

# Food Insecurity in Alaska: What We Know and How We Know It

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# What We Will Cover Today

- Food Insecurity definitions and data, causes and correlations
- Changing Face of Hunger – client demographics
- Programs available to address hunger in Alaska



# Food Insecurity Defined

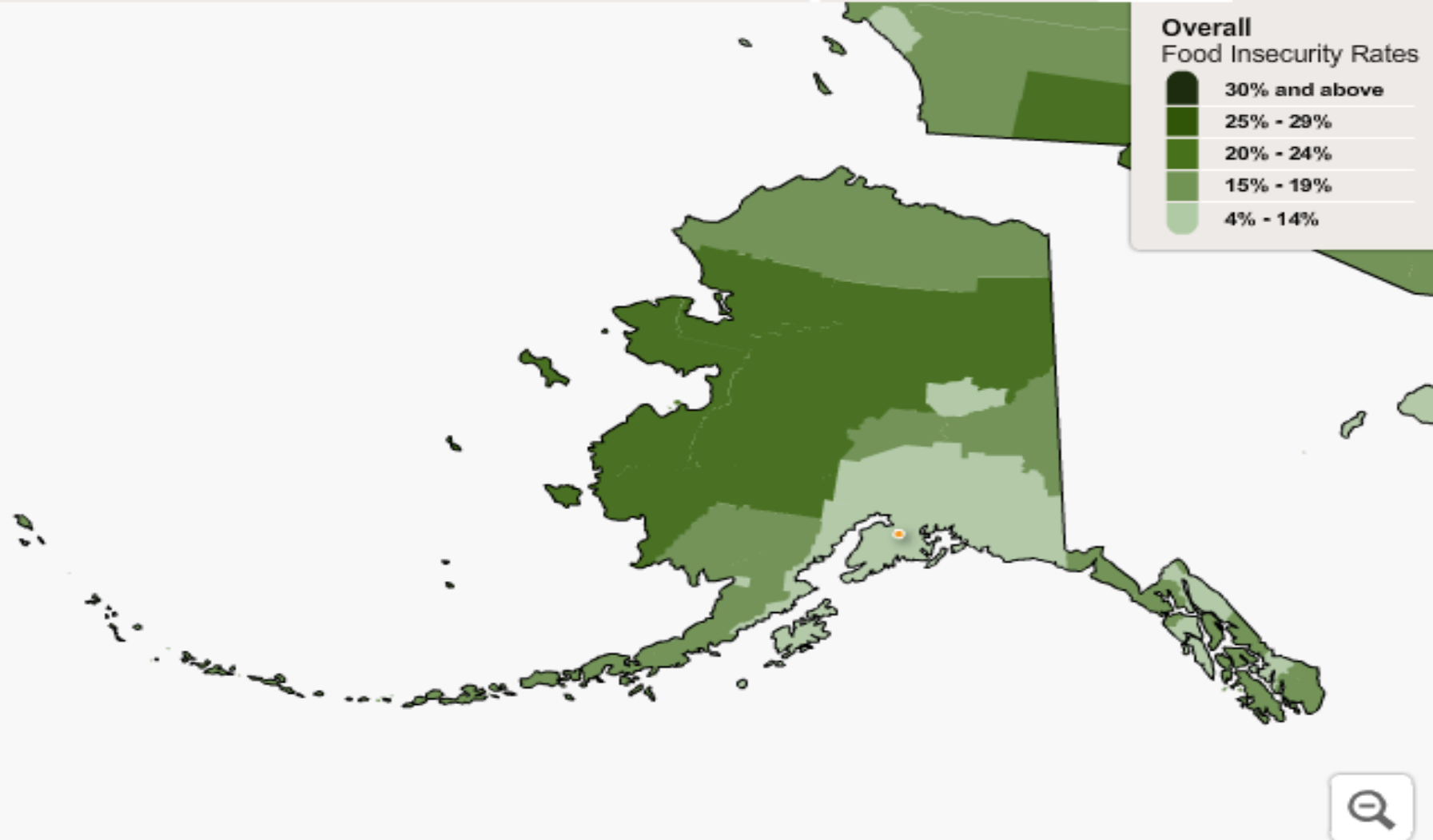
- Food insecurity, defined as the inability to access sufficient, safe, and nutritious foods in socially acceptable ways
- Higher in low-income population, but not restricted to low-income



