

CHILD HUNGER IN WISCONSIN

Wisconsin's children are facing rising hunger and food insecurity

20%

of Wisconsin children are
food insecure.

60%

increase in child hunger
over the last five years.

40%

of U.S. college students
are food insecure.

CHILD HUNGER IN WISCONSIN

2020 - 2024



HUNGER HARMS MENTAL HEALTH

Beyond the problems that hunger poses to child development and physical health, it also raises the risk of youth developing mental health problems. Hunger is linked to anxiety, depression, panic disorder, and suicidal thinking.

30% of Wisconsin high school students who are food insecure seriously considered suicide.

RESEARCH ON WHAT HELPS

- ➔ **Child Tax Credits.** Data show families use tax credits to cover essential needs like food and groceries, which reduces food insecurity, stabilizes household finances, and lowers child maltreatment.
- ➔ **School Meals.** Free school meals that are universally offered lower stigma for kids who can't afford lunch. Universal school meals are linked to lower anxiety and depression as students don't have to worry about when they will eat again. Free school meals also help to improve student focus and classroom behavior.
- ➔ **Nutrition Assistance.** The federal food assistance program, SNAP (known as FoodShare in Wisconsin) significantly reduces child hunger, especially during difficult economic periods.

SOURCES

<https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC7282962/>
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<https://www.cbpp.org/blog/snap-is-and-remains-our-most-effective-tool-to-combat-hunger>



WISCONSIN OFFICE OF
**Children's
Mental Health**

SEPTEMBER 2026