

Rebuilding America— One Family at a Time



Hunger in America 2010
for Contra Costa and Solano counties



Food Bank of Contra Costa and Solano: **OVERVIEW**



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The Food Bank of Contra Costa and Solano has been serving Contra Costa and Solano counties for over 30 years.

The Food Bank of Contra Costa and Solano distributes approximately 12 million pounds of food annually serving nearly 130,000 hungry people every month. The Food Bank's mission is "to alleviate hunger by providing an efficient, coordinated system for collecting and distributing food that reduces food waste and increases public awareness regarding hunger and food insecurity." This is accomplished through our continued efforts of acquiring food from food drives, food stores and food manufacturers, purchasing discounted produce from growers and packers, facilitating direct distributions, and supplying area agencies (pantries, kitchens, shelters, and social service organizations) with food as needed. Children, homeless families, low-income seniors, and others receive free meals and food baskets through the Food Bank's valuable network of 175 charitable agencies.

The Food Bank provides food directly to low-income communities through monthly distributions of food boxes, bread products and fresh produce. The Food Assistance Program is a monthly program that provides over 8,000 families with U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) food commodities at 29 sites throughout Contra Costa and Solano counties; the Food for Children Program meets the needs of over 1,000 children ages 4 and 5 and their families each month when they pick up 20 to 25-pound boxes of free food; a Senior Food Program (formerly the Brown Bag Program) provides more than 2,100 households with free groceries twice a month; Farm 2 Kids, a partnership with afterschool programs in 58 low-income schools, delivers 3-5 pounds of fresh produce on a weekly basis to over 6,000 children during the school year, helping children establish healthy eating habits and Extra Helpings is a program serving 200 low-income individuals in HIV/AIDS case management.

In the spring of 2009, the Food Bank of Contra Costa and Solano participated in a nationwide investigation of the conditions surrounding hunger sponsored by Feeding America™ (formerly America's Second Harvest). The Hunger in America 2010 national hunger study is the nation's most comprehensive examination of Americans who seek emergency food assistance.

Method of Survey

Between March and May of 2009, the Food Bank of Contra Costa and Solano participated in the Hunger in America 2010 hunger study. Directed by Feeding America™ and Mathematica Policy Research, Inc., this nationwide effort was conducted to better understand the issues of hunger and food insecurity by interviewing the people we serve through emergency food providers. Throughout the country, approximately 185 food banks participated in the survey and over 62,000 clients were interviewed. Our local charge was to conduct 500 client surveys within our network, at 50 pre-determined food pantries and soup kitchens. We achieved just over a 90% completion rate. The local results of that national study, Hunger in America 2010, are based on the completion of in-person interviews at each of the 50 sites that were selected by MPR, Inc. Each site was randomly selected based upon the size of the populations that they serve. Once at each site, each client interview was determined by a random selection process to ensure a fair and objective sampling.

The data and analysis published in the Hunger in America 2010 study provides information about, the household situations of emergency food clients and the reasons for food insecurity and hunger among low-income populations. This survey is part of the effort to increase awareness, education, advocacy and support among governmental, civic and community leaders to end hunger in our community.

The mission of the Food Bank of Contra Costa and Solano is to alleviate hunger by providing an efficient, coordinated system for collecting and distributing food that reduces food waste and increases public awareness regarding hunger and food security issues in Contra Costa and Solano counties.

“Because no one should go hungry”

As the nation's economy began to fall in 2008, California's unemployment and home foreclosure rates were the highest of any state in nation. The breakdown of America's financial institutions had a seismic ripple effect impacting businesses and employment opportunities. Over 4.2 million jobs were lost nationally and California lost nearly 60,000 jobs a month. In addition, the budgetary shortfalls of county and local governments throughout the United States has impacted Main Street making it hard for working families and individuals. People who have fallen onto hard times are continuing to experience an unraveling of personal support leaving many of them reliant on social service programs and the help of local food bank agencies for the first time ever.