# Map the Meal Gap

- 102,180 Alaskans, or 14%, are food insecure
- 36,650 or 19.6% of Alaskan children are food insecure





## Alaska



**OVERALL**  
food insecurity rate



Food insecure people  
**102,180**

**Estimated program eligibility among food insecure people:**



- 45%** below SNAP threshold of 130% poverty
- 18%** between 130-185% poverty
- 37%** above Other Nutrition Program threshold of 185% poverty

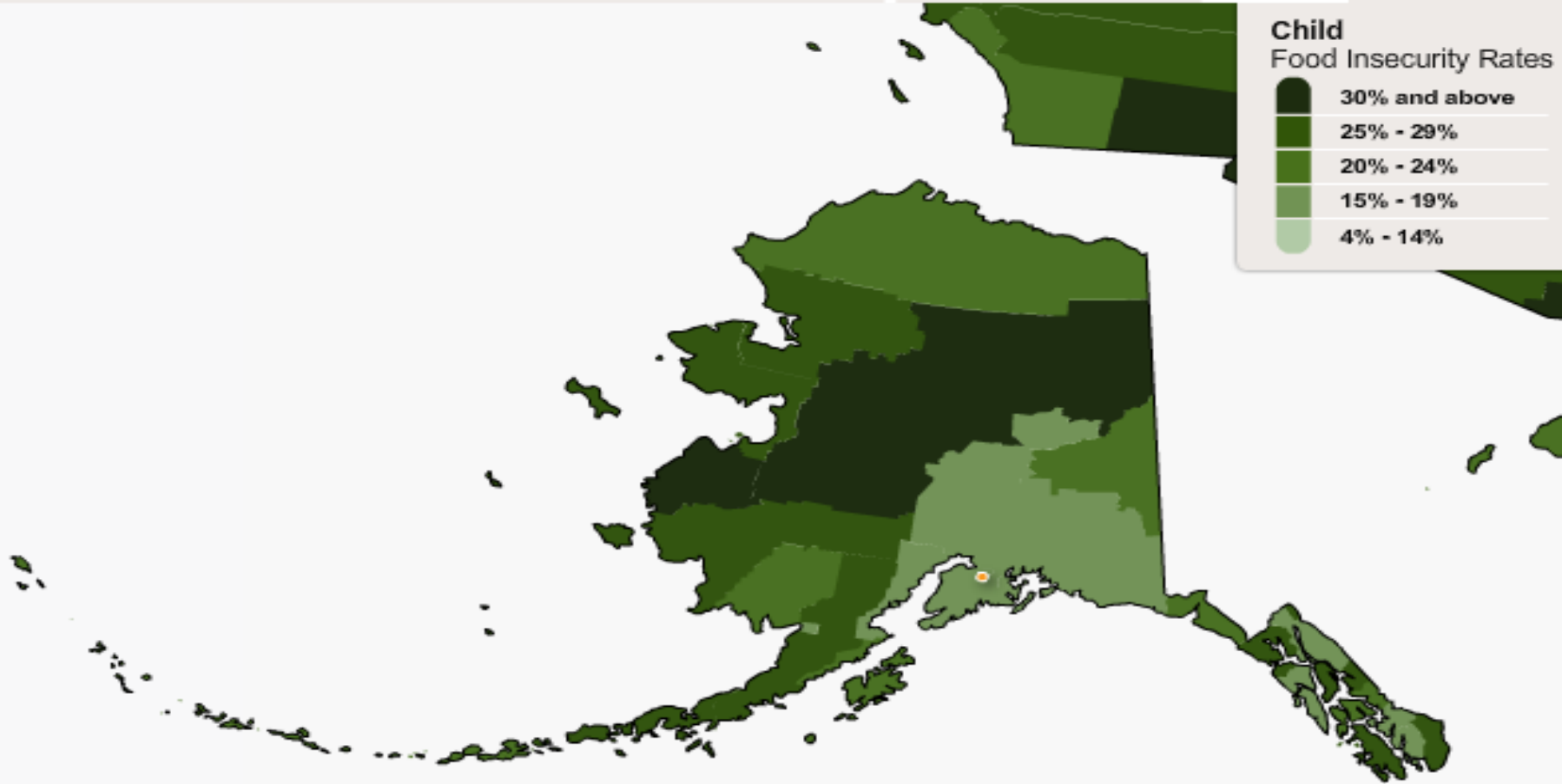
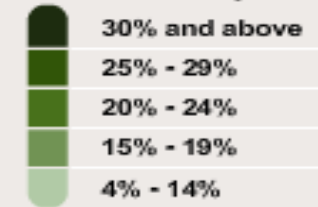
Additional money required to meet food needs in 2012

