

Indiana Coalition on Housing and Homeless Issues

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INDIANA  
INSTITUTE FOR  
WORKING FAMILIES

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# **Ensuring a Hunger-Free Indiana**

**By Jill Nielsen**

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## Indiana Institute for Working Families, ICHHI

The Indiana Institute for Working Families is a program of the Indiana Coalition on Housing and Homeless Issues (ICHHI). ICHHI is a statewide, non-partisan, non-profit organization that believes everyone in Indiana deserves safe, decent, affordable housing; employment; income; and resources for self-sufficiency. ICHHI is committed to building stronger individuals, families, and communities through planning, research, education, and advocacy.

The Indiana Institute for Working Families was founded in 2004 with generous support from the Joyce Foundation located in Chicago, Illinois. The goal of the Institute is to help Hoosier families achieve and maintain economic self-sufficiency. The Institute conducts research and analysis of public policy issues important to working families, engages in advocacy and education campaigns on policy issues, and works through national, statewide, and community partnerships in Indiana to promote progressive policies in Indiana.

### Public Policy: Research and Analysis

The Institute's research focuses on a range of policy issues affecting low-wage workers, including work support programs such as the Earned Income Tax Credit, Food Stamps, child care, health insurance programs, and the unemployment insurance system. In addition, the Institute is interested in policies and programs that involve job placement, retention, and advancement for low-income workers and is currently conducting research within these areas.

### Advocacy, Education, and Information

The Institute engages in a range of activities that inform our constituents about pressing issues and assists with our advocacy efforts. The Institute publishes a monthly newsletter, *The Networker*, which focuses on pressing federal and state legislation and policies that impact low-income workers and highlights research relating to low-wage workers in Indiana. In addition, the Institute has founded *Invest In Hoosiers*, a statewide, grassroots advocacy campaign comprised of organizations and citizens who are concerned about issues affecting low-income working Hoosier families and Indiana's most vulnerable citizens. The Institute also issues periodic *Action Alerts* to inform Hoosier advocates of pending federal and state legislative issues and actions that need to be taken. Individuals can subscribe to both publications on our website at [www.ichhi.org](http://www.ichhi.org). The Institute also hosts multiple conferences and seminars across the state as well as giving presentations through its Speaker's Bureau.

### National, Statewide, and Community Partnerships

ICHHI is seen as a statewide leader on public policy and poverty issues. This has allowed the Institute to build upon existing partnerships as well as develop new partnerships with workforce service providers, national research and advocacy organizations, and local service providers and advocates. Some of our partners include Center on Budget & Policy Priorities, Economic Policy Institute, National Employment Law Project, The Hatcher Group, Food Research and Action Center, Wider Opportunities for Women, and the Indiana Coalition for Human Services.

## About the Author

**JILL NIELSEN** is currently a Senior Policy Analyst with the Indiana Institute for Working Families. Specific program areas under her purview include work supports, such as child care and Food Stamps, and workforce and economic development system programs. Ms. Nielsen has been the primary author on several reports and issue briefs. Ms. Nielsen has also been actively involved with expanding the use of the Self-Sufficiency Standard and other information tools to improve the lives of low-income working families in Indiana.

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# INTRODUCTION

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There is no question that hunger is on the rise in Indiana. Decreasing median wages and household incomes coupled with increases in the state's poverty rate mean that more and more Hoosiers are struggling to pay their monthly bills. When earnings decline, families cut where they can to keep as many of their housing, utility and transportation resources intact. With the advent of winter and associated heating costs expected to rise between 36 and 50 percent in the Midwest, there will be more and more working families who find their paychecks inadequate to cover costs.<sup>1</sup> Hundreds of thousands of families in Indiana will have to ask themselves each day, "Heat or eat?" Research has shown that they will likely cut their food budgets, increasing the incidence of hungry children and families in our state.<sup>2</sup>

And hunger in our communities has grave consequences – not just on the families and children themselves but on all Hoosiers. Low birth weight babies and hungry children are more likely to be hospitalized. With rising numbers of the uninsured, expensive medical bills fall onto families and local health care providers. Medical bills are one of the top reasons families in Indiana file for bankruptcy. Bills that cannot be paid put community hospitals at financial risk. Hungry children have more difficulty learning in school, making it less likely they will achieve successful ISTEP scores. Workers who skipped a meal so their children could eat – or who worry about where their next meal will come from – are less likely to be able to concentrate on their jobs, decreasing productivity and negatively impacting business.

This report highlights some of the economic trends that are exacerbating the hunger problem in Indiana and documents the number of families experiencing hunger and food insecurity. It then describes the government assistance programs and the community and faith-based organization network that work in coalition to address the ever-growing incidence of hungry families and children in our state. ***The key point to remember about hunger is that, unlike several other issues afflicting low-income families, we can address it directly and have the basic infrastructure to do so. We just need the political and social commitment to strengthen that capacity.***

## Hunger is an Income Issue

Ultimately, hunger is an income issue. The ability of an individual to purchase food is closely tied to the ability to find and keep a job that pays an adequate wage. What is an adequate or self-sufficient wage in Indiana? According to the 2005 Self-Sufficiency Standard, a single parent with an infant and preschooler living in Marion County needs to earn an hourly wage of \$17.91 – equaling an annual income of \$37,835 – just to cover basic living costs (i.e., child care, housing,

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<sup>1</sup> See United States Energy Information Administration, Official Energy Statistics from the United States Government. *Short-term Energy Outlook, November, 8, 2005*. Online:

<http://www.eia.doe.gov/emeu/steo/pub/nov05.pdf>.

<sup>2</sup> Bhattacharya, J., DeLeire, T., Haider, S., and Currie, J. *Heat or Eat? Cold-Weather Shocks the Nutrition in Poor American Families*. American Journal of Public Health, v. 93, no. 7, Jul. 2003, p. 1149-1154.

utilities, transportation, health care insurance premiums, and food).<sup>3</sup> Yet, nearly 30 percent of families in Indiana have incomes below \$35,000.<sup>4</sup> Table 1 shows the contrast between the Self-Sufficiency Standard and the Federal Poverty Guidelines (FPG). Depicting this contrast is important because the FPGs determine eligibility for a wide array of assistance programs, including Food Stamps, the collection of child nutrition programs, heating assistance, health insurance through Hoosier Healthwise, and others. **Appendix A-1** includes a map demonstrating the Self-Sufficiency Standard for a single parent household with a preschooler for all 92 counties.

