



RIVER BEND
FOODBANK

Hunger In America 2014

Extended Report



Introduction

During the summer of 2013, River Bend Foodbank staff and volunteers, in coordination with Feeding America, visited over 180 of our agencies that we serve. Feeding America is the national association of food banks which oversees about 80% of all food banks in the US and has member food banks which cover every single county in the United States. This report presents the results of the sixth comprehensive study sponsored by Feeding America. Feeding America supports the emergency food system for their member food banks by obtaining food for the system from national organizations, such as major food companies, and providing technical assistance and other services to the food banks and food rescue organizations. Feeding America defines a food bank as “a charitable organization that solicits, receives, inventories, stores, and distributes donated food and grocery products to charitable agencies that directly serve needy clients.”

The report compiled by Feeding America includes a breakdown for each individual food bank. The report provided to River Bend Foodbank for 2014 has allowed River Bend Foodbank to evaluate the need in our area, refine our processes, and further work towards extinguishing hunger in our 22 county service area. Throughout the remainder of this document, one will find national and local statistics that we believe frame the issue of hunger in our service area and lead to a better understanding of what is necessary to combat food insecurity in the future. We hope after reading this report members of our local community will have a better idea of what our organizations does and who we serve.

Sampling

To determine our impact locally, the River Bend Foodbank surveyed approximately 300 agencies at the time of the survey. We define agencies as organizations with which we have a partnership that share our mission of combating hunger in our service area. Each agency signs a contract with the River Bend Foodbank and completes paperwork to be compliant with Illinois, Iowa, and Feeding America standards. Of the 300 agencies which were interviewed for this study, 175 agencies responded to the agency survey. In this report, we examined information for 148 pantries, 58 meal programs, and 93 other nonemergency food programs. Based on the results of this agency-level sampling process and of the random sampling of clients implemented at the sites, Feeding America developed survey weights that make the sample representative of all clients of the River Bend Foodbank. A total of 609 clients were interviewed at selected program sites of the River Bend Foodbank. Because children were not eligible respondents for the Client Survey, Hunger in America 2014 focuses on the services provided to adult clients and their household members. Consequently, the study will generally underestimate the services provided to children by the Feeding America network.

Hunger Nationally

Nationally, one in seven (17.6 million) U.S. households experienced food insecurity at some time during the year. About 7 million of these households had members who went hungry or skipped meals, an indication of very low food security. Rates of food insecurity are particularly high in households with incomes near or below the federal poverty level and in single-parent households with children. These issues have been exacerbated by the weak economic recovery the USA has experienced since the beginning of the recession in 2008. Throughout the USA, food banks work with a network of agencies to support local hunger-relief programs by distributing food and by raising awareness about the scope of hunger within their service areas.

Hunger Locally

In our service area, our agencies serve approximately 16,500 men, women, and children each week. In total, our agencies serve more than 150,000 people each year. That 150,000 figure represents 46,900 unique households over our service area. The demand has increased for our services since 2010 and we have been able to add more member agencies and begin programs which we believe have helped alleviate hunger in our local community. Grocery pantry programs, mostly run out of churches, are a critical component of our mission and serve more than 15,000 clients weekly. Over the course of the year, these programs will reach 149,400 individuals, many of whom are parishioners of the organization or other members of the local community. One of the more surprising findings was that 18% of households report that someone in their household has served in the US Armed Forces or as a member of the Military Reserve or National Guard.

Table 6. Estimated Number of Clients and Client Households Served

	Weekly		Monthly		Annually	
	Duplicated counts	Unduplicated counts	Duplicated counts	Unduplicated counts	Duplicated counts	Unduplicated counts
Total number of individual clients, all programs	24,100 (+/-7,800)	16,500 (+/-2,900)	104,600 (+/-33,800)	54,700 (+/-5,600)	1,254,600 (+/-405,900)	150,400 (+/-14,900)
Total number of client households, all programs	11,200	6,100	48,800	17,200	585,300	46,900
Total number of individual clients by meal and grocery programs						
Meal programs	7,300	2,900	31,900	7,800	382,700	15,200
Grocery Programs	16,700	15,000	72,700	54,100	871,900	149,400

Food Insecurity

The vast majority of individuals we serve are “food insecure.” Feeding America defines food insecurity as individuals and households where the members are not sure where their next meal will come from. Among this category, there is very low food security which is characterized by consistently having to skip meals due to food shortage. We believe that these numbers show that we are reaching our target population.

