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Advocate

January 2015

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Healthy Food Systems

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January: A New Year

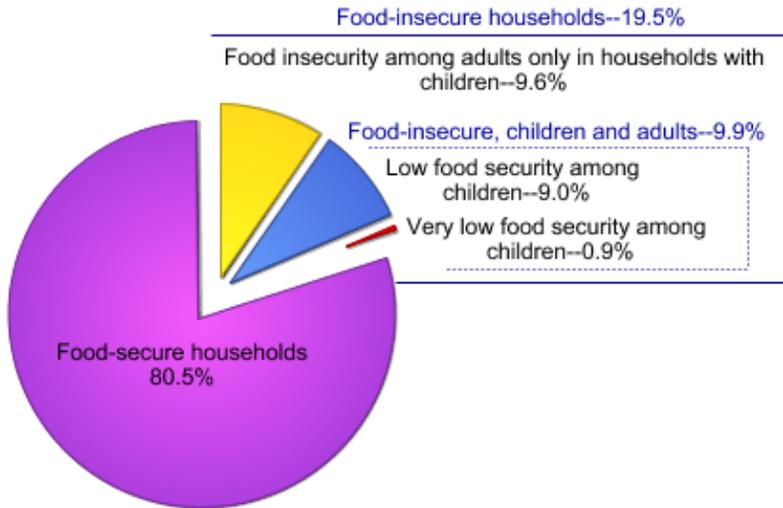
The new year marks a time when people contemplate life changes. After the abundance of holiday food, many people change health habits, including cutting calories. On the other hand, others, as temperatures drop and heating costs rise, face choices between food, fuel or rent.

Special food is essential for our festivals, and food is essential for life. An adult can go for three weeks without eating, but, for children, access to nutritious food is more important and regular, nutritious food vital. A 2010 study found children who had faced one or more episodes of hunger were more likely to have poorer general health. Repeated episodes of hunger were specifically associated with chronic health conditions.

- **Hungry Children and Youth Have More Health Problems, *ScienceDaily*.** <http://bit.ly/tccyadv61>
- **Hunger: Its Impact on Children's Health and Mental Health, *Pediatrics*, Vol. 110, No. 4:** <http://bit.ly/tccyad57>

Food Insecurity

U.S. households with children by food security status of adults and children, 2013



Source: Calculated by ERS using data from the December 2013 Current Population Survey Food Security Supplement.

Hunger in America, which is measured by USDA-funded programs as food insecurity, appears to be improving.

Food insecurity dropped significantly between 2011 and 2013. The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) updated its data on food security, finding 80.5 percent of households with children had access at all times to enough food for an active, healthy life. However, the remainder were either food insecure at some point in the year or had reduced consumption or disrupted eating patterns because of a lack of resources for food.

	All Households	
	Food Insecurity (Low and Very Low*)	Very low* Food Insecurity*
United States	14.6%	5.7%
Tennessee	17.4%	7.0%

Source: USDA; *Both columns contain Very Low household percentage.

- **Household Food Security in the United States in 2013**, U.S. Department of Agriculture: <http://bit.ly/tccyad55>

What the U.S. Pays for with Its Food Dollar

Little Goes to Farmers; Poor Pay Higher Portion of Incomes

On average, U.S. citizens pay a lower percentage of their incomes for food compared to other



countries. However, food in the United States is more expensive than the average costs for the 83 nations the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) monitors. An analysis of U.S. food spending found that the percentage of the incomes of the population's highest and middle income quintiles spent on food dropped between 1984 and 2011, while the portion of the income of the lowest fifth of the population spent on food remained the same at \$1 of every \$6 in income.

- **Cheap: Eats: How American Spends Money on Food, *The Atlantic*:** <http://theatlantic.com/11CW5N8>
- **Food Dollar Series: Quick Facts, USDA:** <http://bit.ly/tccyad60>

Food Loss in the United States

Thirty-one percent of the food available to U.S. consumers in retail stores and restaurants and their homes is wasted. This does not include food considered by producers to be too blemished or irregular to sell or that rots in the field when oversupply causes the cost of harvesting to exceed the value of the produce. The retail and consumer losses in 2010 represented \$1.43 or 1,249 calories per capita daily. Much of the food loss in the United States happens in homes, but the problem contributes to "food deserts," low-income areas served by small markets primarily selling processed foods with long shelf lives rather than fresh produce.

- **Food Loss: Questions About the Amount and Causes Still Remain, USDA:** <http://bit.ly/tccyad56>

End Hunger Network: The Impact of Hunger on Children

The End Hunger Network has a goal: Ending childhood hunger. The organization, founded by actor Jeff Bridges, reported children of all socioeconomic levels are at-risk for poor nutrition. Some families lack money to buy sufficient food. Children in other families consume enough food but have diets high in fat, sugar and sodium that put them at risk for obesity, heart disease and other chronic illnesses. Furthermore, as the number of parents in the workforce increases, according to End Hunger Network, more children are being left to fend for themselves for meals.

