

LIVINGSTON COUNTY HUMAN SERVICES COLLABORATIVE BODY

Health and Human Service Needs FACT SHEET

Hunger in Livingston County

September 2018

What is “food insecurity”? A person who is food insecure struggles at times to put enough nutritious food on the table. A family runs out of food days or weeks before there will be any money to buy more. Parents may skip meals or eat less than is nutritionally required, to make more food available for their children. People are hungry, but eat less to stretch the available food over a few more days. **And only half of food insecure individuals in Livingston County qualify for the government Food Assistance Program (FAP).**

Why is this issue so important to Livingston County? Having enough nutritious food is critical to living a healthy active life. A diet poor in nutrition leads to lifelong health complications such as obesity, Diabetes, high cholesterol, high blood pressure, and heart disease. Costs to the community are high – treatment, lost productivity, hospitalizations, etc. A nationally recognized study calculates the negative impact of hunger to be over **\$167.5 billion per year**. That is **\$542 for every American** or **\$1,410 per household** in costs over and above the cost of government food programs. (*The Economic Costs of Domestic Hunger*)

Addressing hunger is especially important to our youngest children, as a lack of food and poor nutrition can have permanent and devastating effects on their development. Kids can't learn when they are hungry. They can't sleep. They have no energy. They can't function. And even more alarming, poor nutrition actually interferes with proper brain development, 85% of which happens before the child reaches kindergarten age.

What is the impact locally?

- **14,580** Food insecure Livingston County residents, including **4,660** children
(*Map the Meal Gap 2018*)
- **7,102** Livingston County residents on government Food Assistance Program
- **65%** Portion of FAP households with children, seniors, or disabled persons
- **5,853** Livingston County students eligible for free or reduced lunch (2017-2018)
- **2 million** Pounds of food distributed annually by Gleaners in Livingston County

What programs & services exist?

The **Livingston County Hunger Council** is a coalition of individuals, businesses, and organizations, working together to nourish the community by championing food access and education. Programs include the **Food Pantry/Meals Program Network, Summer Lunch Bunch, Community Gardens**. Visit www.livingstonhunger.com.

Food Assistance Program – www.michigan.gov/mibridges

Women, Infants & Children – Livingston County Health Dept., 517-546-5459

School Free & Reduced Meals Programs – Contact the individual school.

Senior Supplemental Food Program – OLHSA, 517-546-8500

Senior Nutrition Meals on Wheels – 810-632-2155 or 888-886-8971



What can you do to help?

☀ **Join** the Livingston County Hunger Council.

☀ **Organize** a food drive for your neighborhood pantry.

☀ **Volunteer** to help with the community gardens, or help people use their Bridge Cards to purchase produce at local farmers markets – cbaker@gcfb.org



☀ **Support** “Summer Lunch Bunch”, which provides meals to hungry kids during the summer when they don’t have access to school meals – give or volunteer. The Salvation Army – Darlene_Howard@usc.salvationarmy.org

☀ **Support** Gleaners Community Food Bank, or your local food pantry, with monetary donations. \$1 to Gleaners feeds one person for one day. – bbrown@gcfb.org

☀ **Volunteer** your time and talent to support your local food pantry or meal program.

☀ **Tell your friends**, neighbors, and coworkers about hunger in our communities, and about the many ways that they can get involved. www.livingstonhunger.com

☀ **Deliver meals** to homebound seniors. Call **810-632-2155**.

☀ **Share produce** from your own garden through a local food pantry, church, Hunger Council Produce Cart, or community event that can help get fresh quality produce to neighbors who may struggle to afford these items.

☀ **Start a community garden** with your church, neighborhood, or service organization.

Eat healthier.



Support local farmers.

Visit a local food pantry or food program to see some of the great things happening In Livingston County.

Teach children about nutrition, how the food gets to their plate, and the importance of local agriculture..

Advocate for nutritional content labels.

Buy local produce.

For more information, contact Anne Rennie, HSCB Coordinator at 517-586-2039 or arennie@cmhliv.org.