

Childhood Hunger in Georgia



No child should go hungry. Yet in Georgia, **1 in 5 kids** lives in a household that struggles to put enough food on the table.

For families, this often means impossible choices — paying rent or buying groceries, filling a prescription or stocking the fridge. Having enough nutritious food every day is essential for healthy pregnancies, early brain development, physical growth and stronger educational outcomes. When families get the support they need at every stage, communities invest not only in children’s immediate well-being, but in a healthier, more prosperous future for Georgia.

Childhood hunger is a crisis, but it’s one we know how to solve. Nutrition programs give children the support they need to grow, thrive and succeed.



In U.S. households with children

31%

of Black households face hunger²

In U.S. households with children

24%

of Latino households face hunger²

PROVEN PROGRAMS THAT WORK

In 2023,

84%

of eligible infants and

37%

of eligible children (ages 1-4) were participating in Georgia's WIC program³

In FY19,

89%

of SNAP eligible children in Georgia were participating in the program⁴

74%

The percentage of Georgia students participating in free and reduced-price school meals in SY23-24⁶

\$214 Million

The amount of money in federal benefits Sun Bucks could bring into Georgia's local economy⁵

1.2 Million

The number of Georgia students eligible for Sun Bucks⁵

WIC: Supporting Healthy Starts

The earliest opportunities to prevent childhood hunger come during pregnancy and early childhood. The Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) helps pregnant women, new mothers, babies and young children up to age five access healthy foods, nutrition guidance and referrals to healthcare services. It's one of the most effective tools we have for supporting healthy pregnancies and early childhood development. Making WIC easier to access means more families can benefit from it.

SNAP: Helping Families Afford Groceries

As children grow older, keeping enough food on the table increasingly depends on a family's ability to afford groceries week after week. The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) provides families with a monthly benefit they can use to buy food at most grocery stores, helping ensure children have consistent access to nutritious food. It's one of the most effective programs for reducing hunger, improving children's health and supporting their success in school. As federal policy changes threaten to make it harder for families to maintain SNAP benefits, strong state support for the program will be critical.

School Meals: Feeding Kids Every Day

School breakfast and lunch programs ensure that millions of students receive the nutritious food that supports their health, learning and overall well-being, helping them thrive both in and out of the classroom. While some schools and states provide free meals to all students, many families must apply to qualify for free or reduced-price meals. These programs operate under significant pressure, including staffing shortages, supply disruptions and tight budgets, and they depend on student participation to remain strong, as schools are reimbursed by the federal government for each meal served. Supporting school nutrition professionals and helping families understand their options are critical to keeping these programs sustainable and able to meet students' needs.

Summer Meals: Keeping Kids Nourished When School is Out

When school is out, many of the nutrition supports families use during the school year temporarily disappear, making summer one of the hungriest times of year for kids. Communities use a combination of tools to help close this gap, each serving a distinct purpose. **Traditional summer meals sites (also called congregate meals)** provide in-person meals and enrichment activities at schools, parks, libraries and community centers, while **non-congregate summer meals options such as grab-and-go meals** help reach families facing transportation, work or scheduling barriers. Most critically, **Sun Bucks** provides families with grocery benefits when school meals are unavailable, putting food purchasing power directly into their hands so they can buy foods that work for their children, schedules and cultural preferences. If Georgia were to adopt Sun Bucks, it would be a win-win for families and the state economy, helping families afford groceries when school meals aren't available while bringing an estimated \$214 million in federal funding into local economies.

DEEP DIVE: CHILDREN FACING HUNGER IN GEORGIA BY COUNTY¹

County	Child food insecurity rate - %
Appling	24%
Atkinson	25%
Bacon	23%
Baker	32%
Baldwin	26%
Banks	14%
Barrow	13%
Bartow	13%
Ben Hill	28%
Berrien	23%
Bibb	33%
Bleckley	26%
Brantley	17%
Brooks	30%
Bryan	12%
Bulloch	23%
Burke	29%
Butts	21%
Calhoun	30%
Camden	21%
Candler	23%
Carroll	19%
Catoosa	15%
Charlton	25%
Chatham	24%
Chattahoochee	23%
Chattooga	26%
Cherokee	9%
Clarke	23%
Clay	36%
Clayton	28%
Clinch	24%
Cobb	12%
Coffee	24%
Colquitt	26%
Columbia	13%
Cook	23%
Coweta	13%
Crawford	20%
Crisp	36%
Dade	14%
Dawson	13%
Decatur	32%
DeKalb	21%

