



Unmet Food Need in Montana Supporting Documentation

Montana Food Bank Network, September 2011

Methods are based on Food Lifeline, Seattle *Missing Meals 2008* methodology.

Unit of Measurement: Meals. When the source data was available in pounds, pounds are converted to meals by dividing the pounds by 1.49. There are 1.49 pounds in a meal according to the average compiled from Thrifty Food Plan guidelines.

When source data was available in dollars, dollars are converted to meals by dividing the dollars by \$2.53. The Map the Meal Gap report by Feeding America shows data collected by The Neilson Company in Montana to reveal the average cost of a meal to be \$2.53 in the state.

The need is measured by the number of households in Montana at and below 185% of the Federal Poverty Guideline. 185% of the poverty level is used as the highest income bracket to determine the total number of people because:

- It is the maximum income level qualification for *most* of USDA's food programs (with the exception of SNAP; however it is unlikely that many people between 185% and 200% of FPL are actually eligible for SNAP)
- USDA research has shown that households with incomes at or below 185% of poverty are likely to be at risk of hunger.

Total Low Income Households:

1. Determine the income level for a household of 2.5 at 185% of poverty using 2011 Federal Poverty Guidelines. Income level cut off= \$32,747
2. Determine number of households below \$32,747 using 2009 US Census America Community Survey estimates for Montana. Data is available in income categories (e.g. \$20,000 to \$24,999; \$25,000 to \$29,999). The income category ceiling closest to \$32,747 is \$29,999. There are a total of 132,281 households below this \$29,999 income ceiling that is closest to 185% of poverty.

Total Low Income Individuals:

FORMULA: Multiply the number of households by 2.5 (The average household size in Montana is 2.5 people (US Census Bureau Fact Finder)). $132,281 \text{ households} \times 2.5 = 330,703 \text{ Individuals}$.

Annual Meals Needed to Feed all Low Income People:

FORMULA: Multiply the number of individuals by 3 (meals per day) by 365 (number of days per year). $330,703 \times 3 \times 365 = 362,119,785 \text{ total meals needed}$.

Total Meals Provided by Individuals:

Weighted average income per person is \$7,780.30 x 14.12% of income spent on food = \$1,098.58 spent on food per person x 330,703 individuals = \$363,303,702 divided by \$2.53 cost per meal – 143,598,301 meals provided by individuals.

To determine the number of meals low income people can provide for themselves, the average individual income and the percentage of income spent on food must be determined.

Average household income: We use a weighted average calculated by multiplying the number of households in each income category by the ceiling dollar amount for that category, summing these

categories, and dividing the sum by the total number of households in all categories. The average household income is: \$19,451.

Percent of income spent on food: US Bureau of Labor Statistics 2009 survey of consumer expenditures shows that households with incomes between \$15,000-\$19,999 spend 14.12% of their income on food. We use the income category which includes the average household income established for this report: \$19,451.

Food Program Meals calculations:

SNAP: FY 2010 average participation 117,035 individuals multiplied by the average benefit \$129.86 per month multiplied by 12 months= \$182,798,727 divided by \$2.53 average cost per meal = 72,252,461 meals.

School Meals: Average Daily Participation (ADP) for Free and Reduced Price (FRP) school lunch, breakfast and summer meals. **School Lunch:** 2010 FRP ADP students= 43,523 multiplied by 180 school days= 7,834,140 meals. **School Breakfast:** 2010 FRP ADP students= 18,523 multiplied by 180 school days = 3,334,140 meals. **Summer Food:** 2011 total lunches served 302,372 plus total breakfast served 105,533 = 407,905 meals.

WIC: Program dollar amount 2009 \$15,148,321 divided by \$2.53 = 5,987,478 meals.

USDA Commodities:

- **TEFAP** (The Emergency Food Assistance Program) TEFAP includes food distributed through MFBN, non-MFBN food banks and pantries, and soup kitchens and homeless shelters. Calculated using pounds: 2,560,982 pounds divided by 1.49 pounds per meal = 1,718,779 meals
- **CSFP** (Commodity Supplemental Food Program) calculated using pounds: 2,899,988 divided by 1.49 pounds per meal = 1,946,300 meals
- **FDPIR** (Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations) calculated using pounds: 1,982,892 pounds divided by 1.49 pounds per meal = 1,330,800 meals)
- **NSIP** (Nutrition Services Incentive Program): data source is meals: 1,250,000 meals.

CACFP: Data source is meals: 2010 total meals 7,708,962.

Senior Nutrition Programs: Includes Home delivered Meals on Wheels (non-commodities) and Senior Congregate meals. Reported in meals: 630,371 home delivered meals + 1,108,184 congregate meals = 1,738,555 meals.

Non-MFBN: Emergency food from local communities not acquired and distributed by Montana Food Bank Network (MFBN). Calculated using pounds: 4,900,000 pounds divided by 1.49 pounds per meal= 3,288,590 meals. Non-TEFAP soup kitchen: 2,080,776 total meals minus 687,840 TEFAP meals=1,392,936 meals. Total 3,288,590 +1,392,936 = 4,681,526 meals.

MFBN: Calculated using pounds: 8.4 million pounds minus 1,044,881 pounds of TEFAP food distributed through MFBN = 7,355,119 pounds divided by 1.49 pounds per meal = 4,745,238 meals.