
Why We Are Needed

Hunger education for hunger relief organizations

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Bill Emerson National Hunger Fellow • Northwest Harvest • February 10, 2011

Food banks and pantries are often viewed as experts on hunger. Their work interacting with and providing services to community members facing hunger puts them in this position. Many of these organizations also work actively in policy advocacy to engage lawmakers in the fight to end hunger. These are important roles for people working in hunger relief to fill. However, how much do employees and volunteers know about their role and how it fits into the broader context of hunger and poverty?

In working or volunteer at a food distributor, either a regional food bank or a local pantry, the fact that food is needed can be seen, but the systems that lead people to needing that food are not always apparent. The first-hand experience of providing food directly to clients and hearing their stories is vital information, but sometimes the bigger picture is lost. The knowledge and experiences gained from working in the emergency food system contribute to an expertise of sorts in domestic hunger issues, but a larger context is often missing.

As hunger relief organizations increasingly become involved in advocacy work, public policy, referrals, and branch out of their traditional direct service roles in other ways, the knowledge of the causes of hunger and the systems that are working to end hunger become all the more vital. Each employee should be able to represent the organization as a “hunger expert” in the community and connect the work that they do on a daily basis to the full picture of hunger in the United States.

Having greater knowledge is also very important for the people that volunteer in hunger relief organizations. The more that volunteers are able to connect to the organization’s the overall impact and greater meaning of the issue being addressed, the more they will develop a connection to the organization and issue and more likely to make a long-term commitment to the organization. Expanding the knowledge of the supporter base is also critical in working to expand beyond charitable intentions and have an informed donor base that begins to work towards social and political action alongside the organization.

Included below is the curriculum for an introduction to the problem of hunger in the United States. This can provide a jumping-off point to begin an ongoing conversation about the causes of hunger in the United States and the work that is being done to combat it. At Northwest Harvest this learning module, *Hunger in the United States: An Introduction*, was used to kick off a Brown Bag Conversations program that would bring together staff from across departments once a month to share expertise and more information about the issues that affect and drive the work that they do. This workshop was held twice, once at the main offices in Seattle and once at the Kent Warehouse. The sessions were an hour long and provide space for information to be shared, conversations to be started, and knowledge to be further

solidified. The Hunger in the United States presentation will also be adapted for use in volunteer education and youth recruitment.

Once a base of knowledge is established, conversations on more specific issues can be facilitated. Potential future topics could include:

- Why are people poor? A discussion of the systems that contribute to poverty
- Child hunger: The impacts of food insecurity on children and the policies and programs in place to reduce it.
- SNAP/Food Stamps.
- Advocacy work for an end to hunger

Hunger education should be an ongoing commitment among the people who work in hunger relief. Without this ongoing commitment, there can be a disconnect from the day to day work done to the mission of the work of the organization grows. Two-hour meetings can pass without the words “food,” “hunger,” or “poverty” ever being used. Even those working directly in contact with clients can forget the bigger picture beyond the individuals that they serve. This education can help to rebuild that connection and play a vital role in moving an entire organization forward into new areas of advocacy and public policy or better fulfill their role as the hunger experts in the community.

Learning Module:

HUNGER IN THE UNITED STATES: AN INTRODUCTION

Summary

This presentation, discussion, and workshop is meant to provide an overview of hunger in the United States and the reasons behind its prevalence. Also this will provide an introduction to the work that is being done to combat hunger. Overall at the end of this learning module the participants should understand that hunger is an issue of low incomes and limited resources, not just a food issue.

The full module should take one hour. Alternatively, without the Family Budget Activity, this is easily adapted into a 15-20 minute presentation.

Goals:

1. Expand our knowledge of hunger in the United States
2. Define the role of food banking in the overall efforts to address hunger in the United States
3. Go over federal programs

Overall: (Re)connect our everyday work to the need that we are meeting

Originally Developed for:

Adults working in hunger relief. Can also be used for college and upper high school students as well as adult volunteers. Easily adapted for wider audiences.

Applications

Education on hunger and the fight to end hunger within the United States can be used across many facets of hunger relief organization. It can be used with new or perspective volunteers to help recruit and solidify commitments to the organization, long time volunteers to provide a greater context for their work and the role of the organization in working to combat hunger, and for employees to connect or reconnect their day to day tasks to the mission of their work and the need that they are filling.

What essential questions will guide or focus the teaching and learning?