**Table 1**

<b>Self-Sufficiency Standard Versus Federal Poverty Guidelines, 2005</b>		
	<b>Self-Sufficiency Standard</b>	<b>Federal Poverty Guidelines</b>
<b>Family of Three</b>	\$37,835	\$16,090
<b>Aspects of Measure:</b>	Calculates costs of each basic need	Calculated solely on food costs
	County specific	Same everywhere
	Assumes all adults are working full-time	Assumes one stay-at-home parent and one working parent
	Adjusts for family size and children's ages	Slight extra costs for extra children
	Local cost variations	No local cost variations
	Includes impact of taxes and tax credits	Tax impacts not included
<p><b>Note:</b> The Self-Sufficiency Standard in this example is a single parent household with one infant and one preschooler for Marion County. The Indiana Self-Sufficiency Standard is available at <a href="http://www.ichhi.org">www.ichhi.org</a>. The 2005 Federal Poverty Guidelines are available at <a href="http://aspe.hhs.gov/poverty/05poverty.shtml">http://aspe.hhs.gov/poverty/05poverty.shtml</a>.</p>		

## Current Indicators Detailing Economic Struggle

So how are families faring in Indiana? Households have experienced consistent drops in their incomes over the past several years, with the 2003-04 two-year average of median household income declining by nearly \$3,200 since 1998-99, specifically falling from \$46,136 to \$42,946.<sup>5</sup> Wages are stagnant. The 2004 poverty rate in Indiana was 11.6 percent with an alarming child poverty rate of nearly 20 percent (18.5%), according to 2005 Census Bureau data.<sup>6</sup> This translates into 333,000 children in Indiana living below the poverty level. And, as detailed above,

<sup>3</sup> Self-Sufficiency Standards are available for over 70 different family types in all 92 counties. The Standard report was written in cooperation with Pearce, D. (2005). *The Self-Sufficiency Standard for Indiana: Where Economic Independence Begins*. Center for Women's Welfare, University of Washington. Seattle, Washington. Online: [www.ichhi.org/downloads/contentDocuments/the\\_2005\\_selfsufficiency\\_standard\\_for\\_indiana\\_final\\_92805.pdf](http://www.ichhi.org/downloads/contentDocuments/the_2005_selfsufficiency_standard_for_indiana_final_92805.pdf).

<sup>4</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey. 2005. Online: <http://www.census.gov/acs/www/>.

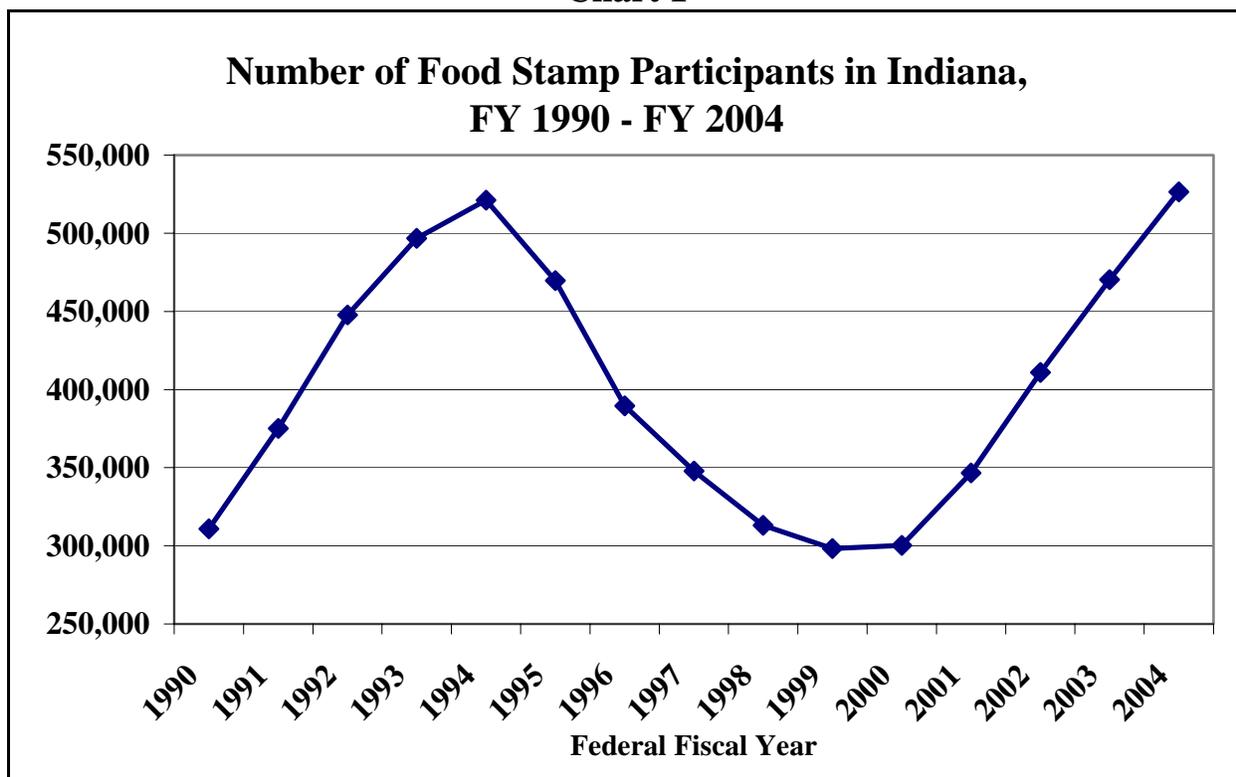
<sup>5</sup> For a thorough discussion of economic indicators for families in Indiana see Warren, Charles. (2005). *The Status of Working Families in Indiana, 2005 Update*. Indiana Institute for Working Families, Indiana Coalition on Housing and Homeless Issues. Indianapolis, IN. Online: [www.ichhi.org/downloads/contentDocuments/final\\_status\\_of\\_working\\_families\\_2005\\_update.pdf](http://www.ichhi.org/downloads/contentDocuments/final_status_of_working_families_2005_update.pdf).

<sup>6</sup> U.S. Census Bureau. Table 9, *Income, Poverty, and Health Insurance Coverage in the United States: 2004*.

the poverty level – developed in the 1960s – is an outdated and inadequate measure of the numbers of families actually struggling economically. The actual figure is more likely to be double the official poverty numbers. The most recent county-level poverty data (Census 2000) is shown in **Appendix A-2**.<sup>7</sup>

The dramatic increase in the number of Indiana participants of federal food assistance programs is clear evidence that there are more struggling and hungry families. For example, the Food Stamp Program experienced an increase of 75.3 percent in participation from 2000 to 2004, after experiencing a similar *decline* in participation during the strong economy of the late 1990s. Chart 1 below, demonstrates the participation trend in the Food Stamp Program in Indiana from FY 1990 to 2004.

**Chart 1**



Source: United States Department of Agriculture

### **How Many Families in Indiana are Hungry?**

*Food insecurity* is a technical concept used to measure the number of families that lack access to enough food for an active and healthy lifestyle. To be food insecure, the cause of this “lack of access” must arise *specifically* from a lack of money and other resources to acquire food. According to the most recent data utilizing a three-year average, 10.1 percent of households in Indiana were food insecure in 2002-04. This translates into 246,642 Indiana households who

<sup>7</sup> Obviously, as the state has experienced increases in its poverty rate each year since 1999, one can safely assume that county poverty levels have increased as well.

were struggling to feed themselves.<sup>8</sup> Of those households, 3.6 percent or 87,912 experienced *food insecurity with hunger*, meaning members within the household were going to bed or work hungry, skipping meals, or even an entire day of food. The most recent data shows an increase from the 1999-2001 rate of 8.5 percent food insecurity and 2.5 percent food insecurity with hunger. Table 2 below compares Indiana’s food insecurity rates with other East-Central Midwest states.

