



EXTENSION

STRENGTHENING OKLAHOMA FAMILIES Family and Consumer Sciences News

MARCH 2025

Food and Nutrition Security Continue to Be Problematic

The terms food security, nutrition security and hunger are often used interchangeably. Although the strategies to address these issues are connected, there are important differences that should be understood.

Food security is defined as a household in which all members at all times can access enough food for an active, healthy life. Some households may achieve this by purchasing enough food. Others, however, are considered food secure because they use food pantries, the [Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program](#) and other food assistance resources.

Nutrition security is food quality, and the USDA defines it as all people in a household having regular and equitable access to healthy, safe and affordable foods that are essential to optimal health and well-being.

While some households are food secure, they can be nutrition insecure. They have access to enough food to keep them full, but the food lacks the necessary balance of vitamins and minerals required for healthy living.

Oklahoma has some of the worst food insecurity statistics in the country. More than 15% of households are food insecure, said Candy Gabel state coordinator for

[Oklahoma State University Extension's Community Nutrition Education Programs.](#)

"About 15.4 Oklahoma households are food insecure. This places us as one of only seven states that has a food insecurity rate higher than the national average of 13.5%," she said. "More than 1.2 million Oklahomans live in low-income communities that have low access to nutritious food. While you might think that happens only in rural areas, research indicates over 1 million of them live in urban communities while 187,000 are located in rural areas."

Why is food and nutrition insecurity a concern? Hunger is connected to higher poverty rates and costs Oklahoma more than \$1.4 billion each year through increased illness and decreased academic achievement. Food insecurity increases chronic illnesses, including diabetes, obesity, hypertension, and kidney disease.

Moreover, food-insecure children in Oklahoma are more likely to have lower reading and math scores and increased behavior and social problems. Food insecurity can also impact high school graduation rates.

"Food insecurity weakens the labor force, decreases educational attainment, and increases healthcare costs in Oklahoma," she said. "And while food insecurity and

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Food and Nutrition Security Continue to Be Problematic (Continued from front page):

poverty aren't the same, they are related. Other factors that are associated with the lack of access to adequate, nutritious food include higher unemployment, lower household assets and some demographic characteristics."

Some rural communities are food deserts, meaning a quarter of the town's population lives more than 10 miles from a grocery store. Those areas may have convenience stores, but the food sold there is typically much more expensive and doesn't offer the variety needed for a healthy diet. In addition, these areas have fewer charitable food service options than urban areas.

Gabel said nearly 80% of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program participants are children, elderly or disabled. In 2023, more than 900,000 Oklahomans relied on SNAP at some point during the year to meet their basic nutritional needs. Senior citizens sometimes have to choose between buying food or paying for medical care and prescriptions. In addition, about two-thirds of Oklahoma public school students participate in the free or reduced-price meal program.

"It's important for citizens to use the donated food/food pantries, private dollars, and state and federal resources to be able to put nutritious food on the table," she said. "Contact the [county OSU Extension office](#) to learn more about the valuable resources available in your area. OSU Extension's Community Nutrition Education Programs can help empower limited-resource Oklahomans to improve their nutrition to help improve their quality of life."

OHCE FAMILY NIGHT

Tuesday, March 18, 2025, at 6:30 PM at the Payne County Expo Center

we're having ***Family Night***, so bring the whole clan! Bring covered dishes including meat, veggies, salads, & desserts, to feed your family and our special guests. We'll eat and have time to visit, then at 7:15 p.m. we'll have entertainment.

Family Night Hostess Groups:

Registration: Rising Star

Decorations: Lunch Bunch

Set Up/Clean Up: Elm Grove

The Calamity Jane Cloggers from Moore, OK are coming back to entertain us!

The group performs 2-3 times a month at various events, hospitals, nursing homes, civic events, art/car shows and the State Fair of Oklahoma. Several of the dancers have been clogging for over 40 years. While several of the dancers are retired, most of the team still work and everyone enjoys the exercise and fellowship of clogging together. They plan to show those willing how to do some "round" dancing. Plan to come enjoy good food, great fellowship and wonderful entertainment. This group was so much fun two years ago so come and have another evening of fun with them! ***You don't want to miss it!!***





PAYNE COUNTY OHCE NEWS



APRIL OHCE LEADER LESSON

“Sensational Salads, Not Just Greens” will be taught on **Tuesday, March 18th at 5:30 p.m. at the Payne County Expo Center prior to Family Night.** If you are the lesson leader for your local group, please try to attend the lesson and it will count as a make-up for perfect attendance.

OHCE FOOD FESTIVAL IS FRIDAY, MAY 9, 2025

Food Festival will be here before you know it. It will be held on **Friday, May 9th from 8:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. at the First United Methodist Church Family Life Center on the southwest corner of 7th and Duck. Mark your calendars!!**

Complete details & entry packets will be sent to local group Presidents in time for your April meeting. An entry sheet is included in this newsletter for your information only to help with planning.

A note from LeeAnn Barton, OHCE Food Festival Chairperson:

Greetings from the Food Festival Committee!

