle every day to live their lives, while consuming food that is not healthy for them. They can be literally obese, but still they’re malnourished.

### **Limited Resources**

We often hear people speaking about hunger and poverty in the same breath. We know that poverty is the major cause of hunger. But what is the difference between food insecurity and “just plain” poverty?

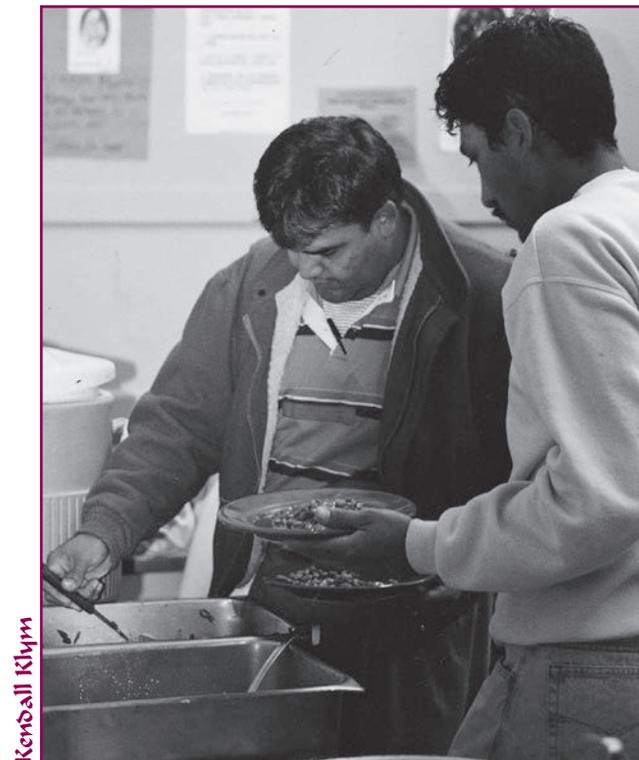
Again, the operative word is *accessibility*. People who live in poverty may also live in a community where food is easily accessible—a grocery store just down the street, affordable restaurants near by, large store chains like Walmart and Target within easy reach of their community. However, for them, the economic reality is that food prices are out of their reach.

Television commercials tell us that eating more fruits and vegetables is important to our health and welfare. But what about those who live in food-insecure neighborhoods? They pay high prices at the local gas station food mart for food that contains little or no nutritional value. They end up going without the nutrition they need, and then they face a myriad of health issues.

A family does not have to live below the poverty line to be affected by food insecurity. In today’s political environment, many families who have been able to move above the poverty line still find themselves struggling with food insecurity. They may have more money to spend, but just one crisis can drop them into poverty again. A job could be cut or work hours reduced. Someone could get sick or injured. The family’s vehicle could break down. Some cities have viable public transportation, but many do not. What does a family do in those situations? They have to make difficult choices.

Feeding America, a huge national food bank network, feeds millions of poor and hungry people across the country through its affiliate food banks

*The Special Report continues on page 4.*



Kendall Klym

and pantries. In 2014, the median annual income for households served by Feeding America was \$9,175.00. The network report for that year describes the devastating choices facing the people whom they served, because of limited resources:

- 69 percent had to choose between food and utilities.
- 67 percent had to choose between food and transportation.
- 66 percent had to choose between food and medical care.
- 57 percent had to choose between food and housing.
- 31 percent had to choose between food and education.<sup>5</sup>

### Federal Food Programs

In 2018, the Federal Farm Bill will come up for a vote in the US Congress—the last Farm Bill to be passed was the Agricultural Act of 2014. The Farm Bill is the centerpiece for federal legislation on food and farming. It has profound impacts on access to nutritious food for tens of millions of American families each year. This bill protects several emergency nutrition programs: The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP), the Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP) and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).

**The Emergency Food Assistance Program** is a means-tested federal program that provides food commodities at no cost to Americans in need of short-term hunger relief through food providers like emergency food pantries, food banks, soup kitchen and shelters.

Many people in Congress want to cut TEFAP by \$21 billion over the next 10 years. John Schoen, economic analyst for CNBC and founder of National Public Radio’s *Marketplace*, wrote that US President Donald Trump’s 2018 budget proposal places heavy emphasis on “welfare reform,” which includes significant cuts to programs that assist low-income households.<sup>6</sup>

The **Commodity Supplemental Food Program** serves about 595,000 low-income people each month. CSFP also is the only USDA nutrition program that provides monthly food assistance specially targeted for low-income seniors. One in 12 households with seniors are at risk of hunger nationwide. The Trump administration is also targeting this program, as well as the **Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program**, formerly known as the Food Stamp program.

