

## 1. HIGHLIGHTS OF FINDINGS

This report presents information on the clients and agencies in the state of Missouri. The information is drawn from a national study, Hunger in America 2010, conducted in 2009 for Feeding America (FA) (formerly America's Second Harvest), the nation's largest organization of emergency food providers. The national study is based on completed in-person interviews with more than 62,000 clients served by the FA national network, as well as on completed questionnaires from more than 37,000 FA agencies. The study summarized below focuses on emergency food providers and their clients who are supplied with food by food banks in the FA network. Emergency food programs are defined to include food pantries, soup kitchens, and emergency shelters serving short-term residents. It should be recognized that many other types of providers served by food banks are, for the most part, *not* described in this study, including such programs as Congregate Meals for seniors, day care facilities, and after school programs.

Key findings are summarized below:

### HOW MANY CLIENTS RECEIVE EMERGENCY FOOD FROM FA FOOD BANKS IN MISSOURI?

- The FA system in Missouri provides emergency food for an estimated 728,400 different people annually.
- About 139,300 different people receive emergency food assistance in any given week.

### WHO RECEIVES EMERGENCY FOOD ASSISTANCE?

FA agencies in Missouri provide food for a broad cross-section of households. Key characteristics include:

- 39% of the members of households in Missouri are children under 18 years old (Table 5.3.2).

- 10% of the members of households are children age 0 to 5 years (Table 5.3.2).
- 7% of the members of households are elderly (Table 5.3.2).
- About 66% of clients are non-Hispanic white, 27% are non-Hispanic black, 4% are Hispanic, and the rest are from other racial groups (Table 5.6.1).
- 42% of households include at least one employed adult (Table 5.7.1).
- 75% have incomes below the federal poverty level (Table 5.8.2.1) during the previous month.
- 7% are homeless (Table 5.9.1.1).

### **MANY CLIENTS ARE FOOD INSECURE WITH LOW OR VERY LOW FOOD SECURITY**

- Among all client households served by emergency food programs in Missouri, 77% are food insecure, according to the U.S. government's official food security scale. This includes client households who have low food security and those who have very low food security (Table 6.1.1.1).
- 36% of the clients have very low food security (Table 6.1.1.1).
- Among households with children, 76% are food insecure and 33% are food insecure with very low food security (Table 6.1.1.1).

### **MANY CLIENTS REPORT HAVING TO CHOOSE BETWEEN FOOD AND OTHER NECESSITIES**

- 48% of clients in Missouri report having to choose between paying for food and paying for utilities or heating fuel (Table 6.5.1).
- 36% had to choose between paying for food and paying their rent or mortgage (Table 6.5.1).
- 37% had to choose between paying for food and paying for medicine or medical care (Table 6.5.1).
- 30% had to choose between paying for food and paying for transportation (Table 6.5.1).
- 40% had to choose between paying for food and paying for gas for a car (Table 6.5.1).

**DO CLIENTS ALSO RECEIVE FOOD ASSISTANCE FROM THE GOVERNMENT?**

- 53% of client households in Missouri are receiving Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits (Table 7.1.1); however, it is likely that many more are eligible (Table 7.3.2).
- Among households with children ages 0-3 years, 65% participate in the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) (Table 7.4.1).
- Among households with school-age children, 66% and 62%, respectively, participate in the federal school lunch and school breakfast programs (Table 7.4.1)
- Among households with school-age children, 12% participate in the summer food program (Table 7.4.1).

**MANY CLIENTS ARE IN POOR HEALTH**

- 34% of households in Missouri report having at least one household member in poor health (Table 8.1.1)

**MOST CLIENTS ARE SATISFIED WITH THE SERVICES THEY RECEIVE FROM THE AGENCIES IN MISSOURI**

- 94% of adult clients said they were either “very satisfied” or “somewhat satisfied” with the amount of food they received from their provider; 93% were satisfied with the quality of the food they received (Table 9.2.1).

**HOW LARGE IS THE FA SYSTEM IN MISSOURI?**

- At the administration of this survey, 6 food banks or FROs affiliated with FA operated in Missouri. Of the agencies that were served by those organizations, 1,058 agencies that had their operation within the state responded to the agency survey. Of the responding agencies, 782 had at least one food pantry, soup kitchen, or shelter.