Hunger in South Louisiana– Fact Sheet

Second Harvest Food Bank of Greater New Orleans & Acadiana

Introduction

Feeding America provides Second Harvest with two major reports on hunger in the communities we serve. These reports, Map the Meal Gap and Hunger in America, combine to provide a broad overview of who is at risk of hunger in our community and Second Harvest serves. Map the Meal Gap is updated annually and shows food insecurity rates, the cost of food, and provides insight into the incomes of food insecure individuals and children in each parish. Hunger in America is a quadrennial study of the clients and member agencies Second Harvest serves.

Overview of Hunger in South Louisiana

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 according Hunger in America, 2010.

Approximately 75% of Second Harvest Food Bank client households had incomes below the federal poverty level in the month prior to survey.[1] According to Map the Meal Gap, in 2010 nearly one-third of food insecure households lived at or above 185% of the Federal Poverty Level. For a family of four this means they earned more than $41,348 but still had to make difficult choices about food.

More than 130,000, about one in five, children in Second Harvest's service area are food insecure. Nearly one-third come from families that earn more than 185% of the Federal Poverty Level and do not qualify for food assistance services such as Free and Reduced Price School Lunches. (Map the Meal Gap)

The average food insecure household reported they needed $13.61 more each week to meet their food needs. (Map the Meal Gap)

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. (Hunger in America, 2010)

Almost one-third (31%) of households served by Second Harvest 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. (Hunger in America, 2010)

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. (Hunger in America, 2010)

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. (Hunger in America, 2010)

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. (Hunger in America, 2010)

Only 13% of children participated in the Summer Food Service Program, mostly because parents did not know about this program. (Hunger in America, 2010)

97% of households did not receive any form of general assistance, welfare, or Temporary Assistance to Needy Families in 2007 or 2008. (Hunger in America, 2010)

[1] For more detail on the clients served by SHFB, visit http://bit.ly/zZxHV4

In households served by Second Harvest Food Bank member agencies, 30% report someone in poor health. (Hunger in America, 2010)

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. (Hunger in America, 2010)

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. (Hunger in America, 2010)

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. (Hunger in America, 2010)

SNAP, formerly the Food Stamp Program, benefits last an average of two weeks for households with seniors or children under 18 years of age. (Hunger in America, 2010)

58.6% of households with seniors have applied for SNAP benefits, but only 29.7% are currently receiving benefits. (Hunger in America, 2010)