

# Nevada Council on Food Security

## *2020 Annual Report*



**Nevada Department of  
Health and Human Services**

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Background	3
Food Insecurity in Nevada	4
<i>Food Insecurity in Nevada: Pre-COVID 19</i>	4
<i>Food Insecurity in Nevada: Post-COVID 19</i>	5
Nevada CFS: 2020 Accomplishments	8
<i>LEAD</i>	8
<i>FEED</i>	8
<i>GROW</i>	9
<i>DATA</i>	9
Future Focus	10

# BACKGROUND

In 2012, the Nevada Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) Grants Management Unit (GMU) conducted a Community Needs Assessment. The assessment identified food insecurity as a priority public health issue for Nevada. At the time, one (1) in six (6) Nevada households were food insecure. In 2013, the GMU implemented a strategic planning process to address food insecurity in Nevada. Four (4) workgroups were created to address specific components of food insecurity: LEAD, FEED, GROW, and REACH. Goals and activities were developed under each component, comprising the 2013 *Food Security in Nevada: Nevada's Plan for Action* (i.e. the Food Security Plan). Following the completion of the Food Security Plan, Governor Brian Sandoval issued Executive Order 2014-03 on February 12, 2014, establishing the CFS to implement the goals of the Food Security Plan and effectively improve the quality of life and health of Nevadans by increasing food security throughout the State. In 2017, the CFS updated the Food Security Plan. The updated themes and objectives are:

## LEAD

*Goal 1: Align and enhance collaboration efforts of state and non-state agencies to strengthen statewide food security strategies.*

*Goal 2: Identify and support state and local policies that increase food security in Nevada.*

## FEED

*Goal 1: Support strategies that increase participation in state/federal nutrition programs.*

*Goal 2: Support client-centered strategies that increase access to nutrition programs and resources that address determinants of hunger.*

## GROW

*Goal 1: Support initiatives to strengthen Nevada's food system and increase access to local foods.*

## DATA

*Goal 1: Establish evaluation and reporting processes to enhance data collection to drive future strategies and track progress in improving food security in Nevada.*

The CFS was codified in the 80<sup>th</sup> Nevada Legislative Session, per [Senate Bill 178](#) (SB178), which also created the DHHS Food For People, Not Landfills Program (FFPNL) to increase food security through food waste reduction. Since its inception, the CFS has provided a platform for stakeholders and subject-matter experts to make recommendations to state agencies on addressing food insecurity in Nevada and has enhanced connectivity among food security initiatives and partners. Over the past six (6) years, the CFS has aimed to fight hunger among Nevada's most vulnerable populations, including children and older Nevadans.

This report provides data on the current state of food insecurity in Nevada, including the impact of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) on Nevada food insecurity, the accomplishments of the CFS throughout 2020, and the future focus of the CFS for 2021.

# FOOD INSECURITY IN NEVADA

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) defines food insecurity as households that are uncertain they will have, or be able to acquire, enough food to meet the needs of household members due to insufficient resources for food. Food insecurity is a significant public health concern associated with adverse health outcomes and a poor quality of life, including chronic diseases and mental health issues.<sup>1,2</sup> In addition, food insecure individuals often lack access to nutrition-dense foods, limiting their ability to maintain healthy eating behaviors and manage their chronic disease(s). While food insecurity may be harmful to individuals of all ages, it can be especially devastating to children and older adults. Food insecure children are more likely to repeat a grade in elementary school, experience developmental impairments in areas like language and motor skills, and have more social and behavioral problems.<sup>3</sup>

The older adult population faces unique food security challenges compared to other age groups. Older Nevadans living at home are at an increased risk of hunger due to poor health conditions; lack of reliable social support and transportation; low fixed incomes; and disability or functional limitations which impact their ability to obtain or prepare food. Having a lower income is a known cause of food insecurity that impacts older adults who have limited financial resources available for purchasing food; often, money goes toward cheaper and less nutritious foods so other necessary bills can be paid, such as housing costs, utilities, and prescriptions.<sup>4</sup>

