



Economic Impact Survey 2009: Food Bank Response

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

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 Northern Nevada has witnessed and reported over the past year in the community it serves.

Estimated increase in demand or need for emergency food assistance:	We've seen a significant change between the time frame of July 2008 to July 2009, with an increase of 20% of unduplicated clients from our partner agencies and our direct service programs as well. Over the past two years we have seen an increase in unduplicated clients of 44%, up from 68,800 to more than 106,000 unduplicated people receiving services.
Local factors impacting changes in demand:	Local unemployment is over 12% in the region and we anticipated 14,135 households will roll off unemployment benefits in the state of Nevada by the end of 2009.

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

tel 312.263.2303
fax 312.263.5626
feedingamerica.org



Critical trends contributing to increased need for emergency food:	Unemployment Underemployment Foreclosures Cost of Fuel Very low income people and senior citizens do not qualify for an adequate SNAP (formerly food stamps) benefit
Client trends include:	More first-time users Former middle-income families are in need of emergency pantry services
The frequency with which the food bank or its agencies had to reduce the amount of food available per person or household:	Occasionally, due to seasonality of food and food drives. Partner agencies are limited in distribution in relation to their physical capacity to store food donations.

Additional Comments:

We have had a couple of small casinos close their doors, leaving about 1600 community members unemployed. Many construction companies have not resumed business during the spring and summer months.

Nevada remains near the top of the list for high mortgage foreclosures, high unemployment rates and low participation in the food stamp program. The State of Nevada offers many jobs in the hospitality industry when the economy is healthy and speedy recovery of this industry does not look hopeful at this time.

For further information, please contact:

Angela Dazey
 Agency Relations and Outreach Manager
 Food Bank of Northern Nevada
 McCarran, NV
 775.331.3663 x 112
 adazey@fbnn.org