

## 2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### 1. Who is hungry in America?

- **How many people seek charitable food assistance?**

Second Harvest provides food to 46,295 agencies which operate 94,093 food programs. These programs serve a total of 25,786,357 unduplicated people, including 21,440,079 people served by emergency food programs (pantries, kitchens or shelters). Each person is counted only once, no matter how many times he or she is served. (Table 4-1, pp. 29-31)

- **Are they men or women?**

37.6% of clients are male; 62.4% are female. (Table 8-66, p. 176)

- **How old are they?**

37.8% of clients are 17 years of age or younger, while 16.0% are 65 or over. (Table 8-27, p. 133)

- **What is their ethnic origin?**

White clients predominate at 47.1%, followed by African Americans at 32.1%. 14.6% of clients are Hispanic. (Table 8-25, p. 130)

- **What is their educational level?**

39.9% lack a high school diploma or equivalent. The highest level of education for 36.2% is a high school diploma. 5.0% have completed college or beyond. (Table 8-64, p. 174)

- **Where do they live?**

27.2% of food programs serve rural areas; 26.1% serve cities of less than 100,000 people. (Table 8-7A, p. 111)

### 2. Why do they need to depend on charity?

- **What are the most frequent causes of need for assistance?**

44.7% of clients come to agencies for food assistance because they have too little income from employment. 39.4% come because they are recently unemployed, and 31.0% come because of an emergency or crisis. (Table 8-40, p. 148)

- **How much income do client households have?**

67.0% of client households receiving food from emergency food programs have an annual household income of less than \$10,000. (Table 8-56, p. 166)

- **What are the primary sources of household income for clients?**

For 28.1% of clients, employment is the primary source of household income; for 18.2%, Social Security is the primary source; for 10.9%, Supplemental Social Security Income is the primary source of income. (Table 8-62, p. 170)

- **How does client income compare with the federal poverty level?**  
A four-person household living at the federal poverty level has a weekly income of \$308.65 or an annual income of \$16,050. 79.9% of four-person households served by the food banks have an annual income of under \$15,500. (Tables 9-1 and 9-2, pp. 178-179)
- **How many clients have no income?**  
11.3% of clients served by agencies of the food banks received no income in the previous month. (Table 8-62, p. 170)
- **What is client employment status?**  
37.0% of all clients are unemployed, 20.7% are working, 21.0% are disabled, and 11.7% are retired. (Table 8-44, p. 153)
- **What is employment status by household?**  
In 61.4% of client households, no adult is working; in 38.6% of households, one or more adults are working. (Table 8-52, p. 161)
- **How many clients are looking for a job?**  
62.4% of unemployed clients are looking for work. (Table 8-53, p. 162)
- **How long have the unemployed been without a job?**  
59.0% of unemployed clients have been without work for one year or more. (Table 8-54, p. 163)
- **What kind of jobs did unemployed clients have last?**  
Prior to unemployment, 11.2% of clients held professional jobs, while 23.9% held skilled jobs. (Table 8-55, p. 165)
- **What is the full- or part-time status of clients' jobs? Are they involved in training?**  
Of those clients who are employed, 49.3% have full-time employment and 41.8% are employed part-time. (Table 8-46, p. 155)  
2.1% of all clients are participating in government sponsored JOBS or job training programs. (Table Q-58A, p. 156)
- **What is the housing status of clients?**  
15.8% of clients are homeless and another 5.0% live in marginal housing situations. (Table 8-12, p. 116) In the past year, 35.1% of responding client households had to choose between paying their rent or mortgage and buying food. (Table Q-48A, p. 122)
- **How many are single parent households?**  
33.4% of all households served are single parent households. (Table 8-35, p. 143)
- **How many clients live alone?**  
29.5% of clients live alone. (Table 8-31, p. 136)

### **3. What resources do clients have or lack?**

- **How many clients receive food stamps?**  
40.7% of clients receive food stamps. (Table 10-1, p. 185)

- **How long do food stamps last?**  
78.7% of all emergency food clients receiving food stamps state that food stamps do not last the entire month. (Table 10-3 p. 189) In the past year, 15.2% of food stamp recipients have received increased benefits, while 39.3% now receive decreased benefits. (Table Q-37A, p. 190)
- **Have they applied for food stamps?**  
39.7% of emergency clients not receiving food stamps have applied for them and are awaiting approval. (Table 10-5, p. 193)
- **What food sources do clients have?**  
78.5% of food program clients interviewed in this study have no resources for food other than agency or government food programs. (Table 12-11, p. 227)
- **How many adults miss meals?**  
27.5% of clients report that adults in their households have missed meals in the past month because they did not have enough food or money to buy food. (Table 10-13, p. 202)
- **How many children miss meals?**  
In 9.1% of the households with children, clients report that children have missed meals in the past month because they did not have enough food or money to buy food. (Table 10-16, p. 204)
- **What household resources do clients lack?**  
24.1% of clients have no stove for cooking, 42.5% have no telephone, and 59.6% have no car. Lack of communication and transportation impedes their employment and/or search for employment. (Table 8-18, p. 123)

#### **4. How long do emergency food clients depend on charity?**

- **How long have clients received food from an agency?**  
67.2% of agency clients have received food for less than one year. 32.8% of agency clients have received food for more than one year. (Table 8-1, p. 100)
- **What is the average length of time clients receive food?**  
Agencies report that clients have used their programs for an average of 33.5 weeks. (Table 8-3, p. 104)

