



**For Immediate Release**

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**Survey Finds 16.9 Percent of Households in MO Struggle to Afford Food**  
*New Data Underscore Need to Protect and Improve Federal Nutrition Programs*

**JEFFERSON CITY, MO** – One in six people – almost 17 percent of respondents – in Missouri reported in 2014 they struggled to afford enough food for their households, according to a new report released by the Food Research and Action Center (FRAC).

*How Hungry is America?* provides data on food hardship – the inability to afford enough food – for the nation, every state, and 100 of the country’s largest Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSAs), including Kansas City and St. Louis. The report found that nationally the food hardship rate was 17.2 percent in 2014.

The report’s *Food Hardship Index* reveals:

- Missouri ranked 22 out of 50 states, with 16.9 percent of the population in 2014 reporting they were unable to afford enough food.
- St. Louis reported a food hardship rate of 17.9 percent, 60<sup>th</sup> in the nation, while Kansas City reported a rate of 17.7 percent (61<sup>st</sup>) during 2013-2014.

“It is unacceptable that so many Missourians cannot afford enough food to provide for their families,” said Jeanette Mott Oxford, executive director of Empower Missouri. “Let us not forget the real people behind the numbers - children, seniors, veterans, working adults and people with disabilities who are struggling to make ends meet.”

Empower Missouri is concerned that the Senate and House both recently passed budgets that would subject the federal nutrition programs to staggering cuts. Such cuts would cause irreparable harm to the health and well-being of millions of people across the country who struggle to put food on the table.

Oxford continued, “We urge Congress to do right by their constituents and protect and strengthen federal nutrition programs, such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and school meals. The data released today shows that no state or community is free from food hardship. We must recommit to end hunger.”

“Food hardship is a problem in every corner of America. People are still struggling,” said Jim Weill, FRAC president, noting that too many Americans bear the brunt of insufficient wages, unemployment, involuntary part-time employment, and inadequate safety nets to lift or keep them out of poverty. “Congress and the President must reject cuts to nutrition programs and other programs that benefit low-income people and build a strong safety net.”

Empower Missouri urges concerned community members to raise their voices and to tell their Members of Congress to strengthen – not weaken – the nation’s nutrition safety net. They can do so, for example, by adding their name to a [petition](#) in support of SNAP or by joining the Empower Missouri Hunger Task Force.

***How Hungry is America?*** contains data throughout 2014 for every state and 100 of the country’s largest metropolitan areas (MSA). The data were gathered as part of the Gallup-Healthways Well-Being Index project, which has been interviewing hundreds of households daily since January 2008. FRAC has analyzed responses to the question: “Have there been times in the past twelve months when you did not have enough money to buy food that you or your family needed?” A “yes” answer to this question is considered to signal that the household experienced food hardship.

**The full report is available at [www.frac.org](http://www.frac.org).**

Empower Missouri ([www.empowermissouri.org](http://www.empowermissouri.org)), formerly Missouri Association for Social Welfare, is a statewide justice advocacy organization that educates and empowers community members on issues such as hunger, housing, education, health and economic opportunity.

