



National Study Shows Food Insecurity Up in Central and Western Virginia

(VERONA, Va. — May 27, 2015) — More families in central and western Virginia continue to struggle with hunger during the weak economic recovery, according to results from the recently released *Map the Meal Gap 2015*. The study, conducted by Feeding America, measures food insecurity across the U.S., and includes new data for the Blue Ridge Area Food Bank service region of 25 counties and nine cities.

Apart from the study, the Food Bank cites low-wage employment as a growing reason why working adults can't cover all of their expenses, including the costs of daily, nutritious meals.

The study revealed that 146,770 neighbors in the region were food insecure in 2013, the most recent year for which data is available. This is up from the 144,480 reported the previous year. Also, more children were reported to be food-insecure. More than 53,000 young people didn't know when they would get their next serving of food, compared to the 51,670 previously reported.

The study is based on statistics collected by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, U.S. Census Bureau, and the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics in 2013.

The study's outcome lines up with national trends revealing weak wage growth and a loss of mid-wage jobs. A report from the National Employment Law Project showed 58 percent of jobs regained during the nation's economic recovery were often low-wage and part-time without benefits.

Most telling are the rates of underemployment in the Food Bank's service area, which includes people involuntarily working part time. Underemployment jumped to 13 percent in 2013 from 10.9 percent in 2012.

"We have increasingly become a lifeline for working families who struggle to make ends meet," said Michael McKee, CEO of the Blue Ridge Area Food Bank. "Separate research revealed that 60 percent of households served by the Food Bank report at least one person worked in the last year," he added.

Food insecurity rates for specific communities within the Food Bank's entire service area are available through an [interactive map](#). Readers can also learn about hunger across the Commonwealth and the rest of the country at www.feedingamerica.org/mapthegap.

"*Map the Meal Gap 2015* provides unique insight into the prevalence of food insecurity in each county and congressional district in our nation," said Matt Knott, president of Feeding America. "It will help policy makers and our elected officials understand the challenges they face in addressing hunger in the communities they serve."

Map the Meal Gap is a detailed analysis of food insecurity done by Feeding America and the only study available that provides county-level estimates of food insecurity in the United States. Food insecurity is defined by the USDA as a socioeconomic condition of limited or uncertain access to

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enough food to support a healthy life. The Howard G. Buffett Foundation, ConAgra Foods Foundation and Nielsen supported research for the study.

