

On Our Plates: Food Insecurity Across the Economic Spectrum and its Impact on School Culture

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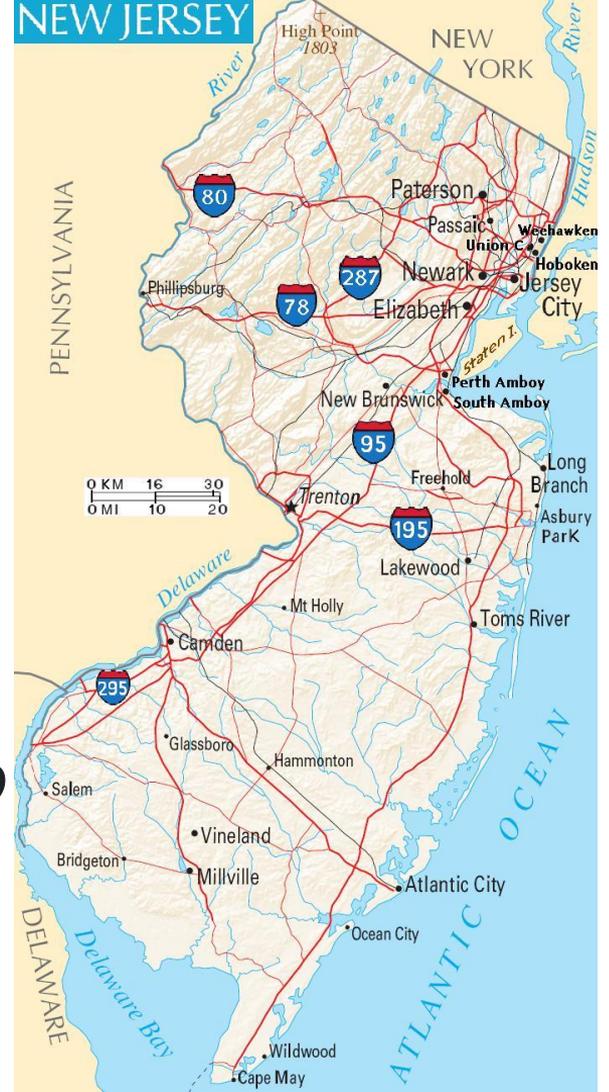
**New Jersey County Teachers of the Year
Clearview Regional High School, Mullica Hill, NJ**

Relevance Guide

NJ focus

**Intersectional look at food
insecurity/low food security**

Closer look: who are we missing?



By the end, you will have...

An increased understanding of causes of food insecurity and ways of seeing its effect on your school's culture

“Look fors” to identify at-risk members of your school community.

A list of stakeholders and possible helpers

Some “next steps” that fit your classroom/building/district needs and culture

On your own, take a minute to consider this question:

What is your experience with having enough to eat?

Stretching a chicken, by Betty Lou Barry

SUNDAY



**Roasted
Chicken**

MONDAY



**Chicken Salad
Sandwiches**

TUESDAY



Chicken Soup

WEDNESDAY



Gravy Bread



Food Insecurity in New Jersey

Contexts and Causes

What We Know...

Indiana school district turns unused cafeteria food into take-home meals for kids

by ED ERNSTES, WSBT 22 Reporter

Tuesday, April 2nd 2019

AA



Pop-up pantries aim to reduce food insecurity for college students

Apr 2, 2019 6:25 PM EDT

What exactly are we talking about?

Food *security* is defined as: access by all people at all times to enough food for an active, healthy life ([USDA](#))



Food *insecurity* is...

- **situational, episodic, and occasioned by “a lack of available financial resources for food at the level of the household” (Feeding America)**
- **measured in daily, weekly, or monthly increments**

More specifically, from the **USDA**...

Low food security: reports of reduced quality, variety, or desirability of diet. Little or no indication of reduced food intake.

Very low food security: reports of multiple indications of disrupted eating patterns and reduced food intake.

Housing Instability

DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING

**EVICTIION
NOTICE**

In 2016, an Estimated 1.3 Million Children in Grades K-12 Were Homeless at Some Point. 700,000 were 13-17 Years Old.

- **Temporary homelessness**
- **Ad hoc kitchens**
- **“Invisible” homeless adolescents**

Underemployment and Unemployment



Employment Instability Affects Children in Places Where You Might Not Expect It.

