

FACT SHEET

Access to Healthy Food Vital to Battle Obesity Epidemic

KEY TAKEAWAY:

Lack of access to healthy foods and the associated negative outcomes on the health of Mid South residents are well documented. Obesity and the lack of consumption of fresh fruit, for example are among the highest levels in the country.

One strategy to address the social and economic costs of lack of access to fresh food includes HOPE's Fresh Food financing Initiative.

This initiative provides \$14 million to expand access to fresh food in underserved communities in Orleans Parish LA and supports small businesses to create jobs.

FRESH FRUIT CONSUMPTION:

Residents of Mid-South states are less likely than many other states to consume fruits daily.

In 2009, Mississippi, Arkansas, Tennessee and Louisiana ranked in the bottom 11 states for the portion of residents eating fruit twice a day.

FOOD INSECURITY

Food Insecurity is defined as a lack of access at all times to enough food for an active, healthy life. This table illustrates the national rankings and provides a regional comparison.

Households in Arkansas and Mississippi experience the largest levels of food insecurity in the country.

PERCENTAGE OF HOUSEHOLDS EXPERIENCING FOOD INSECURITY, 2009		
STATE	RANK (out of 50)	% OF HOUSEHOLDS
<i>United States</i>		14.7%
Arkansas	1st	17.7%
Mississippi	3rd	17.1%
Tennessee	6th	15.1%
Louisiana	45th	10%

Source: USDA. Household Food Security in the United States, 2009

CHILD OBESITY

Two of the four Mid South States (MS and AR) have the highest rates of child obesity in the nation. Child obesity rates in MS, AR, TN and LA all rank in the top 7 for the nation as seen in the table below.

PERCENTAGE OF CHILDREN WHO ARE OVERWEIGHT OR OBESE, 2007		
STATE	RANK (out of 51)	% OF CHILDREN
<i>United States</i>		31.6%
Mississippi	1st	44.4%
Arkansas	2nd	37.5%
Tennessee	5th	36.5%
Louisiana	7th	35.9%

Source: Kaiser Family Foundation. State Health Facts, 2007