



Although USDA has stopped collecting food security data, Feeding America will continue to estimate local food insecurity and meal costs. Moving forward, Feeding America is collaborating as a nationwide network of food banks, food pantries, state-wide associations and regional co-ops—in partnership with diverse partners—to explore alternative data sources from which to estimate local food insecurity in 2027 and beyond.



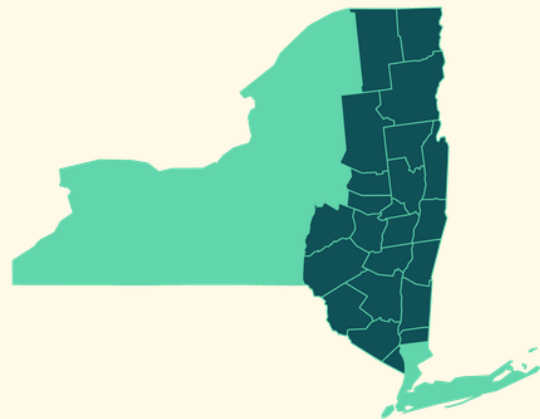
2026 STATE OF HUNGER

Capital Region



Across the Food Bank's 23-County Service Area

Across the Regional Food Bank's 23-county service area, the total number of people facing food insecurity rose approximately **23.2%** from 2019 to 2024, with over **351,730** people experiencing challenges associated with hunger; this number is even higher amongst children, with **16.2%** of children lacking access to the nutritious foods they need to thrive.



Interested in learning more about food insecurity in your county? Scan the QR to see more regional data or visit regionalfoodbank.net.



For every neighbor in need.