**Table 2**

<b>Prevalence of Household-Level Food Insecurity and Food Insecurity with Hunger, Three-Year Average 2002-2004</b>		
	<b>% Food Insecure</b>	<b>% of Food Insecure with Hunger</b>
<b>Indiana</b>	<b>10.1%</b>	<b>3.6%</b>
<b>Illinois</b>	9.0%	3.0%
<b>Kentucky</b>	12.2%	3.3%
<b>Michigan</b>	11.3%	3.8%
<b>Minnesota</b>	7.2%	2.5%
<b>Ohio</b>	11.4%	3.4%
<b>Wisconsin</b>	9.0%	2.8%

**Source:** Food Assistance and Nutrition Research Report Number ERR11. *Measuring Food Security in the United States, Household Food Security in the United States, 2004.*

Although Indiana’s food insecurity rate is “middle of the pack” as compared to its neighbors, the numbers are particularly disturbing in light of consistent increases in participation in federal food assistance programs and increases in demands for food assistance at community and faith-based hunger relief organizations during the same time period. There are still families, despite these resources, who are struggling to feed themselves. This indicates that more must be done to increase the capacity of the public-private infrastructure to feed hungry families in Indiana.

<sup>8</sup> Nord, M., Andrews, M. and Carlson, S. (October 2005). *Measuring Food Security in the United States, Household Food Security in the United States, 2004.* Food Assistance and Nutrition Research Report Number ERR11. United States Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service. Online: <http://www.ers.usda.gov/publications/err11/>.

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## Filling the Gap Between Inadequate Income and Basic Living Expenses to Ensure Adequate Nutrition

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To make up the gap between basic living expenses and lack of adequate income, many families in Indiana rely on two available networks of assistance: 1) the federal nutrition support programs – such as Food Stamps, Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), and free or reduced priced school lunches, and 2) faith and community-based resources – such as food pantries, meal programs, and the network of food banks. Addressing hunger in Indiana takes a sustained commitment, in both resources and a willingness to collaborate and build capacity in each of these two important networks. Below details some data and information on these networks and concludes with some key recommendations on how the infrastructure to address hunger can be improved.

### Government Food Assistance Programs

There are several federal programs that address hunger and food insecurity. The major programs include: the Food Stamp Program, WIC, the National School Lunch and Breakfast Programs, Summer Food Service Program, Child and Adult Care Food Program, and the Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP). The critical point to remember is that this collection of programs is almost entirely federally funded. In other words, by increasing the availability of and participation in nutrition programs, the state can simultaneously assist hungry families *and* draw down additional federal dollars into the state's economy.<sup>9</sup> In FY 2004, the programs listed below contributed over \$810 million in federal dollars to assist hungry families and children in Indiana.<sup>10</sup>

- **The Food Stamp Program** provides benefits in the form of an Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) card to low-income families to purchase nutritious foods at participating vendors. It is the first line of defense against hunger. The income guidelines are at or below 130 percent of poverty or \$20,917 for a family of three.<sup>11</sup> The asset limit is \$2,000 for most families and \$3,000 for disabled persons and the elderly. In FY 2004, the Food Stamp Program had an average monthly participation of 526,324 and nearly \$550 million annually in federal dollars came into the state. The average daily benefit amount per person was \$87.00. **Appendix A-3** includes a map of Food Stamp participation per 10,000 persons by county.
- **The National School Lunch Program** provides lunches that meet specific dietary guidelines to participating children. Children in families at or below 130 percent of poverty receive free lunches. Children in families above 130 percent, but at or below 185 percent of

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<sup>9</sup> See Nielsen, J., Travis, L., and Warren, C. *Is Indiana Getting Its Fair Share? Federal Programs Available to Help Working Hoosier Families*. Indiana Institute for Working Families, Indiana Coalition on Housing and Homeless Issues. Indianapolis, IN. Online: [http://www.ichhi.org/downloads/media/final\\_fair\\_share\\_report\\_2005.pdf](http://www.ichhi.org/downloads/media/final_fair_share_report_2005.pdf).

<sup>10</sup> Unless otherwise noted, data for these programs come from the Food Research and Action Center. (2005). *State of the States: A Profile of Food and Nutrition Programs Across the Nation*. Washington, DC. Online: [http://www.frac.org/State\\_Of\\_States/2005/Report.pdf](http://www.frac.org/State_Of_States/2005/Report.pdf).

<sup>11</sup> For July 1, 2005 through June 30, 2006, 130 percent of the poverty level is \$20,917 for a family of three; 185 percent is \$29,767. See <http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/governance/notices/iegs/IEG05-06.pdf>.

poverty (\$29,767 for family of three), receive reduced priced lunches. In FY 2004, there were 679,664 students participating on an average day, of which 291,522 received free and reduced priced lunches. The 2,241 sites across the state received nearly \$120 million in federal reimbursement. **Appendix A-4** includes a map of the percentage of free and reduced priced lunches by county.

- **The National School Breakfast Program** provides breakfasts that meet specific dietary guidelines to participating children.<sup>12</sup> Children in families at or below 130 percent of poverty receive free breakfasts. Children in families above 130 percent but at or below 185 percent of poverty receive reduced priced breakfasts. In FY 2004, 139,887 children received breakfasts through the program on an average day. Of those, 111,946 received a free or reduced priced meal. Indiana ranks 33<sup>rd</sup> in the ratio of students receiving free or reduced priced breakfasts per 100 receiving free or reduced priced lunches (38.4). The top ten states, which includes Kentucky, have ratios of 50 or more.
- **Women, Infants and Children (WIC)** provides supplemental foods, nutrition education, health care referrals, breastfeeding promotion, and support to pregnant women and their children up to age five. Families at or below 185 percent of poverty are eligible. In FY 2004, 131,485 participated in an average month and the state received nearly \$75 million for the program. WIC is a critical cost savings program as well; research has shown that for every \$1 spent on WIC for pregnant women, \$2.89 in health care savings can be achieved during the first year after birth; and \$3.50 in savings can be achieved over 18 years.<sup>13</sup> The other important point is that because WIC has a higher eligibility threshold, it has the ability to include families that cannot qualify for Food Stamps. This is an important outreach opportunity, especially educating schools, businesses and child care homes, and centers that low-income families, who are not eligible for Food Stamps may be eligible for WIC.
- **Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)** provides nutritious meals and snacks for children and adults in approved day care settings. These include homeless and emergency shelters serving children 0-18 years old, child care centers, registered day care ministries, Head Start, and others. Sites that provide care to “at-risk” children during after-school hours, on weekends, holidays, and during the school year can also participate and receive reimbursement for the meals and snacks they provide. Children and adults in families at or below 130 percent of poverty receive free meals and those above 130 percent, but at or below 185 percent of poverty, receive reduced priced meals. In FY 2004, CACFP had 21,685 children receiving meals and snacks in 1,953 family child care homes. Another 32,125 received meals and snacks at child care centers, including Head Start sites. Total federal funding in FY 2004 for CACFP was \$29.6 million.

