



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Wolf Administration, Feeding PA Recognize Hunger Action Month

Encourages Support of Charitable Food Networks, Use of Food Assistance Resources

Harrisburg, PA – The Wolf Administration today joined Feeding Pennsylvania and leadership from Pennsylvania’s food banks to recognize Hunger Action Month and encourage continued support for Pennsylvania’s charitable food network, which has seen an unprecedented and sustained rise in need due to the COVID-19 pandemic and accompanying economic instability. Pennsylvania’s charitable food network and food assistance programs are available so no one has to go hungry.

“As a Pennsylvanian, I take great pride in knowing that we have a dedicated charitable food network that has gone above and beyond to feed those experiencing hunger and food insecurity in our commonwealth,” said First Lady Wolf. “The numbers – 2 million Pennsylvanians – are devastating, but our food banks, our volunteers and our food partners continue to show us that we can do something to lessen the impact of hunger in our communities. In this past year and a half, when we were all faced with uncertainty, they demonstrated just how powerful we are when we come together to support one another. Food insecurity is everyone’s issue, and it will take all of us to stand up against it during Hunger Action Month and every month if we want to end it.”

“Having enough to eat is a privilege that’s easy to overlook, but food and nutrition are essential to good health and overall well-being. As we recognize Hunger Action Month, I want to thank our food banks and pantries, their dedicated volunteers, and all of our partners in the charitable food network for their heroic work to support our communities through the last year and a half,” said Acting Human Services Secretary Meg Snead. “This work helps people meet this most essential basic need and provides much deserved security through unprecedented challenges so people who are struggling know that they do not have to go hungry. As we continue to navigate the pandemic and our economic recovery, please know that this resource will continue to be here to help keep our communities safe and healthy.”

“A hungry child cannot learn to their full potential,” said Vonda Ramp, the State Director of Child Nutrition Programs at the Pennsylvania Department of Education. “I’d like to thank our partners in schools and in the agriculture and food and nutrition industries for their tireless efforts, during Hunger Action Month and every month, to ensure children across Pennsylvania have continued access to nutritious school meals.”

According to Feeding Pennsylvania, approximately 2 million Pennsylvanians – including 630,000 children – did not have reliable access to adequate, nutritious meals and were food insecure in 2020. Last year, nearly 1 in 20 Pennsylvanians were newly food insecure. Feeding America’s [national projections for hunger in 2021](#) show improvements compared to last year, but hunger and food insecurity are still much higher around the country compared to pre-pandemic levels.

“Last year, the pandemic led to a significant increase in food insecurity across Pennsylvania due to temporary unemployment as a result of restrictions to mitigate the spread of COVID-19,” said Jane Clements, Chief Executive Officer of Feeding Pennsylvania. “But despite the improvement in numbers, many of our neighbors continue to face great need and impossible choices. For many families, it’s often a decision between food or other critical needs such as childcare, utility bills, or medication. Feeding PA invites individuals across the state to join us this Hunger Action Month to help raise awareness and funds to ensure that no one in Pennsylvania goes without food.”

Inadequate food and chronic nutrient deficiencies have profound effects on a person’s life and health, including increased risks for chronic diseases, higher chances of hospitalization, poorer overall health, and increased health care costs. As the nation faces the COVID-19 pandemic, access to essential needs like food is more important than ever to help keep vulnerable populations healthy and mitigate co-occurring health risks.

Pennsylvania’s charitable food network has been an integral partner fighting hunger on the front lines in communities across the commonwealth. Food banks in Pennsylvania typically serve approximately 2.2 million people annually, but since the public health crisis began in March 2020, these food banks have served nearly 356.6 million pounds of food to more than 41.8 million duplicated individuals.

Help with buying food is also available through the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). SNAP helps nearly 1.8 million Pennsylvanians by providing money each month to spend on groceries, helping households have resources to purchase enough food to avoid going hungry. SNAP is our country’s most important and most impactful anti-hunger program. For every meal provided by a Feeding Pennsylvania food bank, SNAP provides nine.

Applications for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and other public assistance programs can be submitted online at www.compass.state.pa.us or by phone at 1-866-550-4355. On-site [County Assistance Office](#) (CAO) services are available if clients cannot access online services or need assistance that cannot be accessed through the COMPASS website, the myCOMPASS PA mobile app, or by calling the Customer Service Centers at 215-560-7226 for Philadelphia clients or 1-877-395-8930 for clients in all other counties.

All Pennsylvanians experiencing financial hardships due to the pandemic, a lost job, or a change in income are strongly encouraged to apply and see if they qualify for assistance with food, health care, and other essential needs.

Anyone interested in volunteering can find organizations in need of volunteer support on the [United Way of Pennsylvania’s 211 website](#).

For more information about food assistance resources for people around Pennsylvania impacted by COVID-19 and the accompanying economic insecurity, visit the Department of Agriculture’s [food security guide](#).

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