

# Hunger and Food Insecurity

## Cass-Clay Community Snapshot

February 2019

### INTRODUCTION

While hunger is the physiological discomfort that results from prolonged, involuntary lack of food, food insecurity occurs when consistent access to adequate food is limited by a lack of money and other resources at times during the year and oftentimes results in hunger.<sup>1</sup> Food insecurity and hunger are seen in every county across the United States including Cass and Clay Counties.<sup>2</sup> According to the Great Plains Food Bank, 1 in 9 individuals in Cass and Clay Counties used the emergency feeding network in 2017.

The [2018 Hunger in North Dakota survey](#) interviewed 516 clients from 54 different feeding networks from across the state; 113 resided in Cass and Clay Counties. The survey revealed the following related to Cass and Clay Counties<sup>3</sup>:

- 37% of clients are children and 7% are seniors
- 62% of adults and 17% of children skip meals regularly
- 29% report not eating for a whole day in the last month
- 70% of participants have a chronic disease

While food insecurity is a complex problem, it stems from two primary issues - not having enough resources to be able to afford nutritious foods and not having access to affordable, healthful foods.<sup>4</sup> The Cass-Clay community is working to improve in each of these areas in a variety of ways. The following is a snapshot of some of the more directly related efforts to reduce hunger and food insecurity within our local community.

### INITIATIVES TO REDUCE HUNGER AND FOOD INSECURITY IN CASS-CLAY

#### Federal Programs

- SNAP: the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program provides monetary benefits and education to low income households for the purchase of healthful foods. As of January 2018, 18,290 individuals in Cass and Clay counties receive SNAP benefits.
  - Family Nutrition Program (FNP or SNAP-ED): a nutrition education program for individuals and families who are receiving or are eligible to receive SNAP benefits. In 2017 over 11,500 adults and youth across North Dakota received direct education.
- WIC: The Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children provides nutrition education and food assistance in the form of vouchers to low income pregnant or nursing women and infants and children up to the age of 5. In 2017, the number of total participants in the WIC program in Cass and Clay counties was 7,323.
- School Lunch Program: The SLP provides free and reduced price breakfast and lunch meals to income eligible students at participating schools. In the Fargo-Moorhead area, Fargo Public Schools, West Fargo Public Schools, Moorhead Public and Dilworth

Schools all participate in the School Lunch Program. Additionally, the state of North Dakota subsidizes the cost of breakfast for North Dakota schools, making breakfast free for all free and reduced meal students. For the 2018-2019 school year, Madison Elementary of Fargo Public Schools will participate in the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) program which provides free meals to all students at the school. For the 2018-2019 school year there are 9,911 students receiving free or reduced price meals through the National School Lunch Program in Fargo, West Fargo, Moorhead and Dilworth-Glyndon-Felton.

## **Food Banks, Food Pantries, Donations**

### Great Plains Food Bank

The Great Plains Food Bank (GPFB) is part of the Feeding America network and works to end hunger by distributing large amounts of food quickly and efficiently to local food pantries and other local food distribution programs. The food bank also works through a variety of programs aimed at improving hunger in specifically targeted populations:

- Backpack Program: supplies backpacks filled with milk, juice, snacks and food for meals to assist hungry children over the weekend
- School Pantry Program: provides nutritious food to children and their families in convenient, familiar and safe locations
- Youth Summer Meals Program: provides nutritious meals for children during the summer months who would normally receive free or reduced meals at school during the school year
- Minnesota Farm to Food Shelf Program: provides locations and reimbursement for local farmers to donate produce that would otherwise go unharvested or discarded, produce is then brought to the Great Plains Food Bank.