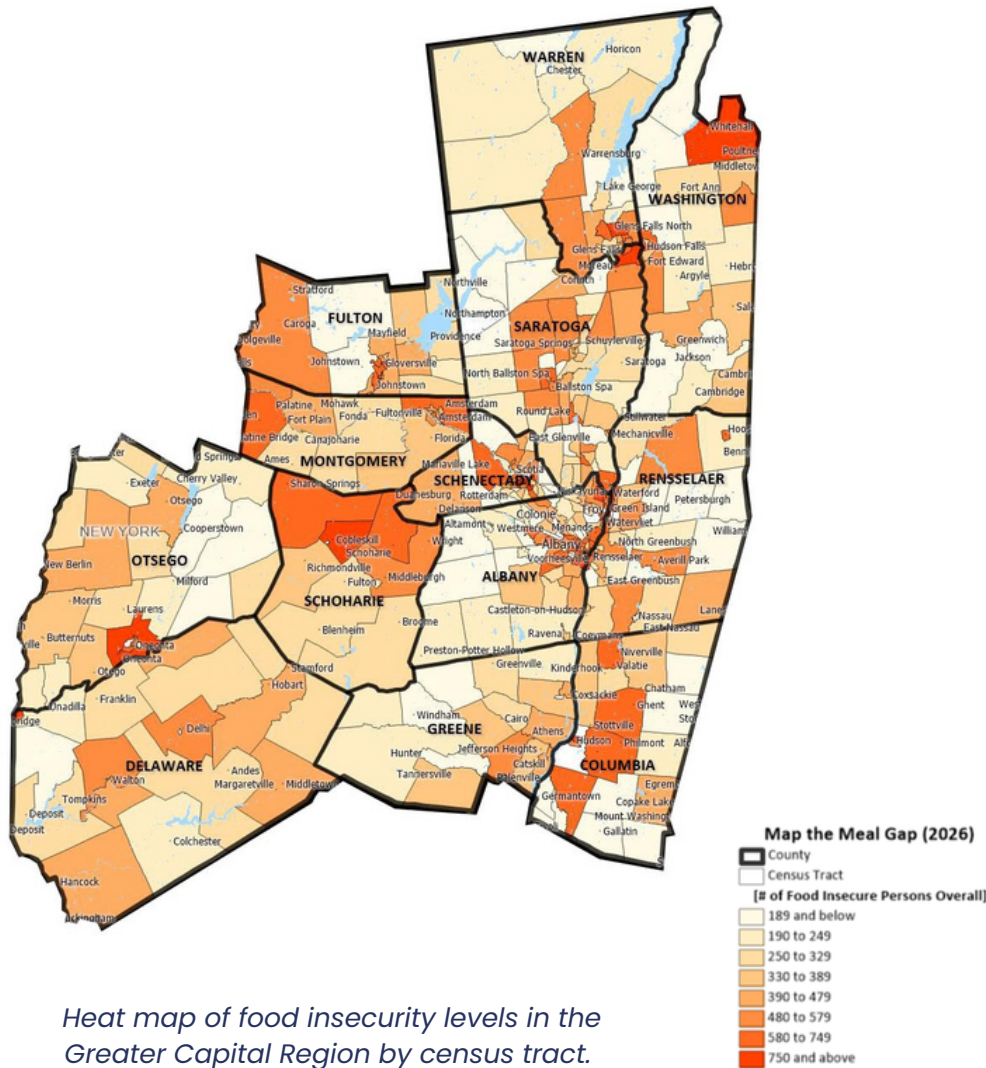


Mapping the Meal Gap

Each year, Feeding America releases a national report known as Map the Meal Gap, using publicly available data from USDA Economic Research Service, U.S. Census Bureau and Bureau of Labor Statistics to estimate local food insecurity at the county, congressional district and state levels. The study also estimates local meal costs and food budget shortfalls using food price data from NIQ, based on USDA’s Thrifty Food Plan, and grocery sales tax data. The newest Map the Meal Gap report reflects the state of food insecurity as of 2024.

160,830 neighbors in the Capital Region face food insecurity.

County	% Food Insecure
Albany	12.6%
Columbia	11.9%
Delaware	13.6%
Fulton	13.6%
Greene	11.3%
Montgomery	15.0%
Otsego	11.9%
Rensselaer	12.3%
Saratoga	9.3%
Schenectady	12.3%
Schoharie	12.7%
Warren	12.0%
Washington	11.3%
Regional Average	11.9%



Heat map of food insecurity levels in the Greater Capital Region by census tract.

Children Facing Hunger

Food insecurity among children is 15.9%, equaling 39,970 children in the Greater Capital Region who lack access to the food they need to grow, learn, and thrive. In Fulton County, this rate is as high as 19.5%.



1 in 6 children experience food insecurity



1 in 8 adults experience food insecurity

Food insecurity is experienced by people from all backgrounds and demographics, but disparities exist.

Most people experiencing food insecurity nationally are white, non-Hispanic. Individuals who are Black or Latino often face disproportionately higher rates. In the Capital Region, available data by race/ethnicity shows that 10% of white individuals, 26% of Black individuals, and 21% of Latino individuals experienced food insecurity in 2024.

Food Spending and Cost

In 2024, people in food-insecure households reported needing an **additional \$23.16 per person, per week** to have just enough money to cover their food needs. This translated to \$36.3 billion across all 53.2 million individuals in food-insecure households.

Residents of the Greater Capital Region feel this firsthand, with an estimated food budget shortfall of \$123,845,000.

Individuals who were food secure in 2024 reported spending an average of \$3.70 per meal. Meal costs vary significantly by county throughout the nation, ranging from \$2.56 to \$6.28, showcasing the diverse economic challenges faced by communities.

In the Greater Capital Region, the average cost per meal is **\$3.98**, which reflects the high need we see at the Regional Food Bank.

Food Spending and Income

Nationally, half of all people experiencing food insecurity may not qualify for SNAP benefits due to income limits. Here in the Capital Region, **38%** of people facing hunger may not qualify for SNAP.

The Regional Food Bank and our partners provided food equivalent to **21,165,999 meals** in the Greater Capital Region in 2025. Despite these efforts, **the current meal gap in the Capital Region is 30,536,700.**