

## Great recession reflux amounts to more hunger among seniors

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A new study that looked at the hunger trends over a 10-year period found that 14.85 percent of seniors in the United States, more than one in seven, face the threat of hunger. This translates into 8.3 million seniors.

"In 2005, we reported that one in nine seniors faced the threat of hunger," said Craig Gundersen, University of Illinois associate professor of agricultural and consumer economics and executive director of the National Soybean Research Laboratory who led the data analysis on the study. "So, unlike the population as a whole, [food insecurity](#) among those 60 and older actually increased between 2009 and 2010."

According to the study, from 2001 to 2010, the number of seniors experiencing the threat of hunger has increased by 78 percent. Since the onset of the recession in 2007 to 2010, the number of seniors experiencing the threat of hunger has increased by 34 percent.

Gundersen said that the fact that seniors in our country are going without enough food due to economic constraints is a serious problem that will have greater implications for senior health.

"Compounding the problem is that food insecurity is also associated with a host of poor [health outcomes](#) for seniors such as reduced nutrient intakes and limitations in activities of daily living," Gundersen said. "Consequently, this recent increase in senior hunger will likely lead to additional nutritional and health challenges for our nation."

The increases in senior hunger were most pronounced among the near poor, whites, widows, non-metro residents, the retired, women, and among households with no grandchildren present.

"What may be surprising is that out of those seniors who face the threat of hunger, the majority have incomes above the [poverty line](#) and are white," Gundersen said.

Other key findings in the study are that those living in states in the South and Southwest, those who are racial or ethnic minorities, those with lower incomes, and those who are younger, ages 60 to 69, are most likely to be threatened by hunger.

Provided by University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

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