“SNAP is the cornerstone federal food program to help low-income families during difficult times,” a Feeding America report states. “Serving more than 43

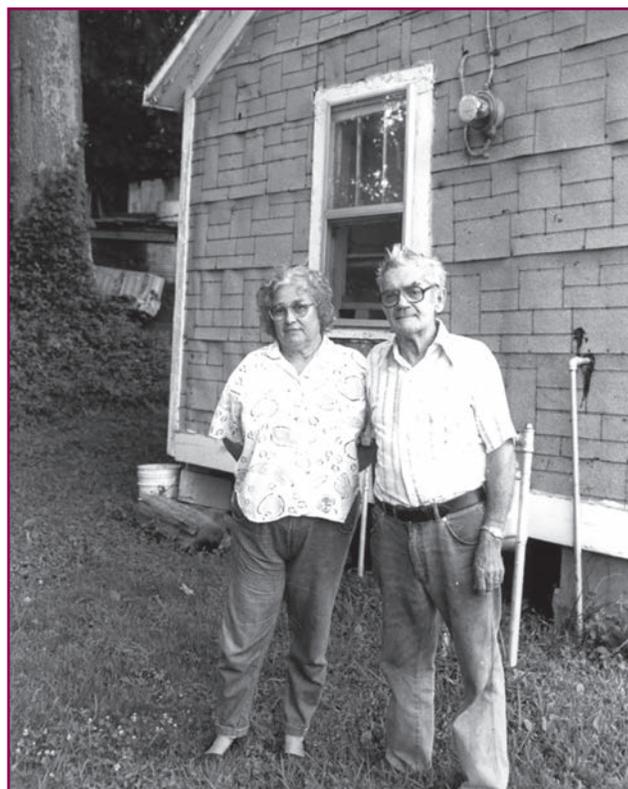
million Americans, SNAP is the largest anti-hunger program in the United States.”<sup>7</sup>

John Schoen said that there is “talk in the Republican Party” to separate SNAP from the Farm Bill all together, letting SNAP stand on its own. Schoen seems to find it interesting that, if cuts were made today in SNAP on a per-voter basis, Hawaii and New Mexico would be the most affected, along with Mississippi, West Virginia, Tennessee, Louisiana and Georgia. The latter are states that supported the Trump election.<sup>8</sup>

According to *Politico* reporter Catherine Boudreau, even though the Farm Bill (and specifically SNAP) serves tens of millions of Americans, the White House and leaders in Congress intend to slash USDA spending on mandatory Farm Bill programs by \$228 billion over the next 10 years, including cutting SNAP by more than 25 percent and reducing billions of dollars in farm subsidies.

Boudreau continues: “The proposed cuts are on top of a 21 percent reduction to the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) discretionary spending that the White House called for in its ‘skinny’ budget in March.”<sup>9</sup> [See also “Who Will Be Affected by the Proposed SNAP Cuts?” on page 7.]

Even though the **Special Supplemental Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC)** is not connected to the Farm Bill, it makes a major difference in the health and welfare of children. And it is scheduled to be on the administration’s chopping



block, according to the proposed Federal Budget for 2018, released by the White House in May. WIC plays a critical role in protecting the health of women, infants and children up to five years of age. WIC has an educational component to instruct women on breastfeeding and nutrition counseling, as well as monthly food packages to supplement healthy eating. [See “What’s So Good about WIC?” on page 9.]

According to USDA’s Food and Nutrition Service, “Research shows that poor nutrition during early childhood increases the chance of anemia, limits memory development and can affect a child’s ability to learn.”

Another program that has already faced cuts is the **National School Breakfast and Lunch Programs**. This program provides nutritional food for low-income children before and during school hours, as well as meal programs during the summer months. “To ease the reductions in school meals, the YMCA and Boys and Girls Clubs offer the Kid’s Farmer’s Market once a month throughout the school year.”<sup>7</sup> Each month during the school year, children have been able to attend nutritional classes and learn how to prepare healthy snacks. In the summer months, when children are out of school, programs like the Boys and Girls Clubs offer lunch and healthy snacks.

