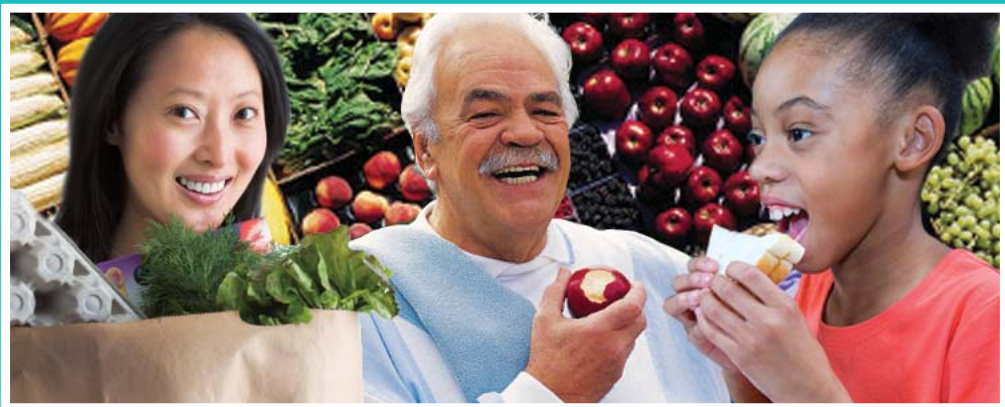


NEW JERSEY HUNGER PREVENTION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

2009 REPORT TO THE LEGISLATURE



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Governor, State of New Jersey

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“The number of people who are facing hunger has risen dramatically beyond the chronically poor to the newly in need – those whose incomes have fallen precipitously because family members lost jobs or businesses, had hours/ wages cut, have seen retirement savings evaporate or have become homeless. Requests for emergency food at pantries and meal sites have jumped 30 percent or more in the past year. And we know that the number of people in need of food assistance will continue to rise as the recession lingers.

***Phyllis Stoolmacher, Director
Mercer Street Friends Food Bank, Trenton***



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The last two years have been extremely difficult for New Jersey's Emergency Food Provider (EFP) system. With the economy sinking into a recession, and unemployment and gasoline prices soaring, the EFPs have been struggling to meet the overwhelming increases in demand for emergency food. Early on, some EFPs were forced to close their doors as their shelves were bare, others limited the amount of food distributed to individuals/families in an effort to stretch their limited resources and serve more people.

In SFY '07, the Legislature created a line-item in the state budget called the Hunger Initiative, and appropriated \$3 million for emergency food and \$1 million to enhance the EFP infrastructure, through the acquisition of stoves, refrigerators, walk-in freezer/refrigerated boxes, and storage units. In the FY '08 state budget, the Legislature increased the allocation for emergency food from \$3 million to \$4 million.

By the fall of 2008, purchasing food was becoming increasingly unaffordable for many people, even for the middle class. According to Feeding America (formerly known as America's Second Harvest, the nation's food bank network) one in eight Americans was struggling with food insecurity issues. As the economy continued to weaken, the demand for emergency food soared and quickly exceeded food supplies.

During FY '09, the situation was so dire that Governor Corzine authorized an additional \$3 million for the acquisition of emergency food to assist the food banks, food pantries, and soup kitchens which were being hit hard with a significant increase in the number of people needing food. The Food Bank Directors were anecdotally reporting a 30% increase in the number of people needing food although there was great variation in the numbers based upon geographic area. These funds continue to be used for the acquisition of food. The food banks are currently reporting that food is flying off their shelves and business is booming throughout the emergency food provider system – good news for those in need – and a sad reflection of the current economic times.

In late 2008, the County Welfare Agencies (CWAs) began reporting long lines of people waiting to apply for the federal Food Stamp program, which is our nation's first line of defense against hunger. Some counties reported lines out their doors and around the block, creating additional hardships for



agencies already impacted by staffing shortages. The number of households receiving Food Stamps in May of 2009 has increased by 16.3% over 2008, with Hunterdon County experiencing an increase of over 40%. Another seven counties experienced an increase of over 20% during the same period. While Food Stamp participation overall has significantly increased every month throughout SFY '09, during June 2009, New Jersey reached its highest level of Food Stamp participation ever recorded. The participation included a total of 248,711 households on Food Stamps, which equals 507,002 adults and children.

While the CWAs as well as the EFPs were anecdotally reporting dramatic increases in the number of people being served, they also noted they were serving more than just the chronically poor. They were now serving the newly in need. This new clientele included those who lost jobs or businesses, had lower incomes due to hours/wages being cut, had seen their saving evaporate, and/or had recently become homeless.

