

# ANTI-HUNGER PLAYBOOK

*54th Arizona State Legislature*

A LEGISLATOR'S GUIDE TO ADDRESSING HUNGER





## TABLE OF CONTENTS

**Fighting Hunger Together in 2019: A Note from Our CEO** 3

**Association of Arizona Food Banks: Our Member Food Banks** 4

### **The Facts**

*Poverty & Hunger in Arizona* 5

*How the Association of Arizona Food Banks Addresses Hunger* 6

*Hunger & Health in Arizona* 7

*SNAP: By the Numbers* 8

*SNAP Works!* 9

### **The Faces**

*Meet Arizonans Facing Hunger* 10

### **Take Action**

*Healthy, Hunger-Free Students* 12

*Healthy Food to Families in Need* 13

**References** 14

## FIGHTING HUNGER TOGETHER IN 2019

Welcome to the 54th Arizona State Legislature.

Hunger is pervasive and undeniably difficult to tackle. While food banks play a critical role in alleviating hunger by providing emergency assistance, we cannot end hunger until we address its root causes, especially poverty. Thanks to joint efforts by private charity, public support, and corporate giving, fewer people in Arizona are facing hunger this year than last year, and we must keep that momentum going—but how?

As a state legislator, **YOU'RE IN AN IDEAL POSITION TO HELP US ADDRESS HUNGER IN ARIZONA.** You can raise awareness about the reality of hunger and promote legislation that strengthens and streamlines anti-hunger programs. You can collaborate with state agencies to ensure policies are implemented effectively. You can take up the struggle of your most vulnerable constituents, connect them to help, and work with colleagues on both sides of the aisle to eliminate food insecurity.

In this playbook, the Association of Arizona Food Banks gives you the facts about hunger in Arizona and the work we do to address it. You'll also meet a few of the Arizonans who visit our food banks and learn about the policies you can support this session to help tackle hunger.

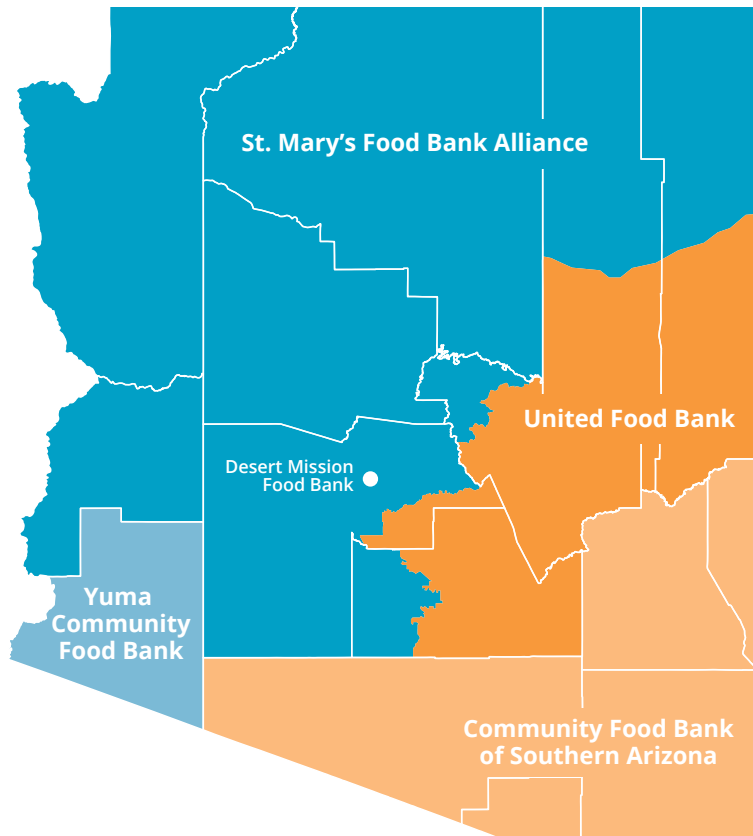
We look forward to collectively making sure all Arizonans lead hunger-free lives. Please consider us a resource for the work ahead.

Sincerely,



Angie Rodgers  
*President and CEO*  
Association of Arizona Food Banks

## AAFB: OUR MEMBER FOOD BANKS



The Association of Arizona Food Banks (AAFB) has five members that collectively provide emergency food relief to all 15 Arizona counties. The map above reflects each food bank's service area. Our members work with nearly 1,000 partner agencies statewide—including community centers, homeless shelters, food pantries, and other social service providers—to get healthy foods to Arizonans in need. Learn more about our network on [PAGE 6](#).

