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# Hunger in the Mid-South 2010

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# Hunger in the Mid-South 2010

*Hunger in the Mid-South 2010* is information on the clients and agencies served by Mid-South Food Bank, drawn from the national study, *Hunger in America 2010*, conducted in 2009 by Mid-South Food Bank and Feeding America, the nation's largest organization of emergency food providers. Results were compiled by Mathematica Policy Research, Inc.

## **Methodology**

The study is based on completed in-person interviews. In the Mid-South, more than 400 clients served by Mid-South Food Bank were interviewed and 189 Food Bank member agencies filled out comprehensive questionnaires.

The study focused on emergency food providers and their clients who are supplied with food by Mid-South Food Bank. Emergency food programs are defined to include food pantries, soup kitchens and emergency shelters serving short-term resident. The many other types of agencies served by Mid-South Food Bank, including youth programs, rehabilitation centers, senior programs, the Food for Kids BackPack Program and Kids Cafes are not included in this study.

## **Food Insecurity**

Food insecurity is a term frequently used in the hunger study. It is defined as "not always having access to enough food to meet basic needs." There are two categories:

*Low Food Security* includes people who have had to make changes in the quality or the quantity of their food in order to deal with a limited budget.

*Very Low Food Security* includes people who have struggled with having enough food for the household, including cutting back or skipping meals on a frequent basis for both adults and children.



# Key Findings

## Who is hungry in the Mid-South?

### How many clients receive emergency food from Mid-South Food Bank?

- Mid-South Food Bank provides emergency food for an estimated 186,500 different people annually.
- About 21,000 different people receive emergency food assistance in any given week.

### Who receives emergency food assistance?

- 31% of the members of households served by Mid-South Food Bank are children under 18
- 6% of the members of households are children age 0 to 5 years
- 10% of the members of households are elderly
- 40% of clients are non-Hispanic white, 56% are non-Hispanic black, 4% are Hispanic and the rest are from other racial groups
- 27% of households include at least one employed adult
- 76% have incomes below the federal poverty level during the previous month
- 15% are homeless

### How many clients are food insecure with low or very low food security?

- Among all client households served by emergency food programs of Mid-South Food Bank, 76% are food insecure. This includes client households who have low food security and those that have very low food security.
- 32% of clients have very low food security
- Among households with children, 78% are food insecure and 34% are food insecure with very low food security



# Key Findings

## Who is hungry in the Mid-South?

### **How many clients report having to choose between food and other necessities?**

- 83% of clients served by Mid-south Food Bank report having to choose between paying for food and paying for utilities or heating fuel.
- 32% had to choose between paying for food and paying their rent or mortgage
- 26% had to choose between paying for food and paying for medicine or medical care
- 25% had to choose between paying for food and paying for transportation
- 29 had to choose between paying for food and paying for gas for a car

### **Do clients also receive food assistance from the government?**

- 46% of client households served by Mid-South Food Bank are receiving Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits. However, it is likely that many more are eligible.
- Among households with school-age children, 74% and 69%, respectively, participated in the federal school lunch and school breakfast programs.
- Among households with school-age children, 14% participate in a summer food program.

### **How many clients are in poor health?**

- 19% of households served by Mid-South Food Bank report having at least one household member in poor health.



# Mid-South Food Bank Member Agencies

Mid-South Food Bank has approximately 195 member agencies that are either food pantries, soup kitchens or shelters, of which 189 responded to the agency survey.

## **What kinds of organizations operate emergency food programs in the Mid-South?**

- 77% of pantries, 69% of soup kitchens and 46% of shelters are run by faith-based agencies affiliated with churches, synagogues, mosques and other religious organizations.
- Private nonprofit organizations with no religious affiliation make up a large share of other types of agencies.

## **Have emergency food agencies reported changes in the number of clients seeking services?**

- Among programs that existed in 2006, 81% of pantries, 80% of kitchens and 65% of shelters reported that there had been an increase since 2006 in the number of clients who come to the emergency food program sites.

## **Where do emergency food agencies obtain their food?**

- Mid-South Food Bank is by far the single most important source of food, accounting for 76% of the food distributed by pantries, 53% percent of food distributed by soup kitchens and 48% percent of food distributed by shelters.
- Other important sources of food include religious organizations, government and direct purchases from wholesalers and retailers.

## **How important are volunteers to Mid-South Food Bank member agencies?**

- As many as 91% of pantries, 76% of soup kitchens and 74% of shelters use volunteers
- Many programs rely entirely on volunteers; 69% of pantries and 37% of soup kitchens have no paid staff at all.



## **Acknowledgements**

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### **Agencies**

Amory Food Pantry  
Barron Heights Transitional Center  
Brownsville Mustard Seed  
CAP Veterans Transitional Housing  
Calvary Rescue Mission  
Catholic Charities, Sophia's House  
Catholic Church of the Ascension  
Christ Missionary Baptist Church  
Clarksdale-Coahoma Ministries  
First Unitarian Church  
First United Methodist Church  
Friends for Life  
Golden Leaf Baptist Church  
Holy Communion UMC  
Jericho Baptist Church  
Memphis Family Shelter  
Memphis Union Mission  
Mission of Hope Church & Christian Center  
Mississippi Boulevard Christian Church  
Nettleton UMC  
Raleigh Assembly of God  
Salvation Army of Dyer County  
Salvation Army Purdue Center of Hope  
Salvation Army Tupelo  
Seek for the Old Path Prayer and Consecration Center  
St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Church

St. Luke United Methodist Church  
St. Mary's Catholic Church  
St. Patrick's Pantry  
St. Timothy UMC  
St. Vincent DePaul Food Mission  
The Pantry, Oxford  
Tippah County Good Samaritan Center  
Union County Baptist Association  
Union Grove MBC  
University Cluster Food Pantry  
Warrior Ministries

### **Staff**

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