[http://harvesttoendhungermn.org/F2F\\_FAQ\\_FINAL.pdf](http://harvesttoendhungermn.org/F2F_FAQ_FINAL.pdf)

Visit the GPFB website for additional information: <https://www.greatplainsfoodbank.org>

### Pantries and Soup Kitchens

For a list of pantries and soup kitchens in Cass and Clay Counties visit the Great Plains Food Bank website or First Link:

[https://www.greatplainsfoodbank.org/get\\_help/pantries\\_and\\_soup\\_kitchens.html](https://www.greatplainsfoodbank.org/get_help/pantries_and_soup_kitchens.html)

<https://myfirstlink.org/community-resources>

### GleaND

GleaND is a gleaning network that works through volunteers and local growers to capture excess produce to donate to local food pantries.

<https://www.gleand.org>

### Food Pantries and organizations that accept fresh produce donations

There are several locations throughout the community that will accept fresh produce. It is advised to contact individual locations for specific hours and drop off instructions.

[http://download.cityoffargo.com/0/where\\_to\\_donate\\_fresh\\_produce.pdf](http://download.cityoffargo.com/0/where_to_donate_fresh_produce.pdf)

### Master Gardeners' Veggies for the Pantry

Community members can take the excess produce from their gardens to one of several drop off locations where it will be picked up by an Extension Master Gardener and delivered to the Emergency Food Pantry.

NDSU Extension Master Gardener Program: [Veggies for the Pantry](#)

## **Local Organizations**

### Cass Clay Food Partners

The Cass Clay Food Partners work to increase access to safe, nutritious, affordable and culturally-based food for all residents through policy, various interventions, programs and events. This organization consists of three branches:

- Cass Clay Food Partners Steering Committee: an advisory committee comprised of key government organizations and food systems experts working to provide direction, organization and management to the Cass Clay Food Partners.
- Cass Clay Food Commission: advises policy makers and elected officials in Cass and Clay Counties on how to assure that residents have access to safe, nutritious, and affordable foods.
- Cass Clay Food Action Network: facilitates connections and leverages capacity with partners to increase access to safe, nutritious and affordable food for all residents of Cass and Clay Counties.

<https://www.cassclayfoodpartners.com>

### Cass/Clay Hunger Coalition

A newly organized group of members from different community organizations, emergency feeding networks and interested community residents working together to find methods to fight hunger and food insecurity in the Cass and Clay Counties. The coalition is open to the public and currently meets at 8:30am the first Tuesday of every month at Fargo Cass Public Health (February 2019).

For more information on how to get involved contact Taylor Syvertson at [tsyvertson@greatplainsfoodank.org](mailto:tsyvertson@greatplainsfoodank.org)

### Prairie Roots Community Fund

The Prairie Roots Community Fund conducts social justice outreach activities and is dedicated to building a healthy community by providing access to natural, organic, and local food. Nutrition interventions in food desert areas include nutrition education and organizing community gardens. The fund also supports doubling of SNAP dollars for fresh, frozen, or canned fruits and veggies and Co-op ownerships to those in need.

<https://www.facebook.com/FargoPRCF>

## **Local Initiatives, Programs, Opportunities**

### Community Gardens

Community gardens provide an opportunity for people without space, gardening resources, or varying gardening knowledge to work together to grow nutritious fruits and vegetables.

Generally, anyone in the community can participate, and gardening opportunities may be either free or for a small cost. The Fargo-Moorhead area offers community gardens where individual plots can be rented as well as a number of “communal” gardening opportunities run by the Growing Together Community Gardens program where participants work in the garden together.

<https://www.facebook.com/GrowingTogetherND>

[https://download.fargond.gov/0/community\\_gardens\\_list\\_2018.pdf](https://download.fargond.gov/0/community_gardens_list_2018.pdf)

### Farmers Markets

Farmers markets provide the opportunity for community members to purchase locally grown, nutritious produce and provide additional locations outside of supermarkets where potentially food insecure residents can access healthy foods. Currently, Hildebrandt Farmers Market, Moorhead Farmers Market, and the Red River Farmers Market accept SNAP benefits.

