



## **Hunger in America 2006: The New York City and State Report**

**Joint Report by the  
Food Bank For New York City and City Harvest**

© Copyright 2006 by the Food Bank For New York City and City Harvest

Members of America's Second Harvest, The Nation's Food Bank Network



## **ABOUT THE FOOD BANK FOR NEW YORK CITY**

The mission of the Food Bank For New York City is to end hunger by organizing food, information and support for community survival and dignity. The Food Bank collects, warehouses and distributes food to close to 1,300 nonprofit community food programs throughout the five boroughs. The organization offers ongoing support to its network of food programs through nutrition and food safety workshops, networking sessions and education tools that help build capacity and improve efficiency. The Food Bank also develops policy, conducts innovative research and serves as a resource center for member agencies, legislators, the media and the public.

A member of America's Second Harvest, The Nation's Food Bank Network, the Food Bank provides 67 million pounds of food annually to our network of community food programs citywide, including soup kitchens, food pantries and shelters. The food provided helps programs to serve more than 250,000 meals each day to individuals and families seeking emergency food assistance.

**Main Office:** 90 John Street, Suite 702  
New York, NY 10038-3239  
Phone: 212-566-7855  
Fax: 212-566-1463  
[www.foodbanknyc.org](http://www.foodbanknyc.org)

**Warehouse:** Hunts Point Co-op Market  
355 Food Center Drive Bronx, NY 10474-7000  
Bronx, NY 10474-7000  
Phone: 718-991-4300  
Fax: 718-893-3442

### **BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

**CHAIR, Carla A. Harris**, Managing Director, Morgan Stanley & Company, Inc.

**EXECUTIVE VICE CHAIR, Ralph L. Rogers, Jr.**

**VICE CHAIR, Jewel Jones**, Director of Social Services, Love Kitchen, Inc.

**TREASURER, Robert Weinmann**, Senior Vice President, ACOSTA Sales & Marketing

**SECRETARY, John F. Fritts, Esq.**, Partner, Cadwalader, Wickersham & Taft LLP

**Mario Batali**, Chef

**Reverend Henry Belin**, Senior Pastor, Bethel AME Church

**Peter L. Bloom**, Managing Director, General Atlantic LLC

**Eileen Scott**

**Nancy Seliger**, Executive Vice President & Senior Partner, General Manager, Fleishman-Hillard

**Stanley Tucci**, Actor/Director

### **PRESIDENT & CEO**

**Lucy Cabrera, Ph.D.**

### **RESEARCH TEAM FOR HUNGER IN AMERICA 2006: THE NEW YORK CITY AND STATE REPORT**

**Áine Duggan**, Vice President of Government Relations, Policy and Research

**Veronica Olázabal**, Director of Policy and Research

**Ashley Baughman**, Policy and Research Coordinator

**Renee Razzano**, Research Coordinator

**Christopher Fasano**, Policy and Research Intern

**Kelly Foster**, Government Relations Liaison Intern

**Allison Gramaglia**, Community Liaison Intern

**Aaron Platt**, Research Intern

## **CITY HARVEST AND THE FOOD BANK FOR NEW YORK CITY GIVE SPECIAL THANKS TO**

All the emergency food program clients who so generously gave of their time to participate in interviews; Staff and volunteers of New York City emergency food programs; the anti-hunger community; the food industry; America's Second Harvest, The Nation's Food Bank Network; New York City Human Resources Administration: Office of Domestic Violence and Emergency Intervention/EFAP; New York State Department of Health: Division of Nutrition/HPNAP; New York State Office of General Services: Division of Government Donated Foods/TEFAP; Mathematica Policy Research, Inc.; Staff of the Food Bank For New York City and City Harvest; donors, funders and friends of the Food Bank For New York City and City Harvest.

## ABOUT CITY HARVEST

Founded in 1982, City Harvest is the world's first food rescue organization, dedicated to feeding New York City's hungry men, women and children. This year, City Harvest will collect over 19 million pounds of excess, donated food from all segments of the food industry, including restaurants, grocers, corporate cafeterias, manufacturers and farms. This food, more than 60 percent of which is fresh produce, is then delivered free of charge to over 500 agencies throughout New York City using a fleet of 15 trucks and volunteers on foot. Each week, City Harvest helps more than 260,000 hungry New Yorkers find their next meal.

City Harvest exists to end hunger in communities throughout New York City. We do this through food rescue and distribution, education and other practical, innovative solutions. In addition to our work rescuing and delivering food to feed hungry men, women and children in New York City, we address longer term issues surrounding hunger through nutrition education, increased access to fresh produce, and increasing the capacity of our agency network.

575 Eighth Avenue 4th Floor  
New York, NY 10018  
Phone: 917.351.8700  
Fax: 917.351.8720  
[www.cityharvest.org](http://www.cityharvest.org)

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

**CHAIRMAN**, James Kallman, Kallman Management Corp.  
**VICE CHAIRMAN**, Clifton Strain, Wachovia Securities  
**TREASURER**, Sharon H. Jacquet, JPMorgan Private Bank  
**SECRETARY**, Michael Young, Vision Marketing  
**IMMEDIATE PAST CHAIRMAN**, Susan Marks

**Marjorie Sybul Adams**, DLA Piper Rudnick Gray Cary US LLP  
**Carol Atkinson**  
**Arthur F. Backal**, Cipriani USA, Mandarin Oriental Hotel & State of the Art Enterprises, Inc.  
**Melissa A. Berman**, Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors  
**Richard Berry**, Zuberry Associates, LLC  
**William Bonnett**, Fulbright & Jaworski  
**Matthew Bryant**, The Advertising Business, LLC  
**Daniel J. Bumgardner**, Wachovia Securities  
**Dana Cowin**, Food & Wine Magazine  
**Gary Freilich**, NBC Universal  
**Denise Gray-Felder**, Communication for Social Change Consortium  
**Tom Guba**, Terwin Capital, LLC  
**Joseph R. Gurrera**, Citerella/Josephs  
**Stephen P. Hanson**, B.R. Guest Restaurants  
**EX OFFICIO**  
**Founding Chairman**, Harley Brooke-Hitching  
**Chairman Emeritus**, Robert Cahill, Jr.  
**Chairman Emeritus**, Peter Schmidt

**Anita Hoffman**, Bowne of New York  
**Joy Ingham**  
**Sujal Kapadia**, Lehman Brothers  
**Alan Katz**, Vanity Fair  
**Pamela Kaufmann**, Jerry Elsner, Co. Inc  
**Jason Kliot**, Deutsch/Open City Films & HDNet Films  
**Nick Mautone**, Mautone Enterprises  
**Heather Mnuchin**  
**Liz Moore**, Indian Point Foundation  
**John Penberthy**  
**Eric Ripert**, Le Bernardin  
**Donna Rodriguez**, B.R. Guest Restaurants  
**Emilia Saint Amand**  
**Jeffrey L. Weiss**, Lehman Brothers  
**Timothy White**, Timothy White Photography  
**Katie Raskin Workman**, Workman Publishing Company

### EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

**Jilly Stephens**, Executive Director

### RESEARCH TEAM FOR HUNGER IN AMERICA 2006: THE NEW YORK CITY AND STATE REPORT

**Patricia Barrick**, Senior Director of Marketing and Communications  
**John A. Krakowski**, RD, Director of Policy and Public Information  
**Carrie Napolitano**, RD, Hunger Study Intern  
**Jennifer Ott**, Vice President of External Relations  
**Jacob Pfohl**, Director of Program Development  
**Nicole Rottino**, Manager of Publications  
**Valerie Traore**, Director of Agency Relations  
**Yossi Zak**, RD, Hunger Study Intern



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>SUMMARY</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b>HIGHLIGHTS</b> .....	<b>8</b>
<b>FINDINGS</b> .....	<b>13</b>
Emergency Food Program Clients and Client Households .....	13
Emergency Food Programs .....	25
<b>METHODOLOGY</b> .....	<b>29</b>
Survey Procedures and Response Rates .....	29
Sampling Unit: Clients versus Households .....	30
Limitations.....	30
<b>CONTACT INFORMATION</b> .....	<b>31</b>



## SUMMARY

### BACKGROUND

In 2005, America's Second Harvest, The Nation's Food Bank Network, collaborated with member Food Banks<sup>1</sup> and Food Rescue Organizations<sup>2</sup> throughout the United States to conduct a quadrennial study of emergency food programs (EFPs)<sup>3</sup> and the people they serve. This national effort included collecting data from more than 52,000 EFP clients and 30,000 agencies<sup>4</sup> that provide emergency food assistance to make this study the most comprehensive national research collaboration on hunger in America. In New York State, the ten America's Second Harvest member Food Banks and Food Rescue Organizations joined together to undertake the state component of the research, with each organization assuming responsibility for data collection in its geographic service area. In New York City, the Food Bank For New York City and City Harvest jointly conducted research interviews at EFPs and coordinated provider surveys. Drawing upon the local, state and national findings, as analyzed by Mathematica Policy Research, Inc., Food Bank and City Harvest prepared this report, *Hunger in America 2006: the New York City and State Report*.

### EMERGENCY FOOD PROGRAM CLIENTS AND CLIENT HOUSEHOLDS

Currently, EFPs throughout the U.S. provide food to approximately 25 million clients annually. This figure includes more than two million (2.1 million) people who access EFPs in New York State and more than one million (1.2 million) people who turn to EFPs in New York City each year. Every week, there are approximately four million people accessing EFPs in the U.S., including more than 500,000 in New York State and more than 300,000 in New York City. Results show that among EFP client households, a large majority are food insecure.<sup>5</sup> This finding is true for close to two-thirds of EFP client households in New York City and New York State (62 percent and 65 percent respectively). Among EFP client households in the U.S., more than two-thirds (70 percent) are food insecure.

The food insecurity findings above are consistent with U.S. Census Bureau poverty statistics and United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) food insecurity data showing that, in the U.S., 37 million people are living in poverty and 38 million are in food insecure<sup>6</sup> households. Estimates for the annual number of EFP clients are also consistent with the New York City and New York State poverty figures of 1.7 million people and 2.7 million people respectively.

### **Socio-Demographic Analysis**

Although findings reveal that hunger is a widespread problem that does not discriminate, the population relying on the emergency food system is largely comprised of children, women, people of color, people with disabilities and the working poor, most of whom live at or below the federal poverty line. Within EFP client households, more than one-half are non-elderly adults (60 percent New York City; 59 percent New York State; 54 percent U.S.) and approximately one in every ten is

---

<sup>1</sup> A food bank is a charitable organization that solicits, receives, inventories, stores and distributes donated food to charitable agencies.

