



Missouri Food Bank Association

**For immediate release**

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# Study unveils the face of hunger in MO

*Landmark analysis details growing problem*

**Columbia, Mo.** – One in eight Missourians needs emergency food assistance every year and children are especially vulnerable. Those are some of the findings in an unprecedented study of hunger in Missouri conducted by Feeding America and the six food banks of the Missouri Food Bank Association (MFBA).

According to *Hunger in America: Missouri State Report*, an estimated 728,400 different Missourians seek emergency food assistance annually. Forty percent of those in need are children under the age of 18 and 10 percent are infants.

“The study paints a stark picture of who is hungry in Missouri and the reality that these people face,” MFBA state director Scott Baker said. “Hunger is an increasingly pervasive problem in Missouri. It knows no racial, geographic, or demographic boundaries.”

Six food banks and over 1,000 agencies (pantries, shelters, and kitchens) make up the MFBA network. This network provides food for a broad cross-section of households.

Key characteristics include:

- 39% of the members of households are children under 18 years old
- 10% of the members of households are children age 0 to 5 years
- About 66% of clients are non-Hispanic white, 27% are non-Hispanic black, 4% are Hispanic
- 42% of households include *at least* one employed adult

Very difficult choices face those struggling with hunger:

- 48% say they have had to choose between paying for food and paying for utilities
- 36% had to choose between paying for food and paying their rent or mortgage
- 37% had to choose between paying for food and paying for medicine or medical care

The safety net provided by the MFBA and its member food banks is continuing to grow out of necessity. Last year the network distributed over 84 million pounds of food.

It is important to note that the data used in the “Hunger in America” report does not include many other emergency feeding programs run by food banks, including after school programs.

“This growing problem can only be solved by acknowledging the situation and uniting to confront it head-on,” Baker said. “That attitude is imperative if we are to address a dilemma of this magnitude.”

The entire survey can be found at [www.feedingmissouri.org](http://www.feedingmissouri.org).