

HUNGER IN LOS ANGELES COUNTY 2010

Los Angeles Regional Foodbank

February 2010

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Executive Summary

This report shows that a record 983,400 Los Angeles County residents received food assistance from food pantries, soup kitchens and shelters served by the Foodbank in 2009. This total represents nearly 1 in 10 residents of Los Angeles County. Children comprise 40 percent of people receiving food assistance and seniors comprise 5 percent as an estimated 393,000 kids and 49,000 seniors benefited from food distributed by the Foodbank over the course of the year.

The report's release is in conjunction with survey results collected by food banks throughout the U.S. and compiled at the national level by Feeding America. The national and local results provide the most comprehensive snapshot of the charitable food assistance network to date.

Comparing the results of this survey to a similar survey conducted four years ago, we see that even though food pantries and other agencies are serving more people than ever, these agencies are also reporting the need for more food and other resources to meet the growing demand for food assistance due primarily to the high unemployment rate. An estimated 584,300 residents of Los Angeles County are unemployed, and the current 12 percent unemployment rate has more than doubled since four years ago.

This study, based on 451 face-to-face interviews with clients at food pantries, soup kitchens and shelters, as well as 363 surveys of the volunteers and staff who manage food programs, shows that:

- The total number of people receiving food assistance has increased by 46 percent since 2005 from 674,100 people annually to 983,400 people in 2009.
- The number of children receiving food assistance has more than doubled from 185,000 in 2005 to 393,000 children in 2009.
- While 37 percent of households include at least one employed adult, two-thirds of these adults are working part-time while only one-third of the adults are working full-time.
- For adults currently working or who have worked before, 20 percent have held managerial or professional jobs during their career.
- Families and individuals face difficult economic decisions when attempting to meet their basic needs as 48 percent report having to choose between paying for food and paying for utilities, 46 percent choosing between food and rent, and 42 percent between food and transportation.

For the agency survey, the median length of operation for the food pantries, soup kitchens and shelters served by the Los Angeles Regional Foodbank is 15 years, and these agencies rely heavily on volunteers to administer their food programs. In addition to distributing food, many agencies offer other services such as health services, employment training and clothing distribution. More than 49 percent of pantries report "problems with funding" while 42 percent of food pantries and 30 percent of soup kitchens report "problems with food supplies."

Client satisfaction is high as 94 percent of recipients said that they were either "very satisfied" or "somewhat satisfied" with the amount of food that they received from their provider, while 91 percent were satisfied with the variety of the food they received.

Four Year Comparison 2005 vs. 2009

The landscape of hunger in Los Angeles County has changed significantly over the past four years. The county's unemployment rate has more than doubled from 5% to 12%, increasing the county's unemployed from 243,000 to 584,300 people and the average rent for a two-bedroom apartment decreased only slightly from \$1,716 a month to \$1,612*. While unemployment plays a key indicator in food insecurity, there are several other factors consider.

	<u>2005</u>	<u>2009</u>
Income		
<u>Income as a Percentage of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL)</u>		
Households 100% or Below FPL	60.6%	68.9%
Households Between 101% and 150% FPL	11.4%	9.9%
Households Above 150%	7.4%	6.2%
Average monthly income	\$790	\$860

	<u>2005</u>	<u>2009</u>
Housing		
Clients with a Place to Live	75.1%	86.9%
Clients without a Place to Live	24.9%	13.1%
In the previous 12 months, clients or their family who had to choose at least once between paying for food and paying for the rent/mortgage.	29.8%	46.0%

	<u>2005</u>	<u>2009</u>
Health		
In the previous 12 months, clients or their family who had to choose at least once between paying for food and paying for medicine or medical care.	28.3%	35.2%

*(Source M/PF Research published in the Los Angeles Business Journal 1/18/2010)

Four Year Comparison 2005 vs. 2009

	<u>2005</u>	<u>2009</u>
Food Insecurity Among Households with Children Younger than Age 18.		
With Low Food Security	43.0%	40.1%
With Very Low Food Security	17.1%	44.4%
Subtotal	60.1%	84.5%

	<u>2005</u>	<u>2009</u>
Program Participation		
Food Stamps	25.1%	20.6%
Women, Infants and Children Program (WIC)	42.0%	68.0%
School Lunch	41.1%	68.5%
School Breakfast	31.5%	61.7%
Afterschool Snack	6.1%	12.2%
Summer Lunch Program	3.6%	15.3%

	<u>2005</u>	<u>2009</u>
<i>Clients whose child/children was/were hungry at least once during the previous 12 months, but couldn't afford more food.</i>	10.7%	33.9%

	<u>2005</u>	<u>2009</u>
Clients who couldn't afford to eat balanced meals.	66.3%	71.8%

	<u>2005</u>	<u>2009</u>
Number of Clients Served Through the Foodbank's Emergency Food Network Annually	674,100	983,400

Agency Findings

Agencies work with the Foodbank in furthering our mission to mobilize resources to fight hunger in our community. Agencies are on the front lines in the battle against hunger—they see the face of food insecurity every day, and struggle against it in a variety of ways.

