

Second Harvest

Need Statement for Benton-Franklin County

There is no doubt the food need within our local communities is great. Second Harvest works to prevent hunger in the community, including Benton and Franklin Counties, by providing food to those in need. Nationwide, 42 million Americans are at risk of hunger. There is much importance in local food banks having the most up-to-date information and statistics regarding food need in local area in order for the assistance within the community to be as effective as possible.

Even though Washington is listed as 11th for value in agriculture products sold, the state still ranks as 23rd for hunger in the United States. Farming is an immense business in Benton and Franklin counties; however, the locals are not seeing the return.

Feeding America organization has tracked food insecurity throughout the nation. According to Feeding America, food insecurity refers to, “lack of access, at times, to enough food for an active, healthy life for all household members and limited or uncertain availability of nutritionally adequate foods.” Those who claim to be food insecure were as high as 11.3% in Benton County and 6.7% in Franklin County (18% total). On the surface, these numbers may not seem great, but that is approximately 26,690 people that have limited access to food. This means one in seven people in Benton and Franklin Counties are currently facing hunger.

Benton and Franklin Counties have the highest percentage of food insecurity amongst children in Washington. The counties combined show a youth food insecurity rate of 23.4%. It is argued by No Kid Hungry organization that children who do not receive proper nutrition are more likely to struggle in school, suffer from increased health issues, and are less likely to finish high school or earn a college degree. These children will continue to grow into adults who are less likely to earn a livable wage; therefore, creating a circle of poverty and hunger. This is why it is of the utmost importance to address hunger early in life. Local food banks often indicate the higher level of poverty in the counties to be the main underlying cause for hunger the community.

Second Harvest works through its deeply rooted mission statement “Fighting hunger, feeding hope: Second Harvest brings community resources together to feed people in need through empowerment, education and partnerships.” Second Harvest provides free food each month to more than 25 food banks, meal centers and other hunger-relief programs that are feeding hungry people in Benton and Franklin counties. Second Harvest also organizes charitable events such as the “Hunger Hike” where donations provided food for children and families in need in the local area. Second Harvest recently opened up a new distribution center in Pasco. The new facility is just one part of Second Harvest’s system-wide upgrade. The new facility will assist in Second Harvest increasing food distribution in the Columbia Basin to 9 million pounds of food annually by 2018. With this new facility up and running, Second Harvest will continue to expand its relationship with local farmers, manufactures, and grocers to get more food to people in need.

Resources:

Benton Franklin County Health District. (2016). *“Assistance available for kids, older adults who face food insecurity.”* Tri-City Herald.

Feeding America. (2017). *“2017 Overall Food Insecurity: Data by County & Congressional District in Each State.”*

Haas, Elise. (2016). *“A collaborative approach to fighting hunger, helping families lead more nutritious lives.”* KEPRtv.