

# Food insecurity jumps in Rochester area

## 1 city ZIP code ranks third-highest in NY

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New data from Feeding America reveals the sharpest increase in food insecurity since the Great Recession.

Based on the most recent data from the “Map the Meal Gap” study, the food insecurity rate in Foodlink’s 10-county service area jumped to 12% in 2022, from 9.3% in 2021. This study offers lo-

cal-level estimates of food insecurity and food costs for every county nationwide.

The one-year increase led to an additional 33,580 people experiencing food insecurity, raising the total to 151,820 in the Rochester/Finger Lakes region. The USDA defines food insecurity as a household’s occasional lack of access to sufficient food for an active, healthy life.

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Foodlink and City of Rochester staff help distribute emergency food supply boxes at the Rochester Public Market in 2020. SHAWN DOWD/ROCHESTER DEMOCRAT AND CHRONICLE FILE PHOTO

# Food

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Although each of Foodlink's 10 counties saw significant increases, the data shows that the 14605 ZIP code, which covers the Upper Falls and Marketview Heights neighborhoods in the city of Rochester, has the third-highest food insecurity rate in the state (29.8%).

"We have seen our distribution increase from a steady flow from 45 families each week, to a steady flow of 100 families, including seniors arriving and waiting in line each week for the distribution of food and home goods supplies," LaVada Howard said.

Howard works with Straight from the Heart Community Outreach, an organization that runs a food pantry on Hudson Avenue in the 14605 zip code.

The upsurge can be linked to two main factors – the sudden rise in food inflation from 2021 to 2022 and the termination of several COVID-era federal assistance programs.

After Foodlink analyzed the monthly reports collected from its 200-plus members, including food pantries and meal programs, it found that from January to March 2024, visits to pantries and meal programs increased by 35% from the same period in 2023.

"In the short time that the Rochester Hope North Clinton Food Pantry has

## Additional data

- Black and Hispanic residents are far more likely to be food insecure. In our region, 8% of white residents are food insecure, compared to 27% of Black residents and 28% of Hispanic residents.
- Approximately 34% of people facing hunger do not qualify for SNAP benefits due to income thresholds.
- The childhood food insecurity rate jumped from 12.5% to 17% from 2021 to 2022.

been open, we have come to see firsthand what food insecurity looks like in Rochester," Dawn Burdick said. "It is in the face of a single mother that doesn't know how she'll be able to find enough food for her children while they are home during the weekend. It is seniors lining up in the cold and snow to use the food pantry three hours before the doors open. It is in people on edge as the end of the month approaches and their SNAP benefits have been exhausted. In our area of the world that is so rich in resources, it is disheartening to see the increased number of people faced with food insecurity."

To read the latest Map the Meal Gap report, visit [Map.FeedingAmerica.org](https://www.mapthefeedinggap.org).

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