Home Foreclosures

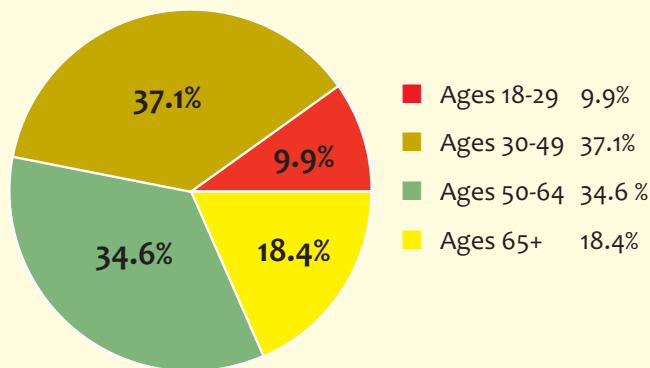
The national unemployment rate is 6.7 percent and across the country, 1 in 44 American households are facing foreclosure. In 2008 and 2009, California ranked the fourth in the nation with more than 350,000 home foreclosures and ranked first in the number of foreclosure filings (481,392 filings on 249,513 properties). California's unemployment rate is 2.3 percent above the national average (10 percent) holding steadily above 12 percent.

Unemployment

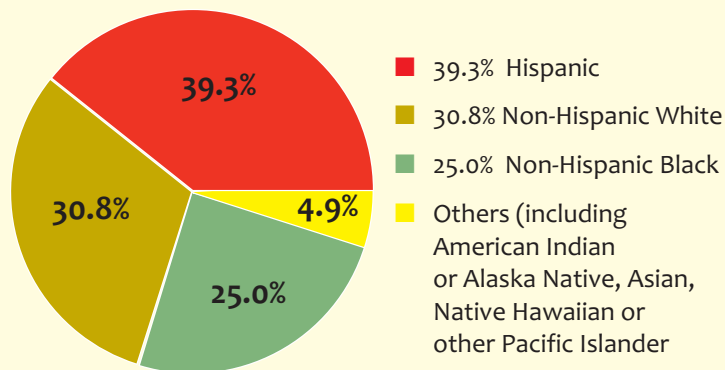
In Contra Costa and Solano counties, the unemployment rates are 11.2 percent and 12 percent respectively. As indicated in this hunger study, 70.4 percent of those clients surveyed reported being currently unemployed and 44.7 percent reported being unemployed for more than two years. With 71 percent of households utilizing the Food Bank of Contra Costa and Solano services reporting income levels below the federal poverty level, a growing number of working poor Americans are becoming food insecure and experiencing hunger on a daily basis.

Demographics of Food Recipients

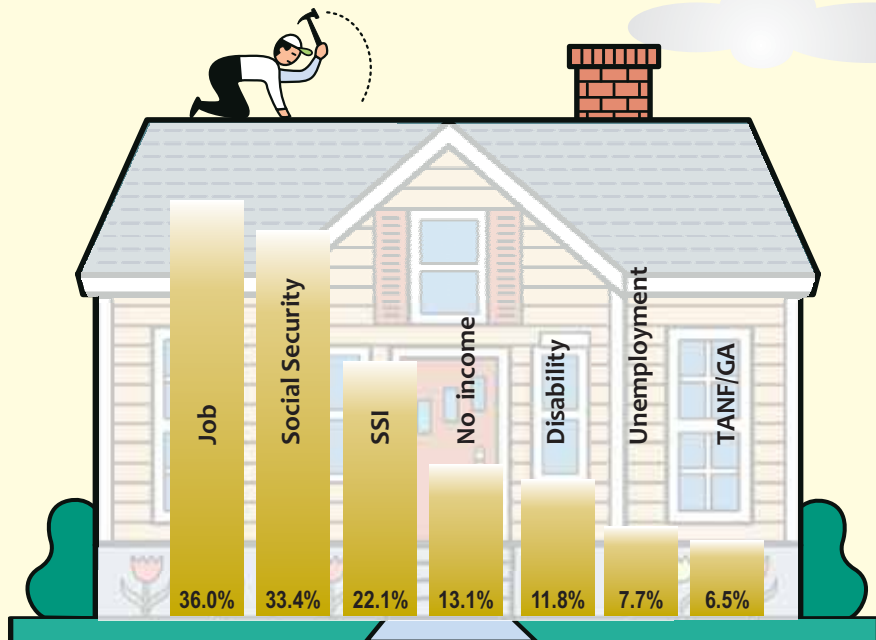
Age



Race



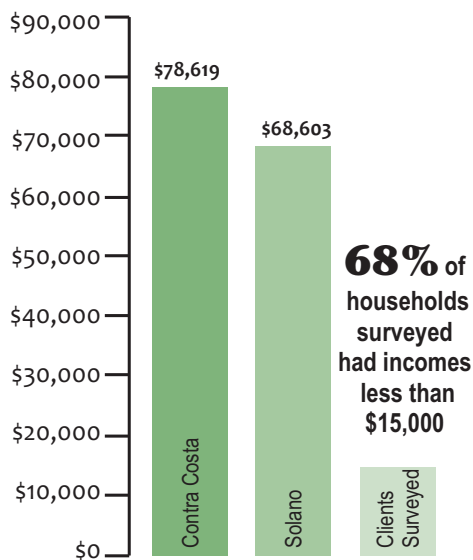
All sources of household income for the previous month