### Other Cuts

Nutritional food programs are not the only areas that the White House and Congressional leaders want to alter that will have an impact on poor people. For example, as Bridgeton, NJ, Mayor Albert Kelly, stated in a *New Jersey Local News* editorial, these include HOME Investment Partnership Programs and Community Development Block Grant Programs, “which provide essential resources for lower-income residents to get critical repairs done on their homes.”

Mayor Kelly continues

*Overall, cuts to the Department of Housing and Urban Development would be cut by \$4.8 billion. And, woe unto the children and students among us: The budget document eliminates 21st Century Community Learning Centers, Student Support and Academic Enrichment Grants, Federal Supplemental Education Opportunity Grants and Comprehensive Literacy Development Grants. US Department of Education cuts will total close to \$5 billion.*<sup>10</sup>

We hear more every day about threats of cuts in the proposed 2018 budget. The numbers are staggering. It’s almost as if, if it’s helping someone, it’s getting cut. These are billions and trillions of dollars that are being thrown around. The numbers are almost too much for us to grasp.

Yes, the times we live in are challenging for all of us, but we must remember that they are even more difficult for poor and hungry people, for the very young and the elderly, for all of the people who live in the margins of our society. There is a huge amount of well-being at stake, including nutrition and access to high-quality, healthy food. And there are broader health implications—especially for children and senior citizens.

### How We Can Help

When we look at these mind-boggling numbers, we must remember that each number is a human being. We must look back into that rear-view mirror and remember that these are real people. These realities affect almost 50 million people nationwide. Hunger and food insecurity are huge issues, and we already know there can be hard times ahead. We are tempted to look away because the issues are so big and complicated. However, there are things we can do as individuals and groups to help relieve the burdens of those who struggle each day.

Here are a few things you can do:

1. Purchase extra food every time you shop for groceries and make donations to your local food pantry.
2. Have a food drive at your school, church or workplace. Find out what kinds of foods your local pantry needs and emphasize those.
3. Volunteer at a soup kitchen near you.
4. Donate to organizations that support farmer’s markets or Community Agriculture Associations.
5. Write, call or email your elected officials and tell them not to cut funds from nutritional programs or programs that aid impoverished people. Tell them that it is also important to protect the Farm Bill—and, especially SNAP. [For help in wording your communication, go to *Bread for the World’s* website—[www.bread.org](http://www.bread.org)—and look for the *Offering of Letters* tab.]
6. Plant a community garden and offer the produce to food-insecure people in your community.
7. Begin a discussion of hunger issues in your church or group. This may be hard to do, and change will not come overnight, but we have to start somewhere. [See *Seeds of Hope’s* Hunger in God’s World workshop resource for help. The workshop curriculum can be downloaded at no charge from [www.seedspublishers.org](http://www.seedspublishers.org).]
8. See what the Bible says about responding to the problems of vulnerable people. [We can send you a list of passages with which to start—or you can use a concordance and start looking.]
9. Invite your community leaders to sit down with you and share your concerns.

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10. Have a hunger-awareness event. National Hunger & Homelessness Awareness week is Nov. 12-19; you could promote that. You could organize a hunger walk or hunger meal. [For help organizing a hunger walk, Church World Service can help. Go to [www.cropwalk.org](http://www.cropwalk.org).]

Even if we each just did one thing, that would make a difference. We must make our country's leaders understand that these issues are important to us. But there is one thing that we, as people of faith, cannot do. We cannot stay on the sidelines and watch.

—Linda Freeto, a frequent contributor to Hunger News & Hope, has received a number of Associated Church Press (ACP) awards for her Special Section reports in the HNH summer issues. Her special report on Women and Poverty from the summer 2016 issue was included in ACP's new volume, Best of the Christian Press 2016. A former member of the Seeds Council of Stewards and former volunteer Business Manager, Linda has recently agreed to serve again as a Council Member.

### Endnotes

1. UN Food and Agriculture Organisation ([fao.org](http://fao.org)).
2. Ibid.
3. United States Agriculture Department (USDA) Economic Research Division ([ers.usda.gov](http://ers.usda.gov)).
4. USDA ([www.usda.gov](http://www.usda.gov)), data posted in February 2017.
5. Feeding America: *Hunger in America: The Impact of Hunger*, ([www.feedingamerica.org/hunger-in-america/impact-of-hunger](http://www.feedingamerica.org/hunger-in-america/impact-of-hunger)).
6. John Schoen, "These Programs Would Get Hit Hardest by

Trump's Proposed Budget Cuts" ([www.cnn.com](http://www.cnn.com)), posted in May 2017.

