HUNGER IN THE INLAND REGION

Inland families struggle with food insecurity

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California has the highest poverty rate in the nation as evidenced by the U.S. Census Bureau's most recent Supplemental Poverty Measure which showed nearly one in five of the state's residents live in poverty. The nation's Supplemental Poverty Measure weighs a number of factors including the cost of housing, utilities, food, and clothing. It also counts any noncash government assistance as a form of income.

California is currently home to 11 percent of the nation's population and boasts a Gross Domestic Product that economists report, increased at a rate double the national average during the five-year period which ended in 2016, yet, the state is home to nearly one in three of America's welfare recipients.

Despite the level of welfare enrollment and improving employment numbers, food insecurity defined as the lack of access to enough healthy
food for all members of a household, has continued to persist. A new report by the domestic hunger relief organization Feeding America, provided information on food insecurity based on recent data and statistics.

According to the report, in 2018, more than 37.2 million California residents or 1 in 8 people were food insecure. The report notes that the population of food insecure individuals has been increasing over the past five years.

One of the impacts of poverty is to make it more difficult for people to obtain nutritious foods and access to food. In some cases, even when food is available, the cost of food can be prohibitively high, making it difficult for individuals and families to meet their basic needs.

The report highlights the need for increased access to affordable and healthy food options, particularly in areas with high levels of food insecurity. It also points to the importance of addressing the root causes of poverty and inequality, such as lack of affordable housing and healthcare, in order to improve food security for all.

Feeding America notes that the pandemic has had a significant impact on food insecurity, with many people facing economic challenges and increased food costs. The organization encourages individuals and organizations to take action to address these challenges and support those in need.

Kim McCoy, Chief of the California Department of Social Services, recently highlighted the issue of food insecurity in California, stating that it is a major concern for many households. She noted that the state has seen an increase in the number of people experiencing food insecurity, particularly in areas with high levels of poverty.

In response to these challenges, Feeding America has launched a new program called Feeding America’s California 2020 Hunger Study, which aims to provide more data on food insecurity in the state and identify areas where additional support is needed. The program will provide ongoing data and analysis to help identify areas of need and inform policy decisions.

In conclusion, the report from Feeding America highlights the need for increased support and action to address food insecurity in California. It is clear that continued efforts are needed to ensure that all individuals have access to nutritious and affordable food options, particularly in areas with high levels of need.