



HUNGER IN MAINE 2014

LOCAL REPORT FOR HUNGER IN AMERICA

PREPARED BY GOOD SHEPHERD FOOD BANK AND FEEDING AMERICA

OCTOBER 2014





1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report presents results from Hunger in America 2014 (HIA 2014) for Good Shepherd Food Bank and its service area, the state of Maine.

Feeding America and its nationwide network of food banks have conducted the most comprehensive study of hunger in America every four years since 1993. Like the prior studies, HIA 2014 documents the critical role that food banks and their partner agencies play in supporting struggling families in the United States.

HIA 2014 details how various agencies in the charitable hunger relief network (food pantries, meal sites, shelters, etc.) operate, including the sources of food available to them, the types of programs they run, their use of volunteers, and the challenges they face. It also documents the number and characteristics of clients who seek assistance from the charitable hunger relief network, including what other sources of food assistance are available to them. Its results are based on nationally representative surveys of food banks' partner agencies and their clients in 2013.

For a discussion of the findings from the national study, see the [Hunger in America 2014 National Report](#) on Feeding America's website, feedingamerica.org.

Methods

HIA 2014 follows the pattern of past Hunger in America studies by implementing two surveys — an Agency Survey and a Client Survey — through the collaborative effort of an extended research team. The first step of the study design was conducting the Agency Survey, which included all partner agencies identified by Good Shepherd Food Bank on the agency list it compiled and provided to Feeding America. The Agency Survey, conducted from October 2012 to January 2013, was used to obtain basic information about programs in the charitable food assistance network. Following the Agency Survey, a client sample was obtained and Food Bank staff and volunteers carried out a Client Survey from April through August 2013.

The information in this report is based solely on the agencies and programs that participated in this study, adjusted by weighting to account for sampling and nonresponse. The Agency Survey yielded responses from 234 eligible agencies (73 percent of agencies provided to Feeding America by Good Shepherd Food Bank). Of the 580 eligible clients sampled, 312 (54 percent) responded to the Client Survey.

Because children were not eligible respondents for the Client Survey, HIA 2014 focuses on the services provided to adult clients and their household members. Consequently, the study will generally underestimate the services provided to children by Good Shepherd Food Bank.

2. KEY FINDINGS

1 IN 7 MAINERS

TURN TO THEIR LOCAL HUNGER RELIEF AGENCY FOR FOOD ASSISTANCE



Good Shepherd Food Bank, through its network of local food pantries, meal sites, shelters, and other organizations, provides food assistance to Mainers in need.

AGE OF CLIENTS



0-5

7.2%



6-17

21.1%



18-59

46.2%



60+

25.6%

54% OF CLIENTS WHO SEEK ASSISTANCE FROM GOOD SHEPHERD FOOD BANK'S NETWORK ARE CHILDREN (UNDER 18) AND SENIORS (OVER 60).

In total, the Food Bank's network of local partner agencies serves

178,000
UNIQUE
INDIVIDUALS EACH YEAR

On a duplicated basis, Good Shepherd Food Bank and its partner agencies distribute food to 38,100 individuals in a typical week, 165,400 individuals in a typical month, and

1,985,200
INDIVIDUALS ANNUALLY

THIS MEANS THAT MAINERS IN NEED OF FOOD ASSISTANCE ARE VISITING THEIR LOCAL HUNGER RELIEF AGENCY NEARLY EVERY MONTH – 11 TIMES PER YEAR ON AVERAGE.





Income

Reported household income and poverty status demonstrate the financial struggles of clients served by Good Shepherd Food Bank and its partner agencies. One percent of client households have no income, 38 percent have annual incomes of \$1 to \$10,000, and 40 percent have annual incomes of \$10,001 to \$20,000. Looking at annual income as a percentage of the poverty level, 56 percent of client households fall at or below 100 percent of the poverty level; 94 percent have incomes below 150 percent of poverty.