- How widespread is hunger in the United States?
- Why are people hungry?
- What is being done about it?
- What is our role in the fight to end hunger?

Materials

- Handouts
- Focus group reports
- Activity handouts
- Pens
- Calculators

Notes on facilitation

When working to educate people, especially adults, it is important to recognize their existing life experiences and knowledge. There needs to be a connection and validation of their knowledge and experience base that they are coming into the room with. The facilitator should aim to draw on this and relate the concepts to the participants already formed life experience.

This is meant to provide a space to begin a longer discussion of why people struggle to feed themselves and their families within the United States. A large part of this presentation involves discussion the human experience of hunger and poverty within the United States. Participants may all have different relationships with hunger and socio-economic backgrounds. It is important to recognize this and the expertise that comes with personal experience that the facilitator may or may not have. This session was designed for people who are not currently struggling with or do not have experience with poverty. However it will be enhanced with shared personal first-hand experience

OUTLINE

The timing indicated is for presentation portions. Allow space for questions and discussions in between each Roman numeral.

- I. Introduction (2 minutes)
 - A. Thanks for coming
 - B. Names (if applicable)
 - C. Goals
 - D. Acknowledging the wide range of experiences and backgrounds of the participants
 - E. Questions and staying on topic
- II. Hunger in the United States (3 minutes)
 - A. Extent of Hunger
 - B. Trends
- III. Poverty as the root cause of Hunger (8 minutes)
 - A. Not just an issue of food
 - B. Poverty in the United States
 - C. Limitations of wages and unemployment
 - D. Many pulls on limited resources and income
- IV. Fight to End Hunger: Damaged Heart metaphor (5 minutes)
 - A. Emergency Room and Defibrillator -- Food Banking and Emergency Food
 - B. Heart Medicine -- Federal nutrition and poverty alleviation programs
 1. Food Supports
 2. Income Supports
 - C. Heart Surgery -- Systemic Change
 1. Still dealing with a healthy heart
 2. Living wages
 3. Imagine a different world
- V. Wrap up (2 minutes)
- VI. Family Budget Activity (25 minutes) – See appendix
- VII. Debrief Activity and Overall Session (15 minutes)

SCRIPT

I. Introduction

A. Thanks for coming

B. Names (if applicable)

C. Goals

- During our time together I will be going over the following three things:
 - What hunger looks like in the United States
 - Defining the role of food banking in the overall efforts to address hunger in the United States, and what those efforts are
 - Going over federal programs
- Overall the goal of today is to work to reconnect the work that we do every day to the bigger picture of poverty and hunger in the United States and our mission to __ (include organizations mission) __.

D. Acknowledging the wide range of experiences and backgrounds of the participants

- Before we start today I would like to acknowledge that there are a wide range of personal experiences with hunger in this room and socio-economic backgrounds. (If comfortable state own background; example: I haven't any personal experience with hunger or poverty so I have gained my knowledge of these issues through my course of studies in school and reading and research since then. Therefore that is the perspective that I will be giving this address from.) This presentation is aimed at people who are not currently struggling with poverty or hunger and who do not necessarily have that experience in their past. Therefore I want to invite people with personal experiences to contribute your expertise and chime in.

E. Questions

- This is meant to be a conversation, so please speak up and ask questions.
- (Part of opening up the session to comments and questions provides an opportunity to address stereotypes that arise. Answer questions to the best of your ability and if you do not know the answer write down the question and follow up with them later)

II. Hunger in the United States

A. Extent of Hunger

- Hunger is a very widespread problem in the United States. As of September 2010, 18% of households were facing food hardship, which means that at some point in the previous twelve months they had not been able to feed their families¹. That is almost one in five people! Look around the room right now, there are __ people here today, that is _ of you who cannot count on having dinner on the table every day of the year. You may have heard other numbers too. 1 in 6 or 1 in 7 are “food insecure,” another term and measure for hunger. But whichever number you come across, that is 1 in 5, 1 in 6, and 1 in 7 too much.

B. Trends

- During the recession the amount of hungry people in the United States greatly increased. Just in Washington state, between 2008 and 2009 there was a 27% increase in food insecure households. ² These numbers are just now starting to steady, there was even a .2% decrease in food hardship in 2010³ but there is a lot of work to be done before getting back to even pre-recession levels. The levels of hunger in the United States are still supremely high. Before the recession in 2006 around a 10th of households were food insecure, now it is almost 15% of US households⁴.
- Before we move onto the causes of hunger in the United States, are there any questions?

