



www.foodbankst.org

945 County Route 64 Elmira NY 14903-9701
Phone: 607.796.6061 Fax: 607.796.6028

A Regional Agency of
Catholic Charities

A Member of
FEEDING AMERICA™

TO: News Editors
DATE: October 27, 2009
CONTACT: Melissa Smith, Community & Public Relations Manager
Food Bank of the Southern Tier
CONTACT INFO: (607) 796-6061 x23
mlsmith@feedingamerica.org
RE: New Feeding America Survey: Food Banks Struggle as Economic Woes and Record Unemployment Send Many Americans in Search of Food.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Southern Tier, NY – The Food Bank of the Southern Tier reports that increased need is driven by many seeking emergency food assistance for the first time. In 2008, the Food Bank of the Southern Tier experienced a 25% increase in the number of households served. The Food Bank continues to see a rise in need across the Southern Tier, experiencing an additional 7.4% increase in need throughout the first half of 2009.

In early September 2009, Feeding America, the nation's largest domestic hunger-relief charity, conducted a brief survey of food bank members to learn more about the challenges faced by food banks, their member agencies, and clients served. More than 175 Feeding America food banks responded to the survey, which collected information about the economic challenges faced by the nation's food assistance network, and the ability of food banks, soup kitchens, emergency shelters and other providers to respond to the need. Following are key findings from the survey:

Rising Need, Rising Unemployment

- Rising need for emergency food is nearly universal – 99% of all participating food banks reported increases in demand for emergency food assistance over the last year.
- The average increase in demand across the network from summer 2008 to summer 2009 was 30%. However, the increase in need for services over the last year varies across the nation, ranging from 5% in some areas to more than 150% in others.
- High unemployment across the nation – which reached 9.7% in August – is a critical factor in the rising need for emergency food. Local economic circumstances, such as plant and business closings, have a significant impact on rising need for emergency food. Ninety-one percent (91%) of food banks cite unemployment as a critical factor in the increasing need for emergency food over the last year, and 79% identified underemployment as a major contributor.

New Faces

- Food banks report that increasing demand is particularly driven by more first-time users of the food assistance system (98% of food banks) and more newly unemployed (92%).
- Existing clients need assistance more frequently than before, according to 72% of food banks.
- More than half of food banks (56%) also report that they are seeing more children as clients.

Struggling to Meet the Challenge

- It is becoming increasingly more difficult for many food banks and their agencies to meet the needs of their clients, especially when new clients arrive all the time. Despite the fact that the nation's food banks delivered approximately 2.63 billion pounds of food between July 2008 and June 2009 – an increase of 21.4% over the prior year --many are struggling to meet the increase in client demand.



www.foodbankst.org

945 County Route 64 Elmira NY 14903-9701
 Phone: 607.796.6061 Fax: 607.796.6028

A Regional Agency of
 Catholic Charities

A Member of
 FEEDING AMERICA™

- While food banks are struggling to meet the demand, approximately three-quarters report that they have benefited from the help of more volunteers in the past year.

“It’s becoming increasingly difficult for many food banks and their agencies to meet the needs of their clients, especially when new clients arrive all the time,” said Vicki Escarra, president and CEO of Feeding America. “This is especially sobering when you consider that our network of 205 food banks delivered a record-breaking amount of food and groceries this past year—more than 2.6 billion pounds between July 2008 and June 2009 – which was an increase of 21.4 percent over the previous year.” said Escarra.

"It very hard to keep our food pantry shelves stocked. Food is going home with those in need, as fast as we get it in! The need has just been so great," said Angela Klopff, Tioga Outreach Center Director- Catholic Charities of Tompkins / Tioga. "The amount of people we are serving right now- many new people, is just overwhelming. It's scary to think what the coming months will bring, as people have to start paying winter heating costs again," added Klopff.

In 2008, the Food Bank of the Southern Tier supplied nearly 7 million pounds of food to their network of over 180 hunger-relief agencies, compared to 5.2 million in 2007. “We are grateful for the support our Food Bank and those in need receive from our community, but it’s difficult to think about the increasing number of Southern Tier families who are struggling to make ends meet and the challenges ahead.” said Natasha Thompson, President & CEO of the Food Bank of the Southern Tier. “The Food Bank’s programs like the Mobile Food Pantry Program and the Backpack Program™ are instrumental in reaching our neighbors in need. This year, the Mobile Food Pantry has already distributed over 1.4 million pounds of food, mostly fresh produce and dairy items, and the Backpack Program™ is projected to reach over 1200 children at risk of hunger each week at 18 different sites across the Southern Tier throughout the 2009-2010 school year.” added Thompson.

<i>How current economic conditions are impacting the emergency food system served by the Food Bank of the Southern Tier</i>	
Estimated increase in demand or need for emergency food assistance:	July 2008: 17,742 Households served; July 2009: 21,233 Households served
Local factors impacting changes in demand:	Changing Economy Mobile Food Pantry allows us to get to rural areas
Critical trends contributing to increased need for emergency food:	Unemployment Underemployment Cost of Fuel
Client trends include:	More first-time users More employed persons More Seniors

Source: Feeding America



www.foodbankst.org

945 County Route 64 Elmira NY 14903-9701
Phone: 607.796.6061 Fax: 607.796.6028

A Regional Agency of
Catholic Charities

A Member of
FEEDING AMERICA

For complete details on Feeding America’s “Economic Impact Survey” including anecdotes from across the nation, visit <http://feedingamerica.org/newsroom/local-impact-study.aspx> . To learn more about the Food Bank of the Southern Tier and how your support makes a difference in the fight against hunger, visit the Food Bank’s website at www.foodbankst.org or call 607-796-6061.

About the Food Bank

In operation since 1981, the Food Bank of the Southern Tier distributes food and food-related products to people in need through a network of more than 180 hunger-relief agencies including food pantries, soup kitchens, shelters and other non-profit organizations. The Food Bank also has a number of programs that fight hunger including the Backpack Program™ and Mobile Food Pantry. Located in Elmira, NY it is a regional agency of Catholic Charities and an affiliate of Feeding America serving the six counties of Broome, Chemung, Schuyler, Steuben, Tioga and Tompkins.

About 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 25 million Americans each year, including 9 million children and 3 million seniors. Serving the entire United States, more than 200 member food banks operate 63,000 agencies that address hunger in all of its forms. For more information on how you can fight hunger in your community and across the country, visit www.feedingamerica.org.

#####