### In partnership with



### Our members



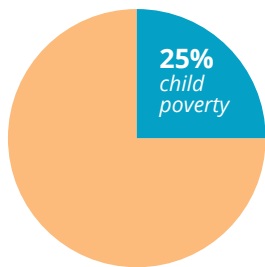
Note: Desert Mission Food Bank is a member of AAFB within St. Mary's Food Bank Alliance's service area.

# POVERTY & HUNGER IN ARIZONA

## 1,018,935 Arizonans Live in Poverty.<sup>1</sup>

Despite an improving economy, **ARIZONA RANKS 46TH IN UNEMPLOYMENT** nationwide.<sup>2</sup>

**1 in 4 kids in Arizona** lives in poverty.<sup>3</sup>



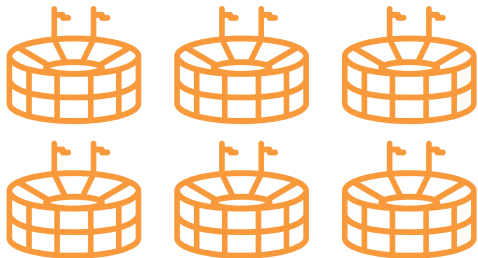
**Arizona's poverty rate** dropped last year but remains higher than the national average.<sup>4</sup>



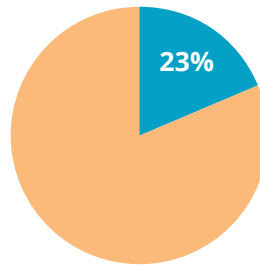
## More Than 1 Million Arizonans Are at Risk of Going Hungry.<sup>5</sup>

There has been a decline in **FOOD INSECURITY\*** statewide since 2016, but much work remains to be done.

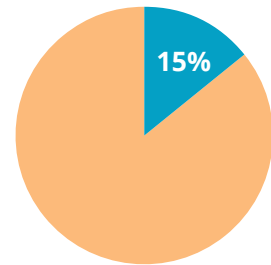
**370,960 kids in Arizona face hunger.**<sup>6</sup>  
That's enough to fill State Farm Stadium nearly six times.



**Nearly 1 in 4 children** is food insecure.<sup>7</sup>



**Nearly 1 in 6 adults** is food insecure.<sup>8</sup>



\* The U.S. Department of Agriculture defines "food insecurity" as a lack of reliable access to enough food for an active, healthy life for all household members, or uncertain availability of nutritionally adequate foods.

### How the Association of Arizona Food Banks Addresses Hunger

AAFB is a nonprofit organization dedicated to a hunger-free Arizona. Our mission is to develop solutions to end hunger through food banking, public policy, and innovation. We support our members and the statewide emergency food network with transportation and food distribution; lead efforts to improve childhood nutrition; engage in anti-hunger advocacy; and collaborate with partners on healthy initiatives.



#### WORKING WITH FOOD BANKS

Collectively, AAFB's five food bank members and their 1,000 supporting partners distributed 185 million pounds of food to Arizonans in need last year.



#### FRESH PRODUCE INITIATIVE

Fresh fruits and vegetables made up 47 percent of the food our members distributed in 2017–2018, much of it donated or purchased from Arizona and surrounding communities. Over the past two years, we have increased the volume of fresh produce we distribute by nearly 70 percent. This initiative also reduces food waste by diverting healthy produce from landfills.



#### CHILD & YOUTH OUTREACH

We work with schools and food service departments statewide to make school meals, summer meals, and after-school snacks more accessible and nutritious.



#### ADVOCATING TO END HUNGER

We work with elected officials at the state and federal levels to raise awareness about the impact of legislation on hungry people and to offer solutions. We also partner with the public, nonprofit, and private sectors to end hunger.

## Social Determinants of Health\*

People who face hunger and poverty have unique challenges in eating healthy. Low-income households often lack access to...



**Full-service grocery stores.**



**A reliable vehicle.**



**Healthy foods** like fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and low-fat dairy.

AAFB and its member food banks are strengthening partnerships with the healthcare sector to address the prevalence of diet-related illnesses among our clients. We have been focused on increasing the volume of fresh fruits and vegetables we distribute, and have achieved a 70 percent increase in only two years.