III. Poverty as the root cause of Hunger

A. Not just an issue of food

- Hunger in the United States is not just an issue of food, it is an income issue. People struggle to feed their families because of low incomes and few resources.

¹ FRAC. Food Hardship: A Closer Look at Hunger Data for the Nation through September 2010 (http://frac.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/11/foodhardship_nation2010.pdf)

² Children’s Alliance. *Hungry in Washington* (<http://www.childrensalliance.org/resource-center/hungry-washington-2010>)

³ FRAC. Food Hardship: A Closer Look at Hunger Data for the Nation through September 2010 (http://frac.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/11/foodhardship_nation2010.pdf)

⁴ Children’s Alliance. *Hungry in Washington* (<http://www.childrensalliance.org/resource-center/hungry-washington-2010>)

- We are lucky that in the United States the quantity of food is not an issue. As of 2004, almost half (40 to 50%) of food ready for harvest is thrown away each, on top of around a quarter of ready to eat food which is wasted⁵.
- Accessibility to food is a problem for some people. You may have heard the term “food desert” which is used to describe areas that the residents don’t have access to any grocery stores or are limited to very few food retail options such as corner stores or fast food restaurants.
- However, primarily, hunger is a matter of lack of access and having too little income and too few resources. Poverty is the root cause of hunger in the United States

B. Poverty in the United States

- As with hunger, poverty has greatly increased over the past few years. Around 14% of people in the United States are below the poverty threshold. But the number of people who are unable to meet their basic needs is significantly higher. 23.6% of the US population are “near poor” which means that they fall under 150% of the poverty line.⁶ That is almost a fourth of this nation! The 43.6 million people living in poverty is greater than the population of all of New England and Texas combined!
- Poverty is incredibly widespread in this country. In the 1990s one heard about the hidden wealth and now there is a similar hidden poor. Just for example there has been a 37% increase in poverty in the suburbs over the past decade.⁷
- One statistic that particularly shocked me is that if given 30 days, half of the people in this country couldn’t come up with \$2000 dollars.⁸ The amount of \$2000 was used because that is a pretty standard amount for an emergency. It could easily cost \$2000 for a car repair, or a trip to the hospital, or the first payment of a larger medical problem, or to have to fly across the country for an ill family member. So that

⁵ Hall K. D., Guo J., Dore M., Chow C. C. 2009. The progressive increase of food waste in America and its environmental impact. *PLoS ONE* 4, e7940

US Wastes Half Its Food (<http://www.foodnavigator-usa.com/Financial-Industry/US-wastes-half-its-food>)

⁶ What the Census Tells Us About the Great Recession (http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/2010/09/joint_poverty_memo.html)

⁷ Suburban Poverty by the Numbers (http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/2010/11/suburban_poverty_numbers.html)

⁸ <http://freakonomicsradio.com/is-america-ready-for-a-no-lose-lottery.html>

inability to come up with \$2000 means that about half of Americans are just one misstep, not even a large disaster, away from fairly dire circumstances.

C. Limitations of wages and unemployment

- Also contributing to large number of families in poverty are the low wages in this country. Even though Washington has the highest minimum wage in the country, \$8.67, a person working 40 hours a week, 52 days a year, without a single day off, still doesn't make enough to lift above the federal poverty line for a family of four. So people who are working full time, and even more than that, are still unable to support their families.
- There is also a large problem of un- and under- employment. Currently almost 9½% of Americans are counted as unemployed. This does not even include people who have given up looking for work or are involuntarily working part time.
- While economists have declare the recession over, this has been primarily a jobless recovery. The numbers of people who are unable to work as much as they want or need to are huge and not really showing signs of decreasing. For a large population this has not been a recession, this has been a depression. People still hadn't recovered from the economic downturn at the turn of the millennium, and other groups have been in a permanent depression.
- Either through being forced into unemployment and to stay there or through jobs that don't pay enough, families are faced with limited resources and many needs pulling on them.

