



HUNGER STUDY 2014 HIGHLIGHTS NEED ACROSS NEW JERSEY, September 15, 2014

A new look at the problem of hunger in New Jersey shows almost 900,000 people in the state rely on food banks, and that 7,700,000 times year, someone in need is fed by a food bank partner charity. The findings come from **Feeding America's Hunger in America 2014**, the most comprehensive national report on the issue of hunger. The research clearly shows that hunger remains a very real problem in the state, with an increase in demand for food assistance in New Jersey, and more families forced to make donated food an ongoing, basic part of their plan to make ends meet.

As the largest food bank in the state, the Community FoodBank of New Jersey is on the front lines, seeing this need every day, and working to try to meet it. Diane Riley, CFBNJ's Director of Advocacy, says, "The stark reality of the data should be a wakeup call to advocates and everyone concerned about the issue of hunger. These findings affirm what we hear every day from the people behind the numbers. More people are coming more often to pantries and other feeding programs because they are forced to use their ever-eroding resources to pay for other critical needs such as housing, transportation and medicine, with little or nothing left over for food."

Key findings about CFBNJ's programs include:

- 91% say they feed as many or more people as in the previous year
- 60% say they saw an increase in demand for food
- 28% say they had to turn away clients. 42% of these say they occasionally or frequently had to turn clients away because they ran out of food

Key findings about CFBNJ's clients include:

- 90% say they are food insecure
- 74% live below the poverty line
- 73% have at least a high school degree or equivalent
- 70% say they have to plan to get food assistance on a regular basis
- 69% live in households with 3 or fewer people
- 56% receive SNAP benefits (food stamps)
- 47% had at least one household member with a paying job in the past year. Of those not looking for work, 66% are disabled and 29% are retired.
- 20% of households say they have a member who is currently serving or has served in the US military

Feeding America's recent research (Map the Meal Gap) also shows that almost 400,000 children in New Jersey (nearly 1 in 5) are food insecure. A great many of their families rely on public and private assistance to help feed their children, utilizing resources including school breakfasts and lunches, after-school meals, summer feeding programs, BackPack and Kids Cafe programs and other food provided by CFBNJ and/or our partner charities.

TOUGH CHOICES

Among CFBNJ clients surveyed:

- 77% said they had to choose between paying for utilities or food
- 73% chose between medicine and food
- 70% chose between housing and food
- 61% chose between transportation and food
- 35% chose between education and food

HEALTH ISSUES

Among CFBNJ clients surveyed:

- 75% said they purchased inexpensive, unhealthy food as a way to cope
- 28% had a household member with diabetes
- 57% had a household member with high blood pressure