



2006 Western New York Hunger Study

The Food Bank of Western New York recently participated in a national hunger study conducted by America's Second Harvest. The result is a snapshot of Hunger in America, New York State, and the four Western New York counties (Cattaraugus, Chautauqua, Erie and Niagara).

The following are highlights of this study:

More than 25 million Americans - including nearly nine million children and three million senior citizens - receive emergency food assistance each year through America's Second Harvest, The Nation's Food Bank Network. These statistics are part of a comprehensive study - Hunger in America 2006 - which included 52,000 face-to-face interviews with people seeking emergency food assistance and more than 30,000 agency surveys.

The eight New York State food banks, all members of America's Second Harvest, also released their survey results. More than two million state residents turn to soup kitchens, food pantries or shelters for help each year. Locally, at least 140,000 residents are served by the Food Bank of Western New York through its 457 agencies in Cattaraugus, Chautauqua, Erie and Niagara counties. (Approximately 54% of Western New Yorkers live below the federal poverty line.)

The majority of people in New York State needing assistance with food are children, women, and the working poor. As Americans, one thing we must realize is that hunger is not exclusive to a particular race or neighborhood. Less fortunate individuals are our neighbors; they are working Americans; they are senior citizens who have worked their entire lives; and they are children.

Our agencies report their largest increase of clients in a group known as the "working poor". It consists of blue collar households and working-class families with children. They are struggling to make ends meet and, in the face of rising gas prices, utility bills, and medical prescription costs, are forced into choices such as paying bills or buying food. More often than not, they forgo the grocery store and go hungry or purchase a minimal amount of food.





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How Many People Receive Emergency Food from the Food Bank Of Western New York?

- The system served by the Food Bank of Western New York provides food for an estimated 140,000 different people annually.
- Approximately 43,200 unduplicated clients receive assistance in any given week.

Who Receives Emergency Food Assistance?

Agencies served by the Food Bank of Western New York provide food for a broad cross-section of households. Key characteristics include:

- 26% of the members of households are children under 18 years old.
- 6% of the members of households are children age 0 to 5 years.
- 17% of the members of households are elderly.
- About 63% of clients are non-Hispanic white, 32% are non-Hispanic black, 3% are Hispanic, and the remainder are from other racial or ethnic groups.
- 31 % of households include at least one employed adult.
- 54% had incomes below the official federal poverty level during the previous month.

Many Western New Yorkers Are Food Insecure Or Are Experiencing Hunger

- Among all households served by emergency food programs of the Food Bank of Western New York, 68% are food insecure, according to the U.S. government's official food security scale. This includes client households who are food insecure without hunger and those who are food insecure with hunger
- 29% of the households are experiencing hunger.
- Among households with children, 76% are food insecure and 33% are experiencing hunger.



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Many Western New Yorkers Report Having to Choose Between Food and Other Necessities

- 52% of clients served by the Food Bank of Western New York report having to choose between paying for food and paying for utilities or heating fuel.
- 36% had to choose between paying for food and paying their rent or mortgage.
- 32% had to choose between paying for food and paying for medicine or medical care.

Do Western New Yorkers Also Receive Food Assistance from the Government?

- 41% of households served by the Food Bank of Western New York are receiving Food Stamp Program benefits; however, it is likely that many more are eligible.
- Among households with school-age children, 59% participate in the federal school lunch and 52% school breakfast programs.

Many Western New Yorkers Are In Poor Health

- 31 % of households served by the Food Bank of Western New York report having at least one household member in poor health.

Most Western New Yorkers Are Satisfied with the Services They Receive from the Agencies of the Food Bank of Western New York

- 92% of adult clients interviewed said they were either "very satisfied" or "somewhat satisfied" with the amount of food they received from their provider; 95% were satisfied with the quality of the food they received.



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How Large is the Food Bank of Western New York?

- The Food Bank of Western New York serviced approximately 457 agencies at the administration of this survey. Of the responding agencies, 127 had at least one food pantry, soup kitchen, or shelter.

What Kinds of Organizations Operate Emergency Food Programs of the Food Bank of Western New York?

- 69% of pantries, 48% of kitchens, and 50% of shelters are run by faith-based agencies affiliated with churches, mosques, synagogues, and other religious organizations.
- 64% of agencies with at least one pantry, kitchen, or shelter and 52% of all agencies including those only with other types of programs are faith-based
- Private nonprofit organizations with no religious affiliation make up a large share of other types of agencies

All are nonprofit agencies providing food to the less fortunate of WNY on an ongoing basis.

Have Agencies Been Experiencing Changes in the Need for Their Services?

- 80% of pantries, 70% of kitchens, and 37% of shelters of the Food Bank of Western New York reported that there had been an increase in the number of clients who come to their emergency food program sites since 2001.

Where Do These Agencies Obtain Their Food?

- Food banks are by far the single most important source of food for the agencies, accounting for 76% of the food used by pantries, 57% of kitchens' food, and 39% of shelters' food.
- Other important sources of food include religious organizations, government, and direct purchases from wholesalers and retailers.
- 96% of pantries, 58% of kitchens, and 67% of shelters of the Food Bank of Western New York receive food from government commodity programs.





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Volunteers Are Extremely Important to the Food Bank

- 95% of the Food Bank's member pantries, 88% of kitchens, and 77% of shelters use volunteers.
- Many programs rely *entirely* on volunteers; 58% of pantry programs and 32% of kitchens have no paid staff at all).



Last year, the Food Bank of WNY distributed 10,742,945 pounds of food and grocery products through its member agencies. This figure represents less food distributed to a larger number of clients. Our sources of donated food have decreased, and that has us extremely concerned.



<u>COUNTY</u>	<u>2004 Lbs. Distributed</u>	<u>Agencies</u>	<u>AVERAGE MONTHLY SERVICES**</u>		
			<u>House holds</u>	<u>People</u>	<u>Meals</u>
CATTARAUGUS	687,683 Lbs.	55	1,852	8,505	112,655
CHAUTAUQUA	1,537,747	47	4,542	13,246	137,449
ERIE	8,027,810	302	21,787	66,794	792,710
NIAGARA	<u>1,570,782</u>	<u>52</u>	<u>3,295</u>	<u>10,276</u>	<u>126,760</u>
TOTAL WNY	11,824,022 Lbs.	456	31,476	98,821	1,169,574

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			<u>House holds</u>	<u>People</u>	<u>Meals</u>
CATTARAUGUS	592,548 Lbs.	56	2,033	9,022	115,179
CHAUTAUQUA	1,524,066	47	3,100	11,389	155,012
ERIE	7,207,928	304	24,229	71,334	879,792
NIAGARA	<u>1,418,403</u>	<u>50</u>	<u>3,029</u>	<u>9,267</u>	<u>117,315</u>
TOTAL WNY	10,742,945 Lbs.	457	32,391	101,012	1,267,298

The goal of the Food Bank of WNY is to improve these numbers by fighting hunger one day at a time. With your continued assistance and that of our commercial donors, we can make a difference

