

Executive Summary

Map the Meal Gap – ZIP code map and analysis

Research Goal

Map the Meal Gap (MMG) is a validated data analysis tool, created by Dr. Craig Gundersen and Feeding America, to assess food insecurity rates by county. Three Square's local MMG map uses this methodology to drill down by ZIP code within the greater Las Vegas valley to report on food insecurity at the neighborhood level.

MMG mapping at a local level supports informed decision-making by Three Square and our network of 160+ Agency Partners, as well as decisions made by local, county and state agencies and their leaders. Leaders glean insight from the maps on their districts and the state of the valley as a broader metropolitan community, interconnected and inter-dependent on the health and wellbeing of each neighbor in order to reduce impacts of food insecurity on children, seniors, and adults.

Research Methodology

Feeding America uses a rigorous scientific process to determine the food insecurity rate for every county in the United States. Three Square, with the support of Feeding America and Dr. Craig Gundersen, applied the same formula to data collected for 66 ZIP codes in Clark County which include metropolitan areas of unincorporated Clark County, the City of Las Vegas, City of Henderson, City of North Las Vegas and the City of Boulder City. The formula used to determine food insecurity percentages include data from American Communities Survey, Nielsen's consumer research, Applied Analysis, and the United States Department of Agriculture. Data points collected and reported on by these groups include: median household income, poverty rates, housing, and race/ethnicity. These characteristics are weighted by risk associated with food insecure households according to published literature. More information about the research methodology for Map the Meal Gap can be reviewed online at: <http://map.feedingamerica.org/>

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Three Square has been at the forefront of the Feeding America network, mapping food insecurity on a local level, for six years. All six of Three Square's local MMG maps can be accessed through our website: <http://www.threesquare.org/learn-about-hunger/research>

On average, food insecurity robs nearly 40 million US residents of 5.5 meals per week on average. Food budgets are the most flexible spending a struggling household may have; millions in this great country must decide between an adequate, healthy diet, and their rent/mortgage, healthcare, transportation, and electricity. In Southern Nevada, hunger is present all countries, in neighborhoods. Hunger rates are higher in our rural communities, though the greatest number of food insecure individuals live in the greater Las Vegas valley, hence the neighborhood maps. Clark County has a meal gap of 57 million meals above and beyond the meals provided by government and charitable entities. In 2014, Three Square provided 28 million meals to individuals and families through its network of 160+ Agency Partners.

Charity alone cannot solve hunger. Charitable enterprises and government entities must work together, with the business community, systems of education, and elected leaders if we are to see an end to hunger. ZIP code maps are used to drive both policy and programmatic decisions around

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government and charitable responses to hunger in Southern Nevada. Several local, county and state agencies and non-profit organizations rely on the ZIP code maps to measure action equal to hunger’s burden on our systems of education, public health, social services and criminal justice.

Research Update 2015 results

- In Three Square’s six years mapping food insecurity, this is the first year that all ZIP codes on the map in the greater Las Vegas valley have at least 10% food insecurity.
- The average food insecurity rate across Clark County is about 15.6 percent. About one out of every six people in Clark County is food insecure. This represents about 297,000 people.
- Changes in food insecurity rates by ZIP code within the last year have fluctuated by less than four percent in either direction, with nearly two-thirds of ZIP codes experiencing a change of less than one percent in either direction. This means that while the economy demonstrates improvement overall, families continue to struggle long after the recession has ended. Under-employment, lower annual median incomes, and higher costs of food contribute to this stagnation for hundreds of thousands of Southern Nevadans.
- The five ZIP codes with the highest food insecurity rates in 2015 are: 89106 (27.5%), 89101 (23.2%), 89169 (22.0%), 89029 (21.9%), and 89115 (21.5%). Food insecurity rates in these areas have remained high since 2012, when the unemployment rate began to decline again.

Fluctuations year over year are expected based on local economic conditions. Of the 66 ZIP codes tracked for the Southern Nevada area, Table A highlights the ZIP codes with the dramatic changes from last year to this year. Table B reflects the five ZIP codes with the highest rates of food insecurity over the last three years, since unemployment has been lower than 10% in Nevada.

Table A: Southern Nevada ZIP Codes with Greatest Changes in Food Insecurity from 2014 to 2015

Top 5 ZIP Codes with Reduced Food Insecurity		Top 5 ZIP Codes with Increased Food Insecurity	
<i>Zip Code (Area)</i>	<i>% Change from 2014</i>	<i>Zip Code (Area)</i>	<i>% Change from 2014</i>
89030 (North Las Vegas)	-3.5	89046 (Searchlight)	3.4
89101 (Las Vegas)	-3.2	89054 (Sloan)	3.0
89115 (North Las Vegas)	-2.8	89109 (Winchester)	2.3
89104 (Las Vegas)	-2.3	89134 (Summerlin)	2.0
89110 (Las Vegas)	-2.2	89021 (Logandale), 89005 (Boulder City)	1.9

Table B: Southern Nevada ZIP Codes with the Highest Food Insecurity

<i>Zip Code (Area)</i>	<i>% Food Insecurity</i>
89106 (Las Vegas)	27.5
89101 (Las Vegas)	23.2
89169 (Las Vegas)	22.0
89029 (Laughlin)	21.9
89115 (North Las Vegas)	21.5