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<sup>12</sup> For a thorough discussion of the National School Breakfast Program, see Food Research and Action Center. (November 2004). *School Breakfast Score Card, 2004*. Washington, DC. Online: [http://www.frac.org/School\\_Breakfast\\_Report/2004/Report.pdf](http://www.frac.org/School_Breakfast_Report/2004/Report.pdf).

<sup>13</sup> For a review of research on the effects of nutrition programs, see Volume 3, Literature Review of Mary Kay Fox, William Hamilton, and Biing-Hwan Lin, *Effects of Food Assistance and Nutrition Programs on Nutrition and Health*, Economic Research Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, 2004. Online: [www.ers.usda.gov/publications/FANRR19-3](http://www.ers.usda.gov/publications/FANRR19-3).

- **Summer Food Service Program (SFSP)** provides reimbursement for free, nutritious meals to school-aged children 18 and under at sites that are located in low-income areas or that serve primarily low-income children. Once the site qualifies, the program is reimbursed at the same rate for all meals. Sites can provide up to two meals a day. Children in families at or below 130 percent of poverty receive free meals. Children in families above 130 percent of poverty but at or below 185 percent of poverty receive reduced priced meals. In July 2004, the SFSP offered 548,938 lunches at 539 sites to low-income children throughout the state. FY 2004 federal funding for the SFSP was \$3,441,444 in meal reimbursements and \$338,861 for administration.<sup>14</sup>
- **The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP)** provides funding to the state to purchase bulk food products and provides “bonus” food products for the state to distribute to local community and faith-based food assistance organizations. There is no income limit or asset limit. On average each month in 2004, TEFAP in Indiana assisted approximately 75,000 households and served 267,776 meals.<sup>15</sup> Currently, there are 532 food pantries and community kitchens (i.e., soup kitchens) participating in TEFAP. FY 2004 funding, which includes entitlement, bonus commodity and administrative funding, was \$7.5 million.

## Community and Faith-Based Network

The community and faith-based network of organizations is a vital resource in the fight against hunger. According to research published by the United States Department of Agriculture, households who are food insecure are 17 times more likely than food secure households to visit a community-based food pantry and 16 times more likely to have eaten a meal at a community kitchen.<sup>16</sup> However, according to the survey, 80 percent of food insecure households did not use a food pantry. Among those households, 26 percent reported there was no such resource available to them and 19 percent did not know if there was one in their area. These data indicate a need to increase the availability and outreach services of food pantries because of their role in providing a vital protection against hunger and food insecurity.

## The Availability of Community and Faith-Based Food Assistance Organizations in Indiana

Purdue University maintains an online database containing information on organizations across the state that offer some type of food assistance. Analysis of this database shows that there are *at least* 1,045 organizations in Indiana offering food assistance to local communities. This includes 10 food banks, 663 food pantries, and over 400 soup kitchens, congregate meal programs and/or meal delivery services. According to the database, all 92 counties have – at minimum – one food assistance organization available.<sup>17</sup> In **Appendix A-5**, a map outlines the coverage areas for the network of food banks, that is, the 10 organizations across the state that are responsible for the

<sup>14</sup> Data from the Indiana Department of Education.

<sup>15</sup> TEFAP participation data from the Indiana Family and Social Services Administration. It should be noted that food banks and pantries receive product from other sources, as well as TEFAP.

<sup>16</sup> These data come from Ohls, J., Cohen, R., Saleem-Ismail, F., and Cox, B. (August 2002). *The Emergency Food Assistance System – Findings from the Provider Survey. Vol. II: Final Report*. United States Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service. Washington, DC. Online: <http://www.ers.usda.gov/Publications/fanrr16-2/>.

<sup>17</sup> This database is available online at <http://www.cfs.purdue.edu/safefood/directoryrelease.html>.

transportation and distribution of millions of pounds of food and necessary products to individuals, groups and other organizations to address hunger and food insecurity.

In summer 2005, the Indiana Institute for Working Families collected survey data from nine out of the ten food banks in Indiana. In 2004, these food banks distributed 43,295,681 pounds of food and other basic necessities to 1,814 organizations across the state. This is an increase from 2003, where 40,228,292 pounds were distributed to 1,774 agencies. The Institute also surveyed several other food assistance organizations that offer pantry services, congregant meals or meal delivery to low-income families. Although the sample size for this survey was limited, all organizations indicated they experienced an increase in demand from 2003 to 2004.

In both the food bank survey and the pantry/congregant/meal delivery survey, organizations cited common challenges. These included: 1) Inadequate funding to strengthen their organizational capacity, 2) lack of facility and infrastructure needs, such as storage space for perishables or trucks to pick up and deliver products, 3) need for more volunteers, and 4) community awareness of the hunger issue.

It should be noted that in July 2005, Indiana formalized an Indiana Food Bank Association, entitled *Feeding Indiana's Hungry* (FIsh). FIsh will help improve the communication and distribution systems between the major food banks resulting in a more streamlined and efficient delivery system to local food assistance organizations. The state has shown its support for this effort by providing a two year initial investment of \$100,000 to launch the Association. The state should be applauded for that commitment.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> For more information on FIsh, contact the Association Manager Katy Stafford at (317) 472-5255 or [kstafford@thecorydongroup.com](mailto:kstafford@thecorydongroup.com).

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## Improving the Response to Hunger in Indiana

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The following seven recommendations are a few key ways that both the public and private infrastructure described above can be protected or improved to ensure a hunger-free Indiana.

- 1. Maintain adequate federal funding and the entitlement structure of nutrition assistance programs.** The collection of federal nutrition programs highlighted above is the most significant resource available to address hunger in Indiana. The importance of maintaining adequate funding and an entitlement structure cannot be overstated. Over the past several years, several key nutrition programs – most recently the Food Stamp Program – have been placed on the chopping block during the annual federal budget debate. Although federal nutrition programs have escaped major cuts thus far this year, stakeholders invested in addressing hunger in Indiana must be vigilant in their monitoring of the federal budget process and subsequent decisions in Washington given the current political and budgetary climate.<sup>19</sup>
- 2. Bolster resources for faith and community-based organizations by beginning a “Hunger-Free Communities” Trust Fund and increasing corporate and private foundation investments.** In a survey of over 25 local faith and community-based food assistance organizations conducted across the state this fall (referenced above), all cited at least one basic infrastructure need, such as a vehicle for transporting product, capacity for storing perishables, or facility improvements. Modeled after a state housing trust fund, a “Hunger-Free Communities” trust fund could competitively award grants to improve the capacity and operations of eligible faith and community-based organizations to address hunger. In addition, more partnerships are needed between local food assistance organizations and corporate and private foundations to increase the capacity of organizations to serve hungry families in their communities.
- 3. Stakeholders must monitor the state’s privatization plan of the Food Stamp Program.** The state is in the planning phases of moving towards the privatization (i.e. “localization”) of the application and eligibility screening functions of several assistance programs, including Food Stamps. The plan would include, among other things, the use of call-in centers and online applications, carried out by a private contractor. Stakeholders must monitor and be involved in this process as it proceeds. And, the state must be extremely cautious with respect to privatizing these functions should they gain approval from the federal government to do so. To begin with, the state should host regional, public “listening” sessions on the impact – both positive and negative – that privatization could have on service delivery. Access to nutrition assistance programs, as well as the other programs serving low-income families, should not be compromised through an untested privatized system.

