

Starved for Attention

Food Insecurity in Northwest Connecticut

“A hungry man can’t see right
or wrong. He just sees food.”

—*Pearl S. Buck*



THE COMMUNITY FOUNDATION
of NORTHWEST CONNECTICUT

The Draper Foundation Fund



This publication is made possible by generous contributions from the following individuals and organizations:

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Graphic Design: Alan Colavecchio, Colavecchio Design

Special Thanks: Christina Tranquillo, Susan Bremer

Printing: Mansir Printing

THE DRAPER FOUNDATION FUND

A fund of The Community Foundation of Northwest Connecticut

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THE COMMUNITY FOUNDATION
of NORTHWEST CONNECTICUT

Dear Friends,

We've all seen distressing news reports about people who are starving in countries plagued by war or drought. For most of us, the phrase "I'm starving" really means "I'm late for dinner" or "I missed a meal." But for many in the Northwest Corner, it means something vastly different.

Even though, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Americans throw away a pound of food per person every day, one in every 10 Northwest Corner residents experiences chronic hunger. Some of our region's children, who are most vulnerable to the effects of economic hardship, go to bed malnourished or underfed. Local food pantries are serving the poor in record numbers, but overwhelming demand has resulted in severe food shortages.

The Community Foundation of Northwest Connecticut is pleased to provide you with this report on food insecurity in the Northwest Corner. It highlights many of the key hunger statistics and food-security challenges that face us today. It also serves as a guide for funders and the general public to support the fragile network of organizations that work tirelessly to address this heartrending situation.

This report is made possible through the incredible benevolence of **Jim and Shirley Draper** and The Draper Foundation Fund. The fund's philanthropy supports area food banks, food pantries, soup kitchens, our local homeless shelter and many of the charitable organizations serving our area's most vulnerable citizens.

We hope you will join us in the fight to end chronic hunger in your town. Together, we can support positive changes in the supply of and access to nutritious food for our most disadvantaged neighbors, nourishing the spirit of community that defines us as a region while creating healthy outcomes for all.

Sincerely,

Guy Rovezzi
President



Table of Contents

Starved for Attention: Food Insecurity in Northwest Connecticut *

How Is This Possible?	3
Looks Can Be Deceiving	5
What It Takes to Make Ends Meet	7
Defining the Gap	9
How Big Is the Safety Net?	10

I'm Just Going to Run to the Store But Can You Get There From Here?	23
Cash, Check, Credit or EBT Card?	25

How Much Is That Burger Through the Window?	28
You Are What You Eat	29
Feed Your Children Well	29

Food for Thought	31
What You Can Do to End Childhood Hunger	32
The Five Faces of Food	36

Appendix	
Food Pantries in Northwest Connecticut	38
Soup Kitchens Serving the General Public	41
Agencies and Towns Served	42
Basic Economic Security Table 2012	43
The Draper Foundation Fund	44
The Community Foundation of Northwest Connecticut	45

**Because most data on food insecurity are reported at the county level, statistics specific to Litchfield County will be noted as such. Where data exist at the individual town level, they have been aggregated and reported as Northwest Corner statistics.*

How Is This Possible?

It is the 20th of the month. The electric bill is past due, your child needs an asthma inhaler and the pantry is bare. Food stamps will cover a few more meals; then a choice must be made: will it be medicine, the electric bill or food?

Hunger in America 2014, a study conducted by the Connecticut Food Bank in partnership with Feeding America, the leading domestic hunger-relief organization, noted that **68 percent of people seeking food assistance from the Connecticut Food Bank had to choose between food and medicine.**

Source: Connecticut Food Bank, *Hunger in America 2014: The Face of Hunger in Connecticut*, September 23, 2014, www.ctfoodbank.org

According to Connecticut Food Bank President and CEO Nancy L. Carrington, “Many of our neighbors seeking food assistance have jobs, raise families, work toward education and struggle with health problems, like all of us. Too often, they also have to make difficult trade-offs to get enough food for their families.”

A key finding of the *Hunger in America 2014* report is that nearly **45 percent of households** served through the Connecticut Food Bank **use three or more coping strategies to get enough food** such as:

- Purchasing inexpensive, unhealthy food (73.2%).
- Receiving help from friends or family (54.4%).
- Purchasing food in dented or damaged packages (42.6%).
- Eating food past its expiration date (40.8%).
- Diluting food or drinks (40.7%).
- Pawning or selling personal property (34.7%).
- Growing food in a garden (16%).

Low wages, underemployment and unemployment have been significant contributors to food insecurity in Connecticut. According to *Hunger in America 2014*:

- 17.7 percent of respondents faced foreclosure or eviction in the past five years.
- 60.3 percent of all households served by Connecticut Food Bank agencies and programs have at least one member who has been employed in the past year.
- In households where a member or members are employed, the person with the longest duration of employment is more likely to work part time (59.2%) rather than full time (40.8%).

Source: Connecticut Food Bank, *Hunger in America 2014: The Face of Hunger in Connecticut*, September 23, 2014, www.ctfoodbank.org

According to the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), “food security for a household means access by all members at all times to enough food for an active, healthy life.” The USDA also states that food security includes, at a minimum:

- The ready availability of nutritionally adequate and safe foods.
- Assured ability to acquire acceptable foods in socially acceptable ways (that is, without resorting to emergency food supplies, scavenging, stealing or other coping strategies).

The price of fresh fruits and vegetables has increased by 40 percent since 1980 while the price of processed foods decreased by 40 percent.

We subsidize agriculture to provide ingredients for processed foods, but we do not subsidize fruits, vegetables and whole grains.

Source: Clemons, Mary, “‘A Place at the Table’ Reveals Stark Facts About Food Insecurity in U.S.,” February 25, 2013, www.occasionalplanet.org

Conversely, food insecurity is defined by the USDA as “limited or uncertain availability of nutritionally adequate and safe foods, or limited or uncertain ability to acquire acceptable foods in socially acceptable ways.”

Source: S. A. Andersen, ed., “Core Indicators of Nutritional State for Difficult-to-Sample Populations,” Life Sciences Research Office, *The Journal of Nutrition* 120:1557S-1600S, 1990;
www.ers.usda.gov/topics/food-nutrition-assistance/food-security-in-the-us/measurement.aspx

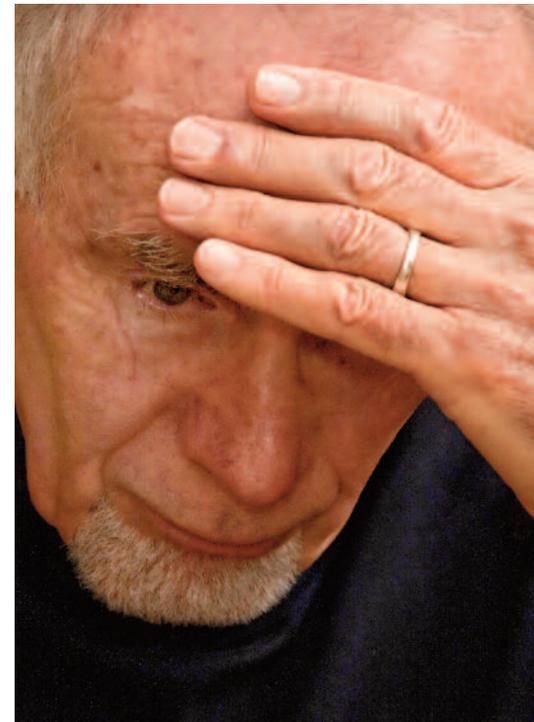
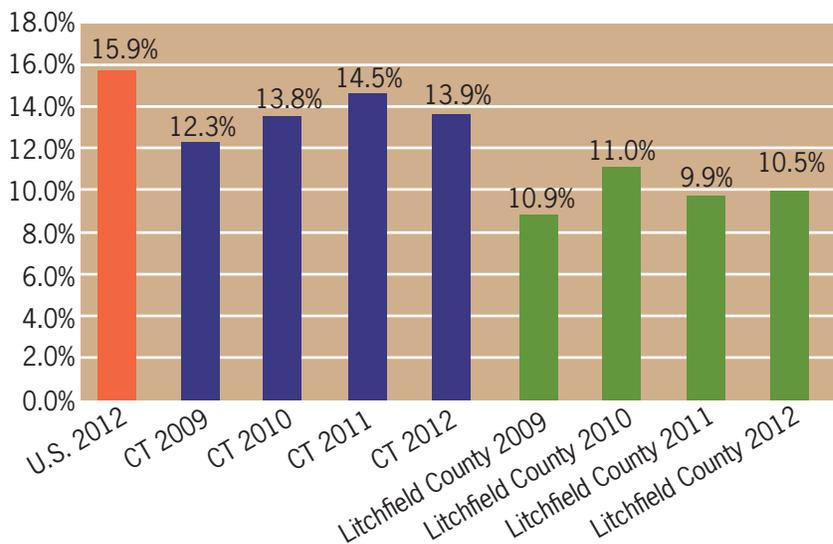
In 2006, the USDA introduced the following **food-security benchmarks**:

1. **High Food Security:** Households had no problems, or anxiety about, consistently accessing adequate food.
2. **Marginal Food Security:** Households had problems at times, or anxiety about, accessing adequate food, but the quality, variety and quantity of their food intake were not substantially reduced.
3. **Low Food Security:** Households reduced the quality, variety and desirability of their diets, but the quantity of food intake and normal eating patterns were not substantially disrupted.
4. **Very Low Food Security:** At times during the year, eating patterns of one or more household members were disrupted and food intake reduced because the household lacked money and other resources for food.

Source: *Ibid.*

Since 2009, approximately 20,000 people—or 10 to 11 percent of Litchfield County’s population—have been consistently designated as food insecure.

Food Insecurity Rate (2009 – 2012)



Four out of five families classified as food insecure also cannot afford basic non-food household necessities.

These families reported:

- **not washing dishes or doing laundry (74%).**
- **skipping or delaying utility-bill payment (64%).**
- **cutting back on medical expenses (49%).**
- **delaying diaper changes (44%).**
- **skipping or delaying rent payment (40%).**
- **brushing their teeth without toothpaste (39%).**

Source: *In Short Supply: American Families Struggle to Secure Everyday Essentials*, www.feedingamerica.org

Looks Can Be Deceiving

Route 44 winds across the Northwest Corner from east to west and is dotted with farms, produce stands and signs for farmers' markets on almost every town green. Cows and corn are prevalent. According to the 2012 U.S. Census of Agriculture, Connecticut's 5th Congressional District, which encompasses much of the Northwest Corner, is home to 1,462 farms totaling over 99,545 acres.

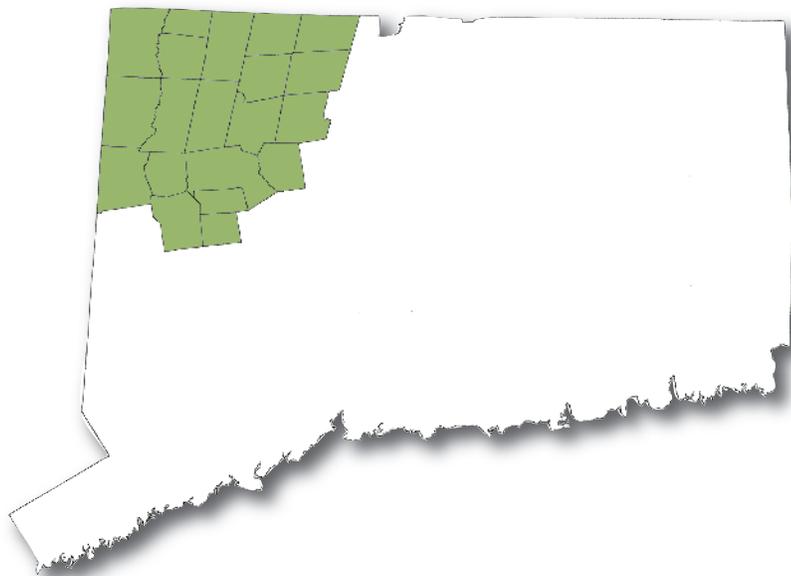
Source: Nestor, John, "U.S. Rep. Esty Meets With Farmers Across Northwest Connecticut," *The Register Citizen*, August 15, 2014

Despite the Northwest Corner's outward appearance as the land of plenty, the Connecticut Department of Social Services reported that in 2012, 7,861 Northwest Corner residents representing 2,860 households were enrolled in the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program (SNAP), formerly known as food stamps. During the 2013-2014 school year, just over 4,000 Northwest Corner children were eligible for the free and reduced-price lunch program.

