For Immediate Release

NEW FEEDING AMERICA STUDY ON SENIOR HUNGER FINDS NATIONAL RATES REMAIN UNCHANGED

In Kentucky, Senior Food Insecurity was above the national rate.

May 19, 2022 – Feeding America®, last week, released The State of Senior Hunger in America in 2020, a study that sheds light on the extent to which food insecurity – or having limited access to enough food to live a healthy lifestyle – affects individuals aged 60 and older. The report shows that in 2020, 6.8% of seniors aged 60 or older in the United States, or 5.2 million seniors total, were food insecure, a rate that was unchanged compared to 2019. In Kentucky, the food insecurity rate for seniors was 10.8%, higher compared to the national rate and 4th highest in the nation. An additional report highlighting food insecurity among individuals aged 50-59 was also released as part of The State of Senior Hunger in America report series. The full reports can be found here. Kentucky had the second highest rate of food insecurity among individuals aged 50-59.

“This heart-wrenching study is a critical call to action,” said God’s Pantry Food Bank CEO Michael Halligan. “We are grateful for the resources entrusted to the Food Bank that help us fight hunger. We sponsor 91 Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP), a senior food box program, sites across Central and Eastern Kentucky with available capacity to serve another 3,000 individuals. If you need food assistance please go to http://godspantry.org/help/ or email CSFP@godspantry.org to learn how you can access nutritious food."

The study also finds there was a deepening divide along racial and ethnic lines. The Feeding America study shows that nationally food insecurity worsened among Black seniors, rising from 15.5% to 19.6%, while improving for white seniors, dropping from 5.0% to 4.2%, leading to wider disparities between most groups. In 2020, Black seniors were 4.7 times as likely and Latino seniors were 3.1 times as likely to experience food insecurity compared to white seniors. While the study does not include separate food insecurity estimates for other demographic groups, it has been shown through other analyses that individuals who identify as Native Americans, Pacific Islanders, and some Asian subgroups also have disproportionately high rates of food insecurity.

“Food insecurity is a complex issue, and seniors face many unique challenges when it comes to accessing food. Whether they are choosing between food and medicine or fuel, too many seniors have to make difficult decisions that could have harmful effects on their health and wellbeing and we are seeing that seniors from certain communities are more often having to make these decisions,” said Claire Babineaux-Fontenot, CEO of Feeding America.

With the cancellation of the pandemic state of emergency many seniors who were receiving the maximum Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits are now only receiving the minimum amount. One senior in Fayette County has gone from receiving $250 a month to now only receiving $20 while also recovering from a recent surgery and hospital stay. Because of the medical bills, they depend on the SNAP benefits and additional senior commodities to stretch the food budget for the
month. They are not alone, many of our senior neighbors across the commonwealth find themselves making tough choices and facing hunger in what should be their golden years.

God’s Pantry Food Bank is a member of the Feeding America network of food banks and provides food to those facing hunger in Central and Eastern Kentucky through a network of more than 450 food pantries and meal programs.

The study was funded by the Enterprise Rent-A-Car Foundation through its Fill Your Tank program, a multi-year initiative launched in 2016 to address food insecurity in communities around the world. It is one of the largest donations aimed at fighting hunger.

Learn more about senior hunger at feedingamerica.org and join the conversation about The State of Senior Hunger using #SolveSeniorHunger.

Contact
Misty Beard
mbeard@godspantry.org
859-288-5327

About God’s Pantry Food Bank
The mission of God’s Pantry Food Bank is to reduce hunger by working together to feed Kentucky communities. Working through more than 450 food pantries and meal programs the Food Bank serves 50 counties across Central and Eastern Kentucky. God’s Pantry Food Bank distributed nearly 41.8 million pounds of food to many of the more than 250,000 neighbors facing food insecurity, including nearly 13 million pounds of fresh produce in fiscal year 2021. For more information, visit us at www.godspantryfoodbank.org.

About Feeding America
Feeding America® is the largest hunger-relief organization in the United States. Through a network of more than 200 food banks, 21 statewide food bank associations, and over 60,000 partner agencies, food pantries and meal programs, we helped provide 6.6 billion meals to tens of millions of people in need last year. Feeding America also supports programs that prevent food waste and improve food security among the people we serve; brings attention to the social and systemic barriers that contribute to food insecurity in our nation; and advocates for legislation that protects people from going hungry. Visit www.feedingamerica.org, find us on Facebook or follow us on Twitter.

*In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA.