THE NATIONAL HUNGER STUDY: CHICAGO PROFILE

The Greater Chicago Food Depository has conducted extensive research in conjunction with America’s Second Harvest, the nation’s largest domestic hunger relief organization with a network of more than 200 food banks and food rescue organizations. This report summarizes the results for Cook County, the Food Depository’s service territory. These results parallel the national findings presented in Hunger in America 2001, which reported that an estimated 23.3 million people, including more than nine million children, rely on food and grocery assistance provided by network food banks and food rescue organizations. The next Hunger in America study will be conducted in 2005, with publication expected by year’s end. The Food Depository had three main objectives in the 2001 study: to quantify the impact that the Food Depository has on feeding hungry people; to develop a profile of the people who receive food; and to show the trends in emergency food assistance.

What does Food Depository food mean to its 600 member agencies?

The loss of Food Depository food would adversely affect 91.7 percent of pantries, 83.2 percent of soup kitchens and 86.4 percent of shelters that are member agencies of the Greater Chicago Food Depository.

- 62 percent of pantries said the loss of Food Depository food would be devastating; 29.7 percent said the loss would have a significant impact.
- 61.9 percent of soup kitchens said the loss of Food Depository food would be devastating; 21.3 percent said the loss would have a significant impact.
- 44.3 percent of shelters said the loss of Food Depository food would be devastating; 42.1 percent said the loss would have a significant impact.
- 54.8 percent of the food pantries distribute, 40.5 percent of the food soup kitchens serve and 53.9 percent of the food shelters serve are provided by the Food Depository.

Increasing need

68.4 percent of pantries, 69.1 percent of soup kitchens and 52.1 percent of shelters indicate they serve more people now than they did in 1998.

What does hunger look like?

Annually, 309,655 different people rely on emergency feeding programs served by the Food Depository.

- 36.7 percent are children under 18 years old (6.9 percent are children 5 years old or younger)
- 7.7 percent are age 65 and older
- 78.8 percent had incomes below the official federal poverty level
- 21.8 percent of all adult clients are homeless
- 27.9 percent of households have one or more member in poor health
- 31.7 percent of households include at least one employed adult
- 51.6 percent are female
- 48.4 percent are male
- 67.7 percent are African-American
- 22.2 percent are white
- 8.0 percent are Hispanic
- 3.7 percent are American Indian or Alaskan Native