## Food Insecurity in Nevada: Pre-COVID 19

Since the end of the Great Recession, Nevada has made significant strides in addressing food insecurity. Through the development of *Food Security in Nevada: Nevada's Plan for Action* in 2013, the creation of the Office of Food Security (OFS) within Nevada DHHS, the creation of the CFS via Executive Order, and codifying the CFS into state law in the 80th Legislative Session in 2019, Nevada has demonstrated its dedication to providing a platform for enhancing collaborative efforts throughout the food security network and implementing policies supporting food security statewide. In 2016, Nevada was one (1) of 16 states to experience a significant decrease in food insecurity; however, from 2016-2019, one (1) in eight (8) Nevadans remained food insecure.<sup>5,6</sup> Nationally, in 2018, the prevalence of household food insecurity declined for the first time to the pre-recession (2007) level of 11.1%.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.ers.usda.gov/webdocs/publications/84467/err-235.pdf?v=42942>

<sup>2</sup> <https://academic.oup.com/jn/article/145/3/622/4743717>

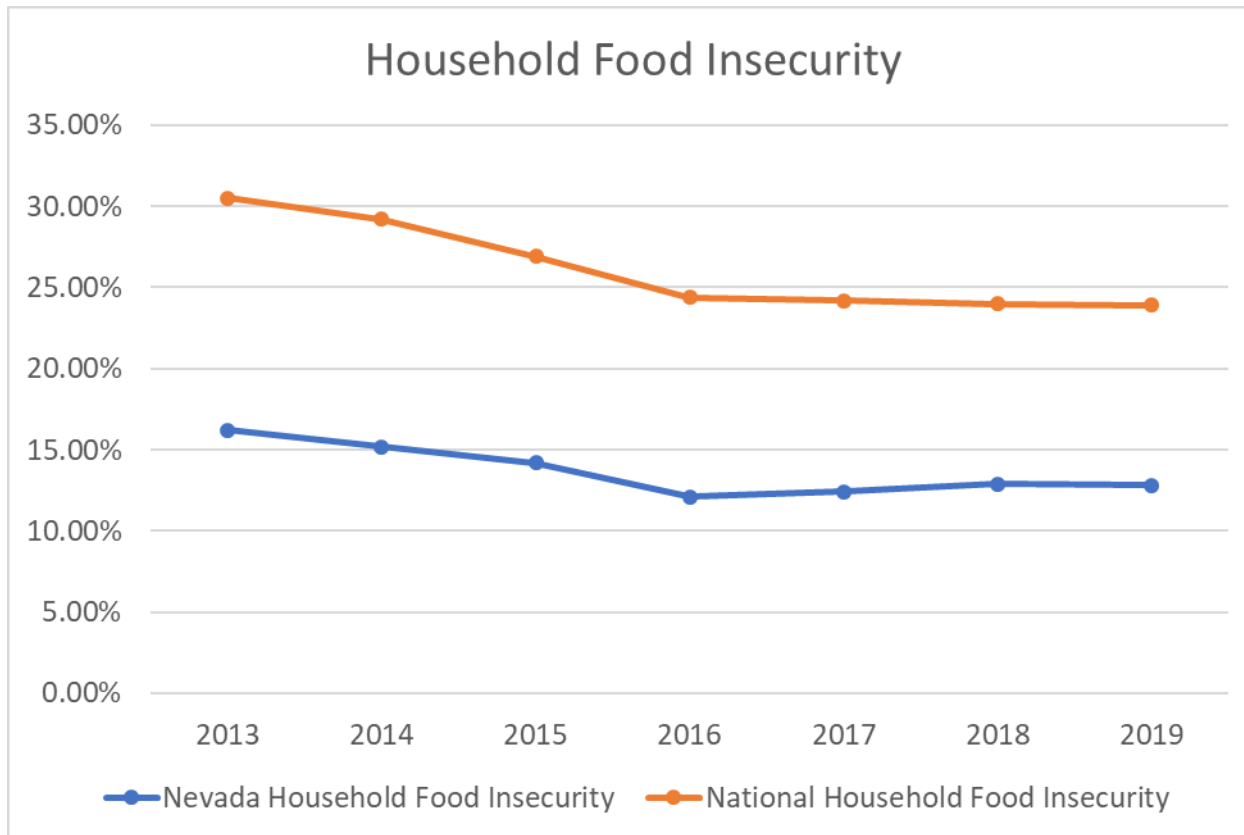
<sup>3</sup> <https://www.feedingamerica.org/hunger-in-america/child-hunger-facts>