- **Income sources**
- **Seasonable employment**
- **Benefit variability**
- **Benefit longevity**

Healthcare and medical expenses



Chronic and Catastrophic Illness, Medical Expenses, and Food Insecurity are Directly Connected

- **Lost work time**
- **Reduced parental supervision**
- **Reprioritized income**
- **Negative nutritional, physical, emotional implications**

Social Isolation



Social Support Networks are Essential for Food Security

- **Families in immediate crisis**
- **One-guardian households**
- **Elderly or custodial caretakers**
- **Transient, temporary, or emergency housing outside of social support network**

Geographic Isolation



Where You Live in New Jersey Affects Your Access to Nutritious Food

- **Suburban/rural isolation**
- **Transportation options**
- **“Education Poverty”**
- **Perceptions of Suburban/Rural Socioeconomics**

Food Deserts



Where You Live in New Jersey Affects Your Access to Groceries

- **Location of grocery stores**
- **Quality of food sources**
- **Affordability of nutritious food**

Household Food Rationing



Are Your Students Re-apportioning Their Food?

- **Parents and/or older children foregoing food so other household members can eat**
- **Multiple household members in or across school/district**
- **Privacy issues**

Other considerations...

USDA (2019): Poverty threshold for 1 adult/2 child household: \$21,330. SNAP Benefit eligibility income is \$37,296.

Harvard School of Public Health (2017): “There are 16.9 million Americans living in poverty in the suburbs - more than in cities or rural communities...40% of the uninsured population live in the suburbs.”

Be careful...

According to [NJ Center for Food Action](#), NJ SNAP recipients decreased 14% between May 2016 and May 2018. **HOWEVER...**

300,000+ eligible kids ARE NOT receiving free breakfast. ([NJ SCHOOL BREAKFAST](#))

About a quarter of eligible student receive summer meals. ([AFCNJ. 2018](#))

[Community Food Bank of New Jersey](#) (2016): 16.8% of NJ's children are food insecure.

Who Are We Missing in the School Community?

PUBLIC HEALTH

For Many College Students, Hunger 'Makes It Hard To Focus'

July 31, 2018 · 9:00 AM ET

MICHELLE ANDREWS



[National Public Radio,](#)
[7/31/18](#)

[New York Times, 4/2/18](#)

The New York Times

***Teachers in Oklahoma and
Kentucky Walk Out: 'It Really Is
a Wildfire'***

Food Insecurity in New Jersey: What Can We Look For?

“If one person in eight starves regularly in the world, this is... the result of his inability to establish entitlement to enough food; the question of the physical availability of the food is not directly involved.”

-Amartya Sen, 1998 Nobel Laureate, Economics
Poverty and Famines: An Essay on Entitlement and Deprivation

Think About Your Students and School Community Members...

What signs would indicate to you that a person *in your educational setting* is food insecure? Choose a thought partner or two in your area and jot down some “look fors.”

You have 5 minutes.

Be ready to share two to three ideas!



Is the community member...

Anxious for the next meal to be served?

Lingering for a second helping or more?

Exhibiting extreme hunger on Mondays or returns from breaks?

Exhibiting fatigue, short attention span, inability to concentrate?

Snacking whenever possible, or asking for snacks?

Taking extra food “for later” when it is available?

When It's Time to Have a Conversation About Food...

Make sure it's happening between people who trust each other.

It must be coming from a place of concern and a desire for healing or growth.

It might not be explicitly about food.

How Do I Start?

Turn and talk to a thought partner.

How might you approach a student or colleague who you suspect might be food insecure?

In two minutes, share one conversation starter you might use...

Some One-on-One Conversation Starters...

“How have you been feeling lately?”

“Tell me about the people in your house.”

“Did you eat breakfast?”

“What time do you wake up in the morning/go to bed at night?”

“What are your plans after school?”



Food Insecurity in New Jersey: Finding The Helpers

“It all starts with seeds.” -Stephen Ritz

You can't do this alone.

You are not the only person who sees this student or colleague during the day.

Somewhere, there are others who want the same thing.



Who Are the Helpers?

Take a moment to think...

- Who are the obvious helpers? Who are the hidden helpers?
- Let the “Look Fors” guide your thinking.
- Jot some ideas either by yourself or with a thought partner. You have 5 minutes. We would love to hear three ideas.

2019 SEPTEMBER						
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					

Food Insecurity in New Jersey: Next Steps for September

Some Steps Other Districts Have Taken...

Establishing food pantries and backpack programs

Providing confidential assistance with free and reduced-price lunch forms to meet the parent's/guardian's needs

Establishing shared food culture between staff members (Friday Soup Club)

Other ideas...

Establishing “Breakfast After the Bell” programs and other best practices.

Maximizing communication between student support staff: school nurses, social workers, counselors, coaches, physical trainers, cafeteria staff, etc.

After-school “food clubs” that teach students about healthy, economical cooking, eating, and food production.

Get in touch!

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- Confronting Suburban Poverty