



Bread for the World Louisiana

The Twomey Center for Peace Through Justice
Loyola University New Orleans

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Food Hardship: A National Problem

Food hardship is far too common in every corner of the nation. It is crucial that the nation build an economy and develop public supports that will dramatically decrease food hardship numbers and do so quickly. Essential steps include: a growing economy that provides jobs at decent wages, shares prosperity and pulls households out of hunger and poverty; improved income supports (e.g. unemployment insurance, refundable tax credits) that help struggling workers and families; and strengthened federal nutrition programs (SNAP/food stamps, school meals, WIC, summer, after school and child care food) that reach more people in need.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau data released on September 10, 2009:

39.8 million (13.2%) Americans lived in poverty, an increase of 2.3 million from 2007.

14.1 million (19%) of all children under age 18 were poor, an increase of 0.8% from 2007.

3.7 million (9.7%) of all Americans 65 and older were poor.

The poverty rate for non-Hispanic whites was 8.6%, 24% for blacks, 23.2% for Hispanics and 11.8% for Asians.

To set the poverty level, the U.S. Census Bureau uses a set of income thresholds based on the Consumer Price Index. The income thresholds were originally set using the cost of a minimal diet (based on eating patters in the 1950's), multiplied by 3.

The 2009 Health and Human Services Poverty Guidelines	
The 2009 Poverty Guidelines for the 48 Contiguous States and the District of Columbia	
Persons in family	Poverty guideline
1	\$10,830
2	14,570
3	18,310
4	22,050
5	25,790
6	29,530
7	33,270
8	37,010
For families with more than 8 persons, add \$3,740 for each additional person.	
2009 Poverty Guidelines for Alaska	
Persons in family	Poverty guideline
1	\$13,530
2	18,210
3	22,890
4	27,570
5	32,250
6	36,930
7	41,610
8	46,290
For families with more than 8 persons, add \$4,680 for each additional person.	
2009 Poverty Guidelines for Hawaii	
Persons in family	Poverty guideline
1	\$12,460
2	16,760
3	21,060
4	25,360
5	29,660
6	33,960
7	38,260
8	42,560
For families with more than 8 persons, add \$4,300 for each additional person.	

Food hardship, **the lack of money to buy food that families need**, is a national problem. It is a national problem in the sense that the rate for the nation is so high. It is a national problem in the sense that rates

are high in virtually every state, metropolitan statistical area, and congressional district.

Let's take a look at Louisiana. Louisiana ranks 5th in the nation of states with the highest rates of food hardship.

State	Rate 2009	Rank
Mississippi	26.2	1
Arkansas	24.0	2
Alabama	23.9	3
Tennessee	23.1	4
Kentucky	22.4	5
Louisiana	22.4	5
South Carolina	22.4	5
Oklahoma	22.2	8
North Carolina	22.1	9
Nevada	21.6	10
Georgia	21.4	11
Florida	21.0	12
Texas	20.9	13
West Virginia	20.9	13
District of Columbia	20.8	15

Metropolitan areas also show a high rate of food hardship. Metropolitan areas include New Orleans-Metairie-Kenner at #8 and Baton Rouge at #21.

Food hardship and poverty are prevalent in all of Louisiana's congressional districts. Of the 436 congressional districts in the United States Louisiana's congressional districts rank as follows in poverty/food hardship:

Congressional District	Poverty/Food Hardship
CD #1 Scalise	96
CD #2 Cao	35
CD #3 Melancon	24
CD #4 Fleming	119
CD #5 Alexander	38
CD #6 Cassidy	184
CD #7 Boustany, Jr.	157

Louisiana Parishes with poverty rate above 20% include:

Franklin	31.5%
Natchitoches	30.4%
St. Landry	30.4%
Morehouse	29.9%
Lincoln	25.6%
Pointe Coupee	25.6%
Washington	24.8%
Tangipahoa	24.2%
Evangeline	23.9%
Orleans	23.8%
Avoyelles	23.6%
E. Feliciana	22.7%
Acadia	22.2%
Caddo	22.1%
St. Mary	21.9%
Ouachita	21.4%
Union	21.4%
Sabine	20.6%
Assumption	20.5%
Iberia	20.2%
Richland	20.1%

Since hurricanes Katrina and Rita the change in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP – formerly known as Food Stamps) participation increased by 54% in Orleans, 26% in Jefferson, 142% in St. Bernard, and 15% in Plaquemines.

CONTACT YOUR MEMBER OF CONGRESS AND LET THEM KNOW THAT FOOD HARDSHIP IN LOUISIANA IS UNACCEPTABLE, ESPECIALLY FOR THE CHILDREN OF LOUISIANA.

URGE THEM TO SUPPORT RESTORING CUT MADE IN THE SNAP AND CHILD NUTRITION PROGRAMS.

FOOD STAMPS TO PAY FOR MEDICAID

Robbing Pete to pay Paul is not a solution that will help feed hungry people or provide health care for poor people. The U.S. Congress passed a \$26 billion state aid bill that would be used by states to pay for critical items such as Medicaid reimbursements and salaries for teachers, firefighters, and police officers. Unfortunately, the bill was paid for by reducing future funds for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP – formerly known as food stamps). Bread for the World President, David Beckmann said, “Taking money from poor, hungry people to help poor, sick people is not the solution.”

“...We are now forced to choose between jobs and healthcare or food for hungry people. This is one of the more egregious cases of robbing Peter to pay Paul.”

James McGovern, D-MA

House members (108 members signed, none from Louisiana) sent a letter to Speaker Nancy Pelosi, requesting the Leadership to schedule floor consideration on H.R.5504, *the Improving Nutrition for America’s Children*. This bill provides critical improvements in the school and summer meal programs and will help reduce hunger and obesity in children around the country.

Every five years, Congress reviews the federal child nutrition programs, including school breakfast and lunch, summer Food, Child & Adult Care Food and

WIC programs. President Obama and anti-hunger advocates are asking Congress to increase funding for child nutrition programs by \$1 billion. This would be a huge step toward ensuring that no child in America goes hungry.

2 IMPORTANT OCTOBER EVENTS

October 16th – Observing the 30th World Food Day. For information go to www.worldfooddayusa.org

October 17th – Bread for the World Sunday. A creative way to involve your church in the work of advocating for hungry people. Order free resources, including bulletin inserts and a scripture study for preaching and discussion, by calling 1-800-822-7323 or go to www.bread.org/go/sunday. Spanish resources available.



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