Background

As of September 2015, the Census Bureau reported that 43.1 million people lived in poverty in America, and The National Alliance to End Homelessness reports that 553,742 people were experiencing homelessness in America.

More than 40 million people in America need the government’s help to keep from going hungry, and many families struggle to receive adequate nutrition. For many children, school breakfast or lunch may be the only real meal they receive per day, though the quality of these meals varies, and the number of elderly individuals experiencing food insecurity exceeded 10 million for the first time last year.*

If unemployment is only 4.4 percent, why are so many still living in poverty?

Should the Federal Government spend more on anti-hunger programs?

*Info taken from the articles Hunger in America and Poverty and Homelessness, available through CQ researcher, by CQ Press, an imprint of SAGE Publications

Related Films:

- **Beasts of the Southern Wild (2012)**: Follows a father and his daughter living in a remote Delta community threatened by rising water levels and magical beasts.
- **The Florida Project (2017)**: Follows the experience of a young mother and her daughter living week to week in the shadow of Disney’s Magic Kingdom.
- **Food, Inc. (2009)**: Examines the influence of corporations on the American Food Chain.
- **The Glass Castle (2017)**: Recounts a young woman’s experience growing up poor and mostly off the grid under the care of an eccentric father.
- **A Place at the Table (2013)** by Laurie Silverbush and Kristi Jacobson: Examines the issue of hunger in America through the experience of 3 individuals.
- **Time Out of Mind (2015)**: Starring Richard Gere as a homeless man trying to reconnect with his estranged daughter. Praised for its innovative cinematography.
- **Winter’s Bone (2010)**: Set in the remote Ozarks region, a young woman, left caring for her siblings, must embark on a dangerous quest to save their only shelter.

Related Podcasts:

- On the Media's Busted: America’s Poverty Myths (2017)
- Off-Kilter podcast (current; formerly Talk Poverty)
READ

The Classics
- Nickel and Dimed: On (Not) Getting By in America, by Barbara Ehrenreich (2001)

Recent nonfiction
- Evicted, by Matthew Desmond (2017)
- Fire in the Ashes: 25 years among the poorest children in America, by Jonathan Kozol (2012)
- Hillbilly Elegy, by J. D. Vance (2017)
- Maid: Hardwork, Low Pay and a Mother’s Will To Survive, by Stephanie Land (2018)
- A Tale of Two Americas: Stories of Inequality in a Divided Nation, edited by John Freeman (2018)
- $2 a day: Living on Almost Nothing in America, by Katherine Edin (2015)
- We Are All Fast Food Workers Now, by Annalise Orleck (2018)

Fiction
- The Heart Goes Last, by Margaret Atwood (A/2015)
- Sunset Park, by Paul Auster (A/2010)
- Where I Live, by Brenda Rufner (YA/2018)
- Winter’s Bone, by Daniel Woodrell (A/2006)

ENGAGE

Volunteer, organize a food drive, or donate to the Merrimack Valley Food Bank

Merrimack Valley Food Bank, Inc.
Feeding Families Since 1991

Sponsor a meal or volunteer for Table of Plenty in Chelmsford

Participate in Project Bread’s Annual Walk for Hunger (May 2019) to raise money for hunger defeating programs in your community

Get in touch with your representatives in Congress to let them know how important this issue is to you:
www.govtrack.us

COME TOGETHER

Novel Conversations
REACTs: Hillbilly Elegy, by J. D. Vance book discussion, Friday Nov. 2, 12:30PM

Let’s Talk: Poverty in America, a REACT Chelmsford conversation with Keith West, Nov. 13 at 7PM

Families REACT storytime and crafts
Wed. Nov. 14, 4-5PM

Teens REACT: TED talk afternoon w/ popcorn
Thursday Nov. 15 4-5PM

Film Screening:
A Place at the Table
Sunday Nov. 18, 2-3:30

To all REACT programs in November, please bring a non-perishable food donation for our local food bank, if you are able.