Considerable research exists on the link between nutrition and learning from the prenatal through school years and the importance of nutrition education for children. More information on the Network is available.

- **Impact of Hunger on Children, End Hunger Network:** <http://bit.ly/tccyad571>

Food Stamps: Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)

Federal food programs are mostly the domain of the United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Food and Nutrition Service. Perhaps the best known form of public food assistance in the United States is the program originally known as Food Stamps. The program celebrated its 50th anniversary in 2014. While a flashpoint for controversy, it lifted 4.9 million Americans above the poverty line in 2012 and generally serves as a short-term (less than two years) solution for most participants.

One in four members of every major demographic subgroup in the United States surveyed by the Food, Research and Action Center, a primary source of information on food assistance programs, reported in 2014 they or a member of their immediate family had used government food assistance programs in the last couple of years.

- **SNAP Facts Infographic:** <http://bit.ly/tccyad59>
- **Food and Nutrition Services (FNS), USDA:** <http://bit.ly/tccyad72>

School Food

Much research connects nutritional lacks with intellectual lags and has been used by advocates to support school feeding programs. The federal government passed the National School Lunch Act in 1946, and school breakfast began as a pilot program in the Child Nutrition Act of 1966. The programs have helped millions of students.

School Lunch. Sadly, one of the most deleterious effects of poverty on children, one that they learn early, is shame. Many children view participation in school lunch as something only poor children do; other children's lunches are made up of the cheap convenience foods with an abundance of sodium and calories and little nutrition. Thanks to changes in federal legislation, school systems, like the Metro Nashville Public Schools and a number of others across Tennessee, began offering free lunches to all students. Eligibility for the program is based on the percent of students in the school who qualify for free and reduced-price lunches

- **National School Lunch Program, USDA Food and Nutrition Services:** <http://bit.ly/tccyad73>

School Breakfast. Knox County Schools was one of 10 districts that received grant funding to provide universal school breakfast in the classroom. Schools across the nation that have participated in breakfast in the classroom have reduced truancy, fewer behavior problems and better test scores.

- **National School Breakfast Program, USDA Food and Nutrition Services:** <http://bit.ly/tccyad74>

Other Food Assistance Programs. Two other food assistance programs serve children: the Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) program serves at-risk, low-income pregnant, postpartum and breastfeeding women; infants; and children up to age 5., and the Child (and Adult) Care Food Program provides nutritious foods to children in child-care centers and homes and afterschool programs serving low-income communities.

- **Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC), USDA, FNS:** <http://bit.ly/tccy76>
- **Child (and Adult) Care Food Program, USDA, FNS:** <http://bit.ly/tccyad75>
- **Food, Research & Action Center:** <http://bit.ly/tccyad58>

Farm Bill

In 2014, Congress reauthorized the Farm Bill, which includes nutrition assistance programs. The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) funding included \$200 million for job training and \$100 million to increase fruit and vegetable purchases. The bill also included funds to help young farmers and encourage “specialty food” (fruits and vegetables) growth.

- FRAC Overview of 2014 Farm Bill: <http://bit.ly/1ANyYAj>
- USDA 2014 Farm Bill Implementation: <http://bit.ly/tccyad71>

Second Look Commission Report

The Second Look Commission (SLC), created to improve the state’s child abuse prevention efforts by evaluating cases of repeat abuse, released its annual report in December. Stakeholders from all groups involved in child protective services compose the SLC, which is staffed by TCCY’s Craig Hargrow. The SLC evaluates some of the worst cases of abuse, including five fatalities last year.

The report recommends improving coordination with and among the state’s medical examiners and more attention to substance-abuse matters.

- *Second Look Commission 2014 Annual Report*, Tennessee Commission on Children and Youth: <http://www.tn.gov/tccy/slc-areport14.pdf>

Legislature Goes Back to Work

The Tennessee General Assembly returned to work at noon on January 13 for the first year of its two-year session. Through the political process, the citizens of Tennessee have hired 132 people to represent them in the 109th Legislature: 99 members of the House, all of whom were elected or re-elected in November 2014; and 33 Senators, half of whom won election or re-election in 2014.

Governor Haslam has requested a special session beginning on Feb. 2 to consider his “Insure Tennessee” health care proposal to fill in gaps in Tennessee’s health care systems. TCCY urges advocates to support this plan.

- TCCY Recommendations on Insure Tennessee: <http://www.tn.gov/tccy/leg-IT-15.pdf>

In its role as an advocate for children, TCCY also monitors and reports on related legislation.

- TCCY Legislative Updates: <http://www.tn.gov/tccy/legislat.shtml>
- Sign Up for TCCY Updates and Newsletters: <http://www.tn.gov/tccy/listserv.shtml>

Updates

In December, Gov. Haslam named Candice McQueen as commissioner of the Tennessee Department of Education. McQueen was dean of the Lipscomb University College of Education for six years and oversaw growth in the size of the program. Its secondary education program was named number two in the nation and number one in the South by the National Council on Teacher Quality last year. TCCY looks forward to working with Commissioner McQueen.

