

Michigan Poverty & Well-being Map: East

The East region includes: Genesee, Huron, Lapeer, Sanilac, Shiawassee, St. Clair, and Tuscola counties.

Learn more about the map at poverty.umich.edu.

Fighting Food Insecurity

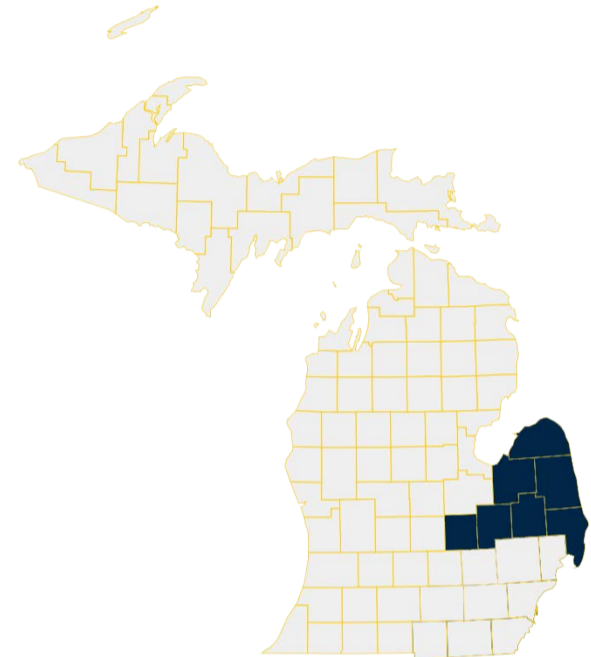
East Michigan has the largest proportion in the state of residents receiving assistance from the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), also known as food stamps. The proportion of food insecure populations ranges from 11.9% in Lapeer County to 15.2% in Genesee County.¹ In the City of Flint alone, the food insecure population amounts to 17%, well above the national average.² This food insecurity is exacerbated by low access to healthy food.

Access to healthy foods is integral in a region plagued by poor water infrastructure since proper nutrition can help mitigate the effects of lead consumption.³ However, many areas in this region are categorized as food deserts, which are areas experiencing high levels of poverty with 33% of the

population more than 1 mile from a grocery store.⁴ Fortunately, service providers in the area are working to increase access to nutritional foods. For example, the Community Foundation of Greater Flint invests in Flint Fresh Mobile Market and Flint Fresh Food Hub to overcome transportation barriers. And, the Food FARMacy program at Hurley Medical Center in Flint developed an innovative approach to supplying patients with nutritional foods and is looking to have insurance companies fund such programs.

The Michigan Local Food Council Network works within Flint and Genesee County and recently received a \$500,000 grant to support local food councils in areas of low food access with seed grants.⁵ Michigan's Good Food Fund supports businesses working to increase access to healthy and affordable foods in low-income areas.⁶ Local service providers may also take advantage of grants from the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, like the Value-Added and Regional Food Systems Grants supporting efforts to expand access to healthy foods throughout the state. Ensuring these efforts continue and expand is integral to improving food security in the region.

At the federal level, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) recently invested \$69 million to "address critical food and nutrition security needs of low-income communities enduring the pandemic, enhance the resilience of food and health care systems impacted by the pandemic, and maximize funds reaching participants."⁷ The USDA granted Michigan's Fair Food Network nearly \$5 million to support food access in low-income areas hit hardest by the pandemic and provide \$3.75 million in fruits and vegetables to Michigan families. Together with local efforts, these programs should help improve food security in the region.



East: Percentage of People Experiencing Food Insecurity ⁸

County	Rate of Food Insecurity
Genesee	15.2%
Sanilac	14.9%
Tuscola	14.5%
St. Clair	13.7%
Huron	13.5%
Michigan	13.0%
Shiawassee	12.7%
Lapeer	11.9%

References

¹ Feeding America. "Food Insecurity in Michigan." Accessed March 21, 2022.

<https://map.feedingamerica.org/county/2019/overall/michigan>.

² "Food Deserts in Flint: What is Being Done." The Flint Phoenix, June 12, 2017,

<https://flintphoenix.com/2017/06/12/food-deserts-in-flint-what-is-being-done/>.

³ Kordas, Katarzyna. "The "Lead Diet": Can Dietary Approaches Prevent Or Treat Lead Exposure?";

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⁴ USDA, Economic Research Service. "Mapping Food Deserts in the United States" Accessed March

22, 2022. [https://www.ers.usda.gov/amber-waves/2011/december/data-feature-mapping-food-](https://www.ers.usda.gov/amber-waves/2011/december/data-feature-mapping-food-deserts-in-the-us/)

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⁵ Weiss, Andrea. "\$500,000 grant will help Michigan communities address food insecurity and limited access to healthy food." (Michigan State University, Center for Regional Food Systems, October 2021)

[https://www.canr.msu.edu/news/500-000-grant-will-help-michigan-communities-address-food-](https://www.canr.msu.edu/news/500-000-grant-will-help-michigan-communities-address-food-insecurity-and-limited-access-to-healthy-food)

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⁶ Learn more at: <https://migooodfoodfund.org/financing/>.

⁷ U.S. Department of Agriculture. "USDA Invests \$69 million to Support Critical Food and Nutrition

Needs." Accessed on March 21, 2022. [https://www.usda.gov/media/press-releases/2021/08/17/](https://www.usda.gov/media/press-releases/2021/08/17/usda-invests-69-million-support-critical-food-and-nutrition)

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⁸ Feeding America. "Food Insecurity in Michigan, 2019." Accessed March 21, 2022.

<https://map.feedingamerica.org/county/2019/overall/michigan>.