

1. HIGHLIGHTS OF FINDINGS

This report presents information on the clients and agencies served by the Maryland Food Bank. The information is drawn from a national study, Hunger in America 2010, conducted in 2009 for Feeding America (FA) (formerly America's Second Harvest), the nation's largest organization of emergency food providers. The national study is based on completed in-person interviews with more than 62,000 clients served by the FA national network, as well as on completed questionnaires from more than 37,000 FA agencies. The study summarized below focuses on emergency food providers and their clients who are supplied with food by food banks in the FA network. Emergency food programs are defined to include food pantries, soup kitchens, and emergency shelters serving short-term residents. It should be recognized that many other types of providers served by food banks are, for the most part, not described in this study, including such programs as Congregate Meals for seniors, day care facilities, and after school programs.

Key findings are summarized below:

HOW MANY CLIENTS RECEIVE EMERGENCY FOOD FROM THE MARYLAND FOOD BANK?

- The FA system served by the Maryland Food Bank provides emergency food for an estimated 261,000 different people annually.
- About 44,600 different people receive emergency food assistance in any given week.

WHO RECEIVES EMERGENCY FOOD ASSISTANCE?

- 27% of the members of households served by the Maryland Food Bank are children under 18 years old (Table 5.3.2).
- 9% of the members of households are elderly (Table 5.3.2).
- 36% of households include at least one employed adult (Table 5.7.1).
- 63% have incomes below the federal poverty level (Table 5.8.2.1.) during the previous month.
- 8% are homeless (Table 5.9.1.1).

MANY CLIENTS REPORT HAVING TO CHOOSE BETWEEN FOOD AND OTHER NECESSITIES

- 32% of clients served by the Maryland Food Bank report having to choose between paying for food and paying for utilities or heating fuel (Table 6.5.1).
- 25% had to choose between paying for food and paying their rent or mortgage (Table 6.5.1).
- 24% had to choose between paying for food and paying for medicine or medical care (Table 6.5.1).
- 34% had to choose between paying for food and paying for transportation (Table 6.5.1).
- 21% had to choose between paying for food and paying for gas for a car (Table 6.5.1).

HAVE AGENCIES WITH EMERGENCY FOOD PROVIDERS REPORTED CHANGES IN THE NUMBER OF CLIENTS SEEKING SERVICES?

- Among programs that existed in 2006, 81% of pantries, 73% of kitchens, and 67% of shelters of the Maryland Food Bank reported that there had been an increase since 2006 in the number of clients who come to their emergency food program sites (Table 10.8.1).

VOLUNTEERS ARE EXTREMELY IMPORTANT IN THE FA NETWORK

- As many as 93% of pantries, 92% of kitchens, and 73% of shelters in the Maryland Food Bank use volunteers (Table 13.2.1).
- Many programs rely entirely on volunteers; 80% of pantry programs and 55% of kitchens have no paid staff at all (Table 13.2.1).