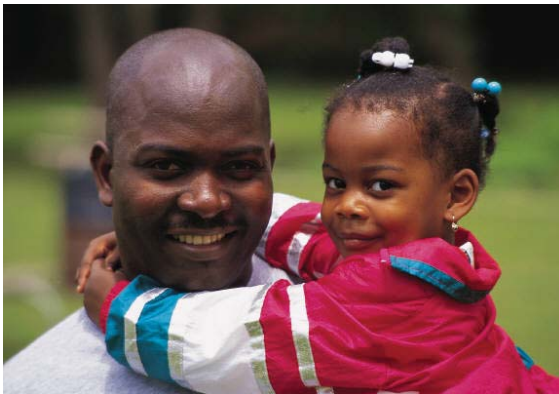


According to the *Food Links America* newsletter, dated September 26, 2008 the need for emergency food was being further hampered by rising food costs. States and local hunger relief organizations were also unable to purchase more government commodities at a time when demand for emergency food was increasing. This was due to the temporary cancellation of federal bonus food purchases. As of early 2009, the bonus food became available again and New Jersey (via the Department of Agriculture) is taking full advantage of the bonus foods available to states.

For FY 2010, the Department of Agriculture requested \$6 million for the acquisition of emergency food. The Legislature approved \$3.9

million in state funds plus an additional \$1.8 million in federal stimulus funds for the acquisition of emergency food.

A surge in the need for emergency food is anticipated to begin in August 2009 as over 30,000 people will lose their unemployment benefits. Between August 2009 and January 2010, it is anticipated that the number of people losing their unemployment benefits will be over 78,000. If this surge occurs and if the recession lingers, it is hoped that the state will continue to respond favorably to the emergency food providers in times of fiscal crisis.



"We have seen a 14% increase over the previous calendar year in the number of people served through our foodbank, with a seven percent increase in the pounds distributed. This growth illustrates the critical need for continued support of local food banks."

**Margie Barham, Executive Director
Community FoodBank of New Jersey,
Southern Branch, Egg Harbor Twp.**





ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Electronic Benefits Transfer

The Hunger Prevention Advisory Committee, in collaboration with the Division of Family Development (DFD) and the Department of Agriculture, worked with interested farmers in New Jersey to develop strategies to utilize the Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) technology within the local farm markets. The use of EBT cards in the farmers markets became operational in July 2009. This created the opportunity for Food Stamp recipients to utilize their Families First card to purchase fresh fruits and vegetables using their Food Stamp benefits. Fresh fruits and vegetables had previously been identified as lacking in the diets of many food insecure New Jerseyans.



when food donations are lowest and the need for emergency food increases. This increase is due to children being out of school and many school breakfast/lunch feeding programs are unavailable. While many people donate food around the holiday season in November/December, additional work is needed to educate people that emergency food donations are needed year round, especially in the summer.

Website

The DHS Office of Information Technology has added a new feature onto the www.endhungernj.org website. This new feature is a "What's New" section which will be frequently updated with current information. Efforts remain underway with HPAC members promoting the endhungernj.org website.

Food Drive

The Hunger Prevention Advisory Committee in collaboration with the Department of Human Services hosted their "1st Annual Hunger Doesn't Take a Summer Vacation" food drive during the summer of 2008. Through nineteen DHS locations, approximately forty large storage boxes of non-perishable food were collected. The food was distributed to the food banks based upon the geographic areas served, for example, the food collected in DHS offices in Mercer County was distributed to Mercer Street Friends, the foodbank serving Mercer County. It is hoped that this food drive will continue and expand to other state departments.

The food drive was instituted during June/July, at a time of year



How Many Food Insecure People Do We Serve?

Emergency Food Providers

With the state economy struggling for the past several years and then going into a recession, the six regional food banks have reported a significant spike in the number of people seeking emergency food. The table below illustrates the increase in the number of people served by the food banks in SFY 2001, 2006, and 2008.



Agency	Number of people served in 2001	Number of people served in 2006	Number of people served in 2008
Community Food Bank, Hillside	506,000	537,000	794,577
Community Food Bank of NJ – Southern Branch, Egg Harbor	6,231	8,168	39,891
Mercer Street Friends, Trenton	13,000	18,000	23,000
NORWESCAP Foodbank, Phillipsburg	883,000*	954,400*	132,732*
Foodbank of Monmouth & Ocean Counties, Neptune	Not Available	70,000	431,894
Foodbank of South Jersey, Pennsauken	Not available	272,508**	368,156

* Data was collected by volunteers and may be subject to error

** This is a corrected figure from the 2007 report.

Please note these are the number of people served; individuals/families may have been served more than once.

