



## Real Talk About Food Insecurity: What Leaders Need To Know

The Department of Defense is on a mission to make sure our people are well fueled and able to perform at peak level. As a leader or service provider who works with military families, here's how you can be part of the solution.

### What is food insecurity?

At its most basic, food insecurity means a person or a household doesn't have enough nutritious food to live an active, healthy life. It ranges from sometimes having to skip meals to not getting enough to eat or relying on cheaper, less-nutritious foods. Not being able to afford enough food can be temporary or it can last a long time.

### Food insecurity in the military

Anyone can be food insecure.

- It is not always a matter of pay or poor money management.
- Spouse job loss, medical expenses or unexpected car repairs can force a service member or family to choose between buying food and paying bills.

Service members who don't get enough nutritious food are at increased risk for:

- Stress, fatigue and impaired ability to perform their duties
- In the long term, serious physical and mental health issues

Children from food-insecure households have higher risks of health and development problems and may not do as well in school.