

# RENT EATS FIRST

## Hunger and Home Affordability in Idaho



Idaho Asset Building Network

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Idahoans in the most housing cost-burdened counties are 25 percent more likely to be food insecure.

**Having to decide between shelter and food seems impossible, but Idaho's low wages and increasing housing costs put some families in this position every day.** This can mean families resort to eating what's cheap rather than what's healthy or parents skip meals to ensure at least the children can have dinner.

One in eight Idahoans are food insecure, meaning they don't have consistent access to sufficient, affordable, and nutritious food. High rent prices force many of these families to skimp on groceries. Most people visiting food pantries report having to choose between paying their rent or food - and more than one in six are unable to avoid an eviction or foreclosure.

Families are housing cost-burdened if they spend more than 30 percent of their income on housing. In Idaho, counties with higher housing cost burden tend to have higher rates of food insecurity. For example, in Lemhi County home prices are 16 percent more likely to be unaffordable for residents, who are also 26 percent more likely to be food insecure. On average across the state, Idahoans who live in the most cost-burdened counties are 25 percent more likely to be food insecure.

**Solutions exist to help Idahoans buy groceries and help offset the high cost of housing.** The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program helps ensure seniors, children, Idahoans with disabilities, and residents facing low wages aren't forced to pay more than 30 percent of their income on groceries. Rental assistance programs were created to make homes affordable and tax credits for affordable home development encourage a supply of homes affordable at all income levels.

**Programs that help people keep a roof over their heads also help alleviate hunger.** Compared to families with low incomes who have access to rent they can afford, families with low incomes who are housing cost-burdened spend 13 percent less on food nationwide. On the other hand, children receiving rental assistance have a 19 percent lower risk of food insecurity and 28 percent lower risk of being seriously underweight when compared to their peers in families who are on the waiting list.



Children who receive rental assistance have a 19 percent lower risk of food insecurity.



Children who receive rental assistance have a 28 percent lower risk of being seriously underweight.

**But not all qualified Idahoans can get the help they need.** The average wait time for a qualified Idaho family to get rental assistance is nearly two years. Sign up today to learn how you can support necessary food and rental assistance programs for Idahoans at [IdahoAssetNetwork.org/subscribe](http://IdahoAssetNetwork.org/subscribe)



Idaho Asset  
Building Network

In partnership with Idaho Voices for Children

For more resources or more information:  
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Sources: Feeding America, American Community Survey 5-year Estimates, and Children's HealthWatch.