**\$55,653,000**

Average cost of a meal:

**\$3.11**

## Child Food Insecurity Rates



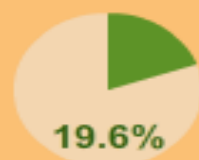
### Alaska

OVERALL  
food insecurity rate



102,180  
Food insecure people

CHILD  
food insecurity rate



36,650  
Food insecure children

Estimated program eligibility among  
food insecure children

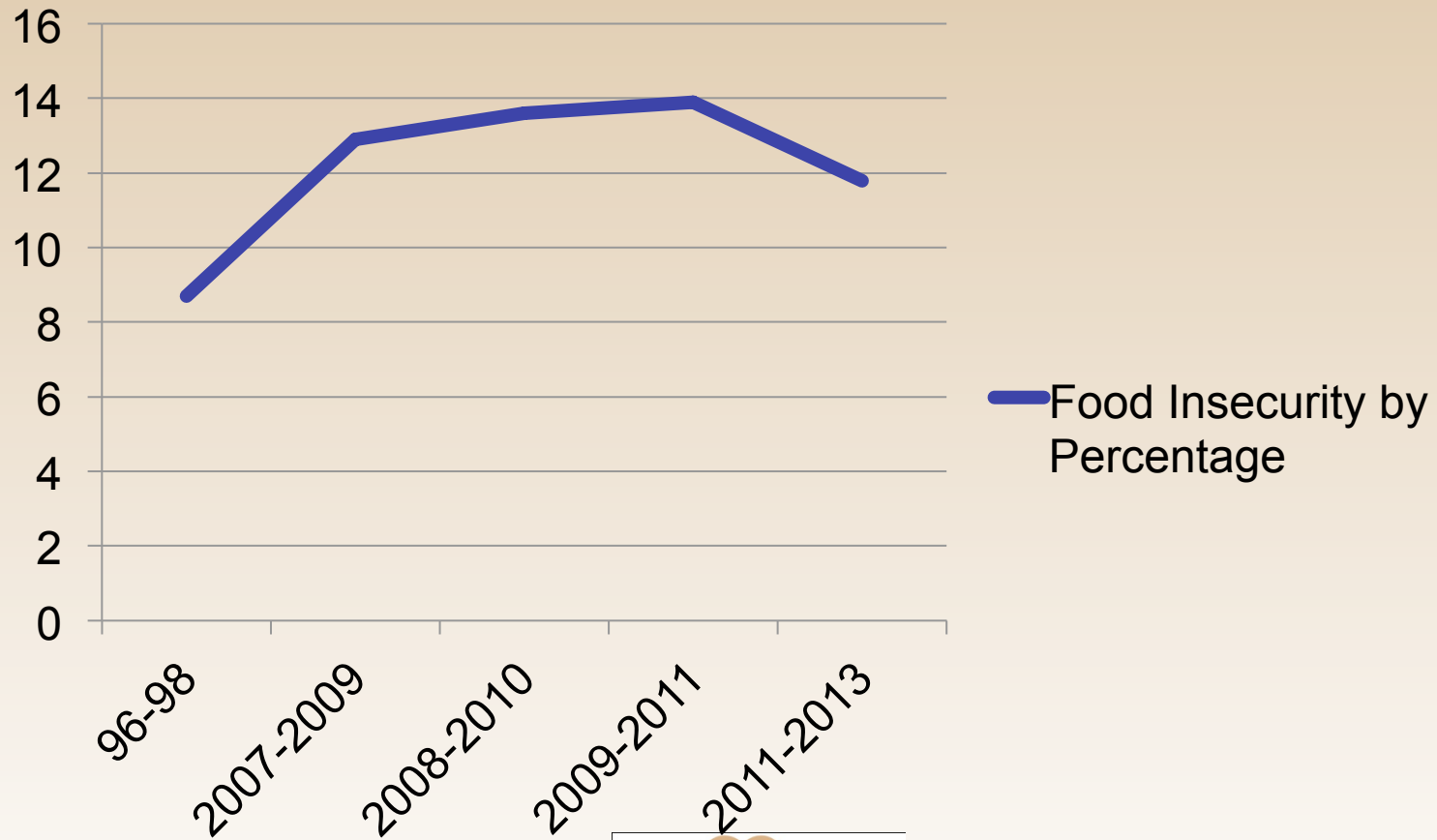


61% income-eligible for nutrition programs (incomes at or below 185% of poverty)

39% likely ineligible for federal nutrition programs (incomes above 185% of poverty)

# Household Food Security Study

## Food Insecurity by Percentage



<http://www.ers.usda.gov/media/1565415/err173.pdf>



# Food Hardship

- Asks one question “Have there been times in the last twelve months when you did not have enough money to buy food that you or your family needed?”
- 19.2% of Alaskans answered yes, up 1% since the 2011 study
- We rank 23<sup>rd</sup> for food hardship rates in the nation





# BRFSS

- Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System
- Phone survey conducted biennially by State of Alaska (and most states)
- Intended to learn about behavior that leads to health risks, like smoking

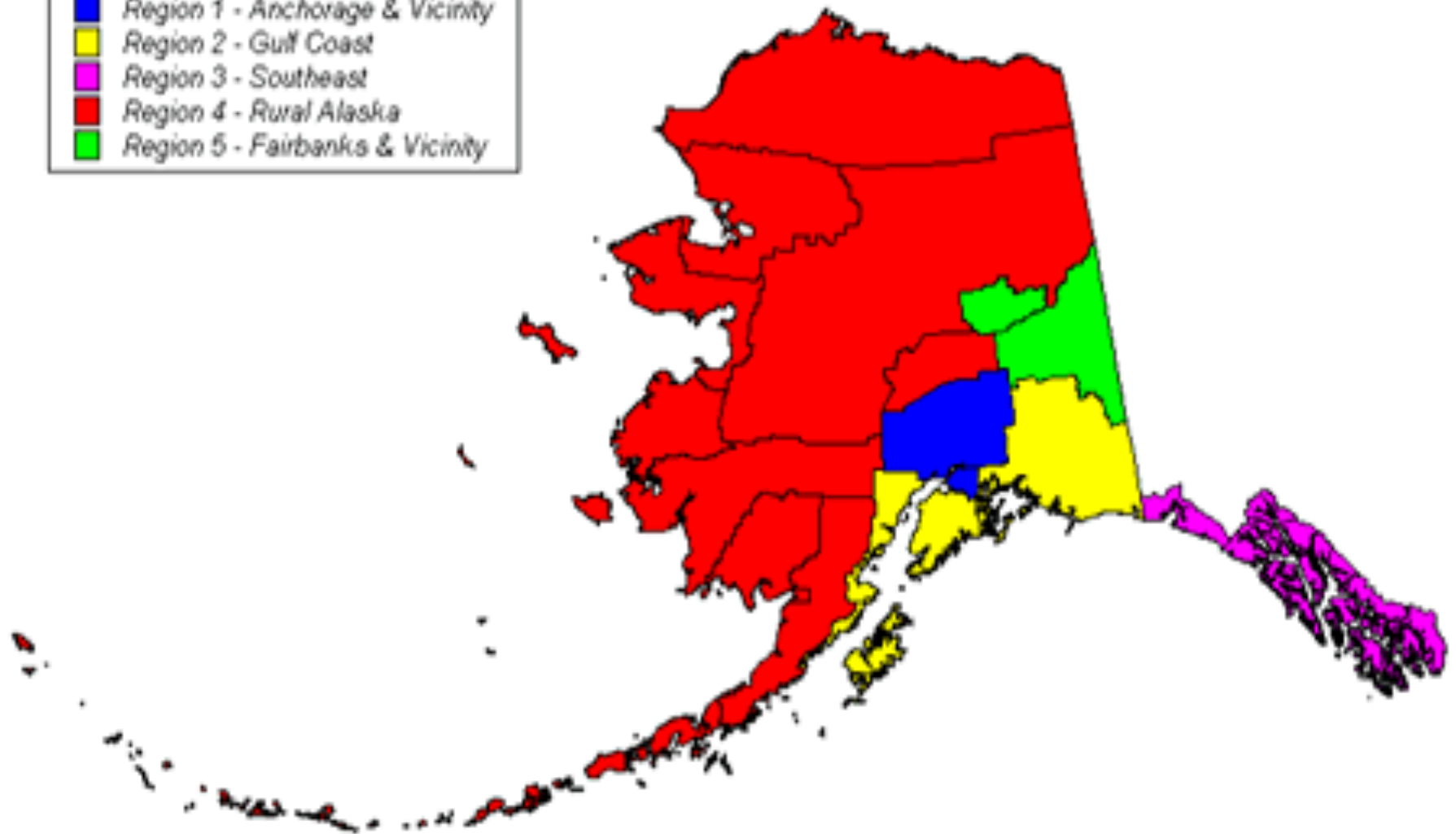


# BRFSS

- Alaska WIC paid to add a selection of the Household Food Security Study questions to BRFSS in 2006
- The idea was to get a more granular sense of the ‘universe of need’ – broken down by region in the state



## ***BRFSS Regions in Alaska***



Source: State of Alaska, Dept. of HSS, Division of Public Health, CHBS Unit

# BRFSS

	% of Food Insecure Adults	% of Food Insecure Children
Alaska	11 %	15 %
Anchorage	10 %	15 %
Gulf Coast	11 %	14 %
Southeast	7 %	9 %
Rural	20 %	24 %
Fairbanks	9 %	14 %



# 2014 Hunger Study

- Coordinated by Feeding America
- Alaska Food Coalition and FBA staff and volunteers conducted in-person interviews of 619 Alaskans in spring 2012-2013
- Interviews conducted in a random sample of communities statewide
- Conducted 77 program visits in network
- Surveyed 194 partner agencies



# 2014 Hunger Study

- Aims to learn who is seeking food assistance – demographic information on current clients and certain information about programs offered in our network
- Best source of data on the details of who is hungry in Alaska



# 2014 Hunger Study – Changing Face of Hunger

- Who Are We Serving? 1 in 7 Alaskans turn to our network for help each year.  
Including:
  - 184,000 Alaskans served annually (or 63,200 households); 21,200 unique clients in a typical week (or 7,700 households).
  - 32% children under 18
  - 13% seniors aged 60 and older



# Changing Face of Hunger

- 23.3% at least one member has served in military, 2.6% are currently serving
- 60.3% worked for pay in last 12 months
  - 43% worked for pay in last four weeks. More likely to work part time
- 21% of households are retired and 69% of households cannot work due to disability.
  - 11% of households include grandparents who have responsibility for grandchildren who live with them







# Hungry People Are Faced With Difficult Choices

- 64% making choices between food/transportation