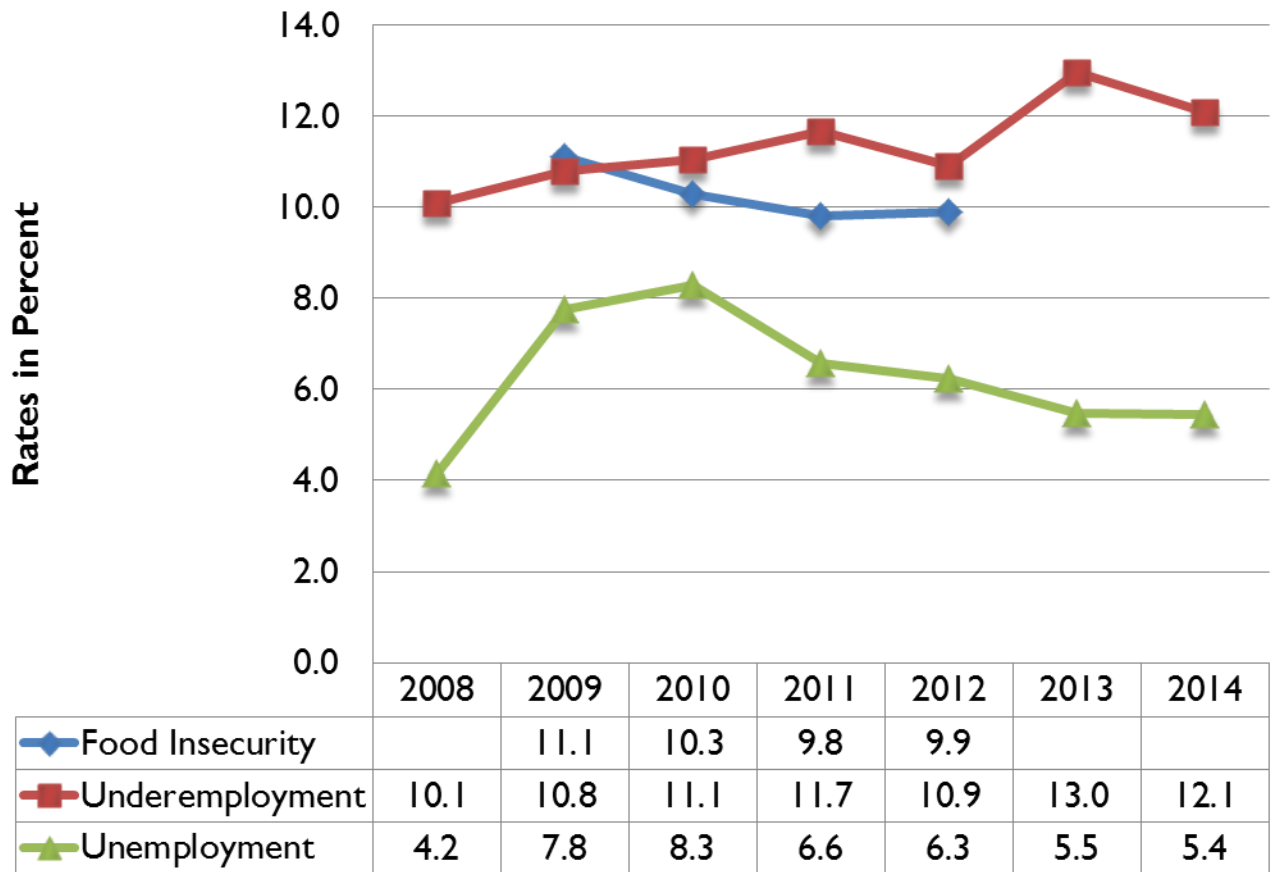
About the Blue Ridge Area Food Bank

Founded in 1981, the Blue Ridge Area Food Bank is the largest organization alleviating hunger in western and central Virginia. Headquartered in Verona, VA, the Food Bank serves 25 counties and nine cities through distribution centers in Charlottesville, Lynchburg, Winchester and Verona. The Blue Ridge Area Food Bank distributes nearly 22 million pounds of food annually to 116,000 people each month through a network of 224 community partners – food pantries, soup kitchens, shelters, schools, churches and other non-profit groups. The Food Bank is a member of Feeding America, a national food bank association that supports 202 food banks across the United States. For more information, visit www.brafb.org.

(See graph and chart below)



BRAFB Service Area





Food Insecurity Rates— Blue Ridge Area Food Bank Service Area

County	Population	Food insecurity rate	Estimated number food insecure individuals (rounded)
Albemarle	100,636	10.1%	10,180
Amherst	32,244	12.4%	4,000
Appomattox	15,054	12.9%	1,940
Augusta	73,726	9.1%	6,730
Bath	4,686	10.8%	510
Bedford	69,175	8.8%	6,120
Buckingham	17,126	16.3%	2,790
Campbell	54,967	12.1%	6,660
Clarke	14,191	7.7%	1,090
Culpeper	47,330	10.1%	4,800
Fauquier	66,015	7.0%	4,600
Fluvanna	25,860	8.4%	2,160
Frederick	79,453	7.9%	6,240
Greene	18,577	9.1%	1,680
Highland	2,276	9.0%	210
Loudoun	326,477	4.7%	15,380
Madison	13,249	10.3%	1,360
Nelson	14,940	11.8%	1,760
Orange	33,934	11.1%	3,760
Page	23,975	13.5%	3,230
Rappahannock	7,448	9.3%	690
Rockbridge	22,345	10.7%	2,390
Rockingham	76,885	8.9%	6,860
Shenandoah	42,270	10.4%	4,390
Warren	37,836	9.9%	3,730

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Bedford city	6,052	16.7%	1,010
Buena Vista city	6,699	14.1%	950
Charlottesville city	43,663	17.5%	7,650
Harrisonburg city	49,926	17.1%	8,560
Lexington city	7,026	17.5%	1,230
Lynchburg city	76,467	18.2%	13,950
Staunton city	23,989	14.5%	3,480
Waynesboro city	21,099	14.8%	3,110
Winchester city	26,587	13.4%	3,570
Service Area Total	1,482,183	9.9%	146,770

* Gundersen, C., A. Satoh, A. Dewey, M. Kato & E. Engelhard. *Map the Meal Gap 2015: Food Insecurity and Child Food Insecurity Estimates at the County Level*. Feeding America, 2015. Data presented above reflect one-year rates for 2013.