## The Cost of Hunger & Diet-Related Illnesses

The economic cost of hunger takes into account poor health outcomes, lost productivity, increased education expenses, and the cost of food banks and other charities that provide emergency relief. In Arizona, that cost increased by **\$1 BILLION** in only four years.<sup>9</sup>



By 2030, more than **725,000** Arizonans are projected to have **diabetes**.<sup>10</sup>



In the next 10 years, **1.5 MILLION** Arizonans will be diagnosed with **hypertension**.<sup>11</sup>

**Nearly 2 in 3 Arizonans** are either overweight or obese.<sup>12</sup>



\* According to the World Health Organization, "social determinants of health" are the conditions in which people are born, grow, live, work, and age, which are shaped by the distribution of money, power, and resources at global, national, and local levels. The social determinants of health are mostly responsible for health inequities.



## The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)

Formerly called “food stamps,” SNAP is the most effective anti-hunger program in the United States. SNAP helps people on a fixed income and those who are temporarily struggling to purchase groceries. SNAP is designed to support employment and adjust to economic trends. In other words, as a person’s income from a job increases, their SNAP benefit gradually decreases.

\$169,896,290	infused into the Arizona economy through SNAP last year <sup>13</sup>
845,835	Arizonans used SNAP to help put food on the table last year <sup>14</sup>
75%	Arizonans who participate in SNAP are children, older adults, or people with disabilities <sup>15</sup>
220,000	workers across Arizona use SNAP to supplement low wages, limited benefits, or seasonal work <sup>16</sup>
4,000	grocers and convenience stores accept SNAP, providing critical income to retailers, especially in rural communities <sup>17</sup>
\$118	average amount a person in Arizona participating in SNAP receives in grocery benefits each month <sup>18</sup>
162,766	Arizonans lifted out of poverty last year by participating in SNAP <sup>19</sup>

## SNAP WORKS!



### WORKERS

**Roughly 60 percent of SNAP participants in Arizona who can work, do work—more than 30 hours per week.** The other 40 percent work part time or are legally exempt from work because they are students, participants in a drug/alcohol rehabilitation program, or for other reasons.<sup>20</sup>



### CHILDREN

Kids in low-income households that receive SNAP are **18 percent less likely to experience developmental delays** than kids in eligible households that do not participate.<sup>21</sup>



### OLDER ARIZONANS

**More than 11 percent of SNAP participants in Arizona are over the age of 60.** Older adults who participate in SNAP are much less likely to be admitted to nursing homes and hospitals.<sup>22</sup>



### RURAL COMMUNITIES

**Roughly 22 percent of households in rural Arizona participate in SNAP,** generating economic activity that creates jobs and expands markets for farmers.<sup>23</sup>



### HEALTH

Older adults with diabetes who participate in SNAP are **20 percent more likely to adhere to prescribed medications** than eligible nonparticipants.<sup>24</sup>

## MEET ARIZONANS FACING HUNGER



**CRYSTAL ELLISON, GILBERT**

"I served my country in the U.S. Navy. My husband and I weren't eligible for SNAP because the basic allowance for housing put us above the income eligibility cutoff. It's embarrassing to be hungry, to not be able to feed your kids. But in the military, no one really talks about how junior sailors are struggling financially."



**ELFRIDA FRANCIS, WINSLOW**

"My family still lives on the Nation, but I moved to Winslow about 15 years ago to find a job. I'm a teacher's aide, but my salary barely covers rent, utilities, transportation, and the cost of raising my three kids. I'm a believer that kids shouldn't eat frozen or processed foods, so SNAP allows me to buy fresh vegetables and meat."



**JESUS BARRIOS, TUCSON**

"My mom was always working, so I learned to cook at an early age. When I graduated high school, I wanted to go to culinary school but went into construction instead, to pay bills. When I turned 35, I thought 'What have I always wanted to do with my life? The answer is cook.' I got accepted into **Community Food Bank's Caridad culinary-training program**, and, two months later, got hired as a cook. I'm so motivated to come to work every day."



**TERRI AND PAUL LABARRE, MESA**

"Terri and I had a thriving business, but we lost everything when the economy sank. Today, we live below the poverty line. Often, we have to choose between eating or paying the electric bill. I applied for SNAP, but we were denied because our Social Security was \$5 too much. We come to **United Food Bank's Help Yourself program** every Friday because for about \$12, we get enough food for the week. We've had a good life, but still dream of figuring a way back into the world, even at our age."

## MEET ARIZONANS FACING HUNGER



### JESSICA BARNEY, PHOENIX

"I work every day at a bakery, but sometimes I don't get a full-time schedule. I make minimum wage and can usually get by on my income and SNAP benefit each month. My son gets free meals in school, and the Kids Café at **St. Mary's Food Bank** definitely helps us through the summer months."



### OTIS BOWERS, PRESCOTT

"I'm a full-time student at Prescott College, in a combined Bachelor's/Master's degree program for cultural studies and video production. I work 20 hours per week in a work/study program, which gives me enough for rent but not much else. I applied for SNAP, but was denied because I'm not working full-time."



