

# Fact Sheet

Do you have a picture in your mind of what a hungry person looks like? If it is the stereotypical image of a homeless person in an inner city or a child in a third world country, you need to adjust that image. Americans experiencing hunger are women, children, the elderly, and individuals who suffer from disabilities, many of whom live in rural and suburban areas.

Everyday in the United States, many families have to make difficult choices when it comes to the basic necessities of food, shelter, healthcare, and childcare. All too often, sacrifices have to be made that not only affect the health and development of families but also take a toll on their quality of life.



- An estimated 38 million Americans are food insecure; meaning their access to enough food is limited by a lack of money and other resources.
- Increases in the price of heating oil, gasoline and rents have resulted in record numbers of individuals and families seeking food assistance during the last year.
- Hunger is on the rise in Pennsylvania. Nearly 1.2 million Pennsylvanians, almost 10% of our population, live in households at risk for hunger.
- 18% of Pennsylvania children live in poverty.
- 47% of PA adults requesting food assistance are employed.
- Children who experience hunger and food insecurity are more likely to:
  - require special education
  - miss days of school
  - repeat a grade
  - be suspended from school
  - have health issues
- All individuals who experience hunger and food insecurity are more likely to:
  - have poor overall health
  - develop chronic illness
  - suffer from depression
  - experience psychosocial dysfunction
- Hunger depletes the strength of the working poor and perpetuates the cycle of poverty.

References: USDA/ERS, *Household Food Security in the United States: 2006*  
*Hunger and Homelessness Survey, conducted by the United States Conference of Mayors, December 2007.*  
*The Almanac of Hunger and Poverty in America, 2007.*  
*Blueprint for a Hunger-Free Pennsylvania, Inter-Agency Council on Food and Nutrition, 2007.*