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<sup>19</sup> To keep apprised of the federal budget process and its impact on nutrition assistance programs, see the Food Research and Action Center’s website at [www.frac.org](http://www.frac.org). In addition, the Indiana Institute for Working Families, ICHHI, publishes a monthly e-newsletter, The Networker, as well as periodic action alerts that include relevant information and action steps vis-à-vis nutrition assistance programs. More information is available at [www.ichhi.org](http://www.ichhi.org).

**4. Partner with businesses, school districts, WorkOne centers, child care providers, and local faith and community-based food assistance organizations for outreach.**

Increasing the education and outreach to local entities that serve or have contact with low-income families is a crucial aspect of ensuring that nutrition programs are reaching all those who are eligible. Families who have never been in contact with the various nutrition programs may be misinformed about eligibility criteria and benefits. In addition, there may be stigma about being enrolled in an assistance program and to the extent that businesses and work-related entities can address this, the programs will have a broader impact. It is extremely important that businesses, schools, non-profit organizations, WorkOne centers, and other entities become well-versed on the individual programs and how to connect eligible employees, customers, students, and clients with them. In addition, there are federal outreach dollars available at a 50-50 match and some states have collaborated with local entities to draw down these dollars to conduct successful outreach campaigns.<sup>20</sup>

**5. Increase accessibility by offering transitional benefits to recipient families transitioning from welfare-to-work and offering twelve-month recertifications.<sup>21</sup>**

Indiana should adopt the transitional Food Stamps option. In essence, this state option enables states to “freeze” a Food Stamp benefit amount for up to five months after a family leaves the Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) program. Providing this option to families smoothes the transition into work and the subsequent income changes that result from the loss of TANF cash assistance benefits. It also provides continuity with the Food Stamp Program, even when the family is no longer enrolled in TANF. Indiana should also offer twelve-month recertifications for working families. This option, allowed under federal rules, allows recipients to recertify their eligibility on a 12-month schedule. It reduces burden on not just recipients but also caseworkers who are experiencing significant time constraints because of the dramatic Food Stamp caseload increase over the past several years.

**6. Reverse ban on Food Stamp benefits for ex-offenders.** Federal regulations give flexibility to states on whether to offer Food Stamp benefits to ex-offenders convicted of a drug felony. Indiana has not opted to extend Food Stamps to this population, even if they meet all of the other eligibility criteria. This is contrary to the goal of assisting individuals transition back into a life of stability once they are released from incarceration. Providing access to employment services and necessary support programs, such as Food Stamps, after release is *critical* to reducing the recidivism rate. Research shows that if an individual is employed shortly after release, the likelihood that he or she will re-offend drops precipitously.<sup>22</sup> Given the tremendous cost of incarceration to

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<sup>20</sup> See Appendix B for links to resources and information about available food assistance programs.

<sup>21</sup> See Rosenbaum, D. (November 2003). *Transitional Food Stamps: Background and Implementation Issues*. Center on Budget and Policy Priorities. Washington, DC. Online: <http://www.cbpp.org/11-10-03fa.htm>.

<sup>22</sup> See Houston, M. (2001). *Offender Job Retention*. National Institute for Corrections, Office of Correctional Job Training and Placement. Washington, DC. Online: <http://www.nicic.org/Misc/URLShell.aspx?SRC=Catalog&REF=http://nicic.org/Library/016971&ID=016971&TY=PE=PDF&URL=http://www.nicic.org/pubs/2001/016971.pdf>.

Indiana's taxpayers along with the impact on public safety, it is in the best interest that the state support this transition. Enabling ex-offenders to access nutritious food through the Food Stamp Program is an extremely low-cost way for the state to do so.

- 7. Expand access to the School Breakfast Program.** For every 100 children receiving a free or reduced priced meal in the School Lunch Program, just 38.4 also receive breakfast. Indiana ranks 33<sup>rd</sup> in the United States on this indicator, meaning there is much room for improvement.<sup>23</sup> One of the innovative ways to improve participation is by offering “universal access” to the School Breakfast Program. In other words, schools make the program available to all students, usually in a “grab and go” format and allow the students to eat during first period. Illinois, Maryland, Massachusetts, and North Carolina operate Universal School Breakfast Programs and helps support them through state funding to sponsor sites. Cities, such as Cleveland, Kansas City, and New York, offer Universal Breakfast Programs. This can be done through the implementation of Provision 2 or 3 of the National School Lunch Act which allows schools to provide breakfasts (and lunches) for multiple years, free of charge to all students without collecting meal applications. At least 40 states take some advantage of Provision 2 and/or Provision 3. By all accounts, these expansions have been incredibly successful improving performance, attendance and nutrition of all children.<sup>24</sup>

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## Conclusion

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Raising the personal income of Hoosiers is a stated goal of Governor Mitch Daniels. It is an imperative goal but one that will take time. Until it can be achieved, hundreds of thousands of Hoosiers will worry about feeding themselves and their families. The negative consequences of hunger and food insecurity on our state are just too great to be ignored. Therefore, it is in Indiana's best interest to build the capacity of existing public and private programs to address hunger, through improving access, streamlining and coordinating services, and increasing investments.

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<sup>23</sup> Food Research and Action Center. (2005). *State of the States: A Profile of Food and Nutrition Programs Across the Nation*. Washington, DC. Online: [http://www.frac.org/State\\_Of\\_States/2005/Report.pdf](http://www.frac.org/State_Of_States/2005/Report.pdf).

<sup>24</sup> See [http://www.ichhi.org/index.asp?action=programs\\_iiwf\\_pra&medcat=7](http://www.ichhi.org/index.asp?action=programs_iiwf_pra&medcat=7) for specific policy briefs outlining more options to improve nutrition programs.