7. *Hunger in America*.

8. Catherine Boudreau, *Politico*: Morning Agriculture, posted in May 2017.

9. Megan A. Carney, *The Unending Hunger*, published by University of California Press, 2015; page 148.

8. Mayor Albert Kelly, "Opinion: Behold the Damage from Federal Chopping Block," *New Jersey Local News* ([www.nj.com](http://www.nj.com)), June 5, 2017. ■

## This Neighborhood Is Not a Food Desert Anymore

Nonprofit organizations in the US have endeavored for decades to address the issue of food accessibility, and many are still seeking new ways to accomplish this. One example is the Jubilee Food Market in Waco, TX. Ever searching for innovative ways to increase food security and well-being in its neighborhood, the 26-year-old Mission Waco recently opened this grocery store across the street from its headquarters. The new store provides the community with affordable, nutritional options and is within easy walk for neighborhood folks. Intentional neighborhood grocery stores like these are springing up all over the United States.

Owen Lynch, an Associate Professor at Southern Methodist University in Dallas, TX, drove to Waco to see the new Jubilee Food Market. He told *Waco Tribune-Herald* reporter Mike Copeland, "What I was most struck by was ownership of the project by the community, people from all over, buying shares to raise money to make it happen. Jubilee Food Market demonstrates that you can provide a high-quality product—fresh healthy food—as an alternative to sugary products, lottery tickets and cigarettes." —Linda Freeto



JERRY LARSON/WACO TRIBUNE-HERALD

# Who Will Be Affected by the Proposed SNAP Cuts?

by Chelle Samaniego

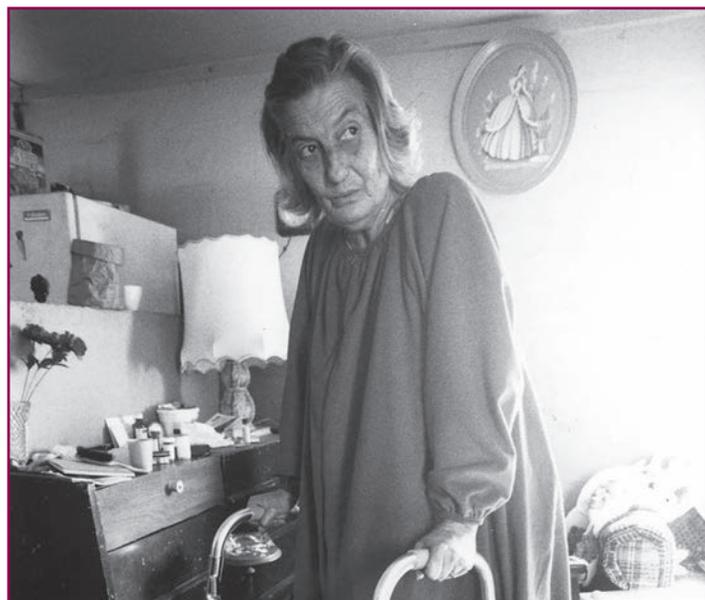
In May 2017, Mick Mulvaney, US President Donald Trump's Office of Management and Budget Director, stated, "If you're on food stamps, and you're able-bodied, we need you to go to work. If you're on disability insurance and you're not supposed to be—if you're not truly disabled, we need you to go to back to work."

There seems to be a lot of speculation in Washington right now about what makes a person live in poverty. Past presidential candidate and now Secretary of Housing and Urban Development Ben Carson—who himself was raised in poverty—recently said, "poverty to a large extent is also a state of mind."

There is a belief that economic hardship, lack of jobs, lack of training or a stale job market aren't at fault for the millions of Americans who live in poverty. The thinking is that people get so much money on government aid that, frankly, why would they want to work at all?

The Trump Administration's budget plan would cut \$191 billion from the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) over the next ten years. Currently, 42 million Americans receive these benefits to ensure food is on the table each day. Two-thirds of them are elderly, disabled or children.

The understood goal of the White House is to get "able-bodied" SNAP participants into wage-earning jobs so they no longer need to rely on government aid. Who decides if someone is able-bodied? Let's take a look at a few of the groups who will be affected by these proposed laws.