- ✓ Among the households we serve, 86% are food insecure
- ✓ Only 14% can be considered food secure

Choices

Food insecurity is a problem that leads to difficult choices. Because food is a good which must be purchased, often families and households will have to make tough decisions due to limited income. Some of these decisions are outlined below. All percentages are based off of a 12 month period.

- ◆ 30 % of households chose between paying for food and educational expenses in the past 12 months
- ◆ 62 % chose between paying for food and medical care
- ◆ 60 % chose between paying for food and their rent/mortgage
- ◆ 68 % chose between paying for food and gas for a car/transportation
- ◆ 70 % chose between paying for food and utilities

Demographic Highlights

When dealing with food insecurity, depending on our biases, many of us likely have ideas as to what type of person receives emergency food assistance from a grocery or meal program. In the following section, we will use a series of selected statistics and graphs to show what type of people we service in our area.

- 69% of adult clients we serve are Non-Hispanic White

Race/Ethnicity		
White	101,600	68.5%
Black or African American	25,700	17.3%
Hispanic, Latino	10,400	7.0%
Some other race	10,600	7.2%
Total	148,300	100.0%
Total weighted N	150,400	
Weighted non-reporting clients	2,100	

- 34% of our clients are children under 18
- 7.6% of our clients are 65 or older

Table 7. Selected demographic characteristics of River Bend Food Bank clients

Demographic Characteristics	All Food Programs	
	Count	Percent
Age		
0-5 years	15,000	10.8%
6-17 years	32,600	23.5%
18-29 years	25,500	18.4%
30-49 years	33,000	23.8%
50-59 years	17,200	12.4%
60-64 years	4,800	3.4%
65 years or older	10,600	7.6%
Total	138,600	100.0%
Total weighted N	150,400	

- 75% of recipients have their GED or a higher degree.
- 33.6% of recipients have some college or trade school experience

Education			
Household Highest Education Level			
Less than high school	1,844	11.0%	2.2%
High school diploma	6,701	39.8%	8.1%
General equivalency diploma or GED	2,620	15.6%	3.0%
Business, trade, or technical license, certificate, or degree beyond high school	1,283	7.6%	1.9%
Some college beyond high school or a 2-year college degree	3,167	18.8%	6.2%
Four-year college degree or higher	1,213	7.2%	4.0%
Total excluding nonresponse	16,830	100.0%	.

Employment

Many individuals who receive food assistance struggle to make ends meet and find employment. The recovery in the United States has been slow and those who have less education have a difficult time finding work in our new service economy. These individuals make up the bulk of our service population. To make income, these individuals who receive food assistance often work part-time jobs or work for money over short periods of time. Other recipients are unable to work due to illness and disability. In our report, we find that:

- ✘ 60% of client households have an adult who has worked for pay in the last 12 months.
- ✘ 16 percent of client households include grandparents who have responsibility for grandchildren who live with them.
- ✘ In 62 percent of client households, the most-employed person is not currently working. In 24 percent of households, this person is actively looking for work.
- ✘ Among client households where the most-employed person is not working and not actively seeking work, 30 percent are retired, 58 percent are disabled, in poor health or act as a caretaker for another, while 12 percent indicate some other reason for not.

Income Levels

With a diminished employment percentage, it is not surprising that many of our clients have low incomes. However, one may find it surprising how shockingly low the incomes are of many of the individuals we provide assistance to. In this section, we detail the income of our clients and use these reported figures to determine where individuals fall in relationship to the federal poverty line.

- ✚ 84.2% of all client households had monthly household income less than \$20,000.

Characteristic	Count	Percentage	
		Estimate	Margin of Error (+/-)
Income			
Household Annual Income			
\$0	1,440	9.9%	3.9%
\$1 - \$10,000	6,908	47.6%	3.6%
\$10,001 - \$20,000	3,879	26.7%	6.2%
\$20,001 - \$30,000	1,611	11.1%	4.4%
More than \$30,000	684	4.7%	1.6%
Total excluding nonresponse	14,521	100.0%	.

- ✚ 73.5 % of our client households have incomes that fall below the federal poverty line.

Table 9. Household Annual Income as % of Poverty Level

Annual Income	All Food Programs	
	Count	Percent
0% (no income)	1,440	9.9%
1%-50%	5,321	36.6%
51%-75%	1,412	9.7%
76%-100%	2,512	17.3%
101%-130%	1,600	11.0%
131%-150%	1,139	7.8%
151%-185%	764	5.3%
186% or higher	335	2.3%
Total	14,521	100.0%
Total weighted client households	17,192	
Weighted nonreporting client households	2,671	

Data Source: Hunger in America 2014 Client Survey, Q1 and Q23.
Note: All data are weighted.]

