



Economic Impact Survey 2009: Food Bank Response

How current economic conditions are impacting the emergency food system served by America's Second Harvest of Tampa Bay

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.

The current recession and the rise in unemployment are having a profound effect on the nation's food banks. In early September 2009, 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. A total of 176 food banks participated in the survey. What we found was that 99% of all participating food banks reported increases in demand for emergency food assistance over the last year. The average increase in demand across the network from Summer 2008 to Summer 2009 was 30%. However, the increase in need for services over the last year varies across the nation, ranging from 5% in some areas to more than 150% in others. Local economic circumstances, such as plant closings, can have a significant impact on need but it is also clear that high unemployment across the nation – which reached 9.7% in August – is a critical factor in the rising need for emergency food.

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. Despite the fact that the nation's food banks delivered 2.63 billion pounds of food between July 2008 and June 2009 – an increase of 21.4% over the prior year --many are struggling to meet this increase in demand.

Here is a snapshot of what America's Second Harvest of Tampa Bay has witnessed and reported over the past year in the community it serves.

<p>Estimated increase in demand or need for emergency food assistance:</p>	<p>Our total pounds distributed for the first 7 months of 2009 is up 22%. If you look at the individual agencies, 30% have increased their pounds and 65% have decreased.</p>
<p>Local factors impacting changes in demand:</p>	<p>The decrease is mainly due to the agencies lack of funding to keep their programs running. We are seeing agencies work together to handle the need as it is too much for any one agency to handle. Because 65% of our agencies have distributed fewer pounds, areas are left with inadequate coverage. Consequently, we started to distribute food directly to the needy.</p>



Critical trends contributing to increased need for emergency food:	Unemployment Underemployment
Client trends include:	More requests from existing clients More first-time users More children More employed persons
The frequency with which the food bank or its agencies had to turn people away:	Frequently
The frequency with which the food bank or its agencies had to reduce the amount of food available per person or household:	Frequently

Additional Comments:

The main factor impacting our area is unemployment, which is mainly due to the decline in the tourist industry and the real estate down turn.

Everyone is trying to stretch their food dollars further. This is helping drive collaboration, which is always needed. The additional funds from EFSP and/or ARRA have been helpful to agencies for acquiring food when donated sources are depleted. Local response with food drives is running 130% above last year for our food bank. Most of food drives go directly to the agencies so I think they are seeing even greater local support.

For further information, please contact:

Pat Rogers
 Executive Director
 America's Second Harvest of Tampa Bay
 Tampa, FL
 813-254-1190
 progers@a2htampabay.org

National Office
 35 E. Wacker Drive
 Suite 2000
 Chicago, IL 60601

tel 312.263.2303
fax 312.263.5626
feedingamerica.org