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NEW STUDY REPORTS SENIORS, OLDER ADULTS IN OHIO FACE ALARMING RATES OF FOOD INSECURITY
Factors like housing, disability status, presence of grandchildren in household impact food security

COLUMBUS – As Ohio’s population continues to age, Ohio’s foodbanks are experiencing increasing demand for help with food from seniors. That trend is reflected in the newest research released today by Feeding America, *The State of Senior Hunger*, which found that food insecurity among seniors and older adults across the country remains more prevalent than prior to the Great Recession.

Ohio’s rate of food insecurity among seniors age 60 and older was 7.8 percent, compared to 7.7 percent nationally. The research found that seniors are nearly four times more likely to be food insecure if they are renters rather than homeowners, and more than twice as likely to be food insecure if they have grandchildren in the home. Additionally, one in four seniors and older adults with disabilities are food insecure.

Food insecurity for older adults age 50 to 59 in Ohio is a particular problem, with 15 percent struggling with food insecurity, ranking Ohio 9th nationally. More than four in 10 of those older adults are living with disabilities, and about half are not homeowners.

“This research clearly demonstrates the interconnectedness of food security and poverty-related issues,” said Lisa Hamler-Fugitt, executive director of the Ohio Association of Foodbanks. “When individuals reach their near-retirement and retirement years and are trying to survive on limited, fixed incomes – often without assets like their own home or retirement savings – there’s nowhere else for them to turn. We can’t rewind the clock for them, but we absolutely should provide them the basic security of adequate, nutritious food, not only because it’s the right thing to do, but because it will save taxpayers money in the long run in the way of reduced health care costs and nursing home stays.”

More than 200,000 Ohioans over age 60 are food insecure, and another 240,000 between ages 50 and 59 are also struggling to afford enough food.

“When seniors enter our food pantry lines, they don’t leave them,” said Hamler-Fugitt. “Our promise is that we will provide wholesome food to keep them from going hungry. It’s the most basic and critical promise we can make as a state. And, our foodbanks need help to keep that promise.”

The Ohio Association of Foodbanks is seeking increased funding in the 2020-21 state biennial budget to support a Comprehensive Approach to Hunger Relief. For more information, visit <http://ohiofoodbanks.org/news/budget.php>. To view the full *State of Senior Hunger* report and related research, visit feedingamerica.org/stateofseniorhunger.

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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 3,500 member charities including food pantries, soup kitchens and shelters. In SFY 2018, the association and its member foodbanks were able to acquire and distribute over 216 million pounds of food and grocery items. The association has also served as the home of The Ohio Benefit Bank since 2006. Follow the association on [Twitter](#), stay connected on [Facebook](#) and visit them on the web at www.ohiofoodbanks.org.

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