66.3%

of all adults younger than 65 surveyed by the Food Bank were unemployed.

Average Annual Household Income



ABAG Bay Area
Census/ACS Data 2009

35.7%

of all clients had to choose between paying for food and paying their rent or mortgage.

Main Street

- ◆ Of all adults in households receiving food, 50.2 % are female and 49.8% are male
- ◆ 28.3% of the members of households served by the Food Bank are children under 18 years old; 8.1% under the age of 5
- ◆ Among households with children under 18, 58.4% were food insecure without hunger; 30% were food insecure with hunger
- ◆ Among seniors 65 and older, 44.4% were food insecure without hunger; 20.7% with hunger

The Employment and Housing Crisis

- ◆ 29% of households included at least one employed adult; a decrease of 3 percent compared to the 2006 Hunger Study
- ◆ 23.6% of all clients are without health insurance; 33.2% have unpaid medical bills
- ◆ 32.7% of all clients had to choose between paying for food and paying for gas for the car
- ◆ 25.5% clients admitted being late paying the last month's rent/mortgage
- ◆ Of those having a place to live, 76.6% of the clients rent the place where they live and 14% of clients own the place where they live
- ◆ 13.6% of client with a place to live said they receive Section 8 or Public Housing Assistance

Poverty on the Rise

- ◆ 68% of all client households had an annual income of less than \$15,000 in 2008
- ◆ 58.1% of all client households had monthly incomes less than \$1,000
- ◆ Median household income among all clients during the previous month was \$900; in contrast, the median monthly income for the U.S. population as a whole in 2008 was \$4,192
- ◆ 86.5% of all clients had income below 130% of the federal poverty level during the previous month

Benefit Sources

- ◆ 27.6% of clients stated that employment was the main source of household income in the previous month; a 6% decline from the 2006 Hunger Study
- ◆ 40.1% of all clients receive other governmental assistance such as social security or unemployment compensation as the main source of household income
- ◆ 14.6% of client households served are receiving Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) (currently called Food Stamps in California) benefits; however it is likely that many more are eligible



Childhood obesity poses a significant public health problem in the United States and causes immediate health consequences for weight-related health problems. Doctors and scientists are concerned about the rise of obesity in children and youth because obesity may lead to the following health problems:

- ◆ Heart disease, caused by high cholesterol and/or high blood pressure
- ◆ Type 2 diabetes
- ◆ Asthma
- ◆ Sleep apnea
- ◆ Social discrimination

Farm 2 Kids

Farm 2 Kids is a partnership between the Food Bank and local after school program site that enables children to receive seasonal produce on a weekly basis. Farm 2 Kids is an excellent way to get more produce out into a community that could really use it, since over 50% of the students in these schools receive free or reduced lunches.

In some cases the Food Bank delivers to participating schools whereas some schools pick up their produce. The type and variety of the produce depends on seasonality and availability. During the winter months this may include oranges, potatoes, carrots, and onions. In spring, stone fruit is available, and in the fall schools often receive apples and pears.

After school programs provide bags and bag the produce. This can be done in different ways. Some sites have their staff bag the produce and others have the children pick out what they want as they leave for the day.

Produce may be used as snacks or for cooking classes with the balance being sent home with children at the end of the day. The goal of the program is to have each child take home at least three pounds of fruits and vegetables each week. Research shows that increased consumption of a variety of fruits and vegetables over a lifetime reduces risk of chronic disease.

“Farm 2 Kids provides 3–5 pounds of produce per child to families who otherwise may not be able to afford to put nutritious food on the table.”

Food for Children Program

The Food Bank's Food for Children Program, provides food boxes for children 4-5 years old that contain fresh produce and nutritious food items that are high in protein, low salt, low sugar, or whole grains that contribute to the reduction of chronic disease and obesity in children.