County	Child food insecurity rate - %
Dodge	25%
Dooly	31%
Dougherty	38%
Douglas	20%
Early	30%
Echols	9%
Effingham	11%
Elbert	27%
Emanuel	31%
Evans	23%
Fannin	20%
Fayette	11%
Floyd	22%
Forsyth	4%
Franklin	22%
Fulton	19%
Gilmer	16%
Glascock	17%
Glynn	22%
Gordon	15%
Grady	27%
Greene	21%
Gwinnett	14%
Habersham	15%
Hall	14%
Hancock	47%
Haralson	20%
Harris	11%
Hart	19%
Heard	24%
Henry	20%
Houston	18%
Irwin	24%
Jackson	11%
Jasper	16%
Jeff Davis	26%
Jefferson	30%
Jenkins	19%
Johnson	25%
Jones	18%
Lamar	19%
Lanier	26%
Laurens	28%
Lee	14%

County	Child food insecurity rate - %
Liberty	26%
Lincoln	26%
Long	20%
Lowndes	25%
Lumpkin	14%
McDuffie	31%
McIntosh	25%
Macon	32%
Madison	21%
Marion	25%
Meriwether	28%
Miller	28%
Mitchell	30%
Monroe	16%
Montgomery	21%
Morgan	15%
Murray	15%
Muscogee	29%
Newton	21%
Oconee	7%
Oglethorpe	17%
Paulding	12%
Peach	24%
Pickens	20%
Pierce	15%
Pike	11%
Polk	22%
Pulaski	27%
Putnam	24%
Quitman	32%
Rabun	18%
Randolph	38%
Richmond	34%
Rockdale	23%
Schley	16%
Screven	28%
Seminole	24%
Spalding	27%
Stephens	18%
Stewart	39%
Sumter	30%
Talbot	33%
Taliaferro	26%
Tattnall	23%

County	Child food insecurity rate - %
Taylor	32%
Telfair	33%
Terrell	40%
Thomas	25%
Tift	23%
Toombs	22%
Towns	18%
Treutlen	31%
Troup	26%
Turner	27%
Twiggs	23%
Union	17%
Upson	26%
Walker	18%
Walton	17%
Ware	27%
Warren	31%
Washington	26%
Wayne	23%
Webster	31%
Wheeler	24%
White	16%
Whitfield	15%
Wilcox	25%
Wilkes	28%
Wilkinson	25%
Worth	26%
State Total	20%

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A HUNGER-FREE FUTURE IS POSSIBLE

Ensuring children have enough food on the table every day takes more than just programs that work on paper. It also requires that families know about them, can access them and that they work well in practice.

No Kid Hungry, a national campaign of Share Our Strength, works to strengthen access to essential nutrition programs for children and families. In Georgia, this includes:

- Grants to schools and community organizations
- Hands-on support to improve meal programs
- Advocacy to strengthen nutrition policies
- Public awareness to help families learn about available resources

In 2025, No Kid Hungry invested more than \$355,000 in 17 Georgia organizations connecting kids and families to the food they need. By supporting these efforts, we ensure that programs like WIC, SNAP, school meals and summer nutrition initiatives are not only available, but accessible, effective, and responsive to the needs of Georgia families.

- ¹ Dewey, A., Hilvers, J., Dawes, S., Harris, V., Hake, M., and Engelhard, E. (2025). [Map the Meal Gap: A Report of Local Food Insecurity and Food Costs in the United States in 2023](#). Feeding America National Organization.
- ² Household Food Security in the United States in 2024, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Services, <https://ers.usda.gov/sites/default/files/laserfiche/publications/113623/ERR-358.pdf?v=88107>
- ³ National- and State-Level Estimates of WIC Eligibility and Program Reach in 2023, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Services, <https://fns-prod.azureedge.us/sites/default/files/resource-files/wic-eer2023-report.pdf>
- ⁴ Mathematica Inc. Analysis for No Kid Hungry, “State Estimates of Children’s Eligibility for and Participation in SNAP, FY2019”
- ⁵ Canning, Patrick and Brian Stacy. [The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program \(SNAP\) and the Economy: New Estimates of the SNAP Multiplier](#), ERR-265, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service, July 2019.
- ⁶ U.S. Department of Agriculture National Data Bank v8.2 for the month of October 2023 ([No Kid Hungry FR Enrollments Data Brief](#))