



PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release
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USDA's Household Security Report for 2022 Shows Need for Immediate Action to Address Large Increase in Food Insecurity

URBANA, IL – November 1, 2023 – The number of people facing food insecurity in the United States increased to 44 million in 2022, including 13 million children, according to a [report released today by the U.S. Department of Agriculture \(USDA\)](#). This is an increase of 31% for all individuals and 44% for children from the previous year, the highest rate and number of individuals and children since 2014 and the largest one-year increase in food insecurity since 2008. The USDA report confirms what Eastern Illinois Foodbank (EIF) and its network of 170 partner agencies have seen across east-central Illinois each day in recent months.

“This data is upsetting, but unfortunately not surprising. In the communities we serve, we have seen a 40% increase in need over the last year—and in some areas, even higher,” said Kelly Daly, EIF President & CEO. “Our neighbors have shared with us that the relentless increases in food costs are straining their budgets more than ever. Factors such as the expiration of emergency SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) benefits and transportation costs continue to make it a challenge to make ends meet.”

The increase in food insecurity has presented a historic and prolonged elevation in need in the 18 counties served by EIF, with the foodbank serving 1.5 million people in the past year and distributing 38% more meals than in the prior year. One of the key strategies in addressing the heightened demand for food assistance has been the reimagining of EIF's Foodmobile program.

“With our communities facing unprecedented obstacles in receiving food assistance, it's more important than ever to meet our neighbors where they are,” said Daly. “We knew we had to evolve this program in order to best respond to the needs of our community and fulfill our mission of alleviating hunger in eastern Illinois.” As of October, the Foodmobile is on the road nearly every day, serving more than 80 communities each month throughout the 18 counties in the foodbank's service area.

Daly credits the individuals and organizations who support EIF as an integral part of the foodbank's ability to continue to rise to meet the need. “We are fortunate to have an incredibly generous, philanthropic community. Their support has always made what we do possible and will continue to be the cornerstone of our ability to feed our neighbors.”

The foodbank is also encouraging the community to join them in advocating for policies such as the Farm Bill, which invests in nutrition programs that move healthy food from farms to foodbanks. EIF is among the foodbanks across the Feeding America network in the Farmers Feed America coalition, demonstrating the important relationship between foodbanks and farmers. “This is a win-win for farmers and foodbanks,” said Daly. “We can continue to learn from the lessons of the pandemic and join forces to ensure we're delivering nutritious food to local families. We serve our community best when we stand together.”

To donate to EIF or find more information on advocating for the Farm Bill, visit eifoodbank.org.



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Eastern Illinois Foodbank (EIF) works to alleviate hunger in eastern Illinois as the primary food source to a network of 170 food pantries, agencies, and other programs throughout our 18-county service area. Through these agencies, the Foodbank provides meals to more than 1.5 million people each year. Since 1983, EIF has led the fight against hunger and strengthened communities by providing food access, emergency relief, education, and advocacy to families in east-central Illinois. EIF is a member of Feeding America, Feeding Illinois, the United Way of Coles County, and the United Way of Champaign County. For more information, visit eifoodbank.org.