

Landmark New Study Reveals an Unprecedented Number of Islanders Seeking Emergency Food Assistance

Largest, Most Comprehensive Report Ever Conducted On Emergency Food Distribution Reports 39 Percent Increase in Number of Hawaii Clients Served Annually; Over 55,000 Children and 11,000 Seniors in Need

HONOLULU, HAWAII- FEBRUARY 3, 2010 --- A landmark study released today by the Hawaii Foodbank and Feeding America, the nation's largest domestic hunger-relief organization, reports that more than 183,000 people, including 55,000 children, receive emergency food each year through the Hawaii Foodbank network. The findings represent a 39 percent increase since the findings reported in *Hunger in America 2006*.

Hunger in America 2010 is the first research study to capture the significant connection between the recent economic downturn and an increased need for emergency food assistance. The number of children and adults in need of food as a result of experiencing food insecurity has significantly increased.

The Hawaii Foodbank network is feeding 51,000 more people than in 2006.

Hunger in America 2010 is the first comprehensive research study that captures the connection between a weak economy and increased needs for emergency food assistance. The data was collected in the heart of the 2009 economic downturn (February-June 2009).

Hawaii Findings

- The 183,500 different islanders provided emergency food assistance annually by the Hawaii Foodbank network include 55,050 children and over 11,000 seniors (11,010).

Oahu	123,800
Hawaii Island	30,000
Maui	18,600
Kauai	11,100

- These numbers are based on surveys conducted at emergency feeding centers, such as soup kitchens, shelters, Ohana Produce distributions and food pantries, but do not factor in many individuals also served at non-emergency locations, such as Kids Café or Backpack programs and senior centers.

Client Households

- 79 percent of client households served are food insecure, meaning they do not always know where they will find their next meal.
- 43 percent of these client households are experiencing food insecurity with hunger, meaning they are sometimes completely without a source of food.

- 83 percent of client households with children served are also food insecure.
- Of the 183,500 people the Hawaii Foodbank network serves:
 - 79 percent of households have incomes below the federal poverty line.
 - The average monthly income for client households is \$850.
 - 42 percent of households have one or more adults who is working.

Tough Choices

Many of the client households served by Hawaii Foodbank food banks report that their household incomes are inadequate to cover their basic household expenses.

- 21 percent of client households served report having to choose between paying for utilities and food.
- 28 percent of client households said they had to choose between paying for rent or a mortgage and food.
- 19 percent of client households report having to choose between paying for medical bills and food.
- 32 percent of client households must choose between transportation and food.

Over one in five client households (22 percent) do not have health insurance and nearly one third of our adult clients report that they have unpaid medical and hospital bills.

Thirteen percent of households report having at least one member of their household in poor health.

Agencies

- Hawaii Foodbank network provides food and groceries to 416 food pantries, soup kitchens and emergency shelters.
- 60 percent of pantries and soup kitchens in Hawaii rely solely on volunteers and have no paid staff.
- 58 percent of agencies in Hawaii are faith-based.

National Hunger Study Methodology

Hunger in America 2010 is a scientific study that conducted more than 62,000 face-to-face interviews with people seeking emergency food assistance from the nearly 63,000 agencies served by a Feeding America food bank.

More than 37,000 agencies also participated in *Hunger in America 2010* by completing an agency survey.

Background: The Economic Landscape

The economic recession of 2009, resulting in dramatically increasing unemployment and poverty nationwide, has driven sharp increases in need for emergency food assistance and enrollment in federal nutrition programs.

The increase in need is likely being driven by the dramatically increasing rates of unemployment and poverty.

During 2005, when the last Hunger in America data was collected, the national unemployment rate averaged 5.1 percent.¹

When the data collection for the 2010 study commenced in late winter and spring of 2009, the recession was in full swing and the unemployment rate was rising rapidly, jumping from 4.9 percent at the start of recession² in December 2007, to 9.5 percent when client data collection was completed in June 2009.

In addition, the Bureau of Labor Statistics reported that when individuals with “marginal labor force attachment” and those who were working part-time involuntarily were considered, more than 17 percent of the population was affected in late 2009 by the shifting employment trends.

Hawaii’s food banks are the main source of food for local hunger-relief charities.

Hawaii’s food banks provide 81 percent of the food provided at food pantries, 49 percent of food provided at soup kitchens and 38 percent of food provided at emergency shelters.

Feeding America

Feeding America provides low-income individuals and families with the fuel to survive and even thrive. As the nation's leading domestic hunger-relief charity, our network members supply food (free of charge) to more than 37 million Americans each year, including 14 million children and 3 million seniors. Serving the entire United States,

¹ U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics. Found on the web December 16, 2009 at http://data.bls.gov/PDQ/servlet/SurveyOutputServlet?data_tool=latest_numbers&series_id=LNS14000000

² The National Bureau of Economic Research dates the beginning of the 2008-2009 recession from December 2007. NBER defines a recession as a significant decline in economic activity spread across the economy, lasting more than a few months, normally visible in production, employment, real income, and other indicators (Found on the web December 16, 2009 at <http://www.nber.org/cycles/dec2008.html>).

more than 200 member food banks support more than 61,000 agencies that address hunger in all of its forms. Feeding America is based in Chicago.

Hawaii Foodbank

The Hawaii Foodbank is the only nonprofit 501(c)(3) agency on Oahu that collects, warehouses and distributes mass quantities of both perishable and non-perishable food to help feed Hawaii's hungry. Donated and purchased foods are distributed to approximately 250 charities on Oahu. Last year the Hawaii Foodbank distributed over 10 million pounds of food, including 2 million pounds of fresh fruits and vegetables to people requiring emergency food assistance in Hawaii. All Hawaii Foodbank food is distributed to clients free of charge. The Hawaii Foodbank is a certified member of Feeding America, the Nation's Food Bank Network and a partner agency of Aloha United Way.

For more information on how you can fight hunger in Hawaii, visit www.hawaiifoodbank.org. Find us on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/Hawaii Foodbank](https://www.facebook.com/HawaiiFoodbank).

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