- 56% making choices between meds/meals
- 53% making choices between housing/food
- 59% making choices between utilities/food



# Health of Clients

- 26% of households reports at least one member with diabetes
- 47% have high blood pressure
- 34% have no health insurance
- 56% have unpaid medical bills



# Income of Clients

- 53% of clients served have incomes that are at or below the federal poverty level (\$15,510 or less for household of two)
- 27% have incomes between \$1-\$10,000 annually; 29% have incomes of \$10,001-\$20,000 annually



# 100% of Poverty Line

<b>Family or Household</b>	<b>Alaska</b>
1	\$14,580
2	\$19,660
3	\$24,740
4	\$29,820



# Education of Clients

- 7% have an adult student in the home
- 87% of all clients have attained a high school degree or GED or more, 35% of all clients have post-high school education (including license or certification, some college or a four-year degree)



# Housing and Clients

- 12% of households own their home with a mortgage
- 60% rent or lease
- 88% of clients live in non-temporary housing/”stable” housing
  - 17% starting living with another family in the past 12 months to make ends meet
  - 15% have faced eviction



# Housing Continued

- 7% of households do not have access to cooking facilities such as stove or hot plate
- 15% of households don't have access to place to preserve fresh food, such as a refrigerator







# Hunger & SNAP

- 45% of households participate in SNAP but 26% report that their benefits last only one week or less; 30% report lasting two weeks; 25% report that benefits last for three weeks; and 19% report that benefits usually last four weeks or more.
- 20% of clients not participating in SNAP cite believing they are not eligible as reason for not participating



# Hunger & Top Desired Food

- Top three desired food items of clients reported was: Dairy products such as milk, cheese, or yogurt (29%); fresh fruits and vegetables (53%); protein food items like meats (54%)



# Client Coping Strategies

- Eaten food past expiration date – 71%
- Grew food in garden – 18%
- Purchased food in dented or damaged packages 57%
- Purchased inexpensive, unhealthy food – 81%
- Received help from family or friends – 54%
- Sold or pawned personal property – 29%
- Watered down food or drinks – 37%



# Low Income Neighborhoods & Obesity

- Research is limited on the relationship between food insecurity, poverty, and weight
- Complex relationship of issues: lack access to healthy, affordable foods, yet have an unequal proportion of fast-food restaurants and convenience stores that provide large portions of cheap, high calorie foods.