ANNUAL INCOME OF CLIENT HOUSEHOLDS



Employment

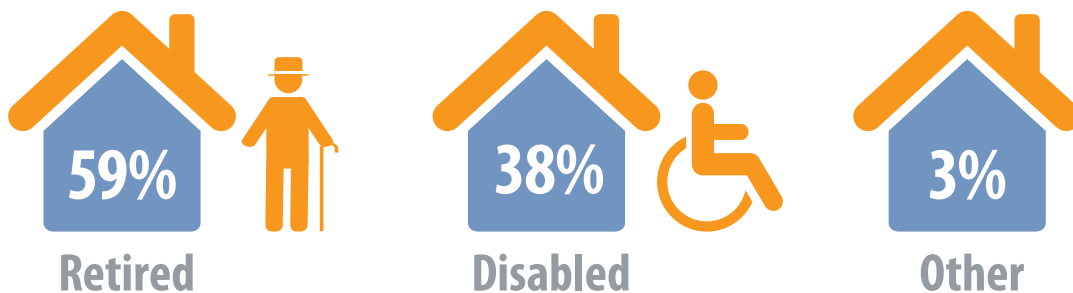
In analyzing household employment, we focus on the employment status of the household member who was employed the greatest number of months in the past 12 months (the most-employed person). In some households, such as those with seniors, there may be no person working; in those cases and others, the “most-employed person” may not have been employed at all.

Employment status for the most-employed person is analyzed because this individual is typically a primary source of income for the household. As such, interruptions in this individual’s employment may profoundly affect the household’s ability to be self-sufficient, potentially increasing their need for charitable food program services.



- For 59% of households, the most-employed person worked for pay in the last 12 months.
- For 43% of households, the most-employed person worked for pay in the last four weeks.
- In 57% of households, the most-employed person is not currently working.
- In 6% of households, this person is actively looking for work.

AMONG HOUSEHOLDS WHERE THE MOST-EMPLOYED PERSON IS NOT CURRENTLY WORKING, REASONS GIVEN FOR NOT ACTIVELY SEEKING WORK



Some households face additional potential barriers to employment. For instance, the adults may serve as the caretakers for grandchildren living with them, and this commitment may not allow them to secure employment. Another potential barrier to employment is if any household member has been released from prison in the previous year and may have difficulty finding employment for this reason.

- 10% of households include grandparents who have responsibility for grandchildren who live with them.
- 3% of client households include a member who was released from prison in the past 12 months.

Household Health

In addition to challenges related to employment and food, the households who rely on Good Shepherd Food Bank and its partner agencies may face challenges to their well-being, including health status, health conditions, and medical insurance status. These challenges can keep people out of the workforce, increase expenses, and limit resources. Together, these challenges may increase the need for charitable food assistance.



HAVE AT LEAST ONE
MEMBER IN POOR HEALTH



HAVE A MEMBER DIAGNOSED
WITH DIABETES



HAVE A MEMBER WITH HIGH
BLOOD PRESSURE



HAVE UNPAID MEDICAL BILLS



HAVE NO HEALTH INSURANCE
(INCLUDING MEDICAID)

Trade-Offs

A common coping strategy for food insecure households is to make trade-offs between purchasing food and other basic necessities.

CLIENTS SERVED BY
THE FOOD BANK'S
NETWORK
CHOOSE BETWEEN
PURCHASING FOOD
AND PAYING FOR...



Education
22%



Transportation
52%



Medicine
65%



Housing
43%



Utilities
71%

Accessing Food

Many client households using the services of Good Shepherd Food Bank also use government assistance to supplement their household food budget. Prominent among these services is the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, formerly the Food Stamp Program). SNAP benefits are intended to supplement a household's groceries each month; typically, benefits do not last recipients the entire month.

57% OF HOUSEHOLDS REPORT PARTICIPATION IN SNAP



There may be many reasons some clients of Good Shepherd Food Bank's Network do not receive SNAP benefits. They may not have applied because they did not know about the program, or perhaps they knew about the program but did not think they were eligible. Others may have applied but did not pass the eligibility screens, and others may have failed to complete the full application process.