D. Many pulls on limited resources and income

- One issue that came up in the Northwest Harvest focus groups was the high cost of housing. Over the past few years homelessness has gone up as poverty and unemployment rose. Lately we have been hearing about a new increase in homelessness as people's savings have run out and they haven't been able to find new employment.
- Housing prices have increased at a much faster rate than wages and even other price increases over the past few decades. People struggle to afford housing and overcome the barriers to acquiring new shelter. Moving into an apartment can cost an application fee, deposit, and first month's rent -- with over half of Americans unable

to come up with \$2000, one can imagine how difficult it is to find a place to live. The mortgage crisis and credit crunch makes housing even more difficult. In addition there are cost for utilities such as water, electricity and gas that further increase the cost of maintaining a roof over a family's head.

- Another strain on the few resources that people have is health care costs. A huge number of Americans are uninsured, and even those with insurance face large medical costs. The food bank clients that were talked to for the focus group report and the national studies show that medical costs are further pushing people into poverty.
- There are so many pulls on people's low incomes and limited resources. People are faced with hard choices to meet their families needs. Will they cut back on food to pay for heating their house? Will they work fewer hours because they earn less than it costs to keep their children in child care? Will they loose their home to pay for vital medicine? Low income families are forced into hard decisions as they fight to pay for their basic needs
- Are there any questions about poverty or the choices that families are forced to make before we move on to the solutions?

IV. Fight to End Hunger: Damaged Heart metaphor

For me I find it helpful to think about hunger in the United States as an unhealthy or failing heart.

A. Emergency Room and Defibrillator -- Food Banking and Emergency Food

- The emergency food system, made up of hunger relief organizations like this, food banks, pantries, and meal programs, is like a defibrillator. This is vital work, shocking the heart each times it fails to keep at least some beat going.
- Food banking, as we now know it, came out of the "Hidden Hungry" movement in the 1960s. Media and political attention put a spotlight on the starvation that existed in poor communities in the South and Appalachia. In large part because of the food banks and meal programs that came out of that era there is no longer a problem of starvation in this country.
- Emergency food services are particularly vital for children and the elderly, the most vulnerable in our community. Study after study has shown the detrimental impacts of

missed meals on children. When young children do not get enough to eat there are negative impacts to their development, both cognitively and physically. Even one missed meal has consequences on a child; and the elderly.

- Each trip to a food bank or meal program is like a trip to the emergency room, it saves the heart and allows for life to continue.

B. Heart Medicine – Federal nutrition and poverty alleviation programs

- However, a heart cannot survive by keep going to the brink and being shocked back to life. There needs to be heart medicine to help sustain the heart and prevent some of the dependence on the defibrillator. The heart medicine is the government's nutrition and poverty alleviation programs.
- The federal government has two main approaches: food supports and income supports.

1. Food Supports

- The child nutrition programs are an example of food supports.
- The National School Lunch Program is the largest of the child nutrition programs. Over 31 children receive subsidized school lunches through this program each year. The program helps fight child hunger through providing free or reduce priced lunches to students from low income families in school.
- The other main child nutrition programs are the School Breakfast Program and Summer Food Service programs. These work by providing funding and food commodities to feed children breakfast in school and meals during the summer months when school isn't in session. Also the Child and Adult Care Food Program works the same way with child care and adult day care centers, and at risk youth after school programs.
- There are other federal programs that provide food supports for individuals. The Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children, better know as WIC, provides pregnant women, new mothers, and children under the age of five with vouchers that allow them to get nutritious food packages, along with some other health services. The Commodity Supplemental Food Program works in a similar way and while open to the same group as WIC in addition, it is mostly used by the elderly.

- Federal nutrition programs also support the emergency food system. Through The Emergency Food Assistance Program, TFAP, the government provides funding and commodities to states to be distributed to food banks and meal programs.

2. Income Supports

- The other main way that the government works to alleviate poverty and hunger is through income supports.
- The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, SNAP, formally known as Food Stamps is the government's first line of defense against hunger. This program provides low income families with a monthly allowance of money that can only be spent on food. The program is no longer called food stamps in part because there is no longer such a thing as a food stamp. People use Electronic Benefits Transfer or EBT cards, which are like debit cards that can only be used at grocery stores on limited items.
- Another form of income support is the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, TANF, better known as "welfare." This is a federal block grant program which is administered through individual states so it looks very different across the country. Usually there is a cash assistance component to the program.
- Another income support is the Earned Income Tax Credit, EITC. This provides working low income families with cash to offset the money taken out of their paycheck for things like social security and the federal income tax. This has been a very successful program in lifting people out of poverty, but the need to file tax returns to get it has proven a significant barrier.
- Before I continue, are there any other questions about the role the federal government is playing in the fight against hunger?