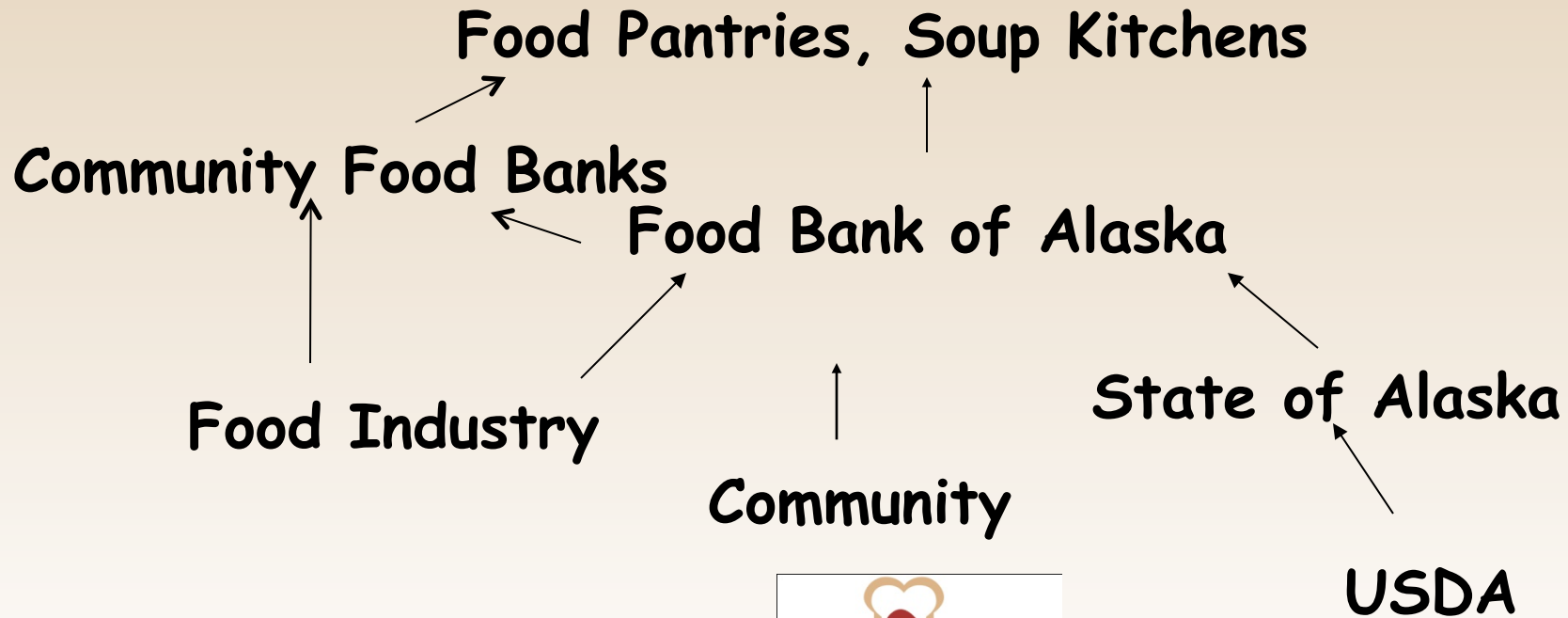




# FBA Partner Agency Network



# Charitable Anti-Hunger System



# How Families Get Help

- Charitable efforts – soup kitchens, food pantries, summer camps, feeding neighborhood kids
- FBA distributed nearly 7 million pounds of food in FY13 through the charitable food network around Alaska.





# Agencies in our Network

- Meal Programs make up 19.5% of network and Grocery programs make up 80.5%
- 50% are faith based
- 64% of agencies report employing paid staff. The median number of paid FTEs was 5; however, Average agency relies on multiple part-time individuals to make up one full time position.