[https://download.fargond.gov/0/area\\_farmers\\_markets\\_resource\\_2018.pdf](https://download.fargond.gov/0/area_farmers_markets_resource_2018.pdf)

### Little Free Garden

Little Free Gardens are small gardens placed in publically accessible spaces, commonly the front yard. The garden is planted and maintained by the garden owner but the food grown is intended to be harvested and shared with anyone who wants or needs it.

<http://www.littlefreegarden.com>

### Urban Orchard Project

Urban orchards provide access to fresh, locally grown food through plants and trees grown and maintained by homeowners on their privately owned residential property or by organizations on their land. Produce is shared with the community.

- An urban orchard in Moorhead can be found at 802 3rd St. S. in Moorhead.  
<http://www.fmuglyfood.com/urban-orchard>
- Orchard Glen Park (Fargo Parks) can be found at 76th Ave S & Orchard Park Dr in Fargo.  
<https://www.facebook.com/OrchardGlenParkFargo/>

### Heart-n-Soul Community Cafe

The Heart-n-Soul Community Café, Inc. is committed to addressing food insecurities, building community and providing delicious food to nurture the body, heart and soul. All are welcome at the café which provides healthy meals incorporating locally grown, fresh food and operates under a pay-what-you-can model.

<http://heartnsoulcafe.com>

## Double Up Food Bucks

- Moorhead Farmers Market: The market accepts SNAP benefits and Double Bucks up to \$10 through Hunger Solutions Minnesota.
- Red River Farmers Market: SNAP users double their purchasing power up to \$10 when they use their EBT card at the market. Residents can also obtain free rides to the market via the MAT bus during market hours.
- Prairie Roots Co-op: If SNAP recipients spend \$10 at the Co-op, they receive a \$10 voucher to buy fruits and vegetables during a future purchase.

## **Healthcare Programs**

Food insecurity can mask underlying health conditions, cause misdiagnosis, prolong hospital stays and contribute to higher health care costs. When hospitals and health clinics assess patients for food insecurity they identify a vulnerable target population, help reduce the prevalence of food insecurity and its effects on the community, and potentially reduce health care costs by reducing preventable emergency room visits. In the Cass-Clay community, different healthcare facilities have implemented programs to help fight hunger and food insecurity.

- Screening for Food Insecurity in the Clinical Setting  
Using a brief survey, health care providers at Essentia Health identify food insecure patients and connect them with SNAP, food shelves and other food resources. The two question food security screen tool asks:
  - “Within the past 12 months, we worried whether our food would run out before we had money to buy more.”
  - “Within the past 12 months, the food we bought just didn’t last and we didn’t have money to get more.”
- Food Baskets for New Moms  
The Food Baskets program at Sanford Health provides food bags to pregnant women during their doctor appointments. The food bags have enough food to feed an entire family for a day and have been a great incentive for moms to come to their doctor appointments regularly.

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1. Coleman-Jensen A, Gregory CA, Rabbitt MP. Definitions of food security. United States Department of Agriculture Economic Research Service website. <https://www.ers.usda.gov/topics/food-nutrition-assistance/food-security-in-the-us/definitions-of-food-security/>. September 2018. Accessed September 10, 2018.

2. Borger C, Kinne A, O’Leary M, et al. Hunger in America 2014 executive summary. Feeding America website. <http://www.feedingamerica.org/research/hunger-in-america/hia-2014-executive-summary.pdf>. Accessed September 10, 2018.

3. 2018 Hunger in North Dakota [https://www.greatplainsfoodbank.org/ending\\_hunger\\_2\\_0/hunger-in-north-dakota-2018.html](https://www.greatplainsfoodbank.org/ending_hunger_2_0/hunger-in-north-dakota-2018.html). Accessed January 09, 2019

4. Move for Hunger. Hunger and homelessness website. <https://www.moveforhunger.org/hunger-and-homelessness/>. 2018. Accessed September 9, 2018.