C. Heart Surgery – Systemic Change

- Even by keeping the heart beating by shocking it and strengthening it some, you still have an unhealthy heart. Heart surgery, a transplant or pacemaker, is needed to have a healthy heart to make for a strong body, or country.

1. Living wages

- Bread for the World puts it well: “The solution is simple: jobs that pay enough for a family to live on”
- People in this country are not being paid living wages. Someone working 40 hours a week for 52 weeks a year should be able to secure a roof over their head, pay their child’s medical bill, and feed their family. A single earner providing for one child would need to earn \$17.48 an hour for a living wage in King County, WA. \$28.56 for a family of four.⁹ The current minimum wage is \$8.67, that is almost a \$20 an hour difference!

2. Imagine a different world

- What will this new heart look like? How will the surgery be performed? And by who? Can we imagine a country without hunger?

V. Wrap up

VI. Family Budget Activity

See below for instructions and handouts

VII. Debrief Activity and Overall Session

Go around and have each group report out what they found most difficult, if they found a way to make the budget work, and any other impressions. Then open up for questions and discussion.

⁹ Poverty in America, Living Wage Calculator: *Living Wage Calculation for King County, Washington* (<http://www.livingwage.geog.psu.edu/counties/53033>)

FAMILY BUDGET ACTIVITY: INCOME AND FOOD SECURITY¹⁰

This module explores the relationship between a household's income and its level of food security, as well as the community and government responses to hunger and poverty. The activities provide an opportunity to learn about some of the daily challenges millions of people face in this country.

Description:

Participants will be given different family scenarios and will determine how much money they have left over for food after paying basic expenses. They will also identify the other expenses that families have beyond the basic expenses of rent, transportation, and they will discuss each scenario's impact on food security.

Objective:

- Increase awareness about the gap that often exists between wages and expenses.
- Begin to explore the various government and community responses to marginal, low and very-low food security.

Materials:

Copies of family scenarios (see below), copy of *Possible Government Responses to Budget Scenarios*, pencils and calculators (optional)

Time: 20-30 minutes

Activity Directions:

- Depending on the size of the group, divide the group into smaller groups of 2-3 people so that there are five groups.
- Give each group a different family scenario. Each scenario will describe each household and the household income.
- Have each group brainstorm what other expenses a family might have. *For example, diapers, cleaning supplies, car repair, etc.*
- Ask each group to add up all their *expenses* and subtract these from their *starting income*. The amount left over is the income they can use toward food and other expenses. If there isn't enough to cover all expenses, other plans need to be made and items prioritized.
- Calculate the income needed to cover all expenses (40 hours a week, 4 weeks a month for a full time job – 160 hours)
- After they have completed this, have each group will report out to the larger group.

¹⁰ Adapted from Atlanta Community Food Bank's [Hunger 101 Curriculum](#)
Data from Northwest Harvest's [Focus on Food Security 2011: How Can Our Communities Survive More Cuts?](#)

Potential Government Responses to Family Scenarios

If there's time, use the following information to let students know which government programs the family scenarios might be eligible for. It is important to recognize that being “**potentially eligible**” and actually being eligible *and accessing* benefits are very different. Applying for these benefits is time consuming and often requires taking time off of work, and applicants may not meet all eligibility requirements.

Newport Scenario (127% of Poverty Threshold)

Potentially eligible for:

- Basic Food (SNAP (formerly Food Stamps)) – Qualifies for \$554 in Basic Food¹¹
- 1 and 4 year-old for Medicaid
- WIC (Women, Infants and Children)
- 7 year-old for Apple Health
- Subsidized childcare and energy assistance
- Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC)

Spokane Scenario (77.7% of Poverty Threshold)

Potentially eligible for:

- Basic Food (SNAP (formerly Food Stamps)) – Qualifies for \$668 in Basic Food
- 3 year-old for Medicaid, 6 year-old for Apple Health.
- WIC (Women, Infants and Children)
- Subsidized childcare and energy assistance
- Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC)

Port Angeles Scenario (129% of Poverty Threshold)

Potentially eligible for:

- Basic Food (SNAP (formerly Food Stamps)) – Qualifies for \$617 in Basic Food
- WIC (Women, Infants, and Children) for 2 and 4 year-old
- Medicaid for kids
- Subsidized childcare and energy assistance
- Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC)

