



Economic Impact Survey 2009: Food Bank Response

How current economic conditions are impacting the emergency food system served by Akron-Canton Regional Foodbank

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 Akron-Canton Regional Foodbank has witnessed and reported over the past year in the community it serves.

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| Estimated increase in demand or need for emergency food assistance: | 19% Increase in Pantry Request YTD June 30, 2009 vs. 2008, 46% Increase in Congregate People Served YTD June 30, 2009 vs. 2008 |
| Local factors impacting changes in demand: | The surge in demand we have experiencing in the last 12 months has been driven by high levels of unemployment within our service area and manifested through high numbers of first time clients. |
| Critical trends contributing to increased need for emergency food: | Unemployment Underemployment |



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| Client trends include: | More requests from existing clients More first-time users More children |
| The frequency with which the food bank or its agencies had to turn people away: | Occasionally |
| The frequency with which the food bank or its agencies had to reduce the amount of food available per person or household: | Occasionally |

Additional Comments:

Six of eight counties serviced by our Foodbank have had increases in unemployment greater than 120% in YTD 2009 over each month in 2008. This is on top of the 50-70% increases experienced each month of 2008 over 2007. These huge increases in unemployment have led to record high food pantry AND SNAP (formerly food stamps) utilization in our service area and in Ohio.

Demand in 2008 was off the charts. Who would have thought we'd see such significant INCREASES in 2009 over 2008? However, because of increases in TEFAP and State Programs, we have managed to keep pace.

For further information, please contact:

Dan Flowers
 CEO
 Akron-Canton Regional Foodbank
 Akron, OH
 330.535.6900
 danf@akroncantonfoodbank.org