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The 2014 Hunger Report by the Numbers

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More Americans are at risk of hunger due to the slow recovery from the Great Recession.

The number of people at risk of hunger in the United States increased from 36.2 million in 2007 to 49 million in 2012.¹

In 2012, 14.5 percent of all U.S. households were food insecure—a total of 17.6 million households.²

For every current job opening in the United States, an average of 2.9 people are seeking jobs.³

Among unemployed workers, 37.9 percent have been out of work for six months or more⁴—the highest share since the Great Depression of the 1930s.

Members of certain groups are at higher risk of hunger.

In 2012, 20 percent of households with children were at risk of hunger, compared to 12 percent of households without children.⁵

While 21.6 percent of all children were at risk of hunger, 31.5 percent of African-American children and 28.7 percent of Hispanic children were food insecure in 2012.⁶

The risk of hunger rises to 25 percent in households where there is a disabled adult of working age (18-64) and to 33 percent in households where there is a disabled adult of working age who is not employed.⁷

35.4 percent of households led by a single mother, and 23.6 percent of households led by a single father, were food insecure in 2012.⁸

The safety net is responding to the growing demand, but needs to be strengthened.

In August 2013, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), formerly food stamps, provided support to 47.7 million people.⁹

One in four Americans participates in a federal nutrition program.¹⁰ In 2012, 31.6 million children participated in the National School Lunch Program, of whom 60 percent received free or reduced-price meals.¹¹ As mentioned above, 47.7 million people participate in SNAP.

For every 1,000 children who received free or reduced-price school lunch during the 2011-2012 school year, only 143 received meals through the summer nutrition program in July 2012. This is down from 221 of every 1,000 children in 1998.¹²

In November 2013, SNAP households of all sizes saw their benefits cut when Congress decided not to renew an increase that had been included in the 2009 Recovery and Reinvestment Act. As a result, SNAP benefits in 2014 will average less than \$1.40 per person per meal.¹³



Rising income inequality means fewer Americans are benefiting from the nation's economic growth.

The average income of the top 1 percent of U.S. households rose by 19.6 percent in 2012, compared to an increase of only 1 percent in the incomes of the other 99 percent.¹⁴

From the end of the Great Recession in 2009 through 2012, the incomes of the bottom 99 percent of wage earners grew by an average of 0.4 percent.¹⁵ During that same period, the average income of the top 1 percent of earners grew by 31.4 percent.¹⁶

Adjusted for inflation, the real value of the minimum wage peaked in the late 1960s. If the minimum wage had kept pace with productivity growth, it would be \$18.67 an hour in 2013 dollars.¹⁷

Between 1979 and 2007, the wages of the top 1 percent of earners rose almost 10 times as fast as those of the bottom 90 percent—increasing by 156.2 percent for the top 1 percent but by just 16.7 percent for the bottom 90 percent.¹⁸

The United States helps respond to global hunger.

In 2012, 12 percent of the world population was hungry, down from 16 percent in 1992.¹⁹

34 countries are home to 90 percent of the world's children stunted by malnutrition.²⁰

Between 2002 and 2011, nearly 50 million people around the world received an average of \$2.2 billion annually in U.S. emergency food aid.²¹

Feed the Future, the U.S. global hunger and food security initiative, targets women and young children. If women farmers had the same access to productive resources as men, they could increase yields on their farms enough to reduce the number of hungry people in the world by 12 percent to 17 percent—up to 150 million people.²²

Endnotes

¹ U.S. Department of Agriculture, Household Food Security in the United States, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012.

² Alisha Coleman-Jensen, Mark Nord, and Anita Singh (September 2013), *Household Food Security in the United States in 2012*, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service.

³ Heidi Shierholz (October 24, 2013), "Ratio of Job Seekers to Job Openings Slips Below 3-to-1 for First Time in Nearly Five Years, but Is Still as High as in Worst Month of Early 2000s Downturn," Economic Policy Institute.

⁴ Economic Policy Institute (November 9, 2013), "The share of the unemployed who have been jobless for six months or more, 1948-2013."

⁵ Alisha Coleman-Jensen, September 2013, op cit.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Alisha Coleman-Jensen and Mark Nord (January 2013), "Food Insecurity among Households with Working Age Adults with Disabilities," U.S. Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service.

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¹⁰ U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service (June 13, 2013), "Agriculture Secretary Joins Nutrition Partners to Launch Childhood Hunger Campaign." USDA Office of Communications, Press Release No. 0125.11.

¹¹ U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service.

¹² Food Research and Action Center (June 2013), *Hunger Doesn't Take a Vacation: Summer Nutrition Status Report 2013*.

¹³ Stacy Dean and Dottie Rosenbaum, Center for Budget and Policy Priorities, "SNAP Benefits Will be Cut for All Participants," August 2, 2013.

¹⁴ Danilo Trisi (September 17, 2013), "Income Inequality Remains at Record High, New Census Figures Show," Center on Budget and Policy Priorities.

¹⁵ Emanuel Saez (September 3, 2013), *Striking it Richer: The Evolution of Top Incomes in the United States*, University of California-Berkeley, March 2, 2012.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Heidi Shierholz (July 11, 2013), "Lagging minimum wage is one reason why most Americans' wages have fallen behind productivity," Economic Policy Institute.

¹⁸ Lawrence Mishel, Josh Bivens, Elise Gould and Heidi Shierholz (2012), *The State of Working America*, 12th edition, Economic Policy Institute.

¹⁹ Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, *The State of Food Insecurity in the World*, 2012.

²⁰ Zulfiqar A. Bhutta, Jai K. Das., et al. (June 6, 2013), "Evidence Based Interventions for Improving Maternal and Child Nutrition: What Can be Done and at What Cost?" *The Lancet*.

²¹ Congressional Research Service, "International Food Aid Programs: Background and Issues," May 20, 2013.

²² Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, op cit.



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