

Bread for the World's
2020 Offering of Letters to Congress

Better Nutrition, Better Tomorrow

Facts on Hunger and Poverty in the United States

In 2018, U.S. poverty and food insecurity rates continued to decline. However, far too many of our neighbors continue to struggle to buy nutritious food and secure steady jobs with livable wages.

- More than 37.2 million people in the United States, including children, lived in households that struggled to put food on the table in 2018.¹ African-Americans were approximately twice as likely as the overall population to live at risk of hunger.²
- More than 38 million people in America lived below the poverty line in 2018; 1 in 3 were children.³
- U.S. poverty rates fell or remained unchanged for every demographic group. However, African-American and Latino communities still have disproportionately higher rates of poverty than the general population.⁴
- For African-Americans, the poverty rate fell to 20.8 percent in 2018 from 21.2 percent in 2017, and for Latinos, the poverty rate fell to 17.6 percent in 2018 from 18.3 percent in 2017. The poverty rate among

female-headed households fell from to 24.9 percent in 2018 from 25.7 percent in 2017.⁵

- 11.1 percent of U.S. households were food insecure in 2018, declining further from a peak of 14.9 percent in 2011.⁶
- SNAP moved an estimated 3.1 million people out of poverty in 2018.⁷
- About two-thirds of SNAP recipients are children, elderly, or disabled.⁸
- In 2018, more than 6.8 million low-income women and young children retrieved nutritious food and nutrition education through the WIC program.⁹
- The earned income tax credit and the refundable portion of the child tax credit moved 7.9 million people out of poverty in 2018, including 4.2 million children.¹⁰
- For the third consecutive year, households in the United States experienced an increase in real annual median income. Median household income was \$63,179 in 2018, from the 2017 median of \$61,372.¹¹

ENDNOTES

¹ Household Food Security in the United States in 2018, <https://www.ers.usda.gov/webdocs/publications/94849/err-270.pdf?v=963.1>

² Ibid, page 15.

³ Income and Poverty in the United States 2018, U.S. Census Bureau. <https://www.census.gov/content/dam/Census/library/publications/2019/demo/p60-266.pdf>

⁴ Ibid, page 13.

⁵ Ibid, page 14.

⁶ Household Food Security in the United States in 2017, page 15.

⁷ The Supplemental Poverty Measure: 2018, <https://www.census.gov/library/publications/2019/demo/p60-268.html>

⁸ Characteristics of USDA Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Households: Fiscal Year 2017 (Summary), USDA, Food and Nutrition Service, <https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/resource-files/Characteristics2017-Summary.pdf>

⁹ USDA, Women, Infant, and Children Program Participation and Costs. <https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/resource-files/wisummary-9.pdf>

¹⁰ The Supplemental Poverty Measure: 2018, page 13.

¹¹ Income, Poverty, and Health Insurance in the United States in 2018, page 1.



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