



Landmark New Study Reveals Number of Texas Panhandle residents seeking Emergency Food Assistance

AMARILLO --- February 2, 2010 --- A landmark study released today by the High Plains Food Bank and Feeding America, the nation's largest domestic hunger-relief organization, reports that more than 42,000 people, receive emergency food each year through High Plains Food Bank.

[The Hunger in America 2010 Hunger Study for the High Plains Food Bank](#) is the first research study to capture the significant connection between the recent economic downturn and an increased need for emergency food assistance. The number of children and adults in need of food as a result of experiencing food insecurity has significantly increased.

In the Texas Panhandle, more than 56 percent of client households are experiencing very low food security—or hunger—a 15 percent increase in the number of households compared to four years ago.

An estimated 9,600 people receive emergency food assistance each week from a food pantry, soup kitchen, or other agency served by the High Plains Food Bank. This is a 20 percent increase in 2009 alone.

Nationally, more than one in three client households are experiencing very low food security—or hunger—a 54 percent increase in the number of households compared to four years ago.

An estimated 5.7 million people receive emergency food assistance each week from a food pantry, soup kitchen, or other agency served by one of Feeding America's more than 200 food banks, including The High Plains Food Bank. This is a 27 percent increase over numbers reported in Hunger in America 2006, which reported that 4.5 million people were served each week.

"The number of people that hunger effects is increasing dramatically," said Janie Singleton, executive director of the High Plains Food Bank. "The Texas Panhandle has seen a startling growth of those who are food insecure and children who are hungry. The time to act is now."

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"It is morally reprehensible that we live in the wealthiest nation in the world where one in six people are struggling to make choices between food and other basic necessities," said Vicki Escarra, president and CEO of Feeding America. "These are choices that no one should have to make, but particularly households with children. Insufficient nutrition has adverse effects on the physical, behavioral and mental health, and academic performance of children. It is critical that we ensure that no child goes to bed hungry in America as they truly are our engine of economic growth and future vitality."

The methodology incorporated into the 2010 study includes data collected from February through June, 2009. The High Plains Food Bank conducted face-to-face interviews with over 300 people seeking emergency food at food pantries, soup kitchens and other emergency feeding programs, as well as interviews with more than 126 agencies that provide food assistance.

Nationally, Feeding America collected quantitative and qualitative feedback from 61,000 face-to-face in-depth interviews with people seeking emergency food assistance and more than 37,000 agency surveys, making this study the largest, most-comprehensive ever conducted on domestic hunger.

USDA reported in November 2009 that an estimated 49 million people, including 17 million children, are at risk of hunger in this country. Hunger in America 2010 reinforces the dramatically increasing need for food assistance in the United States.

Among the key findings in the High Plains Food Bank report:

- The High Plains Food Bank provides emergency food assistance for an estimated 42,000 different people annually
- 40 percent of the members of households served by the High Plains Food Bank are children under 18 years old
- 51 percent of households include at least one employed adult
- 63 percent have incomes below the federal poverty level during the previous month
- Among all client households served by emergency food programs of the High Plains Food Bank, 87 percent are food insecure, according to the U.S. government's official food security scale
- 56 percent of clients served by HPFB report having to choose between paying for food and paying for utilities
- 52 percent had to choose between paying for food and paying for medicine
- 53 percent had to choose between paying for food and paying for gas for a car
 - 31 percent of households served by HPFB report having at least one household member in poor health
- An estimated 68,000 live on or below the poverty line in the Texas Panhandle

A summary of the findings and the full hunger study for the High Plains Food Bank is available at www.hpfb.org/reports.htm. The full national report is available on Feeding America's web site at [Hunger in America 2010](#).

The High Plains Food Bank secures and distributes more than 4.7 million pounds of donated food and grocery products annually and over 400,000 pounds monthly. The Food Bank distributes to approximately 165 charitable agencies and churches operating food pantries, soup kitchens, emergency shelters, after-school programs and Kids Cafes throughout 29 counties of the Texas Panhandle. For more on the High Plains Food Bank please visit www.hpfb.org or follow us on Twitter: <http://twitter.com/hpfoodbank>.

Feeding America

Feeding America provides low-income individuals and families with the fuel to survive and even thrive. As the nation's leading domestic hunger-relief charity, our network members supply food to more than 37 million Americans each year, including 14 million children and 3 million seniors. Serving the entire United States, more than 200 member food banks support 61,068 agencies that address hunger in all of its forms. Feeding America is based in Chicago. For more information on how you can fight hunger in your community and across the country, visit <http://www.feedingamerica.org>. Find us on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/Feeding America](http://www.facebook.com/FeedingAmerica) or follow our news on Twitter at <http://twitter.com/Feedingamerica>.

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