



— 2026 —

Food Insecurity in Pennsylvania Report

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Letter from Shila Ulrich, CEO Central Pennsylvania Food Bank

Dear reader,

In each hunger crisis that I have witnessed during my two decades in the charitable food space, I am reminded of something deeply human: when people see hunger clearly, they want to help. Communities step forward. Neighbors give what they can. Volunteers show up with compassion, urgency, and hope. But hunger does not disappear when the headlines fade, and our commitment cannot depend on whether the crisis is front and center. In fact, sustaining that momentum is more important now than ever. With the U.S. Department of Agriculture ending its long-running Household Food Security reporting, a crisis that already touches millions of families risks becoming easier to overlook. The absence of a national spotlight cannot become the absence of concern. If anything, it calls us to pay closer attention, listen harder to those in need and the organizations providing food, and keep showing up—because the human spirit is at its best not only when it responds to urgent need, but when it refuses to let that need become invisible.

By reading this report and telling a friend or neighbor about the growing need for food resources, you are helping to take hunger out of invisibility. You are helping to galvanize communities to show up and help out. And maybe most of all, you are demonstrating that you are a partner in this work and we know at Central Pennsylvania Food Bank that we cannot do this alone. Thank you for championing our mission and believing in our vision that no one should be hungry.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Shila Ulrich'.

Shila Ulrich, MSW
CEO, Central Pennsylvania Food Bank

Letter from Julie Bancroft, CEO Feeding Pennsylvania

Dear colleagues,

It's a privilege to introduce Central Pennsylvania Food Bank's *2026 Food Insecurity in Pennsylvania* Report. On behalf of the entire Feeding Pennsylvania network, I want to thank Central Pennsylvania Food Bank's Policy Research team for their ongoing commitment to studying and elevating awareness of the factors that contribute to hunger and food insecurity in their service area and beyond.

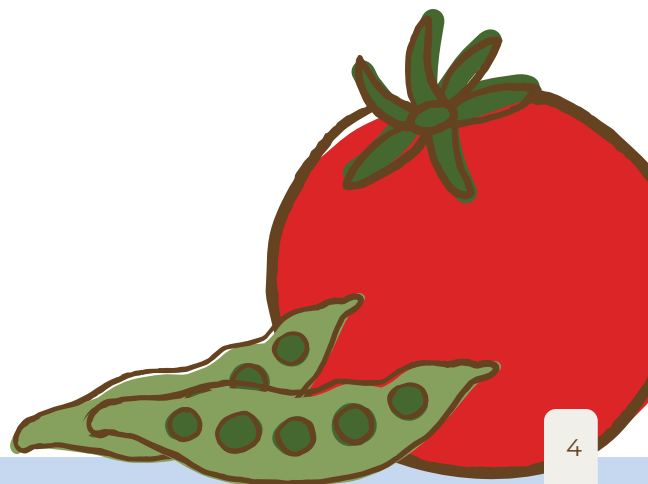
The 2026 Report highlights the One Big Beautiful Bill Act's (OBBBA) impact on food security within our Commonwealth, noting rapid declines in SNAP participation and heightened visits to charitable food partners. It offers clear, insightful data on the human impact of policy changes and underscores the declining availability of federal commodities, which affects our response resources. Access to reports like this empowers us to make informed decisions that best serve Pennsylvania's communities.

Thank you to the Central Pennsylvania Food Bank team for their leadership in this area and for generously sharing their findings.

With gratitude,



Julie Bancroft
CEO, Feeding Pennsylvania



Executive Summary

Food insecurity is an increasingly pressing challenge in Pennsylvania and across the country. Since 2021, food insecurity has increased 44% in Pennsylvania and by 38% nationally.

More than 1.76 million Pennsylvanians, including 507,000 children, faced food insecurity as of 2024, according to Feeding America’s latest *Map the Meal Gap 2026* report, which provides food insecurity estimates for geographies and demographics smaller than the nation.

Map the Meal Gap’s statewide estimates align with the *Household Food Insecurity In the United States* report released by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) in late 2025, which shows that national household food insecurity rates stood at 13.7% as of 2024 with an individual rate of 14.4%. These rates are exceeded only by those observed during and immediately after the Great Recession.

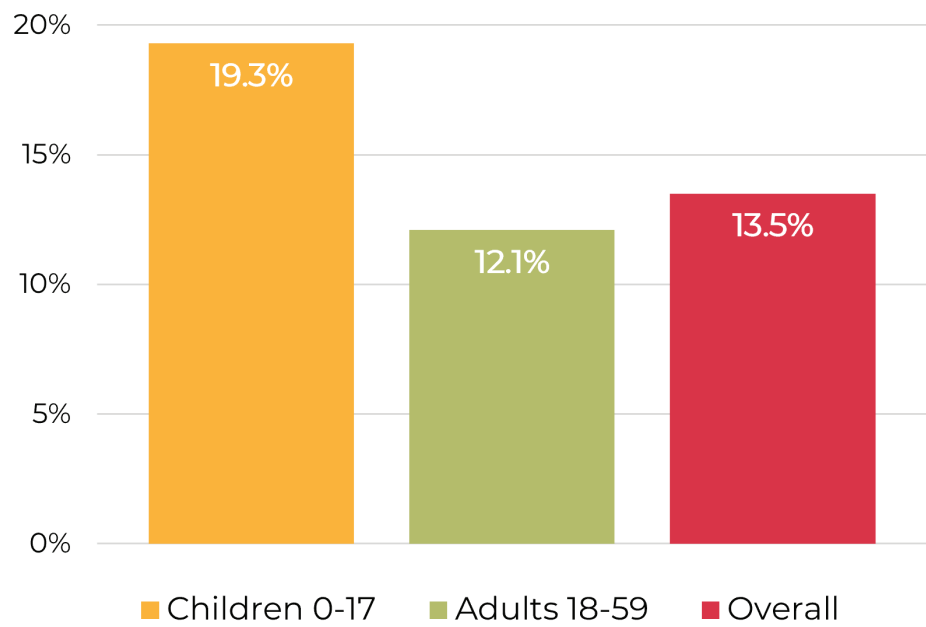
In total, one in seven Pennsylvanians (13.5%) lived in households that experienced challenges accessing the food they needed to live an active, healthy life in 2024. Pennsylvania’s children were 60% more likely than adults to live in food insecure households, with about one in five (19.3%) children and youth living in households experiencing food insecurity compared to one in eight individuals over 18 (12.1%).

Food insecurity affects every locality in the Commonwealth, but its prevalence varies significantly by county. Overall food insecurity rates by county in 2024 ranged from less than 10% in the Philadelphia collar counties of Chester, Montgomery, and Bucks, to more than 17% in Cameron, Fayette, and Philadelphia counties. While food insecurity rates differ by county, the highest number of food insecure people largely aligns with the highest population counties.

Children were more likely to live in households experiencing food insecurity than adults across every single county in Pennsylvania. Child food insecurity rates spanned from just over 11% in Chester County to over 25% in Forest, Cameron, and Philadelphia counties. Nearly half of Pennsylvania counties had a child food insecurity rate at or above 20%.

While the most recent food insecurity data ends in 2024, public policy changes and persistent food price inflation in the last two years point to the strong likelihood that food insecurity rates are even higher today. The cancellation of the annual USDA report in late 2025 after three decades of continuous publication makes analysis of other data sources even more valuable to understand the food insecurity situation moving forward.

Food Insecurity Rate by Age in Pennsylvania
(Map the Meal Gap 2024 Estimates)

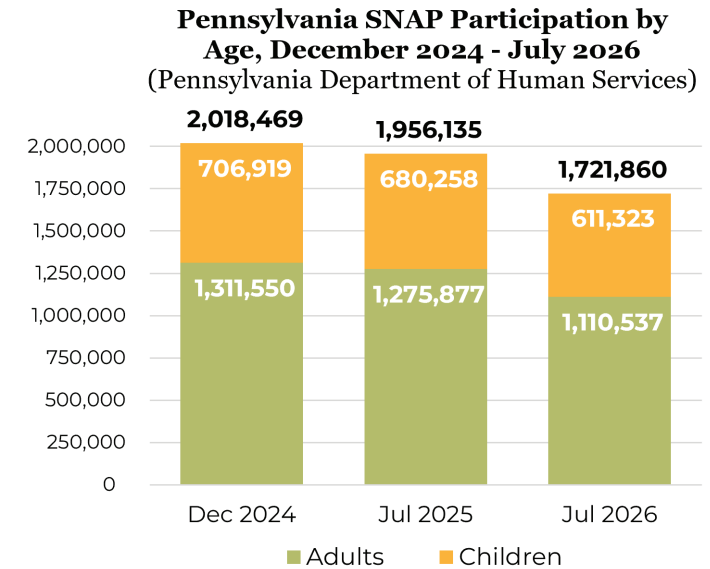


The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), the nation's largest and most important food assistance program, experienced the largest cuts in its history with the passage of the One Big Beautiful Bill Act (OBBBA) in July 2025. Since December 2024, SNAP participation has dropped 14.7% in Pennsylvania, with children and adults similarly affected. In total, more than 296,000 people have lost benefits. Given SNAP's strong record of reducing food insecurity,¹ this sharp drop indicates that more people are struggling to put food on the table.

Available real-time intake data from food pantries also points toward an increase in food needs. Charitable food providers in central Pennsylvania have seen a 9.1% increase in visits since January 2025, with demand from households not participating in SNAP rising more than from households still on the program, indicating that at least some of this jump stems from benefit loss due to policy change.