1. What are the types of agencies?

Organization Types	
Faith-based/Religion-affiliated Nonprofits	55.7%
Nonprofit organizations and Other	44.3%

Length of Operation	Average years
Food Pantry	15
Soup Kitchen	23
Shelter	22

On average, Pantries and Kitchens rely more heavily on volunteer staff than paid staff.

2. What other programs are available?

Agencies serve food, but they sometimes offer a variety of other services:

Some agencies also offer programs such as:	
Nutrition Counseling	Language Translation
WIC Eligibility Counseling	Short-Term Shelter
Food Stamps Eligibility Counseling	Health Clinics
Employment Training	Information and Referral Services
Utility Bill Assistance	Transportation
Short-Term Financial Assistance	Clothing and Furniture

Agency Findings

3. How much food do agencies serve, and where does it come from?

Amount of Food Served
Pantries distributed an average of 269 food packages in a typical week.
Kitchens distributed an average of 277 meals on the day the program was last open.
Shelters distributed an average of 147 meals on the day the program was last open.

Food Sources—Foodbank	Pantries	Kitchens	Shelters
Amount of Food Received from the Foodbank	80.3%	37.2%	39.5%

Other Sources of Food	Pantries	Kitchens	Shelters
Agencies Reporting Support from:			
Church or religious congregations	67.8%	47.5%	26.7%
Local merchant or farmer donations	39.8%	45.1%	28.8%
Local food drives	35.2%	20.1%	13.4%
Food purchased by agency	46.9%	85.1%	88.8%

Satisfaction with Services at Food Programs	All Agencies	
Amount of Food Provided	<i>Very Satisfied</i>	43.0%
	<i>Somewhat Satisfied</i>	50.7%
	Subtotal	93.7%
Variety of Food Provided	<i>Very Satisfied</i>	40.5%
	<i>Somewhat Satisfied</i>	50.9%
	Subtotal	91.4%
Overall Quality of Food Provided	<i>Very Satisfied</i>	46.9%
	<i>Somewhat Satisfied</i>	45.5%
	Subtotal	92.4%

Agency Findings

4. What challenges do agencies face?

“Problems related to funding” is the main threat reported by Pantries, Kitchens and Shelters. Other challenges include food supplies, problems related to paid staff/personnel, volunteers, and community resistance.

In response to the economic climate, Foodbank agencies have also seen an unprecedented increase of clients seeking assistance. Meeting this need has been a constant challenge.

Increased Number of Clients	More served in 2009 than in 2005?
Pantry	76.2%
Kitchen	78.6%
Shelter	54.2%

Food Quantity/Supplies	Pantries	Kitchens	Shelters
During the past year, the program sometimes/always had to reduce meal portions or reduce the quantity of food in food packages because of a lack of food?	24.2%	14.7%	8.5%
The program had to turn away clients during the past year.	26.4%	13.2%	34.8%
The elimination of the Foodbank as a food source would have a devastating impact.	72.8%	31.7%	34.1%
<i>If a program had to turn away clients, pantries and kitchens listed lack of food resources as the most frequent reason.</i>			

5. What do agencies need?

Additional Meals	Pantries	Kitchens	Shelters
Program requires additional meals.	NA	41.2%	41.8%
Kitchens require an average of 362 more meals per week.			
Shelters require an average of 261 more meals per week.			

Additional Products--Top Three	All Agencies
Meat, Poultry, Fish, Beans, Eggs, Nuts	65.9%
Bread, Cereal, Rice, Pasta	58.4%
Fresh Fruits and Vegetables	52.4%

Additional Assistance Desired	Pantries	Kitchens	Shelters
Nutrition Education	35.2%	35.4%	49.0%
Food Stamp Benefits and Outreach	35.9%	27.1%	18.6%
Accessing Local Resources	49.0%	38.9%	51.0%

Client Findings

Who seeks food assistance?

