



## **HUNGER**

The physical and mental condition resulting from not eating enough food due to insufficient economic, social and community resources.

## **FOOD INSECURITY**

The lack of safe and nutritionally acceptable food available through non-emergency sources.

## **FOODBANK**

Providing a vital link between the multi-faceted food industry and people in need of food. By forming partnerships at the national, regional and local level with the growers, producers and manufacturers of food, the Foodbank gains access to millions of pounds of valuable foods which would not ordinarily be available to our local residents through any other channel.

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# HUNGER IN SANTA BARBARA COUNTY 2010

## **INTRODUCTION**

The demand for food assistance has increased steadily throughout the Foodbank's 27-year history. Today, tens of thousands of low-income Santa Barbara County residents cannot afford food; many of these individuals and families never imagined they would need to request food assistance, but barren cupboards and empty pockets lead more than 145,000 individuals, families, children and seniors to access a variety of food assistance programs throughout Santa Barbara County.

One of the most common misconceptions is the assumption that if someone is hungry, that means they do not have a job and are living on the streets, however, 47% of households served by the Foodbank have one or more employed adults in the home.

The **Foodbank of Santa Barbara County**, a **Feeding America** food bank, participated in the nation's largest hunger study to better understand the realities of individuals seeking food assistance. This report presents information on the agencies and ultimately the clients served by the Foodbank. The report is based on independent research conducted on behalf of Feeding America by Mathematica Policy Research, Inc (MPR), a widely respected social policy research firm and nationally recognized as a leader in the field of human services research.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The study had two components: (1) a member agency survey that collected information about the food programs serviced by the Foodbank of Santa Barbara County, (2) a client survey that conducted face-to-face interviews and collected information from the people using food pantries, emergency kitchens and shelters in order to provide a better understanding of their needs.



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### **WHERE HOUSEHOLDS ARE GOING FOR FOOD ASSISTANCE**

#### **MEMBER AGENCY**

A nonprofit organization that receives food from the Foodbank and is capable of distributing or serving food to those in need.

#### **FOOD PANTRY**

May operate on daily, weekly or monthly basis distributing bags of food to low income households. 31% of the Foodbanks member agencies operate food pantries.

#### **SOUP KITCHEN**

Providing cooked meals to needy families or individuals on a daily, weekly, or monthly basis. 11% of Foodbank member agencies are considered soup kitchens.

#### **EMERGENCY SHELTERS**

Providing temporary housing on a nightly, weekly, or monthly basis to single men, women, seniors, and families who are homeless. Shelter also provide food on a regular basis. 5% of Foodbank member agencies are emergency shelters.

#### **OTHER FOODBANK MEMBER AGENCIES**

51% are nonemergency food programs; such as congregate or residential feeding, children and senior programs.

# KEY FINDINGS

## **1 FOOD INSECURITY & CHILDREN**

During the previous 12 months:

- 13% of households with children reported their children had skipped a meal
- 17% of households with children reported their children had been hungry at least once
- 3% of households with children reported their children often skipped meals because there was not enough money for food

## **2 HOUSEHOLDS STRUGGLE WITH EMPLOYMENT**

- 47% of households served by the Foodbank have one or more employed adults in the home
- 40% of those interviewed have been unemployed for more than two years
- 29% have an annual income of less than \$10,000

**Household Composition:** The average household size is 2.8 persons.

- 38.2% Male
- 61.8% Female
- 32% are children under 18 years old
- 59% are adults ages 18-64
- 8.2% are seniors age 65 and over

## **3 LACK OF SUFFICIENT INCOME PLAYS A MAJOR ROLE IN FORCING A PERSON OR A FAMILY TO SEEK ASSISTANCE FROM AN EMERGENCY FOOD PROVIDER**

- 62% have annual household income below the federal poverty level
- 29% have an annual income of less than \$10,000
- 41% had to choose between buying food and paying for utilities
- 32% had to choose between paying for food or rent or mortgage

## **4 EDUCATION LEVEL IS STRONGLY LINKED TO INCOME; CLIENTS INTERVIEWED REPORTED A DIVERSE BACKGROUND**

- 33% less than high school education
- 5% completed business/trade/technical school
- 30% finished high school
- 27% have some college/two year degree
- 5% completed college or higher

**“If it wasn’t for the support of the Foodbank we would not be able to help feed at least 500 families every week.”**

*-Larry Farewell  
Angel Food  
Pacific Christian Church  
Santa Maria*

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## 5 SUPPLEMENTAL FOOD ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (SNAP) BENEFITS (FORMALLY KNOWN AS THE FOOD STAMP PROGRAM)

Clients were asked if they have ever applied or are currently receiving SNAP benefits.

