

How Food Banks and the Farm Bill's Nutrition Programs Address Hunger in the U.S.

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 2022, an estimated 49 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 your state;
- 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 next Farm Bill.

Rhode Island



In **Rhode Island**, an average of **8.6%** of households were food insecure between 2020 and 2022, according to the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). Feeding America estimates that **12.9% of children** and **5.2% of seniors** (age 60+) lived in food-insecure households in 2021. The United States Department of Agriculture defines food insecurity as “having inadequate resources to acquire enough food for a healthy, active life.”

Food insecurity rates vary by race and ethnicity. Feeding America estimates that in 2021, approximately **18% of Black individuals**, **15% of Latino individuals**, and **7% of white individuals** faced food insecurity in **Rhode Island**.

Meals Distributed in Rhode Island by the Feeding America Network

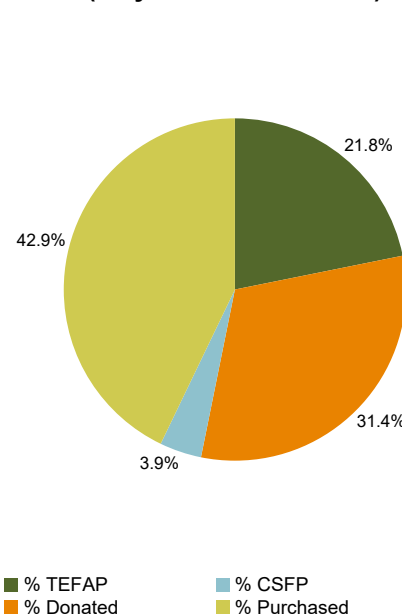
Feeding America Food Sources

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.

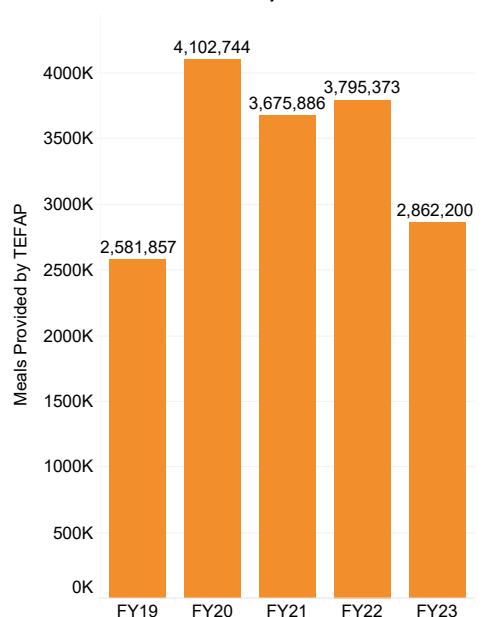
Meals Distributed by Food Source (July 2022 – June 2023)

Total Meals: 13,114,511
TEFAP Meals: 2,862,200
CSFP Meals: 517,909
Purchased Meals: 5,620,584
Donated Meals: 4,113,817

Percentage of Meals Distributed by Source (July 2022 – June 2023)



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



SNAP in Rhode Island

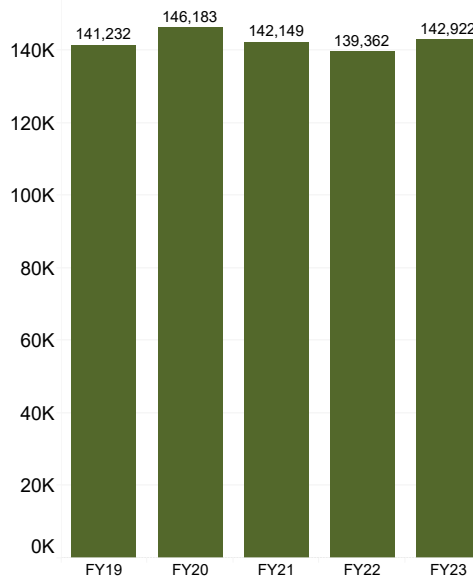
SNAP Overview

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 2023

Total SNAP Benefits: \$398,768,451
Estimated # of Meals Provided: 154,561,415

Average # of SNAP Recipients Per Month by Federal Fiscal Year



Characteristics of SNAP Recipients in Rhode Island

From October 2021 to November 2022, almost **52%** of SNAP participants were in families with children. Almost **49%** were in families with members who are older adults or have disabilities. More than **34%** were in working families, meaning that the household had earnings.

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

- **Double funding for TEFAP food purchases.** This will ensure food banks can serve everyone who comes through their doors, and it will support the U.S. agricultural economy.
- **Increase funding for TEFAP storage and distribution to \$200 million a year.** This will help food banks offset the cost of storing and transporting USDA foods.
- **Continue to provide \$15 million per year for TEFAP infrastructure grants.** This program helps expand the capacity and infrastructure of food banks in rural areas.
- **Boost funding for the TEFAP Farm to Food Bank Program,** which funds state projects to harvest, package, and transport food donations from local farmers.
- **Ensure SNAP aligns with rising grocery prices and provides adequate support during tough economic times.** This will decrease the need for charitable food assistance, helping to reduce the strain on food banks.
- **Simplify SNAP eligibility and enrollment** for older adults, college students, veterans, working families, immigrants and other people facing barriers. Protect SNAP choice and focus on ensuring affordable access to nutritious foods.
- **Improve assistance to individuals seeking employment** by supporting effective state employment and job training programs and ensuring people have access to SNAP benefits as they find work.
- **Allow Puerto Rico and other U.S. territories to participate fully in SNAP and extend flexibility to Native communities** to administer the program.