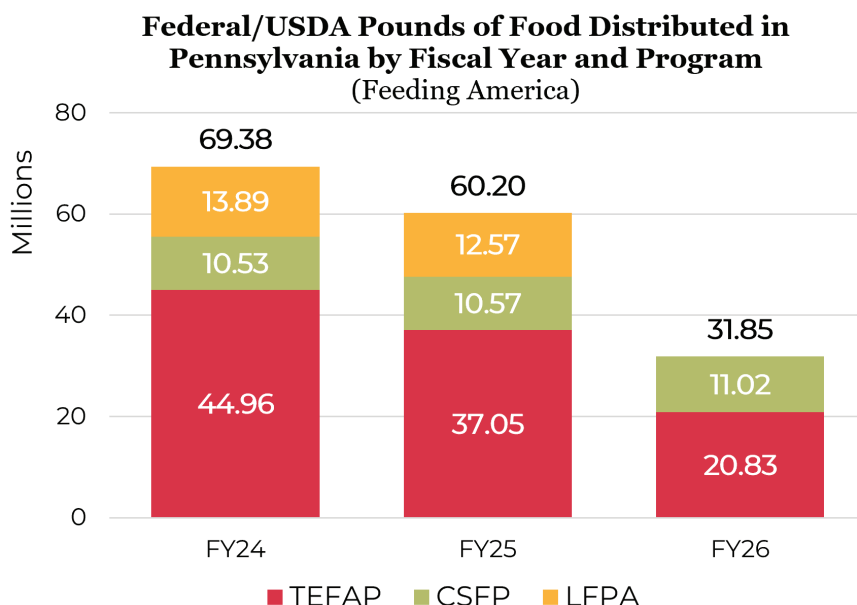
At the same time, federal support to Pennsylvania's charitable food network through programs like The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) has dropped substantially. Federal food pounds distributed statewide have dropped by half, falling by more than 37.53 million pounds (54% decrease) since fiscal year 2024.

Additional support to the charitable food system from the Pennsylvania state government helped cover about a quarter of the drop in federal assistance, although more than half of this support was temporary aid offered in response to the November 2025 SNAP crisis. In total, the



state's charitable food system now has less food available to serve more Pennsylvanians in need. Because the charitable food system reduces food insecurity,^{2,3} this further implies that the present food insecurity situation is even more serious than the 2024 estimates show.

Addressing the hunger crisis in Pennsylvania will require reinvestment at the federal level in key nutrition assistance programs like SNAP and TEFAP, added resources at the state level and increased efforts at local levels to support community nutrition programs that provide food assistance to families.

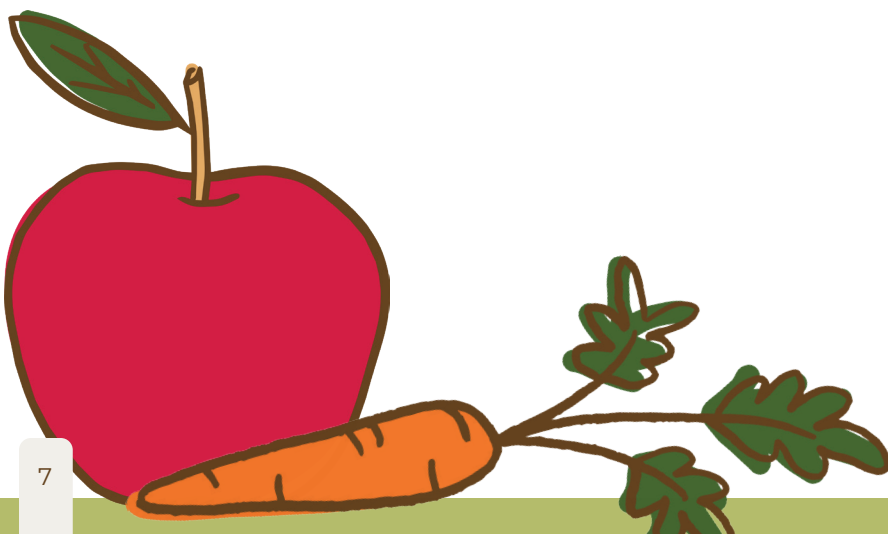


Introduction and Background

Section One of this report assesses the food insecurity situation in Pennsylvania and its 67 counties as of 2024 according to Feeding America's most recent *Map the Meal Gap* localized food insecurity estimates released in July 2026. In addition to analyzing how food insecurity's prevalence has changed over the last several years and discussing how uncertain or limited food access varies across the Commonwealth's counties, this section of the report will also cover disparities in food insecurity by demographic group, including age and race or ethnicity.

Although the data presented in Section One is backward-looking, it is nevertheless important in increasing understanding of who and where is most vulnerable to food insecurity. This year's *Map the Meal Gap* carries even more import in light of the cancellation of the annual *Household Food Security in the United States* report produced by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) announced in 2025.

Section Two will provide further context about the food insecurity landscape across the Commonwealth in the present and future, with analysis of trends in Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program participation (SNAP, also known as food stamps), the effects of recent federal policy changes to the program, and the resulting impact on the charitable food network. This section analyzes drops in in-kind federal support to the charitable food system as well, as decreases in federal food availability have limited the resources food banks and food pantries have available to help alleviate food insecurity. Together, these two sections aim to provide an up-to-date, robust understanding of the extent of food insecurity and the charitable food network's response to the issue in Pennsylvania.



SECTION ONE

Map the Meal Gap: 2024 Estimates for Pennsylvania

FOOD INSECURITY IN PENNSYLVANIA

Nearly one in seven Pennsylvanians faced food insecurity in 2024, according to the most recently released Feeding America *Map the Meal Gap* estimates.⁴ In that year, more than 1.76 million Pennsylvanians were uncertain where their next meal would come from due to a lack of money to buy food.

Food insecurity varied dramatically by age in Pennsylvania as of 2024, with children being the most likely to live in households facing food insecurity. Nearly one in five children (19.3%) lived in a food insecure household in 2024. Children were 60% more likely to face food insecurity than all adults over the age of 18.

Working-age adults aged 18-59 had a food insecurity rate of 14.9%, making them significantly more likely to face food insecurity as seniors aged 60 or older, who had a food insecurity rate of 6.2%.

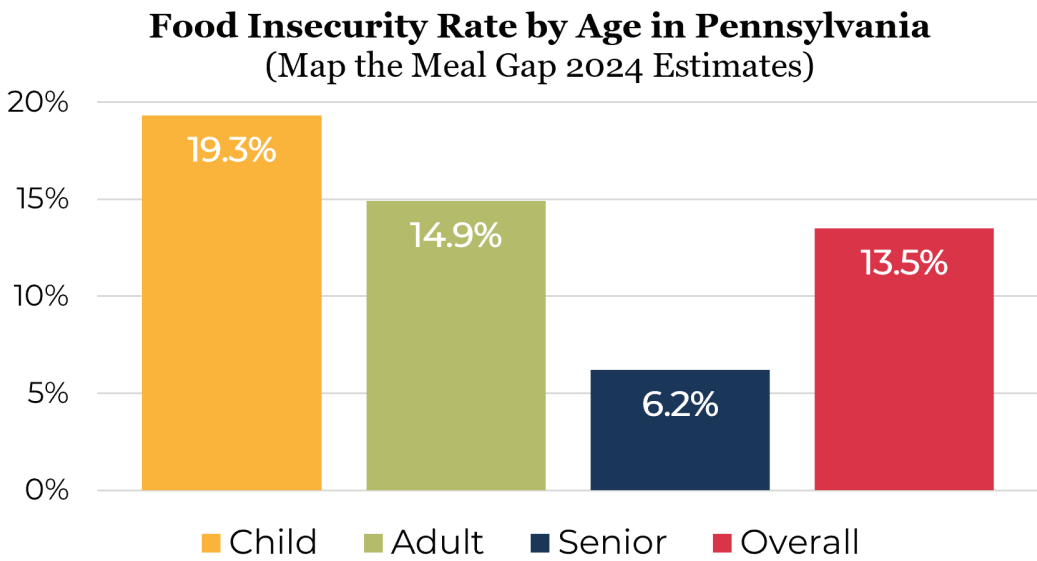
Due to these considerable disparities in food insecurity rates by age, children made up more than a quarter (29%) of the food insecure population despite being just a fifth (20%) of the total population as of 2024.

There were also major inequities in food insecurity rates by race and ethnicity. Most food insecure individuals in Pennsylvania are white, non-Hispanic, but Black and Hispanic individuals are

disproportionately likely to face food insecurity. In 2024, Black and Hispanic Pennsylvanians were more than two and a half times more likely to face food insecurity than their white, non-Hispanic neighbors, with rates of 27% and 29%, respectively.

Furthermore, food insecurity is not evenly distributed across the Commonwealth's different geographies. Pennsylvania's rural counties, as defined using USDA's Rural-Urban Continuum Code (RUCC), had slightly higher food insecurity rates in 2024 than counties within metropolitan areas. Specifically, rural counties had a 14.0% average food insecurity rate compared to 13.0% in metro counties.

It is important to note that county-level rates mask differences in food insecurity's incidence within counties. The USDA *Household Food Insecurity in the United States* report found that major cities within metro areas had food insecurity rates similar to those found in highly rural areas, while suburban areas had somewhat lower rates.⁵ An interactive map with 2024 food insecurity rates by county and census tract is available online.



FOOD INSECURITY IN PENNSYLVANIA OVER TIME

Food insecurity rates across Pennsylvania rose slightly in 2024 from 13.2% in 2023 to 13.5%, continuing a trend that began after 2020. Overall food insecurity has jumped by more than 50% since 2020 and is now up 44% since 2021, the year in which national-level food insecurity was at its most recent low.