# Agencies in our Network

- Volunteer work force is used the median number of volunteers assisting at programs in a typical week is 5, giving a median of 19 volunteer hours each week.
- 8% of volunteers are age 18 or younger
- 64% of volunteers are between 19-59 years old, and 28% are age 60 or older.



# Food Need and Sources of our Network Partners

- 37% of agencies report having somewhat less or a lot less food than needed to meet clients' needs.
- Average percentage of total food distributed by food programs in the past 12 months by source:
  - 51.8% came from FBA
  - 13.5% donations
  - 31.0% purchased
  - 3.6% other



# Some Charitable Child Nutrition Programs

- KNN – Knowledge Needs Nutrition
- Back Pack Buddies – Faith Christian
- The Children's Lunchbox, weekend food program
- Dare to Care
- Schools Foundation



# Food Assistance Programs: How Families Get Help

- School Meals

About 44% of all school children in Alaska qualify for free or reduced price meals

- After School Meals (CACFP)

- 15 rural communities

- Summer Food Service Program (SFSP)

- 55 rural communities serving over 65,000 meals



# When School is Out

- Two USDA programs –  
Child and Adult Care Food Program

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## Summer Food Service Program

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<http://education.alaska.gov/tls/cnp>



# Child and Adult Care Food Program

- The most complex federal program ever invented (well, one of them at least)
- Many options: Child Care Centers & Family Day Care Homes, Head Starts & Pre-Schools, Emergency Shelters and...
- **At-Risk Afterschool Meals** – thanks to the 2010 Healthy, Hunger Free Kids Act



# Child and Adult Care Food Program

- At-risk meals is a reimbursement program for suppers/snacks served to children after school
- Meals must meet USDA meal pattern requirements (and they are different from SFSP!)
- Sites must offer an activity in order to qualify for the at-risk meals program, kids are not required to participate in the activity in order to get the meal





# Child and Adult Care Food Program

- Site **MUST** be located in an impoverished area
- Site is located in the attendance area of a public school where at least 50% of students are eligible for F/RP meals under NSLP



# Number of At-Risk Sites in AK

- At-Risk Afterschool Meal Sites (serving suppers during school year): **37**
- At-Risk Afterschool Meal Sites (serving afterschool snacks during school year): **59**



# Child and Adult Care Food Program

- Because at-risk meals program is new, this program is still very small in Alaska
- FBA is sponsoring 8 at-risk meal sites; 7 in rural Alaska this year and 1 in Anchorage
- Some school districts are also operating the at-risk meal program at their schools: Anchorage, Dillingham, Haines, and Petersburg



# Benefits of CACFP Participation

- Studies show that
  - children in CACFP receive meals that are nutritionally superior to those served to children in child care settings without CACFP.
  - Children in participating institutions have higher intakes of key nutrients, fewer servings of fats and sweets, than children in non-participating care.

<http://frac.org/federal-foodnutrition-programs/child-and-adult-care-program/>



# Benefits of CACFP Cont'd.

- Research cites participation in CACFP as one of the major factors influencing quality care – 87 percent of the family child care homes considered to be providing quality child care participated in CACFP.

<http://frac.org/federal-foodnutrition-programs/child-and-adult-care-program/>



# Benefits of CACFP Cont'd.

- CACFP also makes child care and afterschool programs more affordable for low-income parents, who rely on these programs to provide a safe and healthy place for their children. 87 percent of the family child care homes considered to provide good quality care participate in CACFP.

<http://frac.org/federal-foodnutrition-programs/child-and-adult-care-program/>





# Summer Food Service Program

- A reimbursement program for meals served to children under age 19 during the summer
- Meals must meet USDA meal pattern requirements





# Key Players

- USDA – sets the rules
- State of Alaska – administers the rules
- Sponsor – takes legal responsibility and maintains paperwork
- Site – provides meals to kids



# Food Flexibility

- Self-prep – make food on-site
- Vended – purchase food from someone else, hot or cold
- Pre-packed – shelf-stable ‘lunch-able’ type meals



# Some of the Headaches

- Not all sites qualify – they have to be located in a low-income area or take income applications
- Sites must be monitored at least three times during the summer
- Paperwork



# Getting Creative

- Unusual sites – DPA offices, Food Pantry of Wasilla, libraries
- Using local monitors for rural sites



# FBA SFSP Site, Holy Cross



July 26, 2012

To Whom It May Concern:

I am a grandmother of two children ages 7 and 8. While at the library, time does move fast, and the children get hungry. Most times I have to gather our things, and leave the library. One day I overheard other children talking about how the library feeds you. Their voices were loud with excitement. I investigated the information and found that indeed, the Mountain View Library have a luncheon program.

