

Hunger in America 2010

An Overview of Local, State, and National Hunger

In 2009, the Regional Food Bank of Northeastern New York participated in a national study of the charitable response to domestic hunger in conjunction with Feeding America, the nation's food bank network. The study is called *Hunger in America 2010* and is based on face-to-face interviews with more than 62,000 clients nationwide, as well as completed questionnaires from more than 37,000 agencies. The Regional Food Bank conducted 352 client interviews and received 467 surveys from its member agencies.

This report focuses on key local findings, providing valuable insights into who is in need and how that need is being met in communities throughout northeastern New York. Locally, the report demonstrates that approximately 244,400 residents turned to Food Bank member food pantries, soup kitchens, and emergency shelters for help in 2009.



We thank Feeding America, our member agencies, survey volunteers, and staff for making *Hunger in America 2010* possible. We are especially grateful to the hundreds of individuals who had the courage to be interviewed and provide their personal information for this most important study. May their stories serve as a catalyst for change.



Summary of Key Local Findings

The Food Bank in Numbers

- The Regional Food Bank of Northeastern New York provides food for an estimated 244,400 different people annually in our 23-county service area
- Approximately 38,600 different people receive assistance in any given week
- The Regional Food Bank distributes over 20 million pounds of food annually to a network of 1,000 human service agencies; this is equivalent to distributing over 60,000 pounds of food a day or 430,000 pounds of food a week

195,700 people were served in 2005

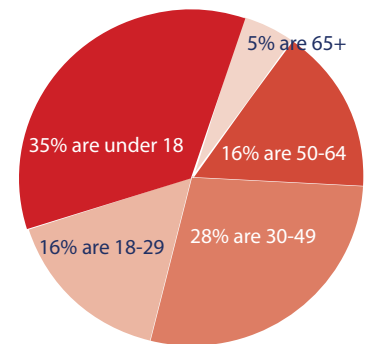
244,400 people were served in 2009

25% increase from 2005

The Face of Hunger

- 39% of households include at least one employed adult
- 68% of adult clients have at least a high school degree
- 69% of households had incomes below the federal poverty level, living at less than \$22,050 for a family of four
- 42% of clients are non-Hispanic white, 28% are non-Hispanic black, 23% are Hispanic, and 7% are from other racial groups

Regional Food Bank Clients by Age



35% of people served are children

Difficult Decisions

- Many clients report having to choose between food and other necessities

Food vs. rent or mortgage 46%

Food vs. utilities or heating fuel 45%

Food vs. medicine or medical care 32%

Hunger and Health

- 31% of households served by the Food Bank have at least one member in poor health
- 22% of all clients are without health insurance
- 50% of clients have unpaid medical or hospital bills



Key National Findings



- 37 million Americans are served annually by Feeding America food banks, including nearly 14 million children and nearly 3 million seniors.
- Each week, approximately 5.7 million people receive emergency food assistance from agencies served by Feeding America food banks, a 27 percent increase over numbers reported in *Hunger in America 2006*.
- 1 in 8 Americans now rely on the Feeding America network for food and groceries.

More information on the national study can be found at www.regionalfoodbank.net.

Federal Assistance and Hunger Relief

- 39% of households receive Food Stamp benefits (now known as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, or SNAP); however, it is likely many more are eligible
- 60% of households with school-age children participate in the Federal School Lunch Program, 59% in the School Breakfast Program, and 18% in the Summer Food Program

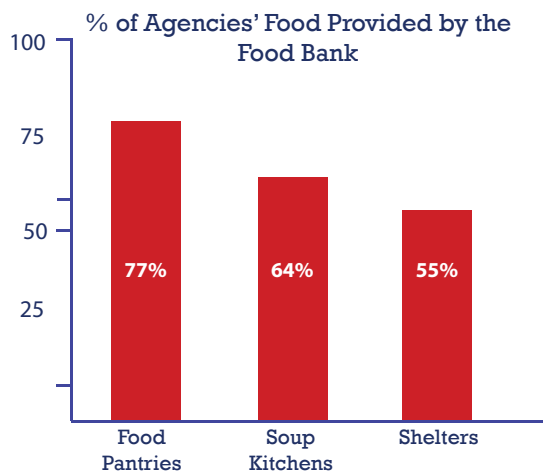
Increased Demand

- Agencies report large increases in the need for their services since 2005
 - 88% of pantries
 - 74% of soup kitchens
 - 60% of shelters
- To meet this need, the Food Bank is providing agencies with 7,000 pounds more food per day than it did four years ago