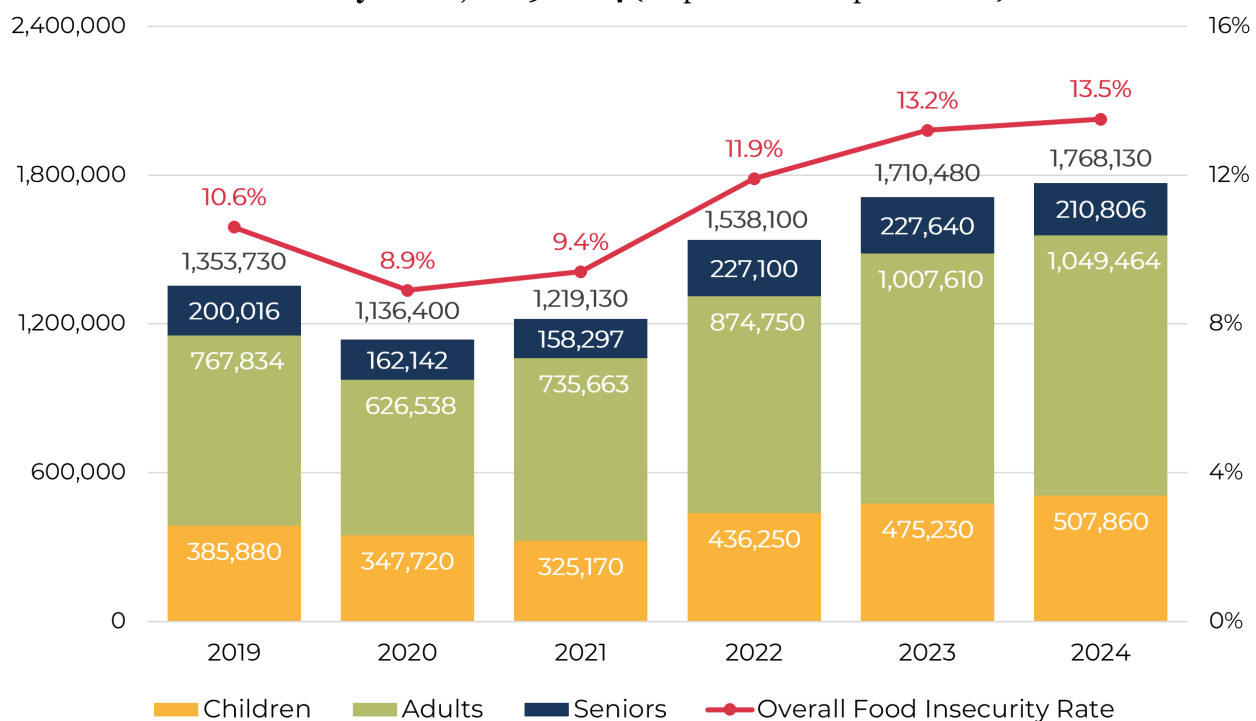
Similar trends in food insecurity over the last few years are reflected in other data sources, including the USDA *Household Food Security in the United States* report and the Urban Institute's Wellbeing and Basic Needs Survey (WBNS).⁶

The increase in food insecurity seen since the turn of the decade results from a variety of factors. One important factor is the expiration of pandemic-related federal programs like the expanded Child Tax Credit (CTC)⁷ and Emergency Allotments⁸ for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, also known as food stamps) in 2022 and 2023 that reversed previous improvements in food security. Grocery inflation and sustained high prices have likely caused more households to experience food insecurity in recent years as well; the cost of food at home has risen 33% since July 2019.⁹

As will be discussed in Section Two of this report, cuts and eligibility changes to major anti-hunger and anti-poverty programs like SNAP and Medicaid made in the July 2025 One Big Beautiful Bill Act (OBBBA) are likely driving and will continue to drive increases in food needs in Pennsylvania and beyond. Public policy is a critical tool in the effort to combat hunger, as shown by the significant impact it had on food insecurity rates just a few years ago.

Additionally, the discontinuation of the *Household Food Security in the United States* report after thirty years of continuous publication¹⁰ will make tracking progress over time more challenging. Although alternate sources of national food insecurity statistics exist, including the WBNS and several other federally or privately collected datasets,¹¹ the USDA report was the gold-standard source of information about food insecurity's prevalence, severity and dispersion across the country.

Food Insecurity Rate and Number Food Insecure by Age in Pennsylvania, 2019-2024 (Map the Meal Gap Estimates)

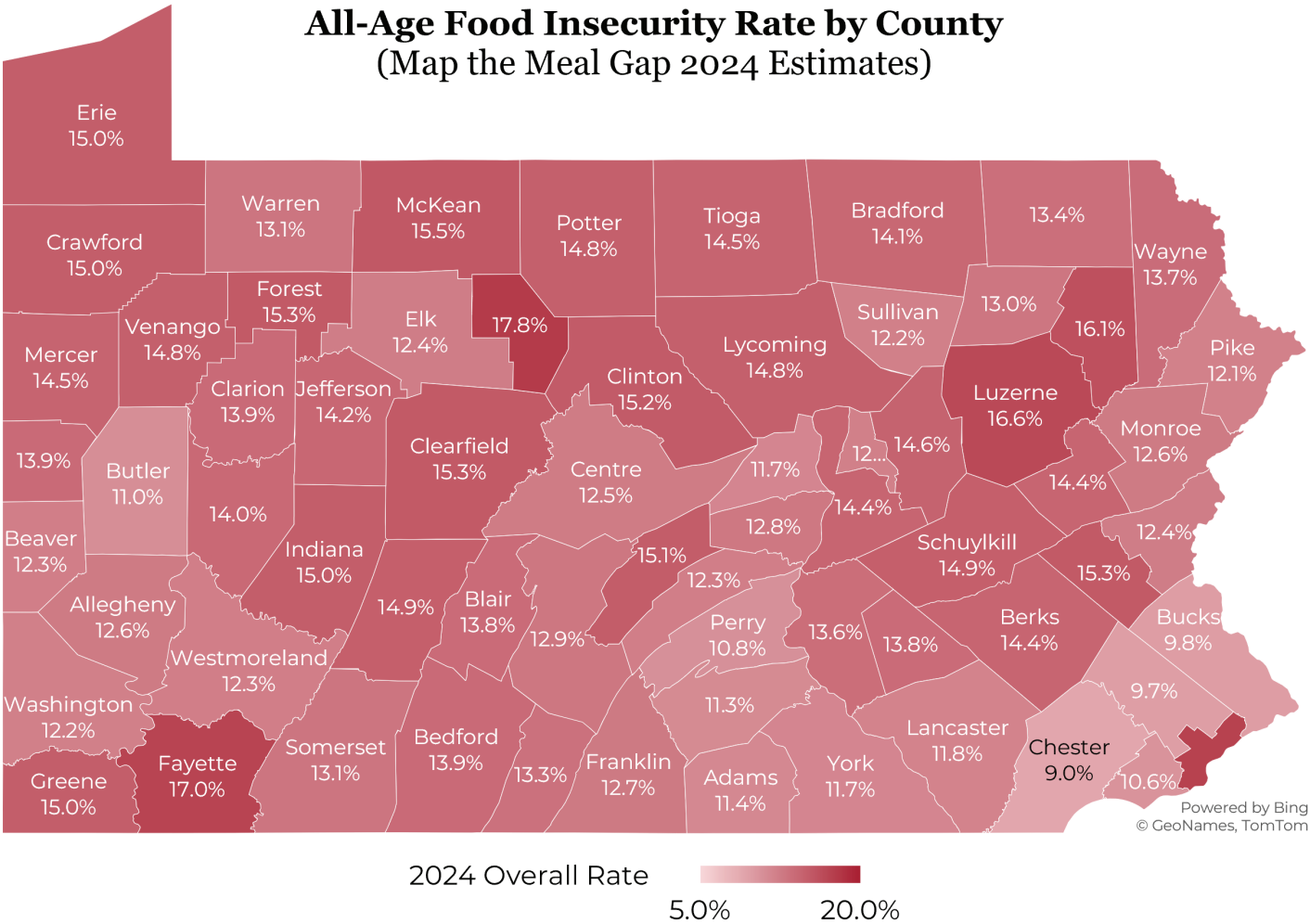


ALL-AGE FOOD INSECURITY RATE BY COUNTY

Food insecurity varies substantially by county across the Commonwealth. The below map shows the all-age food insecurity for each of Pennsylvania’s 67 counties as of 2024 using *Map the Meal Gap* estimates.

Overall food insecurity rates ranged from a low of 9.0% in Chester County to a high of 17.8% in Cameron County as of 2024. In general, food insecurity was less prevalent in suburban counties, most notably the Philadelphia collar counties (Bucks, Chester, Delaware, and Montgomery), which all had food insecurity rates below 11%. The only other county in the state that had a rate below this threshold was Perry County in central Pennsylvania.

High food insecurity rates were most often found in either highly rural or urban counties; Cameron County had the highest rate at 17.8%, but Philadelphia was close behind at 17.3%, followed by Fayette at 17.0%. No other county had a food insecurity rate above 17%.

