

# Hunger & Poverty

The combination of hunger and poverty in America often produces food insecurity. Food insecurity is the accepted measure of hunger among a large population. The USDA defines food insecurity as a state in which "consistent access to adequate food is limited by a lack of money and other resources at times during the year."

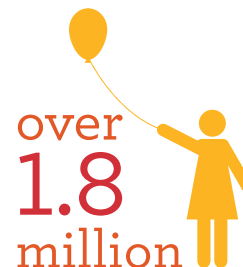
## Food Insecurity in Texas



families in TX experience food insecurity.



of Texans over 60 years old are marginally food insecure.



kids were food insecure in 2013; that is more than a quarter of all Texas kids.

## Importance of Public-Private Partnerships

The problem is too big for churches and private charity to handle alone.



For every dollar a private charity (like a church) provided in food assistance, federal nutrition benefits provided twenty. For example, in 2013, federal nutritional assistance totaled \$102.5 billion compared to \$5.2 billion provided by private charities to combat hunger.

SNAP is the largest program preventing hunger in Texas. Most SNAP recipients in Texas are children, with more than



children participating in the program.

Churches can help fill the gaps by serving those at risk for hunger because their income exceeds federal program eligibility.



are going hungry but are ineligible for federal assistance.

## Hunger causes...



delayed physical, emotional and intellectual growth.



children to have trouble focusing, which increases the likelihood of social and behavioral problems.



economic consequences including lower educational outcomes, reduced productivity and higher healthcare costs for treating chronic illness.

# Why Should Christians Care?

*"For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me.' Then the righteous will answer him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? And when did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? And when did we see you sick or in prison and visit you?' And the King will answer them, 'Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me.'" Matthew 25: 35-40, ESV*

*"Then you shall call, and the Lord will answer; you shall cry, and he will say, 'Here I am.' If you take away the yoke from your midst, the pointing of the finger, and speaking wickedness, if you pour yourself out for the hungry and satisfy the desire of the afflicted, then shall your light rise in the darkness and your gloom be as the noonday." Isaiah 58:9-10, ESV*

*"By this we know love, that he laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers. But if anyone has the world's goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God's love abide in him? Little children, let us not love in word or talk but in deed and in truth." 1 John 3:16-18, ESV*



## What You Can Do:

- 1 Write or call your U.S. Congressperson.** Ask him or her to support the reauthorization of child nutrition programs including the school meals program, summer meals program and the WIC nutrition programs for pregnant women and women with small children.
- 2 Contact your state representatives and ask them to protect and strengthen existing nutrition programs.** Proven programs like SNAP, school meals, and out-of-school nutrition should be strengthened in Texas to reach more children and families in need. Texas health officials should improve access to these programs, especially for vulnerable Texans such as seniors, foster children, and those living in rural communities.
- 3 Give to the Texas Baptists Hunger Offering.** The Texas Baptist Hunger Offering grants 100% of its collections to hunger relief projects and initiatives designed to help people escape poverty in Texas, the U.S. and abroad. For more information, contact Ali Hearon via email at [ali.hearon@texasbaptists.org](mailto:ali.hearon@texasbaptists.org).
- 4 Share your experiences with food insecurity with the CLC.** During the legislative session, we may ask you to share your story with your local elected officials or before a legislative committee.
- 5 Volunteer at a local food pantry, community garden, or job training program.** Providing food or job assistance to those in your community who have an immediate need is a great way to build relationships and give hope to those who may be struggling to provide for themselves and their families.



*Do Justice. Love Kindness. Walk Humbly with God. -Micah 6:8*

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