Help kids develop healthy eating habits

There's no great secret to healthy eating. To help children and families develop healthy eating habits...

- ◆ Eat plenty of vegetables, fruits, and whole-grain products.
- ◆ Include low-fat or non-fat milk or dairy products with meals.
- ◆ Choose lean meats, poultry, fish, lentils, and beans for protein.
- ◆ Serve reasonably-sized portions.
- ◆ Encourage families to drink lots of water.
- ◆ Limit sugar-sweetened beverages.
- ◆ Limit consumption of sugar and saturated fat.

The Food Bank Farm 2 Kids Program serves 32 schools and a total of 4,894 children in Contra Costa County. In Solano County, 26 schools and over 2,070 children are served.

The Farm 2 Kids Program serves children at after school programs in Bay Point, Pittsburg, Concord, Pleasant Hill, Richmond, San Pablo, Rodeo, Fairfield, Suisun City, Vacaville, and Vallejo.



Produce may be expensive and spoils easily. For families on a tight budget, fruits and vegetables are often the first foods to be skipped in favor of cheaper, more shelf-stable foods. Yet these foods frequently lack many of the essential vitamins and nutrients necessary for a complete diet.

Access to healthy, balanced meals is especially important for children as they grow and learn. Farm 2 Kids increases access to fresh fruits and vegetables in order to promote healthy eating in low-income households.



"The Senior Food Program really helps supplement our food. We are so low-income we can barely pay the bills. We really like the Farmer's Market coupons. I know fresh fruit and vegetables are really important for good nutrition. I am a retired RN. Our disability is not enough. We really look forward to coming to this program. The food really lasts a while. We don't need to come here every time. I look for the food ads and only buy what is on sale except things I have to get like milk and eggs. You don't really have a choice on those. You don't always know what is in the bag so they ask if we want carrots and we take them. Then there are already carrots in the bag. What do you do with all of those carrots? I make lots of soups and stews. Same with the potatoes. One time we got lots of garlic and I don't know if you can freeze that so I gave the extra to my friends who have helped me out with food before. We are not getting cost of living increases this year. We are grateful for this program. We didn't know about it until we were desperate. I started looking into different programs and found out about this through our church. We only go to this one and leave the other programs for the other people who are not seniors. Years ago we used to donate to the food bank and the Christian Help Center."

— Velia and Charlie, Vallejo

In California, seniors and disabled residents are growing more vulnerable due to state and federal budget cuts to health care and the elimination of programs that provide in-home support services that allow them to age in place in their homes. Rising costs of housing, health care, and prescription drugs have continued to leave many without income to buy food.

Supplemental Security Income/ State Supplementary Payment (SSI/SSP)

More than one million low-income aged, blind, and disabled Californians depend upon cash aid to meet basic needs. The federal government provides monthly assistance known as Supplemental Security Income (SSI), and the state adds to the federal benefit with a State Supplementary Payment (SSP). SSI recipients are ineligible to receive food stamp benefits in California. Of SSI/SSP's 1.25 million recipients in California, 69% are disabled, 2% are blind and 29% are aged.

Many seniors and other disabled individuals live on the edge of poverty and face issues of hunger. In Contra Costa and Solano, 40.1% of those surveyed reported government assistance as the main source of household income. Checks from the Social Security Administration, Unemployment Compensation, Disability (SSDI/Workers Compensation) and Supplemental Security Income do not cover the daily cost of living.

The maximum monthly SSI grant for an individual in California currently is \$845. The maximum monthly grant for a couple is \$1,407. These grants are funded primarily by the federal government, but the State of California also contributes a portion. In the past two years, cost of living increases from the federal government were not passed on to grant recipients in order to reduce California's budget deficits. Additionally, the state reduced their share of funding in the spring of 2009; every SSI recipient has received a smaller check each month since that time. When you can barely make ends meet, any cuts are painful. The Food Bank supports seniors and disabled individuals by providing food resources through the Food Assistance Program (FAP), Senior Food Program (formerly Brown Bag), Extra Helpings Program, and food pantries.



44.4%

of seniors interviewed
were food insecure
without hunger.

20.7%

of seniors reported
experiencing food
insecurity with hunger.

Food Stamp Program

The Food Stamp Program is the nation's strongest defense against hunger. Benefits are available electronically. Coupons are a thing of the past. United States citizens must meet certain income and asset requirements. Counties administer the Food Stamp Program. The average monthly benefit per qualifying family member is approximately \$135.