# **APPENDIX A**

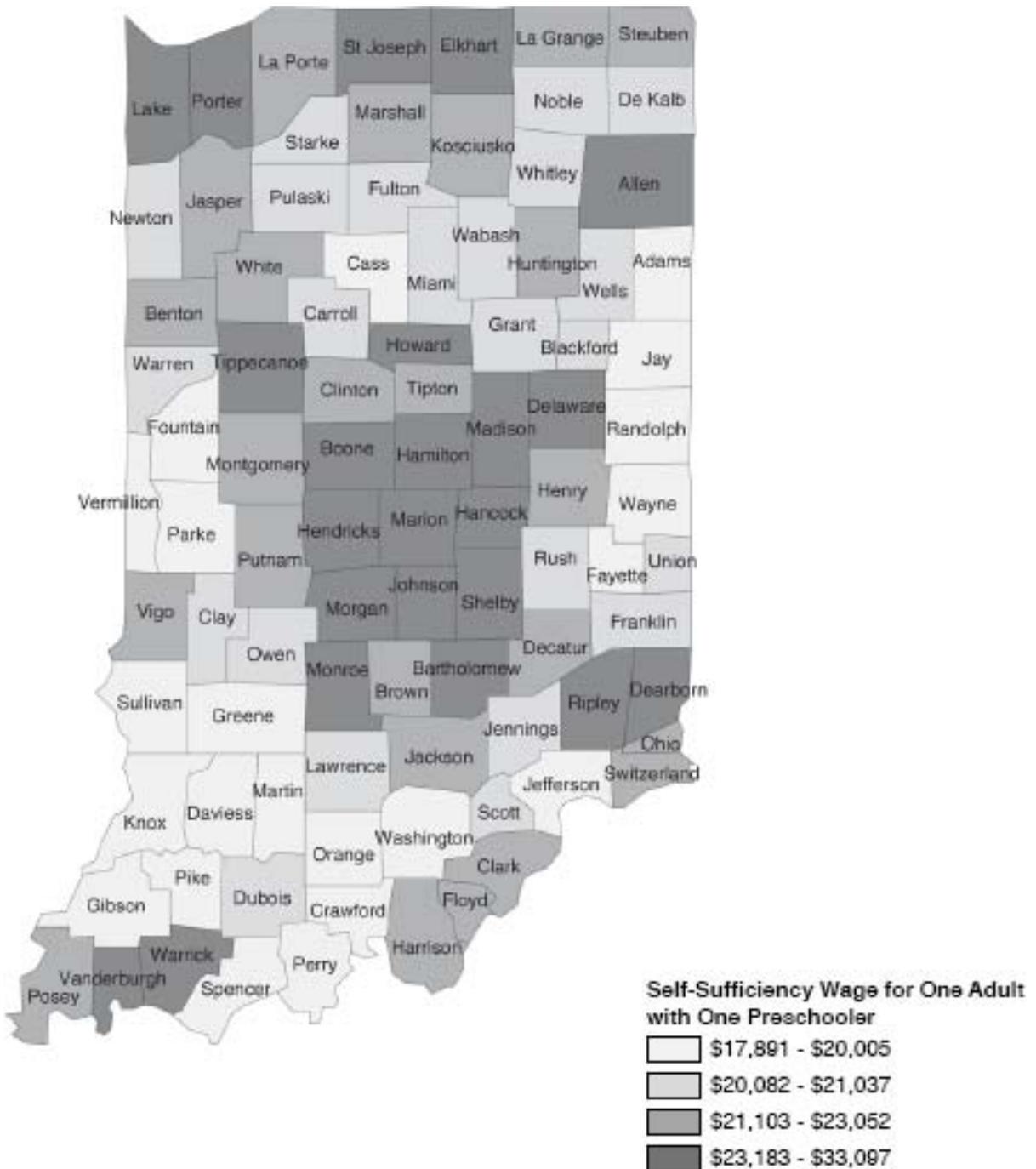
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## **Supplemental Maps of Indiana Counties**



