

Needs Assessment: Hunger/Food Insecurity

The Community Fund of Darien

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Definition of Food Insecurity

- The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) defines food insecurity as lack of consistent access to enough food for a healthy life
- Poverty and food insecurity in the United States are closely related, but people living below the poverty line are not always experiencing food insecurity, and people living above the poverty line can experience food insecurity
- It is estimated that in Fairfield County, a family of four (two adults and two children) needs an annual salary of about \$71,000 to avoid being food insecure.
 - If working poor earn minimum wage (2017 \$10.10/hour), both adults would have to work 10 hours a day, 7 days a week for the entire year, just to earn \$70,700

Food Insecurity in Fairfield County

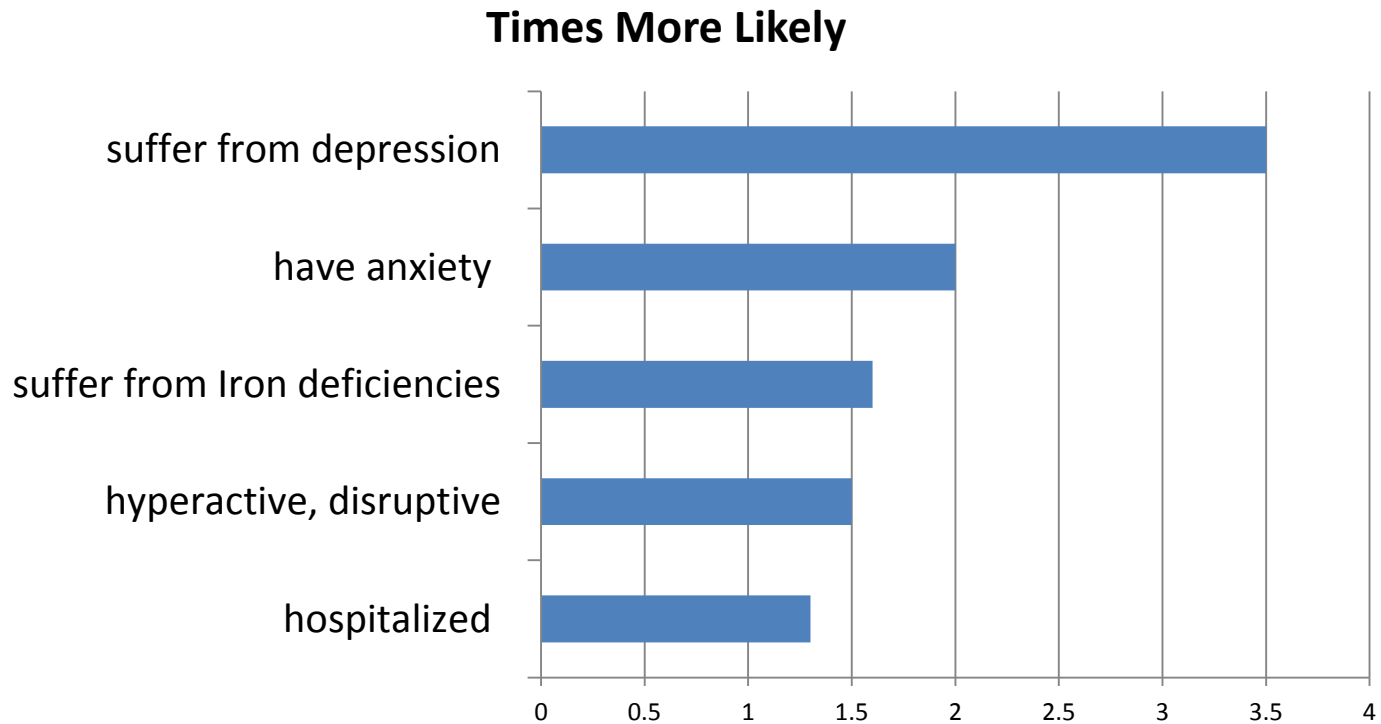
- In FFC, over 94,000 or 10% of population is food insecure
 - Among residents who identified as white, this figure was 6% compared to 23% among residents who identified as black or Latino
- 1 of every 6 Stamford residents face food insecurity = over 20,000 residents
- Average price per meal in FFC: \$3.49 (vs. national avg. \$2.89)
 - high cost of living in FFC means people must earn more in order to be food secure
- CT 2017: 1/8 residents struggle with hunger. 1 /6 children struggle with hunger

SNAP Benefits

- The income standards for SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program formerly known as the Food Stamps) program are based the federal poverty levels (FPL).
 - Income limit is equal to 185% of the current Federal Poverty Level
 - In CT, maximum income would be \$1860 a month for 1 person or \$3793 for a family of 4
- 62% of FFC residents live below the SNAP threshold of 185% of FPL
- In Connecticut, 1/3 of SNAP participants are working families

Impact on Children

- In FFC 34,890 children living in a food insecure household
- Child who suffers from food-insecurity:



Food insecurity and Obesity

- Coexistence of food insecurity and obesity expected given both are consequences of economic and social disadvantage
 - Psychological stress, habits of overeating when food is available, and the inability to consume higher-quality foods that cost more money or take more time to prepare
- In 2015, the rate of obesity in FFC= 22 % vs. national 35% and state 26%
 - In CT, obesity rates increased dramatically from 16% in 2000 to 26%
 - 28% of Black and Hispanic adult populations are obese in Norwalk
 - Bridgeport- Stamford-Norwalk metro area, 9% of families with children have trouble finding affordable fresh fruits and vegetables

Local Programs that Help

- In addition to supporting food pantries and feeding programs, should consider support of programs that address the root causes of poverty such as employment programs, affordable housing, and programs that build income security and economic opportunity
- P2P: In FY17, 9172 unique clients (5,535 adults and 4,232 children), were served by P2P Food Pantry (Darien, Norwalk)
 - In late 2017, P2P will operate a Mobile Food Pantry (bus) capable of serving an additional 35-40 families per day/5x week in Stamford
- The Food Bank distributed more than 1.2 million pounds of food to its member agencies in FY2017
- New Covenant food programs are largest in Stamford; reach 3,500 individuals- but still only getting food to less than 20% of those who would qualify