

Clay County, AR

Socioeconomic Profile

Population: 16,083 people

Demographics: 98% White

Gender: 49% Male
51% Female

Median Income: \$42,203

Families below
Poverty line: 18.7%

Federal Food Assistance Programs

SNAP Participation: 2,430 people

School Lunch Program: 2,469 children

Emergency Food Assistance: 3 locations
(pantries, soup kitchens, etc.)

Meals on Wheels: 0 locations

Federal Assistance Offices

DHS Office (for SNAP): Piggott, AR

Health Clinics (for WIC): Piggott, AR
Corning, AR

Traditional Food Sources

Supermarkets/Groceries: 6 locations
Convenience/Gas stations: 7 locations

Alternative Food Sources

Farmers' Markets: 0 locations
CSAs: 0 locations
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.

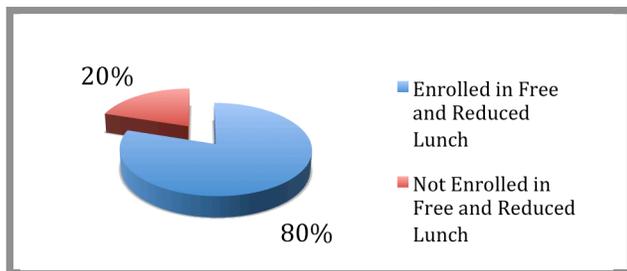
Community Food Insecurity in Clay County

Clay 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, Clay 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 Clay 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 Clay County do not have food resources in their local communities that combine affordability with good quality and good variety. Instead, residents travel to food resource locations outside of Clay County to find this mixture of assets. This is considered to be a more convenient alternative to large shopping trips inside the county (which would be more expensive or have fewer or worse goods). Spent outside of the county, food purchases do not give back to the local economy. This may limit the incentives for investing in more food resources inside the county.

Children in Clay County (2012)



When Clay County residents go shopping inside the county, they have to pay 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 Clay County, residents have to pay an average of \$159.48 at large grocery stores that only have an average of 93% of the necessary goods. Clay County residents are paying more for less.

This trend grows larger at smaller stores. Small groceries and gas-groceries have fewer products at more expensive prices. In Clay County, small groceries lack an average of 41% of the items needed to meet the minimum nutrition requirements for the lowest cost. At a sample gas-grocery, a significant 78% 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 sometimes of low quality in the stores where they were actually available.

Some Clay County residents do have access to the ideal combination for food - affordable, good quality and good variety. Yet low-income residents do not. With 18.7% 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 Clay County where the smallest amount of good quality, healthy food costs the most to purchase. Furthermore, there is only one public transportation system in Clay County, Black River Area Development, with very limited daily and monthly services. Thus, those without private transportation have severely limited options for accessing food other than those local sites.

SNAP Participants

