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OHIO NOT KEEPING PACE WITH OTHER STATES WHEN IT COMES TO IMPROVING FOOD SECURITY
Food hardship data released today shows Ohio, major MSAs lagging behind

COLUMBUS – A report released today by the Food Research and Action Center (FRAC) called [How Hungry is America?](#) found that more than one in six Ohioans (17.0 percent) answered yes to the question, “Have there been times in the past 12 months when you did not have enough money to buy food that you or your family needed?” This finding ranked Ohio 13th in the country for worst food hardship rates in 2015, up from 19th the previous year. Ohio was the only state from the Midwest that ranked in the top 20 for highest rates of food hardship in 2015.

“In spite of Ohio’s current unemployment rate of just 5.1 percent, one in six of our neighbors and friends reported experiencing food hardship last year,” said Lisa Hamler-Fugitt, executive director of the Ohio Association of Foodbanks. “That represents about 2 million people, which tracks precisely with the demand our emergency food network experiences for help each year. Ohioans living on the margins, including low-wage workers, seniors, people living with disabilities and families with children, are still struggling to meet their basic needs.”

Nationally, food hardship rates declined from 17.2 percent in 2014 to 16.0 percent in 2015. Ohio also saw an improvement, with its food hardship rate improving from 18.1 percent in 2014 to 17.0 percent in 2015. However, all of Ohio’s Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSAs) – including Youngstown-Warren-Boardman, Dayton, Toledo, Cincinnati, Cleveland-Elyria, Columbus, and Akron – had food hardship rates higher than the national average and were ranked in the top half among the nation’s MSAs for highest rates of food hardship.

Ohio Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA)	Food Hardship Rate 2015	National Rank (out of 109 MSAs)
Youngstown-Warren-Boardman	22.3 percent	7
Dayton	21.7 percent	11
Toledo	17.7 percent	36
Cincinnati	17.2 percent	43
Cleveland-Elyria	16.8 percent	48
Columbus	16.6 percent	53
Akron	16.5 percent	55

“Recent policy changes, including the family tax credits made permanent by Congress and the expansion of Medicaid, seem to have had some positive impacts on food security in Ohio and across the country,” said Hamler-Fugitt. “We urge Members of Congress to focus on protecting

and strengthening programs and policies that maintain a strong safety net for low-income families. As we continue to climb out of the Great Recession, we cannot afford setbacks from harmful proposals to block grant federal nutrition programs.”

The full *How Hungry is America?* report is available at frac.org.

About the Ohio Association of Foodbanks

The Ohio Association of Foodbanks is Ohio's largest charitable response to hunger, representing Ohio's 12 Feeding America foodbanks and 3,300 member charities including food pantries, soup kitchens and shelters. In SFY 2015, the association and its member foodbanks were able to acquire and distribute over 197 million pounds of food and grocery items. The association also serves as the home of The Ohio Benefit Bank and operates the state's largest navigator program for the Affordable Care Act. Follow the association on [Twitter](#), stay connected on [Facebook](#) and visit them on the web at www.ohiofoodbanks.org.

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