<sup>2</sup> Food rescue organizations are nonprofit organizations that obtain prepared and perishable food from food service organizations such as restaurants, hospitals, caterers and other distributors to agencies that serve clients.

<sup>3</sup> Emergency food programs (EFPs) provide short-term or emergency assistance to clients in need and include food pantries, soup kitchens and shelter programs. Food pantries distribute non-prepared food and grocery products to clients, who then prepare and use these items where they live. Soup kitchens provide prepared meals served at the program to clients who do not reside on the premises. Emergency shelters provide and serve one or more meals a day on a short-term basis to clients in need.

<sup>4</sup> America's Second Harvest network members distribute food to qualifying charitable agencies, most of which provide food directly to clients through food programs. Some programs operate single-type and single-site food programs, while others operate food programs at multiple sites and sometimes operate multiple types of food programs.

<sup>5</sup> USDA Economic Research Service. (2005). *Household Food Security in the United States, 2004*. Economic Research Report No. (ERR11): October 2005. The USDA defines food insecure households as those that, at some time during the year, had difficulty providing enough food for all household members due to a lack of resources. In 2004, approximately 12 percent of all households in the U.S. (13.5 million) were food insecure.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

elderly (12 percent New York City; 11 percent New York State; 10 percent U.S.) The remaining approximate one-third of household members are children (29 percent New York City; 30 percent New York State; 36 percent U.S.) representing 348,000 children in New York City, 630,000 children in New York State and nine million children in the U.S. who rely on emergency food.

The gender composition of EFP client households suggests that women disproportionately bear the burden of ensuring that their household does not go hungry. Results show that approximately one-half of all EFP client household members are women, yet a larger number of women visit EFPs to receive or pick up food. For example, 50 percent of EFP client household members in New York City, 51 percent in New York State and 52 percent of EFP client household members in the U.S. are women. In contrast, women comprise 54 percent of clients who *visit* EFPs in New York City, 58 percent in New York State and 61 percent in the U.S.

Although people of color make up a large component of EFP clients throughout New York City, New York State and the U.S., the racial/ethnic composition of EFP clients differs greatly by geographic region. For example, the largest racial/ethnic categories among EFP clients in New York City are Latino/Hispanic residents (32 percent) and Black/African-American residents (57 percent). In contrast, the largest racial/ethnic categories in New York State are among White residents (27 percent) and Black/African-American residents (45 percent). In the U.S., EFP clients are primarily Black/African-American residents (38 percent) and White residents (40 percent). Additionally, less than 10 percent of EFP clients are American Indian, Alaskan Native, Pacific Islander or Asian residents (7 percent New York City; 5 percent New York State; 7 percent U.S.).

### ***Housing***

In general, the vast majority of EFP client households rent their place of residence but the housing status of clients differs significantly by geographic region. While 57 percent of EFP client households in the U.S. rent their place of residence, this number increases to nearly three-quarters (74 percent) in New York State and to 81 percent in New York City. Differences are also seen among EFP clients that own their place of residence. While 4 percent of EFP client households in New York City and 12 percent of client households in New York State own their place of residence, this figure increases to one-quarter (25 percent) among client households in the U.S. These disparities are likely due to the differences found between housing markets in urban and rural areas.

Although large disparities are seen among EFP client households in New York City, New York State and the U.S. that rent and own, the noticeably low percentages of homeless clients are similar across all three areas. In New York City, 11 percent of EFP client households are homeless, while a comparable 9 percent and 12 percent of EFP client households in New York State and the U.S. respectively are homeless.

### ***Education***

Results also indicate that while education is an important factor related to hunger, the level of education needed to escape the poverty that causes hunger is increasing. For example, a majority of the EFP client population has received a high school degree or higher. In New York City, 57 percent of clients have a high school degree or above. This percentage increases to 59 percent among EFP clients in New York State and the U.S. In addition, nearly one-quarter of all clients have completed some college or have obtained a college degree or higher. This figure is 23 percent in New York City, 24 percent in New York State and 22 percent in the U.S., indicating that a college education does not necessarily guarantee freedom from economic hardship.

**Employment**

Further, it is a commonly held view that employment provides a path out of poverty. Therefore, as employment numbers increase, one expects a corresponding decrease in problems such as hunger. However, as the findings show, this is not always the case as approximately one-third of EFP client households have one or more employed adult members. This figure is 32 percent in New York City, 35 percent in New York State and 36 percent in the U.S. Employment findings indicate that although many households include working adults, wages are not high enough to sustain their basic needs, even in New York State where the state minimum wage was increased to \$6.00 per hour in 2005 (above the federal minimum wage of \$5.15). Among adult client household members who are working, approximately one-half are working full-time and are still unable to make ends meet. This figure is 51 percent in New York City, 49 percent in New York State and 53 percent in the U.S.

It is interesting to note that of the clients who have worked before or are currently working, close to one-fifth have held managerial or professional jobs — 19 percent in New York City, 18 percent in New York State and 16 percent in the U.S. In conjunction with the high number of clients with more than a high school degree, this finding may indicate that inflation coupled with stagnant real wages<sup>7</sup> has steadily diminished the purchasing power of many workers at various levels of their careers, leaving much of the workforce in a precarious economic position.

**Income**

Income data further affirms that EFP client wages, and other sources of income, are often too low to keep them out of poverty. In New York City, nearly three-quarters (73 percent) of EFP client households live at or below the federal poverty line while among EFP client households in New York State and the U.S., more than two-thirds (67 percent and 69 percent respectively) live at or below poverty. The research shows that the average monthly EFP client household income is as low as \$820 in New York City and \$860 in New York State and the U.S. The median income is even lower, demonstrating that one-half of New York City client households live on monthly incomes of \$670 or less. This figure increases to \$680 and \$750 among EFP client households in New York State and the U.S. respectively. These findings demonstrate that the average monthly EFP client household income is much lower than the average monthly income for the general U.S. population in 2004 (which was \$5,006 with half reporting incomes of \$3,724).<sup>8</sup>

In addition, income findings confirm for the first time that hunger primarily impacts hardworking families and individuals who are struggling to get by on insufficient earnings or low fixed incomes. Around the country, employment, Social Security and disability benefits are the single greatest source of income for a majority of people turning to EFPs for help. This finding suggests there is a continuum of low-income families and individuals who may be faced with long-term dependence on emergency food, as today's low-wage workers are likely to continue experiencing difficulty making ends meet when they age into small pensions and other fixed incomes. New York City, New York State and U.S. results show that the main sources of income among EFP client households are generally employment, Social Security and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and that few client households rely upon Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) as their main income source. For example, the main sources of income among EFP client households in New York City are SSI (20 percent), employment (18 percent) and Social Security (9 percent); in contrast TANF is the main source of income for only 5 percent of client households. Similar results are found among EFP client households in New York State (20 percent employment; 17 percent SSI; 12

<sup>7</sup> According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, average hourly earnings in the U.S. (as constant dollars adjusted for inflation) have decreased by .5 percent between December 2004 and December 2005. Between December 2000 and December 2005, average hourly earnings in the U.S. (as constant dollars adjusted for inflation) have only increased 3 percent while productivity, as measured by output per hour, has increased 12 percent in the same period. Productivity is based upon statistics in the non-farm business sector, which accounted for 77 percent of the value of the gross domestic product in 2000. Real earnings are based upon all non-supervisory workers on non-farm payrolls.

<sup>8</sup> U.S. Census Bureau. (2005) *Income, Poverty, and Health Insurance Coverage in the United States: 2004*. August, pp. 60-229.

percent Social Security; 4 percent TANF) and the U.S. (26 percent employment; 20 percent Social Security; 10 percent SSI; 2 percent TANF).

The economic constraints that result from low wages and fixed incomes force EFP clients to make tough choices each month in order to stretch their dollars. The findings show that more than one-third of EFP client households choose between paying for food and rent/mortgage (34 percent New York City; 34 percent New York State; 35 percent U.S.). Similar results are found among EFP client households that choose between paying for food and utilities/heating fuel (34 percent New York City; 37 percent New York State; 40 percent U.S.). In addition, more than one-fifth of client households in New York City and New York State and close to one-third in the U.S. choose between paying for food and medicine/medical care (22 percent New York City; 24 percent New York State; 32 percent U.S.). This finding is troubling considering the poor health status of the EFP client population.

### ***Health and Medical Insurance***

The research reveals that more than one-quarter of EFP client households have at least one member in poor health – 28 percent in New York City and 29 percent in both New York State and the U.S. In addition, the findings suggest that many EFP clients are living with a disability. For example, a large number of client households rely on Supplemental Security Income (SSI) (20 percent New York City; 17 percent New York State; 10 percent U.S. as presented above) and Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) or Workers' Compensation (7 percent in New York City, New York State and the U.S.) as their main source of income.

It may also be the case that those in poor health are caught in a vicious cycle as the socioeconomic status that aggravates health problems also denies most EFP clients adequate health coverage. As little as 14 percent of EFP client households in New York City, 17 percent in New York State and 14 percent in the U.S. have private health insurance. Additionally, as many as 16 percent of EFP client households in New York City, 26 percent in New York State and 41 percent in the U.S. have unpaid medical or hospital bills. When faced with a severe medical need, money that would have otherwise been spent on food must instead be spent on healthcare, often forcing people to either rely on EFPs or go hungry. Further, a large number of clients rely on Medicaid to offset their medical costs. Approximately two-thirds of EFP clients in New York City and State (66 percent New York City; 61 percent New York State) and close to one-half of EFP clients throughout the U.S. (45 percent) are enrolled in Medicaid.

### ***Ability to Afford Food***

Many families also face times during the year when they are hungry and do not have sufficient resources to buy food. The research shows that more than one-third of client households experienced times during the past year when they were hungry and did not eat because they could not afford enough food — this finding holds true for 34 percent of client households in both New York City and New York State and 39 percent of client households in the U.S. In fact, approximately one-quarter of client households experienced times during the past year when they did not eat for a whole day because they did not have enough money for food. This figure is 22 percent of client households in New York City, 21 percent in New York State and 26 percent in the U.S.