National School Lunch Program

One of several child nutrition programs available to local school districts, the NSLP helps schools provide low-income students with nutritious meals so they can stay awake and be ready to learn. This program is administered by the state Department of Education.

WIC

Formally known as the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children, WIC provides vouchers for specific nutritious foods to pregnant women and children up to age 5. Administered by county Public Health Departments, WIC also provides nutrition education and health care referrals. The WIC food package has just been revised to help families reach goals of eating more fruits, vegetables and whole grains.

TEFAP

The Emergency Food Assistance Program provides surplus commodities and staple items (rice, beans, canned meats, cereals, canned fruits and vegetables) to low-income populations once a month. California Emergency Foodlink transports the food to a provider designated by the County Board of Supervisors. The local provider distributes the food through a network of volunteer run distribution sites.

EFSP

Emergency Food and Shelter Program funding helps counties provide services to households experiencing emergencies and homeless populations. Typically, the funds are used to support soup kitchens and shelters and to purchase nutritious food items for struggling families.



Emergency food and direct distribution service by county		
PROGRAM	CONTRA COSTA	SOLANO
Food Pantries	37,050	27,950
Soup Kitchens	15,000	3,000
Extra Helpings	200	
Farm 2 Kids	4,894	2,070
Food Assistance Program (USDA)	21,500	3,500
Food for Children	600	400
Brown Bag	3,200	800
Other Programs	7,800	1,700
People served per month	90,244	39,420

SNAP (Food Stamp Program in California) is the nation's first line of defense against hunger. SNAP is the largest of the federally funded nutrition assistance programs aimed at low-income households and individuals.



In Contra Costa and Solano, 30.1% of clients surveyed believed that their income was above the eligible level as a reason for not applying for food stamps. Of the same households, 21.3% had incomes at or below 130% poverty level. This is just one example of the public's confusion about eligibility for this program.

In 2003, concerns about the low enrollment rate in the Food Stamp Program prompted USDA to begin partnering with food banks to publicize the nutritional benefits of food stamps to low-income populations. California's enrollment rate, approximately half of the eligible population, is the lowest in the nation. The Food Bank is working to increase participation rates in our counties through collaboration with the California Association of Food Banks and the Network for a Healthy California. Food Bank employees and volunteers have learned about food stamp eligibility requirements and are working with the county social services departments and our member agencies to provide accurate program information and combat myths. We use methods ranging from community trainings to distributing materials to helping people complete food stamp applications.

Through our outreach efforts to potentially eligible participants, the Food Bank is working to increase participation rates enabling many families and individuals to have increased purchasing power at the grocery store. Food stamps are now stored on an electronic benefits card as shown above.

14.6%



of clients surveyed are receiving food stamps; however, it is likely that many more are eligible.

Food Pantry

Individuals and families in crisis receive a 3-day emergency food supply from a non-profit or charitable organization within the community on a weekly or monthly basis. The food includes non-perishable food items, fresh produce, and bread items. The Food Bank network has over 80 pantry locations within Contra Costa and Solano counties.

Soup Kitchen

Individuals and families receive free hot prepared meals at a local church, community center, or shelter on a daily, weekly, or monthly basis. The Food Bank network has 14 dining rooms within Contra Costa and Solano counties.

Food Assistance Program (FAP)

Every month, low-income families and individuals receive two bags of fresh produce, bread and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) food commodities at 29 sites located throughout Contra Costa and Solano counties. Food recipients are low-income as defined by the federal government.

Food For Children

Children ages 4 and 5, whose families are struggling to make ends meet, receive a free box of nutritious food weighing 20-25 pounds every month. There are nine Food for Children sites in Contra Costa and Solano counties.

Extra Helpings

This food box program serves 200 individuals in case management with the Contra Costa AIDS Program, providing them with additional nutrition to help them maintain their health.

Senior Food Program (Formerly Brown Bag Program)

Low-income senior citizens living on fixed incomes receive free supplemental food items of non-perishables, fresh fruit and vegetables, and bread items twice per month. There are 26 Brown Bag sites in Contra Costa and Solano counties.

Other Programs

The Food Bank also provides food resources to homeless and family shelters, residential facilities for disabled individuals, child care programs, and group homes for children throughout Contra Costa and Solano counties.