Agriculture is viewed as a key factor in Connecticut's economic growth and job creation. According to the 2015 Locavore Index produced by the Vermont nonprofit organization Strolling of the Heifers, Connecticut had 156 farmers' markets, 119 Community Supported Agriculture farms (CSAs) and nearly half of its school districts had farm-to-school food programs. The index takes into account per-capita sales by farmers directly to consumers; per-capita numbers of farmers' markets, CSAs and food hubs; and the percentage of school districts with farm-to-school programs. While Connecticut ranked high overall (10th place), every other New England state ranked ahead of it.

Source: "CT Jumps Into Top 10 in Locally Produced Food Index," www.HartfordBusiness.com, April 7, 2015

Barkhamsted
Bethlehem
Canaan/Falls Village
Colebrook
Cornwall
Goshen
Hartland
Harwinton
Kent
Litchfield
Morris
New Hartford
Norfolk
North Canaan
Salisbury/Lakeville
Sharon
Torrington
Warren
Washington
Winchester/Winsted

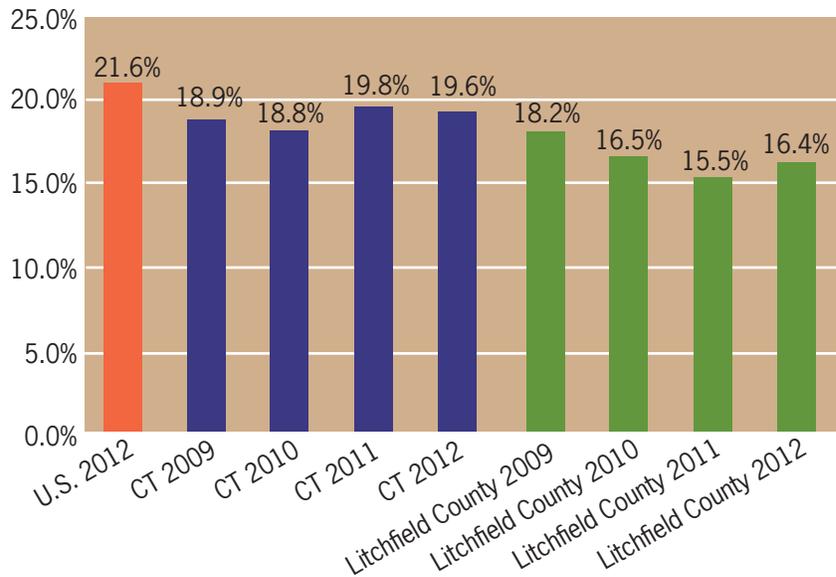


The *Map the Meal Gap 2015* report, based on 2013 federal data, found that food insecurity exists in every county in the United States but is especially prevalent among households with children.

Source: *Map the Meal Gap 2015*, www.FeedingAmerica.org

Approximately 107,000 individuals reside in Connecticut's Northwest Corner. Children comprise just over one-third (39 percent) of the population of Litchfield County, and of those children more than 16 percent were considered food insecure in 2012.

Food Insecurity Rate for Children (2009 – 2012)



Source: Words & Numbers Research, Inc., based on Gundersen, C., Engelhard, E., Satoh A., and Waxman, E., *Map the Meal Gap 2014: Food Insecurity and Child Food Insecurity Estimates at the County Level*; Feeding America, 2014

The percentage of food-insecure children in Litchfield County remains virtually unchanged since 2009. Any declines have been offset by increases in subsequent years. While less than the national percentage, the number of food-insecure children in Litchfield County reflects a persistent aftereffect of the Great Recession.



What It Takes to Make Ends Meet

The Basic Economic Security Tables (BEST™) Index is a measure of the cost of needs and assets essential for economic security. The BEST Index includes a list of basic items necessary for health and safety such as housing, utilities, food, and essential personal and household items, including clothes, household products and a landline telephone.

The BEST Index assumes the following: single heads of households and both adults in a two-adult household work outside the home; all workers incur transportation costs; all households with children pay for child care; all workers pay federal and state taxes and receive tax credits.

Source: Basic Economic Security Tables (BEST) for Connecticut 2012. BEST tables are tabulated by Wider Opportunities for Women (WOW) as part of the national BEST initiative led by WOW.



Annual Income Required for All Basic Household Expenses

Summary Version of the Basic Economic Security Table (BEST™) 2012
Using the Official USDA Low-Cost Food Plan*

(Table assumes families have no employment-based benefits such as unemployment or health insurance and/or retirement plan.)

	All Northwest Corner Towns Except Torrington	Torrington
Monthly Food Cost		
1 Worker	\$275	\$306
2 Workers	\$505	\$562
1 Worker, 1 Preschooler, 1 School-Aged Child	\$596	\$663
2 Workers, 1 Preschooler, 1 School-Aged Child	\$797	\$887
Annual Income Required**		
1 Worker	\$38,868 (\$19.43/hr)	\$44,316 (\$22.16/hr)
2 Workers	\$55,872 (\$27.94/hr)	\$62,160 (\$31.08/hr)
1 Worker, 1 Preschooler, 1 School-Aged Child	\$72,840 (\$36.42/hr)	\$82,788 (\$41.39/hr)
2 Workers, 1 Preschooler, 1 School-Aged Child	\$91,464 (\$45.73/hr)	\$101,976 (\$50.99/hr)

Hourly wage estimate based on a 40-hour work week for 50 weeks per year, assuming the worker takes two unpaid weeks each year for sick and/or personal days.

*The USDA Low-Cost Food Plan is an age-specific, no-frills diet consisting entirely of foods prepared and eaten at home.

**For complete details of the BEST Index cost of items necessary for health and safety such as housing, utilities, food, and essential personal and household items, refer to the sample table in the Appendix.



Median Earnings by Gender in Litchfield County (Ages 16+)

Men: \$49,527 (\$24.76/hour)
Women: \$30,974 (\$15.49/hour)

Source: Words & Numbers Research, Inc., based on U.S. Census Bureau, 2008-2012 American Community Survey

The median income of most Northwest Corner residents is significantly less than the annual income needed for food security as measured by the BEST Index, especially for Northwest Corner women.

Lower-wage occupations (\$7.69 to \$13.83 per hour)	Mid-wage occupations (\$13.84 to \$21.13 per hour)	Higher-wage occupations (\$21.14 to \$54.55 per hour)
constituted 21 percent of recession job losses but 58 percent of recovery growth.	constituted 60 percent of recession job losses but only 22 percent of recovery growth.	constituted 19 percent of recession job losses and 20 percent of recovery growth.

Source: National Employment Law Project (Data Brief): "The Low-Wage Recovery and Growing Inequality," August 2012

Poverty in the United States is only one of many factors contributing to food insecurity. While often occurring together, food insecurity and poverty are not always linked when the official U.S. government income thresholds for poverty are taken into consideration.

Connecticut's Minimum Wage: \$9.15* per hour = \$19,032 per year
 (40 hours per week for 52 weeks)

*In May 2013, the Connecticut State Senate and House of Representatives voted to increase the state minimum wage to \$8.70 from \$8.25, effective January 1, 2014, and to \$9.00, effective January 1, 2015.

On March 27, 2014, Gov. Malloy signed into law an additional increase in Connecticut's minimum wage to \$9.15 in 2015, \$9.60 in 2016 and \$10.10 in 2017.

In 2013:

- 45.3 million Americans (14.5%) were living in poverty.
- 49.1 million Americans (15.7%) lived in food-insecure households.
- 17.5 million households (14%) were food insecure.
- 6.8 million households (6%) experienced very low food security.
- 4.8 million Americans aged 60 and over (8%) were food insecure.

Households with children (20%), especially households with children headed by single women (34%) or single men (23%), as well as black non-Hispanic households (26%) and Hispanic households (24%), experienced higher rates of food insecurity than the national average.

The highest level of income a family or individual can earn and still qualify for federal or state nutrition-assistance programs is 185 percent of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL).

Twenty-seven percent of food-insecure households in the United States earned more than 185 percent of the FPL.

Source: Coleman-Jensen, Gregory and Singh, Household Food Security in the United States in 2013, USDA ERS 2014

According to the most recent data available (2015), 185 percent of the FPL for a family of four amounted to \$44,123. Using the BEST annual-income parameters, this is *less than half* the amount needed for Northwest Corner families with children to remain food secure.

Other factors such as higher unemployment, lower household assets and certain demographic characteristics also led to a lack of access to adequate, nutritious food.

Source: *Hunger and Poverty Fact Sheet*, www.feedingamerica.org

2015 Eligibility Guidelines Based on Gross Income

Number in Family	100% FPL	130% FPL	185% FPL
1	\$11,670	\$15,171	\$21,590
2	\$15,730	\$20,449	\$29,101
3	\$19,790	\$25,727	\$36,612
4	\$23,850	\$31,005	\$44,123
5	\$27,910	\$36,283	\$51,634
6	\$31,970	\$41,561	\$59,145

The Shriver Center Poverty Scorecard 2014 State of Connecticut

Number of people living in poverty: 385,130
Poverty rate: 10.7%
Poverty state ranking: 47th

Source: Words & Numbers Research, Inc., based on U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of the Assistant Secretary of Planning and Evaluation, 2014

One-half of the 2,815 families in Litchfield County who qualified for SNAP in 2012 were single-parent households.

Families earning more than 185 percent of the FPL are ineligible for government-sponsored programs and must rely on charitable resources to meet their household food needs.

Families with children are clearly those most in jeopardy: **two-thirds of households earning less than 185 percent of the FPL were households with children.**

Defining the Gap

Map the Meal Gap researchers attempted to estimate the shortfall in family food budgets by compiling responses to the following question: “In order to buy just enough food to meet (your needs/the needs of your household), would you need to spend more than you do now or could you spend less?” For those who responded “more,” the following question was posed: “About how much more would you need to spend each week to buy just enough food to meet the needs of your household?” Based on the responses, researchers determined a national average per-person of \$15.82 per week, which translated to approximately 5.5 meals each week based on the national average meal cost of \$2.74. The results at the county level were refined using a cost-of-food index, which resulted in a county average cost per meal and assumes that every food-insecure person is not in need every week of the year.

For 2012, it was estimated that **over \$10.5 million annually was needed to plug the food-security gap for Litchfield County.**

This represents a 7 percent increase over the estimate for 2009.



Additional Funds Necessary to Meet Food Needs

Litchfield County	2009	2010	2011	2012
Number of Food-Insecure Persons	20,590	20,900	18,740	19,930
Estimated Extra Funds Needed Annually	\$9,925,960	\$10,360,830	\$9,532,020	\$10,592,000
Average Meal Cost	\$2.89	\$2.88	\$3.12	\$3.03
Estimated Food-Insecure Persons per Week	12,005	12,579	10,682	12,219
Estimated Extra Funds Needed per Week	\$190,884	\$199,247	\$183,308	\$203,692

Source: Words & Numbers Research, Inc., based on Gundersen, C., Engelhard, E., Satoh A., and Waxman, E., *Map the Meal Gap 2014: Food Insecurity and Child Food Insecurity Estimates at the County Level*; Feeding America, 2014

How Big Is the Safety Net?

From 2009 to 2012, Litchfield County experienced approximately the same percentage increase of food-insecure persons earning less than 185 percent FPL as the state of Connecticut, and that percentage increase corresponds to a similar percentage decrease in the number of food-insecure persons accessing charitable resources.

