

Why Are 14 Million Children Hungry in America: The World's Richest Country with the Biggest Economic Advantages

Households with child food insecurity increased by 44% in just one year

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Region: [USA](#)

Theme: [Poverty & Social Inequality](#)

There are nearly 14 million children in the USA who suffer from food insecurity and hunger, or about one in five. During the peak of the COVID crisis this had come close to about 18 million (see The Conversation discussion by four experts titled '18 million US children are at risk of hunger', January 21, 2021).

This is part of a wider and serious problem of hunger and food insecurity in all age-groups.

According to the US Department of Agriculture's report 'Household Food Security in the USA in 2022', in 2022 17 million US households (or 12.8% of the total number of households) were food insecure or suffered from hunger to a lesser or greater extent. This number had increased from 10.2% in 2021. Within this number of 17 million households, 6.8 million had very low food security, or suffered even more from hunger. This number of households suffering from very high food insecurity also went up from 3.8% to 5.1% from 2021 to 2022, when seen as a percentage of total households.

The number of households where children suffered from food insecurity is recorded at lower levels as the number of households with children is only 39% of total households in the USA, and also because elders generally try to protect children from hunger. Nevertheless it is disturbing to learn from this official report that the number of households with child food insecurity and hunger was 2.3 million in 2021 and went up very rapidly to 3.3 million in 2022, a 44% increase in just one year. Similarly households with high child food insecurity (which includes children skipping meals or altogether going without food for a day) increased from 274,000 in 2021 to 381,000 in 2022 in just one year, a 40% rise in just one year.

In addition there are hungry children (age-group up to 18) living outside households who face high food insecurity, including those who are homeless.

Food insecurity and hunger among certain sections of population like blacks and Latinos are significantly higher than the national average.

Hence a question arises that a country which has very high GNP and the topmost number of billionaires, which has very high natural resource base, which was favored by history to emerge at the top, which has extraordinary power to create currency and trade systems to suit its interests, is unable to feed its people properly and has very high rates of hunger and food insecurity among its people and most glaringly among its children.

What is more, while the country could make available hundreds of billions of dollars for the most destructive wars and proxy wars, it could not make available tens of billions of dollars which could have ensured that (almost) no one was hungry in the USA, as per the estimates given by various groups fighting hunger in USA.

In fact the available data shows that while the USA was getting deeply involved in such proxy conflicts which have been extremely costly in terms of loss of life, the number of those affected by hunger and food insecurity in the USA was rising at a very high rate.

In many parts of USA the expected decrease in hunger following the end of COVID crisis did not take place as some of the special programs to keep away hunger and other deprivation during the COVID days were rolled back too hurriedly.

In fact recently the Food Research and Action Center issued a warning that as about 12 states in the USA are poised to move away from a combined 1.4 billion dollar spending on food and nutrition (EBT) program, this can lead to an increase in food insecurity for about 10 million children during the summer next year (2025).

All this draws attention to how far removed capitalism, particularly in its more aggressive forms, is from meeting the most priority needs of its own people, let alone being sensitive to the needs and safety of the people of other countries.

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