

LIVINGSTON COUNTY HUMAN SERVICES COLLABORATIVE BODY

Health and Human Service Needs FACT SHEET

Hunger in Livingston County

April 2022

What is “food insecurity”? A person who is experiencing food insecurity struggles at times to put enough nutritious food on the table. A family runs out of food days or weeks before there will be any money to buy more. Parents may skip meals or eat less than is nutritionally required, to make more food available for their children. People are hungry but eat less to stretch the available food over a few more days. ***And only half of individuals experiencing food insecurity in Livingston County qualify for the government Food Assistance Program (FAP).***

Why is this issue so important to Livingston County? Having enough nutritious food is critical to living a healthy active life. A diet poor in nutrition leads to lifelong health complications such as obesity, diabetes, high cholesterol, high blood pressure, and heart disease. Costs to the community are high – treatment, lost productivity, hospitalizations, etc. A 2010 study, ***“The Economic Costs of Domestic Hunger”*** reports the negative impact of hunger to our nation at **\$167.5 billion**. That is **\$542 for every person or \$1,410 per household** in costs over and above the cost of government food programs.

Addressing hunger is especially important to our youngest children, as a lack of food and poor nutrition can have permanent and devastating effects on their development. Kids can’t learn when they are hungry. They can’t sleep. They have no energy. They can’t function. And even more alarming, poor nutrition interferes with proper brain development, 85% of which happens before the child reaches kindergarten age.

What is the impact locally*?

Local Data	2019
Food insecure Livingston County residents (Feeding America)	16,180
Children who are food insecure (Michigan.gov/MDHHS)	2,398
Livingston County residents on government Food Assistance Program (FAP) (Michigan.gov/MDHHS)	6,420
Livingston County students eligible for free or reduced lunch costs (Kids Count)	5,449
Pounds of food distributed annually by Gleaners in Livingston County	2 Million
2019 United Way ALICE (Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed) Report indicates seniors have the highest numbers of those in poverty and in households that are struggling	1,361 in Poverty 6,335 Struggling Households

*These are the most up-to-date data points available at this time.

What programs & services exist?

The **Livingston County Hunger Council** is a coalition of individuals, businesses, and organizations, committed to building a community-based food system where all can thrive. Over the last several years, the Council has significantly . . .

- Improved access to fresh produce
- Promoted nutrition education and healthier food choices
- Increased capacity and coordination of the food pantry network
- Closed the gap of over 5 million meals to become the first “food secure” county in the State of Michigan (able to respond to the need here)



What can the community do to help?



Today, the Council works to sustain access to nutritious food; increase availability of local fresh produce; and integrate nutrition education with food programs.

Join the Livingston County Hunger Council

Together, we nourish our community by championing food access and education.

Other ways you can make a difference:

- ❖ Organize a food drive for your neighborhood pantry
- ❖ Volunteer to help with the community gardens, or help people use their Bridge Cards to purchase produce at local farmers markets
- ❖ Volunteer at Gleaners Community Food Bank – www.gcfb.volunteerhub.com
- ❖ Support “Summer Lunch Bunch”, which provides meals to hungry kids during the summer when they don’t have access to school meals – give or volunteer at The Salvation Army – (517) 546-4750
- ❖ Support Gleaners Community Food Bank, or your local food pantry, with monetary donations. \$1 to Gleaners feeds one person for one day. www.gcfb.org
- ❖ Volunteer your time and talent to support your local food pantry or meal program
- ❖ Tell your friends, neighbors, and coworkers about hunger in our communities, and about the many ways they can get involved. www.livingstonhunger.com
- ❖ Deliver meals to homebound seniors. Senior Nutrition – (810) 632-2155
- ❖ Share produce from your own garden or when planting your garden add/grow a row to be donated to a local food pantry, church, Hunger Council Produce Cart, or community event to help neighbors who may struggle to afford these items
- ❖ Start a community garden with your church, neighborhood, or service organization

Eat healthier.



Visit a local food pantry or food program to see some of the great things happening in Livingston County.

Support local farmers.

Advocate for nutritional content labels.

Donate produce to pantries or the produce carts around the community.

Buy local produce.

Teach children about nutrition, how the food gets to their plate, and the importance of local agriculture.

Support Hunger Council events!

Learn more about Hunger in Livingston County www.livingstonhunger.com
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