Volunteers

- 92% of food pantries, 92% of soup kitchens, and 55% of shelters use volunteers
- 60% of food pantries and 28% of soup kitchens are run entirely by volunteers

Importance of the Regional Food Bank to Agencies



97% of pantries, 99% of kitchens, and 87% of shelters said that elimination of support from the Food Bank would have a significant or devastating impact on their operations.

Key State Findings

- Over 2.3 million New York State residents turn to emergency feeding programs for help each year, including 840,000 children.
- Each week, approximately 570,000 different people turn to New York State food bank member agencies for food assistance.

More information on the New York State study can be found at www.regionalfoodbank.net.

About the Study

Hunger in America 2010 is the largest, most comprehensive study of its kind ever conducted. The study provides authoritative and statistically valid data on the national charitable response to hunger and the people served by food pantries, soup kitchens, and shelters via Feeding America's national network of food bank. *Hunger in America 2010* is based on independent research conducted on behalf of Feeding America by Mathematica Policy Research, Inc. (MPR), a widely respected social policy research firm. Feeding America contracted with MPR to work with the Regional Food Bank and 184 other network member food banks which voluntarily spent over 3 months collecting data in their communities.





Help End Hunger At Home

The results of *Hunger in America 2010* are discomfoting. It is difficult to understand how people living in this land of plenty have to make decisions between paying for food and other basic necessities. It is troubling that children and seniors, the country's most vulnerable citizens, may have to forgo their most basic need – food – because of a lack of resources.

By compiling thousands of personal stories, *Hunger in America 2010* confirms the important role food banks and the emergency food network play in meeting the growing needs of our neighbors.



How the Food Bank is Helping

Since 1982, the Regional Food Bank has been helping to feed the poor and hungry in our communities. From Plattsburgh to Newburgh, in urban, rural, and suburban communities, the Food Bank provides over 20 million pounds of food a year to 1,000 charitable agencies. To help combat childhood hunger, the Food Bank sponsors Kids Cafes, Backpack Programs, and Summer Food Service Programs.

The Food Bank is committed to enhancing the existing network of emergency food providers in our service area. We will continue to provide ample resources, training, and technical assistance to area providers. We have conducted a service gap analysis to determine geographic pockets of unmet need, and are working to build relationships within such communities to ensure those in need are provided with the support they deserve.



How You Can Help

The Gift of TIME

"It means a great deal to me to rescue food so that needy folks can be fed."

Ted Thompson, Volunteer

Volunteers are vital to the Food Bank's operation and contribute in countless ways. Sorting food, picking produce at our farm, or raising money at a fund raising event—there are endless varieties of enjoyable, rewarding tasks that volunteers perform every day.

The Gift of TALENT

"The Food Bank should not spend its money on pavement; it should put its money into food."

Emil Galasso, In-Kind Donor of Paving Services

This sentiment reflects the feelings of many donors of in-kind supplies and services. Their gifts allow the Food Bank to get more food to more hungry people.

The Gift of TREASURE

"Anything my family can do to respond to the needs of the hungry is consistent with our social and spiritual world view. Helping the Regional Food Bank in particular provides an extra sense of satisfaction because it is an efficient organization that can significantly leverage the resources its supporters provide."

Don Csaposs, Financial Donor

Financial donations sustain the Food Bank and enrich the larger community by providing nourishment, dignity, and a sense of sharing to all involved. Funds come from grants, special events, and contributions, and each donation makes a meaningful difference.

"I find it a humbling experience to play a small part in such a large community effort to eliminate hunger."

David Sullivan, Champlain Valley Apple Storage

The food industry is the backbone of food banking. Its support is critical to the Food Bank's work.