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## *The States*

This proposed 25 percent reduction does not mean these funds simply go away. If approved, this percentage will be transferred to individual states, which will then decide not only who is eligible, but also whether they can support taking up the slack.

The Problem: If your state is one of the poorer ones in the nation, this could mean a removal of SNAP benefits due to lack of funding. The poorest states with highest number of SNAP participants will be the most affected. According to USDA data, these are Louisiana, Mississippi, New Mexico, Tennessee, Oregon and West Virginia. The District of Columbia also has a high rate of citizens receiving SNAP benefits.

## *Single "Able-Bodied" Adults with No Dependents*

Few Americans realize that current SNAP recipients who do not have dependents are required to work at least 20 hours per week, or be in enrolled in a documented job training or employment program. They also have 90 days to find work once they are enrolled and receiving benefits. However, in areas of the country where the unemployment level is higher than the national average, these restrictions have been lessened. In the proposed SNAP guidelines, all "able-bodied" recipients without dependents must meet the work requirements in order to receive benefits, regardless of their area's economic adversity—no exceptions.

The Problem: Further cuts in the proposed budget will terminate job-search and job-training programs in some areas, which could result in participants simply not having a program in which to enroll.

## *Families with More than Six Members*

Currently, each person who lives in a household is eligible to receive benefits. For a family of eight, the current maximum monthly allotment is \$1,169. For each family member exceeding eight, the family receives \$146 per each additional person. Right now, the current maximum allotment for a family of six is \$925 each month. With the proposed guidelines, the maximum allotment for all families regardless of size will be capped at six individuals at the current \$925 maximum monthly allotment. So, a family with six members and a family with 13 members will receive at most \$925 under the new plan.

Please see "SNAP Cuts" on page 10

# American Seniors: Living on the Edge

by Libby Bellinger

Food insecurity is a problem for older adults. Getting by is getting harder for a lot of older people. If the federal government makes cuts to Medicaid, SNAP, Meals on Wheels and other support services, then life could get really difficult for the older adults in our communities already living on the edge.

Recent research sponsored by Meals on Wheels America found that:

- **Nearly six million seniors faced the threat of hunger.** *11.4 percent of all seniors experienced some form of food insecurity. Of these, about 2.5 million were at risk of hunger and about 750,000 suffered from hunger due to financial constraints.*
- **Hunger is not confined primarily to poor people.** *Poor people are more likely to be at-risk, but half of all at-risk seniors have incomes above the federal poverty line. And one in seven food insecure households have an annual income above twice the poverty line.*

The research revealed that the following seniors were more likely to be at risk of hunger:

- **A young senior between the ages of 60 and 64.** *An 84-year-old is over one-third less likely to be at-risk of hunger than a 64-year-old.*
- **Living at or below the poverty line.** *Households above 200 percent of the poverty line have nearly a 15 percentage point lower probability of being “marginally food-insecure” than those living below the poverty line, a 6 percentage point lower probability of being food-insecure, and a 2 percentage point lower probability of having very low food security.\**
- **A high school dropout.** *Holding income and other factors constant a high school graduate is 20 percent less likely to be at risk of hunger compared to a high school dropout, and a college graduate is 40 percent less likely.*
- **African-American or Hispanic.** *Holding other factors constant, African-Americans are 75 percent more likely to be at risk of hunger than whites. Hispanics are 20 percent more likely than whites.*
- **Divorced or separated, or living with a grandchild.** *Married couples were at about a 20 percent reduced probability of being at risk of hunger. Seniors living with a grandchild, however, were about 50 percent more likely to be at risk of hunger compared to those with no grandchild.*
- **Renters.** *Homeowners have access to resources not similarly available to those seniors who rented, and thus homeowners faced about one-half the odds of being at-risk of hunger.*

In 1977, Hubert H. Humphrey said: “The moral test of government is how it treats those who are in the dawn of life, the children; those who are in the twilight of life, the aged; and those in the shadows of life, the sick, the needy and the handicapped.”

If we agree to measure our moral progress in part by how we treat the oldest members of our society, then the number of older Americans who are impoverished or economically insecure should be a clear signal that we have much more work to do. This is not a time to cut major social services.

—Libby Bellinger is the Associate Director of Meals on Wheels Waco in Waco, TX. An ordained Baptist minister, she holds a degree in gerontology from Baylor University.