Estimated Program Eligibility for Food-Insecure Population

Litchfield County	2009	2010	2011	2012
Number of Food-Insecure Persons	20,590	20,900	18,740	19,930
Charitable Response Needed > 185% FPL	12,766 (62%)	12,749 (61%)	10,307 (55%)	10,962 (55%)
Eligible for Govt. Programs* < 185% FPL	7,824 (38%)	8,151 (39%)	8,433 (45%)	8,968 (45%)

* The threshold for SNAP and CSFP is below 130% FPL. Between 130 percent and 185% FPL, eligibility exists for some nutrition programs such as WIC and the National School Breakfast/Lunch Program (and Summer Food Service Program). Above 185% FPL exceeds the nutrition-program threshold and requires charitable resources to meet household/family food needs.

Source: Words & Numbers Research, Inc., based on Gundersen, C., Engelhard, E., Satoh A., and Waxman, E., *Map the Meal Gap 2014: Food Insecurity and Child Food Insecurity Estimates at the County Level*; Feeding America, 2014

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) is big business. One out of every seven Americans currently utilizes SNAP. Walmart takes in 18 percent of all food-stamp spending in the U.S. and may be the biggest single corporate beneficiary of SNAP, but a growing number of stores are now authorized to accept food stamps, including big-box stores like Target and Costco along with 7-Elevens and dollar stores.

Source: "The Secret Life of a Food Stamp." *Marketplace* Narr. Krissy Clark, National Public Radio, in collaboration with *Slate* 2014

Right now, the average dollar amount allotted per meal is less than \$1.40 for every person on the program. Most people who receive SNAP benefits run out before the end of the third week. Then they must decide how best to allocate their remaining funds to pay for food, rent, utilities, gasoline, medication or some other essential item. Food banks typically report a spike in demand in the final week of each month.

Source: Waters, Rob, "New Study Reveals the Hidden Health Cost of Cutting Food Stamps," *Forbes* 2014

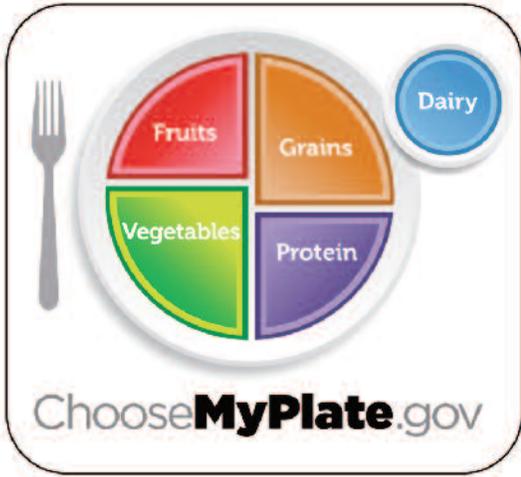
Monthly SNAP benefits are calculated as the difference between the household's expected contribution to its food costs and the maximum benefit. Participating households are expected to devote 30 percent of their net monthly income to food purchases. Net income is considered gross income minus certain specified deductions. The maximum SNAP benefit is based on the USDA's lowest-cost food plan, known as the Thrifty Food Plan (TFP), and is scaled to household size. It is organized as a set of 15 market baskets, each of which is designed to meet the nutritional needs of different age/gender groups.

Each market basket contains a selection of foods in quantities that reflect "current dietary recommendations, food-composition data, food prices and actual consumption patterns."

Source: Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, "A Quick Guide to SNAP Benefits and Eligibility," revised September 29, 2014



The USDA defines the TFP as a “nutritious, minimal-cost diet.” However, some of the items included in the plan are pastries, sodas and candies. In addition, dairy products constitute the highest quantity in all market baskets, which is at odds with the 2011 ChooseMyPlate guidelines represented below.



The highest rates of osteoporosis are seen in countries where people consume the most dairy foods.

Source: Safran Foer, Jonathan, *Food Industry Dictates Nutrition Policy*, October 30, 2009, CNN.com

The Thrifty Food Plan's weekly market basket for a family of four allows slightly more than half an ounce of “frozen or refrigerated entrees” and just over two ounces of “all cheese.” This translates to about two-thirds of a fish stick and two slices of cheese for a family of four per week, which amounts to about three fish sticks and eight slices of cheese for a family of four per month.

Source: Food Research and Action Center, “Replacing the Thrifty Food Plan in Order to Provide Adequate Allotments for SNAP Beneficiaries,” December 2012

Among households enrolled in SNAP, 87 percent had at least one person working. Also of note is that 50 percent of Northwest Corner households enrolled in SNAP were classified as below the poverty line, which means that half were above the poverty line but could not make ends meet without this program.

Northwest Corner Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Enrollment (2012)

	Number of SNAP Recipients	% of Population	Households with Children <18	Households with 1 or more Aged 60+
Torrington	4,684	13%	690	417
Winchester/Winsted	1,345	12%	201	79
Litchfield	258	3%	38	19
Canaan/Falls Village*	167	14%	6	9
Harwinton	147	3%	9	43
New Hartford	158	2%	13	31
Barkhamsted	117	3%	0	0
Sharon	108	4%	42	0
North Canaan*	108	3%	78	33
Bethlehem	104	3%	45	21
Kent	100	3%	8	2
Washington	98	3%	16	0
Salisbury/Lakeville	94	3%	0	23
Morris	79	3%	0	14
Cornwall	69	5%	8	13
Goshen	67	2%	0	15
Hartland	58	3%	6	15
Norfolk	50	3%	0	7
Warren	29	2%	0	2
Colebrook	21	1%	0	0
Northwest CT	7,861	7%	1,160	743

Source: Words & Numbers Research, Inc., based on CT Dept. of Social Services, 2012

*Local social service agencies have requested the DSS to review the accuracy of these statistics.

Estimated Program Eligibility for Food-Insecure Children

Connecticut	2009	2010	2011	2012
Number of Food-Insecure Children	155,560	151,530	157,550	155,380
Charitable Response Needed >185% FPL	77,780 (50%)	68,189 (45%)	66,171 (42%)	66,813 (43%)
Eligible for Govt. Programs* <185% FPL	77,780 (50%)	83,341 (55%)	91,379 (58%)	88,567 (57%)
Litchfield County	2009	2010	2011	2012
Number of Food-Insecure Children	7,710	6,830	6,420	6,660
Charitable Response Needed >185% FPL	5,089 (66%)	4,303 (63%)	3,788 (59%)	3,929 (59%)
Eligible for Govt. Programs* <185% FPL	2,621 (34%)	2,527 (37%)	2,632 (41%)	2,731 (41%)

* Free and Reduced-Price School Lunch, School Breakfast, Summer Food Service Program, SNAP, WIC

Source: Words & Numbers Research, Inc., based on Gundersen, C., Engelhard, E., Satoh A., and Waxman, E., *Map the Meal Gap 2014: Food Insecurity and Child Food Insecurity Estimates at the County Level*; Feeding America, 2014

From 2009 to 2012, Litchfield County experienced the same increase in food-insecure households with children and earning less than 185 percent of FPL as did the state of Connecticut; that increase corresponds with a decrease in the number of food-insecure households with children accessing charitable resources.

It is encouraging to note that in Litchfield County the actual number of food-insecure children decreased by 13.6 percent (1,050 children) from 2009 to 2012, in comparison with the state of Connecticut, which reported virtually the same number of food-insecure children in 2012 as in 2009. Despite this promising trend in Litchfield County, reliance on charitable organizations is still quite strong. A significant number of individuals who earn in excess of 185 percent of FPL continue to rely on charitable organizations.

In 2012, of the nearly 3,000 Northwest Corner households enrolled in SNAP, two-thirds included children under the age of 18 or had one or more residents over 60 years of age.

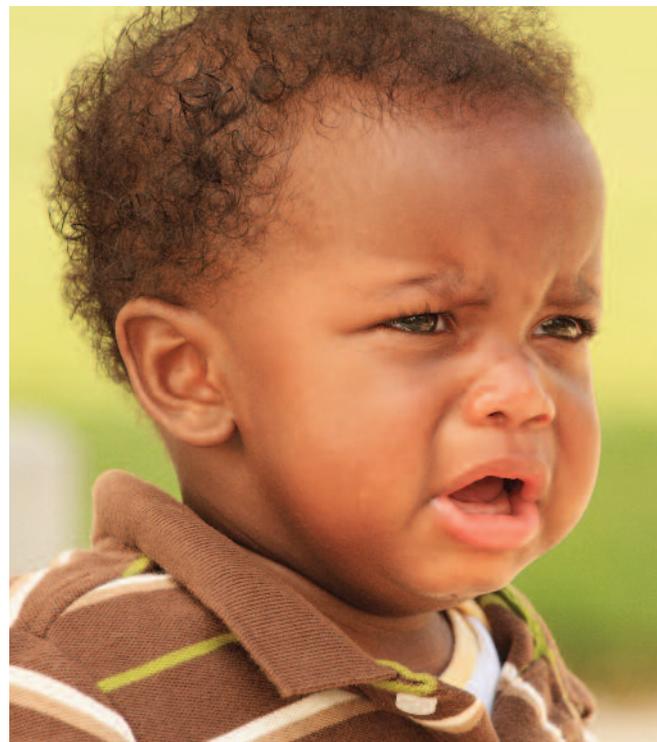


Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children

The Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) provides federal grants to states for supplemental foods, health-care referrals and nutrition education for low-income pregnant, breastfeeding and non-breastfeeding postpartum women, and to infants and children up to age 5 who are found to be at nutritional risk. During the 2013 federal fiscal year, 1,117 Northwest Corner women and children participated in WIC, which represented 2 percent of the state's monthly WIC participation.

Torrington and Winchester/Winsted residents comprise the largest number of WIC participants, equal to 82 percent of all WIC participants in the Northwest Corner.

	Number of WIC Participants	Percentage of Total WIC Participants
Torrington	746	67%
Winchester/Winsted	167	15%
Canaan/Falls Village	30	3%
Litchfield	22	2%
New Hartford	21	2%
Harwinton	20	2%
Kent	14	1%
Bethlehem	12	1%
Goshen	12	1%
Norfolk	11	1%
Sharon	11	1%
Barkhamsted	10	1%
Salisbury/Lakeville	8	1%
Cornwall	7	1%
Morris	7	1%
Hartland	6	<1%
Washington	6	<1%
North Canaan	4	<1%
Warren	2	<1%
Colebrook	1	<1%



Source: Words & Numbers Research, Inc., based on the Statewide WIC Information System (SWIS), CT Department of Public Health

24% of Northwest Corner students were eligible for free/reduced-price lunch during the 2013-2014 school year.

20% of Northwest Corner students were eligible for free/reduced-price lunch during the 2010-2011 school year.

National School Breakfast and Lunch/Summer Food Service Programs

The National School Breakfast and Lunch programs are administered by the Connecticut Department of Education's Bureau of Health and Nutrition Services, Child/Family/School Partnerships. These programs operate in public and nonprofit private schools and residential child-care institutions with the goal of providing nutritionally balanced, low-cost or free lunches to children each school day. Other qualifying institutions include homes for the physically, mentally or emotionally impaired; group homes; temporary shelters; orphanages; and juvenile detention centers.

The Summer Food Service Program provides free meals to children 18 years of age and under during the summer months when school is not in session.

Northwest Corner Schools with 45 percent or more of students eligible for free/reduced-price lunch during the 2010-2011 school year included:

Vogel-Wetmore, Torrington (74%)
Southwest School, Torrington (59%)
Forbes School, Torrington (55%)
Pearson Middle School, Winsted (46%)
Explorations (Charter School), Winsted (45%)

In almost half of all Northwest Corner towns, the percentage of students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch is two to seven times higher than their town's stated poverty rate. The relatively low poverty rate reported for most Northwest Corner towns is deceptive when you consider that 17 of the region's 23 school districts have school populations where 10 percent or more of children are eligible for free or reduced-price lunch. The most extreme example is in the city of Torrington, whose reported poverty rate for 2012 was 11 percent. However, **in one Torrington school almost three-quarters of the students were eligible for free or reduced-price lunch.**

Winsted and Torrington schools account for 69 percent of Northwest Corner students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch.



Unpaid meal charges are a growing national problem, and schools are asking the USDA to address this issue as part of its oversight of the school lunch program. “We’re seeing a rise in the number of students not eligible for free and reduced-price lunches who aren’t able to pay for their meals,” said Diane Prat-Heavener, spokesperson for the School Nutrition Association. “Members regularly tell us they’re encountering an increase in unpaid meal charges. When that happens, schools get stuck with the deficit.”