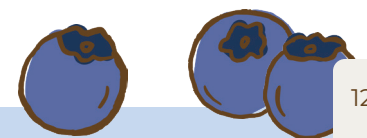
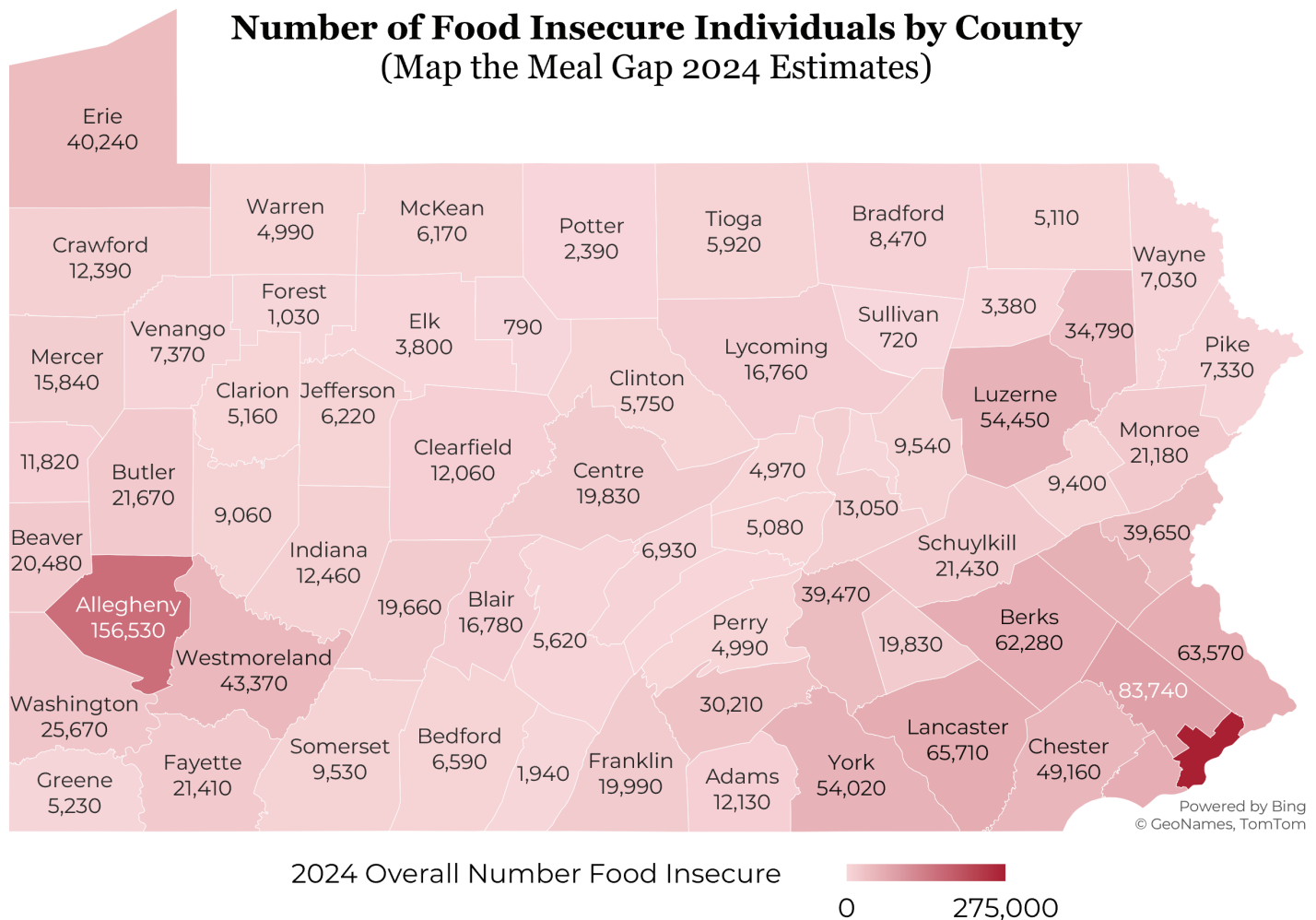


NUMBER OF FOOD INSECURE INDIVIDUALS BY COUNTY

The number of food insecure individuals by county provides a different perspective on the issue of uncertain or limited food access across Pennsylvania, as the number of food insecure individuals is equal to the food insecurity rate times the total population.

Because the population of the Commonwealth is not evenly distributed across its counties, this means that densely populated counties with relatively low food insecurity rates are nevertheless home to large numbers of food insecure individuals, and that rural, sparsely populated counties with high rates have relatively few food insecure individuals.

The map below shows the number of food insecure individuals by county as of 2024.



NUMBER OF FOOD INSECURE INDIVIDUALS BY COUNTY (CONT.)

Just two counties – Philadelphia and Allegheny – were home to nearly a quarter of Pennsylvania’s food insecure population, with 274,020 and 156,530 food insecure individuals respectively as of 2024.

Philadelphians were disproportionately likely to have uncertain or limited food access. About one in six food insecure Pennsylvanians lived in the city (15%), though it makes up only an eighth (12%) of the state’s total population.

Allegheny County, which contains the city of Pittsburgh and many of its suburbs, was more proportionately affected by food insecurity; it accounted for 9.5% of the Commonwealth’s population and 8.9% of food insecure Pennsylvanians.

Eight other counties had food insecure populations of 50,000 or more as of 2024, including Montgomery, Lancaster, Bucks, Berks, Delaware, Lehigh, Luzerne, and York. These counties, as well as Allegheny and Philadelphia, are shown in the table below. The table ranks the top ten counties in Pennsylvania by food insecurity rate and the food insecure population.

The top ten counties in food insecure population largely align with the top ten counties in overall population as of 2024, except for Luzerne, which ranks twelfth in population but rises to ninth in food insecure population. Conversely, Chester County is seventh in total population but eleventh in food insecure population. Altogether, food insecure residents of these ten counties made up just over half of the total food insecure population of Pennsylvania, a slightly smaller share than their proportion of total statewide population (54.3%) according to the 2024 5-Year American Community Survey.¹²

Top 10 Pennsylvania Counties by Food Insecurity Rate and Population (Map the Meal Gap 2024 Estimates)				
Rank	Food Insecurity Rate		Food Insecure Population	
1	Cameron	17.8%	Philadelphia	274,020
2	Philadelphia	17.3%	Allegheny	156,530
3	Fayette	17.0%	Montgomery	83,740
4	Luzerne	16.6%	Lancaster	65,710
5	Lackawanna	16.1%	Bucks	63,570
6	McKean	15.5%	Berks	62,280
7	Clearfield	15.3%	Delaware	61,500
8	Forest	15.3%	Lehigh	58,060
9	Lehigh	15.3%	Luzerne	54,450
10	Clinton	15.2%	York	54,020

CHILD FOOD INSECURITY RATE BY COUNTY

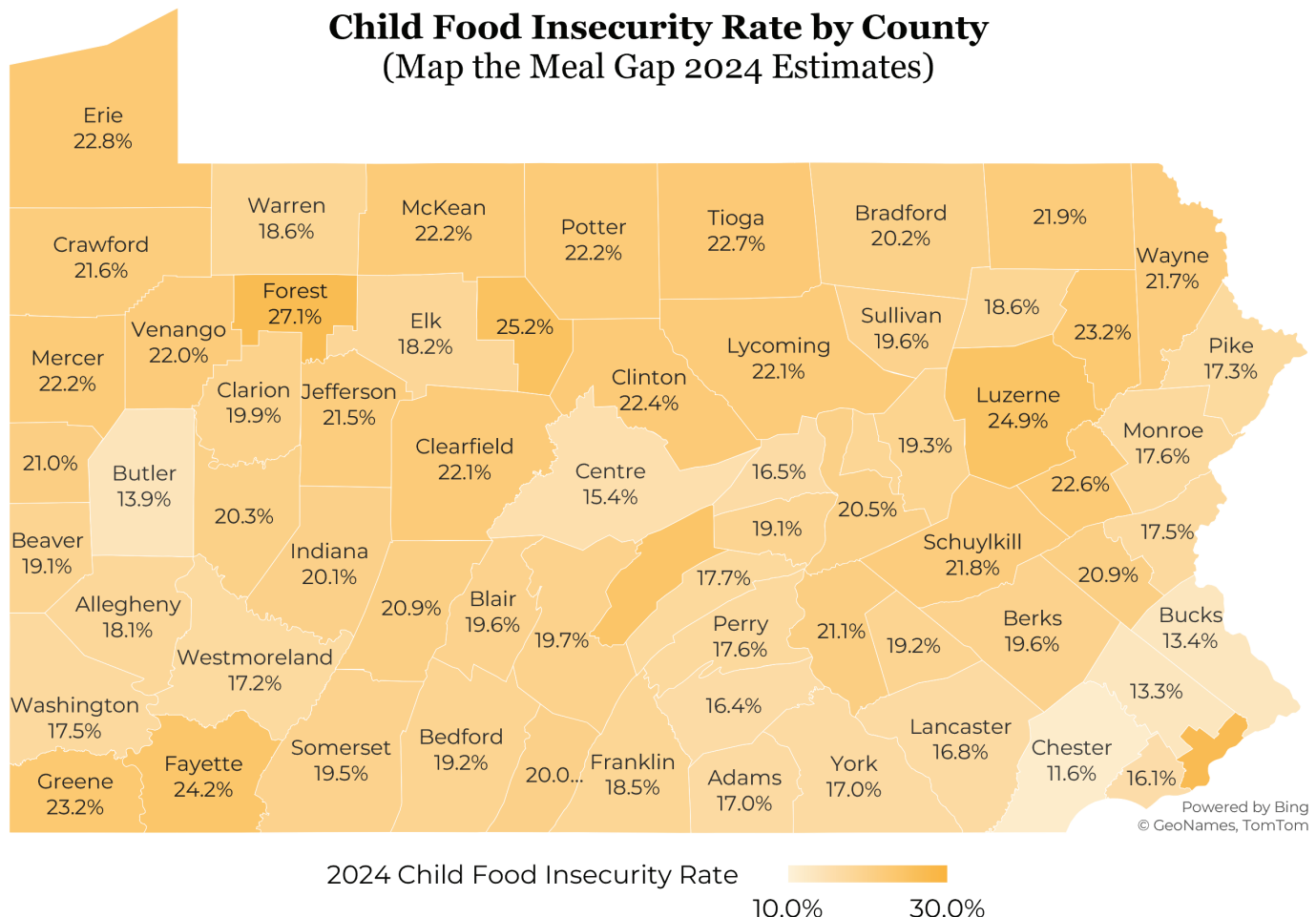
Child food insecurity grew at a faster pace than overall food insecurity across Pennsylvania between 2023 and 2024, rising 6.6% from 18.1% to 19.3%. One in five children in the Commonwealth had uncertain access to food at some point in 2024, making them by far the age group most vulnerable to food insecurity.

Children and youth under the age of 18 were 30% more likely to live in households facing food insecurity than working-age adults, who had a food insecurity rate of 14.9%. Furthermore, child food insecurity rates were more than triple that of seniors over the age of 60, who had a rate of 6.2%. These relative rates simultaneously highlight the disproportionate impact on young Americans and the relative strength of the social safety net for older ones.

The below map shows child food insecurity rates by county in Pennsylvania as of 2024.

Child food insecurity rates ranged from a low of 11.6% in Chester County to a high of 27.1% in Forest County as of 2024 (although there are less than 250 total children in Forest County). As with overall food insecurity, child food insecurity rates tended to be lowest in suburban counties, including many of the Philadelphia collar counties (in this case Bucks, Chester, and Montgomery) as well as Butler County north of Pittsburgh, which all had rates below 14%.