Ocean Park Scenario (89.7% of Poverty Threshold)

Potentially eligible for:

- Basic Food (SNAP (formerly Food Stamps)) – Qualifies for \$767 in Basic Food
- WIC (Women, Infants, and Children)
- Medicaid
- Subsidized childcare and energy assistance
- Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC)

Maple Valley Scenario (94.5% of Poverty Threshold)

Potentially eligible for:

- Basic Food (SNAP (formerly Food Stamps)) – Qualifies for \$526 in Basic Food
- WIC (Women, Infants, and Children)
- Low income Medicaid for kids
- Subsidized Childcare
- Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC)

¹¹ Calculated with http://foodhelp.wa.gov/bf_benefit_estimator.htm

NEWPORT FAMILY SCENARIO

❖ WHO YOU ARE

You are a 2 parent with 3 kids who are ages 1, 4 and 7

One parent works full time for **\$8.67** per hour (minimum wage).

One parent works full time for **\$9.00** per hour.

\$2,827.00 is your monthly income.

❖ Expenses

1. Rent for a 2 bedroom apartment.	\$760.00
2. Utilities for electricity, gas, water and phone.	\$210.00
3. Transportation for car, gas, and insurance.	\$359.00
4. Childcare for 1 in daycare, and 2 in after school.	\$829.00
5. Medical no health insurance, all healthy this month.	\$ 00.00
6. Taxes for state, Medicaid and SS withholdings.	\$ 61.53
7.	
8.	
9.	
10.	
Total of expenses	_____
Monthly income	\$2827.00
Minus total expenses	_____
Amount left over for food	_____

Needed to have whole family fully fed

\$706.00

SPOKANE FAMILY SCENARIO

❖ WHO YOU ARE

You are a single parent with 3 kids who are ages 3, 6 and 10.

You work full time for \$9.00 per hour.

\$1,440.00 is your monthly income

❖ Expenses

1. Rent for a 2 bedroom apartment.	\$868.00
2. Utilities for electricity, gas, water and phone.	\$175.00
3. Transportation for public transportation.	\$ 45.00
4. Childcare for 1 in daycare, and 2 in afterschool.	\$1092.00
5. Credit Card Minimum payment.	\$120.00
7.	
8.	
9.	
10.	

Total expenses	_____
Monthly income	\$1440.00
Subtract total expenses	- _____
Amount left over for food	_____

Needed to have whole family fully fed **\$648.00**

PORT ANGELES FAMILY SCENARIO

❖ WHO YOU ARE

You are a single parent family with 3 kids who are ages 2, 4 and 8.

You work full time, for \$15.00 per hour.

\$2,400.00 is your monthly income.

❖ Expenses

1. Rent for a 2 bedroom apartment.	\$961.00
2. Utilities for electricity, gas, water and phone.	\$210.00
3. Transportation for car, gas, and insurance.	\$338.00
4. Childcare for 2 in daycare, and 1 in after school.	\$1142.00
5. Medical for health insurance.	\$398.00
6. Taxes for state and federal withholdings.	\$232.00

7.

8.

9.

10.

Total expenses _____

Monthly income **\$2400.00**

Subtract total expenses - _____

Amount left over for food _____

Needed to have whole family fully fed \$706.00

OCEAN PARK FAMILY SCENARIO

❖ WHO YOU ARE

You are a widowed parent with 5 kids who are ages 2, 6, 7, 10 and 12.

You work full time, for \$9.00 per hour, and you have another part time job at night earning \$8.67 per hour.

\$2,143.00 is your monthly income.

❖ Expenses

1. Rent for a 3 bedroom apartment.	\$875.00
2. Utilities for electricity, gas, water and phone.	\$160.00
3. Transportation for car, gas, and insurance.	\$365.00
4. Childcare 1 in daycare and 4 home alone after school.	\$438.00
5. Medical for health insurance and two prescriptions	\$398.00
6. Taxes for state and federal withholdings.	+\$50.00

7.

8.

9.

10.

Total expenses _____

Monthly income **\$2,143.00**

Subtract total expenses - _____

Amount left over for food _____

Needed to have whole family fully fed \$706.00

MAPLE VALLEY FAMILY SCENARIO

❖ WHO YOU ARE

You are a **single parent family with 2 kids who are ages 1 and 8.**

You work full time, for **\$8.67** per hour.

