

How Food Banks and the Farm Bill's Nutrition Programs Address Hunger in Maine

As supply chain disruptions and rising food costs make it more difficult to afford the basics, millions of people in the U.S. are forced to make impossible choices between food and other necessities. The Feeding America network of more than 200 food banks and over 60,000 faith-based and charitable agency partners, including food pantries and meal programs, helps ensure people facing hunger can put food on the table. In 2021, an estimated 53 million people—1 in 6 people in the U.S.—turned to the charitable food sector for help. Although the charitable sector helps many people avoid hunger, it cannot *end* hunger in our communities without government support.

Federal nutrition programs, including **The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP)**, the **Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)**, and the **Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP)**, work hand in hand with food banks to help families put food on the table. The farm bill reauthorization process is an opportunity to improve these nutrition programs, ensuring that everyone who needs food assistance can access it.

Continue reading to:

- See who faces hunger in Maine;
- Explore how food banks and the farm bill's nutrition programs work together to keep families nourished; and
- Learn about opportunities for Congress to improve these programs through the 2023 Farm Bill.

Questions? Contact policy@feedingamerica.org.



Maine



In **Maine**, an average of **9.5%** of households were food insecure between 2019 and 2021, according to the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). Feeding America estimates that **15.9% of children** and **5.2% of seniors** (age 60+) lived in food-insecure households in 2020. The USDA defines food insecurity as “having inadequate resources to acquire enough food for a healthy, active life.”

Meals Distributed in Maine by the Feeding America Network

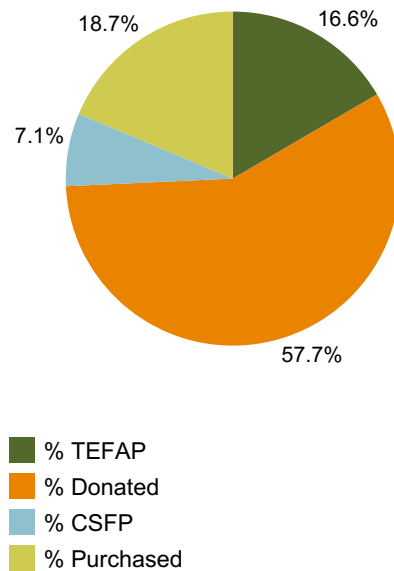
Feeding America Food Sources

The Feeding America network obtains its food from a variety of sources. The federal government provides food through The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) and the Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP). People, businesses and farmers donate food. Food banks purchase additional items as needed.

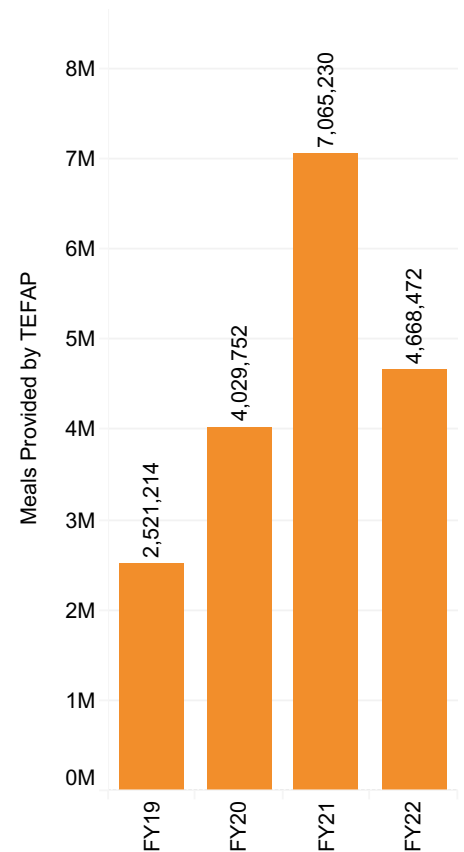
Meals Distributed by Food Source (July 2021 – June 2022)

Total Meals: 28,145,532
TEFAP Meals: 4,668,472
CSFP Meals: 1,988,682
Purchased Meals: 5,250,897
Donated Meals: 16,237,480

Percentage of Meals by Source (July 2021 – June 2022)



Meals Provided by TEFAP per Feeding America Fiscal Year (July – June)



SNAP in Maine

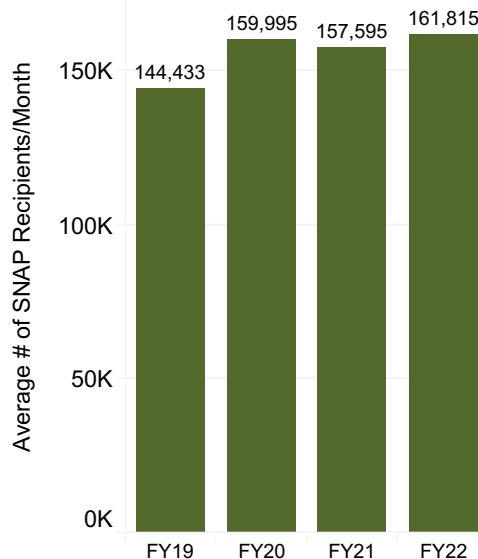
SNAP Overview

SNAP is the most effective hunger-relief program in the U.S., providing monthly grocery benefits to households with very low incomes. These benefits improve the food security, financial security and health of recipients. SNAP benefits also infuse money into local economies.

SNAP Benefits in Federal Fiscal Year 2021

Total SNAP Benefits: \$475,481,836
Estimated # of Meals Provided: 270,160,134

Average # of SNAP Recipients Per Month by Federal Fiscal Year



Characteristics of SNAP Recipients in Maine

From October 2021 to November 2022, almost **56%** of SNAP participants were in families with children. Almost **55%** were in families with members who are older adults or have disabilities. More than **36%** were in working families, meaning that the household had earnings.

In the 2023 Farm Bill, Feeding America calls on Congress to:

- **Increase funding for TEFAP food purchases.** A steady, continuous stream of TEFAP foods is essential to help ensure food banks can continue serving everyone facing hunger in their communities.
- **Increase funding for TEFAP storage and distribution and continue funding TEFAP infrastructure grants.** These funds will help food banks offset the cost of storing and transporting USDA foods, especially in rural communities. They will help cover expenses like refrigeration and fuel.
- **Increase SNAP's purchasing power** by basing SNAP benefits on the Low-Cost Food Plan to bring benefit amounts in line with grocery prices and need.
- **Simplify and streamline SNAP eligibility and enrollment processes** to improve access for seniors, college students, immigrants and other groups who face barriers to participating in the program.
- **End SNAP's three-month time limit for able-bodied adults without dependents and adequately fund and improve state employment and training programs.** This will help ensure people have the food and training opportunities they need to get back on their feet.
- **Create parity in food assistance for U.S. territories** by allowing them to transition from capped Nutrition Assistance Program (NAP) block grants to full participation in SNAP.
- **Ensure sovereignty for Native communities** by allowing tribal governments to administer federal nutrition programs and allowing SNAP participants to also receive benefits through the Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR).
- **Reauthorize and streamline reporting for CSFP** to support the nutrition needs of seniors.

Read Feeding America's full farm bill recommendations.



ACT NOW: Visit Feeding America Action to explore ways you can help strengthen the partnership between the charitable sector and federal nutrition programs.



SHARE: Circulate this state-by-state resource and encourage others to learn more about how food banks and food assistance programs work together.