Start planning and practicing your baking skills for our friendly annual "bake-off" between OHCE local group members. This event benefits your group financially and gives you bragging rights for a year for the best....cake, pie, or bread.

The Committee has decided to keep the 15 categories and prices the same this year. We will also have our "extra" baked goods for the Gloria Hesser Scholarship Fund and early buyers + the coffee and snack bar for your sweet tooth and County coffers.

With 15 classes, we will need **30 superintendents**. (This is a good place for new members to get their feet wet!) The Superintendents' training will be held on **Thursday, May 1st at 10:00 a.m. in the Commissioners' Meeting Room on the 2nd floor of the County Administration Building. You can call the Extension Office or call me (LeeAnn Barton) to sign up to serve as a Superintendent. If we don't get enough volunteers, we will be calling you.**

We are looking forward to our friendly competitiveness, raising community awareness of OHCE, and satisfying that sweet tooth! LeeAnn Barton, Food Festival Chairperson

Northeast District Meeting Silent Auction Fundraiser Baskets

THANK YOU!!! to all groups who have come up with some creative basket themes!! Since the silent auction will be set up on Monday before the meeting on Tuesday, please bring your baskets to the Extension Office by **Friday, March 21st at Noon.** We will take the baskets to Guthrie Monday and get everything set up. If you'd like to go and help on Monday, let me know!

Recycling Books: Why and How

Recycling books is not what we hear about most of the time when the subject of recycling comes up. These books that have taught us the history of our world provide imaginary worlds for us to go and just play, and that continue to provide continuity to our society. What happens to them when they are no longer needed?

Why recycle books? There are numerous benefits to recycling books. It conserves resources, by reducing the demand for virgin paper pulp, reduces landfill waste which contributes to greenhouse gas emissions. Saves energy, making new paper from recycled paper takes less energy, translating to a smaller carbon footprint. Promotes a circular economy by fostering a model where materials are reused and repurposed than simply discarded, minimizing waste, and maximizing the value of resources.

Picture this: a single ton of paper that gets recycled:

- Preserves 17 trees.
- Eliminates 3 cubic yards of landfill space.
- It saves 7,000 gallons of water.
- Conserves 380 gallons of oil
- Reduces 4,000 kilowatts of energy.

Also, recycling books can raise money for important causes.

How do you recycle books? One of the best places to recycle books is any thrift store in your town/city. Salvation Army, Elite Repeat, Goodwill, and Karmen Corner. Many of these stores are supporting a charity from their sales and may be happy to accept your gently used books. The public Library takes donations of used books and holds an annual book sale each year. You should check with the library to ensure what their rules are regarding books and magazines. Other donation locations are: Local Literacy programs, international charities like the World Literacy Foundation, Books for Africa, and Book Aid International are among those that reach out to those in need across the world. Donate to a local prison; call the prison management to find out if they are part of the Prison Book Program. If the local prison is not part of the program, they can connect you with others.

Other options for recycling books can be found in creative upcycling, and DIY projects you make for your home or gifts for friends and family. Books that are slightly damaged or have no resale value can be used for a variety of crafts. Crafters browsing websites like Pinterest find inspiration for projects like:

- A book wreath; Bookmarks and/or gift tags; Folded origami paper cranes
- Upcycle old books into homemade journals and sketch pads
- Craft a table lamp shade with mixed papers (see *thriftyfun.com* for ideas)
- Make unique cards and gift envelopes from books and magazines (see *creativegreenliving.com*)

Give them away: You can do this in several ways depending on your location and transportation options. Place an ad on Craigslist.com, Marketplace, Bunz.com, LetGo.com or Freecycle.org (*the last three sourced from <https://recyclingcenternear.me/recycle-books-near-me/>*). Listing free books in local Facebook groups is good, too.

Sell your books: The internet has opened new avenues for donating and selling used books. eBay and Amazon are among the popular websites to use. *BookScouter* is also a website that helps you sell your books online. They provide a service that searches for vendors who are willing to pay for your used books. You will need to know the ISBN of your book. You should visit the *BookScouter* website for more information. If a book does not have an ISBN number eBay and AbeBooks are other avenues that are available instead.

How to recycle books:

- Paperback books and magazines are usually categorized as “mixed paper” can be added to your curbside recycling bin whole.
- Hardcover books: it is best to remove the covers of any hardcover book prior to recycling. They may contain non-paper elements. Once you remove the binding of hardcover books and textbooks, they can then be added to your curbside recycle bin.
- However, keep in mind that any book that has gotten wet, moldy, or turned brown should be thrown away or burned. They have no value in the recycling market.

Sources for this article: Environmental Literacy Council (website), BookScouter.com (website), and <https://recyclingcenternear.me> (website)

Being and taking responsibility for what happens to a book when you have completed it is more than just putting it on another shelf. Someone out there will want to read it, someone out there can repurpose it for a “book wreath.” They really are pretty; I have a former classmate who makes them.

Kathie Tanner

Payne County OHCE Resource Management Chairman



Payne County Home & Community Education

MARCH 2025



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