The State of Senior Hunger in America in 2017


Hunger Among Adults Age 50-59 in 2017


5.5 million seniors are food insecure as of 2017.


Every day, 10,000 people become a senior.


2.3 million seniors were food insecure in 2001.


About 8 million seniors will be food insecure in 2050.


An *Aging Nation: The Older Population in the United States* provides population projections for the senior population age 65 and older. To estimate projections for the 60 and older population, we first look at Figure 2. As shown, the population for the age groups from 45 to 64 is distributed in a roughly even way. Using this information, we can say that in 2050, about 25% of those in the 45 to 65 are in the 60-65 age range. By taking 25% of the middle projection for the 45 to 64 age group in Figure 3 (95 million/4) and adding this to the middle projection of those 65 and older (80 million), you get 104 million people over the age of 60. Calculations are below.

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(95,000,000 \text{ seniors}/4)+80,000,000 \text{ seniors}=104,000,000 \text{ seniors}
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104,000,000(.077)=8,008,000 \text{ seniors}
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A single person living in poverty in 2017 earns under $12,060/year or $1,005/month.


Average monthly social security benefit in 2017 was $1,360.


Some seniors stay employed to meet basic needs due to increased life expectancy, decreased savings, and higher healthcare costs.

About 1 in 5 seniors work part- or full-time.


Many low-income seniors face tough choices, including choosing between food or utilities, housing, health costs, and transportation.

This is measured through a Client Survey, which measured the circumstances of client households that contain at least one member age 50 and older.


Colorado, Minnesota, and North Dakota are the states with the lowest levels of senior food insecurity, whereas Louisiana, Mississippi, and New Mexico are the states with the highest levels of senior food insecurity.


Seniors are more likely to experience food insecurity if they are racial/ethnic minorities, divorced or separated, living with grandchildren, disabled, unemployed, or female.


Poor health can be both a cause and a consequence of food insecurity. Disability and risk for disease decrease capacity for stable employment and increase healthcare costs. Poorer nutrition increases risk for disease and challenges of disease management.


Food insecure seniors are 78% more likely to experience depression, 55% more likely to experience asthma, 40% more likely to experience chest pain, 21% more likely to experience limitations in activity, and 10% more likely to experience high blood pressure.


Nearly 5 million senior households receive, on average, $125/month in SNAP benefits.


Only 45% of SNAP-eligible seniors are enrolled.


The Feeding America network of food banks serves 7 million seniors through grocery programs, meal programs and benefit outreach.


For questions or comments, please contact the Feeding America Research team at research@feedingamerica.org.