**Understanding Hunger in Arizona: The Impact and Need**

Missed or incomplete meals are more than just an inconvenience—they have a significant impact, especially on growing children, veterans, and the elderly. Hungry children often worry more about empty stomachs and refrigerators than about finishing their homework.

Food insecurity affects nearly one in six Arizonans, which is over one million residents—higher than the national averages, according to the Arizona Department of Economic Security. Food insecurity means a lack of access to or the ability to afford enough food to feed an entire household.

Data from 2016 reveals that more than one in four children in Arizona worry about their next meal. In many cases, free school lunches are the most dependable food supply for children—an alarming fact.

Food banks in urban areas collect and distribute food to those in need while also sending supplies to rural areas. Apache County, for example, had the highest rate of food insecurity in the nation at 26.6% of the county's population. Apache, Navajo, and La Paz counties had poverty rates higher than 20%, with Apache County's rate approaching 35%. Sadly, children in these areas experience disproportionate poverty rates compared to the general population. Apache, Navajo, and Coconino counties had child poverty rates of 40.9%, 38.4%, and 34.5%, respectively, compared to 25.5% in Maricopa County.

**For more information, visit** [**https://azfoodbanks.org/hunger-in-arizona/**](https://azfoodbanks.org/hunger-in-arizona/)

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