



Local Impact Survey: Food Bank Response

How current economic conditions are impacting the emergency food system served by Food Bank of Southwest Georgia

Feeding America is the nation’s largest domestic hunger-relief organization, serving an estimated 25 million low-income Americans each year through its network of 205 food banks and their 63,000 charitable feeding agencies, including food pantries, soup kitchens, and homeless shelters. Feeding America is very concerned about the economic downturn, increasing unemployment, rising food prices, and the effect these conditions are having on the emergency feeding system and the millions of men, women, and children who depend on it.

In December of 2008, Feeding America conducted a brief survey of food bank members to learn more about the challenges faced by food banks, their member agencies, and clients served. What we found was that *every food bank* respondent reported increases in demand for emergency food assistance since last year. Additionally, although the average reported increase in demand was 30% across the network, it is obvious that there is a downward trend and we will likely see continued increases in need.

It’s becoming increasingly more difficult for many food banks and their agencies to meet the needs of their clients, especially when new clients arrive all the time. Many are struggling to meet this increase in demand. Here is a snapshot of what Food Bank of Southwest Georgia is currently witnessing and reporting in the community it serves.

Estimated increase in demand for emergency food assistance over the past year:	about 35-40%
Factors that are contributing to the increase in demand for emergency food:	Increasing Unemployment
Trends in usage include:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> increased need among existing clients (more repeat visits) more first-time users more employed persons newly unemployed persons



Do you feel that you are currently able to adequately meet the needs of your community without having to adjust the amount of food you distribute or your operations?

Yes. I think that we are getting food to anyone and everyone that needs food. If anyone calls from any of our 20 counties I know of agencies in each county where they can get help. Here, in Albany we do have more agencies than we do, say in Ben Hill or Coffee Co., but we still have agencies that can help people in need in those counties.

Additional Comments from Food Bank of Southwest Georgia

We have signed up many new agencies in our surrounding counties because they have seen such a growing need in their communities.

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