Many of the people seeking food assistance in Los Angeles County are among the most vulnerable in our community - children account for nearly 40% of all recipients. Due to a challenging job market, four out of five adults not working, and low-paying jobs, many households must juggle their resources making the difficult decision to purchase food or pay their rent. Clients are accessing more food programs than ever before. Taking into account all individuals in recipient households:

1. Age and Gender

Age and Gender

Children under 18 Years Old	39.5%
Adults 18 to 64	55.5%
Seniors 65 and Older	5.0%
<hr/>	
Male	47.5%
Female	52.5%

2. Racial and Ethnic Background

Racial and Ethnic Background

American Indian or Alaskan Native	0.5%
Asian or Pacific Islander	0.9%
Black	26.0%
Latino or Hispanic	58.2%
White	8.0%
Other	9.7%

3. Employment Status

Employment Status

Percentage of client households with one or more adults employed	36.6%
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Client Findings

4. Household Income

Household Income	
<u>Total Monthly Income</u>	
\$0	15.1%
\$1 - \$1000	46.9%
\$1000 - \$1999	16.6%
\$2000 - \$2999	4.3%
\$3000 or more	2.1%
Unknown	15.0%
Average Monthly Income	
\$860	
<u>Main Source of Household Income</u>	
Job	30.1%
Government Welfare Assistance (Cal WORKS and General Assistance)	12.7%
Social Security, Unemployment, Disability, Supplemental Security Income (SSI)	23.9%
Pension, Support from Relatives	6.9%
Other	4.6%
No Income	17.7%
Unknown	4.0%

5. Housing Status

Housing Status	
Clients With a Place to Live	86.9%
Clients Without a Place to Live	13.1%
Clients late paying the last month's rent or mortgage.	35.4%

6. Health Status

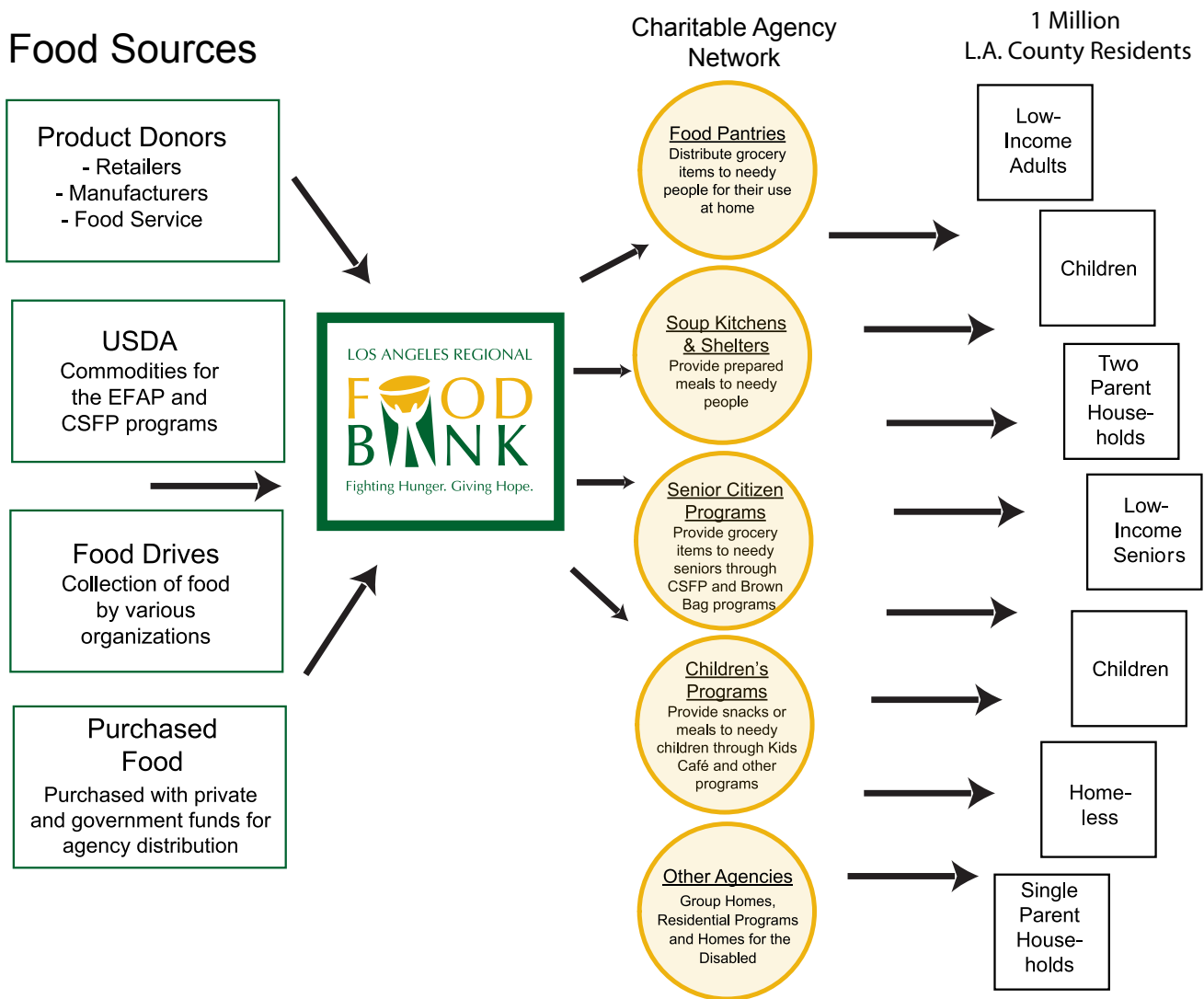
Health Status	
Households with at least one member reported to be in poor health.	29.9%
Clients who had unpaid medical or hospital bills.	19.8%

