

This report presents the result of a study conducted in 2005 for the America's Second Harvest Network (A2H), the nation's largest organization of emergency food providers. The study is based on completed in-person interviews with more than 52,000 clients served by the America's Second Harvest Network, as well as on completed questionnaires from more than 30,000 A2H agencies.

HOW MANY CLIENTS RECEIVE FOOD FROM A2H EMERGENCY FOOD PROVIDERS?

- The A2H system served an estimated 25.35 million different people annually. This includes 22 to 25 million pantry users, 1.2 to 1.4 million kitchen users, and 0.8 million shelter users.
- Approximately 4 million different people receive emergency food assistance from the A2H system in any given week.

WHO RECEIVES EMERGENCY FOOD ASSISTANCE?

A2H agencies serve a broad cross-section of households in America. Key characteristics include:

- 36% of the members of households served by the A2H National Network are children under 18 years old.
- 9% of the members of households are children age 0 to 5 years.
- 11% of the members of households are elderly.
- About 39% of clients are non-Hispanic white; 38% are non-Hispanic black, and the rest are from other racial groups. 17% are Hispanic.
- 36% of households include at least one employed adult.
- 68% have incomes below the official federal poverty level during the previous month.
- 5% are receiving Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, and 7% are receiving General Assistance.
- 12% are homeless.

MANY A2H CLIENTS ARE FOOD INSECURE OR ARE EXPERIENCING HUNGER

- Among all clients of the A2H National Network, 70% are food insecure, according to the U.S. government's official food security scale. This includes clients who are food insecure without hunger and those who are food insecure with hunger.
- 33% of the clients are experiencing hunger.
- Among households with children, 73% are food insecure and 31% are experiencing hunger.

MANY CLIENTS REPORT HAVING TO CHOOSE BETWEEN FOOD AND OTHER NECESSITIES

- 41% of clients served by the A2H National Network report having to choose between paying for food and paying for utilities or heating fuel.
- 35% had to choose between paying for food and paying their rent or mortgage.
- 32% had to choose between paying for food and paying for medicine or medical care.

DO A2H CLIENTS ALSO RECEIVE FOOD ASSISTANCE FROM THE GOVERNMENT?

- 35% of client households served by the A2H National Network are receiving Food Stamp Program benefits; however, it is likely that many more are eligible.
- Among households with children ages 0-3 years, 51% participate in the Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC).
- Among households with school-age children, 62% and 51%, respectively, participate in the federal school lunch and school breakfast programs.

MANY A2H CLIENTS ARE IN POOR HEALTH

- 29% of households served by the A2H National Network report having at least one household member in poor health.

MOST CLIENTS ARE SATISFIED WITH THE SERVICES THEY RECEIVE FROM THE AGENCIES OF THE A2H NATIONAL NETWORK

- 92% of adult clients said they were either "very satisfied" or "somewhat satisfied" with the amount of food they received from their A2H provider; 93% were satisfied with the quality of the food they received.

HOW LARGE IS THE A2H NATIONAL NETWORK?

- The A2H National Network includes approximately 44,000 agencies, of which 31,111 have provided usable responses to the agency survey. Of the responding agencies, 21,834 had at least one food pantry, soup kitchen, or emergency shelter.
- The A2H National Network includes approximately 29,600 food pantries, 5,600 soup kitchens and 4,100 emergency shelters.

WHAT KINDS OF ORGANIZATIONS OPERATE EMERGENCY FOOD PROGRAMS OF THE A2H NATIONAL NETWORK?

- 74% of pantries, 65% of kitchens, and 43% of shelters are run by faith-based agencies affiliated with churches, mosques, synagogues, and other religious organizations.
- At the agency level, 69% of agencies with pantry, kitchen, or shelter and 56% of all agencies including those with other programs are faith-based.
- Private nonprofit organizations with no religious affiliation make up a large share of other types of agencies.

HAVE AGENCIES BEEN EXPERIENCING CHANGES IN THE NEED FOR THEIR SERVICES?

- 65% of pantries, 61% of kitchens, and 52% of shelters of the A2H National Network reported that there had been an increase since 2001 in the number of clients who come to their emergency food program sites.

WHERE DO THESE AGENCIES OBTAIN THEIR FOOD?

- Food banks are by far the single most important source of food for the agencies, accounting for 74% of the food distributed by pantries, 49% of the food distributed by kitchens, and 42% of the food distributed by shelters.
- Other important sources of food include religious organizations, government, and direct purchases from wholesalers and retailers.
- 69% of pantries, 49% of kitchens, and 46% of shelters receive food from government commodity programs.

VOLUNTEERS ARE EXTREMELY IMPORTANT IN THE A2H NETWORK

- As many as 90% of pantries, 86% of kitchens, and 71% of shelters in the A2H National Network use volunteers.
- Many programs rely entirely on volunteers; 66% of pantry programs and 40% of kitchens have no paid staff at all.

For more information on Hunger in America 2006, please visit www.hungerinamerica.org



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