

## **Facts About Food Insecurity in the U.S.**

**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.

### **The Reality in our State:**

- Missouri is rated as having very poor food security with 13% food insecure older adults.
- 15% older adults in the St Louis metro area are food insecure.
- St. Louis suburbs have somewhat better food security but many more older adult residents.

### **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.

Information from: Feeding America: [www.feedingamerica.org/hunger-in-america/foodinsecurity](http://www.feedingamerica.org/hunger-in-america/foodinsecurity)

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