Hunger in America 2010 – Fact Sheet

Second Harvest Food Bank of Greater New Orleans & Acadiana

Introduction

Second Harvest Food Bank of Greater New Orleans and Acadiana (GNOA) serves approximately 262,800 different individuals annually across 23 south Louisiana parishes, including nearly 82,000 children and 40,000 seniors in need.

Second Harvest Food Bank reaches roughly 50% of the population that lives below the federal poverty line in its service area. In any given week, 41,800 people receive food through Second Harvest Food Bank's 235 faith-based and nonprofit member agencies.

Client Households

Approximately 75% of Second Harvest Food Bank client households had incomes below the federal poverty level in the month prior to survey.

The average household earned two-thirds of the federal poverty level in 2009; for a family of four this would mean earning less than $1200 per month.

One-quarter of households served had an employed person, while 60% of clients currently unemployed have not worked in more than two years. Most (80%) clients had a high school diplomas or less. Twenty-two percent of clients had or currently have managerial or professional jobs.

Almost one-third (31%) of households served by Second Harvest Food Bank GNOA have children under 18 years of age, 10% of which were children under the age of five. Many households (30% of those served) include a person who is 65 years or older.

Of those clients receiving food assistance, 73% are food insecure. An alarming number of households with children and seniors were food insecure with 68 percent and 64 percent respectively.

More than half of households with children under age five were food insecure. More than 70% of clients earning more than 130% of the federal poverty level were food insecure.

Approximately 77% of client households with a member in poor health are food insecure.

Hunger in America 2010 – Fact Sheet

Second Harvest Food Bank of Greater New Orleans & Acadiana

Clients, Income and Eligibility for Federal Programs

The average monthly income for households served by Second Harvest Food Bank GNOA member agencies was $850; the average household size was 2.3 people.

The average household earned a mere two-thirds of the federal poverty rate, for a family of four this would mean earning less than $1200 per month.

92% of households with income less than 130% of the federal poverty level had children under 18 years of age.

33% of households served by Second Harvest Food bank of GNOA are receiving Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program benefits (SNAP).

58.4% of households with children under five years old have applied for SNAP benefits, only 28% are currently receiving them.

SNAP benefits last an average of two weeks for households with seniors or children under 18 years of age.

75% of households reported children participating in the Free and Reduced Lunch Program; 66% of households reported children participating in the School Breakfast Program.

Only 13% of children participated in the Summer Food Service Program, mostly because parents did not know about this program.

19% of households reported children's participation in LACHIP, the Louisiana Children's Health Insurance Program.

97% of households did not receive any form of general assistance, welfare, or Temporary Assistance to Needy Families in 2007 or 2008.

Poor Health

In households served by Second Harvest Food Bank member agencies, 30% report someone in poor health.

Approximately 40% of clients had unpaid medical bills and overall, 50% received Medicare.

85% of clients with incomes below 130% of the federal poverty line did not have health insurance.

Hunger in America 2010 – Fact Sheet

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Tough Choices

79% percent of households reported that in the past year their household ran out of food and just didn't have enough money to purchase more.

More than 29% of household adults reported skipping a meal in the last year because "there wasn't enough money for food" however, only 6% of children had skipped a meal.

60% of households with children reported having to choose between paying for utilities and purchasing food.

Agencies

Second Harvest Food Bank provides food to 235 faith-based and nonprofit agencies across 23 south Louisiana parishes.

Second Harvest Food Bank is by far the single most important source of food for member agencies and accounts for 83% of the food distributed by pantries, 54% of the food distributed by kitchens and 34% of the food distributed by shelters.

94% of food pantries, 94% of kitchens and 82% of shelters that are Second Harvest Food Bank member agencies rely on volunteers to feed the hungry. Many programs rely entirely on volunteers; 58% of pantry programs and 36% of kitchens have no paid staff at all.

Satisfaction

The majority of clients are "very satisfied" with the amount of food (61%), variety of food (59%), and quality of food provided (65%).

Methodology

Nationally, Feeding America collected quantitative and qualitative feedback from February through June, 2009 from 61,000 face-to-face in-depth interviews with people seeking emergency food assistance and more than 37,000 agency surveys, making this study the largest, most-comprehensive ever conducted on domestic hunger.

Second Harvest Food Bank of Greater New Orleans and Acadiana conducted face-to-face interviews with 472 people seeking emergency food at food pantries, soup kitchens and other emergency feeding programs, as well as interviews with more than 157 agencies that provide food assistance.

Hunger in America 2010 – Fact Sheet

Second Harvest Food Bank of Greater New Orleans & Acadiana

Client Households

- 74% of households that received food from Second Harvest Food Bank member agencies are food insecure[1] meaning they do not always know where they will find their next meal.
- 31% of all households served by Second Harvest Food Bank had children under 18 years of age, 10% of which had children 0 to 5 years old.
- 30% of households included a person who was over 65 years of age, 63% of which were living with "food insecurity."
- 68% of households with children under age 18 were "food insecure."
- 55.7% of households with children under the age of 5 were "food insecure."
- 30% of households have at least one member in poor health.
- One-quarter of households had a member who was employed; 60% of those who were unemployed had not worked in more than 2 years.
- The average monthly income for households served by Second Harvest Food Bank GNOA member agencies was $850; the average household size was 2.3 people.
- The average household earned a mere two-thirds of the federal poverty rate, for a family of four this would mean earning less than $1200 per month.
- 92% of households with income less than 130% of the federal poverty level had children under 18 years of age.
- 97% of households did not receive any form of general assistance, welfare, or Temporary Assistance to Needy Families in 2007 or 2008.