\*Census workers in the US use the terms “high food security,” “marginal food security,” “low food security” and “very low food security.” According to the USDA, a household has very low food security if the food intake of one or more household members is reduced or disrupted at times during the year because the household lacks the money or other resources for food.



vicki klaras

## Meals on Wheels Makes a Difference for Nearly 2.4 Million Seniors

Since the first known US delivery by a small group of Philadelphia citizens in 1954, Meals on Wheels has endeavored to support US seniors to extend their independence and health as they age. It has grown into one of the largest and most effective social movements in the US, currently helping nearly 2.4 million seniors each year across the country, reaching virtually every community in the country.

# What's So Good about WIC?

by Linda Rains-Russell

What's so good about WIC? I'm glad you asked! It seems that many still don't know or have ever heard of WIC—the Supplemental Food Assistance Program better known as the Women, Infants, and Children Program (hence WIC)—and all the great benefits it provides.

WIC has been around since 1974, providing healthy foods, nutrition education and health care referrals to pregnant, postpartum and breastfeeding women—and to infants, and children until they turn 5 years old. WIC wants new moms to be healthy, and it wants kids to get an early start in developing healthy eating habits that can last a lifetime.

Many families don't realize they could qualify for WIC, since one qualification for receiving WIC requires a higher income than other federal programs. Many families who would not qualify for other food programs could qualify for WIC. (As an example, see the Texas WIC income guidelines on page 10.)

To be more specific, let me tell you what's so good about WIC. It provides:

- **Delicious foods...and they're healthy!**

WIC's foods help you get important nutrients; like fiber, calcium, and iron to grow healthy and strong. Foods include:

- Fruits and vegetables
- 100 percent fruit and vegetable juices
- Milk, cheese, and yogurt

- Eggs
- Whole grains like oatmeal, whole-wheat tortillas, bread, and pasta
- Healthy cereals
- Beans
- Peanut butter
- Canned tuna or salmon
- Baby formula and baby foods

- **Breastfeeding support**

Women get personal attention from WIC's breastfeeding experts, and extra benefits like breast pumps and special foods.

*Please see "WIC" on page 10*

## WIC's Longterm Impact from the USDA Food and Nutrition Service

1. Over the last four decades and more, WIC participation has contributed to lower infant mortality rates and improved pregnancy outcomes. A 2009 study concluded that WIC participation was associated with a substantial reduction in poor birth outcomes, such as low birth weights.
2. WIC has a significant, positive impact on the overall health of children. Studies have found that infants of low-income women who did not receive WIC assistance were more likely to be underweight, and also perceived as having fair or poor health.
3. WIC participation is related to greater use of health care services of all types, including dental care, compared to low-income children not participating in WIC. Also, a Chicago study found that by age 25 months, children who were participating in WIC were more likely to be immunized than children in the same age group who no longer participated in WIC.
4. WIC is helping to address childhood obesity in America. According to a 2012 USDA report, the rate of obesity in children who were part of a WIC program fell significantly from 2008 to 2012.
5. The WIC food package was recently updated to provide healthier options. Today, the food package is more consistent with current science-based dietary guidance, offering a wider array of healthy choices, including fruits and vegetables, yogurt, and additional whole grain and fish options.



Susan Mullally

## WIC, continued from page 9

- **Infant formula**

Standard and medically prescribed formulas are available.

- **Health and immunization screenings**

WIC uses two main categories in determining nutritional risk: (1) medically-based risks such as history of poor pregnancy outcome, underweight status or iron-deficiency anemia, and (2) diet-based risks such as poor eating habits that can lead to poor nutritional and health status. All children's immunization records are reviewed for up-to-date status.

- **One-on-one counseling**

At any time, a participant can request to meet with one of our experts: Registered Dietitian, Nutritionist, Internationally Board Certified Lactation Consultant, or Peer Counselor. They are here to help.

Extensive research has found WIC to be a cost-effective investment that improves the nutrition and health of low to middle-income families—leading to healthier infants, more nutritious diets and better health outcomes for children.

So now let me ask you: "What's *not* good about WIC?" —Linda Rains-Russell is the Program Manager for the McLennan County Public Health Department WIC Office in Waco, TX. She has a PhD in Family Studies and has been working with families for 20 years. She is also an active member of the McLennan County Hunger Coalition.

