



FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

FOOD INSECURITY



Food insecurity: the state of being without reliable access to a sufficient quantity of affordable, nutritious food.

Food insecurity is often thought of as synonymous to hunger. Hunger is a personal, physical sensation of discomfort, while food insecurity refers to a lack of available financial resources for food. When we think of people being hungry, we often think of developing nations, or inner-city children living in poverty, but many are also older adults on limited incomes. Some people face difficult decisions about whether to pay for food or medication or home health care.

The situation may develop over time as the gap between income and expenses grows. A person may no longer be able to continue to work. There may be a transition from a two-income to single income (or Social Security benefit) household. Taxes increase or a major home repair is needed. Health changes and more prescriptions are needed to manage chronic health conditions. Food costs may also increase when a person requires a special diet. Some people are also supporting children or grandchildren on their limited incomes.

Feeding America® reports that more than 5 million seniors face hunger in our country. The rate of hunger among people age 60+ increased by 53% since 2001, and is expected to grow by another 50% by 2025 as the Baby Boomer population ages into this demographic.

PSRC social service staff can help someone facing food insecurity. We can help people sign up for SNAP (food stamps), although funding has been reduced so the amount of benefit has decreased while food costs increase. We also help people enroll in programs to help pay their other expenses, such as ways to pay for medications so their funds are available for food. We help people connect with the food pantry at Arm & Arm and with meal programs, including the Baptist Church, Cornerstone Kitchen, and One Table Café.

Most significantly, Princeton, PSRC, and the County Office on Aging have re-opened the Mercer County Nutrition Program for the Elderly site at PSRC. It runs from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Monday through Friday for social interaction and lunch. A participant must register with the Nutrition Program Site Manager and participate in the requirements

of the program. We hope that in addition to activities planned by the program, participants will attend the many activities that PSRC offers in the mornings and early afternoons. More information is available at 609.989.6650 or at PSRC. The Nutrition program is funded by the Federal Older Americans Act and is available in all counties throughout the U.S. There are sites in most senior centers in Mercer County.

If you know an older adult who faces food insecurity, please connect them with PSRC and help us eliminate food insecurity in Princeton. Younger people should connect with the Princeton Human Services Department (609.688.2055).

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