

Poinsett County, AR

Socioeconomic Profile

Population:	22,583 people
Demographics:	90% White 7% African American
Gender:	49% Male 51% Female
Median Income:	\$31,743
Families below Poverty line:	26.8%



Federal Food Assistance Programs

SNAP Participation:	6,148 people
School Lunch Program:	4,227 children
Emergency Food Assistance: (pantries, soup kitchens, etc.)	3 locations
Meals on Wheels:	0 locations

Federal Assistance Offices

DHS Office (for SNAP):	Harrisburg, AR
Health Clinics (for WIC):	Harrisburg, AR Marked, Tree, AR Trumann, AR

Traditional Food Sources

Supermarkets/Groceries:	9 locations
Convenience/Gas stations:	15 locations

Alternative Food Sources

Farmers' Markets:	Harrisburg (seasonal)
CSAs:	Whitton Farms
Farm Co-Ops:	0 locations

Definitions

Food security: the access by all people at all times to enough food for an active, healthy life.

Food insecurity/food hardship rate: an economic and social condition (measured by household) in which people do not have access at all times to enough food for an active, healthy life.

Food insecure households: Households that, at some point during the last year, were unable or uncertain about being able to get enough food to meet basic needs.

Community food security: a set of community-based strategies to improve access, supply, and responses to food resources and needs.

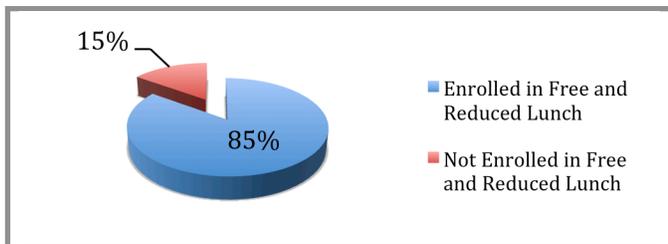
Community Food Insecurity in Poinsett County

Poinsett County has multiple risk factors for high levels of community food insecurity. Risk factors for food insecurity include any factors that affect household resources and the ability of households to acquire food. First, Poinsett County belongs to a larger congressional district whose food hardship rate is 38th highest out of all 436 congressional districts in the United States. More specifically for Poinsett County, risk factors for community food insecurity include the following:

- **Lack or inaccessibility of food markets**
- **Poor quantity or quality of food**
- **Lack or inaccessibility of other food resources (e.g. food assistance, alternative food sources)**
- **Poverty or lack of non-monetary household resources (e.g. time, information, health)**

Residents of Poinsett County do not have food resources in their local communities that combine affordability with good quality and good variety. There are not many grocery-shopping options within the county. This leads to a lack of competition and higher prices among the smaller stores. It appears that most shopping occurs within Poinsett County. By keeping money in the county, there may be opportunities for investing in more food resources inside

Children in Poinsett County (2012)



Furthermore, a majority of Poinsett County residents noted that they had not experienced food insecurity in the past 12 months. However, there were a few people who noted that they had faced food insecurity and had not had enough money for food. These people had to cut back on the size of their meals or skip meals entirely. They worried about not having enough food to eat for some of the past 12 months.

When Poinsett County residents go grocery shopping, they have to pay slightly more than the minimum cost necessary for a U.S. resident to meet the most basic nutritional requirements for a week's worth of menus. For this most basic market basket of foods, a U.S. resident has to pay a minimum of \$147.70 in 2014. For food stores in Poinsett County, residents have to pay an average of \$148.22 at large grocery stores that only have an average of 96.3% of the necessary goods. Poinsett County residents are paying more for groceries than the U.S. average.

This trend grows larger at smaller stores. Small groceries and gas-groceries have fewer products at more expensive prices. In Poinsett County, small groceries lack an average of 47% of the items needed to meet the minimum nutrition requirements for the lowest cost. At a sample gas-grocery, a significant 86% of these items were missing. The missing items are most likely to be healthy foods like fresh and frozen fruits and vegetables and fresh and frozen meats - the same items that residents noted were lacking in variety and availability within the county.

Some Poinsett County residents do have access to the ideal combination for food - affordable, good quality and good variety. Yet low-income residents do not. With 26.8% of families below the poverty level, and with participation in SNAP and Free and Reduced Lunch programs increasing in the past five years, this is significant for the county. A study has shown that while supermarkets accounted for 77% of nationally redeemed food stamps, that figure corresponded to only 59% for rural communities. The other sites were small groceries and gas stations - exactly the locations in Poinsett County where the smallest amount of good quality, healthy food costs the most to purchase. Furthermore, there is only one seasonal farmers' market as well as only one community supported agriculture farm located in the county. Therefore, access to fresh, locally grown fruits and vegetables is limited within Poinsett County. However, these markets and farms have the potential for significant growth.

SNAP Participants

