



Combatting Hunger in Pennsylvania

As Christians, we pray for daily bread, knowing that it is a primary human need. Hunger can have long-term consequences for individual health and community well-being. Lutherans, through ELCA World Hunger and local food pantries, gardens and feeding ministries, relieve hunger through direct service. Through ELCA Advocacy and LAMPa, Lutherans bring this conviction and experience to bear on public policy decisions that make a difference for our neighbors who are food insecure.

1 in 8 Pennsylvanians Struggles with Hunger

Despite headlines citing positive economic statistics, nearly 3 million PA residents turned to food pantries and meal service programs to feed themselves and their families last year. Our feeding ministries around the Commonwealth report steady or growing need.



State Food Purchase Program

For more than 30 years, SFPP has been one of the Commonwealth's most important tools in the fight against hunger and a lifeline for the hungry across Pennsylvania, enabling food banks to provide essential resources to all 67 counties for the purchase of foods and nutritional supplements, food provider transportation and infrastructure and access to federal food commodities. Funding hasn't kept pace with need. **In 2006-2007, the**

state allotted \$18.75 million for SFPP. More than a decade later, funding for SFPP has dropped to \$18.18 million, even as food costs have risen nearly 30 percent over the same period.

Pennsylvania Agricultural Surplus System

Implemented in 2015, PASS has been a benefit to both farmers and hungry Pennsylvanians. Millions of pounds of Pennsylvania-grown agricultural products that would otherwise go to waste each year can instead help to provide nutritious meals, ensuring a virtuous cycle that benefits PA's agricultural sector, farm communities, and the more than 1.6 million Pennsylvanians in need of food assistance. In light of increasing pressures on PA farmers and the benefits of fresh versus processed foods, we are seeking \$3 million for this program in the 2019-2020 budget.

Hunger in Pennsylvania Affects Us All

CHILDREN

Nearly **17 percent** of children in PA are food insecure.

Hunger has lifelong consequences:

- **2x** more likely to repeat a grade in school
- Less likely to graduate, more likely to suffer from physical and mental health risks.

COMMUNITIES

1.6 million Pennsylvanians, or **12.5 percent** of the population, are food insecure.

Hunger has health consequences at every stage of life. Children can experience increased hospital visits and developmental delays; adults are susceptible to obesity and diabetes; senior citizens have a higher risk of infections and stroke.

Costs associated with hunger in PA grew by more than **\$1billion** since 2007. PA is one of 12 states where this occurred.

SENIORS

14.9 percent of seniors in PA are food insecure.

Seniors on fixed incomes often make difficult decisions with their food.

- **60%** eat food past the expiration date
- **35%** water down their food and drinks

Seniors at risk of hunger are more likely to have physical limitations similar to that of a person **14 years older**.

FAMILIES

More than **314,800** working Pennsylvanians have income below the federal poverty line.

An average employee with a low income works 1.25 full-time jobs and is still forced to make tough family decisions between food and other necessities.

- **53%** choose between food and medicine
- **61%** decide between food and housing
- **66%** choose between food and utility bills