Client Findings

7. Program Participation

Program Participation	
Food Stamps / Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP)	
Client or anyone in the household currently receiving Food Stamp benefits.	20.6%
Client or anyone in the household had ever applied for food stamp benefits.	46.8%
Average number of weeks clients or their households have currently been receiving food stamp benefits.	115.6
Average number of weeks during the month over which food stamp benefits usually last.	3.0
Other Government Programs	
Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC)	68.0%
School Lunch	68.5%
School Breakfast	61.7%
Afterschool Snack	12.2%
Summer Lunch Program	15.3%

The Charitable Food Assistance Network



Note: The above diagram does not capture every flow of product in the system. For example, agencies receive some food donations directly and purchase products from other sources. For distribution, some product is distributed by smaller food banks. EFAP is the USDA Emergency Food Assistance Program, and CSFP is the USDA Commodity Supplemental Food Program.

Methodology / Acknowledgments

As part of a national survey, the Los Angeles Regional Foodbank conducted a survey in early 2009 of recipients at food pantries, soup kitchens and shelters in Los Angeles County. In addition, the Foodbank conducted a separate survey of the staff and volunteers who manage these food pantries, soup kitchens and shelters. The results provide the most comprehensive snapshot of the charitable food assistance network in Los Angeles County, and the results can be compared to a similar survey conducted four years earlier.

The national study was commissioned by Feeding America which contracted with Mathematica Policy Research (MPR) of Princeton, New Jersey to conduct the research. MPR developed the survey instruments and worked with the Foodbank to oversee the collection of the data during the first half of 2009. The Foodbank assisted MPR with the development of the sampling frame to ensure that the results are representative of the communities of Los Angeles County. Foodbank staff conducted 451 face-to-face interviews of recipients selected randomly at the agency sites. The agency survey was mailed to all Foodbank agencies.

Sampling variation is measured in terms of the 90 percent confidence interval around an estimate. The 90 percent confidence interval implies that, with 90 percent confidence, the true value of an estimate will be in the interval. Most percentages in this report are measured with sampling variation in the range of 5 to 12 percentage points. The sampling variation increases for subgroups with small sample sizes.

The following Foodbank staff members analyzed the data and compiled this report: Michael Flood, President/CEO, Jeff Dronkers, Chief Programs and Policy Officer, Jessica Jones, Policy and Outreach Supervisor, and Darren Hoffman, Communications Director. Staff members of Mathematica Policy Research and Feeding America played critical roles in all facets of the survey and report. Electronic copies of this and other reports can be accessed at www.lafoodbank.org.

The definitions of the terms “food security” and “food insecurity” were developed by United States Department of Agriculture and the Census Bureau in the mid 1990’s and new definitions have been developed for “low food security” and “very low food security.” Food security is defined as the assured access to enough nutritious food to sustain an active and healthy life. Food insecurity is defined as the limited or uncertain availability or ability to acquire safe, nutritious food in a socially acceptable way. For a full explanation of the development of these terms, please see www.usda.gov.

www.lafoodbank.org

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