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Missouri ranked second for households without enough food

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COLUMBIA - The annual United States Department of Agriculture report on household food security reveals Missouri has the second-highest percentage of households without enough food to eat.

The report shows that almost eight percent of Missourians fall into the "very low food supply" category. Communications Manager for Feeding Missouri, Monica Palmer, said this category is actually the worst category in the report because it means people are going without meals.

"That is the worst category of food security and in that category, Missouri is currently number two, second only to Arkansas," Palmer said.

The USDA report also showed Missouri is tied for seventh in the nation for overall food insecurity, with 17 percent of Missouri households falling in the "low or

very low food supply category." The low food supply category is defined as lacking enough food for an active, healthy lifestyle.

The report revealed that Missouri's prevalence of food insecurity is higher than the national average.

Palmer said 60 percent of the agencies that receive help from Missouri food banks have seen an increase in the number of people needing assistance this past year.

"Hunger doesn't look the same in the U.S. as it does in third-world countries. We have more of an issue of malnourishment than undernourishment, so people may be eating, but they're eating inexpensive foods that are high in calories and low in nutrient value," Palmer said.

Palmer said the exact reasons Missouri is so high in the very low food supply category is unknown, but people need to acknowledge the problem so government agencies and corporations will work toward solutions.

"We still have a hunger problem in Missouri and we need to be aware of it, acknowledge it and then we can work to solve it," Palmer said.

September is Hunger Action Month and Palmer said taking action to reduce hunger in Missouri is key. Palmer wants to encourage people to start food drives, raise awareness and volunteer at local food banks.

The Food Bank for Central and Northeast Missouri serves about 114,000 people a month according to Communications Coordinator Mike DeSantis. Donations can be made [here](#).

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