Geographic trends around high child food insecurity rates generally align with the trends observed for the overall population. Food insecurity most commonly occurs in either highly urban or rural counties. While Forest County had the highest child food insecurity rate at 27.1%, Philadelphia was only narrowly second at 27.0%. Just one other county, Cameron, had a child food insecurity rate above 25%, though Luzerne County, which contains Wilkes-Barre, came close at 24.9%. A total of 32 counties had child food insecurity rates of 20% or higher.

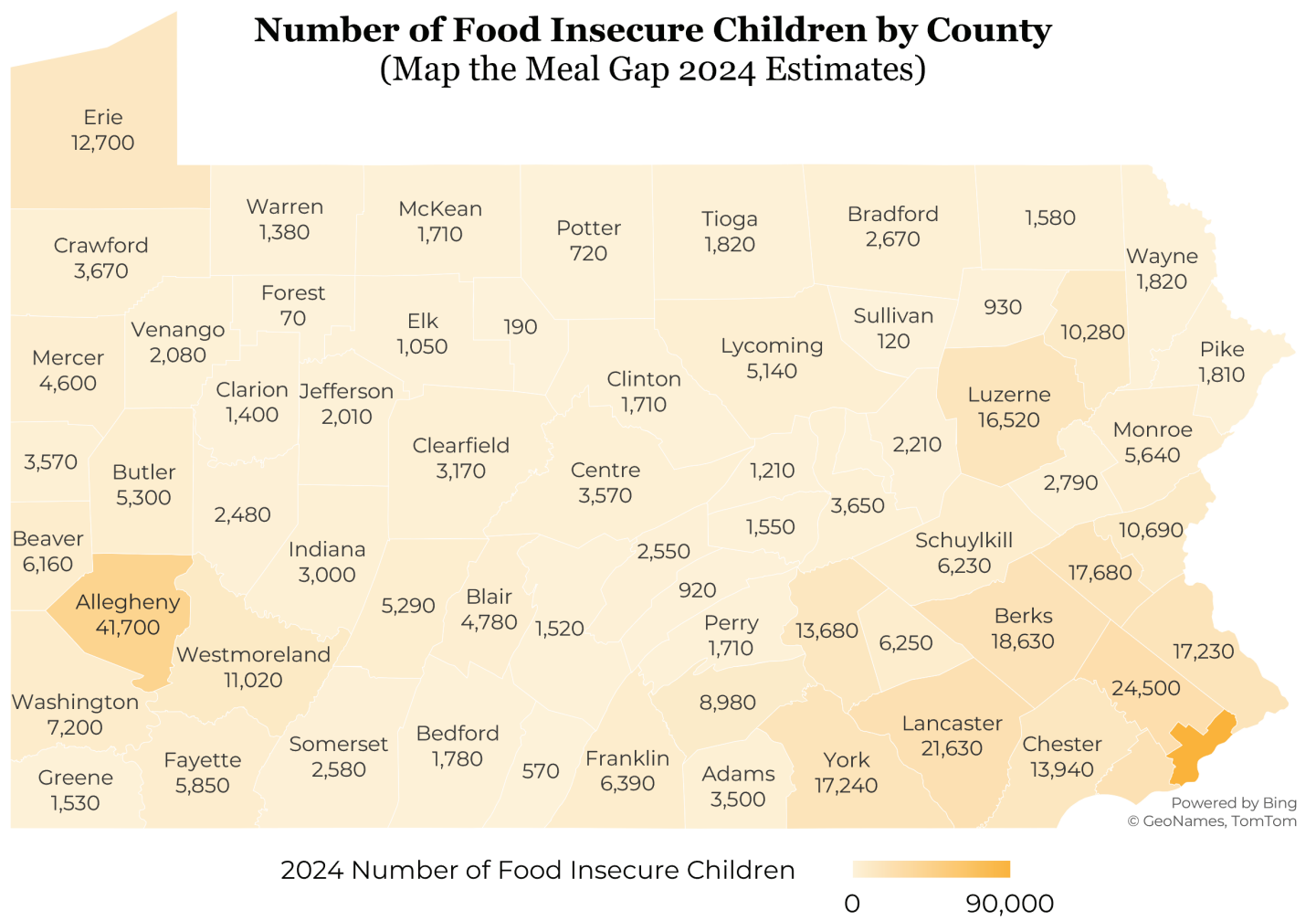


NUMBER OF FOOD INSECURE CHILDREN BY COUNTY

As with overall food insecurity, the number of food insecure children by county is a function of the child population and child food insecurity rate, which reveals different patterns in the dispersion of food insecurity across Pennsylvania.

The map below shows the number of food insecure children by county as of 2024.

The distribution of food insecure children across Pennsylvania is similar to the distribution of all food insecure individuals; just over a quarter of food insecure children and youth in the Commonwealth lived in either Philadelphia (90,470 children) or Allegheny County (41,700 children). Philadelphia’s children make up a disproportionate share of the total population of food insecure children, as only 13% of children in the Commonwealth lived in the city as of 2024, but around 18% of food insecure children lived in the city.



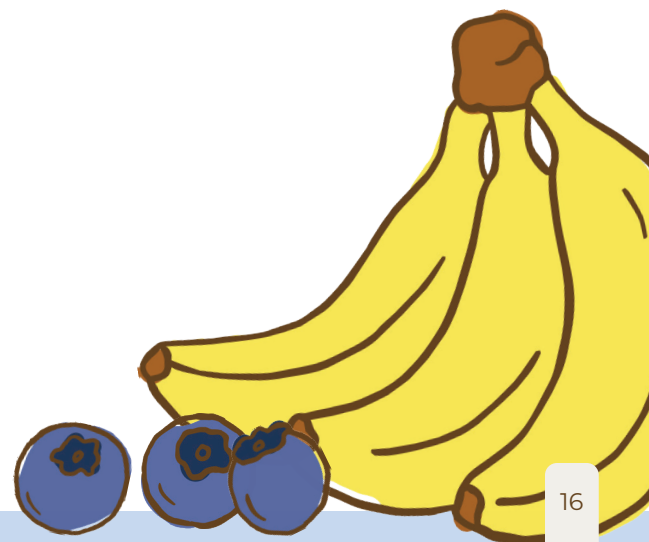
NUMBER OF FOOD INSECURE CHILDREN BY COUNTY (CONT.)

Eight other counties were home to 15,000 or more food insecure children each. These counties are listed in the table below and include Montgomery, Lancaster, Delaware, Berks, Lehigh, York, Bucks, and Luzerne as well as Allegheny and Philadelphia.

These counties again are largely the ten most populous, with the exception of Luzerne; it is the eleventh ranked county in number of total children but comes tenth in the number of food insecure children. Chester County has the seventh most children in the state but is eleventh in the number of food insecure children in the state due to its state-low child food insecurity rate of 11.6%. Including Philadelphia and Allegheny, these ten counties accounted for over 55% of food insecure children in the state.

Top 10 Counties by Child Food Insecurity Rate and Food Insecure Children
(Map the Meal Gap 2024 Estimates)

Rank	Child Food Insecurity Rate		Food Insecure Children	
1	Forest	27.1%	Philadelphia	90,470
2	Philadelphia	27.0%	Allegheny	41,700
3	Cameron	25.2%	Montgomery	24,500
4	Luzerne	24.9%	Lancaster	21,630
5	Mifflin	24.4%	Delaware	20,590
6	Fayette	24.2%	Berks	18,630
7	Lackawanna	23.2%	Lehigh	17,680
8	Greene	23.2%	York	17,240
9	Erie	22.8%	Bucks	17,230
10	Tioga	22.7%	Luzerne	16,520



FOOD INSECURITY RATE BY RACE AND ETHNICITY AND COUNTY

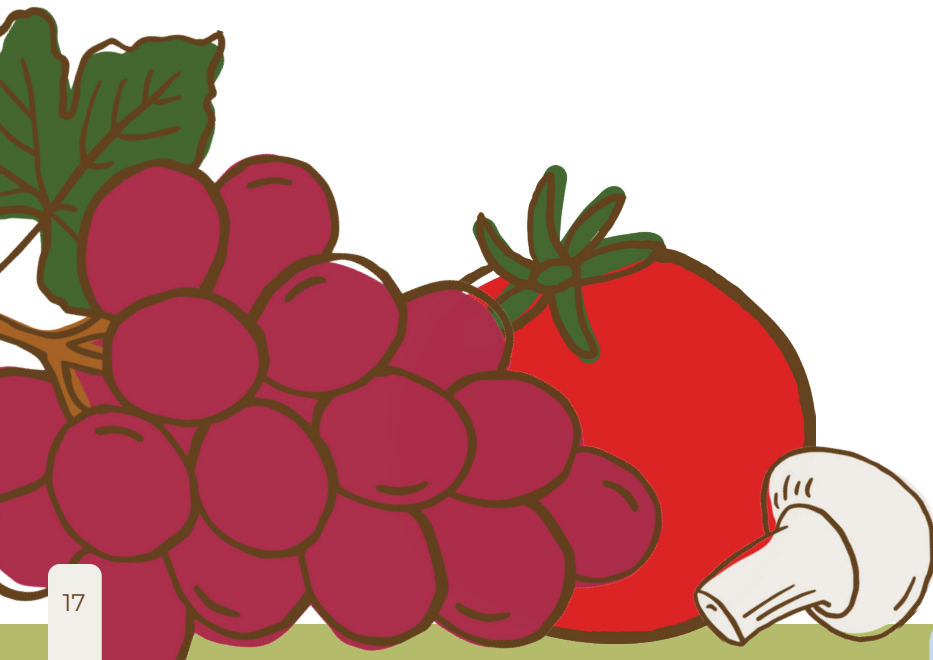
As of 2024, food insecurity rates among Hispanic and Black individuals were between two and a half and three times those of white, non-Hispanic individuals in Pennsylvania; one in four Black (27%) or Hispanic (29%) individuals were food insecure compared to only one in ten non-Hispanic white (10%) individuals across the Commonwealth.