I took my grandchildren to the area where the library serves the children their meal and I watched the children that were so excited about the food. I saw how hungry two of those children were. I knew the lunch was their first meal that day.

I write this letter of appreciation, for all the children in our state that are now able to have a meal, through your program.

I find the program to be beneficial in other ways as well. Children are able to interact with their peers, and participate in other educational activities that they may not have even come to the library for, if a meal was not provided.

My grandchildren as well as others are enjoying a fun, safe, and educational environment.

Moreover, I have never witness any library staffers or volunteers making anyone feel less than a person because they are participating in their luncheon program.

The Library Luncheon Program ROCKS.

Thank You.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Aunt R. Williams", written over a large, light-colored scribble or mark.

# Bigger SFSP Sponsors

- Food Bank of Alaska
- The Children's Lunchbox
- Campfire USA Alaska Council
- Grandview Baptist Church
- Boys and Girls Club



# SFSP Results

- In 2012, there were about 160 SFSP sites in Alaska that served about 259,804 meals
- Kids served per day on average was about 4,661





# Other Federal Programs

- Food Stamps/SNAP – 91,000 in FY13 (1 in 8 people)
- WIC – 23, 055 in FY13
- TANF – 3,352 (not including tribal providers)



# Food Stamps/SNAP

- Largest federal nutrition program
- 91,000 Alaskans participated in FFY2013
- Average benefit per person is \$170.07 per month
- Average benefit per family is \$414 per month



# Food Stamps/SNAP Cont'd.

- Benefits are placed on a debit card and can only be used to purchase food
- Food Stamp benefits last, on average, 2.5 weeks
- 76% of SNAP households contain a child, senior, or disabled member, and 84% of all benefits go to these households



# Other Food Programs at Food Bank of Alaska

- CSFP – Commodity Supplemental Food Program
- Administered by the State of Alaska, Department of Health & Social Services
- Distributes nutritious foods to low-income seniors, pregnant or postpartum women and children up to their 6<sup>th</sup> birthday that are not on WIC



# Other Programs - CSFP

- CSFP food boxes are available once a month to eligible clients.
- Different eligibility requirements for each group
- There are currently 19 FBA affiliated CSFP distribution agencies throughout Anchorage, the Mat-Su Valley and Southeast (does not include KPFB's agencies +5)



# Other Programs - TEFAP

- TEFAP – The Emergency Food Assistance Program
- Administered by the State of Alaska, Department of Education & Early Development
- Provides a once a month food allotment of USDA foods to eligible low-income households



# Other Programs – TEFAP Cont'd

- Income based eligibility
- Households must go through a TEFAP distribution agency to participate in the program
- There are currently 44 FBA affiliated TEFAP distribution agencies throughout Alaska (does not include KPFB (+2) and FCFB agencies)



# Other Programs - FDPIR

- FDPIR
- Provides a once a month allotment of USDA foods to eligible low-income households living in Alaska villages with fewer than 10,000 people.
- Administered by ANTHC





# Other Programs – FDPIR Cont'd

- Households must go through an FDPIR distribution agency in their village to participate in the program.
- Households cannot participate in FDPIR and Food Stamps at the same time
- There are currently 19 FDPIR distribution agencies in rural Alaska



# Concluding Thoughts

- Federal nutrition assistance programs are critical in helping to feed hungry Alaskans and have been shown to improve food security for low income people.
- Kids who have access to enough healthy, balanced meals perform better in school



# Concluding Thoughts

- Nutrition programs help free up resources for families so they don't have to choose between food and rent or heating fuel.
- Programs that help reduce poverty and improve low income neighborhoods to increase access to healthy, affordable foods and more opportunities to be physically active have an important part of a healthy Alaska!



# What Can You Do?

- **Charities, individuals, and government all have a role to play. Please consider giving:**
  - **Funds & Food – for every dollar we can buy 4 meals**
  - **Voice – Advocacy during CNR in 2015**
  - **Time - Volunteer**



# Thank you!

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