- ✚ 83.4 % of households have an income at or below \$2,000 a month. Average household income among all clients during the previous month was \$870 (median: \$750). By contrast, the mean for the U.S. population as a whole in 2008 was \$5,702 (median: \$4,192)
- ✚ Average monthly household income among the pantry clients was \$950 (median: \$800)
- ✚ Average household income among all clients in year 2008 was \$13,080.

Household Monthly Income			
\$0	2,015	12.3%	3.7%
\$1 - \$1,000	7,835	47.7%	5.4%
\$1,001 - \$2,000	3,848	23.4%	4.8%
\$2,001 - \$3,000	1,750	10.7%	2.6%
More than \$3,000	969	5.9%	2.1%
Total excluding nonresponse	16,417	100.0%	.
Households living in poverty	10,684	73.6%	3.6%

Source of Income

- ❖ When clients were asked about all sources of their household income for the previous month, 40.1% included a job as a source.
- ❖ For 43.8% of all clients, other government assistance such as Social Security or Unemployment Compensation was the main source of household income.
- ❖ 28.9% of all clients said they received Social Security benefits.
- ❖ 19.3% listed SSDI or Workers' Compensation as a source of household income.
- ❖ 4.9% of all clients listed TANF as a source of household income during the previous month
- ❖ 18.8% received SSI.

Housing

With our client base, we find that the individuals we serve lack secure, long-lasting housing. While most individuals live in some form of housing, the vast majority of these individuals rent or lease. Others lack even this luxury.

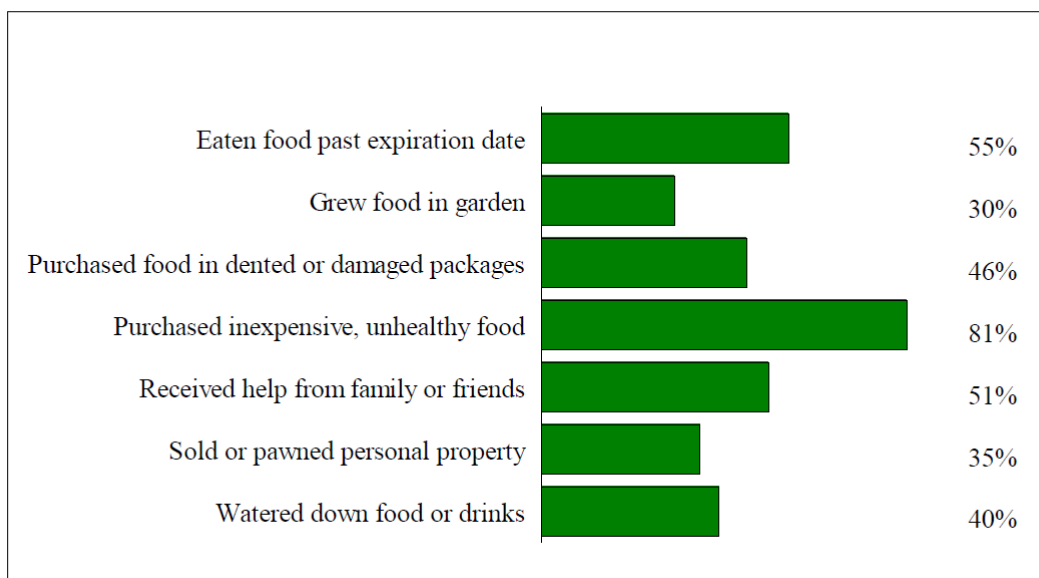
- 8% of clients we serve live in temporary housing structures, meaning that they live in shelters or are homeless

- Among client households living in non-temporary housing, 17% of households own their home with a mortgage
- 12% own their own home free and clear
- 61% percent rent or lease their home

Coping Strategies

To cope with their food insecurity, many families utilize what are known as coping strategies to provide for their families. These various types of strategies are often used in concert by our clients to stretch their food supply. In the past year, the percentage of our clients who reported using various strategies is listed below.