*Note: The WIC program currently operates in all 50 states, 34 tribal organizations, the District of Columbia, American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Guam, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands. WIC services are made*

available through approximately 1,900 local agencies and 10,000 clinic sites. For more information, go to [www.fns.usda.gov/wic](http://www.fns.usda.gov/wic). USDA's Food and Nutrition Service administers 15 nutrition assistance programs. In addition to WIC, these programs include the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, National School Lunch Program, and the Summer Food Service Program, which together comprise America's nutrition safety net. ■

## SNAP Cuts, continued from page 7

**The Problem:** This will affect not only new applicants, but families currently enrolled and re-applying for benefits. For families who have relied on SNAP benefits to supplement their family table each month, hundreds of dollars will be wiped from their family budget, affecting the lives of children and seniors throughout our nation.

### *Why Should We Care?*

Some say there is widespread fraud and abuse in the SNAP system, but improvements in program management have reduced the trafficking rate from four cents on the dollar (the rate in 1993) to about one cent on the dollar. Some say that people become reliant on SNAP assistance, but the average length of time a participant stays on SNAP is nine months.

Globally acclaimed economists have shown time and again that economies are stronger when more people have buying power. SNAP benefits help people not have to decide between rent and groceries, but it also invigorates their local economies.

If that is not sufficient motivation, Proverbs 19:17 says, "He who is kind to the poor lends to the Lord, and God will reward him for what he has done." We have to stop thinking about people as freeloaders and start thinking of people as fellow human beings who are hungry. And, why shouldn't they eat? There is plenty of food to go around...for the right price.

—Chelle Samaniego is a freelance writer and social media specialist living in Waco, TX. She worked with the Waco Homeless Coalition as a VISTA volunteer and is an active member of the McLennan County Hunger Coalition. She is also the Seeds of Hope Social Media editor. Sources: USDA Food and Nutrition Service ([www.fns.usda.gov](http://www.fns.usda.gov)), USA Today, Connecticut Mirror. ■

## Texas WIC Income Guidelines

| Number of people in the house | Bi-weekly income  | Annual Income |
|-------------------------------|-------------------|---------------|
| 2                             | \$0 up to \$1,156 | \$30,044      |
| 3                             | \$1,453           | \$37,777      |
| 4                             | \$1,751           | \$45,510      |
| 5                             | \$2,048           | \$53,243      |
| 6                             | \$2,346           | \$60,976      |

*Income guidelines are updated annually.*

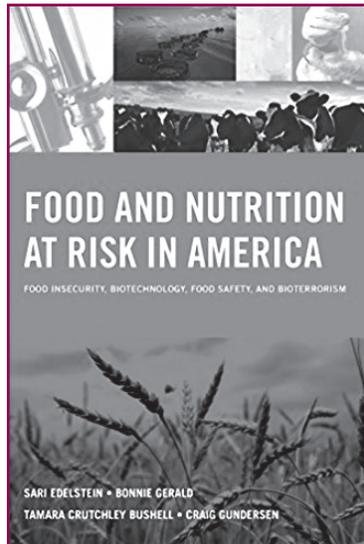
# Resources

## Food and Nutrition at Risk in America

Sari Edelstein, Bonnie Gerald, Tamara Crutchley Bushell and Craig Gundersen. *Food and Nutrition at Risk in America: Food Insecurity, Biotechnology, Food Safety, and Bioterrorism*. Jones and Bartlett Publishers: 2009; textbook.

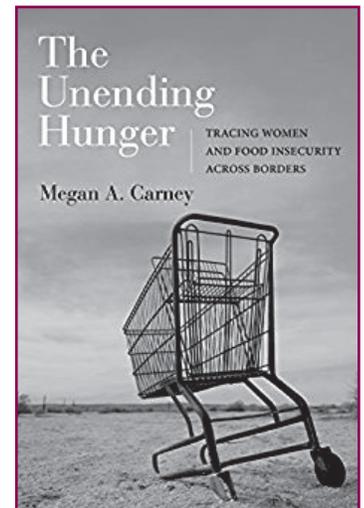
*While about one in 10 Americans are food-insecure, the proportion increases when one examines households below the poverty line. (page 114).*

**F**ood and Nutrition at Risk in America addresses the major food and nutrition issues of our time. Each section covers the latest threats to our nation's food systems, such as intentional and unintentional contamination of the food supply, food insecurity issues within our borders and the affect of crop manipulation on human health.