\$1,387.00 is your monthly income

❖ Expenses

1. Rent for a 1 bedroom apartment.	\$1000.00
2. Utilities for electricity, gas, water and phone.	\$100.00
3. Transportation for public transportation.	\$117.00
4. Childcare for 1 in daycare, and 1 in after school.	\$1548.00
5. Medical for health insurance.	\$398.00
6. Taxes for state and federal withholdings.	\$136.00

7.

8.

9.

10.

Total expenses _____

Monthly income **\$1,387.00**

Minus total of expenses _____

Amount left over for food _____

Needed to have whole family fully fed

\$820.00

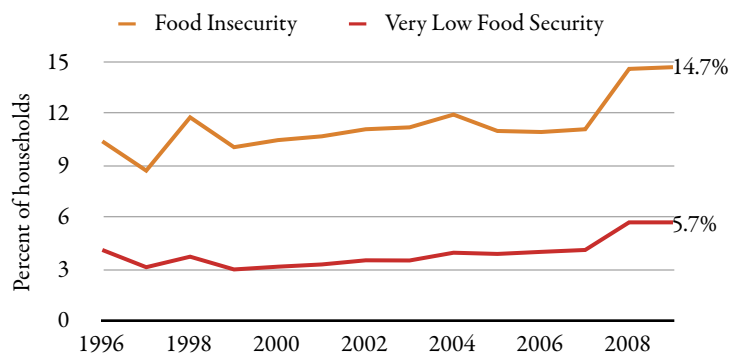
hunger

IN THE UNITED STATES

Hunger, Food Hardship, Food Insecure? The many terms for not enough food.

The USDA uses the term **food insecurity** to describe the condition where a family is unable, due to financial and/or social means, to secure enough food for the entire household. The USDA defines **hunger** as "... a potential consequence of food insecurity that, because of prolonged, involuntary lack of food, results in discomfort, illness, weakness, or pain that goes beyond the usual uneasy sensation." **Food Security** for a household means "access by all members at all times to enough food for an active, healthy life. Food security includes at a minimum (1) the ready availability of nutritionally adequate and safe foods, and (2) an assured ability to acquire acceptable foods in socially acceptable ways (that is, without resorting to emergency food supplies, scavenging, stealing, or other coping strategies)." There is a spectrum of food security from High Food Security to Very Low Food Security.

Prevalence of food insecurity and very low food security in the U.S.



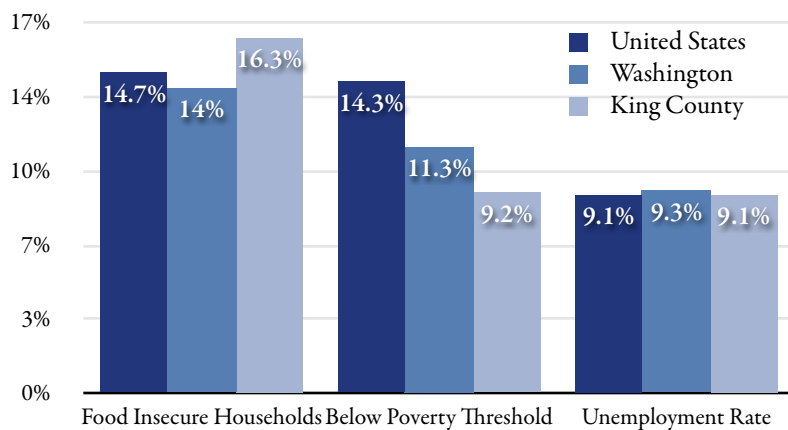
Poverty and a Living Wage

Federal Poverty Line (FPL): The official measure of poverty in the U.S. was developed in 1963 and has changed little since. The poverty threshold for a family of four in 2011 is an income of \$1862.50 per month or \$22,350 a year.

Minimum wage: The minimum wage in Washington, as of January 2011, is \$8.67, the highest in the country. If a person works full time (forty hours a week), 52 weeks a year at this wage they would make \$18,033.60. At 80.69% of the FPL, this is well under the income needed for a family of four to not be in poverty. This wage

would only put an individual, with no dependents, at 165% of the FPL, still considered in poverty under the regulations of many social services.

