

Creating a Hunger Free North Dakota Hunger and Food Insecurity Indicators COVID-19 Pandemic Beginning March 13, 2020 – May 28, 2020

Prior to the start of the pandemic, North Dakotans experienced a food insecurity rate of 9.0 percent, or about 28,700 households, where people did not have enough food for a healthy and active lifestyle from the period of 2015-2017. While this rate is lower than most other states, the rate shows a gradual increase over the past 10 years.

- >100,000 North Dakotans have filed for Unemployment Insurance from March – May, 2020; some jobs are coming back online as some businesses are opening up, while others may not ever re-open.
- The Great Plains Food Bank is reporting a 44% increase in visits to partner food pantries and soup kitchens, and a 79% increased demand for mobile food deliveries; donors and volunteers are stepping up, but there is a long term need for sustaining efforts;
- In early April, there was reported a 34% increase in SNAP applications in North Dakota (nationally, there has been an increase of 41% for SNAP).
- The number of people receiving SNAP benefits in North Dakota in March 2020 was 22,481 households and 48,152 individuals; in April 2020, there were 24,223 households and 51,073 individuals. There have been over 1,700 applications for Pandemic EBT per the North Dakota Department of Human Services.
- 44% of 11,300+ North Dakotans who completed a statewide survey administered by the ND Department of Commerce on impacts of COVID-19 stated that hunger/food insecurity is an issue of concern in their communities.
- Approximately 20.5% (\$94,114 of \$458,396) of grant funds awarded by the North Dakota Community Foundation over two rounds of COVID-19 Response Grants in April and May, 2020 were awarded to fulfill requests from food helper organizations. In addition, other grant awards were provided for both housing and food. Over \$30,000 was requested for meals for seniors, and \$10,000 for school meals <https://www.ndcf.net/learn/news-reports.html>
- Nationally, in April, 2020, the price of food increased 2.6% on average (increases of 4.3% for meats, poultry, fish and eggs, 1.5% for fruits and vegetables, and 2.9% for cereals and bakery products) the biggest monthly increase in nearly 50 years (US Bureau of Labor Statistics)
- Nationally, in April 2020, food insecurity doubled overall and tripled among households with children. “Food insecurity increased by more than April’s unemployment rate jump predicted it would, especially for families with children.”