# Appendix A-1

## Map of Self-Sufficiency Standard by County

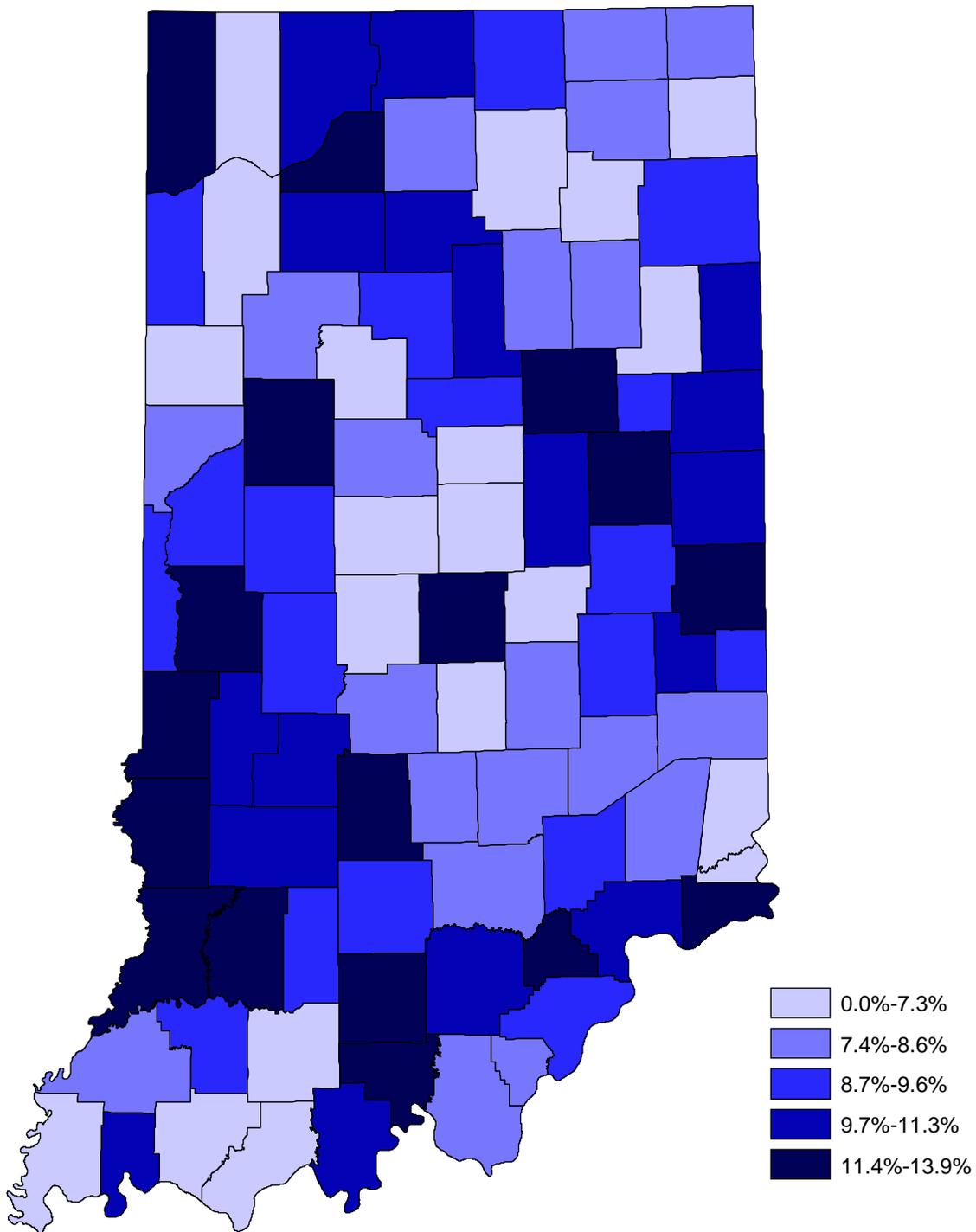




# Appendix A-2

## Poverty Rates, 2002

Source: United States Census Bureau

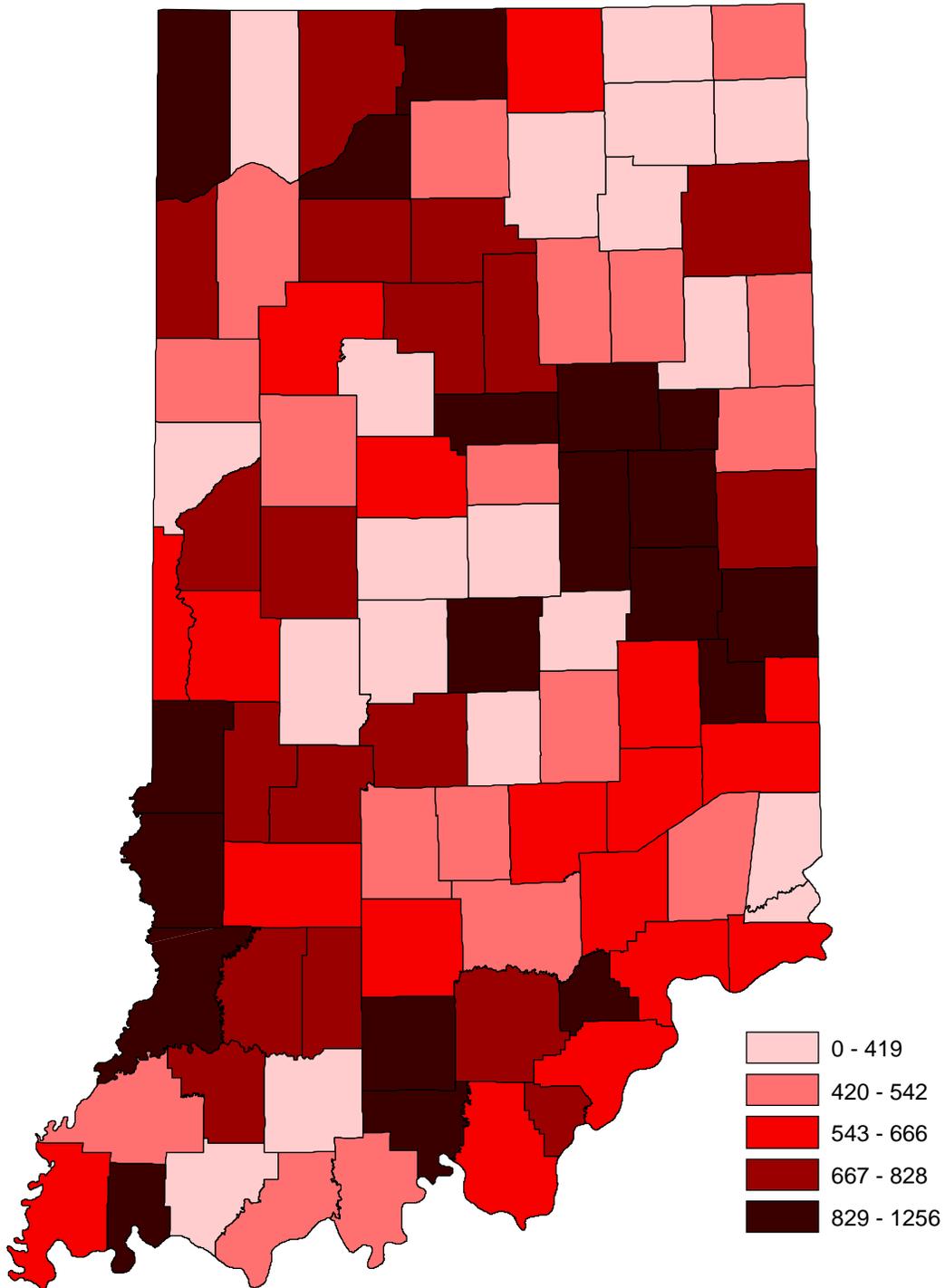




## Appendix A-3

### Food Stamp Participation per 10,000 Population, 2003

Source: Indiana Family and Social Services Administration

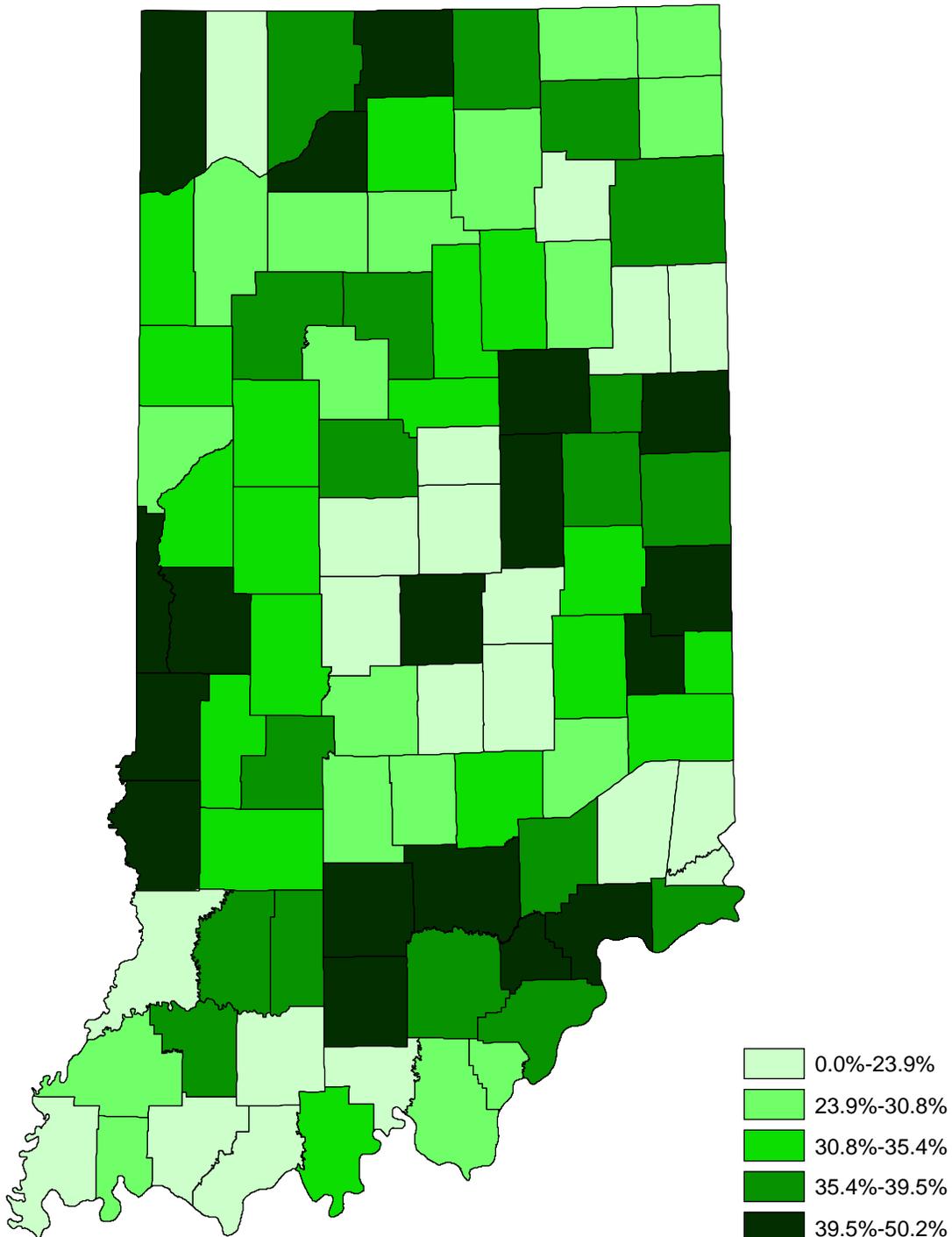




## Appendix A-4

# Percent Receiving Free or Reduced Price Lunch, 2004

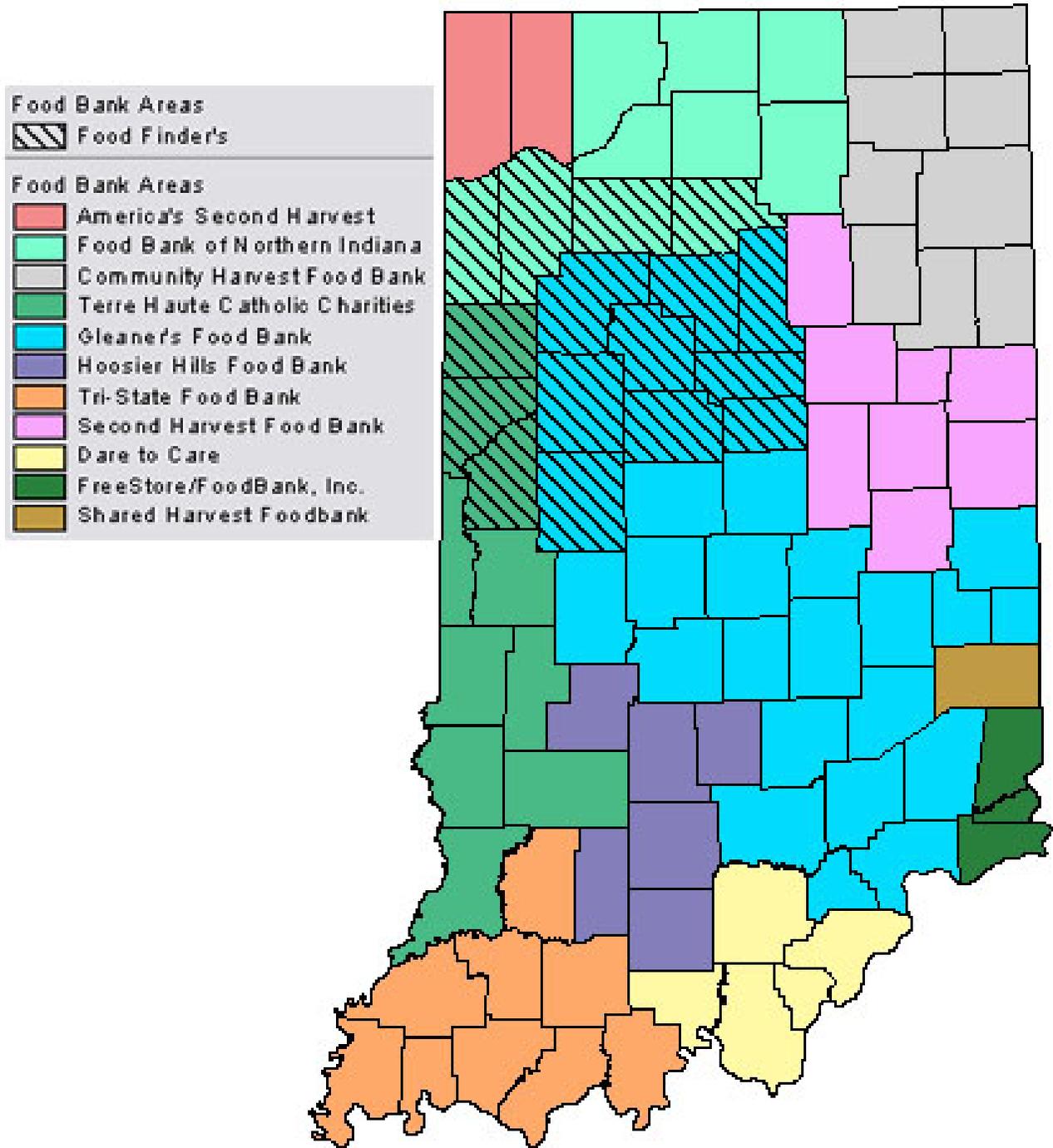
Source: Indiana Department of Education





# Appendix A-5

## Food Bank Coverage Areas





# Bibliography and Online Resources

## Web and Research Report Resources on Hunger and Food Insecurity

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### Web Resources

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- **America's Second Harvest:** [www.secondharvest.org](http://www.secondharvest.org)
- **Food Research and Action Center:** [www.frac.org](http://www.frac.org)
- **Indiana's Directory of Food Assistance Organizations:** [www.cfs.purdue.edu/safefood/directoryrelease.html](http://www.cfs.purdue.edu/safefood/directoryrelease.html)
- **Indiana Family and Social Services Administration:** [www.in.gov/fssa](http://www.in.gov/fssa)
