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For Immediate Release

NEW DATA SHOWS HUNGRY AMERICANS ACROSS THE HIGH PLAINS ARE INELIGIBLE FOR FEDERAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE

14.2% of Residents of Texas Panhandle Who Are Food Insecure May Only Be Able to Turn to Charitable Food Programs for Help

Amarillo, Texas – May 2, 2018 – High Plains Food Bank announced the release of *Map the Meal Gap 2018*, the latest report by Feeding America® on food insecurity and the cost of food at both the county and congressional district level. *Map the Meal Gap 2018* reveals that food insecurity exists in every county in High Plains Food Bank’s service area. Additionally, 29% of residents of the Texas Panhandle who are food insecure are likely ineligible for federal nutrition assistance under current program requirements just as Congress looks at further restricting eligibility for these programs through the Farm Bill.

Overall food insecurity in the Texas Panhandle ranges from a low of 7.8% of the population in Deaf Smith County up to 19.7% in Cottle County.

The analysis also finds that in more than 10 counties across the Texas Panhandle, more than one-third of the people facing hunger are unable to participate in federal nutrition programs. In Armstrong County, 60% of people struggling with hunger may not qualify for food assistance.

“Food insecurity is troubling in the Texas Panhandle,” Executive Director Zack Wilson shared. “The opportunities for families to make ends meet continues to be slim, especially in some rural areas. It’s important to advocate for the nearly 30% of food insecure families who do not have a living wage, nor qualify for any kind of federal food assistance. Our charitable response must be strong at this critical point in time.”

High Plains Food Bank (HPFB) is one of 200 food banks in the Feeding America network that collectively provides food assistance to 46 million Americans struggling with hunger. HPFB provided for over 96,000 households, distributing 8.2 million pounds of food last year alone.



“The Feeding America nationwide network of food banks works hard to deliver more than 4 billion meals annually to people facing hunger, yet the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) serves 12 meals for every one meal provided through our network,” said Matt Knott, president of Feeding America. “As Congress debates legislation like the 2018 Farm Bill, programs like SNAP must be protected and strengthened so that people facing hunger and trying to make ends meet have the essential food resources they need.”

Map the Meal Gap 2018 uses data from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, U.S. Census Bureau, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics and food price data and analysis provided by Nielsen, a global provider of information and insights. The study is supported by [The Howard G. Buffett Foundation](#), [Conagra Brands Foundation](#) and [Nielsen](#).

Key local findings for the Texas Panhandle:

- 26 of the 29 counties we serve have a food insecurity rate of 10% or greater.
- Child food insecurity is still above 20%, at 22.3%, reflecting 28,600 children who may go to bed hungry at night during any given month of the year.
- Food insecurity is still an invisible threat for 67,940 Texas Panhandle residents (14.2% of our service area total population of 477,370). In other words, 1 in 7 community members in our service area struggles with hunger.

The study’s findings underscore the depth of need that remains in communities in and across the U.S., despite national measures from the USDA that indicate overall improvement. Food insecurity is a measure defined by the USDA as lack of access, at times, to enough food for an active, healthy life for all household members.

Dr. Craig Gundersen, Professor of Agricultural and Consumer Economics at the University of Illinois, Executive Director of the National Soybean Research Laboratory and a member of Feeding America’s Technical Advisory Group is the lead researcher of *Map the Meal Gap 2018*.

This is the eighth consecutive year that Feeding America has conducted the *Map the Meal Gap* study.

The *Map the Meal Gap 2018* [interactive map](#) allows policymakers, state agencies, corporate partners, food banks and individual advocates to develop integrated strategies to fight hunger on a community level.

A summary of the findings, an interactive map of the United States, and the full report are available at map.feedingamerica.org.

Join the conversation about *Map the Meal Gap 2018* on Twitter using [#MealGap](#).

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About High Plains Food Bank



Food banking solves two problems: hunger and waste. High Plains Food Bank (HPFB) is a humanitarian resource responsible for securing, processing, and distributing food to 180 charitable organizations who provide it directly to persons in need, in the top 29 counties of the Texas Panhandle. In 2017, HPFB distributed 8.2 million pounds of food to over 96,000 households. In an effort to fight food insecurity and improve the health of those served, HPFB provides a variety of community programs, including Kids Cafe, Direct Mobile Distribution, a senior adult food program (CSFP), and nutrition education through The Garden at High Plains Food Bank. The food bank also assists individuals with the application process for SNAP, CHIP, and Medicaid. It is High Plains Food Bank's mission to alleviate hunger for the 1 in 7 in the Texas Panhandle who struggle with food insecurity, including 1 in 4 children. **High Plains Food Bank is an equal opportunity provider.*

About Feeding America

Feeding America is a nationwide network of 200 food banks that leads the fight against hunger in the United States. Together, we provide food to more than 46 million people through food pantries and meal programs in communities throughout America. Feeding America also supports programs that improve food security among the people we serve; educates the public about the problem of hunger; and advocates for legislation that protects people from going hungry. Individuals, charities, businesses and government all have a role in ending hunger. Donate. Volunteer. Advocate. Educate. Together we can solve hunger. Visit <http://www.feedingamerica.org/>. Find us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/FeedingAmerica or follow us on Twitter at www.twitter.com/FeedingAmerica.

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