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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

New report: regional food insecurity reaches new high

1 in 3 black residents now live in food insecure households

PITTSBURGH, PA (May 15, 2024) A new report from Feeding America shows a surge in the number of people struggling with food insecurity in Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank's 11-county service area (Allegheny, Armstrong, Butler, Beaver, Cambria, Fayette, Greene, Indiana, Lawrence, Somerset and Washington counties). The Map the Meal Gap report is an analysis of the state of food insecurity for 2022 and shows an increase in need across all demographics, but a significant spike in food insecurity rates for Black and Hispanic neighbors and children.

The report shows:

Overall: 1 in 8 individuals are food insecure (25% increase from prior year)
Children: 1 in 6 (33% increase)
Black neighbors: 1 in 3 (32% increase)
Hispanic neighbors: 1 in 5 (20% increase)
White neighbors: 1 in 10 (30% increase)

"This new data reflects a local trend we have seen firsthand when it comes to the struggle to afford groceries. With the high cost of groceries and other basic necessities, and the loss of pandemic programs including universal free meals for kids, families have been forced to make extreme choices. It takes all of us coming together to feed a community, and our neighbors need our support now more than ever," said president and CEO of Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank, Lisa Scales.

Food Bank VP of equity, people and culture, Godfrey Bethea says the highest meal gap in our area is in the Black community where many are facing those same economic hardships, compounded with other societal issues including gentrification, lack of access to grocery stores and lack of access to healthcare.

"This report shows the glaring reality for many of our Black neighbors. Working families still can't make a living wage to put food on the table. We know 50 percent of Black community members in Pennsylvania working with full time jobs, still don't make enough to support their households," said Bethea.

Bethea says Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank is already focused on ways to support our neighbors in need, by expanding resources, improving nutrition education, advocating for policy changes and collaborating with more local organizations. He says the key in addressing food insecurity is more involvement from community members and potential partners to fill any existing gaps in need.

To read the full report, visit <https://map.feedingamerica.org/>