

MY

Who faces hunger in Arizona?

STORY



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I've lived in the Verde Valley for over four years and have called Arizona home since the 1970s. I am a single mom of two boys, and I teach Spanish and Service Learning. As a high school teacher, my salary is not much, so I work three additional jobs to supplement my income.

I grew up food insecure. As a kid, my family was poor, but my mom and dad lifted themselves out of poverty by building a construction company in Northern Arizona. Because of our family's experience, my mother started the first food bank in Chino Valley.

I went to college at Northern Arizona University and had my first child. I was on my own, and it was humbling to ask for help, but I applied for and received SNAP and WIC benefits.

My life got better after I graduated and became a teacher. But, a couple of years ago, I became the sole caregiver for my dad when he had a stroke. He applied for SNAP but earned \$1 too much to qualify. Our financial situation was not good, and I almost lost everything. A friend suggested I go to the food bank. I had forgotten about food banks and the help they provide. Ironically, I was ultimately offered a job in food recovery and now help eliminate food waste and hunger in Camp Verde.

I often drive door-to-door delivering food that cannot be distributed at the food bank. I recover food from restaurants that I distribute and help harvest food that farmers can't sell.

If you are hungry, you can't even think. People need to eat, and I'm passionate about making sure everyone is well-fed.