

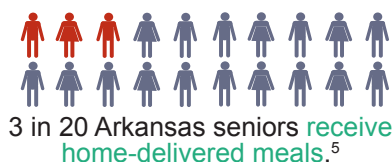
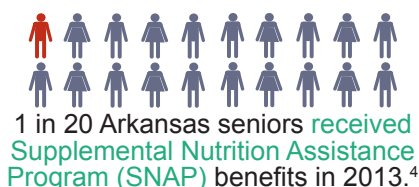
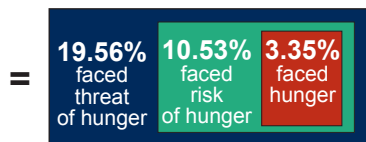
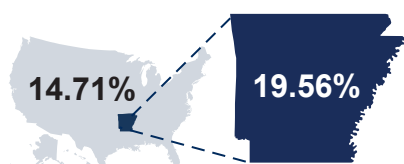
SENIOR HUNGER IN ARKANSAS

September 2017

SENIOR HUNGER STATUS

Food insecurity occurs when seniors have limited access to adequate food due to a lack of financial resources and other limitations.¹ The **categories of food insecurity** include: (1) fully food secure; (2) threat of hunger (marginally food insecure); (3) risk of hunger (food insecure); and (4) facing hunger (very low food secure).² This infographic provides an overview of the scope and impact of food insecurity among Arkansas's seniors age 60 and older.

Nearly one-fifth of the 655,280³ Arkansas seniors **experienced food insecurity** in 2015.²



Of the seniors below 200% of the federal poverty level in Arkansas, **more than 50%** are food insecure.⁴

Arkansas **consistently ranks among U.S. states** with the highest percentage of seniors facing a threat of hunger.

Year	Percent of Seniors	State Rank
2015 ²	19.56%	5
2014 ⁶	24.85%	1
2013 ⁷	26.10%	1
2012 ⁸	25.44%	1
2011 ⁹	24.23%	1
2010 ¹⁰	19.42%	3

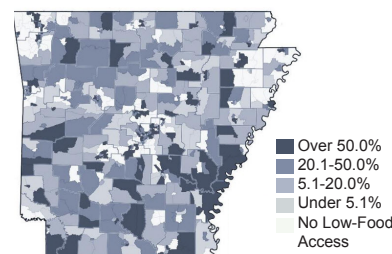
Risk Factors^{4,11}

- Race (African Americans and Hispanics at greater risk)
- Widowed, divorced, separated, or never married
- Low-income
- Younger (ages 60-69)
- Unemployed
- Living with a disability
- Caring for grandchildren

Causes⁴

- Limited financial resources
- Limited access to healthy foods (living in a food desert)
- Lack of transportation
- Reduced mobility

Percentage of All Arkansans Living in a Food Desert¹²



HEALTH IMPACTS FOR SENIORS

Food-insecure seniors are **more likely to experience negative health consequences** compared to their food-secure peers and to other age cohorts.^{4,11}



Negative Health Consequences^{4,11}

1 Development or worsening of chronic health conditions such as heart attack, asthma, and diabetes

2 Depression

3 Nutritional deficiency

4 Limitations in activities of daily living, such as eating, dressing, and bathing

5 Insufficient access to and use of medical care

Compared to food-secure seniors, food-insecure seniors are¹¹



more likely to report a heart attack



more likely to develop asthma



more likely to experience depression



more likely to experience limitations in daily activities

SENIOR HUNGER IN ARKANSAS

WHAT IS BEING DONE

Arkansas

- **Meals on Wheels** in Arkansas is a public-private partnership that seeks to promote health and improve quality of life for vulnerable seniors. In 2016, Meals on Wheels served 38,946 seniors, 59 percent of whom live in a rural community, and provided 3,658,378 meals in Arkansas.¹³
- The **What A Waste™** program, implemented at the Fayetteville Senior Activity and Wellness Center by the City of Fayetteville in partnership with National Foundation to End Senior Hunger (NFESH), helps to better understand food waste at the senior center. The wasted food is studied and menus are adjusted to ensure seniors are provided meals that improve nutrition and promote health. A garden created under the program allows for growing fresh produce and composting wasted food.¹⁴
- The **Older American Act (OAA)** provides for the “organization and delivery of social and nutrition services to older persons age 60+.”¹⁵ Under the OAA, Aging and Adult Services at the Arkansas Department of Human Services contracts to provide meals to seniors in need. Over the last five years, more than 19 million meals have been served to seniors at 180 sites across Arkansas.⁴

- The **Arkansas Hunger Relief Alliance** works to reduce senior hunger by offering application guidance for food assistance benefits. In 2016, 596 eligible seniors received assistance with their applications. Fresh produce is also provided through the Fresh2You mobile farmers market.¹⁶

Other States

- In an effort to reduce food waste, **Kentucky** passed a law in March 2017 providing protection from criminal and civil liability for organizations that donate food. These protections apply to organizations such as grocery stores, restaurants, and caterers.^{17,18} The law expands on the federal Bill Emerson Good Samaritan Food Donation Act of 1996.
- To address food insecurity among seniors, **Virginia** passed legislation in February 2017 directing the Commonwealth Council on Aging to advise the Virginia Department for Aging and Rehabilitation in developing “strategies to improve nutritional health, alleviate hunger, and prevent malnutrition” among seniors.¹⁹
- In May 2016, **Maryland** passed a law increasing the minimum total Food Supplement Program (FSP) to \$30 per month for seniors age 62 or older. FSP is Maryland’s SNAP program. The law requires the state to provide a supplement to meet the minimum total benefit.²⁰

WHAT WE CAN DO



- Support church and community outreach efforts to address seniors’ needs
- Raise awareness about senior hunger through community events or on social media
- Reduce stigma and other barriers to SNAP participation by seniors, through education, outreach, and application assistance²¹
- Provide incentives to grocery store owners to improve offerings and encourage the development of farmers markets¹²
- Provide transportation, such as bus routes, to allow for easier access to established markets¹²
- Assess patients for food insecurity in clinical care and follow-up by connecting patients to SNAP and other federal and local food nutrition resources including: congregate meals, home-delivered meals, food banks, and medically tailored meals²¹



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For the full list of references, visit achi.net.

SENIOR HUNGER IN ARKANSAS

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