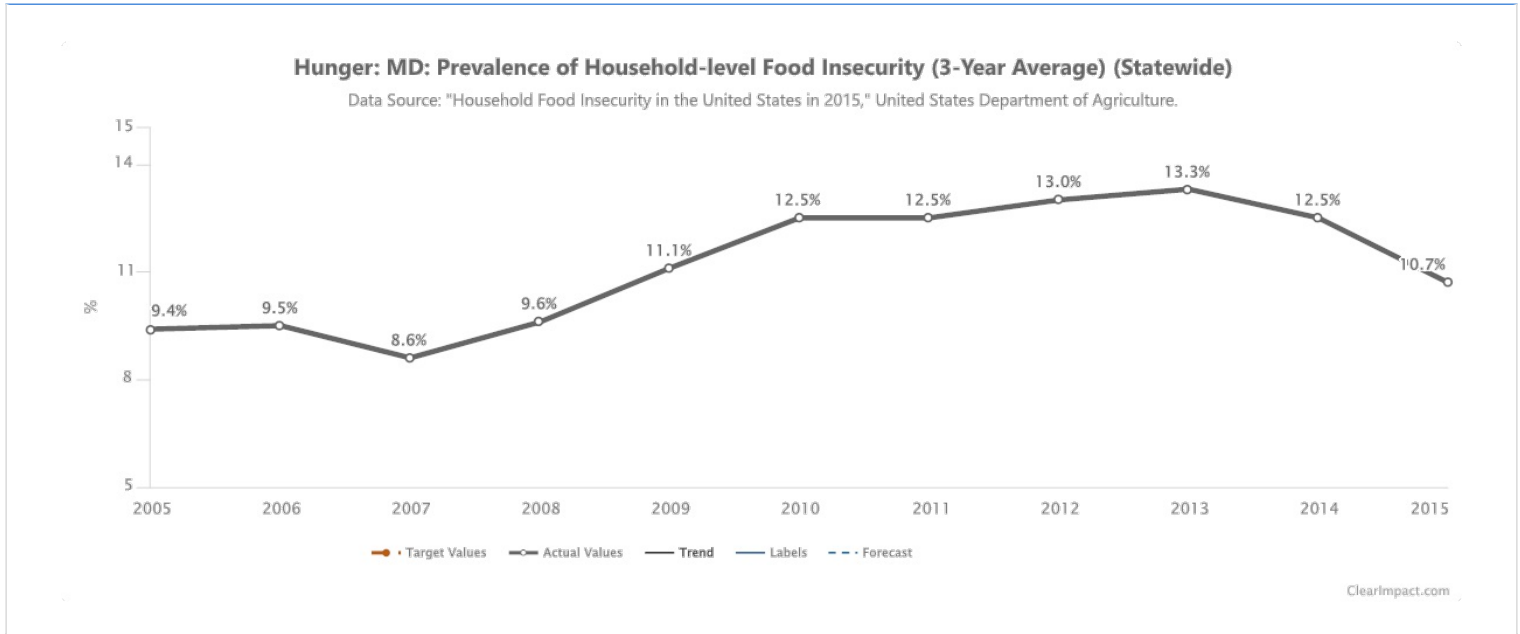


R Families are Safe and Economically Stable (Statewide)

I Hunger: MD: Prevalence of Household-level Food Insecurity (3-Year Average) (Statewide)



Story Behind the Curve

More than one in ten (10.7%) Maryland households lack consistent access to the food and nutrition necessary to lead healthy, active lives. For some, the high costs of housing, transportation, health care, and other necessities combined with low incomes limit the resources available to keep food on the table. In other cases, even when families have the resources, they are often unable to provide nutritious food for their children due to a lack of access to fresh produce in many of the poorest neighborhoods. Additionally, while programs exist to offer help to families, many families are unaware of the programs or their eligibility.

What Works

Over the last several years, Maryland has made significant progress in connecting eligible families to existing nutrition programs and resources.

From the 2014-15 to the 2015-16 school year, Maryland increased overall breakfast participation by 5.6% and connected more than 8,600 additional low-income children to breakfast each day. In addition, during the 2015-2016 school year, [Maryland had the fourth-highest school breakfast](#)

[participation rate among all 50 states](#), a marked improvement from only five years prior, when Maryland's participation ranked only 24th. The increased participation is due, at least in part, to schools implementing alternative delivery models and the success of the Maryland Meals for Achievement (MMFA) program.

MMFA is a State-funded in-classroom breakfast program that provides breakfast to every student at no cost at select low-income schools. This program removes common barriers to participation like stigma and transportation concerns by moving meal service out of the cafeteria and making it accessible to all students in the classroom. As a result, all students at participating low-income schools can begin the school day ready to learn with a nutritious school breakfast. During the 2015-16 school year 471 schools participated in Maryland Meals for Achievement.

Local Highlight

Community Eligibility Provision

The Community Eligibility Provision is a new option that allows schools with high percentages of low-income children to provide free breakfast and lunch to all students. Included in the federal Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010, community eligibility simplifies administrative processes by removing the need for individual free and reduced-price meal applications, which can be confusing for families and burdensome for schools to collect and process. Instead, schools are reimbursed for school meals through a formula based on the number of "identified students" that are in foster care or Head Start, are homeless, migrant or living in households that receive SNAP (food stamps), TANF cash assistance or the Food Distribution on Indian Reservation benefits.

During the 2014-2015 school year, over 374 schools were eligible to participate, yet only 23 schools elected to participate in community eligibility. In 2015, as a result of the passage of the Hunger-Free Schools Act of 2015, which increased access to community eligibility, the number of participating schools increased to 227. The Community Eligibility Provision is utilized in 8 counties, including Baltimore City and Somerset County, where the Provision has been implemented district-wide.

Data Discussion

The percent of families who experience a lack of access, at times, to enough food for an active, healthy life for all household members; limited or uncertain availability of nutritionally adequate foods.