Source: Leschin-Hoar, Clare, “Lunch Lady Revolt: No Money, No Food for You,” www.takepart.com, January 30, 2014

But when someone tries to right a wrong in the school lunchroom, there can be unfortunate consequences. Della Curry, the former kitchen manager of an Aurora, Colorado, elementary school, said she was fired for giving lunches to hungry students. “I had a first grader in front of me, crying because she [didn’t] have enough money for lunch,” Curry explained. “Yes, I gave her lunch.” Curry said that students who don’t bring a lunch and don’t qualify for free or reduced-price lunch receive one slice of cheese on a hamburger bun and a small-sized milk. Believing that this is not sufficient, Curry said she often bought the lunches with her own money. The school district claims it followed policy in firing her.

Source: Grisham, Lori, “Lunch Lady Reportedly Fired for Giving Hungry Kids Free Meals,” *USA Today Network*, June 3, 2015; “School Lunch Lady Claims She Was Fired for Giving Free Lunches to Students Who Couldn’t Pay,” www.thedenverchannel.com, June 2, 2015; Edwards, Ashton and Tribune Media Wire, “Elementary School Kitchen Manager Fired for Giving Students Without Money Free Lunch,” June 2, 2015

The National School Lunch Program reimburses schools \$2.68 for each meal. After subtracting costs for labor, administration, utilities and custodial services, schools report they have at most \$1 to spend on food. When 6 cents were added to the reimbursement in 2012, the food-stamp program reduced its allotment correspondingly.

Source: Clemons, Mary, “‘A Place at the Table’ Reveals Stark Facts about Food Insecurity in U.S.,” February 25, 2013, www.occasionalplanet.org



Lunches were taken from up to 40 students at Uintah Elementary School, in Salt Lake City, after lunch officials noted outstanding balances on their accounts. Because of how the school operates its lunch program, cafeteria workers didn’t know whether the students had lunch money until they had already picked up their meals. Once a student has selected a lunch, it cannot be re-served to another student. So the cafeteria employees took the lunches from the kids who had negative balances and threw them away. The children were given milk and fruit to eat instead.

Source: Alter, Charlotte, “Lunch Lady on Leave After Trashing Hungry Kids’ Food,” www.Time.com, January 31, 2014

Only three Northwest Corner schools participate in the School Breakfast Program. Studies indicate that skipping breakfast is much more common among food-insecure and marginally food-secure children. Even at schools with breakfast programs, 20 percent of children from food-insecure and marginally secure households did not eat breakfast.

Source: *Children's Food Security and Intakes From School Meals: Final Report*, National Agricultural Library, United States Department of Agriculture, May 2010

Reasons for low participation may include:

- Busy morning schedules.
- Inability to get to school early due to bus and carpool schedules.
- Not being hungry first thing in the morning.
- Peer pressure to socialize or play instead of eating breakfast.
- Social stigma that “only low-income students” eat breakfast in the cafeteria.

Source: bestpractices.nokidhungry.org/school-breakfast/benefits-school-breakfast

In honor of National School Breakfast Week in 2013, Share Our Strength's No Kid Hungry campaign published the following facts about how a healthy school breakfast program can change lives:

Breakfast Is Key to Learning: Teachers said school breakfast led to increased concentration (95%), better academic performance (89%) and better behavior in the classroom (73%).

Source: No Kid Hungry, “Hunger in Our Schools” survey, 2012

Breakfast Changes Lives: According to an analysis of the long-term impact of school breakfast, the morning meal does more than simply provide children with essential daily nutrition. On average, students who eat school breakfast have been shown to achieve 17.5 percent higher scores on standardized math tests and attend 1.5 more days of school per year. These factors are linked to improved chances of a child earning a high school diploma and those high school graduates being employed, earning higher wages and enjoying greater self-sufficiency as adults.

Source: “Ending Childhood Hunger: A Social Impact Analysis,” 2013

Nonetheless, researchers report that food insecurity continues to plague many children.

Students Don't Eat Breakfast: Even though more than 21 million low-income kids in the U.S. rely on a free or reduced-price school lunch, only half—about 11 million—are also getting a school breakfast.

Source: FRAC School Breakfast Scorecard, 2011-2012

Teachers Report Hunger: Nearly two-thirds (62%) of K-8 public school teachers said they had children in their classrooms who regularly came to school hungry because there wasn't enough to eat at home.

Source: No Kid Hungry, “Hunger in Our Schools” survey, 2012

In October 2014, hundreds of Farmington, CT, high school students staged a boycott of their lunch program over a number of issues ranging from poor food quality to the practice of throwing away food served to children who did not have enough money in their accounts.

One mother said, “Yes, they do make you toss out your food if you don't have enough money in your account. Luckily, my son's friend was behind him in line and gave him 50 cents so they wouldn't throw his lunch out. Throwing out a whole meal over 50 cents?”

And one student reported, “The food is not even cooked. I know some people who have gotten food poisoning. There's mold on it.”

“Just really poor quality food,” said another student.

Student demands included: lower-cost meals; higher-quality ingredients; food labels that identify allergens; and a greater respect for students.

Source: Scinto, Rich, “High School Students Revolt Over Revolting Food,” www.patch.com, October 31, 2014; Holley, Peter, “Moldy Hot Dogs, Human Hair and Other Cafeteria Nightmares Prompt Students to Boycott School Lunches,” www.washingtonpost.com, November 5, 2014; Parmenter, Amy and Sawyer, Jessie, “Farmington High School Students to Boycott School Lunch Program,” www.nbcconnecticut.com, October 29, 2014



The Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) provides free, nutritious meals and snacks to children in low-income areas throughout the summer months when school is not in session. The Food and Nutrition Service (FNS), an agency of the USDA, administers SFSP at the federal level. State education agencies administer the program in most states. Locally, SFSP is run by approved sponsors, including school districts, local government agencies, camps and/or private nonprofit organizations. Sponsors provide free meals to a group of children at a central site such as a school or a community center. They receive payment from the USDA for the meals they serve through their state agencies.

Source: www.fns.usda.gov/sfsp/frequently-asked-questions-faqs

Each state oversees the following SFSP-approved meal sites:

Open sites operate in low-income areas where at least half of the children come from families with incomes at or below 185 percent of the federal poverty level, making them eligible for free and reduced-price school meals. Meals are served free to any child at an open site.

Enrolled sites provide free meals to children enrolled in an activity program at a site where at least half of them are eligible for free and reduced-price meals.

Camps may also participate in SFSP. They receive payments only for the meals served to children who are eligible for free and reduced-price meals. At most sites, children receive either one or two reimbursable meals each day. Camps and sites that primarily serve migrant children may be approved to serve up to three meals to each child daily.

Source: www.fns.usda.gov/sfsp/frequently-asked-questions-faqs

During the summer of 2013 (most recent figures available), the following maximum reimbursement rates per meal were in effect in most states:

Self-Preparation/Rural Sites

Breakfast: \$1.98

Lunch or Supper: \$3.47

Snack: \$.82

Other Sites (Vended/Urban)

Breakfast: \$1.94*

Lunch or Supper: \$3.41*

Snack: \$.80

*Figures rounded to nearest cent.

Source: www.fns.usda.gov/sfsp/frequently-asked-questions-faqs

Families with two children must provide more than 200 extra meals during the summer months when they don't have access to school meals. This is extremely difficult for most low-income families.

Source: www.ctfoodbank.org/summer-hunger-facts-for-agencies



Meal components are mandated by the SFSP, as follows:

Source: www.fns.usda.gov/sfsp/sfsp-meals-and-snacks

Sample Three-Component Breakfast

1 milk	1 cup	Fluid milk
1 fruit/vegetable	½ cup	Juice and/or vegetable
1 grains/bread	1 slice	Bread or
	1 serving	Cornbread or biscuit or roll or muffin or
	¾ cup	Cold dry cereal or
	½ cup	Hot cooked cereal or
	½ cup	Pasta or noodles or grains

Sample Four-Component Lunch/Supper

1 milk	1 cup	Fluid milk
2 fruits/vegetables	¾ cup	Juice, fruit and/or vegetable
1 grains/bread	1 slice	Bread or
	1 serving	Cornbread or biscuit or roll or muffin or
	½ cup	Hot cooked cereal or
	½ cup	Pasta or noodles or grains
1 meat/ meat alternate ¹	2 oz.	Lean meat or poultry or fish or
	2 oz.	Alternate protein product or
	2 oz.	Cheese or
	1 large	Egg or
	½ cup	Cooked dry beans or peas or
	4 Tbsp.	Peanut or other nut or seed butter or
	1 oz.	Nuts and/or seeds or
	8 oz.	Yogurt

¹The meat (protein) component of the SFSP includes dairy products such as yogurt and cheese.

Sample Two-Component Choice Snack/Supplement

1 milk	1 cup	Fluid milk
1 fruit/vegetable	¾ cup	Juice, fruit and/or vegetable
1 grains/bread	1 slice	Bread or
	1 serving	Cornbread or biscuit or roll or muffin or
	¾ cup	Cold dry cereal or
	½ cup	Hot cooked cereal or
	½ cup	Pasta or noodles or grains
1 meat/ meat alternate ¹	1 oz.	Lean meat or poultry or fish or
	1 oz.	Alternate protein product or
	1 oz.	Cheese or
	½ large	Egg or
	¼ cup	Cooked dry beans or peas or
	2 Tbsp.	Peanut or other nut or seed butter or
	1 oz.	Nuts and/or seeds or
	4 oz.	Yogurt

¹The meat (protein) component of the SFSP includes dairy products such as yogurt and cheese.

In contrast to the ChooseMyPlate recommendations, dairy products play a key role in the Summer Food Service Program. And because there is no approved dairy substitute, these meal plans do not address the dietary restrictions of millions of people who are lactose intolerant or who are allergic to, or simply prefer to avoid, dairy products. It is estimated that 30 to 50 million Americans suffer from lactose intolerance. The condition is extremely common because many people naturally lose the ability to digest lactose as they grow into adulthood. Ethnicity seems to play a role as well: approximately 90 percent of Asian Americans and 75 percent of African Americans and Native Americans are lactose intolerant. At 20 percent, Caucasians are least likely to be affected.

Source: Kloberdanz, Kristin, M.A., "Lactose Intolerance FAQ," consumer.healthday.com/encyclopedia/food-and-nutrition-21/food-and-nutrition-news-316/lactose-intolerance-faq-647337.html



Commodity Supplemental Food Program

“Will you still need me, will you still feed me, when I’m 64?”

—John Lennon and Paul McCartney

The Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP), the only USDA nutrition program targeted to low-income seniors, works to improve the health of elderly persons at least 60 years of age by supplementing their diets with nutritious USDA foods.

Source: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service, Tentative CSFP Caseload and Administrative Funding 201, December 2012

CSFP provides food and administrative funds to each state. States then store and transport the food to local nonprofit agencies for distribution to low-income clients. Feeding America food banks are a primary provider in 22 states. Connecticut has only two Feeding America food banks, one in Bloomfield and one in East Haven, along with a third “partner distribution” organization in New London, all of which are miles away from the Northwest Corner.

Participants pick up their monthly CSFP allotment at a food bank or other local sponsor, or they appoint a designee authorized to complete the transaction for them. Some communities deliver food packages directly to the participants’ home, which is important for seniors with limited mobility or lack of transportation. Regrettably, the CSFP-approved list contains no fresh or frozen foods.

Research published in 2013 by the National Foundation to End Senior Hunger revealed that the national rate of hunger increased to nearly one in every 12 seniors above the age of 60, or about 4.8 million seniors. Due to the Great Recession and its lingering aftereffects, many seniors are entering retirement with less in savings than they intended. The study revealed that older workers experiencing longer-than-average periods of unemployment had less income to spend on necessities. Also, some seniors were adversely affected by prematurely tapping into social security or earning reduced wages after regaining employment.

