

SENIOR HUNGER REPORT CARD™

NAME

United States of America

TERM

2010

EVALUATED BY

National Foundation to End Senior Hunger

Formerly the Meals On Wheels Research Foundation

SUBJECT	GRADE
<p>OVERALL PERFORMANCE</p> <p><i>Comments:</i> 8.3 million seniors faced the threat of hunger in 2010. This reflects a 78% increase since 2001 – and a 34% increase since the start of the recession in 2007.</p>	F
<p>ECONOMICS</p> <p><i>Comments:</i> Since 2009 and the end of the recession, the risk of hunger for the overall US population has declined. However, during the same time period food insecurity increased among those age 60 and older – primarily among the near-poor, with income one to two times the poverty level.</p>	F
<p>GEOGRAPHY</p> <p><i>Comments:</i> The threat of hunger for seniors increased in 44 states since 2007 – the average rate among the “Top Ten Hunger States” increased by two full percentage points, with seniors in non-metro areas being disproportionately affected. The D- recognizes the 6 states in which the threat of senior hunger declined.</p>	D-
<p>WOMEN’S STUDIES</p> <p><i>Comments:</i> The effects of food insecurity are disproportionately borne by women, who make up over 60% of seniors facing the threat of hunger. Senior women are more likely to face the threat of hunger than their male counterparts – and the gender gap has widened since 2009.</p>	F
<p>MULTICULTURAL STUDIES</p> <p><i>Comments:</i> African American and Hispanic seniors are more than twice as likely to be threatened by hunger as their white and non-Hispanic counterparts. However, this grade reflects the progress made, as food insecurity has declined for racial and ethnic minorities since 2008.</p>	D+
<p>HOME ECONOMICS</p> <p><i>Comments:</i> Nearly one-third (31%) of seniors living with a grandchild face the threat of hunger. However, this grade reflects the progress made, as the threat of hunger has significantly declined for this group – down from 36% in 2009.</p>	C-
<p>HEALTH & PHYSICAL EDUCATION</p> <p><i>Comments:</i> Consider that seniors experiencing food insecurity are more likely to be in poor or fair health, and that younger seniors (in their 60s) are most threatened by hunger. An “incomplete” grade is assigned here, as our nation has yet to discover the full consequences of the impending health crisis.</p>	I
<p>ETHICS</p> <p><i>Comments:</i> In the richest nation on Earth, more than 1 in 7 seniors is threatened by hunger. This increase from 1 in 9 seniors in 2005 foretells an alarming human cost if this national crisis is not reversed.</p>	F
<p>RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT:</p> <p><i>America is currently failing our nation’s seniors. A network of 5,000 Meals On Wheels programs across the country is working hard to end senior hunger, but these programs lack the financial and volunteer resources needed to meet this drastic increase in demand. To reverse this crisis America must increase its efforts to address the needs of the growing senior population – with particular attention to: women, minorities, the poor and near-poor and the younger senior population.</i></p>	

SENIOR HUNGER REPORT CARD™: EXPLANATION OF GRADES

At the World Food Summit in 1996, the United States pledged “our political will and our common and national commitment to achieving food security for all and to an ongoing effort to eradicate hunger in all countries, with an immediate view to reducing the number of undernourished people to half their present level no later than 2015.” This goal is in line with the current US Department of Health and Human Services Healthy People 2020 objective to reduce household food insecurity to a target rate of 6.0%.

We have analyzed food insecurity among seniors as far back as 2001, when over 11% of seniors faced the threat of hunger. Therefore, this annual report card will evaluate the United States on its progress toward halving this rate of senior hunger (i.e., with a goal of achieving a marginal food insecurity rate of 6%), as a first step toward the goal of achieving food security for all and ending senior hunger. Additional notes on the grades assigned in each category are outlined below.

OVERALL PERFORMANCE. The failing grade reflects not merely lack of progress, but a looming crisis that this nation has failed to anticipate and respond to. Based on 2001-2005 data, over 5 million seniors faced the threat of hunger – in 2010, over 8.3 million. (See page 3 of the *2010 Annual Report*.)

ECONOMICS. Between 2009 and 2010 the percent of seniors threatened by hunger increased from 14.26% to 14.85% -- a statistically significant step backward (see page 8 of the *2010 Annual Report*). In 2010, 47% of seniors below the poverty line and 31% of seniors with income between 100% and 200% of the poverty line were threatened by hunger (see page 8 of the *2010 Annual Report*). This evidence, particularly when examined in the context of data reported in the Supplemental Poverty Measure report which indicate a 16% poverty rate among seniors, suggests that seniors are disproportionately facing enduring effects of the Great Recession.

GEOGRAPHY. The 2010 “Top Ten Hunger States” in terms of the percent of seniors experiencing the threat of hunger were MS and NM at 21%; AR at 19%; TX and TN at 18%; and AL, GA, SC, FL and NV at 17% (see page 7 of the *2010 Annual Report*). The average rate of marginal food insecurity among the “Top Ten” increased to 18% in 2010, from 16% in 2007. States in which the threat of hunger remained the same or declined between 2007 and 2010 include MS, MN, SC, IN, LA, and ID (see page 6 of the *2010 Annual Report*).

WOMEN’S STUDIES. Women make up over 60% of the population of seniors facing the threat of hunger (see page 6 of the *2010 Annual Report*). While 13% of male seniors are threatened by hunger, a full 16% of female seniors faced this threat in 2010 (see page 4 of the *2010 Annual Report*).

MULTICULTURAL STUDIES. African American seniors face a threat of hunger that is 132% higher than that of white seniors; Hispanics face a threat of hunger 131% higher than that of non-Hispanics (see pages 3 and 4 of the *2010 Annual Report*). However, the threat of hunger declined among African Americans (from 30% to 27%) and other minority races (from 20% to 16%) between 2009 and 2010. The percent of Hispanic seniors threatened by hunger increased slightly to 31% in 2010 (from 30% in 2009) – but is still significantly lower than the 36% rate for this group in 2008 (see pages 11 and 12 of the *2010 Annual Report*).

HOME ECONOMICS. (See pages 4 and 8 of the *2010 Annual Report*.)

HEALTH & PHYSICAL EDUCATION. Those under the age of 70 make up 58% of all seniors facing the threat of hunger. Food insecurity is associated with a host of poor health outcomes for seniors such as reduced nutrient intakes and limitations in activities of daily living. The recent increase in senior hunger will likely lead to additional nutritional and health challenges for our nation. (See pages 2 and 5 of the *2010 Annual Report*.)

ETHICS. (See page 2 of the *2010 Annual Report*.)

The opinions expressed in the **Senior Hunger Report Card™** are solely those of the National Foundation to End Senior Hunger and are based on an independent review of original research and data published in *Senior Hunger in America 2010: An Annual Report* (May 2012), by Dr. James P. Ziliak of the University of Kentucky and Dr. Craig Gundersen of the University of Illinois (cited herein as the “*2010 Annual Report*”).

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**NATIONAL FOUNDATION
TO END SENIOR HUNGER**

1022 Duke Street
Alexandria, VA 22314
NFESH.org

Contact: Enid Borden at enid@nfesh.org