

Are there hungry people in Texas?

Texas is not immune from people being hungry. Here are some facts to consider:
The state of Texas is third in the nation in the percent of its citizens that are food insecure (16.4%).

HUNGER IN AMERICA 2006 TEXAS STATE HIGHLIGHTS

Key findings are summarized below:

- The Texas Food Bank Network (TFBN) member organizations provide emergency food for an estimated 2,064,300 different people annually in Texas.
- Approximately 418,700 different people receive emergency food assistance in any given week.

CLIENTS represented in Texas?

TFBN agencies in Texas provide food for a broad cross-section of households.

- 33% of the members of households in Texas are children under 18 years old.
- 10% of the members of households are children age 0 to 5 years.
- 14% of the members of households are elderly. (See Senior facts in the next section*)
- About 32% of clients are non-Hispanic white, 22% are non-Hispanic black, 45% are Hispanic, and the rest are from other racial groups.
- 36% of households include at least one employed adult.
- 74% have incomes below the official federal poverty level during the previous month.
- 14% are homeless.
- Among all client households served by emergency food programs in Texas, 68% are food insecure. This includes client households who are food insecure without hunger and those who are food insecure with hunger.
- 41% of Texas clients report choosing between paying for food or paying for utilities or heating fuel.
- 33% had to choose between paying for food and paying for medicine or medical care.
- 26% of client households in Texas are receiving Food Stamp Program benefits; however, it is likely that many more are eligible.
- Among households with children ages 0-3 years, 54% participate in Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC).
- Among households with school-age children, 67% and 63%, respectively, participate in the federal school lunch and school breakfast programs.
- 31% of Texas households report having at least one household member in poor health.

VOLUNTEERS in Texas,

- 89% of pantries, 80% of kitchens, and 76% of shelters use volunteers.
- 65% of pantry programs and 22% of kitchens have no paid staff at all.


*The Facts on Senior Hunger in America and TEXAS is 12.3% senior adults!





According to the USDA, in 2002 only 27.7 percent of households with residents age 60 or older who were eligible to receive food stamps actually did. The low participation rates are attributed to both lack of information about the program and issues of personal pride about receiving government assistance.




In 2000, monthly benefits for households that included people older than 60 averaged \$59, compared to the \$158 average for all food stamp households.

 Elderly individuals, accounting for approximately 18% of the population (aged 60 or older), account for roughly 30% of US health expenditures. Research suggests that insufficient nutrient intake accounts for a disproportionate amount of health care costs among low-income elderly individuals, unrelated to the aging process. The elderly that live in households with incomes below 130% of the federal poverty level tend to have lower nutrient intakes than other elderly households, thus exacerbating health concerns. Low income blacks, urbanities, and Southerners generally consumed less of important nutrients than other demographic categories of the elderly.

 4 million elderly persons, or 10.1% of the elderly population, live in poverty. An additional 6.5% are classified as near-poor ([Poverty in the United States: 2001](#), [U.S. Census Bureau](#)).

 The elderly who live in low-income households (below 130% of the poverty level) tend to have lower nutrient intakes than those elderly in households with higher incomes (*A National Survey of Nutritional Risk Among the Elderly*, [FRAC](#)).

 In fiscal year 2002, 1.6 million adults over the age of 60 participated in the Food Stamp Program (*Characteristics of Food Stamp Households*, Mathematica Policy Research).

Poverty – Texas is the top 10 of all 6 categories!

Top Ten Counties (250,000 or more population) with Highest Poverty Rate

| <i>County, State, % People Below Poverty Level</i> | |
|--|-------|
| 1. Hidalgo County, TX | 36.9% |
| 2. Cameron County, TX | 35.9% |
| 3. Bronx County, NY | 29.1% |
| 4. El Paso County, TX | 27.7% |
| 5. St. Louis City, MO | 26.8% |
| 6. Philadelphia County, PA | 25.1% |
| 7. Kings County, NY | 22.6% |
| 8. Caddo Parish, LA | 22.4% |
| 9. Nueces County, TX | 22.1% |
| 10. Tulare County, CA | 21.6% |

U.S. Census Bureau, 2006 American Community Survey, August 2007

Top 10 States with Highest Poverty Rate, 2005-2006

| <i>State, % People Below Poverty Level</i> | |
|--|-------|
| 1. Mississippi | 21.1% |
| 2. District of Columbia | 19.6% |
| 3. Louisiana | 19.0% |
| 4. New Mexico | 18.5% |
| 5. Arkansas | 17.3% |
| 5. West Virginia | 17.3% |
| 7. Kentucky | 17.0% |
| 7. Oklahoma | 17.0% |
| 9. Texas | 16.9% |
| 10. Alabama | 16.6% |

U.S. Census Bureau, Income, Poverty and Health Insurance Coverage in the US: 2006

Top Ten Cities (250,000 or more population) with the Highest Poverty Rate

| <i>City, State, % People Below Poverty Level</i> | |
|--|-------|
| 1. Detroit, MI | 32.5% |
| 2. Buffalo, NY | 29.9% |

| | |
|---------------------|-------|
| 3. Cincinnati, OH | 27.8% |
| 4. Cleveland, OH | 27.0% |
| 5. Miami, FL | 26.9% |
| 5. St. Louis, MO | 26.8% |
| 7. El Paso, TX | 26.4% |
| 8. Milwaukee, WI | 26.2% |
| 9. Philadelphia, PA | 25.1% |
| 10. Newark, NJ | 24.2% |