Source: Aiken, Bob, “As Baby Boomers Approach Retirement, New Research Reveals Great Recession Contributed to Dramatic Increase in Senior Hunger,” www.huffingtonpost.com, May 22, 2013

Data from the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey conducted by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention indicate that:

- 79 percent of food-insecure seniors are not homebound and can cook or access meals.
- 13 percent are homebound and can cook.
- 8 percent are homebound and cannot cook.

Source: Ibid.



The number of hungry seniors is projected to continue to increase significantly: 10,000 Baby Boomers will turn 65 every day until 2030.

Source: Ibid.



Prior to 2015, CSFP operated in only 39 states, the District of Columbia and on two Native American reservations. Connecticut was one of the 11 states that did not operate a CSFP program.

Source: Commodity Supplemental Food Program, Feeding America, March 2013

In 2010, Connecticut was approved by the USDA to operate CSFP, but funding was not appropriated until 2015. The monthly packages, which include \$50 worth of nutritious, shelf-stable foods such as cereal, canned vegetables and evaporated milk, are “survival packs for seniors,” said U.S. Senator Richard Blumenthal.

Source: Aparna, Nathan, “Connecticut to Receive Senior Food Program Funding,” *Yale Daily News*, January 15, 2015

Unfortunately, the number of eligible seniors far exceeds the 2,400 served by the state’s allotted funding. The Connecticut Food Bank alone serves approximately 50,000 seniors, and that figure does not accurately represent the number of food-insecure seniors in the counties it serves.

Source: *Ibid.*

The Northwest Corner would need approximately \$446,000 in funding annually to provide monthly food packages to residents 60 years of age and older who currently receive SNAP benefits, and that figure does not include any administrative or transportation costs.

Given that 743 Northwest Corner households with one or more individuals aged 60 or older are SNAP recipients, compared with some 37,000 for the State of Connecticut, it is unlikely that Northwest Corner seniors will be served by this program in the foreseeable future. Therefore, if families are unable or unwilling to help, the burden of ensuring that food is available to low-income seniors will remain the responsibility of local government and/or charitable organizations.

Local Efforts Help Fill the Gap

A survey of local agencies that collect and distribute food conducted by The Community Foundation of Northwest Connecticut reveals that religious organizations and community food drives are the leading providers, followed closely by agencies that self-purchase food. Over two-thirds of the agencies have been in existence for more than 10 years. The survey also found that **nonprofit organizations are the largest distributors of food (64%)**, over and above the services provided by municipalities or religious groups. These local efforts fill the gap each month after personal income and government-sponsored benefits have been exhausted.

Food/Products Distributed		Food Source per Distributor	
80%	Non-Perishables	60%	Religious Groups
64%	Personal-Care Products	60%	Community Drives
52%	Meat	56%	Self-Purchase
48%	Dairy	44%	CT Food Bank
48%	Produce	44%	Retailers, Wholesalers
		40%	Farmers
		24%	TEFAP*/USDA

**The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) is a federal program that helps to supplement the diets of low-income Americans, including elderly individuals, by providing them with food and nutrition assistance at no cost. The program provides food and administrative funds to states in order to supplement the diets of these groups.*

Contrary to popular opinion, homeless individuals comprise only a portion of those served by food pantries and soup kitchens: an ever-increasing number of clients are community members who are employed and have a roof over their heads.

Clearly, this is a system designed to succeed in the short term—by falsely reassuring the public that charity is fixing the problem—but ultimately doomed to fail in the long term.

Source: Fisher, Andy, "Getting Off the Anti-Hunger Treadmill," from *A Place at the Table*, ed. Peter Pringle, 2013





I'm Just Going to Run to the Store

Over 30,000 Litchfield County residents do not have adequate access to a grocery store. Grocery stores are defined as supermarkets and smaller stores primarily engaged in retailing food such as fresh fruits and vegetables; fresh and prepared meats, fish and poultry; and canned and frozen foods. Delicatessen-type establishments are also considered grocery stores. Convenience stores and large general merchandise stores that also retail food, such as supercenters and warehouse club stores, are excluded. The national, state and county figures are almost identical: just over two stores per 10,000 people. The number of grocery stores in Litchfield County (42) has remained fairly constant since 2007.

But Can You Get There From Here?

Inadequate or low access to a grocery store means that individuals must travel more than 10 miles to obtain food in a rural area and more than one mile in an urban area. While well below the state average of 29 percent, Litchfield County has an unacceptable number of people (30,056 or 16 percent) without ready access to fresh food. Equally alarming is the fact that **seniors and children comprise 38 percent of Litchfield County residents with low access to a grocery store**. The percentage of people in Litchfield County who have low access to a grocery store coupled with low income is consistent with the state percentage.

Grocery Store Access/Proximity

Low Access to Store*	30,056
Low-Access Households, No Car	1,122 (4%)
Low Access & Low Income**	3,244 (11%)
Low Access & Children (aged <18)	7,113 (24%)
Low Access & Seniors (aged >64)	4,255 (14%)

* > 1 mile from store in urban area; > 10 miles in rural areas

** 200 percent or less of FPL, based on family size, in annual family income

Source: Words & Numbers Research, Inc., based on Economic Research Service (ERS); U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), Food Environment Atlas, February 2014

For those who do not drive, or do not have easy access to other transportation options such as a bus, access to fresh food is severely limited. As a result, food that is readily available at convenience stores, gas stations and fast-food outlets often takes the place of fresher, more affordable options.

Store-to-home delivery options like Stop&Shop's Peapod service are largely unavailable throughout the Northwest Corner. Online food delivery available through Amazon or Thrive is convenient, however problematic, if delivery must be made to a workplace where there is no refrigeration available. Local food co-ops have declined as more natural and organic products have become available at mainstream supermarkets. And Albert's Organics trucks now frequent large retail locations instead of neighborhood sites.

Mobile food pantries can help to remove the transportation barriers that make it difficult for low-income individuals to access adequate nutrition. For example, the Connecticut Food Bank Mobile Pantry is an outreach program designed to bring food directly to neighborhoods where people lack access to food-assistance programs, and to supplement the efforts of existing food-assistance programs that have insufficient inventory to meet the growing needs of Northwest Corner residents.

Source: www.ctfoodbank.org/connecticut-food-bank-programs/mobile-pantry

Since the program began in 2010, the Connecticut Food Bank Mobile Pantry has distributed more than 1.4 million pounds of dairy products, fresh vegetables and fruit, whole-grain goods and other perishable items directly to individuals in need. Currently, the Connecticut Food Bank operates 30 mobile pantries, with each site serving an average 120 to 325 households.

Source: www.ctfoodbank.org/connecticut-food-bank-programs/mobile-pantry

Presently, only three Northwest Corner towns—Canaan, Torrington and Winsted—are served by the Connecticut Food Bank Mobile Pantry.





Cash, Check, Credit or EBT Card?

Since 2008, there has been a significant increase (55%) in the number of stores statewide that accept SNAP. Not so for WIC: Connecticut lost 18 stores that were authorized to accept WIC, and the number in Litchfield County has been stagnant at 21.

SNAP and WIC participants receive an EBT card, which operates much like a debit or ATM card. At checkout, the cost of approved foods is subtracted automatically, and the receipt displays the balance. There is no limit on how many times the card can be used per month, and there is no fee for using the card. The EBT card provides a simple, discreet method of purchasing food for low-income individuals.

Despite the big gain in the number of SNAP-authorized retailers since 2008, Litchfield County has only 4.4 SNAP-authorized retailers per 10,000 people, compared with 6.4 per 10,000 people for the state. SNAP-authorized stores not only include grocery stores but also supercenters, specialty-food outlets and convenience stores. Unfortunately, SNAP-authorized retailers tend to be clustered in urban centers even though rural areas have seen a significant increase in residents who use SNAP.

The *Hartford Courant* reported in January 2012 that the Connecticut Department of Public Health (DPH) was attempting to increase the number of locations where WIC benefits are accepted, particularly in more rural parts of the state. Public Health Commissioner Jewel Mullen stated, “For families living in certain parts of the state, especially in the northeast and northwest corners of Connecticut, finding a store that accepts WIC benefits can be difficult.”

The October 2014 list of WIC-authorized vendors released by the DPH shows only 13 stores in the Northwest Corner, and seven (54%) are located in Torrington.

WIC's new maximum monthly fruit and vegetable allowances are: \$6 for children and \$10 for pregnant, breast-feeding and postpartum women.

Now that farmers' markets and Community Supported Agriculture programs (CSAs) have begun to accept SNAP and WIC, they can be an effective means of expanding nutritional food options for low-income individuals and families. However, these purveyors of fresh, affordable food have only begun to realize their potential for increasing food security, improving health outcomes and even reducing oil consumption.

“Each food item in a typical U.S. meal has traveled an average of 1,500 miles. If every U.S. citizen ate just one meal a week composed of locally and organically raised meats and produce, we would reduce our country’s oil consumption by over 1.1 million barrels of oil every week.”

—Barbara Kingsolver, *Animal, Vegetable, Miracle: A Year of Food Life*

The number of farmers' markets in Litchfield County (15) has increased by one-third since 2009. While the net increase is only four, these additional markets translate to a 40 percent increase per 10,000 people. As a result, Litchfield County's per capita ratio increased from 0.58 to 0.80 or nearly twice the number of farmers' markets per 10,000 people than that of the state. Unfortunately, only two of the 15 farmers' markets in Litchfield County accept SNAP or WIC.

Source: Words & Numbers Research, Inc., based on Economic Research Service (ERS); U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), Food Environment Atlas, February 2014

“We don’t have to buy the \$1 bag of Cheetos®”

Farmers' market shoppers in Utah who use food stamps can double their money. It's called the “double-up food bucks” program and allows those using food stamps to stretch their food dollars for more fruits and vegetables.

The goal is to provide low-income families who participate in SNAP access to fresh, local food.

“Basically, how it works is somebody uses their food-stamp card at the farmer’s market and we match up to \$10, and those matched benefits can only be used to buy Utah-grown produce,” said Gina Cornia, Executive Director for Utahns Against Hunger. “We know low-income families really struggle to afford produce and this is locally grown.”

The program was launched last year at only one farmer’s market with a budget of \$2,500, but that ran out fast. This year, a grant awarded to Utahns Against Hunger provides \$53,000 for the program at 19 locations.

It’s a program the Davis family says they’re grateful for. “This is all-organic, so that means you can buy a little more and you can also say, ‘I wasn’t going to get this but today I can,’” said Lehi resident Melissa Davis.

Davis said the matched benefits go a long way toward feeding her two daughters: “We don’t have to buy the \$1 bag of Cheetos; we can spend a little bit more on healthier things like fruits and veggies.”

Source: Nuñez, Kiersten, “Program That ‘Doubles Up Food Bucks’ at Farmers’ Markets for Those in Need Expands in Utah,” www.fox13now.com, July 4, 2015

Programs emulating the Utah initiative should be explored as a cost-effective means of promoting healthy eating habits among low-income residents of the Northwest Corner. Other strategies for improving access to fresh, affordable food include increasing the number of area farmers' markets that accept SNAP and WIC, and promoting the use of SNAP benefits for CSA memberships. CSA members, or share-holders, pay a set amount that entitles them to weekly deliveries of fresh food (typically fruits and vegetables) from local farmers during the growing season.

Source: Food Research and Action Center, “A Review of Strategies to Bolster SNAP’s Role in Improving Nutrition as Well as Food Security,” July 2011, updated January 2013

Most CSAs require payment in advance for the entire season, but as required by the USDA, the payment structure must be modified if clients use SNAP benefits to cover their membership. For SNAP clients, payment is made to for-profit CSA ventures at the time of each delivery, or up to 14 days in advance of a delivery to nonprofit CSA ventures. Nationwide, some CSAs exclusively serve SNAP beneficiaries, while others set aside a portion of their CSA shares for SNAP beneficiaries. Source: Ibid.

According to anti-hunger advocates, there are several potential challenges inherent in using SNAP benefits for CSA memberships, affecting both the CSAs and their SNAP clients. For example, a study conducted by the Food Research and Action Center found that only about 20% of New York City's 100 CSAs accept SNAP benefits. Likely deterrents to more widespread participation include paperwork requirements or the potential need to partner with a community-based organization. CSA membership fees may also be out of reach for SNAP clients if the fees are not subsidized or based on a sliding scale. Source: Ibid.

