



Contact Monica Palmer
Telephone 573.673.1422
Email Monica@FeedingMissouri.org
Website www.FeedingMissouri.org

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COMPREHENSIVE STUDY REVEALS DEPTH OF HUNGER PROBLEM IN MISSOURI

More people in need, relying on state's food banks

Columbia, MO, August 18, 2014— A new study by Feeding America and the Missouri Food Bank Association (MFBA) shows that 1 in 5 people, or an estimated 1,190,600 Missourians, rely upon food pantries and meal service programs to feed themselves and their families on an annual basis.

The study documents client household demographics and the challenges that Missouri food bank clients face.

“This study shows just how deep the hunger problem runs throughout Missouri,” said Scott Baker, state director for the MFBA. “More and more people are relying upon emergency food programs just to make it through the month. As a result, this has put a tremendous strain on resources. Some food pantries have to turn people away because there isn’t enough food. This study paints a stark picture of hunger in Missouri and the ripple effect it can have on people.”

Key Findings of the Hunger in America 2014 Study for Missouri:

Who Uses Food Bank Programs?

- On an annual basis, 1,190,600 unique clients are served
- An estimated 70 percent of clients in Missouri are White; 20 percent are Black; and 3 percent are Hispanic.
- An estimated 46 percent of client households report at least one employed person at some point last year.

Increased Need

- An estimated 60 percent of partner food programs reported an increase in the volume of clients coming to the program in the past 12 months.
- Among partner food programs reporting turning away clients for any reason in the past 12 months, an estimated 24 percent did so because they ran out of food.

Clients Make Tough Choices

- 65 percent of clients have had to choose between paying for food and paying for medicine/medical care.
- 69 percent have had to choose between paying for food and paying for utilities.

“Many of our neighbors who seek food assistance have jobs, raise families, struggle with health issues, and strive for an education,” Baker said. “Our clients often have to make difficult trade-offs to get enough food for their families. This study serves as a reminder that we’ll only solve Missouri’s hunger problem if we make it a top priority. We can’t wait any longer.”

Hunger in America 2014 was conducted using rigorous academic research standards and was peer reviewed by a technical advisory team including researchers from American University, University of Illinois at Champaign-Urbana and the Urban Institute.

A summary of the findings is available at www.feedingmissouri.org. The full national report is available on Feeding America’s website at [Hunger in America 2014](#).

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About Missouri Food Bank Association

The Missouri Food Bank Association is a coalition of the six Missouri Food Banks working to provide hunger relief to every county (and St. Louis City) in the state. Collectively, we distribute over 115 million pounds of food each year through a network of more than 1,500 community feeding programs.

About Feeding America

Feeding America is a nationwide network of 200 food banks that leads the fight against hunger in the United States. Feeding America also supports programs that improve food security among the people we serve; educates the public about the problem of hunger; and advocates for legislation that protects people from going hungry. Individuals, charities, businesses and government all have a role in ending hunger. Donate. Volunteer. Advocate. Educate.

If you would like to schedule an MFBA representative for a media interview, or you would like more information about this topic, please contact **Monica Palmer at 573.673.1422** or email at **Monica@FeedingMissouri.org**.