Figure 18. Client Households by Strategies Used to Get Enough Food in the Past 12 Months

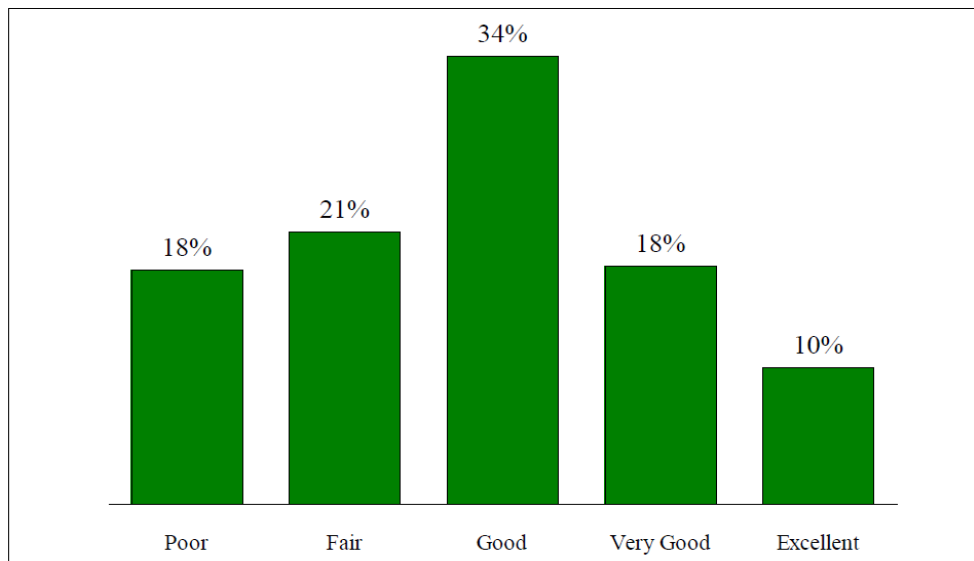


We believe that the 81% of our clients who choose to purchase inexpensive and unhealthy food is a very revealing statistic. Because food that is healthy is often expensive, our clients often do not have the opportunity to consistently eat healthy and nutritious food. This in turn leads to health problems that are our clients face.

Health of Clients

Poor health is an issue which often goes hand-in-hand with food insecurity and poverty. Amongst clients in our service area, we find that many people are in poor health or have family members who grapple with various ailments. These issues exacerbate food insecurity and the cycle of poverty. When asked to rate their own health, clients rarely felt that their health was great.

Figure 12. Client Households by Health Status of Respondent



- ✘ 20% of households have at least one member in poor health.
- ✘ 29% of client households have a member with diabetes.
- ✘ 51% of client households have a member with high blood pressure.
- ✘ 34% of client households lack health insurance of any kind (including Medicaid).
- ✘ 53% of client households have medical bills to pay.

Agencies

Our agencies are very diverse and range from church pantries to state offices. In addition, because many of our agencies are driven by volunteers, certain people are more likely to staff these agencies. Many of our programs are grocery pantry programs.

- ❖ 58% of our agencies are faith-based nonprofits.
- ❖ 53% of volunteers are age 60 or older
- ❖ 48.6% of our agencies are grocery pantry programs

Alternatives to a Food Pantry or Meal Site

- ✚ In the absence of the agency helping the clients, 46.1% of them said that they would go to another agency, 17% said that they would get by somehow, 15.7% said that they would eat less, skip meals, or reduce the size of the meals.

Increase in Demand

Since Hunger in America 2010, there has been a 77% increase in the need for our services as the number of individuals served per week has jumped from around 10,000 to roughly 16,000 each week. Due to this high demand, the Foodbank has improved its relationships with agencies and begun offering higher quality food and nutrition education.

Among our agencies, most of them saw an increase in the demand for their services – meaning that the Foodbank will be responsible for helping secure the supply for this demand.

Program Reported Changes in Demand and Supply in the Past 12 months

Volume of clients compared to prior year

Saw any increase	123	62.3%	5.8%
About the same	68	34.6%	5.7%
Saw any decrease	6	3.1%	2.1%

Increasingly, agencies are requesting healthier foods for their clients. As discussed previously, many clients have poor health or have family members in poor health. Below, we have reported some of the obstacles that clients and agencies face to filling this nutrition gap.

Agency Obstacles to Distribution of Healthier Foods

Client reasons (unwillingness to eat, inability to store, etc.)	89	50.6%	3.1%
Too expensive to purchase healthier foods	117	65.7%	2.9%
Inability to store/handle healthier foods	69	39.2%	3.0%
Lack of knowledge about healthier foods	10	6.0%	1.5%
Healthier food not a priority	37	21.2%	2.5%
Inability to obtain healthier foods from other donors/food sources	97	53.7%	2.9%

Threats to Sustainability of the Agencies

As noted before, many of our agencies are church pantries that are run by older volunteers. Because of these two factors, building sustainable practices is often a critical component for the future viability of each agency. Many agencies report challenges to providing services and recruiting volunteers, these issues occasionally lead to agencies shutting their doors for good. Among agencies that reported having challenges associated with continuing to provide services, agencies reported having the following problems:

- ❖ 12.6% report not having enough money
- ❖ 10.3% report not having enough food supplies
- ❖ 5.1% report not having enough paid staff or personnel
- ❖ 6.9% report not having enough volunteers
- ❖ 5.1% report not having enough leadership
- ❖ 9.7% report not having enough community support

Many of these issues are exacerbated by the fact that it is difficult to recruit committed volunteers which can help expand the agencies fiscal base.

