

Iowa Food Bank Association



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UNPRECEDENTED NEW STUDY PAINTS A DETAILED PORTRAIT OF FOOD INSECURITY IN IOWA

Over 382,000 Iowans are food insecure, or struggle against hunger

Moline, IL - April 6, 2011 - The Iowa Food Bank Association and Feeding America, the nation's largest domestic hunger-relief organization, have released a landmark study, *Map the Meal Gap*, providing the first detailed look at the income and food budget needed by families struggling with hunger here in Iowa each year – an estimated \$151 million would be needed to purchase the 64 million meals missed by Iowa's food insecure population

Tom Laughlin, Executive Director of River Bend Foodbank says, "The best way to help people facing hunger is to understand who is hungry and why they are hungry at the community level. *Map the Meal Gap* provides us with a new understanding of who is struggling against hunger in Iowa, and I believe many will be surprised by the findings."

Map the Meal Gap also provides critical information that has never been previously available -- food insecurity rates for each county and Congressional District. Previously, food insecurity data was only available at the state level in the USDA's annual report. The study further analyzes each county's food insecure population to determine income eligibility for federal nutrition assistance. The study reveals that 43% of Iowa's food insecure population is ineligible for any nutrition assistance programs because they are above the threshold of 185% of the federal poverty level.

"Map the Meal Gap" reveals that there are Iowans struggling with hunger in every county in the state, ranging on the low end from an estimated 9.6 percent of the population in Plymouth County up to 16.4 percent of the population in Lee County.

A press conference will be held today, April 6, at 2PM at the Iowa State Capitol providing more information on the findings of the study. Governor Terry Branstad, Senator Jeff Danielson, as well as staff of the Iowa Food Bank Association, Iowa food banks, The Wellmark Foundation and other members of Iowa's 84th General Assembly will share comments on the staggering statistics, and how we move forward to feed hungry Iowans.

You can find more information about Iowa's *Map the Meal Gap* results, as well as the full data set and methodology at www.iowaFBA.org/mapthegap.

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River Bend Foodbank is the largest hunger relief organization in the Quad Cities and surrounding communities, distributing nearly 7 million lbs of food annually to more than 300 charitable feeding programs throughout a 22 county service area in Eastern Iowa and Western Illinois. More than 10,000 people receive food assistance each week through River Bend's distribution network. The Foodbank also operates four Kids Café sites serving over 50,000 free meals to children each year, the Backpack Program which provides over 1300 Quad City children with nourishing food to take home on the weekends during the school year and the Mobile Food Pantry which directly feeds thousands of families each month.