The use of charitable food assistance is a critical resource for clients; many clients incorporate assistance received through food banks into their overall monthly strategy for obtaining food. Among client households served by Good Shepherd Food Bank:

- **77% plan to get food from a local hunger relief agency on a regular basis**
- **23% wait until they run out of food to visit a hunger relief agency**

Unmet food needs may lead households to look for other ways to get enough food. When faced with the threat of food insecurity, individuals are forced to engage in various coping strategies that range from relatively small changes in eating practices to extreme changes. Consumers who visit Good Shepherd Food Bank's partner agencies responded that they use the following strategies:



67%

PURCHASE INEXPENSIVE, UNHEALTHY FOOD



63%

EAT FOOD PAST THE EXPIRATION DATE



64%

WATER DOWN FOOD OR DRINKS



64%

ASK FOR HELP FROM FAMILY OR FRIENDS



3. GOOD SHEPHERD FOOD BANK'S NETWORK

Good Shepherd Food Bank works with a diverse set of local partner agencies to deliver food assistance throughout the state. The Food Bank serves all 16 counties in Maine. While the Food Bank partners with 600 local agencies in total, at the time this research was conducted, approximately 300 of those agencies were considered “ending-hunger agencies” – these are food pantries, meal sites, and other organizations where the primary mission is hunger relief. The remaining partner agencies are “non-ending-hunger agencies” including rehab facilities, group homes, and summer camps. For the purpose of this study, we conducted the Agency Survey with “ending-hunger agencies” only.

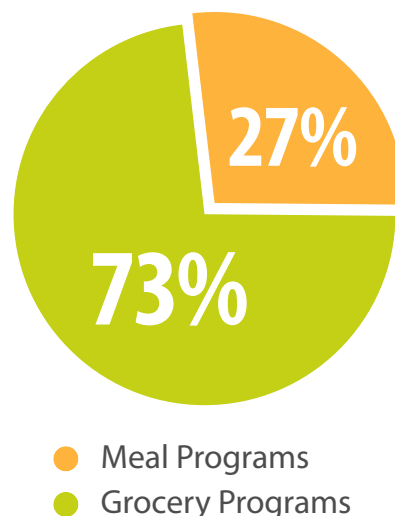
As is the case for food banks across the nation, Good Shepherd Food Bank partners with both faith-based and non-faith-based partners. In Good Shepherd Food Bank's network,

- **57% of agencies are faith-based;**
- **43% of agencies are not faith-based.**

The food programs operated by partner agencies can be divided broadly into those that provide meals and those that provide groceries. Agencies may offer other nonfood programs, including housing, clothing, or job placement assistance. Good Shepherd Food Bank is generally unaffiliated with these nonfood programs.

One agency may operate several programs. In the area served by Good Shepherd Food Bank, partner agencies operate a total of 549 programs, including 269 grocery programs, 100 meal programs, 4 food-related benefits programs, and 176 other nonfood programs.

Program Types



Agency Resources

29% OF AGENCIES report employing full time staff. The median number of full time staff is 3. The median number of volunteers assisting at partner agencies each week is 12.

20% OF AGENCIES report that they had to turn away clients in the past year. Of those agencies, 17% reported that they turned people away because of a shortage of food. Other reasons for turning people away include coming more often than program rules allow (22%) and living outside the agency's service area (44 %).

VOLUME OF CLIENTS AT PARTNER AGENCIES COMPARED TO PREVIOUS YEAR



SAW AN INCREASE



ABOUT THE SAME



SAW A DECREASE

90%

OF AGENCIES REPORT THAT NO LONGER RECEIVING FOOD FROM GOOD SHEPHERD FOOD BANK WOULD HAVE AN IMPACT ON THEIR PROGRAM. 74% SAID THIS IMPACT WOULD BE MAJOR.



To access the national report for Hunger in America 2014,
including a full description of methodology, please visit:
www.feedingamerica.org/HIA_hunger_in_america

Good Shepherd
Food Bank



www.feedingmaine.org