- ❖ 46.2% report difficulty obtaining volunteers (some or a lot of difficulty)
- ❖ 29.8% report difficulty retaining volunteers (some or a lot of difficulty)

Unfortunately, many of our agencies did not have to cut back in some way. Amongst our agencies, we found that the following percentages had to:

- ❖ 17.8% of agencies reported experiencing cutbacks
- ❖ 6.9% cut hours of operation
- ❖ 3.4% had to let staff members go
- ❖ 11.5% limited the area served
- ❖ 82.2%, fortunately, did not experience cutbacks

Turning Away Clients

With the cutbacks mentioned previously, many agencies have also had to turn away potential clients. Amongst agencies that had to turn away clients, the following reported:

- 25% of agencies programs report turning clients away for any reason
- Among these 25%, 6.1% ran out of food at some point
- 49% turned away clients who came more often for food assistance than the agency allows for sustainability purposes

Impact of the Foodbank

Many of our pantries heavily rely on the Foodbank for their food assistance programs. In some of our smaller pantries, 90-95% of their food will come from the Foodbank. Across our service area:

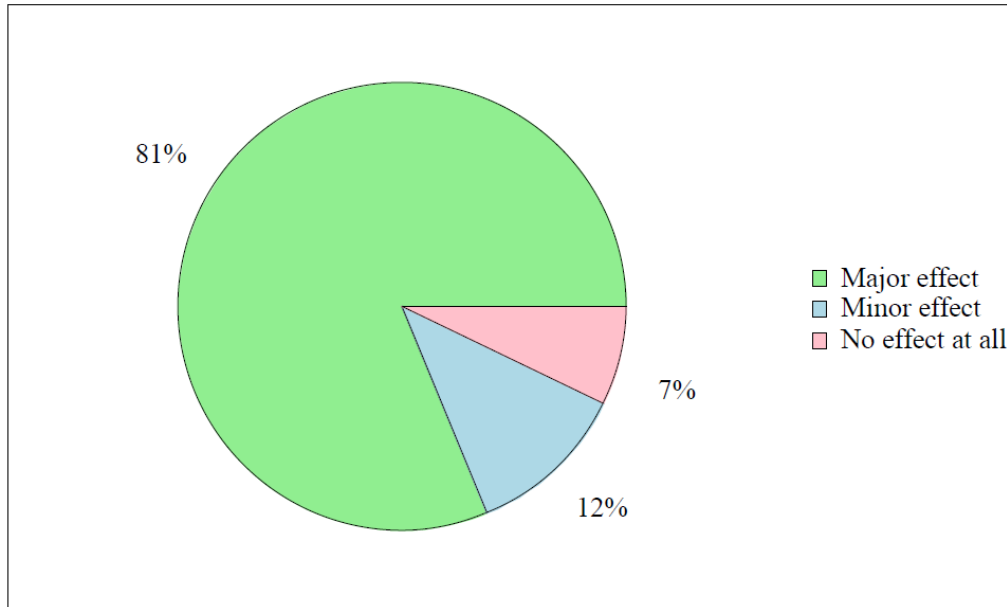
- More than 50% of the food that is served by agencies in our service area comes from the River Bend Foodbank.

Source of Food	All Food Programs Percentage
River Bend Food Bank	50.2%
Donations	14.3%
Purchased	26.4%
Other	9.2%
Total	100%
Total weighted food programs	206
Weighted nonreporting food programs	1
Data Source: Hunger in America 2014 Agency Survey, Q26	
Notes: All data are weighted.	

In addition, a vast majority of organizations rely on the cheap and nutritious food that comes from the Foodbank for their operations.

- 81% of our agencies said that the elimination of support from their food bank would have a significant or devastating impact on their operation.

Figure 9: Program Reported Effect of No Longer Receiving Food from the Food Bank



Data Source: Hunger in America 2014 Agency Survey, Q27.

Notes: Total weighted food programs = 206. Weighted nonreporting food programs = 2. All data are weighted.

Finally, 18% of agencies had to cut some services during the past year due to lack of funding. We believe that the River Bend Foodbank has been able to stave off the worst of these cutbacks due to its low cost food. It is likely that the percentage of organizations with cutbacks would be much higher without the foodbank as a resource.