During the past five years, The Food Bank of Contra Costa and Solano has been working on a number of efforts to improve access to nutritious foods. Successful efforts have included training community-based organizations to promote awareness of the Food Stamp Program, acquiring and distributing year-round supplies of seasonal produce, and produce programs that target children in afterschool programs.

Food Stamp Outreach

Only about 50% of eligible Californians participate in the federal Food Stamp Program. People may not be aware of the program or may believe that they do not qualify for food stamps. Historically, the Food Stamp Program has been restrictive in terms of whether you can own a vehicle worth more than \$4,650, for example. The laws have changed, and owning a vehicle of any value does not keep you from being eligible for food stamps. Community and faith-based organizations can share information about changes in government programs with the people who visit food pantries. They can develop relationships with the county food stamp offices that allow volunteers to promote the Food Stamp Program and even assist clients with completing applications.

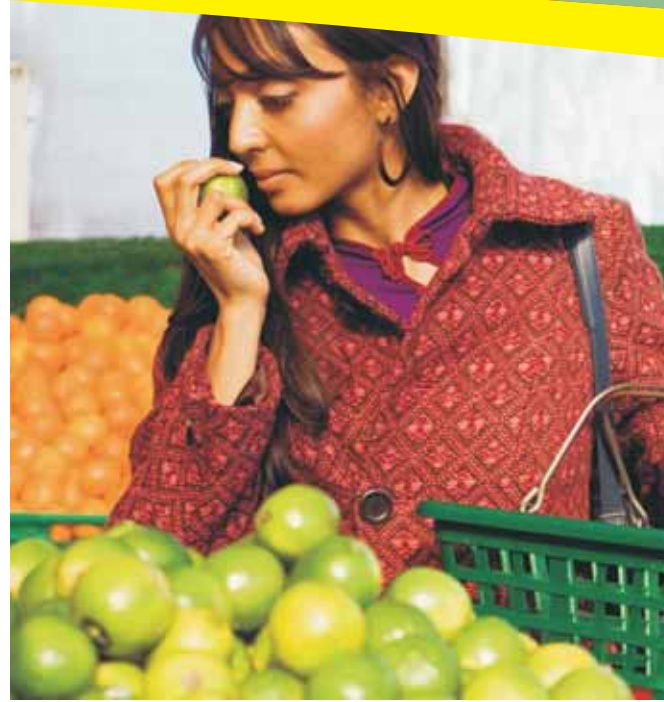
Fresh Produce Programs

Fresh produce is abundant in California. Food bankers have established relationships with growers and packers that enable the purchase of 60 million pounds of fresh, seasonal fruits and vegetables that were previously fed to cattle and pigs for pennies a pound. Through California Association of Food Banks' Farm to Families program, food banks can rely on regular delivery of oranges, potatoes, carrots and onions during many months of the year. Apples, pears, stone fruit, corn, watermelon and winter squash come during the months they are harvested. This produce can supplement a pantry's canned and dry food supplies. The fresh fruits and vegetables are an

important component of a nutritious diet, especially for children and people with chronic diseases like hypertension and diabetes.

Creative Partnerships

The availability of fresh produce has resulted in new programs that bring free fruits and vegetables to nontraditional distribution points. Mobile produce pantries, community produce distributions modeled after farmers markets and partnering with school and recreation programs to put healthy choices in the hands of children and combat childhood obesity are some of the new models that have been used. The Farm 2 Kids Program in Contra Costa and Solano counties works with 58 afterschool programs to provide 3-5 pounds of fresh fruits and vegetables to children each week. The afterschool programs can use the produce for cooking classes or snacks, and the children take the surplus produce home with them.



Every voice COUNTS!

The Food Bank hopes that the evidence detailed in this report will be used to inform policymakers and increase public awareness about the hunger that exists within our community. Together, we can urge governmental, civic and community organizations to make collaborative actions that end hunger.

◆ FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVES

United States Senate
www.senate.gov

United States House
 of Representatives
www.house.gov

◆ STATE REPRESENTATIVES

California State Senate
www.senate.ca.gov

California State Assembly
www.assembly.ca.gov

◆ ADVOCACY NETWORKS

Network for Healthy
 California Champions for Change
www.cachampionsforchange.net

To learn more about donation options, advocacy, volunteerism, or how to raise awareness in your community, please visit www.foodbankccs.org or call 800-870-3663.