Of the 262,800 people that Second Harvest Food Bank serves:

- 80% had a high school education or less.
- 22% of had, or currently have, a managerial or professional job.
- 50% own their homes.
- 79% are registered voters.

[1] Food insecurity is defined as "limited or uncertain availability of nutritionally adequate and safe food or limited or uncertain ability to acquire acceptable foods in socially acceptable ways."

Second Harvest Food Bank
Greater New Orleans and Acadiana

Food Insecurity[2]

- More than one-third of clients' households (36%) are living with "very low food security" meaning that "households have had one or more members experience reductions in food intake or disruptions in eating patterns due to a lack of adequate resources for food."
- Another one-third of clients households (37%) are living with "low food security" meaning "limited or uncertain availability of nutritionally adequate and safe foods" without experiencing disruptions in eating habits or patterns.
- More than 68% of households with children under 18 are food insecure.
- More than 63% of households with someone over 65 years old are food insecure.
- More than 55% of households with children under 5 are food insecure, 28% of which experience "very low food security."
- In shelters, 90% of clients experience "very low food security."
- SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) participants are still food insecure with 76% of households that receive benefits experiencing food insecurity, although the experience of "very low food security" is less than other groups.
- Approximately 72% of households that do not participate in SNAP are "food insecure."
- Almost 77% of households with one person in poor health are food insecure.
- 79% percent of households reported that in the past year their household ran out of food and just didn't have enough money to purchase more.
- More than 29% of household adults reported skipping a meal in the last year because "there wasn't enough money for food" however, only 6% of children had skipped a meal.
- 60% of households with children reported having to choose between paying for utilities and purchasing food.

[2] Data taken from Chapter 6: Household Food Insecurity, Hunger in America 2010 Local Report for Second Harvest Food Bank of Greater New Orleans and Acadiana.

Children[3]

- 31% of Second Harvest Food Bank client households have children under 18 years of age.
- 13% of households have a grandparent responsible for the basic needs of grandchildren in the house.
- 93% of households with children earn less than 130% of the federal poverty level making many children qualified for the National School Lunch Program's Free or Reduced Price Lunch.
- 69% of households with children live with food insecurity; 56% of households with children under age five live with food insecurity.
- 15% of households reported children skipping meals in the last year "because there wasn't money for food."
- 58.4% of households with children under five years old have applied for SNAP benefits, only 28% are currently receiving them.
- SNAP benefits last an average of two weeks for households with seniors or children under 18 years of age.
- 75% of households reported children participating in the Free and Reduced Lunch Program; 66% of households reported children participating in the School Breakfast Program.
- Only 13% of children participated in the Summer Food Service Program, mostly because parents did not know about this program.
- 19% of households reported children's participation in LACHIP, the Louisiana Children's Health Insurance Program.

[3] Data taken from Chapter 7: Clients Use of Food Assistance Programs, Hunger in America 2010 Local Report for Second Harvest Food Bank of Greater New Orleans and Acadiana.

Seniors[4]

- 30% of households reported a household member over the age of 65.
- 91% of households with someone over 65 lived below 130% of the federal poverty line. 50% of households with seniors earned between 50% and 100% of the federal poverty line. For a senior living alone this would be equal to earning between $450 and $900 per month.
- 62% of households with seniors are living with food insecurity.
- 58.6% of households with seniors have applied for SNAP benefits; only 29.7% are currently receiving benefits. 65% of households with seniors who have applied for SNAP benefits earn less than 130% of the federal poverty level.
- SNAP benefits last an average of two weeks for households with seniors or children under 18 years of age.
- 36% of households with seniors choose between paying for food and paying for utilities.
- 25% of households with seniors choose between paying for food and paying for medical care.
- 32% of elderly clients report SNAP benefits lasting 1 week or less.
- Only 3.5% of households with seniors reported participating in home delivered meal programs such as Meals on Wheels; only 10% reported participating in senior nutrition sites.

[4] Data taken from Chapter 7: Clients Use of Food Assistance Programs, Hunger in America 2010 Local Report for Second Harvest Food Bank of Greater New Orleans and Acadiana.

Food Assistance Programs[5]

- 33.5% of clients served by Second Harvest Food Bank receive SNAP[6] benefit. In 2006 almost one-half (46.5%) of clients who received food from GNOA member agencies were receiving SNAP benefits.
- In 2006, 80% of clients had applied for SNAP benefits; in 2009 63% had applied.
- SNAP benefits typically last clients an average of 2.5 weeks
- 58.6% of households with seniors have applied for SNAP benefits, but only 29.7% are currently receiving benefits.
- 58.4% of households with children under 5 years old have applied for SNAP benefits, only 28% are currently receiving them.
- SNAP benefits last an average of two weeks for households with seniors or children under 18 years of age.
- 37% of clients do not think they are eligible for benefits because of income or assets. This compares to 23% who thought the same thing in 2006. 31% of those who had not applied for this reason had incomes below 130% of the federal poverty line.
- Only 5% of clients did not apply for benefits because of social stigma attached to receiving social welfare. In 2006, almost one-third had not applied for benefits for the same reason.
- 51% of clients who had been denied SNAP benefits because of ineligible income earned less than 130% of the federal poverty level.
- 97% of households did not receive any form of general assistance, welfare, or Temporary Assistance to Needy Families in 2007 or 2008.

[5] Data taken from Chapter 7: Clients Use of Food Assistance Programs, Hunger in America 2010 Local Report for Second Harvest Food Bank of Greater New Orleans and Acadiana.
[6] SNAP is the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program formerly known as Food Stamps.