Additional obstacles for SNAP clients include less flexibility for CSA pickups and potentially limited storage and refrigeration space for the fresh produce. By eliminating or reducing these barriers, more communities can take advantage of this resource for SNAP clients.

Source: Ibid.



How Much Is That Burger Through the Window?

In 2013, the Harvard School of Public Health (HSPH) issued the most comprehensive analysis to date comparing prices of healthy foods and diet patterns versus less-healthy ones. The researchers found that healthier eating habits—for example, diets rich in fruits, vegetables, fish and nuts—cost significantly more than unhealthy diets (for example, those rich in processed foods, meats and refined grains). **On average, the healthiest foods cost about \$1.50 more per day than the least-healthy ones.**

Source: www.hsph.harvard.edu/news/press-releases/healthy-vs-unhealthy-diet-costs-1-50-more, December 5, 2013

Why does a cheeseburger—whose multiple ingredients must be processed, cooked, packaged, marketed and advertised—cost less than a fresh peach?

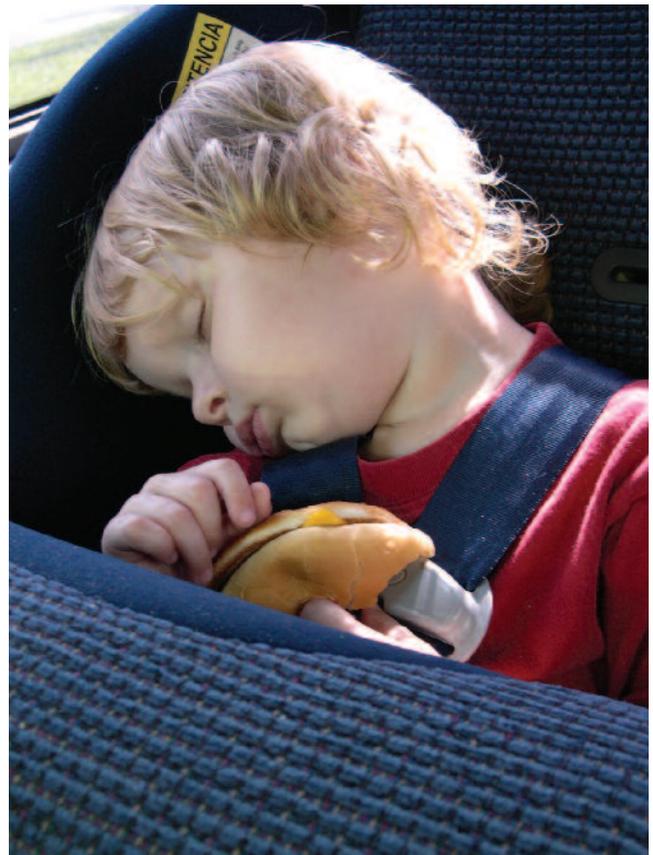
Source: *A Place at the Table*, ed. Peter Pringle, 2013

The Harvard researchers suggest that unhealthy diets may cost less because food policies have focused on the production of “inexpensive, high-volume” commodities, which has led to “a complex network of farming, storage, transportation, processing, manufacturing and marketing capabilities that favor sales of highly processed food products for maximal industry profit.” Given this reality, they propose creating a similar infrastructure to support production of healthier foods that may increase availability—and reduce the cost—of more healthful diets.

Source: *Ibid.*

“This research provides the most complete picture to date on true cost differences of healthy diets,” said Dariush Mozaffarian, the study’s senior author and associate professor at HSPH and Harvard Medical School. “While healthier diets did cost more, the difference was smaller than many people might have expected. Over the course of a year, \$1.50 per day more for eating a healthy diet would increase food costs for one person by about \$550 per year [or about \$45 per month]. This would represent a real burden for some families, and we need policies to help offset these costs. On the other hand, this price difference is very small in comparison to the economic costs of diet-related chronic diseases, which would be dramatically reduced by healthy diets.”

Source: *Ibid.*



Doing Taxes Is Easier Than Eating Healthy

A poll from the 2012 Health & Food survey indicates that 52 percent of people feel it is harder to figure out how to eat healthy than to do their own taxes. And those with the greatest need to eat healthy—people with high BMI, heart disease, cholesterol issues or high blood pressure—are even more likely to find it difficult to make healthy eating choices.

Source: www.blog.cleanprogram.com, January 16, 2015

You Are What You Eat

“Hunger and obesity are flip sides of the same malnutrition coin.”

—Andy Fisher, “Getting Off the Anti-Hunger Treadmill,” from *A Place at the Table*, ed. Peter Pringle, 2013

Cheap, low-quality food is a problem for all of us, whether we consume it or not. While it allows low-income families to stretch their dollars, we end up paying for it in other ways. Diet-related obesity, diabetes and heart disease are now the nation’s leading public-health problems, generating an estimated \$150 billion in health-care costs every year.

Source: Cummins, Ronnie, “America’s Obesity and Diabetes Epidemic: Junk Food Kills,” March 7, 2012, www.naturalnews.com

In an editorial in the *British Journal of Sports Medicine*, three international experts said it was time to “bust the myth” about exercise. Although physical activity is, in fact, key to staving off diseases such as diabetes, heart disease and dementia, its impact on obesity is minimal. Instead, they claim, excess sugar and carbohydrates are the culprits.

Source: Triggler, Nick, “Exercise ‘Not Key to Obesity Fight,’” April 23, 2015, www.bbc.com

The experts, including London cardiologist Dr. Aseem Malhotra, blamed the food industry for encouraging the belief that exercise could counteract the impact of unhealthy eating.

Source: *Ibid.*

Obesity is related to a number of diet-related health conditions, including heart disease, stroke, Type 2 diabetes and certain types of cancer, all of which are extremely costly chronic conditions.

For the period 2009 to 2011, Litchfield County’s obesity rate approximated that of the state. In 2011, 34,000 people or approximately one-quarter of the population of Litchfield County were determined to be obese according to *The State of Obesity*, an annual report by the Trust for America’s Health and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.

Diabetes remains the leading cause of adult blindness and kidney failure, and is a significant contributor to heart disease and stroke. While Type 1 diabetes is largely a result of an autoimmune disorder, Type 2 diabetes can be prevented and controlled through diet and activity.

Feed Your Children Well

Obesity affects one in six children and adolescents nationwide. Obese children are more likely to become obese adults and are at greater risk for developing diet-related chronic diseases at younger ages, including heart disease, Type 2 diabetes, breathing problems such as sleep apnea and asthma, joint and musculoskeletal discomfort, and other gastrointestinal issues such as heartburn. While lower than the same percentages for the state, for the period 2009 to 2011, **10 percent of Litchfield County’s low-income preschool children were considered to be obese.**

Source: Words & Numbers Research, Inc., based on *The State of Obesity*; Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

Crime, traffic and unsafe playground equipment are common barriers to physical activity for low-income children. Because of these and other safety concerns, children and adults alike are apt to stay indoors and engage in sedentary activities such as watching television or playing video games. Not surprisingly, those living in unsafe neighborhoods are at greater risk for obesity.

Low-income children are less likely to participate in organized sports. This is consistent with reports of low-income parents, who state that cost and lack of transportation are barriers to their children's participation in physical activities such as organized sports.

To be deemed "physically fit," students must meet the standard established by the Connecticut State Department of Education on each of four fitness tests involving flexibility, abdominal strength, upper-body strength and aerobic activity. Students are given fitness tests in grades 4, 6, 8 and 10. During the 2012-2013 school year, **half of Northwest Corner school districts scored lower than the state average for physical fitness.** Even more alarming are the declining fitness scores at 12 of the 23 schools over three years, particularly in Region 6 (Goshen, Morris, Warren) where the score declined 27 percentage points.

Source: Words & Numbers Research, Inc., based on CT State Dept. of Education (CSDE), CT Education Data and Research (CEDaR)

Regular physical exercise helps muscle development, bone health and heart health. Children who regularly exercise also tend to have lower levels of depression and anxiety. They tend to do better in school and are more likely to carry their healthy lifestyle into adulthood. Physical activity is critical for weight control and reduced risk of chronic diseases such as diabetes and heart disease. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommend that children and adolescents exercise for an hour a day.

Would You All Remain Standing Please?

Being told to "sit still" in the classroom may soon be a thing of the past. Schools in a growing number of jurisdictions are experimenting with the once-faddish, now commonplace tool of the modern office dweller: the standing desk. The interest in getting standing desks in schools has its roots in the growing obesity epidemic in the United States and other wealthy countries.

The idea is to get school children—who can spend an incredible 65 to 70 percent of their waking hours sitting—moving more during the day. This measure could help them lose weight, improve their cardiovascular health, reduce their risk of Type 2 diabetes and realize other physical and psychological benefits.

Many of the standing desks that are being tested at schools are actually "stand-biased desks" equipped with stools that are standing height. Some also have what researchers call "fidget bars" in the foot area, which allow children who need more movement to get it without disrupting their classmates.

"Children become more restless and distracted with prolonged sitting. Active workstations reduce disruptive behavior problems and increase students' attention by providing them with a different method for completing academic tasks and breaking up the monotony of seated work," said Texas A&M Professor Mark Benden, lead author of two studies on the subject.

Source: Cha, Ariana Eunjung, "Standing Desks at Schools: The Solution to the Childhood Obesity Epidemic?" July 21, 2015, www.washingtonpost.com

Food for Thought

The government-defined poverty line needs an upward adjustment. Too many Northwest Corner residents are victims of food insecurity, and a fair number are not even considered “poor” by government standards. Poverty, however it is defined, and food insecurity are inextricably linked, and parents should not have to choose between feeding their children and paying household bills.

For Northwest Corner families, the income gap between 185 percent of the Federal Poverty Limit and the BEST Index food-security estimate is significant. Without sufficient resources to purchase food, families will continue to rely on government and charitable resources. Our food banks and soup kitchens are stretched to the limit. In order to obtain food to feed more and more hungry people, they often must partner with corporations, some of which are actually causing hunger through their labor practices.

Source: Fisher, Andy, “Getting Off the Anti-Hunger Treadmill,” from *A Place at the Table*, ed. Peter Pringle, 2013

To solve the problem, we must embrace long-term innovation and transformation at the community level that focuses on root causes of food insecurity such as poverty and health. As strange as it seems, hunger and obesity are flip sides of the same malnutrition coin.

Source: *Ibid.*

Ultimately, food banks should be able to measure their success not in pounds of food distributed, but in the number of people they don’t serve—those who are self-sustaining and can afford to buy enough food for their families.

Source: *Ibid.*



What You Can Do to End Childhood Hunger

Adapted from *A Place at the Table*, ed. Peter Pringle, 2013

Restore Economic Growth and Create Jobs With Better Wages for Lower-Income Workers: The solution must focus on jobs and family supports, not on overstretched charities. Parents want jobs with good wages and benefits as a means of supporting their families. That will require fiscal and monetary policies that restore and sustain growth; robust private- and public-sector job creation and job training; full-time jobs at good wages that create family-supporting incomes; benefits and leave provisions that are consistent with family well-being; and strong child-care supports. In addition, parents must not be left in crisis once their children are adequately fed: their struggle with hunger has a negative effect on their children's development, behavior, health and learning. Food insecurity during pregnancy is associated with poor birth outcomes. Parental food insecurity with its resultant stress, depression, poor health and other negative outcomes continues to adversely affect children throughout their childhood.

Raise the Incomes of the Lowest-Income Families: Nutrition programs alone cannot carry the whole burden of government supports to end childhood hunger when employment falls short. If a full-time minimum-wage job pays only two-thirds of the poverty level, even substantially improved food-stamp and school-meal programs will not close the food-security gap. Initiatives are needed that will reduce and alleviate poverty by providing permanent tax relief for working families, expanding the Earned Income Tax Credit, raising the minimum wage and ensuring continued access to affordable health insurance.

