**Hunger in CT 2019**

( *Statistics from* [*www.endhungerCT.org*](http://www.endhungerCT.org) *and* [*www.feedingamerica.org/hunger*](http://www.feedingamerica.org/hunger) )

13.9% CT residents are food insecure, Connecticut’s overall child food insecurity rate is 15.6 percent, Food insecurity is defined by the USDA as the lack of consistent access to adequate amounts of food for an active, healthy life. In CT, about 1/2 million people struggle with hunger. It is estimated that $245 million dollars are needed per year to alleviate hunger in CT. The average cost of a meal in CT is $3.19. The amount funded by SNAP is $1.39.

CT’s SNAP program (formerly Food Stamps) participation rate is 72%. Only 53% of the eligible working poor participate in the SNAP program. Many go to food pantries instead. 32.2% of households receiving SNAP benefits have children. About 40 million participated in SNAP last year. SNAP is voted on as part of the Farm Bill which was signed this year in December, 2018. The next farm bill is in 5 years

**What choices do families have to make?**

The Feeding America 2014 Hunger in America study found that households that seek charitable food assistance had to make tough budget choices at some point during the year:



**69%**

Had to choose between

food and utilities



**67%**

Had to choose between

food and transportation



**66%**

Had to choose between

food and medical care



**57%**

Had to choose between

food and housing



**31%**

Had to choose between

food and education

**What can you do as an individual and as a parish?**

1. Continue to follow the Farm Bill by following updates on line. EndHungerCT is a good website.
2. Contact your congresspeople to give them feedback on the bill.
3. Continue to feed hungry people from your church ministry but work even harder to change legislation that allows Americans to continue to be more food insecure every year.
4. Reach out to people who are hungry and learn their stories and their day to day existence. It is only by encountering those who are affected by laws that we can know if they are just.
5. Learn about the summer feeding program in your town. Only 25 of every low-income students that participate in school lunch also participate in summer meals. Remember, most food insecure children get most of their nutrition from School Lunch. In the summer they do not have this resource. Find out how many families use SNAP in your community. If there are no summer meals in your town, advocate for starting these programs which are federally funded. Help people sign up for WIC, SNAP and summer food programs. Remember…hunger does not end in the summer.

Sample Letter Below

Dear Congressperson/Senator:

We continue to be very concerned about food insecurity in CT. and families inability to secure enough food. As you know, CT has one of the highest costs for renting an apartment. The average cost for an apartment in CT is $1295/month. About 1/4 of the renters pay half of their pay for rent. To be eligible for SNAP, they need to pay 30% of the eligible amount. This leaves only the remainder of income to pay for all other expenses including child care, heat, light, medical, automobile expenses, etc.

**Cost of Living Index \*in CT vs. US**

| **Expense** | **CT** | **U.S.** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Housing | 126.2 | 100 |
| Median Home | 234,000 | 219,000 |
| Utilities | 118.5 | 100 |
| Transportation | 128 | 100 |
| Health | 105.5 | 100 |
| Overall | 118.4 | 100 |

\*if higher than 100 is greater than U.S. average

This may explain why 13.9% of CT residents are food insecure. We suspect the actual numbers are even higher. We are particularly concerned about children who are deeply affected physiologically and emotionally from hunger. One in six children struggle with hunger.

The Catholic Church does much to alleviate hunger but the needs are escalating faster than we can support those in need.

It is time for our national leaders to propose viable solutions that cut food insecurity. Consider minimum wage increases, **cost of living adjustments for rent, heat, food costs, etc. that vary state by state.** The Farm Bill will not be voted on again for 5 years.

This seems like a perfect time to start legislation which would allow fair

allotment of food resources.

We need to protect the unprotected to have a country where our citizens’ basic needs are met so that all may flourish. How we treat the most needy and marginalized in our country will be a measurement of how well you have done your job while in office.

Sincerely,

Name

Town

Email