- **National Association of Nutrition and Aging Services Programs:** [www.nanasp.org/](http://www.nanasp.org/)
- **Stats Indiana:** [www.stats.indiana.edu](http://www.stats.indiana.edu)
- **The Congressional Hunger Center:** [www.hungercenter.org/index.htm](http://www.hungercenter.org/index.htm)
- **United States Department of Agriculture (USDA):** [www.usda.gov/wps/portal/usdahome](http://www.usda.gov/wps/portal/usdahome)
  - **Food and Nutrition Service:** <http://www.fns.usda.gov/fncs/>
  - **Economic Research Service/FNS Data Set Resources:** <http://www.ers.usda.gov/Briefing/FoodNutritionAssistance/data/>
- **U.S. House Committee on Agriculture:** <http://agriculture.house.gov/>
- **U.S. Senate Agriculture Committee:** <http://agriculture.senate.gov/>

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Pearce, D. and Newby, M. (2005). The Self-Sufficiency Standard for Indiana, 2005. University of Washington Center for Women's Welfare, Seattle, Washington and the Indiana Coalition on Housing and Homeless Issues. Indianapolis, Indiana. Online: [http://www.ichhi.org/downloads/contentDocuments/the\\_2005\\_selfsufficiency\\_standard\\_for\\_indiana\\_final\\_92805.pdf](http://www.ichhi.org/downloads/contentDocuments/the_2005_selfsufficiency_standard_for_indiana_final_92805.pdf).

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