U.S. Census Bureau, 2006 American Community Survey, August 2007

Top Ten Cities (250,000 or less population) with Highest Rate of Poverty

| | |
|----------------------------|-------|
| 1. Brownsville, TX | 40.6% |
| 2. College Station, TX | 37.3% |
| 3. Camden, NJ | 35.6% |
| 4. Edinburg, TX | 35.4% |
| 5. Bloomington, IN | 34.7% |
| 6. Flint, MI | 34.1% |
| 7. Kalamazoo, MI | 33.4% |
| 8. Florence-Graham CDP, CA | 33.0% |
| 9. Gary, IN | 32.8% |
| 10. Muncie, IN | 32.6% |

U.S. Census Bureau, 2006 American Community Survey 2007

Top Ten States with the Highest Percentage of Adults 65 years and older living in poverty

| | |
|----------------------|--------|
| Mississippi | 15.7 % |
| District of Columbia | 15.2 % |
| Louisiana | 13.9 % |
| Kentucky | 13.5 % |
| Tennessee | 13.4 % |
| New Mexico | 13.0 % |
| Alabama | 12.6 % |
| Georgia | 12.6 % |
| South Dakota | 12.5 % |
| Arkansas & Texas | 12.3 % |

U.S. Census Bureau, 2006 American Community Survey 2007

Top Ten States with Highest Percentage of Children under 18 Living in Poverty

| | |
|----------------------|--------|
| District of Columbia | 32.6 % |
| Mississippi | 29.5 % |
| Louisiana | 27.8 % |
| New Mexico | 25.6 % |
| West Virginia | 25.2 % |
| Arkansas | 24.3 % |
| Oklahoma | 24.3 % |
| Texas | 23.9 % |
| Alabama | 23.0 % |
| Kentucky | 22.8 % |

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2006 American Community Survey, August 2007

The Poverty Line DEFINED:

Food, shelter, clothing, health care, transportation - these are only the beginnings of the basic necessities of modern American living. Each year, the federal government calculates the minimum amount of money required by families to meet these basic needs. The resulting calculation is what is commonly referred to as the "poverty line." Using 2005 data, the government has set the 2006 poverty guidelines at:

| Size of Family Unit | Weighted Average Thresholds |
|---------------------|-----------------------------|
| One person | 10,294 |
| Two people | 13,167 |
| Three people | 16,079 |
| Four people | 20,614 |
| Five people | 24,382 |
| Six people | 27,560 |
| Seven people | 31,205 |
| Eight people | 34,774 |
| Nine people or more | 41,499 |

SOURCE: U.S. Census Bureau, *Income, Poverty, and Health Insurance Coverage in the United States: 2006*

Health and Human Services Poverty Guidelines

While the U.S. Census Bureau uses poverty thresholds for statistical purposes - for instance, preparing estimates of the number of Americans in poverty each year - the U.S. Department of Health and Human services issues another version of the federal poverty measure called the "poverty guidelines." These guidelines are a

simplification of the poverty thresholds for use for administrative purposes - for instance, determining financial eligibility for certain federal programs, such as Head Start, the Food Stamp Program, the National School Lunch Program, the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program, and the Children's Health Insurance Program. Unlike the "poverty thresholds," the "poverty guidelines" make no distinction of age; yet do provide separate guidelines for Alaska and Hawaii.

For 2007, the HHS Poverty Guidelines are

| Size of Family Unit | 48 Contiguous States and D.C. | Alaska | Hawaii |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------------|----------|----------|
| 1 | \$10,210 | \$12,770 | \$11,750 |
| 2 | 13,690 | 17,120 | 15,750 |
| 3 | 17,170 | 21,470 | 19,750 |
| 4 | 20,650 | 25,820 | 23,750 |
| 5 | 24,130 | 30,170 | 27,750 |
| 6 | 27,610 | 34,520 | 31,750 |
| 7 | 31,090 | 38,870 | 35,750 |
| 8 | 34,570 | 43,220 | 39,750 |
| For each additional person, add | 3,480 | 4,350 | 4,000 |

Source: *Federal Register*, Vol. 72, No. 15, January 24, 2007, pp. 3147-3148.

How the Census Bureau Measures Poverty: the Poverty Threshold

The U.S. Census Bureau uses a complex equation to measure "official poverty." It begins by computing poverty status based on income, including all money income before taxes, such as earnings, unemployment compensation, workers' compensation, Social Security, public assistance, veterans payments, etc. Noncash benefits such as food stamps and housing do not count, nor do capital gains or losses.

If a person lives with a family, the income of all related family members is added up. That income amount is matched against what is called the "measure of need," or the poverty threshold. These thresholds vary according to the size of the family and the ages of the members.

Originally derived in the early 1960s using U.S. Department of Agriculture food budgets designed for families under economic stress, the thresholds are not intended to be complete descriptions of what people and families need to live. Although in some sense they reflect families' needs, the thresholds are intended for use as a statistical yardstick. What's more, many government programs use a different poverty measure, such as the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) poverty guidelines or multiples thereof.

The official measure of poverty used by the Census Bureau was established by the Office of Management and Budget; however, government aid programs do not have to use the official poverty measure as eligibility criteria. The U.S. Census Bureau officially designates a family as "in poverty" if the total family income is less than the threshold appropriate for that family.

For example, if a family has five members - two children, a mother and father and a great-aunt - their poverty threshold in 2006 was set at \$24,382. If the mother's income was \$10,000 for that year, the father's \$5,000 and the great-aunt's \$10,000, the total income of \$25,000 would mean the family was not "in poverty" according to the official definition.

For more information www.povertyusa.org