Mark Your Calendar

Feb. 4, 9 a.m.-2 p.m., **Disability Day on the Hill**, Tennessee Disability Coalition, 301 Sixth Ave. North, Nashville. Contact ddh@tndisability.org or (615) 383-9442.

Feb. 10, **Rural Health Association of Tennessee Hill Day 2015**. Info: susan@rhat.org.

Feb 15, 12 a.m., **End of Affordable Health Care Open Enrollment for 2015**. Info: www.healthcare.gov.

Feb. 20, 12:30-3:30 p.m., **Mid-Cumberland Council on Children and Youth Wilson County Lunch and Learn**, TBA.

March 2, **Mid-Cumberland Council on Children and Youth Legislative Update**, Downtown Nashville Public Library, 615 Church Street.

March 8-10, **Tennessee Conference on Volunteerism and Service-Learning**, Cool Springs Marriott, Franklin. More information at www.tn.gov/finance/adm/vt/TCVSL.shtml or volunteer.tennessee@tn.gov.

March 10-11, **Children's Advocacy Days**, War Memorial Auditorium, Nashville. TBA. Contact (615) 741-2633 or (615) 532-1570. Register at <https://cad2015.eventbrite.com>.

March 18, **Mental Health Day on the Hill**, War Memorial Auditorium. Sponsored by Tennessee Coalition for Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services. Contact tstarling@mhamt.org.

March 30-April 1, **102 Annual Tennessee Conference on Social Welfare**, Franklin Marriott Cool Springs. Contact tlawson@tcsww.org for more information.

In the News

The (Nashville) Tennessean, "Haslam calls special session for Insure Tennessee," <http://tnne.ws/1A6lmux>.

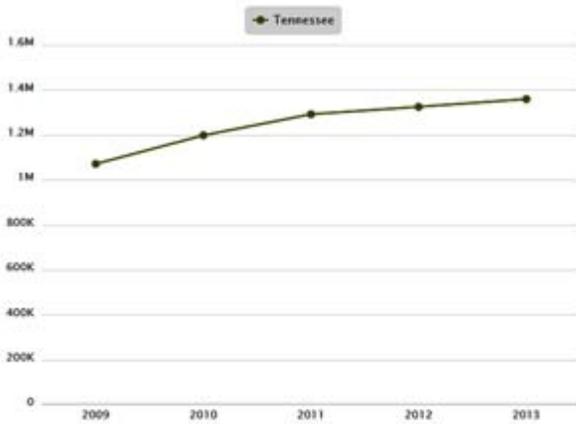
The (Nashville) Tennessean, "Gov. Haslam urges extension of federal health plan for kids," <http://bit.ly/tccyad69>.

Research Information

One in Four Americans Volunteered in 2013, Report Finds, Philanthropy News Digest, Dec. 28, 2014
<http://bit.ly/tccyad67>.

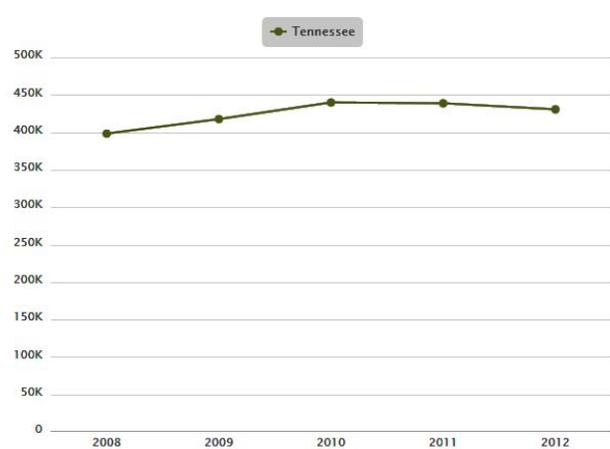
Analysis of 2015 Premium Changes in the Affordable Care Act's Health Insurance Marketplaces, Kaiser Family Foundation, <http://bit.ly/tccyad70>.

Tennessee KIDS COUNT Facts



PARTICIPANTS IN THE SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (SNAP) (NUMBER)

Tennessee Commission on Children and Youth
KIDS COUNT Data Center, datacenter.kidscount.org
A project of the Annie E. Casey Foundation



FREE/REDUCED-PRICE SCHOOL LUNCH PROGRAM (NUMBER)

Tennessee Commission on Children and Youth
KIDS COUNT Data Center, datacenter.kidscount.org
A project of the Annie E. Casey Foundation

No person shall on the grounds of race, color, national origin, sex, age, religion, disability, or ability to pay, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be otherwise subjected to discrimination under any program or activity operated, funded, or overseen by the Tennessee Commission on Children and Youth (TCCY). It is the intent of TCCY to bind all agencies, organizations, or governmental units operating under its jurisdiction and control to fully comply with and abide by the spirit and intent of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

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