These dramatic disparities in food insecurity by race and ethnicity are the result of inequities in the underlying drivers of food insecurity, such as household income, employment, homeownership and disability status, which themselves are the direct result of historic, systemic racism and the policies that perpetuate it¹³ including but not limited to housing and employment discrimination and inequitable access to educational opportunities.

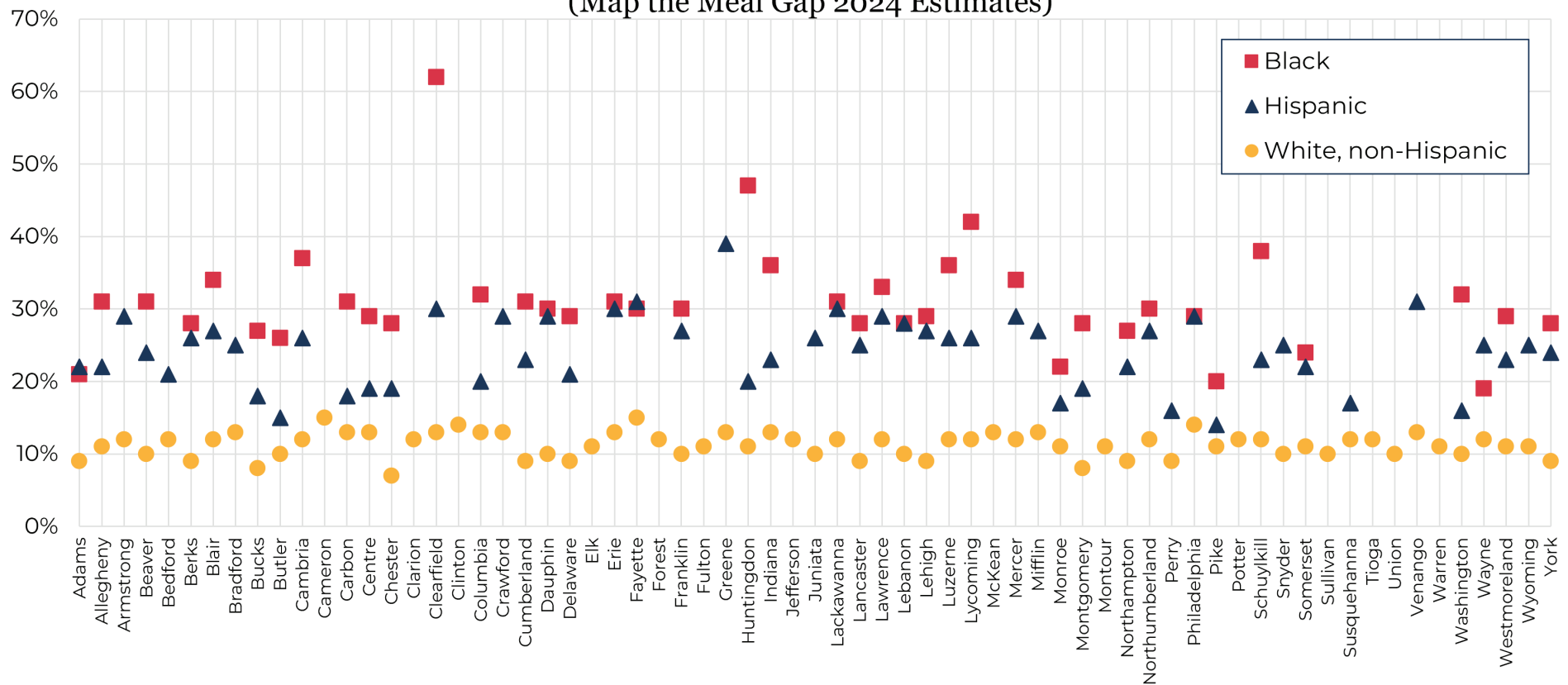
41 of 67 Pennsylvania counties had sufficient data to estimate 2024 food insecurity rates for Black individuals. Of these, Clearfield had the highest at 62% although the margin of error on this estimate is high given the small population in Clearfield County, while Wayne had the lowest at 19%.

Food insecurity rates for the Hispanic population could be calculated for 44 of the Commonwealth's 67 counties. Greene County had the highest food insecurity rate among Hispanic individuals at 39% and Pike County had the lowest at 14%.

Non-Hispanic white food insecurity estimates were available for all counties; they ranged from a high of 15% in Fayette and Cameron counties to a low of 7% in Chester County.



Food Insecurity Rate by Race or Ethnicity and County in Pennsylvania
(Map the Meal Gap 2024 Estimates)



SECTION TWO

Food Insecurity in 2025 and Beyond

While the most recent available statewide food insecurity data ends in 2024, several data points indicate that food insecurity has likely continued to increase over the last two years. In that time, support for the charitable food system to combat that rise in food insecurity has been considerably diminished as well, increasing the difficulty of adequately responding to a rising need for assistance.

SNAP POLICY CHANGE AND SNAP PARTICIPATION IN PENNSYLVANIA

Since the end of 2024, there have been several policy changes and other events that have continued to place pressure on the food security status of Pennsylvania households.

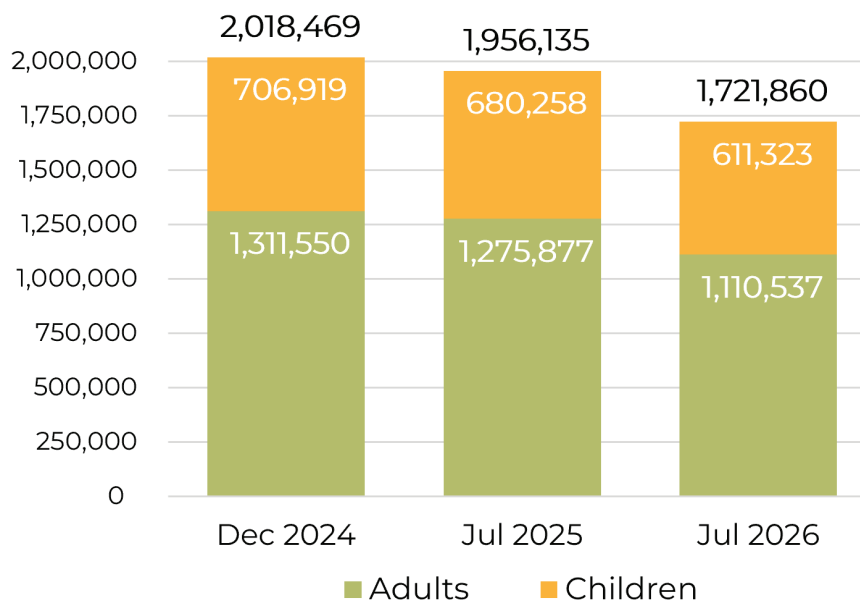
The most significant policy adjustments have been benefit reductions and eligibility changes to SNAP included in the July 2025 budget reconciliation bill, also known as the One Big Beautiful Bill Act (OBBBA). Discussion and implementation of these changes have caused sizable decreases in SNAP participation since December 2024, the month on which the most recent USDA *Household Food Security in the United States* report and Feeding America *Map the Meal Gap* estimates are based.

One in seven (14.7%) people who received SNAP in December 2024 are no longer participating in the program as of July 2026. This equates to more than 296,000 people across Pennsylvania who have lost SNAP benefits between December 2024 and July 2026. SNAP participation dropped from about 2.02 million to 1.72 million individuals in that time frame, with most of the decline occurring after OBBBA was signed into law in July 2025.

Numerous studies have shown that SNAP substantially reduces food insecurity, including very low food security, which corresponds with reduced food intake and is the most severe form of food insecurity.^{14,15} It is likely that the drop in SNAP participation since December 2024 has caused food insecurity to continue to rise through 2025 and 2026.

Importantly, both children and adults have been similarly affected by the changes to SNAP included in OBBBA. These changes included expanding work requirements to individuals between the ages of 55 and 64 and for households with children aged 14 to 17, rescinding work requirement exemptions for certain populations including veterans and former foster youth, discontinuing geographic waivers for areas with persistent high unemployment rates (which previously included 58 of Pennsylvania's 67 counties and other select municipalities in the state), and restricting or eliminating eligibility for legally present non-citizens. OBBBA's policy changes also led to additional documentation being required to apply for and stay on the program¹⁶ raising administrative barriers for everyone.

