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For Immediate Release

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Study Shows Food Insecurity Rate on Rise in Connecticut
Map the Meal Gap study reveals nearly 14% of state residents at risk of hunger

East Haven, CT – April 27, 2012 --- Connecticut Food Bank and Feeding America, the nation’s largest domestic hunger-relief organization, today released the 2012 “Map the Meal Gap” study, which offers a detailed look at food budget required to meet the needs of families struggling with hunger here in Connecticut.

According to the study, nearly 14 percent, or 493,020 of Connecticut’s residents are food insecure, and it would take nearly \$232 million to meet the needs of Connecticut’s food insecure population, or \$16 per week for each food insecure person. Those figures are an increase over last year’s data which showed 12.3 percent food insecurity rate, with a \$199 million budget shortfall in Connecticut.

This is the second year Map the Meal Gap is being released, providing the latest county-level food cost data compiled by The Nielsen Company. The study breaks down the food budget shortfall of residents and calculates the approximate number of meals missing from the tables of people at risk of hunger in Connecticut each year.

According to the study, Middlesex County has among the highest food costs in Connecticut (\$3.10 per meal) , with New Haven County having the highest (14%) food insecurity rate in the state. In Connecticut Food Bank’s service area, 51 percent of the food insecure population does not qualify for food stamps or other federal food assistance program. In Connecticut, the overall number is 61 percent, up 9 percent over last year’s data.

“These numbers are no surprise to Connecticut Food Bank and our network of soup kitchens and pantries who continue to see an increase in demand for their services,” said Nancy L. Carrington, Connecticut Food Bank’s President and CEO. “Many residents continue to face the challenges of paying for housing, utilities, healthcare and food. And if they do not qualify for federal assistance, they often must rely on sources such as Connecticut Food Bank’s member programs to feed themselves and their families.”

Map the Meal Gap provides the following data by state and county in an [interactive map format](#):

- ✓ The percentage of the population who is **food insecure**.
- ✓ The percentage of the food insecure population who qualify based on income for **SNAP (Foods Stamps)** and other federal nutrition programs.
- ✓ The percentage of the food insecure population who **do NOT qualify for federal nutrition programs** and often must rely on charitable food assistance programs and who also need better wages and employment opportunities to help them meet their basic needs.
- ✓ The average price per meal based research by The Nielsen Company.

The interactive map provides policy makers, state agencies, corporate partners and individual advocates to develop integrated strategies to fight hunger on a community by community level. Map the Meal Gap shows the food budget shortfall represents more than 53 million meals in Connecticut Food Bank's service area on an annual basis.

Map the Meal Gap also provides food insecurity rates for Congressional District. The study further analyzes each district's food insecure population to determine their income eligibility for federal nutrition assistance.

The findings of "Map the Meal Gap" are based on statistics collected by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the U.S. Census Bureau, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics and food price data and analysis provided by The Nielsen Company (NYSE: [NLSN](#)), a global information and measurement company providing insights into what consumers watch and buy. The study was supported by the [Howard G. Buffett Foundation](#) and [Nielsen](#).

Prior to the study's first release in March 2011, food insecurity data was only available at the state level in the U.S. Department of Agriculture's annual report. The study also provides meal cost estimates for every county in the nation. This data has the potential to redefine the way service providers and policy makers address areas of need.

A summary of the findings, an interactive map of the United States, and the full report are available on Feeding America's website at www.feedingamerica.org

For more information on Connecticut Food Bank's response to hunger in the state, visit www.ctfoodbank.org.

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Connecticut Food Bank serves approximately 600 local emergency food assistance programs in six of Connecticut's eight counties: Fairfield, Litchfield, Middlesex, New Haven, New London and Windham. Connecticut Food Bank distributes an average of 33 tons of food every business day.

About Feeding America

Feeding America provides low-income individuals and families with the fuel to survive and even thrive. As the nation's leading domestic hunger-relief charity, our network members supply food to 37 million Americans each year, including nearly 14 million children and 3 million seniors. Serving the entire United States, more than 200 member food banks support 61,000 agencies that address hunger in all of its forms. For more information on how you can fight hunger in your community and across the country, visit <http://www.feedingamerica.org>. Find us on Facebook at [facebook.com/FeedingAmerica](https://www.facebook.com/FeedingAmerica) or follow our news on Twitter at twitter.com/FeedingAmerica.