### DELORES BARDEN, YUMA

"My daughter was killed in a crosswalk on her way to school when she was nine. My husband and I couldn't handle the grief. We turned to drugs and alcohol. I'm not making excuses for our decisions, but the circumstances were too much for us. I lost my job as a registered nurse. We were hungry, but I had to make sure my son had enough to eat so I cleaned houses for money. My son is 31 now and stationed at Fort Bragg. I am so proud of him, but he is even prouder of my recovery. I've had two strokes; at 52, and in my condition, I can't find a job. I don't know what I would do without the **Yuma Community Food Bank** and some wonderful friends."



### DENNIS STEWART, MCLEAN

"My wife and I were missionaries and eventually settled in McNeal, a small community of about 250 people in Cochise County. We had a good life—adopted eight kids through the years. My wife died a few years ago, and now it's just me and one of our sons still at home. I get \$24 a month in SNAP. There are no grocery stores around, but we can use it at the gas station or the dollar store. When I have enough gas, we can drive into Douglas for groceries. We make do with what we have."

## What Is the National School Lunch Program (NSLP)?

A federal program that helps schools provide nutritious meals at low or no cost to children. During the 2017–18 academic year, more than 1 million students in Arizona participated in NSLP, and nearly 600,000 low-income students received free or reduced-price meals.<sup>25</sup>

## What Are Unpaid Meal Debt Guidelines?

In 2017, the Arizona Department of Education (ADE) required all schools participating in NSLP to issue guidelines on how to manage unpaid student meal debt.<sup>26</sup> The guidelines define how schools should communicate with families to collect a debt, how students should be treated if they cannot pay for a meal, and what options schools have in providing alternate meals. Guidelines are required to be accessible to anyone.

## What Do the Guidelines Prohibit?

Students with insufficient meal funds cannot be forced to do chores to “earn” a meal, use a separate lunch line, or have their meal thrown in the garbage. Students cannot have their hands stamped or written on or otherwise be used as a tool to notify parents/guardians about the existing meal debt.

## Are the Guidelines Enough?

No. The guidelines are inconsistently applied and enforced, so families and food service departments are left confused. This can lead to unintended stigmatization.

## How Do Schools Address Meal Debt?

Students with insufficient meal funds may be served a nutritionally comparable, reimbursable alternative meal. Applications for free and reduced-price meals are distributed to parents/guardians of all enrolled students, including those who transfer in mid-year. Unpaid meal debt guidelines must be accessible, both online and available upon request.

## How Do Food Banks Bring Healthy Foods to Families in Need?

Arizona's emergency food network serves more than 430,000 individuals every week. Last year, our network distributed more than 185 million pounds of food—the equivalent of more than 154 million meals. This included more than 88 million pounds of fresh produce, or 47 percent of all food distributed.

## How Does the Legislature Support This Effort?

Since 1986, Arizona's legislature has provided some cost reimbursement to food banks for the acquisition, storage, and distribution of both fresh and nonperishable foods. For the past five years, the amount provided for these efforts has been \$1,754,600 annually, but the Hunger Relief Line Item has still not returned to its pre-recession level.<sup>27</sup> In 2018, the state legislature also provided a one-time investment of \$1 million to help the emergency food network store, refrigerate, and transport fresh produce in all 15 counties. Since July 2018, nearly 70 percent of the funds have been disbursed and simultaneously leveraged nearly \$9 million in donated produce.

## What's Needed in 2019–2020?

In 2018, the federal government established a trade mitigation program to assist American farmers suffering losses as a result of ongoing trade disputes with foreign markets. The USDA began distributing some of the foods it purchased from U.S. farmers through this program—including pork, fruits, vegetables, and dairy products—through AAFB's member food banks.<sup>28</sup> While this additional high-quality food has helped to close the meal gap for Arizonans facing hunger, it has strained the capacity of the hunger-relief network.

Collectively, our member food banks committed to accept an additional 55 truckloads of food each month of FY2019—about 16 million pounds of food total—and distribute it to Arizonans in need. At an estimated \$0.11/pound to store and distribute this additional food—compared with Feeding America's national estimate of \$0.17/pound—Arizona's food banks provide incredible value.

Despite our efficiency, however, AAFB and its members will incur an **UNANTICIPATED \$1.76 MILLION** in additional expenses to distribute food made available through this trade mitigation program, which is critical to both feeding Arizonans facing hunger and providing much-needed relief to our state's farmers.

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## Contact the Association of Arizona Food Banks

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