California

A Hunger and Poverty Snapshot

Between 2019-2021:
- Food insecurity in California averaged 9.6%.¹
- California’s food insecurity rate was 8% lower than the national average of 10.4%.²
- The poverty rate in California in 2021 (using the Supplemental Poverty Measure) was 13.2%, which was 5.4 percentage points higher than the nation overall (7.8%).³
- California’s poverty rate is high compared to the rest of the nation in large part because of the high cost of housing. Four in 10 low-income people in California are homeless or pay over half their income for rent.⁴
- SNAP, alone, lifted 833,000 people above the poverty line in California, including 408,000 children, per year between 2013 and 2017, on average.⁵

Nutrition and Health

Diabetes and other diet-related health costs in California were estimated to be $39.5 billion⁶ in 2017.

9.8% of the adult population in California has been diagnosed with diabetes in 2020.⁷ This includes:
- 19.4% of seniors.
- 16.9% of Black adults.
- 17.8% of adults with incomes of less than $25,000.

Every year an estimated 231,503⁸ adults in California are diagnosed with diabetes.

Only 13.6% of adults in the state are meeting recommended fruit intake and 11.3% recommended vegetable intake.⁹

Why Bread for the World is Focused on the Farm Bill

The Farm bill is scheduled to be reauthorized in 2023. No legislation has more impact than a farm bill on the US food system and the nation’s ability to provide healthy food at affordable prices to everyone.

Bread for the World’s farm bill priorities include a focus on nutrition, equity, and sustainability. We believe California has a lot to gain from a farm bill legislated with these priorities in mind.
Bread for the World supports strengthening SNAP in California.

Not only is SNAP the flagship food security and nutrition program, it is indispensable to better health outcomes and economic prosperity.

In 2021, 11% of California residents were helped by SNAP. Roughly 1.63 million workers in California live in households that participated in SNAP in 2021. SNAP helps 1 in 11 workers in California put food on the table. 66% of SNAP participants were in families with children, and 19% in families with members who are older adults or are disabled. 70% of all SNAP-eligible people in California participate in the program.

Bread for the World supports farm policies that promote a more equitable food system in California.

The California population is 35.2% white. According to the most recent Census of Agriculture, 80% of farmers and ranchers (producers) in California are white and occupy 85% of all farmland. Hispanic producers represent 12% and occupy 12% of farmland. Asian producers represent 5% and occupy 3% of farmland. Indigenous producers represent <1% and occupy <1% of farmland. Black producers represent <1% and occupy <1% of farmland.

Bread for the World is committed to eradicating food insecurity by building a more sustainable food system in California.

Reducing unnecessary food waste is one way to build a more sustainable food system.

In 2019, 14.7 million tons of surplus food in California went to waste instead of reaching those who needed it, an amount equal to:

- 23.8 billion meals unsold or uneaten.
- $51.7 billion in lost sales.

Annual CO2 emissions produced by 5,990,045 gasoline-powered cars.

Footnotes

2. Bread for the World, based on USDA reporting, See Note 1.
4. https://www.cbpp.org/research/housing/federal-rental-assistance-fact-sheets#CA
7. https://www.americashealthrankings.org/explore/annual/measure/Diabetes/state/CA
9. https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/71/wr/mm7101a1.htm?s_cid=mm7101a1_w#T1_down