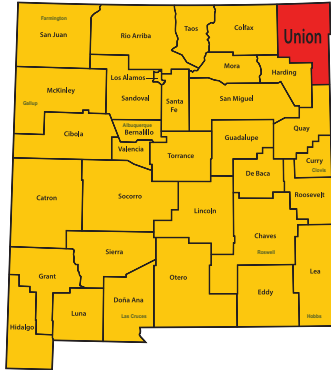




UNION

Population
4,122

Hunger is a Growing Crisis for Families in Northern New Mexico



Hunger by the Numbers for UNION COUNTY

Number of Food Insecure Persons
530 total (12.8%)
170 children (20.1%)

Average Cost of Meal – \$3.12

Annual Food Budget Shortfall
\$293,000

Population of Union County – 4,122

Unemployment Rate – 4.2%

People Living in Poverty – 665 (19%)

Children Living in Poverty – 221 (28%)

SNAP Person Participation – 280 (19%)

WIC Person Participation – 45 (0%)

Data Sources:

- (1) Hunger - Feeding America Map the Meal Gap
- (2) Poverty - The Annie E. Casey Foundation Kids Count Data Center 2022
- (3) WIC – NM Department of Health 10/2022

(Fact sheet created - January 2024)

What is Food Insecurity?

Food insecurity refers to USDA’s measure of lack of access, at times, to enough food for an active, healthy life for all household members and limited or uncertain availability of nutritionally adequate foods. Food-insecure households are not necessarily food insecure all the time. Food insecurity may reflect a household’s need to make trade-offs between important basic needs, such as housing or medical bills, and purchasing nutritionally adequate foods.

Hunger by the Numbers...

UNITED STATES

Number of Food Insecure Persons	33,844,000 (10.4%)
Number of Food Insecure Children	9,262,000 (12.8%)
Average Cost of Meal	\$3.59
Annual Food Budget Shortfall	\$21,466,234,000
Population of USA (July 1, 2022 Census)	334,914,895

NEW MEXICO

Number of Food Insecure Persons	285,220 (13.5%)
Number of Food Insecure Children	90,490 (19.2%)
Average Cost of Meal	\$3.35
Annual Food Budget Shortfall	\$168,875,000
Population of NM (July 1, 2021 Census)	2,109,366
People Living in Poverty	364,725 (18%)
Children Living in Poverty	105,030 (24%)

- NM ranks 3rd in poverty of the 50 states
- NM ranks 3rd in childhood poverty of the 50 states

Why are New Mexicans Food Insecure?

The **leading causes of food insecurity** in America cited in order of frequency in studies by the *Food Research and Action Center* are:

1. unemployment
2. underemployment
3. low-paying jobs
4. high housing costs
5. medical or health costs
6. homelessness
7. poverty or lack of income
8. substance abuse
9. mental health problems
10. reduced public benefits
11. child care costs
12. limited life skills

Here is what The Food Depot is doing in Union County:



IN 2023, THE FOOD DEPOT DISTRIBUTED:

147,614 Pounds =

123,012
Meals

Mobile Food Pantries

Mobile Food Pantries provide easy access to groceries to Northern New Mexico's rural towns and villages.

At every Mobile Food Pantry distribution, a truck delivers a variety of healthy foods to a central community location, such as a fire station, community center, or church.

Local leaders, all volunteers, take time to build healthy food boxes for their community and organize the distribution. Mobile Food Pantries not only provide nutritious food, but also give community members the chance to fellowship with one another.

These distributions are designed without the need for long-term storage. All food is delivered and distributed the day of the Mobile Food Pantry.

Mobile Food Pantries in Union

- Clayton
- Des Moines

Effects of Child Hunger

Hunger can affect children's health, development, and well-being.

Some common effects include:

Poor academic performance -

Children who experience food insecurity may have trouble focusing and learning in school.

Increased health problems -

Kids who don't get enough food to eat face higher risks of health conditions like anemia and asthma.

Developmental differences -

Hunger can change how a child's brain and body grow and affect their thinking, learning, and behavior.



Why hunger is more common in rural areas?

There are many reasons why hunger is more common in rural areas, including:

Lack of transportation - People in rural areas often live far away from grocery stores and food pantries. That can make it difficult to get food, especially without a car or public transit.

Low wages and underemployment - Jobs in rural areas often

pay low wages and don't offer full-time hours. This can make it difficult to afford food, even if you work multiple jobs.

Racism and discrimination - People of color in rural areas are more likely to face hunger due to long-term inequalities affecting food access. In 2022, Black people in rural counties were 2.5 more likely to face hunger. **Native Americans living in rural areas face some of the highest rates of hunger.**

Causes of Senior Hunger

There are many reasons why seniors are at higher risk for hunger:

Health conditions - Seniors are more likely to have chronic health conditions that make cooking and grocery shopping difficult.

Transportation problems - Many seniors don't have access to transportation, making it more difficult to get to grocery stores or food pantries.

Fixed income - Seniors often have limited income, making it difficult to afford food and other expenses like rent and medicine.

Social isolation - Seniors who live alone may not have family or caregivers who can help them with grocery shopping and cooking.