<sup>4</sup> Nevada Office of Food Security, Nutrition Programs for Older Nevadans and Preliminary Recommendations, 2018

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.ers.usda.gov/webdocs/publications/84973/err-237.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.ers.usda.gov/webdocs/publications/99282/err-275.pdf?v=5988.4>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.ers.usda.gov/webdocs/publications/94849/err-270.pdf?v=1893.2>



### Food Insecurity in Nevada: Post-COVID 19

The novel coronavirus (COVID-19) has reversed Nevada's progress in addressing food insecurity. A recent Feeding America report, *The Impact of the Coronavirus on Local Food Insecurity*, projects Nevada among the top three (3) states nationally for highest percent change in food insecurity between 2018 and 2020 with a 50% increase (12.8% in 2018 vs. 19.2% in 2020). The same report projects Nevada to be fifth among the top ten (10) states with the highest rates of projected food insecurity in 2020 compared to 2018. The ranking closely parallels 2018 rankings with the exception of Nevada, which moved from 20<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> due to consistently high unemployment rates, ranking highest in the country. Nevada is also tied with Louisiana for ranking first among states with the highest rates of projected child food insecurity in 2020 compared to 2018 (19.5% in 2018 vs. 32.2% in 2020) and ranks among the top five (5) states with the highest projected percent change in the childhood food insecurity rate between 2018 and 2020, with a projected 65% increase.

According to data released by Feeding America, the projected increases in Nevada counties for the overall food insecurity rate range from 16% (in Esmeralda and Mineral Counties) to 57% (in Clark County). The top five (5) counties projected to experience the highest percent increase in overall food

insecurity include: Clark County (57%), Washoe County (39%), Storey County (38%), Douglas County (37%), and Elko County (32%).<sup>8</sup> These counties are highlighted in grey within the table below.

**Table 1: Projected Overall Food Insecurity Rate per Nevada County**

County	2018 Overall Food Insecurity	Projected 2020 Overall Food Insecurity	Projected Overall Food Insecurity % Increase (2018 v. 2020)
Carson City	14.7%	19.1%	29%
Churchill County	12.6%	15.5%	23%
Clark County	12.8%	20.1%	57%
Douglas County	11.4%	15.6%	37%
Elko County	10%	13.2%	32%
Esmeralda County	12.7%	14.8%	16%
Eureka County	10.9%	12.9%	18%
Humboldt County	9.9%	12.4%	26%
Lander County	9.8%	12.1%	24%
Lincoln County	12.2%	14.6%	20%
Lyon County	13.2%	17.2%	31%
Mineral County	17.2%	20%	16%
Nye County	16.2%	20.6%	27%
Pershing County	12.2%	14.6%	20%
Storey County	11.9%	16.4%	38%
Washoe County	11.2%	15.6%	39%
White Pine County	11.6%	13.7%	19%

The projected increases in Nevada counties for the childhood food insecurity rate range from 17% (Mineral County) to 76% (Clark County). The top five (5) counties projected to experience the highest percent increase in overall childhood food insecurity include: Clark County (76%), Washoe County (51%), Douglas County (43%), Storey County (39%), and Lyon County (38%).<sup>8</sup> These counties are highlighted in blue in the table below.

