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**\*\*Maryland Food Bank Hunger Brief\*\***

**New Poll Reveals Public Perception Matches the Reality of Hunger in Maryland**

***Survey also indicates that hunger is a non-partisan priority that Marylanders want policymakers to address***

BALTIMORE—The Maryland Food Bank (MFB) today released the results of a new public perception poll that finds that hunger continues to affect Maryland families and communities in large numbers, nearly two years since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic.

According to the survey, 33% of residents have been affected by hunger or food insecurity themselves, which coincides with MFB data that indicates up to 2 million Marylanders may face food insecurity as a result of the pandemic. This number has risen steadily from 21% in 2013 to 27% in 2017 to 33% today, as measured by past surveys. Indeed, 30% of respondents noted that they worry about money *every day*, further illustrating the extent of financial pressures Maryland households currently face.

“As difficult as it is to hear that 1 in 3 Marylanders may be facing food insecurity, this survey matches the results of our own analysis that shows this is indeed the case,” said Meg Kimmel, MFB’s Executive Vice President & Chief Strategy Officer. “But working together with our statewide network of community organizations, we’re confident we can begin to bring these numbers down by launching new ideas and partnerships that expand food access and address the underlying causes of food insecurity for more Marylanders.”

In addition to seeing need in their own families and in the communities around them, Marylanders are thinking differently about government and want a more active, problem-solving approach to dealing with hunger. The poll revealed that 90% of respondents want hunger to be eliminated<sup>1</sup> and most believe it can be<sup>2</sup>, while close to three-quarters of those surveyed consider the issue motivating enough to justify *more* support in the form of tax dollars.<sup>3</sup>

There is ample evidence throughout the poll that the pandemic is animating Marylanders and fundamentally changing their expectations of what their government should be delivering to them and to their communities. Additional key takeaways from the survey include:

- The fact that addressing hunger is a high priority for Marylanders, regardless of political party affiliation. While 88% of Democrats would like to see more of their state tax dollars committed to addressing hunger, so do 64% of Republicans and 66% of Unaffiliated voters.
- An overwhelming majority (79%) of Marylanders recognize the idea that “there are people that regularly go to bed hungry in Maryland because they can’t afford to buy food” and three-quarters of respondents (75%) acknowledge that hunger exists in their own communities.
- Almost half the survey sample (48%) said they have known someone personally who has been affected by hunger.

(more)

The survey of 844 randomly selected Maryland households in the MFB service area (the entire state excluding Montgomery and Prince George’s counties) was conducted by Annapolis-based OpinionWorks LLC from November 5 to December 12, 2021. Individuals were interviewed by wireless/landline telephones and online using a survey questionnaire designed to update findings previously collected for the Maryland Food Bank in 2013 and 2017.

This representative survey sample produced a margin of sampling error of no more than  $\pm 3.4\%$  at the 95% confidence level, meaning that if every resident within this geography had been interviewed, the actual results would differ by no more than that margin at least 95% of the time.

### **About the Maryland Food Bank**

*The Maryland Food Bank (MFB) is a nonprofit hunger-relief organization dedicated to feeding people, strengthening communities, and ending hunger for more Marylanders. Since March 2020, the food bank’s statewide food assistance network distributed the equivalent of 84 million meals in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. MFB will continue to meet the immediate needs of vulnerable communities while collaborating with partners to provide resources beyond food and address root causes of hunger so that more Marylanders can become financially stable and thrive. To learn more about the Maryland Food Bank, visit [www.mdfoodbank.org](http://www.mdfoodbank.org).*



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<sup>1</sup> Approximately nine in ten respondents agreed with the statement, “I would like Maryland to strive to be the kind of a state where hunger does not exist.”

<sup>2</sup> More than three-quarters of Marylanders (78%) agreed with the aspiration, “Hunger can be eliminated in Maryland.”

<sup>3</sup> 74% of respondents said they would like to see more of their state tax dollars go to help address the problem of hunger in Maryland, with a majority (53%) feeling that way strongly.