



Economic Impact Survey 2009: Food Bank Response

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

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 Food Bank of the Albemarle has witnessed and reported over the past year in the community it serves.

Estimated increase in demand or need for emergency food assistance:	Our agencies are serving +18.05% more households. Comparison made of data from July 07 - June 08 against July 08 - June 09 agency monthly reports.
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Formerly named
America's Second Harvest®

<p>Local factors impacting changes in demand:</p>	<p>The number of Individuals/families suffering a financial crisis or living on a fixed income has grown by 18% in the last 12 months. More people are forced to visit food pantries as they contend with job loss and higher living expenses. Some people may need help once in a given year, while others may need help month over month to make it through. We measure our impact by using the poverty figures from the latest census as a gauge to evaluate if our effectiveness. We review the service level of our partner agencies by comparing the number of people served against the number of people living in poverty. Our near term goal is to reach 50% of the people living in poverty once per month. We have attained that goal in 6 of the 15 counties we serve, but as the number of people who are unemployed and underemployed continues to rise we find it difficult to keep up with the demand. In the best of times, Northeastern NC is resource poor. Today, more than ever we need the support of lawmakers and our community friends to help feed the hungry men, women and children in our region.</p>
<p>Critical trends contributing to increased need for emergency food:</p>	<p>Unemployment Underemployment Cost of Food Mortgage/Rent Costs Inadequacy of Food Stamp Benefits</p>
<p>Client trends include:</p>	<p>More requests from existing clients More first-time users More employed persons</p>
<p>The frequency with which the food bank or its agencies had to turn people away:</p>	<p>Rarely</p>
<p>The frequency with which the food bank or its agencies had to reduce the amount of food available per person or household:</p>	<p>Frequently</p>



Additional Comments:

Lack of major industry in our region. This area relies on tourism, which is seasonal, and has a drastic impact on the service-related job industry.



For further information, please contact:

Liz Reasoner
Executive Director
Food Bank of the Albemarle
Elizabeth City, NC
252-335-4035
lreasoner@feedingamerica.org