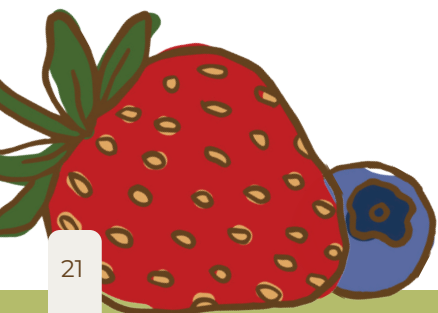
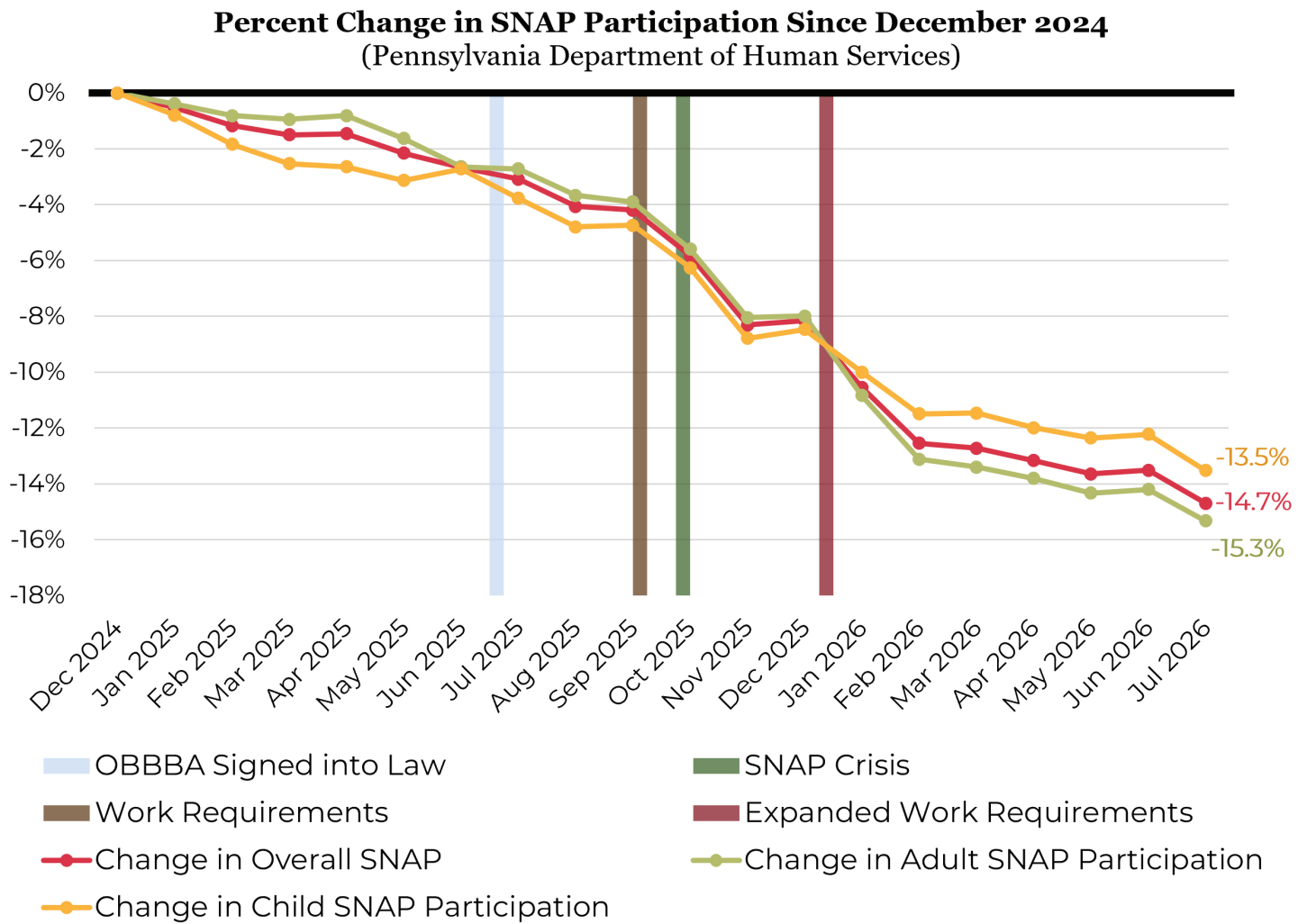
Pennsylvania SNAP Participation by Age, December 2024 - July 2026
(Pennsylvania Department of Human Services)



Section Two

SNAP POLICY CHANGE AND SNAP PARTICIPATION IN PENNSYLVANIA (CONT.)

As shown in the chart below, SNAP participation among children has fallen by 13.5% since December 2024, while adults have seen a drop of 15.3% in the same time frame. This means that households with children, who are already the most likely to face food insecurity among all household types,¹⁷ are similarly affected by SNAP eligibility changes compared to households without children, even though the policy changes were primarily aimed at able-bodied adults without children.



SNAP POLICY CHANGE AND CHARITABLE FOOD DEMAND IN CENTRAL PENNSYLVANIA

The drop in SNAP participation has also directly led to an increase in visits to the charitable food system in the last two years. Charitable food demand has increased 10.3% among non-SNAP participants compared to 7.0% among SNAP participants since January 2025. This resulted in an average 9.1% increase in charitable food demand as assessed using service records from 115 Central Pennsylvania Food Bank (CPFEB) partner food pantries that used a digital intake platform serving 34,000 people monthly.

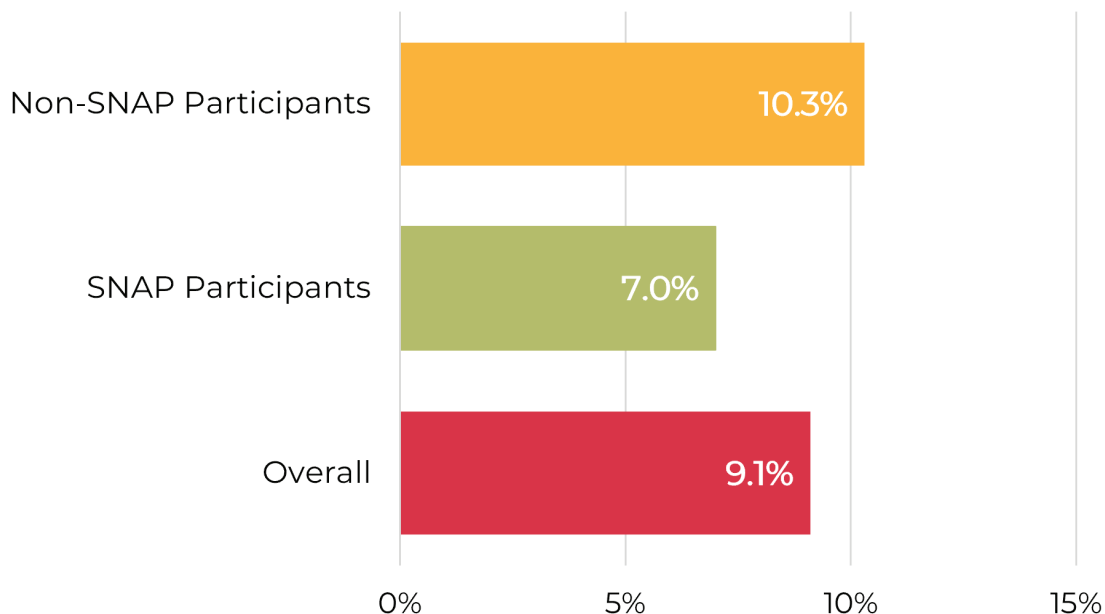
This data indicates that many central Pennsylvanian households are visiting food pantries more often as they lose access to SNAP benefits due to policy changes contained in OBBBA. Moreover, this 3.3 percentage point difference in charitable food demand among households affected by SNAP changes comes in combination with record-high visits to the charitable food system at large. In Fiscal Year 2026 (FY26), the Central Pennsylvania Food Bank and its network of partners had 67% more visits than in Fiscal Year 2019 (FY19).

The increase in visits among SNAP participants is likely due in part to the fact that the total value of SNAP benefits has fallen by 5.2% since October 2025, even among people who still participate in the program. The decline in benefit value is the result of changes in OBBBA that reduced deductions for energy assistance and internet costs in SNAP eligibility and benefit calculation.¹⁸

Broader economic conditions have remained stagnant since 2024, adding another factor creating additional demand for charitable food assistance. The unemployment rate in Pennsylvania increased from 3.8% in June 2024 to 4.1% in June 2026,¹⁹ although it is still historically low. Meanwhile, labor force participation rose slightly from 62.1% to 62.5%.²⁰

Food price inflation plays another critical role. After moderating from record high annual increases in costs of food at home in 2022 and 2023 (capping out at a 13.6% annual increase in August 2022), the cost of food at home started to rise again more quickly in 2026 and rose by 2.6% year over year in July 2026 compared to 1.1% year over year in July 2024. In total, grocery prices have increased by 33% since July 2019.²¹

Percentage Increase in Food Pantry Visits since January 2025, CPFEB Partners
(Service Insights on MealConnect)



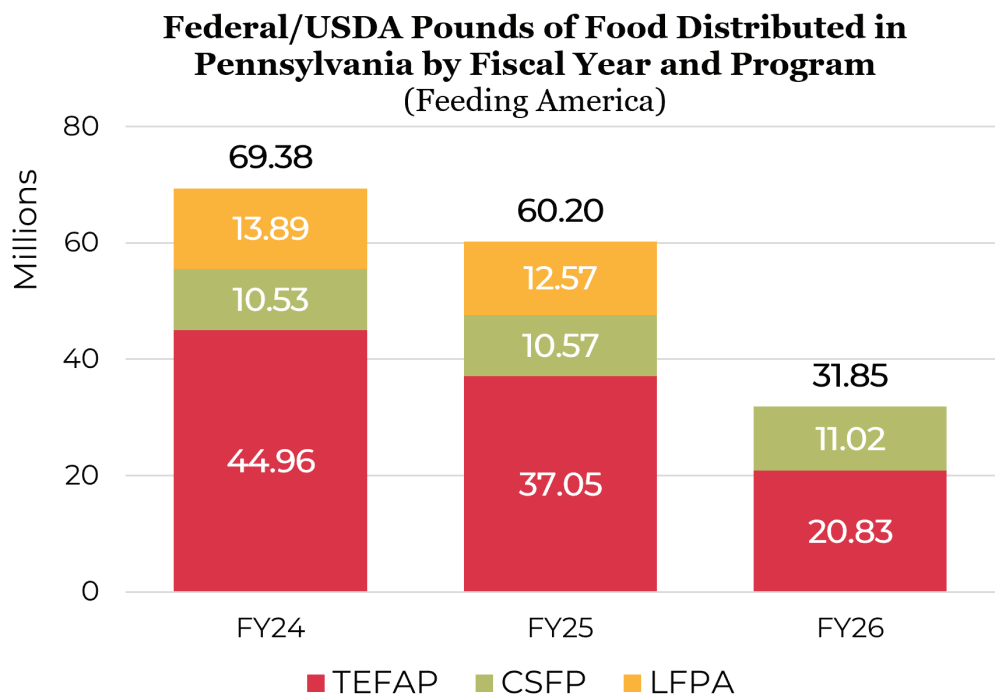
CHANGES IN FEDERAL SUPPORT TO THE CHARITABLE FOOD SYSTEM

The challenges in the policy and economic landscape since December 2024 and the resulting increase in food pantry visits have coincided with dramatic cuts to federal support for the charitable food system via programs like The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) and the Local Food Purchase Agreement (LFPA).