The study also demonstrates that clients are often forced to turn to EFPs when poverty and rising food prices cause them to run out of food, reduce the size of meals or skip meals altogether. In recent years, the Consumer Price Index for food has increased 10 percent in the U.S. and 11 percent in the New York area.<sup>9</sup> Likely caused, at least in part, by this elevated price level, this study reveals that more than 70 percent of all EFP client households experienced times during the past year when it was often or sometimes true that the food they bought did not last and they did not have

<sup>9</sup> Consumer Price Index results are based on years 2001 and 2005 as reported by the U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics. The New York area includes New York, Northern New Jersey and Long Island.

enough money to buy more. These figures are 70 percent in New York City, 72 percent in New York State and 75 percent in the U.S. Additionally, during almost every month of this past year, many client households cut the size of their meals or skipped meals because they lacked the resources to purchase more food. In New York City, more than one-fifth (21 percent) of EFP client households had to reduce the size of meals or skip meals altogether, while in New York State and the U.S. these figures increase to 23 percent and one-quarter (25 percent) respectively.

### ***Grocery Shopping Patterns***

In response to rising food prices, the research suggests that EFP clients purchase food and groceries at the most cost-effective stores and markets available to them. For example, this report shows that the vast majority of EFP clients do most of their grocery shopping at supermarkets (87 percent New York City, 84 percent New York State; 72 percent U.S.) and discount stores (2 percent New York City; 7 percent New York State; 17 percent U.S.) rather than at convenience stores (.3 percent New York City; 1 percent New York State; 2 percent U.S.) or ethnic stores such as bodegas (3 percent New York City; 2 percent New York State; 1 percent U.S.) where food prices are considerably higher. There are even a number of EFP clients in the U.S. (.3 percent), who do the majority of their grocery shopping at Farmers Markets despite the fact that availability of such markets may be limited. Availability may also explain why higher percentages of clients in the U.S. do most of their grocery shopping at discount stores as contrasted with the figures for New York City and New York State.

### ***Participation in Nutrition Assistance Programs***

While many impoverished families rely on child nutrition programs to make ends meet, the findings demonstrate a need to increase participation of eligible families in the various programs. Almost two-thirds of eligible EFP client households participate in the National School Lunch Program (64 percent in New York City and 62 percent in New York State and the U.S.) and approximately one-half of eligible EFP client households participate in the School Breakfast Program (49 percent in New York City, 48 percent in New York State and 51 percent in the U.S.). In sharp contrast, participation in the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) for children — among households with at least one child younger than 18 — is much lower than participation in the National School Lunch Program and the School Breakfast Programs. SFSP participation rates are only 36 percent in New York City, 29 percent in New York State and a mere 13 percent throughout the U.S. Many families may instead be turning to EFPs to secure nutritious meals for their children during the summer months, as indicated by the finding that the number of children accessing EFPs during the summer increases, particularly at a large number of food pantries and soup kitchens. The number of soup kitchens with this type of increase is 47 percent in New York City, 46 percent in New York State and 29 percent in the U.S.<sup>10</sup>

In addition to low participation in the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP), the report also shows low enrollment in the federal Food Stamp Program and the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC). Despite income levels indicating that most are likely eligible, less than one-half of EFP client households are receiving Food Stamp Program benefits in New York (46 percent New York City; 43 percent New York State) and throughout the country only slightly more than one-third of EFP client households (35 percent) are receiving food stamps. The low food stamp participation rates of EFP clients in New York City are consistent with local and federal data on the low enrollment rates of eligible New Yorkers in the program.<sup>11</sup> With approximately 700,000 eligible city residents<sup>12</sup> not enrolled, the pressure on EFPs is overwhelming. Similarly, among EFP client households with preschool children, only about one-half participate in WIC (44 percent New York City; 49 percent New York State; 51 percent U.S.). Even when participating in government

<sup>10</sup> Please see the Findings section of this report for additional information.

<sup>11</sup> Widom, R., Ewart E. and Martínez, O.A. Urban Justice Center. (2006). *A Better Recipe For New York City: Less Red Tape, More Food on the Table*.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

assistance programs, clients may still have difficulty accessing food and are often at risk of losing their benefits. Findings demonstrate that food stamps only last two weeks or less for one-half of EFP client households in New York City, New York State and the U.S. As a result, many people must still rely on EFPs to get by. In addition, the report shows that clients often turn to EFPs after losing benefits, as shown by the more than one-third of EFP client households (34 percent New York City; 35 percent New York State; 42 percent U.S.) who had received Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) or welfare in the past, but whose assistance was discontinued (many of whom were sanctioned by welfare or another agency).

### EMERGENCY FOOD PROGRAMS

With respect to organizations that provide food assistance, findings show that EFPs (food pantries, soup kitchens and shelters) are primarily faith-based organizations that rely heavily on unpaid volunteers to meet the needs of individuals and families seeking emergency food assistance. Nearly two-thirds (64 percent) of New York City programs, almost one-half (48 percent) of New York State programs and over one-half (56 percent) of U.S. programs are operated by faith-based organizations. An even larger number rely on volunteers. For example, the number of food pantries that have unpaid volunteers is 91 percent in New York City, 90 percent in New York State and 90 percent in the U.S. (similar results can be found for soup kitchens and shelters within the Findings section of this report).<sup>14</sup> Similarly, there is also a large number of programs that have no paid staff and rely *entirely* upon volunteers — 55 percent of food pantries in New York City, 56 percent in the State and two-thirds (66 percent) in the U.S.

Resource problems such as the low number of paid staff, low funding levels and insufficient food are challenges that threaten the daily operations of all EFPs and often force programs to turn clients away. For example, findings show that one-half of all soup kitchens in the U.S. (50 percent) experience funding problems that threaten the operation of their programs. This figure increases to 57 percent in New York City and 60 percent in New York State. In addition, funding and similar challenges often force EFPs to turn away people in need. For example, one-third (33 percent) of food pantries in New York State and the U.S. had to turn clients away at some point during the year. This problem is worse in New York City where close to one-half of the food pantries (45 percent) turned clients away. The single greatest reason for EFPs turning clients away is a lack of food resources to meet the need. Among food pantries that turned clients away, for example, 84 percent in New York City, 55 percent in New York State and more than one-third (34 percent) in the U.S. turned clients away due to insufficient food resources. These findings are particularly worrisome as the report also demonstrates that, during the past four years, a majority of EFPs have seen an increase in the number of clients they serve. Among food pantries, for example, 82 percent in New York City, three-quarters (75 percent) in New York State and nearly two-thirds (65 percent) in the U.S. have experienced an increase in the number of people turning to their program for food assistance.

### CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, *Hunger in America 2006: The New York City and State Report* demonstrates that even as EFPs struggle to keep their organizations operating through staffing and resource deficiencies, they also face the growing challenge of serving a diverse population of individuals and families in need of food assistance. A large network of soup kitchens, food pantries and shelters provide temporary relief to 1.2 million New York City residents and 2.1 million New York State residents. Not surprisingly, those in need of assistance are frequently among the most vulnerable

---

<sup>14</sup> Throughout this section, we provide EFP findings for specific types of programs (such as food pantries, soup kitchens and shelters). These results are intended to be used as examples and do not reflect the findings for all EFPs. For further information regarding the research results for all types of EFPs, see the Findings section of this report.

populations which include children, the elderly and those in poor health. Often circumstances make it difficult even for those who are employed and have a college degree to afford enough food. Rising food prices, stagnant real wages and lack of basic health insurance, for example, frequently force families to make tough decisions between purchasing food and paying for other necessities such as housing or medical care. As a consequence, many people must skip meals and go hungry because they are unable to purchase food. Despite need, many individuals and families are not participating in nutrition assistance programs such as the Food Stamp Program, the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) and the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) for children due to eligibility restrictions, lack of awareness or lack of access. Even when families are participating in programs such as the Food Stamp Program, most report that the benefits they receive do not last through the month.

In light of these findings, a number of steps are needed to ensure that individuals and families receive immediate relief while also working towards solving the long-term cycle of poverty and hunger.

While EFPs struggle to provide temporary relief to New Yorkers in need, government funding levels for emergency food have been flat-funded or have suffered cuts over the last decade. Increased funding for the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP), the FEMA Emergency Food and Shelter Program (EFSP), the New York State Department of Health Hunger Prevention and Nutrition Assistance Program (HPNAP) and the New York City Emergency Food Assistance Program (EFAP) is long overdue. This requisite near-term solution would ensure that EFPs are better equipped to respond to New Yorkers who need temporary food assistance.

Simultaneously, there is an urgent need to enroll more eligible New Yorkers in government nutrition assistance programs (such as the Food Stamp Program and the Child Nutrition Assistance Programs). Possible reasons for the low participation rates in SFSP among EFP client households with children include a low level of public awareness about nearby programs or lack of available local programs. Similarly, elderly and working poor EFP clients have the lowest participation rates in the Food Stamp Program in New York City, indicating that limited access is one of the barriers to enrollment.<sup>15</sup> Ensuring that all eligible New Yorkers become enrolled in the Food Stamp Program and WIC would provide families with more of the food they need and would, at the same time, boost the local economy by bringing federal dollars into the city that would directly benefit local grocery stores and would ultimately increase job opportunities in the related food industry.

In addition to working with legislators to prevent cuts to the programs that serve the neediest of families and individuals throughout the country, hunger organizations will also be looking to the upcoming 2007 Farm Bill as an opportunity to address some of the issues outlined in this report, such as the underutilization of USDA funded programs. Reauthorization of the Farm Bill allows for measures to be introduced that would secure increased enrollment in the Food Stamp Program (particularly among eligible populations who currently underutilize the program, including immigrant families and the elderly) and increased food stamp benefit amounts to ensure that families and individuals can access sufficient food to avoid going hungry.

---

<sup>15</sup> Food Bank For New York City/Food Policy Institute. (2004). *Hunger Safety Net 2004: Measuring Gaps in Food Assistance in New York City*. Division of Government Relations, Policy and Research

## HIGHLIGHTS

### EMERGENCY FOOD PROGRAM (EFP) CLIENTS

#### Estimated Number of People Served

- **Weekly:** Each week, there are approximately four million people accessing EFPs in the U.S. including more than 500,000 in New York State and more than 300,000 in New York City.
- **Annual:** Throughout the U.S., approximately 25 million people turn to EFPs for assistance annually including 2.1 million people within New York State and 1.2 million in New York City.

#### Demographic Characteristics of Clients

- **Gender:** Findings suggest that women bear the burden of ensuring their households do not go hungry. Although approximately one-half of EFP client household members are women (50 percent New York City; 51 percent New York State; 52 percent U.S.), women comprise a higher number of EFP clients that visit EFPs (54 percent New York City; 58 percent New York State; 61 percent U.S.).
- **Education:** A majority of clients have received a high school degree or higher throughout New York City (57 percent), New York State (59 percent) and the U.S. (59 percent). In addition, nearly one-quarter of EFP clients have completed some college or obtained a college/graduate degree in New York City (23 percent), New York State (24 percent) and the U.S. (22 percent).
- **Race/Ethnicity:** A large number of EFP clients are people of color; however, racial/ethnic differences are seen among New York City, New York State and the U.S. For example the largest racial/ethnic categories among EFP clients in New York City are Latino/Hispanic residents (32 percent) and Black/African-American residents (27 percent), while the largest racial/ethnic categories in New York State are among White residents (27 percent) and Black/African-American residents (45 percent). In the U.S., EFP clients are primarily Black/African-American residents (38 percent) and White residents (40 percent). Additionally, less than 10 percent of EFP clients are American Indian, Alaskan Native, Pacific Islander or Asian residents (7 percent New York City; 5 percent New York State; 7 percent U.S.).

#### Client Household Characteristics

- **Household Age Composition:** Within EFP client households, approximately one-third are children (29 percent New York City; 30 percent New York State; 36 percent U.S.), close to two-thirds are non-elderly adults (60 percent New York City; 59 percent New York State; 54 percent U.S.) and about 10 percent (12 percent New York City; 11 percent New York State; 10 percent U.S.) are elderly.
- **Housing:** New York EFP clients are more likely to rent than own their homes. Four in five EFP client households (81 percent) in New York City, 74 percent of New York State client households and 57 percent of U.S. client households rent. One-quarter (25 percent) of U.S. client households own their homes in contrast to 4 percent and 12 percent of New York City and New York State client households that own their residence respectively.
- **Homelessness:** The percentages of EFP client households who are homeless are similar throughout New York City (11 percent), New York State (9 percent) and the U.S. (12 percent).

- **Working Poor:** Approximately one-third of EFP client households have one or more adults employed. This figure is 32 percent in New York City, 35 percent in New York State and 36 percent in the U.S. Among EFP client household members who are working, approximately one-half are working full-time. These results are similar in New York City (51 percent), New York State (49 percent) and the U.S. (53 percent).
- **Income Levels:** A majority of EFP client households have incomes at or below the federal poverty line. This figure is slightly higher among EFP client households in New York City (73 percent) than among client households in New York State (67 percent) and the U.S. (69 percent). Similarly, one-half of all EFP client households in New York City have incomes lower than \$670. In New York State and the U.S., this figure increases to \$680 and \$750 respectively.
- **Sources of Income:** Employment, Social Security and Supplemental Security Income (SSI), are the main sources of income for a majority of EFP client households. The main sources of EFP client household income in New York City are SSI (20 percent), employment (18 percent) and Social Security (9 percent). In New York State, employment (20 percent), SSI (17 percent) and Social Security (12 percent) are the main sources of income and in the U.S. the main sources of income are employment (26 percent), Social Security (20 percent) and SSI (10 percent).

#### Participation in Food Assistance Programs

- **Food Stamps:** Less than one-half of all EFP client households participate in the federal Food Stamp Program. Participation among EFP client households is 46 percent in New York City, 43 percent in New York State and 35 percent in the U.S. Among one-half of EFP client households in New York City, New York State and the U.S., food stamp benefits only lasted two weeks or less.
- **WIC:** Among EFP client households with preschool children, approximately one-half participate in the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women and Children (WIC). Participation is 44 percent in New York City, 49 percent in New York State and 51 percent in the U.S.
- **Child Food Nutrition Assistance Programs:** Nearly two-thirds of client households with school-age children participate in the National School Lunch Program (64 percent in New York City; 62 percent in New York State; 62 percent in the U.S.) and approximately one-half participate in the School Breakfast Program (49 percent in New York City; 48 percent in New York State; 51 percent in the U.S.). A little more than one-third of client households in New York City (36 percent) participate in the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP), while only 29 percent in New York State and 13 percent in the U.S. are participating in SFSP.

#### Participation in Other Public Benefits Programs

##### **Public Assistance:**

- Less than one-fifth of EFP client households received public assistance/Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)/welfare during the past two years (18 percent New York City; 17 percent New York State; 14 percent U.S.).

- Among EFP client households that received public assistance or TANF within the past two years, the assistance was discontinued for more than one-third. Assistance was stopped for 34 percent of New York City EFP client households, 35 percent of New York State client households and 42 percent of U.S. client households. Among the EFP client households that are no longer receiving assistance, more than one-fifth (21 percent) in New York City, more than one-quarter (26 percent) in New York State and 9 percent in the U.S. were sanctioned by a welfare agency or other type of agency.

### **Food Insecurity**

- Sixty-two percent of New York City EFP client households, 65 percent of New York State client households and 70 percent of U.S. client households are food insecure.
- More than 70 percent of EFP client households experienced times during the past year when it was often or sometimes true that the food they bought did not last and they did not have enough money to buy more (70 percent New York City; 72 percent New York State; 75 percent U.S.).
- More than one-third of EFP client households experienced times during the past year when they were hungry but did not eat because they could not afford enough food (34 percent in both New York City and New York State and 39 percent in the U.S.).
- Approximately one-fifth of EFP client households in New York City (22 percent) and New York State (21 percent) found that there were times during the past year when they did not eat for a whole day because there was not enough money for food. This figure increases to more than one-quarter (26 percent) among EFP client households in the U.S.
- About one-half of EFP client households ate less than they felt they should at some time during the past year because there was not enough money to buy food (46 percent in New York City; 48 percent New York State; 52 percent in the U.S.).
- Almost every month during the past year, approximately one-quarter of EFP client households had to cut the size of their meals or skip meals because there was not enough money for food (21 percent New York City; 23 percent New York State; 25 percent U.S.).

### **Choosing between Food and Other Necessities**

- More than one-third of EFP client households had to choose between paying for food and rent/mortgage (34 percent in both New York City and New York State and 35 percent in the U.S.).
- More than one-third of EFP client households had to choose between paying for food and utilities/heating fuel (34 New York City; 37 percent New York State; 40 percent U.S.).
- More than one-fifth (22 percent) of New York City EFP client households had to choose between paying for food and medicine/medical care. This figure increases to 24 percent among client households in New York State and close to one-third (32 percent) among client households in the U.S.

### **Health Status, Insurance and Access to Medical Care**

- Close to 30 percent of EFP client households have at least one household member in poor health. These results are similar among New York City EFP client households (28 percent), New York State client households (29 percent) and U.S. client households (29 percent).

- The vast majority of EFP client households have at least one member receiving Medicaid or Medicare. Among New York City EFP client households, two-thirds (66 percent) receive Medicaid and close to one-third (32 percent) receive Medicare. Among New York State EFP client households, 61 percent receive Medicaid and 35 percent receive Medicare. Among U.S. EFP client households, 45 percent receive Medicaid and 36 percent receive Medicare.
- Approximately 15 percent of EFP client households have private health insurance (14 percent New York City; 17 percent New York State; 14 percent U.S.).
- Sixteen percent of EFP client households in New York City have unpaid medical or hospital bills. This figure increases to more than one-quarter (26 percent) among EFP client households in New York State and 41 percent among EFP client households in the U.S.

### **Grocery Shopping Patterns**

- The vast majority of EFP client households do most of their grocery shopping at supermarkets or discount stores (87 percent New York City; 84 percent New York State; 72 percent U.S.). In contrast, only 3 percent of New York City client households, 2 percent of New York State client households and 1 percent of U.S. client households do most of their shopping in ethnic stores or bodegas.

## **EMERGENCY FOOD PROGRAMS**

### **Reliance on Faith-Based Organizations**

- A large number of EFPs are faith-based organizations. In New York City, 64 percent of EFPs are faith-based while close to one-half (48 percent) in New York State and more than one-half (56 percent) in the U.S. are faith-based.

### **Changes in Need of Emergency Food Assistance**

- During the past four years, a majority of EFPs throughout New York City, New York State and the U.S. have experienced an increase in the number of clients served. For example, 82 percent of food pantries in New York City, 75 percent in New York State and 65 percent in the U.S. saw an increase in clients.
- Many EFPs also experience an increase in the number of children served during the summer. For example, 47 percent of soup kitchens in New York City, 46 percent in New York State and 41 percent in the U.S. saw an increase in children during the summer months.

### **Reliance on Volunteers**

- The vast majority of EFPs rely on unpaid volunteers. For example, 93 percent of soup kitchens in New York City, 90 percent in New York State and 86 percent in the U.S. have volunteers on staff.
- Many EFPs rely *entirely* on volunteers. Food pantries in the U.S. have the highest percentage of EFPs with no paid staff (66 percent) while 56 percent of food pantries in New York State and 55 percent of food pantries in New York City have no paid staff.

**Program Challenges**

- **Funding:** Funding problems threaten the daily operations of many EFPs, particularly shelters. Approximately two-thirds of shelters in New York City (66 percent), New York State (65 percent) and the U.S. (66 percent) experience funding problems that threaten the operations of their programs.
- **Food:** Insufficient food supplies threaten the daily operation of many EFPs, particularly food pantries. More than one-half (55 percent) of food pantries in New York City, 43 percent of food pantries in New York State and nearly one-third (31 percent) of food pantries in the U.S. have experienced problems with food supplies that threaten the operation of their programs.
- **Paid Staff:** Lack of paid staff threatens the daily operation of EFPs, particularly in New York City. For example, more than one-fifth (21 percent) of New York City food pantries, 14 percent of New York State food pantries and 7 percent of U.S. food pantries have had staffing problems that threaten the operation of their programs.
- **Turning Clients Away:** Many EFPs were forced to turn clients away at some time during the past year. For example, 45 percent of New York City food pantries and one-third (33 percent) of both New York State and U.S. food pantries turned clients away. Among all EFPs that turned clients away, a large number did so because of a lack of food resources. For example, 84 percent of New York City food pantries, 55 percent of New York State food pantries and more than one-third (34 percent) of U.S. food pantries turned away clients at least once due to a lack of food.

## FINDINGS

In 2005, America's Second Harvest, the Nation's Food Bank Network worked with Food Banks and Food Rescue Organizations throughout the United States to conduct a study of emergency food programs (EFPs) and the people they serve. Nationally, information was collected from more than 52,000 EFP clients and 30,000 of America's Second Harvest Network member agencies.<sup>16</sup> Eight Food Banks and two Food Rescue organizations partnered together to carryout the New York State component of this research. Among them, the Food Bank For New York City and City Harvest collaborated to conduct the New York City portion. This section is a summary of the New York City, New York State and national results.

### EMERGENCY FOOD PROGRAM (EFP) CLIENTS AND CLIENT HOUSEHOLDS<sup>17</sup>

EFPs provide assistance to clients and, in many instances, their households as well. The following results are based upon responses from 611 EFP client interviews in New York City, 3,323 EFP client interviews in New York State and 52,878 EFP client interviews in the U.S.

As provided in Table 1.0, EFPs throughout the U.S. provide food to approximately 25 million clients annually. This finding includes more than two million (2.1 million) people who access EFPs in New York State and more than one million (1.2 million) people who turn to EFPs in New York City each year. Every week, there are approximately four million people accessing EFPs in the U.S. including more than 500,000 in New York State and more than 300,000 in New York City.

**Table 1.0**

#### Number of EFP Client Household Members Served

Client Household Members Served	NYC	NYS	USA
Weekly	300,000	500,000	4 million
Annually	1.2 million	2.1 million	25 million

The EFP client household age composition shows that approximately one-third of client household members are children, nearly two-thirds are non-elderly adults and approximately 10 percent are elderly, as shown in Table 1.1.

**Table 1.1**

#### Number of EFP Client Household Members by Age Composition

Household Age Composition	NYC	NYS	USA
Children	348,000	630,000	9 million
Adults	720,000	1.2 million	13.5 million
Elderly	144,000	230,000	2.5 million

<sup>16</sup> Agencies often operate more than one EFP.

<sup>17</sup> EFP clients are defined differently by different types of programs. Food pantry programs include all individuals in a household when counting the number of clients served because the food received is taken home to be utilized by all household members. However, soup kitchens and shelters include only program visitors in their definition of client as they serve individual meals. Because of this distinction, the sampling unit for client interviews was the individual visitor at soup kitchens and shelters while the sampling unit at food pantries was the household. In this report, the term *clients* refers to respondents who were interviewed at an EFP. Because of the sampling methods described above, information provided on clients of soup kitchens and shelters represents all soup kitchen and shelter clients. Information provided on clients of food pantries represents only the food pantry clients that picked up food at the program. The term *client household* refers to the client and the members of his or her household. Information provided on soup kitchen and shelter client households do not provide a profile of soup kitchen or shelter clients, but rather provide findings on the characteristics of households of which the clients are members. Information provided on food pantry client households represents the total food pantry client population.

**Demographic Characteristics of EFP Clients**

The population of clients relying upon EFPs is largely comprised of children, women, people of color, people with disabilities and the working poor, many of whom live at or below the federal poverty line.

**Gender**

Findings demonstrate that approximately one-half of all EFP client household members are women; however, *more than* one-half of clients that visit an EFP are women. This finding indicates that, in general, women bear the responsibility of ensuring that their households do not go hungry by accessing EFP assistance.

As provided in Table 1.2, one-half (50 percent) of EFP client household members in New York City are women and slightly more than one-half of EFP client household members in New York State (51 percent) and the U.S. (52 percent) are women.

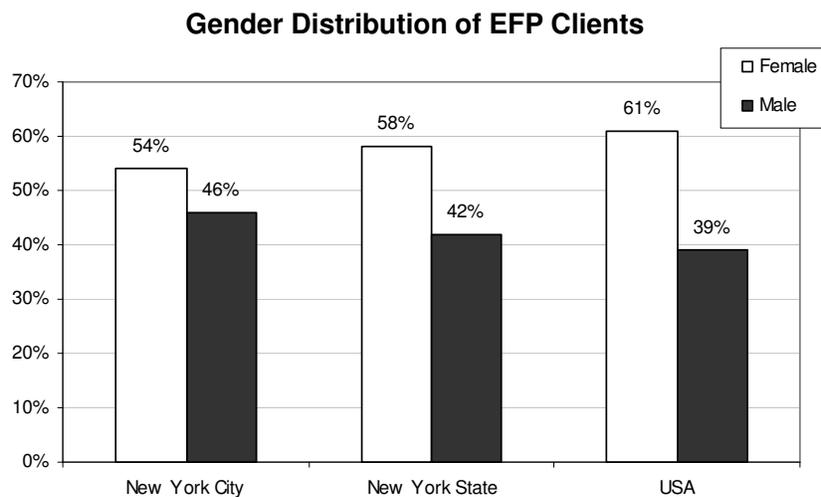
**Table 1.2**

**Gender Distribution of EFP Client Households**

Gender	NYC	NYS	USA
Female	50%	51%	52%
Male	50%	49%	48%

An even larger majority of clients that *visit* EFPs are women. As illustrated in Figure 1.3, 54 percent of clients that receive or pick-up food at an EFP in New York City are women. This figure increases to 58 percent in New York State and 61 percent in the U.S.

**Figure 1.3**



**Education**

Results also show that a majority of clients have received a high school degree or higher. As provided in Table 1.4, 57 percent of EFP clients in New York City have a high school degree or higher.<sup>18</sup> This figure increases to 59 percent among EFP clients in both New York State and the U.S. Further analysis shows that nearly one-quarter of all clients have even completed some college, a college degree or higher.<sup>20</sup> This finding is true for 23 percent of EFP clients in New York City, 24 percent of EFP clients in New York State and 22 percent of EFP clients in the U.S.

**Table 1.4****Highest Education Level Completed Among EFP Clients**

<b>Education Level</b>	<b>NYC</b>	<b>NYS</b>	<b>USA</b>
Less than high school	42%	39%	38%
Completed high school or equivalent	34%	35%	37%
Some college/two-year degree	16%	18%	17%
Completed college or higher	7%	6%	5%

**Race/Ethnicity**

Although EFP client education levels are similar throughout New York City, New York State and the U.S., the racial/ethnic make-up of clients is vastly different between the three geographic areas. For example, the largest racial/ethnic categories among EFP clients in New York City are Latino/Hispanic residents (32 percent) and Black/African-American residents (57 percent) as shown in Table 1.5. Among EFP clients in New York State and the U.S., there are considerably larger percentages of White residents. The largest racial/ethnic categories in New York State are among White residents (27 percent) and Black/African-American residents (45 percent). In the U.S., the largest racial/ethnic categories among EFP clients are among Black/African-American residents (38 percent) and White residents (40 percent). Additionally, less than 10 percent of EFP client households are American Indian, Alaskan Native, Pacific Islander or Asian residents (7 percent New York City; 5 percent New York State; 7 percent U.S.).

**Table 1.5****Race/Ethnicity of EFP Clients**

<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>	<b>NYC</b>	<b>NYS</b>	<b>USA</b>
American Indian, Alaskan Native, Pacific Islander or Asian	7%	5%	7%
Black/African-American	57%	45%	38%
Latino/Hispanic	32%	24%	17%
White	7%	27%	40%
Other	3%	3%	2%

<sup>18</sup> These figures are the sum of the rates for all EFP clients with a high school degree or higher.

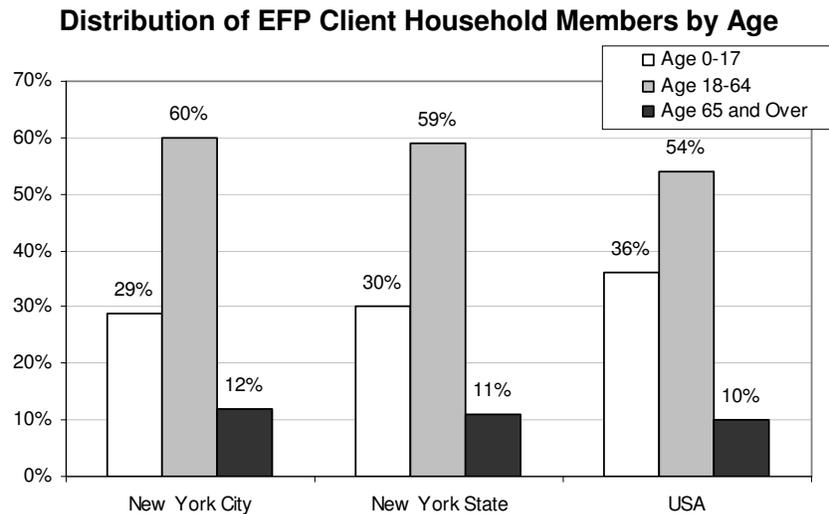
<sup>20</sup> These figures are the sum of the rates for all EFP clients with some college experience or higher.

**Client Household Member Characteristics**

***Household Age Composition***

Within EFP client households, household members are approximately one-third children, close to two-thirds non-elderly adults and approximately 10 percent elderly. As provided in Figure 2.0, EFP clients in New York City are 29 percent children, 60 percent non-elderly adults and 12 percent elderly. Similar figures are seen among EFP client households in New York State where 30 percent of household members are children, 59 percent are non-elderly adults and 11 percent are elderly. Among EFP client households in the U.S., household members are 36 percent children, 54 percent non-elderly adults and 10 percent elderly.

**Figure 2.0**



***Housing***

An overwhelming majority of EFP client households rent their place of residence, although large differences are found between New York City households and U.S. households. In New York City and New York State, approximately three-quarters (81 percent and 74 percent respectively) of EFP client households rent. In the U.S., more than one-half (57 percent) rent their place of residence as shown in Table 2.1.

In addition, 12 percent of EFP client households in New York State and 4 percent in New York City own their place of residence. In the U.S., one-quarter (25 percent) of EFP client households own their residence. This statistic is more than six times the percentage of New York City EFP client households who own and likely indicates differences found between housing markets in urban and rural areas.

Although differences were found between EFP client households that rent and own based upon the area studied, the percentages of homeless EFP client households are similar throughout New York City, New York State and the U.S. As seen in Table 2.1, 11 percent of EFP client households in New York City, 9 percent in New York State and 12 percent in the U.S. are homeless.

**Table 2.1**

**EFP Household Member Housing Characteristics\***

Housing	NYC	NYS	USA
Client households that own their place of residence	4%	12%	25%
Client households that rent their place of residence	81%	74%	57%
Client households that receive Section 8 or Public Housing Assistance	34%	28%	15%
Client households that are homeless	11%	9%	12%

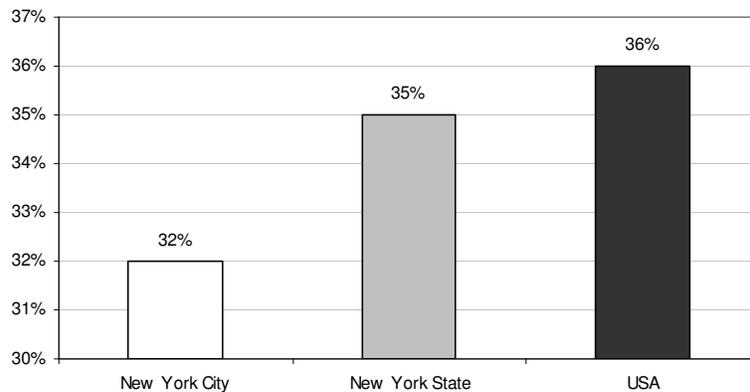
\* Statistics are compiled from multiple survey questions and are not intended to add up to 100 percent.

**Working Poor**

Approximately one-third of EFP client households have one or more employed adults. As illustrated in Figure 2.2, close to one-third (32 percent) of New York City client households, 35 percent of New York State client households and 36 percent of U.S. client households have an employed adult member.

**Figure 2.2**

**EFP Client Households with One or More Adults Employed**



Among adult client household members who are employed, approximately one-half are working full-time and still have difficulty affording food. As provided in Table 2.3, 51 percent of client households in New York City, 49 percent in New York State and 53 percent in the U.S. have at least one adult member employed full-time.

The findings also indicate that even individuals holding professional positions are not necessarily protected from hunger. For example, 19 percent of adult EFP clients in New York City currently hold or have held a managerial or professional position. Similar percentages are found within EFP client households in New York State (18 percent) and the U.S. (16 percent) as shown in Table 2.3.

**Table 2.3****Employment Status of Working-Age Adults in EFP Client Households**

<b>Employment Status*</b>	<b>NYC</b>	<b>NYS</b>	<b>USA</b>
Full-time	51%	49%	53%
Part-time	49%	51%	47%
Clients with managerial or professional jobs among those who have worked or are currently working	19%	18%	16%

\*Among EFP client households with at least one employed working-age member.

**Income Levels and Source of Income**

Despite the finding that a large percentage of client households have a least one employed member, a vast majority of households live at or below the federal poverty line. As presented in Table 2.4, this figure is slightly higher among EFP client households in New York City (73 percent) than among client households in New York State (67 percent) and the U.S. (69 percent).

**Table 2.4****EFP Client Household Income as a Percentage of the Federal Poverty Level**

<b>Poverty Level</b>	<b>NYC</b>	<b>NYS</b>	<b>USA</b>
0% (no income)	9%	8%	10%
100% or below	73%	67%	69%
130% or below	76%	74%	78%
150% or below	79%	78%	82%
185% or below	81%	80%	85%
Unknown	15%	15%	11%

Similarly, one-half of all EFP client households in New York City have incomes lower than \$670. In New York State and the U.S., this figure increases to \$680 and \$750 respectively, as shown in Table 2.5.

**Table 2.5****Average and Median EFP Client Household Incomes**

<b>Average/Median Income</b>	<b>NYC</b>	<b>NYS</b>	<b>USA</b>
Average monthly client household income	\$820	\$860	\$860
Median monthly client household income	\$670	\$680	\$750

Although a large number of EFP client households live at or below the federal poverty line, very few rely upon Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) as their main source of income. Findings demonstrate that the main sources of income among EFP client households are generally employment, Social Security, Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and Disability (SSDI). As provided in Table 2.6, among EFP client households in New York City, more rely upon SSI (20 percent), employment (18 percent), Social Security (9 percent) and SSDI (7 percent) than rely upon TANF (5 percent) as their main source of income. Similar results are found among EFP client households in New York State (20 percent employment; 17 percent SSI; 12 percent Social Security; 7 percent SSDI; 4 percent TANF) and the U.S. (26 percent employment; 20 percent Social Security; 10 percent SSI; 7 percent SSDI; 2 percent TANF).

Table 2.6

## Main Source of EFP Client Household Income

Main Source of Household Income for Previous Month	NYC	NYS	USA
Job	18%	20%	26%
<b>Government welfare assistance</b>			
Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)	5%	4%	2%
General Assistance (GA) <sup>21</sup>	5%	4%	2%
<b>SUBTOTAL</b>	10%	7%	4%
<b>Other government sources</b>			
Social Security	9%	12%	20%
Unemployment compensation	0.2%	1%	1%
Disability (SSDI)/Workers' compensation	7%	7%	7%
Supplemental Security Income (SSI)	20%	17%	10%
<b>SUBTOTAL</b>	36%	36%	37%
<b>Non-government, non-job sources</b>			
Other	4%	4%	3%
No Income	9%	8%	10%
Unknown	20%	20%	15%

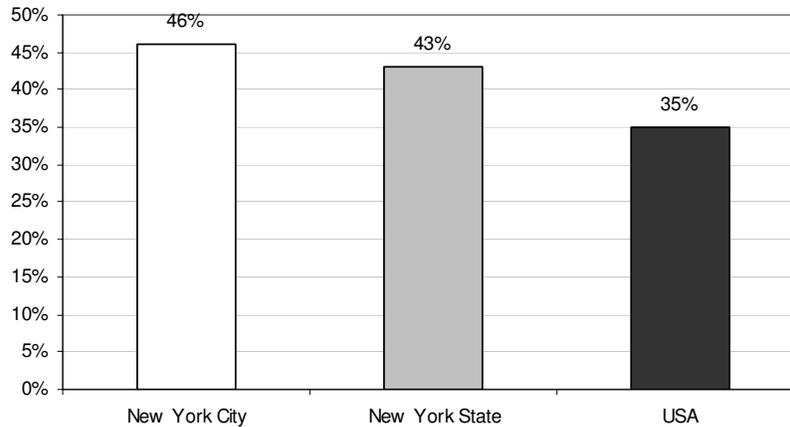
<sup>21</sup> General Assistance (GA) is not offered in New York City, therefore it is likely that respondents interpreted this term to mean public assistance or welfare.

**Food Stamps**

Although a majority of EFP client households have incomes below 130 percent of the poverty level <sup>22</sup> (as presented in Table 2.4), less than one-half of households participate in the federal Food Stamp Program. While 46 percent and 43 percent of client households in New York City and New York State respectively are currently receiving food stamps, only approximately one-third (35 percent) of U.S. households are receiving food stamp benefits as illustrated in Figure 2.7

**Figure 2.7**

**EFP Client Households Currently Receiving Food Stamps**



Among EFP client households in New York City, New York State and the U.S. that are receiving food stamps, benefits usually last two weeks or less for one-half of food stamp recipients, as presented in Table 2.8. On average, food stamps last EFP client households 2.6 weeks in New York City and New York State and 2.5 weeks in the U.S.

**Table 2.8**

**Average and Median Number of Weeks Food Stamps Usually Last Per Month**

	<b>NYC</b>	<b>NYS</b>	<b>USA</b>
Average number of weeks during the month food stamps usually last	2.6 weeks	2.6 weeks	2.5 weeks
Median number of weeks during the month food stamps usually last	2 weeks	2 weeks	2 weeks

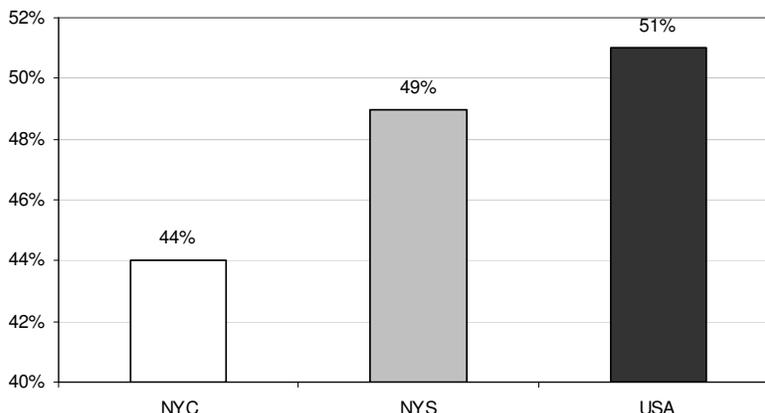
<sup>22</sup> One criterion for Food Stamp Program eligibility is a household income below 130 percent of the poverty level before taxes.

**WIC**

Among EFP client households with at least one child up to three years of age, as little as approximately one-half participate in the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women and Children (WIC). As illustrated in Figure 2.9, only 44 percent of EFP client households in New York City (with at least one child up to three years of age) participate in WIC. This figure increases to 49 percent and 51 percent in New York State and the U.S. respectively.

**Figure 2.9**

**EFP Client Households Currently Participating in the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women and Children (WIC)<sup>23</sup>**



**School Lunch, Breakfast and Summer Food Programs**

Among EFP client households with children in New York City, New York State and the U.S., nearly two-thirds participate in the National School Lunch Program and approximately one-half participate in the School Breakfast Program. While these percentages are low, given the high poverty rates among EFP client households, participation in the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) for children is even lower, especially among U.S. households. While 36 percent and 29 percent of households with children in New York City and New York State respectively participate in SFSP, 13 percent of U.S. households with children participate as presented in Table 2.10.

**Table 2.10**

**EFP Client Households with Children Participating in School Lunch, School Breakfast, and Summer Food Programs**

Program	NYC	NYS	USA
National School Lunch Program	64%	62%	62%
School Breakfast Program	49%	48%	51%
Summer Food Service Program	36%	29%	13%

*\*Among EFP client households with at least one child younger than age 18.*

<sup>23</sup> The margin of error on the percentage of WIC participants in New York City is higher than the margin of error for WIC participation in New York State and the U.S. due to a small sample size.

**Food Insecurity**

As demonstrated in Table 2.11, a large number of EFP client household are food insecure (as defined by the USDA<sup>24</sup>). This finding is true for close to two-thirds of EFP client households in New York City and New York State (62 percent and 65 percent respectively). Among EFP client households in the U.S., more than two-thirds (70 percent) are food insecure.

Additionally, although participation in many government food assistance programs is low among EFP client households, indicators of food insecurity show that clients often go hungry due to an inability to afford food. For example, as provided in Table 2.11, 70 percent of New York City EFP client households, 72 percent of New York State EFP client households and 75 percent of U.S. EFP client households found that it was often or sometimes true that the food they bought did not last and they did not have enough money to buy more. In addition, in almost every month during the past year, approximately one-quarter of EFP client households had to cut the size of their meals or skipped meals because there was not enough money to purchase food. This finding is true for 21 percent of EFP client households in New York City, 23 percent in New York State and 25 percent in the U.S.

**Table 2.11**  
**Indicators of Food Insecurity among EFP Client Households**

<b>Indicator of Food Insecurity</b>	<b>NYC</b>	<b>NYS</b>	<b>USA</b>
Food insecurity among client households	62%	65%	70%
Client households for whom it was often or sometimes true that the food they bought did not last and they did not have enough money to buy more	70%	72%	75%
Client households who were hungry but did not eat because they could not afford enough food	34%	34%	39%
Client households who reported that they did not eat for a whole day because there was not enough money for food	22%	21%	26%
Client households who ate less than they felt they should because there was not enough money for food	46%	48%	52%
Percent of client households that had to cut the size of meals or skipped meals almost every month because there was not enough money for food each month.	21%	23%	25%

\* Among adult clients or other adult household members during the previous 12 months.

<sup>24</sup> The USDA defines food insecure households as those that, at some time during the year, had difficulty providing enough food for all household members due to a lack of resources. In 2004, approximately 12 percent of all households in the U.S. (13.5 million) were food insecure.

**Choosing Between Food and Necessities**

In addition to not having enough money to purchase food, many EFP client households are forced to choose between buying food and paying for other necessities. For example, more than one-third of EFP client households had to choose between paying for food and rent or mortgage. As illustrated in Table 2.12, 34 percent of EFP client households in New York City, 34 percent in New York State and 35 percent in the U.S. were forced to choose between paying for food and rent or mortgage.

Findings also show that more than one-fifth (22 percent) of EFP client households in New York City had to choose between paying for food and paying for medicine or medical care, also shown in Table 2.12. This figure increases to almost one-quarter (24 percent) in New York State and nearly one-third (32 percent) in the U.S.

**Table 2.12**  
**EFP Client Households Choosing Between Food and Other Necessities**

<b>Necessity Choice</b>	<b>NYC</b>	<b>NYS</b>	<b>USA</b>
Client households that had to choose between paying for food and paying for rent or mortgage	34%	34%	35%
Client households that had to choose between paying for food and paying for utilities or heating fuel	34%	37%	40%
Client households that had to choose between paying for food and paying for medicine or medical care	22%	24%	32%

\* Percentages reflect choices made at least once within the last 12 months.

**Health Status, Insurance and Access to Medical Care**

Even as EFP client households are often forced to choose between food and medical care, close to 30 percent have at least one member in poor health. This finding is true for 28 percent of EFP client households in New York City, 29 percent in New York State and 29 percent in the U.S. as provided in Table 2.13

In addition, a majority of EFP client households have at least one member receiving Medicaid or Medicare. Among EFP client households in New York City, two-thirds (66 percent) receive Medicaid and almost one-third (32 percent) receive Medicare. In New York State, 61 percent receive Medicaid and more than one-third (35 percent) receive Medicare, while in the U.S. 45 percent receive Medicaid and 36 percent receive Medicare. In contrast, only 14 percent of EFP client households in New York City, 17 percent in New York State and 14 percent in the U.S. have private health insurance.

Despite the fact that a majority of EFP client households receive Medicaid and Medicare or have private insurance, 16 percent of EFP client households have unpaid medical or hospital bills, as seen in Table 2.13. This figure increases to more than one-quarter (26 percent) in New York State and 41 percent in the U.S.

**Table 2.13**  
**EFP Client Household Health Status, Insurance Status and Access to Medical Care**

<b>Health Status, Insurance and Access to Medical Care</b>	<b>NYC</b>	<b>NYS</b>	<b>USA</b>
Client households with at least one member reported to be in poor health	28%	29%	29%
Client households that receive Medicaid	66%	61%	45%
Client households that receive Medicare	32%	35%	36%
Client households that have private health insurance	14%	17%	14%
Client households that have unpaid medical or hospital bills	16%	26%	41%

**Grocery Shopping Patterns**

The vast majority of EFP clients do most of their grocery shopping in supermarkets or discount stores, while few do a majority of their shopping in higher priced convenience stores or bodegas. For example, 87 percent of EFP client households in New York City, 84 percent of EFP client households in New York State and 72 percent of EFP client households in the U.S. do most of their food shopping in grocery stores, as provided in Table 2.14. In contrast, only 3 percent of EFP client households in New York City, 2 percent in New York State and 1 percent in the U.S. purchase most of their groceries in ethnic stores or bodegas.

**Table 2.14**  
**Grocery Shopping Patterns among EFP Client Households**

<b>Type of store where most grocery shopping is done</b>	<b>NYC</b>	<b>NYS</b>	<b>USA</b>
Supermarket/grocery store	87%	84%	72%
Discount Store	2%	7%	17%
Warehouse clubs	2%	1%	1%
Convenience stores	0.3%	1%	2%
Ethnic (bodegas, Caribbean markets, etc.)	3%	2%	1%
Farmer's Markets	0%	0%	.03%
Other (including "dollar" stores)	2%	2%	4%

**EMERGENCY FOOD PROGRAMS (EFPs)**

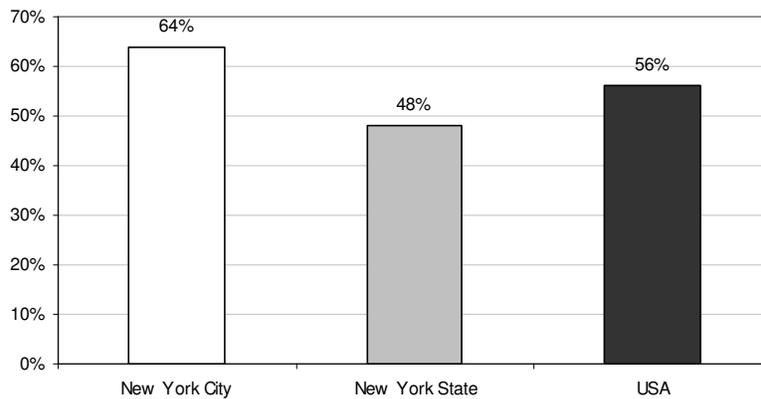
Emergency food programs (EFPs) are comprised of food pantries, soup kitchens and shelters, many of which operate under a larger agency. The EFP segment of this report is based upon responses from 697 agencies in New York City (including 528 food pantries, 226 soup kitchens and 76 shelters), 2,021 agencies in New York State (including 1,623 food pantries, 543 soup kitchens and 280 shelters), and 29,547 agencies in the U.S. (including 18,436 food pantries, 4,514 soup kitchens and 2,704 shelters).

**Reliance on Faith-based Organizations**

A high number of EFPs are faith-based organizations. As illustrated in Figure 3.0, nearly two-thirds (64 percent) of programs in New York City, close to one-half (48 percent) in New York State and more than one-half (56 percent) of EFPs in the U.S are faith-based.

**Figure 3.0**

**Faith-based EFPs in NYC, NYS and the U.S.**



**Changes in Need of Emergency Food Assistance**

In the past four years, a majority of EFPs have seen an increase in the number of clients in need of emergency food assistance. As presented in Table 3.1, 82 percent of food pantries in New York City, three-quarters (75 percent) of food pantries in New York State and nearly two-thirds (65 percent) of food pantries in the U.S. have experienced an increase in the number of clients.

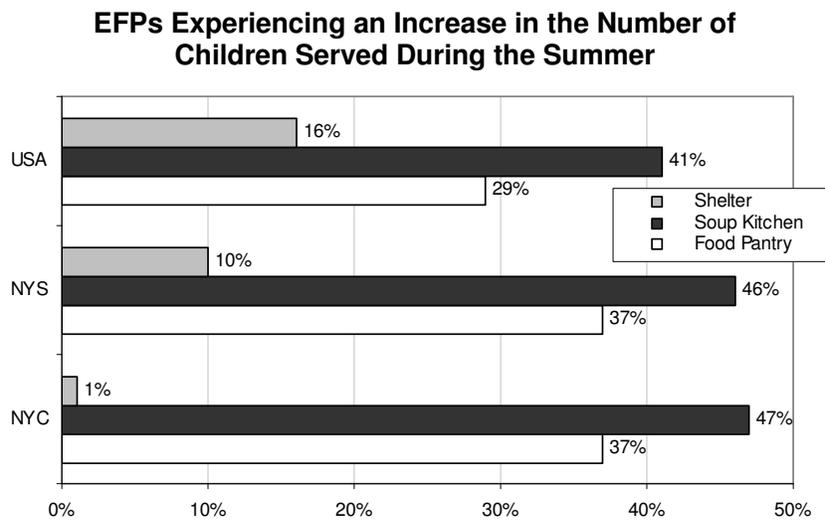
**Table 3.1**

**EFPs Experiencing an Increase in Clients over the Past Four Years**

Program Type	NYC	NYS	USA
Food Pantry	82%	75%	65%
Soup Kitchen	65%	63%	61%
Shelter	40%	40%	52%

In addition to an overall increase in EFP clients seeking food assistance, there has also been an increase in the number of children EFPs serve during the summer months. For example, as provided in Figure 3.2, almost one-half (47 percent) of New York City soup kitchens, 46 percent of New York State soup kitchens and 41 percent of U.S. soup kitchens serve more children during the summer.

Figure 3.2



**Staffing and Resource Challenges**

At the same time that EFPs are seeing an increase in the number of clients seeking food assistance, they are also experiencing staffing, funding and resource challenges making it difficult to serve individuals and families in need.

**Reliance on Volunteers**

Findings show that an overwhelming majority of programs rely upon unpaid volunteers as a part of their staff. While more food pantries and soup kitchens have unpaid volunteers than do shelters, the figures across New York City, New York State and the U.S. are similar. For example, as provided in Table 3.3, 93 percent of soup kitchens in New York City, 90 percent in New York State and 86 percent in the U.S. have volunteers on staff.

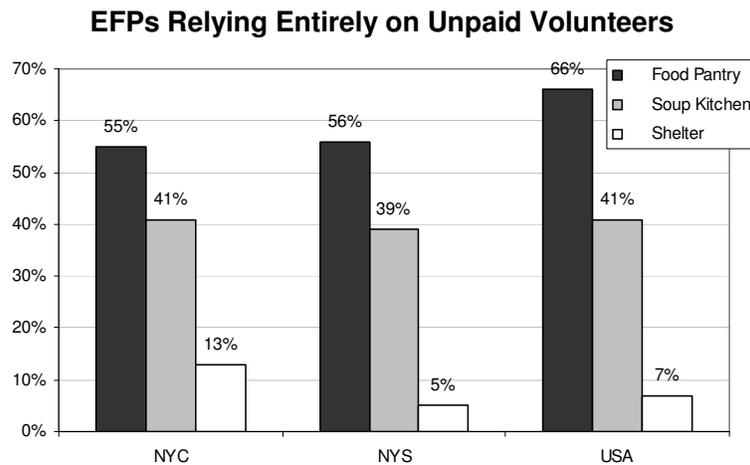
Table 3.3

**EFPs with Unpaid Volunteers on Staff**

Program Type	NYC	NYS	USA
Food Pantry	91%	90%	90%
Soup Kitchen	93%	90%	86%
Shelter	63%	63%	71%

Additionally, many soup kitchens and food pantries rely entirely on unpaid volunteers to operate their programs. As demonstrated in Figure 3.4, more than one-half of food pantries in New York City (55 percent), New York State (56 percent) and the U.S. (66 percent) have no paid staff.

Figure 3.4



**Program Challenges**

Findings also show that, for many EFPs, problems related to low numbers of paid staff threaten the daily operation of their programs. EFPs in New York City have been affected the most. For example, 21 percent of New York City food pantries, 14 percent of New York State food pantries and 7 percent of U.S. food pantries have staffing problems that threaten the operation of their programs, as presented in Table 3.5.

Table 3.5

**EFPs with Problems Related to the Number of Paid Staff that Threaten their Continued Operation**

Program Type	NYC	NYS	USA
Food Pantry	21%	14%	7%
Soup Kitchen	23%	20%	14%
Shelter	33%	19%	20%

In addition to staffing challenges, funding problems that threaten the daily operation of EFPs are also prevalent. Shelter programs have been affected the most with approximately two-thirds experiencing problems related to funding. This figure is 66 percent in New York City, 65 percent in New York State and 66 percent in the U.S., as shown in Table 3.6.

Table 3.6

**EFPs with Problems Related to Funding that Threaten their Continued Operation**

Program Type	NYC	NYS	USA
Food Pantry	51%	51%	42%
Soup Kitchen	57%	60%	50%
Shelter	66%	65%	66%

Findings also demonstrate that problems related to food supplies often threaten the operation of many EFPs. Food pantries have been particularly affected by food supply problems. For example, 55 percent of food pantries in New York City, 43 percent of food pantries in New York State and 31 percent of food pantries in the U.S. have experienced problems with food supplies that threaten the operation of their program as provided in Table 3.7.

**Table 3.7**

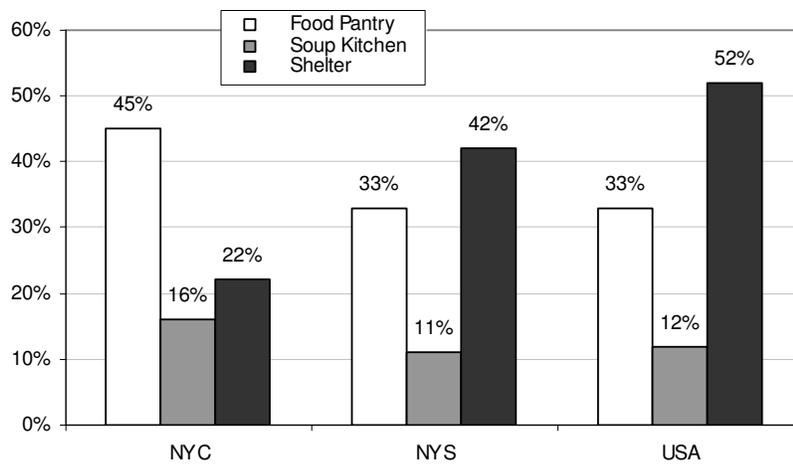
**EFPs with Problems Related to Food Supplies that Threaten their Continued Operation**

<b>Program Type</b>	<b>NYC</b>	<b>NYS</b>	<b>USA</b>
Food Pantry	55%	43%	31%
Soup Kitchen	33%	27%	23%
Shelter	24%	14%	13%

While threatening the daily operation of many EFPs, a deficiency of food and similar problems has also forced programs to turn clients away during the past year. For example, 45 percent of food pantries in New York City and one-third (33 percent) of food pantries in both New York State and the U.S. turned clients away, as illustrated in Figure 3.8.

**Figure 3.8**

**EFPs That Turned Clients Away During the Past Year**



Among all EFPs that turned clients away, a large number did so due to a lack of food. As provided in Table 3.9, 84 percent of food pantries in New York City, 55 percent of food pantries in New York State and 34 percent of food pantries in the U.S. turned clients away at least once during the past year because of insufficient food supplies.

**Table 3.9**

**EFPs that They Turned Clients Away Due to Lack of Food Resources\***

<b>Program Type</b>	<b>NYC</b>	<b>NYS</b>	<b>USA</b>
Food Pantry	84%	55%	34%
Soup Kitchen	58%	42%	32%
Shelter	13%	5%	15%

## **METHODOLOGY**

In 2005, America's Second Harvest, The Nation's Food Bank Network (A2H) collaborated with Food Banks and Food Rescue Organizations throughout the United States to conduct a quadrennial study of emergency food programs (food pantries, soup kitchens and shelters) and clients. Participating member Food Banks and Rescue Organizations were trained and assumed the responsibility of collecting data within their own geographic service areas. Mathematica Policy Research, Inc. analyzed the data at the national, state and local levels, as well as assisted with designing the surveys, developing the methodologies and providing general technical assistance.

### **SURVEY PROCEDURES AND RESPONSE RATES**

The research included two main components: a client survey designed to collect information on the people coming to EFPs and an agency survey designed to collect information about emergency food programs (EFPs). Data were collected during the spring of 2005.

#### ***Client Survey***

Participating Food Banks and Food Rescue Organizations provided a list of all the agencies they serve indicating what type or types of EFPs the agencies operate. Based upon the total list of agencies, an initial sample was drawn using methods to provide larger agencies with a greater probability of selection. Selected agencies were then asked to provide detailed information on their individual EFPs. A final sample of EFPs was then selected as EFP client interview sites (taking into account when programs were open and the average number of clients served per day). An interviewing time and date was scheduled for selected EFPs and each Food Bank or Rescue Organization was responsible for sending interviewers. Once at the programs, clients were randomly selected for interviews through an enumeration process.

The 156 participating A2H members visited a total of 4,593 EFPs (out of the 10,076 contacted for information) where they sampled 70,960 eligible clients and completed interviews with 52,878 clients, representing a 75 percent response rate. Among the total number of clients interviewed, 3,322 were interviewed in New York State and 611 were interviewed in New York City.

#### ***Agency Survey***

Participating A2H members provided a list of all the agencies they serve and a random sample of all active agencies was selected. Bar-coded mailing labels were used to send surveys to the selected agencies. A reminder was sent to all agencies that had not responded after two weeks. An additional two weeks after the reminder, surveys were mailed again to non-responding agencies.

The 163 participating A2H members sent surveys to 43,141 eligible agencies. Of those, completed questionnaires were received from 31,342 agencies representing a 73 percent response rate. Among the total number of participating agencies, 3,105 were in New York (resulting in a 72 percent response rate) and 697 were in New York City (resulting in a 69 percent response rate).

**SAMPLING UNIT: CLIENTS VERSUS HOUSEHOLDS**

The terms EFP clients and EFP client households are used frequently throughout this report. Due to differences in the way different types of EFPs define their clients, the sampling unit used for the client survey also differed depending upon EFP type. As a result, when used to describe the EFP client population by program type, the terms client and client household are inconsistent regarding the population to whom they refer.

The inconsistency within these terms results from the fact that food pantry programs include all individuals in a household when counting the number of clients served because the food received is taken home to be utilized by all household members, while soup kitchens and shelters only include program visitors in their definition of clients, since they serve individual meals. Because of this distinction, the sampling unit for client interviews was the individual visitor at soup kitchens and shelters while the sampling unit at food pantries was the household. In this report, the term *clients* refers to respondents who were interviewed at an EFP. As a result of the sampling methods described above, information provided on clients of soup kitchens and shelters represents all soup kitchen and shelter clients. Information provided on clients of food pantries represents only the food pantry clients that picked up food at the program. The term *client household* in this summary refers to the client and the members of his or her household. Information provided on soup kitchen and shelter client households do not provide a profile of soup kitchen or shelter clients, but rather provide findings on the characteristics of households of which the clients are members of. Information provided on food pantry client households represents the total food pantry client population.

**LIMITATIONS**

Within this report, as with all research studies, the results contain an amount of error only some of which is quantifiable. The quantifiable margin of error is due to the fact that the statistics are only based upon a sample of clients (rather than all clients). Error which is not quantifiable is caused by factors such as variations in sampling and reporting error.

***Margin of Error***

All estimates based upon statistical samples are subject to a margin of error. Factors influencing the margin of error include sample size. For most national level percentage estimates, the margin of error is +/- 1.5 percentage points and for most state and city level percentage estimates, the margin of error is +/- 8 percentage points. In some instances, estimates are based upon sub-samples or sample sizes smaller than the total. In these cases, the margin of error is likely to be higher than those previously stated.

The study also estimates the annual number of clients served at the national, state, and local levels. These numbers are derived from the agency survey based estimates of clients served per week and also includes calculations based upon the days and frequencies of EFP operation, client's frequency of use and information on the sizes of non-participating A2H members. Given the multiple data sources and sample sizes used in this calculation, the annual number of clients served has a margin of error equal to +/- 30 percentage points and is, therefore, an estimated range. The figures provided within this report are the mid-points of the national, state and local ranges and should be considered estimates.

***Sampling Variation***

Although each participating A2H member received training materials and regional training sessions were conducted, sampling variation is unavoidable within any research study. Causes may include variations in the way clients were sampled for interviews, the way in which interview questions were read and the way in which interview responses were recorded. Non-response rates, response error and measurement error can also influence the results. Additionally, seasonal differences among EFP clients are not represented since surveys and interviews were conducted in the spring.

**For more information, please contact:**

Áine Duggan  
VP of Government Relations, Policy and Research  
Food Bank For New York City  
90 John Street, Suite 702  
New York, NY 10038  
t. 212.566.7855  
f. 212.566.1463  
e: [aduggan@foodbanknyc.org](mailto:aduggan@foodbanknyc.org)

Patricia Barrick  
Senior Director of Marketing and Communications  
City Harvest  
575 Eighth Avenue, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor  
New York, NY 10018  
t. 917.351.8747  
f. 917.351.8720  
e: [pbarrick@cityharvest.org](mailto:pbarrick@cityharvest.org)







**Main Office:** 90 John Street, Suite 702  
New York, NY 10038-3239  
TEL: 212-566-7855 • FAX: 212-566-1463

**Warehouse:** Hunts Point Co-op Market  
355 Food Center Drive • Bronx, NY 10474-7000  
TEL: 718-991-4300 • FAX: 718-893-3442

[www.foodbanknyc.org](http://www.foodbanknyc.org)



575 Eighth Avenue, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor  
New York, NY 10018  
TEL: 917-351-8700 • FAX: 917-351-8720

[www.cityharvest.org](http://www.cityharvest.org)