**Table 2: Projected Child Food Insecurity Rate per Nevada County**

County	2018 Child Food Insecurity	Projected 2020 Child Food Insecurity	Projected Child Food Insecurity % Increase (2018 v. 2020)
Carson City	22.9%	31.4%	37%
Churchill County	18.1%	23.5%	30%
Clark County	19.3%	33.8%	76%
Douglas County	19.1%	27.3%	43%
Elko County	16.9%	23.1%	36%
Esmeralda County	19.3%	23.1%	20%
Eureka County	20.3%	23.9%	18%
Humboldt County	15.8%	20.6%	30%

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.feedingamericaaction.org/the-impact-of-coronavirus-on-food-insecurity/>

<b>Lander County</b>	18.8%	23.1%	23%
<b>Lincoln County</b>	21.5%	26.2%	21%
<b>Lyon County</b>	21.1%	29.1%	38%
<b>Mineral County</b>	31.3%	36.7%	17%
<b>Nye County</b>	25.9%	34.5%	33%
<b>Pershing County</b>	20.9%	25.4%	22%
<b>Storey County</b>	23%	31.9%	39%
<b>Washoe County</b>	11.2%	17.4%	51%
<b>White Pine County</b>	11.6%	18.4%	21%

To supplement Feeding America’s findings, DPBH OFS collaborated with Winter Tucker, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Foundation Community Health Program Manager, to develop a food security report series to assess the impact of COVID-19 on food insecurity in Nevada and the state’s food insecurity network of partners. There are two (2) on-going reports included within the series:

- *Combatting the Statewide Hunger Crisis*
- *Hunger Among Older Nevadans Amidst the COVID-19 Pandemic*

The series provides a comprehensive summary of COVID-19 response efforts and service data from select food security partners. The reports summarize all waivers and rule flexibilities implemented for federal nutrition programs and include data and information on federal nutrition programs and food bank distributions. The series of reports can be found, and will continue to be posted, on the [OFS website](#). Reporting and data tracking will continue through April 2021, and a comprehensive annual summary will be released in Summer 2021. The results will be used to assess statewide food insecurity response efforts to identify best practices and service opportunity gaps and inform future CFS priority areas.

# NEVADA CFS: 2020 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The CFS met three (3) times throughout 2020. The two (2) CFS Subcommittees, Policy and FFPNL, met an additional ten (10) times. Despite barriers related to COVID-19, the CFS worked on a number of initiatives outlined in *Food Security in Nevada: Nevada's Plan for Action* and made significant progress on the planning and implementation of the new FFPNL Program. The Council's accomplishments are outlined below, per Food Security Plan focus/core area.

## LEAD

### ***Policy Subcommittee***

During the July 17, 2019 CFS meeting, the CFS Policy Subcommittee was reestablished. The CFS Policy Subcommittee is tasked with researching, assessing, and developing a menu of policy recommendations related to food insecurity in Nevada. The Subcommittee was comprised of members from the public sector and the private non-profit sector, including representatives of the Nevada Department of Agriculture (NDA), Food Bank of Northern Nevada (FBNN), Three Square Food Bank, Catholic Charities of Southern Nevada (CCSN), and Helping Hands of Vegas Valley (HHOVV). The Policy Subcommittee met six (6) times between October 2019 and September 2020 to discuss and identify State and Administrative policy recommendations. At the October 6, 2020 CFS meeting, the Policy Subcommittee presented three (3) policy recommendations for the consideration of the full Council, all of which would require action by the Nevada Legislature:

1. Establish a State Food Purchasing Program.
2. Remove requirements restricting individuals committed of a drug felony within the past 20 years from receiving the benefits of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).
3. Increase home-delivered meal (HDM) program reimbursement.