Living Wage: A wage that would cover all of a family's basic needs including adequate shelter, clothing and food if a person working full time (2080 hours a year) with no other sources of income.



key federal nutrition & poverty programs

Food Assistance

National School Lunch Program (NSLP) – This is the largest child nutrition program in the country, reaching over 31 million children in 2009. Lunches served in participating schools meeting federal nutrition requirements qualify for cash and commodity reimbursements. Also meals are offered free or for a reduced price to low income children.

School Breakfast Program – Provides federal cash reimbursements to schools and non-profit child day care for serving breakfast. Meals must be served at a low or no cost to low income children.

Summer Food Service Program -- Provides meals and snacks to low-income children during the summer when school is not in session. Summer feeding sites are reimbursed for the cost of providing meals.

Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) – Provides federal reimbursement for meals and snacks at qualifying adult and child day care programs, emergency shelters, and after-school programs.

The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) – Provides federal funds and commodities to states for assisting local emergency food distributors (food banks, food pantries, etc). Washington's complementary state program is EFAP.

Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP) – A program that provides monthly nutritious food packages to low income pregnant and nursing mothers, infants, children, and seniors. This was a precursor to WIC and is now almost solely used by low income elderly.

Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants & Children (WIC) -- This program serves pregnant women, new mothers, and children up to the age of five. WIC provides participants with nutritious foods and support for the cost of nutrition counseling, health referrals, and some other social services. WIC is not an entitlement program, therefore not everyone who is eligible receives benefits.

Income Assistance

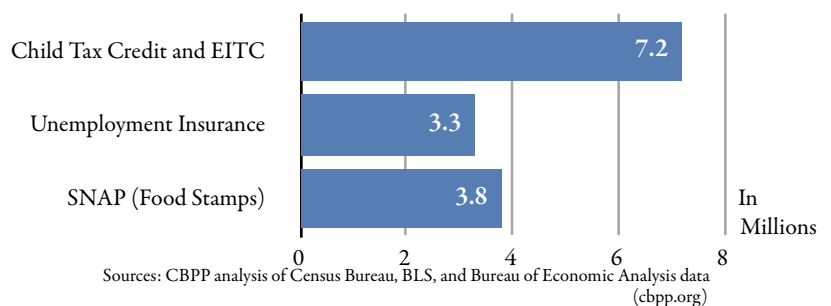
Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (formally Food Stamps) – “The government’s first line of defense against hunger.” SNAP is an entitlement program, meaning that everyone who is eligible receives benefits. Low income families receive Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) cards that are loaded monthly with money that can only be used to purchase food. In Washington, SNAP is called Basic Food.

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) -- The new “welfare” after Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Act of 1996 (“Welfare Reform”). TANF provides qualifying low income individuals with cash assistance, work opportunities, job training, and a variety of other assistance. States are given federal funding through block grants. Because TANF is administrated by the state, the program varies greatly across the country.

Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC)

— A refundable federal income tax credit for working low income individuals. To qualify, individuals must file a tax return and meet other criteria.

People Kept Above Poverty Line By Select Public Programs in 2009



resources

Check out some of these resources to learn more about hunger and poverty in the United States.

Websites on Domestic Poverty and Hunger:

Northwest Harvest's Focus Group Reports — http://northwestharvest.org/About_Us/News/Advocacy.htm

Bread for the World – <http://www.bread.org/hunger/us/>

The Food Research and Action Center— www.frac.org

Feeding America's Faces of Hunger — <http://feedingamerica.org/faces-of-hunger.aspx>

Hunger Almanac — <http://hungeralmanac.issuelab.org/>

The United States Department of Agriculture— www.usda.gov

The Economic Research Service— www.ers.usda.gov

The Center on Budget and Policy Priorities— www.cbpp.org

The Community Food Security Coalition— www.foodsecurity.org

WHY – www.whyhunger.org

Multimedia and Interactive:

Witnesses to Hunger – <http://www.witnessestohunger.org/>

Hunger 101 – <http://www.philabundance.org/resources/hunger-101>

Books

All You Can Eat: How Hungry is America? by Joel Berg

Sweet Charity: Emergency Food and the End of Entitlement by Janet Poppendieck

Growing Up Empty: The Hunger Epidemic in America by Loretta Schwartz-Nobel

For more book suggestions: *WHY's reading list* (<http://www.whyhunger.org/resources/reading-list.html>)

If all 36.2 million Americans faced with food insecurity stood in line at a food pantry in New York City, the line would stretch to Los Angeles and back. Twice.

The Food Research and Action Center (FRAC)