In the last two years, federal food assistance from the USDA has dropped by more than half in Pennsylvania, falling 54% from 69.38 million pounds in FY24 to 31.85 million pounds in FY26, according to food bank sourcing and distribution data from Feeding America and Feeding Pennsylvania.²² The fiscal years referenced here run from July 1 to June 30, meaning that FY24 ended on June 30, 2024.

This drop of 37.53 million pounds of annual federal support over the last two years equates to 16% of the total food distributed in Pennsylvania in FY24. The Central Pennsylvania Food Bank specifically lost nearly 9.5 million pounds in annual federal food support, which represents a 13% decline in total food received compared to FY24. Two thirds of the reduction in federal food support in the last two years are from decreases in TEFAP Bonus pounds, including those provided using Credit Commodity Corporation funds, while

just over a third of the reduction is from the cancellation of LFPA in 2025.²³ These major reductions in federal food availability mean that the charitable food network has substantially less food available to serve a greater number of households. Because food pantry services meaningfully reduce experiences of hunger among visitors,^{24, 25} the fact that there is now less food for the charitable food network to share with the people it serves means that the magnitude of its impact has likely been reduced. That is, more people may be experiencing food insecurity or could be facing more severe episodes of hardship even as they continue to seek help, because they may be receiving less food at pantries. In Pennsylvania, increased funding to state programs like the Pennsylvania Agricultural Surplus System (PASS) in FY26 and the State Food Purchase Program (SFPP) have helped to offset about a quarter of the decrease in the federal food. However, more than half of this increase was temporary funding for PASS provided as an emergency response to the November 2025 SNAP crisis.



CONCLUSION: THE LANDSCAPE IN 2026 AND LOOKING FORWARD

Since the collection of the food insecurity data covered in this report in December 2024, recent policy changes and newly available data indicate that food insecurity has likely continued to rise.

Although the annual USDA *Household Food Security in the United States* report was cancelled and it is not possible to completely replace the USDA's food insecurity data, the data discussed above and other developing indicators of food stress and need will help the public and policymakers continue to understand how needs are changing for Pennsylvanians into the future.

The 13.7% national household food insecurity rate observed in 2024 (14.4% for individuals) is above historical averages and is matched only by the heights of food insecurity reached during the Great Recession. Food insecurity rates being this high in a non-recessionary time frame are extremely concerning.

To address the increasing prevalence of the issue, urgent action to promote policy and programmatic changes that can support vulnerable neighbors is needed. Only together can we build a Pennsylvania, and an America, where no one must worry about how they will get their next meal.



SECTION ONE

Section One of this report is an analysis of the change in the food insecurity situation between calendar years 2023 and 2024 using the 2026 Feeding America *Map the Meal Gap* model, which generates localized food insecurity estimates based on the relationship of food insecurity data published by the USDA to multiple demographic and socioeconomic factors such as poverty, unemployment, median income, homeownership rates and disability status. For more information about the underlying methods and data sources used to produce *Map the Meal Gap*, please see the 2026 Technical Brief.²⁶

SECTION TWO

Section Two of this report features more recent data from a variety of sources, analyzed to provide additional information and context about food insecurity and the public and private response to it throughout 2025 and 2026. The analysis uses statewide data from the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services for SNAP participation as well as statewide data from Feeding America on federally funded pounds distributed by the charitable food system for understanding changes in USDA food support. Information from the US Bureau of Labor Statistics as visualized by the Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis is utilized for inflation and labor market data. Finally, Central Pennsylvania Food Bank internal data on food pantry services is used to understand the interconnected nature of SNAP and charitable food.



APPENDIX A: 2024 MAP THE MEAL GAP ESTIMATES BY AGE AND COUNTY

<i>County</i>	<i>Overall Food Insecurity Rate</i>	<i>Number of Food Insecure Individuals</i>	<i>Child Food Insecurity Rate</i>	<i>Number of Food Insecure Children</i>	<i>Adult Food Insecurity Rate</i>	<i>Number of Food Insecure Adults</i>
Adams	11.4%	12,130	17.0%	3,500	10.1%	8,630
Allegheny	12.6%	156,530	18.1%	41,700	11.4%	114,830
Armstrong	14.0%	9,060	20.3%	2,480	12.6%	6,580
Beaver	12.3%	20,480	19.1%	6,160	10.7%	14,320
Bedford	13.9%	6,590	19.2%	1,780	12.6%	4,810
Berks	14.4%	62,280	19.6%	18,630	12.9%	43,650
Blair	13.8%	16,780	19.6%	4,780	12.4%	12,000
Bradford	14.1%	8,470	20.2%	2,670	12.4%	5,800
Bucks	9.8%	63,570	13.4%	17,230	8.9%	46,340
Butler	11.0%	21,670	13.9%	5,300	10.3%	16,370
Cambria	14.9%	19,660	20.9%	5,290	13.5%	14,370
Cameron	17.8%	790	25.2%	190	16.3%	600
Carbon	14.4%	9,400	22.6%	2,790	12.5%	6,610
Centre	12.5%	19,830	15.4%	3,570	12.0%	16,260
Chester	9.0%	49,160	11.6%	13,940	8.2%	35,220
Clarion	13.9%	5,160	19.9%	1,400	12.5%	3,760
Clearfield	15.3%	12,060	22.1%	3,170	13.8%	8,890
Clinton	15.2%	5,750	22.4%	1,710	13.4%	4,040
Columbia	14.6%	9,540	19.3%	2,210	13.6%	7,330
Crawford	15.0%	12,390	21.6%	3,670	13.3%	8,720
Cumberland	11.3%	30,210	16.4%	8,980	9.9%	21,230
Dauphin	13.6%	39,470	21.1%	13,680	11.5%	25,790
Delaware	10.6%	61,500	16.1%	20,590	9.1%	40,910
Elk	12.4%	3,800	18.2%	1,050	11.1%	2,750
Erie	15.0%	40,240	22.8%	12,700	12.9%	27,540
Fayette	17.0%	21,410	24.2%	5,850	15.3%	15,560
Forest	15.3%	1,030	27.1%	70	14.8%	960
Franklin	12.7%	19,990	18.5%	6,390	11.1%	13,600
Fulton	13.3%	1,940	20.0%	570	11.7%	1,370

Appendix A

<i>County</i>	<i>Overall Food Insecurity Rate</i>	<i>Number of Food Insecure Individuals</i>	<i>Child Food Insecurity Rate</i>	<i>Number of Food Insecure Children</i>	<i>Adult Food Insecurity Rate</i>	<i>Number of Food Insecure Adults</i>
Greene	15.0%	5,230	23.2%	1,530	13.1%	3,700
Huntingdon	12.9%	5,620	19.7%	1,520	11.4%	4,100
Indiana	15.0%	12,460	20.1%	3,000	13.9%	9,460
Jefferson	14.2%	6,220	21.5%	2,010	12.2%	4,210
Juniata	12.3%	2,870	17.7%	920	10.7%	1,950
Lackawanna	16.1%	34,790	23.2%	10,280	14.3%	24,510
Lancaster	11.8%	65,710	16.8%	21,630	10.3%	44,080
Lawrence	13.9%	11,820	21.0%	3,570	12.1%	8,250
Lebanon	13.8%	19,830	19.2%	6,250	12.2%	13,580
Lehigh	15.3%	58,060	20.9%	17,680	13.7%	40,380
Luzerne	16.6%	54,450	24.9%	16,520	14.5%	37,930
Lycoming	14.8%	16,760	22.1%	5,140	12.9%	11,620
McKean	15.5%	6,170	22.2%	1,710	13.9%	4,460
Mercer	14.5%	15,840	22.2%	4,600	12.7%	11,240
Mifflin	15.1%	6,930	24.4%	2,550	12.3%	4,380
Monroe	12.6%	21,180	17.6%	5,640	11.5%	15,540
Montgomery	9.7%	83,740	13.3%	24,500	8.7%	59,240
Montour	12.2%	2,210	18.5%	670	10.6%	1,540
Northampton	12.4%	39,650	17.5%	10,690	11.2%	28,960
Northumberland	14.4%	13,050	20.5%	3,650	12.9%	9,400
Perry	10.8%	4,990	17.6%	1,710	9.0%	3,280
Philadelphia	17.3%	274,020	27.0%	90,470	14.7%	183,550
Pike	12.1%	7,330	17.3%	1,810	11.0%	5,520
Potter	14.8%	2,390	22.2%	720	12.9%	1,670
Schuylkill	14.9%	21,430	21.8%	6,230	13.2%	15,200
Snyder	12.8%	5,080	19.1%	1,550	11.2%	3,530
Somerset	13.1%	9,530	19.5%	2,580	11.7%	6,950
Sullivan	12.2%	720	19.6%	120	11.4%	600
Susquehanna	13.4%	5,110	21.9%	1,580	11.4%	3,530
Tioga	14.5%	5,920	22.7%	1,820	12.5%	4,100

County	Overall Food Insecurity Rate	Number of Food Insecure Individuals	Child Food Insecurity Rate	Number of Food Insecure Children	Adult Food Insecurity Rate	Number of Food Insecure Adults
Union	11.7%	4,970	16.5%	1,210	10.7%	3,760
Venango	14.8%	7,370	22.0%	2,080	13.1%	5,290
Warren	13.1%	4,990	18.6%	1,380	11.8%	3,610
Washington	12.2%	25,670	17.5%	7,200	10.9%	18,470
Wayne	13.7%	7,030	21.7%	1,820	12.2%	5,210
Westmoreland	12.3%	43,370	17.2%	11,020	11.2%	32,350
Wyoming	13.0%	3,380	18.6%	930	11.7%	2,450
York	11.7%	54,020	17.0%	17,240	10.2%	36,780

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