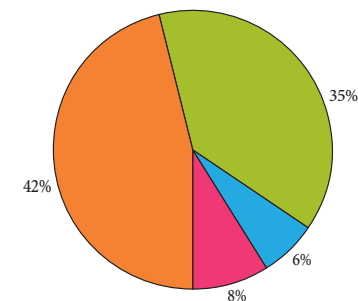
- 49% of the clients have never applied for SNAP benefits
- 32% are currently receiving SNAP benefits
- 19% of clients receiving SNAP benefits have been receiving them for more than two years

How long are SNAP recipients able to make the benefits last?

- 81% of the clients who receive SNAP benefits report the benefits last for three weeks or less
- 54% of the clients who receive SNAP benefits report the benefits last for two weeks or less

Reasons for not having applied for SNAP benefits.

- 42% believe that they are not eligible or eligible for only a low benefit amount
- 35% do not have a need for SNAP benefits or think others need the benefits more
- 6% associate a social stigma with SNAP benefits
- 8% other



## RECOMMENDATIONS WE MUST BUILD AFFORDABLE COMMUNITIES FOR LOW-INCOME PEOPLE AND SUPPORT WORK AND EDUCATION INITIATIVES THAT STRENGTHEN INDIVIDUALS & FAMILIES

### 1. Addressing the Root Causes of Hunger

- Local, state, and federal government must support increase to minimum wages allowing families that are working to meet basic needs.
- Increase the number of affordable housing units throughout Santa Barbara County.
- Improve access to nutritious food in low-income neighborhoods.

### 2. Strengthen Federal Nutrition Programs

- Simplify the SNAP application procedures so that the program is more responsive to the needs of working families, the elderly and the disabled.
- Allow low-income families to participate in the SNAP benefits program without forfeiting their opportunity to save.

### 3. Enhance Foodbank Services

- Support stable funding sources to allow the Foodbank to purchase nutritionally balanced food for member agencies.
- Expand nutritional education to rural and underserved areas of Santa Barbara County.
- Donate, Volunteer, Advocate.

## OTHER RESOURCES

**Feeding America** - The nations food bank network. [www.feedingamerica.org](http://www.feedingamerica.org)



**California Association of Food Banks** - The mission of California Association of Food Banks is to provide a unified voice among food banks to maximize their ability to build a well nourished California. [www.cafb.org](http://www.cafb.org)

**Food Research & Action Center** - This site contains up-to-date research about hunger in the nation, with state break-downs and useful data about national food assistance programs. [www.frac.org](http://www.frac.org)

**California Food Policy Advocates** - This site has information about hunger and food insecurity in California and has up-to-date information about policy and advocacy related to hunger. For a list of California specific research about hunger and government food programs, visit [www.cfpa.net](http://www.cfpa.net).

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### FOR MORE INFORMATION

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**IN 2009**, from two distribution centers in Santa Barbara County, the Foodbank safely distributed 8.7 million pounds of food and fresh produce to 220 nonprofit organizations and churches (member agencies) throughout Santa Barbara County.

**EVERY DAY**, member agencies come to the Foodbank to select packaged groceries, fresh produce, dairy/deli products and frozen meats. This enables agencies to be more receptive to their client's particular needs; from children's snack programs, emergency food distributions to hot meal programs.

**EVERY FRIDAY**, the Foodbank supply 600 children with backpacks full of nutritious foods. These backpacks provide meals and snacks during the weekend when non-traditional food sources are not available.

**EACH WEEK**, the Foodbank delivers thousands of pounds of fresh local and California grown produce to ten rural and underserved neighborhoods throughout Santa Barbara County.

**TWICE MONTHLY**, the Foodbank provides over 1,000 seniors with a supplemental bag of groceries. Each bag contains fresh produce, eggs, bread, rice, beans, and other household staples.

**EVERY MONTH**, the Foodbank delivers and distributes food and fresh produce to neighborhood community centers and church parking lots allowing clients with limited transportation to select the foods that best meet their families' needs.

### **KIDS FRIENDLY FARMERS MARKETS**

Partnering with Boys & Girls Clubs, the Foodbank brings fresh produce and nutrition education to over 250 kids every month.



## **FOODBANK DISTRIBUTION CENTERS**

**SANTA BARBARA**  
4554 Hollister Avenue  
Santa Barbara, CA 93110  
(805) 967-5741

**SANTA MARIA**  
490 W. Foster Road  
Santa Maria, CA 93455  
(805) 937-3422

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