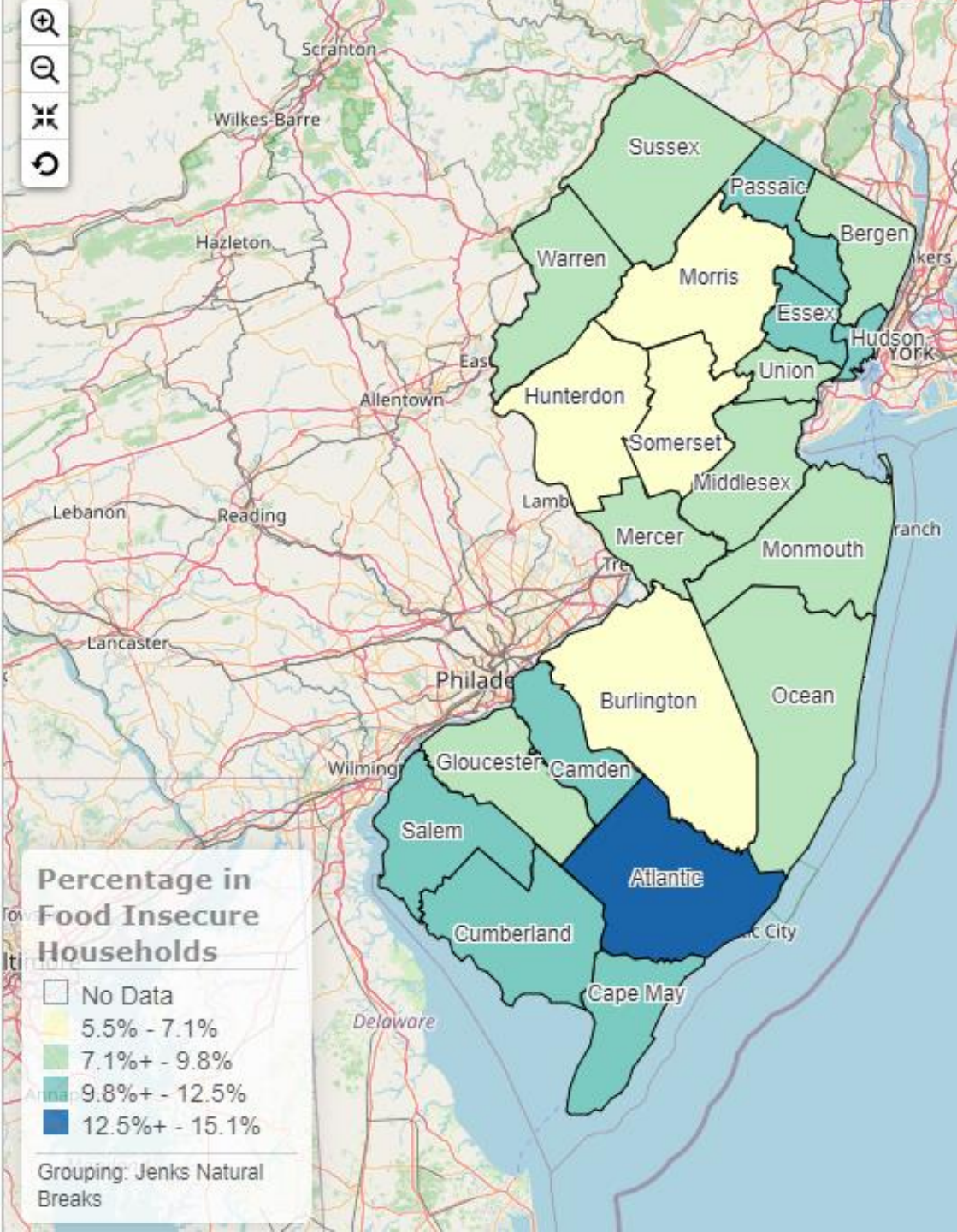




+ • ○ **CREATING FOOD SECURITY IN THE GARDEN STATE**

New Jersey Office of the Food Security Advocate



Food Insecurity in New Jersey

The USDA estimates that in 2020, about 657,320 people, including 175,830 children, in New Jersey were food insecure.

That means 7.4% of individuals and 9.0% of children live in homes without consistent access to adequate food for everyone to live healthy, active lives (NJSHAD, 2022).

Food insecurity in the U.S. is defined as a household-level economic and social condition of limited or uncertain access to adequate food (USDA, 2019).

Coping Strategies

Households experiencing food insecurity have reported a variety of coping strategies (Bezuneh & Yiheyis, 2020; Melese et al., 2021)

- Controlling food intake
- Eating less nutritious or preferred food
- Receiving help or borrowing food
- Selling assets
- Prioritizing expenses

Health

Food insecure households are consistently associated with negative physical and mental health outcomes (Gunderson & Ziliak, 2015)

- Nutrition deficiency
- Obesity
- Diabetes
- Heart Disease
- Depression and anxiety
- Stress

What is OFSA?

- The Office of the Food Security Advocate was created through legislation in 2021
- Sits in the executive branch of state government
- Physically based in and supported by the NJ Department of Agriculture
- Executive Director is a Governor Appointee
- Executive director reports to Chief Policy Advisor and their designee
- This office is a convening and collaborating office

What is OFSA? (continued)

The responsibilities of OFSA include:

- Coordinate outreach for food security programs, including developing new initiatives and outreach campaigns and identifying best practices to increase enrollment in the State's food insecurity programs
- Coordinate communication to and between food access organizations
- Establish best practices for food access organizations to reduce food waste and to distribute more fresh produce and proteins to food security programs
- Collaborate with State and community partners to develop a strategic plan to address identified gaps in areas that are underserved by current food insecurity programs
- Oversee the development and implementation of public-private partnerships to address food insecurity



Availability

Sufficient and nutritious food physically present in the environment

Food deserts, high cost of living environments, store proximity

Access

Resources a household must obtain for appropriate and nutritious foods

Finances, transportation, social network

Utilization

Intake of sufficient and safe food to meet nutritional needs

Food storage, dietary needs (medical, cultural, preferences)

Stability

Reliable supply of foods over time to mitigate shocks in the near or immediate future

Market fluctuation, conflict, natural disaster

Agency

Capacity of individuals and groups to make decisions about, and participate in, food systems

Labeling and nutritional info, participatory research

Sustainability

Food system practices that ensure food needs of the present are met without compromising the future

Diet sustainability, ecosystem stability, food waste

Collaboration and Convening:

- \$95 SNAP minimum benefit -
- SNAP Gap Project
- Collaborating with SNAP-Ed
- Collaborating with WIC



Thank you!