Strengthen the SNAP/Food Stamp Program: SNAP is the country's most important direct defense against hunger. The program is fundamentally strong, but needs some key reforms and improvements:

1. Update and improve benefit levels. The monthly allotment is predicated on the "Thrifty Food Plan," which, although updated in 2006, was developed during the Depression in the 1930s "as a restricted diet for emergency use." The allotment typically carries even the most careful families only part way through a month. The government already has its "Low-Cost Food Budget" in place. The lowest of three government budgets for normal use, it is approximately 25 percent higher than the Thrifty Food Plan. The Low-Cost Food Budget should be the basis for SNAP allotments.
2. Adjust benefit amounts in a timely manner. The benefit allotment is adjusted for inflation each year, but the increases do not go into effect for four to 16 months, at which point the allotment does not reflect current prices.
3. Expand eligibility and improve benefit computation rules. Extend the program to children and parents now excluded from benefits by arbitrary eligibility rules. Allow SNAP benefits to increase when high housing costs consume more of a family's income (a provision that was cut back for families with children in 1996). Reduce unnecessary red tape that deters participation.

The Second Circuit Court of Appeals concluded that people whose food-stamp applications are delayed can sue the state in federal court. The ruling comes two years after U.S. District Court Judge Vanessa Bryant issued a preliminary injunction against the Department of Social Services. Bryant concluded that the DSS was responsible for an "ongoing, persistent systemic failure to comply with the strict unambiguous mandates imposed by the [Food Stamp Act]."

The language in the state plan is clear. Applications must be processed within seven or 30 days depending on income. In April 2015, the state of CT had 8,010 applications requiring seven-day processing and 6,947 for 30-day processing.

Since the ruling two years ago, the DSS has made some progress in processing food-stamp applications, but it still fails to process a number of them and is still not in compliance with Bryant's initial order, which requires the state to achieve a 97 percent timely processing rate.

Source: Stuart, Christine, "Appeals Court Upholds Food Stamp Timeliness," www.ctnewsjunkie.com, July 7, 2015

Strengthen the Child Nutrition Programs: Child nutrition programs (school lunch and breakfast, after-school and summer meals, WIC, child-care meals) are essential tools for ending childhood hunger. These programs are considered among the nation’s most important and cost-effective public interventions.

1. Increase participation in the federal free and reduced-price school meal programs, especially breakfast, which is severely underutilized.
2. Red tape is a problem for schools. Paperwork for participating schools and nonprofits like after-school and summer programs should be reduced so they do not need to file multiple applications for the same child to receive food year-round (e.g., one application for the school year for lunch, another for breakfast, another for after-school and summer meals). Provide more support for schools to access initiatives that offer lunch and breakfast free to all children in schools with substantial numbers of low-income children. This will reduce red tape and stigma and boost participation. Support initiatives to serve breakfast in the classroom, and provide federal commodities and cash reimbursements for school breakfasts like those provided for school lunches.
3. Expand access to after-school and summer programs. Only 15 children receive lunch in the summer from the federal nutrition programs for every 100 low-income children who get lunch during the school year. One barrier is the difficulty for many after-school and summer programs to meet the “area eligibility test” for nutrition-program reimbursement. The test is too strict and even more so after congressional cutbacks. The eligibility requirement should be the same as that for education and after-school programs like the Department of Education’s Title 1 and 21st Century Community Learning Center programs. Startup grants and transportation grants, especially for rural areas, are essential.
4. Implement the federal support program for meals served in after-school programs in schools, parks and recreation programs, and community-based nonprofits and faith-based institutions.
5. Expand nutrition programs for children in child care. The federal Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) should be adjusted to make far more low-income preschoolers in child-care



centers and family child care eligible for a day's worth of federally funded meals and snacks. This will require changes in the eligibility test and a rollback of a shortsighted rule enacted by congress limiting the number of meals for preschoolers to two a day no matter how many hours a day they are in care.

6. Improve WIC. Children in the WIC program should be allowed the full fruit and vegetable allotment recommended by the Institute of Medicine, rather than the smaller one adopted in 2008, which includes a reduction driven by budget considerations.

7. Improve meal quality. The quality of meals provided in child-care settings, schools, and summer and after-school programs must be improved. Reimbursement rates and structures adequate to support healthy eating should be in place. The healthfulness of commodities donated to schools should be improved. Nutrition and safety standards already in effect should be enforced. Standards should be improved and applied to all foods offered or sold in schools.



Engage the Entire Federal Government in Ending Childhood Hunger: All agencies that touch the lives of low-income children, families and communities must be engaged in the campaign to end childhood hunger, not just the Department of Agriculture. Like the silo-busting Opening Doors initiative to end homelessness that brought numerous federal offices and agencies together, this same strategy can be effectuated to end childhood hunger. The list of federal agencies and offices in the White House and Executive Office of the President that are currently engaged in food issues, or can be engaged to work on food issues, includes but is not limited to:

- Department of Agriculture
- Treasury Department
- Department of Education
- Justice Department
- Department of Health and Human Services
- Department of Defense
- Office of Social Innovation
- Domestic Policy Council
- Office of Urban Affairs Policy
- Council on Women and Girls
- Office of Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships

Work With States, Localities and Nonprofits to Expand and Improve Participation in Federal Nutrition Programs: The federal income supports and nutrition programs need to be strengthened, but the intermediaries for those programs also need to take better advantage of them. Today, the rate of participation in SNAP among eligible people ranges from about 50 percent in some states to more than 90 percent in others. The situation is similar with school feeding programs: in some states, only 33 low-income children get school breakfast for every 100 who get school lunch; in others, that rate is much higher. Stronger federal programs with robust federal funding and clear national program rules should be based on a simple paradigm: whether or not a child is hungry should not depend on an accident of birth or family mobility, where the child is from, where the child goes to school or which child-care center the family utilizes.

Make Sure All Families Have Convenient Access to Reasonably Priced, Healthy Food: Many neighborhoods and towns across the Northwest Corner lack decent-sized stores that sell a good variety of food, including fresh produce, at reasonable prices. Living in one of those “food deserts” makes it far harder, if not impossible, for a struggling, low-income family to stave off hunger and stay healthy. They often must forgo healthy food or spend scarce resources traveling to food stores, pay more than average amounts for food and settle for food of lesser nutritional quality. Community and school gardens, farmers’ markets and “greencarts” (mobile food carts that offer fresh produce), along with improvements to the offerings of corner stores, can help combat this. But bigger steps must be taken to make suitable grocery stores accessible to all Northwest Corner residents. The Healthy Food Financing Initiative provides grants and loans for food markets in low-income, underserved areas. All grocery stores should participate in SNAP and WIC in order to give low-income families better access to high-quality food. Other strategies to help low-income households afford adequate and healthy food are outlined in the Food Research and Action Center’s “Review of Strategies to Bolster SNAP’s Role in Improving Nutrition as Well as Food Security.”



The Five Faces of Food

George Schenk, American Flatbread Company, Inc.

Hunger: I am the Face of Hunger; I am the First Face of Food. My body is the great mass and bounty of leaf and flesh. I am hunted and gathered; I am culled and cultivated and cleared and cured and cooked to fill the empty stomachs of the people so that they may rest with peace. This is the First Function of Food. I am the porridge served in Chad and Somalia and Ethiopia and the Sudan. I am the food of prisoners and refugees and the desperate poor of Cairo and Sao Palo and East St. Louis and a thousand other places. I am the line between life and death. For those of you who do not stand near this line, be glad.

Flavor: I am the Second Face of Food. I am the face of flavor. I am sweet and tart and the salt and bitter and fat. I am the miracle of taste and texture. I am the warning and the celebration. I am the guide in the wilderness of plants and animals and minerals. I speak to the lips and teeth and tongue. Listen to your mouth and to the depths of your gut for my true voice, and I will guide you toward the foods of joy and health.

Nourish: I am the Third and Central Face of Food. I am the face of nutrition. From my body come the building blocks that give form and strength. I am the fuel that warms the heart and the power to run and dance and dream. I am the purpose of flavor and the why of hunger pain. Remember me in the foods you eat.

Nurture: I am the face of nurturing. I am the Fourth Face of Food. I am known by the acts of the hands and the heart working together. Food that nurtures is grown with care and respect. It is carried without burden and stirred to the songs of kindness. Food that nurtures is shaped by the ways of love. From food made and shared like this flows great health and happiness.

Heal: Food to fill you. Food of joy. Food for health. Food for comfort. These are the foods of my four sisters. I am the Fifth Face of Food. I am the face of healing. Just as illness and injury take many forms, there are many ways to heal. Food can heal.

The American Flatbread Company, Inc.'s mission is to make good food, food that not only fills our hunger and tastes good to our mouths but also nourishes, nurtures and heals. To do that, they start with good ingredients like organic flour, organic tomatoes, and many organic and locally farmed meats, veggies and cheeses. Flatbread restaurants source ingredients from their unique, local network of farmers and producers.



Appendix

Food Pantries in Northwest Connecticut Serving the General Public

Bethlehem Food Bank

P.O. Box 160
Bethlehem, CT 06751
Christine Murphy
203.266.7510, ext. 4
cmurphy@bethlehemct.org

Town(s) served: Bethlehem

Hours: T–F, 8 a.m.–1 p.m. (additional hours seasonally and when town clerk is in office; call for more information)

Food/products: nonperishables; personal items; laundry products

Permitted frequency: once per week

Services: clients can choose food

Requirements: proof of residence

Church of Christ, Congregational (UCC)

P.O. Box 582
12 Village Green
Norfolk, CT 06058
Rev. Erick R. Olsen, Pastor
860.542.5721
reverendole@hotmail.com

Town(s) served: Barkhamsted, Canaan, Colebrook, Goshen, Norfolk, North Canaan, Salisbury, Torrington, Winsted

Hours: T & Th., 10 a.m.–noon

Food/products: nonperishables; personal items

Permitted frequency: twice per week

Services: clients can choose food

Requirements: N/A

Community Food Bank

P.O. Box 181
93 River Rd.
Pleasant Valley, CT 06063
Marie Phelps, Chairperson
860.489.3286
ummap05@yahoo.com

Town(s) served: Barkhamsted, Colebrook, New Hartford

Hours: M, 6–8 p.m.; Th., 2–4 p.m. (two weeks per month)

Food/products: nonperishables, dairy; meat; produce; personal items; bread; fruit, when available

Permitted frequency: twice per month

Services: clients can choose food

Requirements: N/A

Connecticut Food Bank

150 Bradley St.
East Haven, CT 06512
Nancy L. Carrington, President/CEO
203.469.5000
ncarrington@ctfoodbank.org

Town(s) served: nearly 700 member programs such as food pantries, soup kitchens, emergency shelters and adult/child day programs throughout Fairfield, Litchfield, Middlesex, New Haven, New London and Windham counties. Mobile Pantry Program serves low-income residents without access to food-assistance programs and supplements existing food-assistance programs.

Mobile Food Pantry:

Canaan:

Station Place Parking Lot
107 Whitford Court
3rd Thursday of the month, 9–10 a.m.

Torrington:

First Congregational Church
835 Riverside Ave.

2nd Tuesday of the month, 8–9 a.m.

Winsted:

Northwestern CT Community College
Holabird Parking Lot
3rd Thursday of the month, noon–1 p.m.

Food/products: fresh fruits/vegetables; bread and/or dairy

Permitted frequency: once per month

Services: N/A

Requirements: N/A

The Corner Food Pantry

P.O. Box 705
Lakeville, CT 06039
Joan Groves, Pantry Manager
860.435.4929
jgroves02@att.net

Town(s) served: Canaan, North Canaan, Salisbury, Sharon

Hours: Sat., 9–11 a.m.; every other Fri., 5–6 p.m.

Food/products: nonperishables; dairy; meat; produce; personal items

Permitted frequency: once per week

Services: clients can choose food

Requirements: N/A

Town of Cornwall/Cornwall Food Pantry

P.O. Box 97
 Cornwall, CT 06753
 Anne Scott, Volunteer Coordinator
 860.672.0595
 Cornwallfood@optonline.net

Town(s) served: Cornwall**Hours:** T & Th., 11 a.m.–noon**Food/products:** nonperishables; dairy; meat; produce; personal items; household products; baby items**Permitted frequency:** twice per week**Services:** clients can choose food**Requirements:** proof of residence**FISH/Friends in Service to Humanity of Northwestern CT**

332 South Main St.
 Torrington, CT 06790
 Margaret Franzi, Pantry Manager
 860.482.7300
 mfranzi@fishnwct.org

Town(s) served: Barkhamsted, Goshen, Harwinton, Litchfield, Morris, New Hartford, Norfolk, Torrington, Warren, Winsted**Hours:** M, T, Th., 10 a.m.–3 p.m. (late hours on Thursday, by appointment); F, 10 a.m.–2 p.m.**Food/products:** nonperishables; dairy; meat; produce; personal items; pet foods; baby items; Ensure-type nutrient drinks**Permitted frequency:** twice per month, with 10 business-day interval required**Services:** home delivery**Requirements:** N/A**Fishes and Loaves**

P.O. Box 306
 30 Granite Ave.
 Canaan, CT 06018
 Jean Emberlin, Director
 860.824.7232
 nccongchurch@snet.net

Town(s) served: Canaan, North Canaan**Hours:** W, 9–11 a.m.**Food/products:** nonperishables; dairy; meat; produce; personal items**Permitted frequency:** once per week**Services:** home delivery; clients can choose food**Requirements:** N/A**Friendly Hands Food Bank**

50 King St.
 Torrington, CT 06790
 Maureen Hubert, Executive Director
 860.482.3338
 friendlyhands@optonline.net

Town(s) served: Barkhamsted, Goshen, Harwinton, Litchfield, Morris, Torrington, Winsted**Hours:** M–F, 9:30 a.m.–4 p.m.**Food/products:** nonperishables; dairy; meat; produce; personal items**Permitted frequency:** twice per month**Services:** N/A**Requirements:** proof of residence/income; social security number; photo ID**Hands of Grace**

P.O. Box 145
 Pine Meadow, CT 06061
 Kevin Mongeau, Executive Director
 860.738.0299
 Handsofgracect@gmail.com

Town(s) served: Barkhamsted, Colebrook, Goshen, Harwinton, Litchfield, Morris, New Hartford, Norfolk, Torrington, Winsted**Hours:** M, noon–5 p.m.; T, 10 a.m.–5 p.m.; W, 10 a.m.–5 p.m.**Food/products:** nonperishables; dairy; meat; produce; personal items; some paper products; household items; clothing**Permitted frequency:** once per month**Services:** clients can choose food**Requirements:** agency referral**Harwinton Food Pantry**

P.O. 66
 Harwinton, CT 06791
 Michael Criss
 860.485.9051
 harwintonfoodpantry@gmail.com

Town(s) served: Harwinton**Hours:** 4th Monday of the month, 6–7 p.m.; 4th Tuesday of the month, 10:30–11:45 a.m.**Food/products:** nonperishables; dairy; meat; produce; personal items**Permitted frequency:** twice per month**Services:** clients can choose food**Requirements:** proof of residence

Town of Kent/Kent Food Bank

P.O. Box 678
 Kent, CT 06757
 Leah Pullaro, MSW, Social Services Director
 860.927.1586
 socialservices@townofkentct.org

Town(s) served: Kent**Hours:** F, 9:30 a.m.–noon; Sat., 9–10 a.m.**Food/products:** nonperishables; dairy; meat; produce; personal items; household/paper products**Permitted frequency:** once per week**Services:** home delivery; free transportation to site; clients can choose food**Requirements:** proof of residence/income; USDA form**Town of Litchfield**

P.O. Box 12
 Bantam, CT 06750
 Philip D. Birkett, Social Services Coordinator
 860.567.7564
 pbirkett@townoflitchfield.org

Town(s) served: Litchfield**Hours:** M–Th., 9 a.m.–2 p.m.**Food/products:** nonperishables**Permitted frequency:** as needed**Services:** clients can choose food**Requirements:** proof of residence; agency referral**Marilyn's Food Pantry at Winsted United Methodist Church**

630 Main St.
 P.O. Box 380
 Winsted, CT 06098
 Issy Skilton, Secretary
 860.379.4659
 iskilton@yahoo.com

Town(s) served: Winsted**Hours:** Th. & Sat., 9 a.m.–noon**Food/products:** nonperishables; vegetables**Permitted frequency:** once per week**Service:** N/A**Requirements:** proof of residence/income**Town of Morris**

3 East St.
 Morris, CT 06763
 Susan J. Jeanfavre, Administrative Assistant
 860.567.7430
 selectmen@townofmorrisct.com

Town(s) served: Morris**Hours:** M–Th., 9 a.m.–12:30 p.m., 1–4 p.m.; F, 9 a.m.–noon**Food/products:** nonperishables; produce; personal items; laundry products; baby items**Permitted frequency:** daily**Services:** clients can choose food**Requirements:** proof of residence/income; agency referral**Northwest Hills Community Church**

P.O. Box 329
 Torrington, CT 06790
 Fred Lawson
 860.201.4601
 jfredlawson@sbcglobal.net

Town(s) served: Goshen, Harwinton, Litchfield, New Hartford, Torrington, Winsted**Hours:** F, 10 a.m.–3 p.m.**Food/products:** nonperishables; personal items**Permitted frequency:** twice per month**Services:** N/A**Requirements:** N/A**Salisbury Family Services**

P.O. Box 379
 Falls Village, CT 06068
 Patrice McGrath, Director
 860.435.5187
 pmcgrath@salisburyct.us

Town(s) served: Salisbury**Hours:** M–Th. (call ahead)**Food/products:** nonperishables; personal items**Permitted frequency:** as needed**Services:** clients can choose food**Requirements:** proof of residence

Salvation Army

Torrington:

234 Oak Ave.

Torrington, CT 06790

Town(s) served: Goshen, Torrington

Hours: T, 1–4:45 p.m.; Th. 10 a.m.– noon,
1–3 p.m.; F, 1–4 p.m.

Permitted frequency: once per month

Winsted:

112 Main St.

P.O. Box 571

Winsted, CT 06098

Town(s) served: Colebrook, Norfolk, Winsted

Hours: M, 2–4 p.m., 5–7 p.m.; W, noon–5 p.m.;
F, 10 a.m.–noon

Permitted frequency: twice per month

Rene Jarvis-Hovatter, Captain

860.482.3569, ext. 11

Food/products: nonperishables; dairy; meat;
produce

Services: clients can choose food

Requirements: proof of residence/income; social
security number; photo ID

Sharon Food Closet

P.O. Box 385

Sharon, CT 06069

Ella Clark, Sharon Social Services

860.364.1003

ellaclark@sharon-ct.org

Town(s) served: Sharon

Hours: T, W & Th., 9 a.m.–5 p.m. or by appointment

Food/products: nonperishables; frozen food; bread

Permitted frequency: as needed

Services: home delivery; clients can choose food

Requirements: N/A

Sullivan Senior Center/Litchfield Hills Elderly Nutrition Program

88 East Albert St.

Torrington, CT 06790

Sherry Cote, Nutrition Supervisor

860.489.2587

sherry_cote@torringtonct.org

Town(s) served: Barkhamsted, Canaan, Colebrook,
Goshen, Harwinton, Kent, Litchfield, Morris, New
Hartford, Norfolk, North Canaan, Salisbury, Sharon,
Torrington, Warren, Washington, Winsted

Hours: M–F; some weekends/holidays

Food/products: nonperishables; dairy; meat;
produce; personal items

Permitted frequency: as needed

Services: home delivery

Requirements: agency/town referral

Soup Kitchens Serving the General Public

Community Soup Kitchen of Torrington

220 Prospect St.

Torrington, CT 06790

Lisa Hageman, Food Service Director

860.480.1510

lisa.hageman@yahoo.com

Town(s) Served: Canaan, Cornwall, Litchfield,
Torrington, Winsted

Hours: Daily, 11:30 a.m.–1:30 p.m.

Open Door Soup Kitchen

P.O. Box 57

Winsted, CT 06098

Carrie Delaney, President/Manager

860.738.2449

carriejoyce29@hotmail.com

Town(s) served: Barkhamsted, Colebrook, Norfolk,
Torrington, Winsted

Hours: Daily, 9 a.m.–1p.m.



Agencies and Towns Served

	Barkhamsted	Bethlehem	Canaan/Falls Village	Colebrook	Cornwall	Goshen	Harwinton	Kent	Litchfield	Morris	New Hartford	Norfolk	North Canaan	Salisbury/Lakeville	Sharon	Torrington	Warren	Washington	Winchester/Winsted
Bethlehem Food Bank																			
Church of Christ, Congregational (UCC)																			
Community Food Bank																			
Community Soup Kitchen of Torrington																			
Connecticut Food Bank																			
The Corner Food Pantry																			
Town of Cornwall/Cornwall Food Pantry																			
FISH/Friends in Service to Humanity of Northwestern CT																			
Fishes and Loaves																			
Friendly Hands Food Bank																			
Hands of Grace																			
Harwinton Food Pantry																			
Town of Kent/Kent Food Bank																			
Town of Litchfield																			
Marilyn's Food Pantry at Winsted United Methodist Church																			
Town of Morris																			
Northwest Hills Community Church																			
Open Door Soup Kitchen																			
Salisbury Family Services																			
Salvation Army, Torrington																			
Salvation Army (Winsted Regional Service Center)																			
Sharon Food Closet																			
Sullivan Senior Center/ Litchfield Hills Elderly Nutrition Program																			

Basic Economic Security Table 2012

Monthly Expenses for: 1 Worker, 1 Preschooler and 1 School-aged Child
(without employment-based benefits of unemployment insurance, health insurance and retirement plan)

	All Northwest Corner Towns Except Torrington	Torrington
Housing (Rent)	\$827	\$1,047
Utilities	196	222
Food	596	663
Transportation	576	581
Child Care	1,182	1,326
Personal & Household	437	521
Health Care	944	962
Emergency Savings	277	315
Retirement Savings	137	165
Taxes	1,165	1,364
Tax Credits	(267)	(267)
Monthly Total	\$6,070	\$6,899
Annual Total	\$72,840	\$82,788
Hourly Wage Needed	\$34.49	\$39.20



The Draper Foundation Fund

Jim and Shirley Draper, former residents of Colebrook, were ordinary people who left an extraordinary legacy. Often described as unpretentious, down-to-earth and neighborly, the Drapers' simple lifestyle belied their astonishing contribution to our region's well-being and to the welfare of its citizens.

Jim and Shirley established The Draper Foundation Fund with a \$30-million gift from their estate in 2011. The fund provides permanent support to 19 regionally designated charitable organizations, scholarships to deserving students and grants to local nonprofits awarded through a competitive selection process administered by donor-selected advisors to the fund.

In 2014, The Draper Foundation Fund awarded over \$1.3 million in grants to over 73 local nonprofits. Much of the Drapers' philanthropy reflects their passion for education and their love of children and animals. Included in the fund's remarkable record of community service are grants to over 40 local social-service organizations that feed the hungry and assist the poor. It was with this funding priority in mind that the fund's advisors commissioned this report on food insecurity.



Shirley and Jim Draper

(Photo circa 1960 courtesy of Susan Caufield)

The Community Foundation of Northwest Connecticut

The mission of the Community Foundation is to enrich the quality of life for residents of Northwest Connecticut by inspiring local philanthropy, convening stakeholders in community welfare, strengthening the regional nonprofit network and fostering collaborative funding partnerships.

Established as a community endowment in 1969 with a \$15,000 gift from the Torrington Club, the Community Foundation is a federally designated public charity serving 20 communities in northwest Connecticut. The Foundation's fund-holders and stakeholders made possible \$3.4 million in grants and scholarships in 2014 from assets approaching \$90 million.

Working collaboratively with The Draper Foundation Fund and with the support of the fund's advisors, the Community Foundation has recently been able to double its funding to community-based grassroots organizations serving the region's most needy with food, fuel, shelter and other critical life-sustaining services.

For a full description of the Foundation's rich history of local grant-making as well as an overview of its current initiatives, programs and philanthropic services, visit www.cfnwct.org.

THE COMMUNITY FOUNDATION OF NORTHWEST CONNECTICUT

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