

The Injustice of Food Insecurity in the US: The Facts and a Challenge

Food insecurity means a lack of access to enough food for an active, healthy life—usually because of financial constraints.

The Reality:

- More than 44 million people (10%) in the U.S. face hunger, including 1 in 5 children.
- Over 7 million or 12%, of older adults are food insecure.
- People experience food insecurity in every community.
- Inequality is a root cause of food insecurity for people of color.
- Since 2022 food insecurity is substantially worse with rising food costs and the elimination of many emergency assistance programs.

Older Adults:

- The percentage of older adults experiencing food insecurity has increased over 50% in the past 5 years.
- Many of these are living in poverty, raising a grandchild, and/or have a disability.
- Those over age 80 have experienced the largest increase in food insecurity among older adults.
- Social Security and Medicare don't include a food allowance except with some special plans which cost \$150/month more.
- Food insecurity is associated with a host of poor nutrition and health outcomes among older adults.

Why Older Adults are at Higher Risk for Hunger:

- Chronic health conditions that make cooking and grocery shopping difficult.
- Lack of access to transportation.
- Limited income, making it difficult to afford food with other expenses like rent and medicine.
- Living alone with no family or caregivers who can help with grocery shopping and cooking.
- Health problems which increase the likelihood of anxiety and depression.

A Challenge: What Can You and Your Church Do?

Food insecurity is a justice issue - it affects anyone with no access, no mobility, and/or no money.

These are some suggested action steps:

- Study James 1: 2-5 and James 2: 14-17 (suggestion: The Common English Bible version).
- Research the food insecurity reality in your state, county and community.
- Think about who is in need. Talk to people, ask about others.
- Volunteer at a food bank or nutrition project, to serve and chat with participants.
- Host and visit with singles, those who are lonely, invite them for meal.
- Ask what is needed (be specific) such as: shopping, help getting benefits for food, some extra funds to supplement monthly income.

You can make a difference and help make real changes to a persons' health - all while benefitting the community. We can be healers by caring for others. The Bible says, we should give without keeping score, and giving is a force for good.

You are invited to commit to caring, helping to make a healthier and more just community. There is much to be said for living by faith – and faith, along with a meal cooked with love becomes miraculous!

Information from: Feeding America: www.feedingamerica.org/hunger-in-america/foodinsecurity

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