#### **5. Is there a health connection?**

- **How many clients are in poor health?**  
35.9% of clients report that one or more household members are in poor health. (Table 11-1, p. 207)
- **Do clients have insurance or medical assistance?**  
24.3% of clients receive Medicare; 40.3% receive Medicaid. (Table 11-2, p. 209)

- **What other factors affect client health?**

40.8% of clients have unpaid medical or hospital bills. (Table 11-5, p. 212) 37.3% of clients are delaying medical care because they can't afford it. (Table 11-7, p. 213) 13.4% of all clients have been refused medical care because they could not afford it or because they had a Medical Assistance or Medicare card. (Table 11-8, p. 215)

## **6. Who helps provide hunger relief to clients?**

- **What sources are the primary sources of food assistance?**

Second Harvest National Food Bank Network consists of 186 food banks that provide donated food and grocery products each year to nearly 26 million needy people of all ages. (Section 3.1, p. 12)

- **What is a food bank?**

A food bank is a charitable organization that solicits, receives, inventories, stores and distributes donated food and grocery products to charitable, human service agencies. These agencies, in turn, provide food directly to needy clients through various types of food programs. (Section 3.3, p. 15)

- **How many agencies work with Second Harvest?**

Through 186 food banks, Second Harvest provides food to 46,295 agencies, each operating one or more food programs. (Table 4-1, p. 29)

- **How many programs are represented in this study?**

A total of 22,845 programs are operated by 11,240 agencies that responded to the survey. (These agencies provided information on 12,897 of those programs). 8,282 emergency pantries, 1,869 emergency kitchens, 1,408 emergency shelters and 11,286 other non-emergency programs are operated by the responding agencies. (Chart 3-2, p. 18) (Table 5-1/5-3, p. 35) (Table 15-1, pp. 257-259)

- **How do emergency and non-emergency agencies differ?**

Emergency agencies feed people in a hunger crisis. Non-emergency agencies provide valuable social services, often functioning as hunger and homelessness prevention programs. They may distribute food in the course of those services, although response to hunger crisis is not their primary purpose. (Section 3.3, pp. 15-17)

- **Where do agencies get food for their programs to distribute?**

28.3% of agencies get 80% or more of their food from the food bank. (Table 6-5, p. 60)

- **How large are agencies?**

Over half of the food programs are small, with a median annual income of \$5,700. That is, half of the food programs operate on less than \$5,700 per year. They receive 40.6% of their operating funds from the private sector and 49.7% from state and federal governments. (Table 6-14, p. 66)

- **Are these long-standing organizations?**

37.1% of the programs were established within the past seven years. (Table 5-7, p. 41) 51.0% are church-affiliated. (Table 5-5, p. 39)

- **How is food distributed to clients?**

92.4% of agencies distribute food directly to their clients. (Table 5-9, p. 43) 72.2% have policies limiting eligibility for service (Table 5-10, p. 44), but 50.0% believe that use by clients of more than one food program is fair. (Table 5-20, p. 51) 55.3% of the agencies that believe multiple program use is fair, believe so because of the low-income levels of their clients. (Table 5-22, p. 53)

## 7. What resources do these charities have for hunger relief?

- **Do agencies have enough food?**

Agencies were asked if they ever had to ration or limit food in order to provide for all clients. 45.2% of food programs have had to stretch food in the past year; 13.0% of all agencies have had to do so as often as once a month. (Table 6-28, p. 80)

- **How much more food is needed?**

Agencies report an additional need of 2,217,685 pound of food per week. This projects to a reported additional need of 115,319,642 pounds per year by the reporting agencies, or an additional 965,137,846 pounds per year needed by the entire Second Harvest network. (Table 6-30, p. 82)

- **Do food programs have an adequate variety of products to distribute?**

75.9% of food programs need to add specific items to their inventory. (Section 6.6, p. 88)

- **Are agencies viable?**

73.6% of agencies believe that they are stable. (Section 6.5, p. 86) 7.9% report that lack of funding presents a problem, and another 8.0% report that unpredictable funding presents a problem. (Table 6-34, p. 86)

- **How large are agency staffs?**

Food programs reported an average of 4.9 paid staff members. (Table 6-31, p. 84) They were each assisted last year by an average of 59.3 volunteers who gave an average of 2,595.4 hours to each agency. (Table 6-32, p. 84) A projection based on the U.S. average hourly wages values the annual contribution to these programs at \$327,801,929.62. (Section 6.4, p. 83)

- **What impact would be felt by agencies if the food bank could not provide food?**

80.9% of agencies report such a loss would have a significant or devastating impact on their ability to provide hunger relief. (Table 14-6, p. 243)

**8. Where do these figures come from?**

▪ **What is the source of this information?**

79 food banks participated in this Second Harvest Research Study — *HUNGER 1997: The Faces & Facts*. The figures used in this summary are derived from that study.

▪ **How was agency information obtained?**

A mail survey was distributed to 25,319 agencies. 11,240 agencies responded with information on 6,156 Pantries, 1,209 Kitchens, 937 Shelters, and 4,595 Others, for a total of 12,897 programs. (Chart 3-2, p. 18) (Chart 15-5, p. 256) (Table 15-1, pp. 257-259)

▪ **How was client information obtained?**

Personal interviews were conducted with 27,771 clients at 3,476 agencies. (Chart 3-2, p. 18) (Chart 15-6, p. 264) (Table 15-2, pp. 265-267)