Government

Create local development plans that will increase the number of outlets offering healthy affordable food to low-income populations. Become more informed about hunger and food security issues, existing services, and relevant policies in your district or city. Support policies that provide low-income families and individuals with living wage increases, access to affordable housing, transportation, and health care coverage. Support nutrition programs that increase access to healthy food choices for all Californians.

Community and Non-profit Organizations

Provide free, nutritious food and fresh produce to low-income families and individuals in need of resources living in your local community. Spread the word about the services you provide to those living in the community and the populations you serve. Coordinate your services with other local agencies in your community performing similar work. Organize your volunteers and board members to write letters urging elected officials and policy makers to support effective legislation that eradicates hunger.

Funders/Donors

Donate food, money, and volunteer time to support the Food Bank and local food programs. Ask elected representatives at the federal, state, and local levels about their positions on issues affecting food security and encourage them to vote for those policies that strive to end hunger. Organize your board members and employees to write letters urging elected officials and policy makers to support effective legislation that eradicates hunger.

Individuals

Donate food, money, and volunteer time to support the Food Bank and local food programs. Ask elected representatives at the federal, state, and local levels about their positions on issues affecting food security and encourage them to vote for those policies that strive to end hunger. Organize your friends, family members, and neighbors to write letters urging elected officials and media outlets to support making issues of hunger a priority through effective legislation. Join a task force or advisory group working on hunger and food security, such as the Food & Nutrition Policy Consortium.





This report is dedicated to all of the families and individuals affected on a daily basis by hunger who struggle to make ends meet and to all the many volunteers who work at organizations and emergency food programs to help those need.

A special thank you to every client interviewed as part of Hunger in America 2010 in Contra Costa and Solano. Thank you to all of the staff, volunteers, and organizations that assisted in conducting interviews at the participating sites:

Barbara Stanley	Jill Andrews	Marianne Balin
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Char Howard	John Cassidy	Nasrin Borhani
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Diane Johnson	Juan Orozco	Ron Elsdon
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Donna Coit	Kristy Whatley	Suzie Iventosch
Gordon Miller	Linda Elsdon	Taylor English
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	Maria Padilla	

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California State Department of Finance, "January 2006 Supplemental Security Income/State Supplementary Payment (SSI/SSI) Payment Standards For Aged Individuals Living Independently"

Center for Disease Control, "Healthy Weight—it's not a diet, it's a lifestyle!" www.cdc.gov/healthyweight/children/index.html#problems

State of California: November 2009 California Employment Highlights (December 10, 2009)

RealtyTrac, Inc., Press Release, "U.S. Foreclosures Activity Increases 75 Percent in 2007" (January 29, 2008)

State of California: Labor Market Info.com, "Three-Year Trend in California and the United States Unemployment Rates" (November, 2009)

Participating Member Agencies

- Brown Bag Program Sites: Antioch, Eastshore (Richmond), St. Marks Church (Fairfield), Good Shepherd Church (Pittsburg), Martin Luther King Center (Richmond), Norman King Center (Vallejo), Redwood Shores (Vallejo), San Pablo, Oakley, Vacaville, and Walnut Creek
- Dixon Family Service, Dixon
- East Bay Pentecostal, Brentwood
- First Baptist Church, Pittsburg
- First Baptist Church, Fairfield
- First Baptist Church, Vallejo
- Friendship Missionary Baptist Church, Vallejo
- Food Assistance Program: Antioch, Bay Point, Brentwood, Richmond, San Pablo, Vallejo and Walnut Creek
- G.R.I.P. Souper Center, Richmond
- Hope For The Homeless, Richmond
- Life Changing Reality, Fairfield
- Loaves & Fishes: Antioch, Martinez and Oakley
- McGlothen Temple COGIC, Richmond
- Monument Crisis Center, Concord
- Mt. Calvary Baptist, Fairfield
- Mt. Sinai Missionary Baptist Church, Vallejo
- North Richmond Missionary Baptist Church, Richmond
- Pittsburg Community Emergency Services, Pittsburg
- Queen Of All Saints, Concord
- Richmond Emergency Food Pantry, Richmond
- Rio Vista Ministry, Rio Vista
- Rockville Presbyterian Fellowship, Fairfield
- The Salvation Army, Concord and Vallejo
- Seventh Day Adventist Community Services, Fairfield and Vallejo
- SHARE, Concord
- St. Mark's Lutheran Church, Fairfield
- Vacaville Storehouse, Vacaville

One family at a time.



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