The CFS voted in support of these three (3) policies as effective strategies for addressing food insecurity in Nevada. An Executive Summary of each policy and influencing factors considered while developing the State Legislative policy recommendations can be found [here](#).

### ***Commission on Aging (CoA)/CFS Workgroup***

In Fall 2018, the Nevada CoA developed a workgroup comprised of two (2) CoA members and two (2) CFS members to enhance collaboration and align efforts around CoA and CFS initiatives addressing hunger and nutrition among older Nevadans. The CoA/CFS workgroup met three (3) times in 2020 and will meet monthly throughout 2021 to continue discussions around areas for potential collaboration.

## FEED

### ***Commission on Aging/Council on Food Security Workgroup***

See summary above.



### ***Food for People not Landfills (FFPNL) Program***

Per SB178, the FFPNL Program was established within DHHS to increase food security and decrease food waste by redirecting excess consumable food to vulnerable, food insecure communities. To guide the creation of the FFPNL Program, including the development of the program's goals and objectives, the FFPNL Subcommittee was established at the July 2019 CFS meeting. The FFPNL Subcommittee is comprised of 11 members, including both voting and ex-officio members. Membership includes representation from Three Square Food Bank, the FBNN, NDA, HHOVV, Catholic Charities of Northern Nevada, the Retail Association of Nevada (RAN), the University of Nevada Cooperative Extension, and the Nevada Division of Welfare and Supportive Services (DWSS). The FFPNL Subcommittee met six (6) times throughout 2020 and made significant progress, a summary of which can be found in the 2020 FFPNL Annual Report on the [OFS website](#). Progress will continue into 2021 through identification of potential opportunity gaps to ensure all food donation data is captured to develop a comprehensive, educated baseline measure and five-year goal; development of a food donor toolkit; and finalization of the FFPNL program seal.

## **GROW**

### ***FFPNL Program***

See summary above.

## **DATA**

### ***Research and Analysis Project***

Following the issuance of the 2017 DHHS OFS Report, *Nutrition Programs for Older Nevadans and Preliminary Recommendations*, the CFS motioned for the creation of a Research and Analysis Project at the CFS November 2018 meeting to further assess current available services and unmet needs among Nevada's senior population. To gain a better understanding of the gaps in nutrition and supportive services for this population, the project team developed and issued a survey to 175 private and public agencies statewide serving Nevada's senior population. The survey was issued in August 2019 through various channels including by e-mail, telephone, and US mail. A total of 78 surveys were returned, yielding a 45% response rate. After reviewing the survey results, the project team proposed next steps to the CFS, including hosting a summit to provide networking opportunities for food security partners serving older adults. Despite the challenges related to COVID-19, including social distancing guidelines and restrictions on large group gatherings, the project team successfully planned and implemented the virtual Nevada Senior Services Summit on September 29, 2020. The purpose of the Summit was to share information with Nevada Senior Service providers to improve service efficiency, networking, and capacity. The Summit included presentations on data tracking systems and geographic information system (GIS) mapping; principles of collaboration and engagement; hospital discharge planning support, needs, and current gaps; State of Nevada funding opportunities; food insecurity in Northern Nevada; and client choice food distribution models. There were 111 registrants representing participation from 82 different agencies and organizations.

## FUTURE FOCUS

Throughout 2021, the CFS will continue to bring together statewide, cross-sector partners to align efforts, enhance collaboration, and strategize how best to address food insecurity throughout - and in the aftermath of - the COVID-19 pandemic. The CFS will also support food security-related policies in the 81<sup>st</sup> Nevada Legislative Session, discuss and coordinate matters related to the federal stimulus packages and Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) funding, and will continue the work of developing and implementing the FFPNL Program. Additionally, the CFS will begin planning a revision of the 2017 Food Security Plan in July 2021, with an anticipated completion in January 2022. The revised plan will be updated to ensure CFS goals are measurable, align and incorporate local-level needs and priorities, and consider social determinants of health and racial equity.