*Since 2008, enrollment in SNAP has soared, growing by nearly 40 percent, or 10 million recipients from 2007 to 2009 alone.... (page 14).*

**B**ased on ethnographic fieldwork from Santa Barbara, CA, this book sheds light on the ways that food insecurity prevails in women's experiences of migration from Mexico and Central America to the United States. As women grapple with the pervasive conditions of poverty that hinder efforts at getting enough to eat, they find few options for alleviating the various forms of suffering that accompany food insecurity. As "food security" comes to dominate national policy in the United States, this book argues for understanding women's relations to these processes as inherently biopolitical.



## The Unending Hunger

Megan A. Carney. *The Unending Hunger: Tracing Women and Food Insecurity across Borders*. University of California Press: 2015.

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*... a hunger emphasis primer for beginning churches*

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### *Statement of Purpose*

Seeds of Hope is a private, independent group of believers responding to a common burden for the poor and hungry of God's world, and acting on the strong belief that biblical mandates to feed the poor were not intended to be optional. The group seeks out people of faith who feel called to care for poor and hungry people; and to affirm, enable and

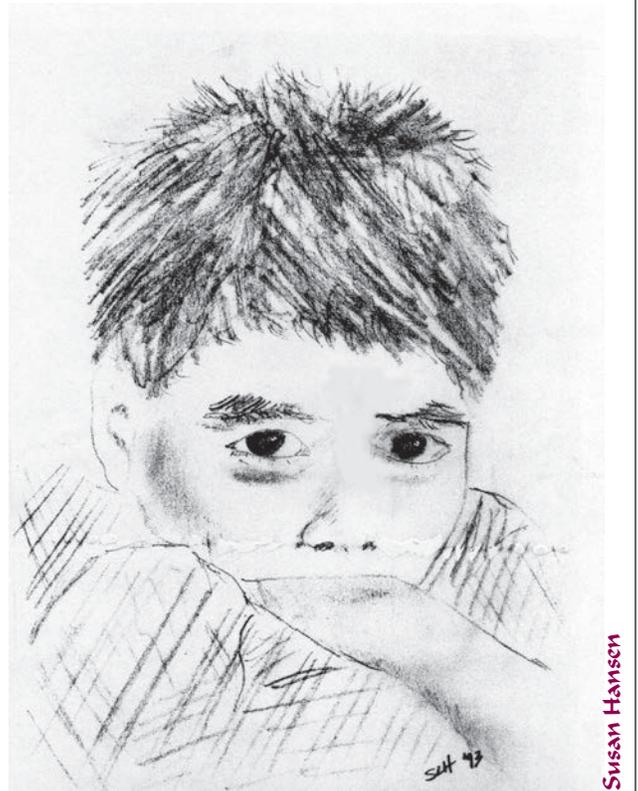
## Quotes, Poems & Pithy Sayings

Pope Francis wrote, "I prefer a Church which is bruised, hurting and dirty because it has been out on the streets, rather than a Church which is unhealthy from being confined and from clinging to its own security. I do not want a Church concerned with being at the center and which then ends by being caught up in a web of obsessions and procedures. If something should rightly disturb us and trouble our consciences, it is the fact that so many of our brothers and sisters are living without the strength, light and consolation born of friendship with Jesus Christ, without a community of faith to support them, without meaning and a goal in life. More than by fear of going astray, my hope is that we will be moved by the fear of remaining shut up

within structures which give us a false sense of security, within rules which make us harsh judges, within habits which make us feel safe, while at our door people are starving and Jesus does not tire of saying to us: "Give them something to eat" (Mark 6:37).

—*Evangelii Gaudium*  
*apostolic exhortation,*  
*49; November 2013.*

*Cited by Sr. Margaret Magee, OSF, in Acting Franciscan*



Susan Hanson

empower a variety of responses to the problems of poverty.

### *Editorial Address*

Seeds is housed by the community of faith at Seventh & James Baptist Church. The mailing address is 602 James Avenue, Waco, TX 76706; Phone: 254/ 755-7745; Fax: 254/753-1909; E-mail: seedseditor1@gmail.com. Web: www.seedspublishers.org. Copyright © 2017; ISSN 0194-4495. Seeds of Hope, Inc., holds the 501(c)3 nonprofit tax status.

Seeds also produces *Sacred Seasons*, a series of worship materials for Advent, Lent and an annual Hunger Emphasis—with an attitude "toward justice, peace and food security for all of God's children." These include litanies, sermons, children's and youth activities, bulletin art and drama.

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