As the chart above indicates, many of the food banks saw a significant increase in the number of people being served throughout the emergency food provider system. The amount of increase between SFY 2006 and SFY 2008 varied by geographic region, for example, the Community Food Bank saw a 67% increase, Mercer Street Friends a 78% increase and the Foodbank of South Jersey in Pennsauken a 74% increase. Other food banks like the Community Food Bank of NJ Southern Branch and the Food Bank of Monmouth & Ocean Counties saw a 20% and 16% increase respectively. Given the wide variation, the Food Bank Directors are anecdotally reporting a 30% statewide increase in the number of people served.



The chart below, illustrates the poundage of food that was distributed in SFY 2001, 2006, and 2008.

Agency	Pounds of food distributed in 2001 in millions	Pounds of food distributed in 2006 in millions	Pounds of food distributed in 2008 in millions	Difference between 2001 and 2008
Community Food Bank, Hillside	17.9	21.2	28.3 *	63%
Community Food Bank of NJ – Southern Branch, Egg Harbor	2.5	3.7	4.2	59%
Mercer Street Friends, Trenton	1.1	1.6	2.0	55%
NORWESCAP Foodbank, Phillipsburg	1.3	1.6	1.6	81%
Foodbank of Monmouth & Ocean Counties, Neptune	2.55	3.3	5.3	48%
Foodbank of South Jersey, Pennsauken	Not Available	3.4	5.3	Not Available
Total		34.8	46.7	

*This was the largest amount of food distributed by the Community Food Bank in its 27 year history.

During 2008, a total of 46.7 million pounds of emergency food were distributed, representing an increase of 11.9 million pounds over 2006.

With the volume of food being distributed reaching unprecedented levels, the food banks have been developing creative methods to distribute the food quickly. This has included setting up an emergency food pantry in Beth Israel Hospital so food insecure families receiving hospital services will have food available which will also aid in their family members healing/recovery and delivering food directly to low-income senior housing sites.



Food Stamps

During October 2008, the Federal Government renamed the Food Stamp program the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). New Jersey however has not yet renamed its program.

The Division of Family Development (DFD) oversees the Food Stamp program in New Jersey and has noted overall increases in the Food Stamp participation from FY 2001 through FY 2009. During this eight year time frame the number of Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) households on Food Stamps increased by approximately 761 households; however, it should be noted that there has been a decrease of 3,459 TANF households since FY 2006. For other low income households, Food Stamp participation increased by 96,333 households, over this eight year time frame.

For individuals receiving Food Stamps, the number of adults and children combined increased by approximately 183,302 as indicated below:



HOUSEHOLDS				PERSONS		
	TANF	Other Low Income	Total	Adults	Children	Total
FY 2001 average	33,302	100,581	133,883	142,675	147,427	290,102
FY 2006 average	37,522	157,397	194,919	199,518	203,464	402,982
FY 2009 average	34,063	196,914	230,977	236,006	237,398	473,404

During SFY '09, while the number of TANF households on Food Stamps decreased by 1,939; the number of low-income households steadily increased by 32,761 households, from July 1, 2008 to June 30, 2009. For children and adults combined, the number of individuals steadily rose by 64,162.

While Food Stamp participation rose every month during SFY '09, during June 2009 New Jersey reached its highest level of Food Stamp participation ever recorded. The participation for that month included a total of 248,711 households on Food Stamps; this equals 507,002 adults and children.

Although the Food Stamp program served more households and individuals in June 2009 than ever before in New Jersey, it must be remembered that Food Stamp benefits are a safety net and the benefits generally do not last the entire month. The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA) provided a boost in SNAP/Food Stamp allotments, giving extra Food Stamp money to recipients. For a household of one, the maximum increase was \$24 per month. For a household of four, the maximum increase was \$80 per month. For individuals and families who remain food insecure, they utilize the emergency food provider system to supplement their Food Stamp benefits.



LEGISLATIVE SUPPORT

Funding Stream for Emergency Food

The Hunger Prevention Advisory Committee would like to thank Governor Jon Corzine and the Legislature for acting on the Committee's recommendation to establish a check-off box on the State Income Tax returns allowing taxpayers to donate funds for the acquisition of emergency food. These funds will purchase food through the Department of Agriculture's State Food Purchase Program which will distribute the food through New Jersey's Emergency Food Provider (EFP) system which includes food banks, food pantries, and soup kitchens. With funds being earmarked exclusively for the purchase of food, this initiative will provide a much needed and ongoing funding stream for the acquisition of emergency food, and will help combat hunger for years to come. Again, thank you for creating the "Community Food Pantry Fund" as a funding mechanism that will assist food-insecure New Jerseyans.

Suggested Funding Stream for EFP Food Distribution Costs

As mentioned in the 2007 HPAC Report to the Legislature, the issue of funding food distribution costs not only remains an issue but has been magnified by the increased volume of food being distributed and rising gasoline costs.

Under The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP), food banks are reimbursed eight cents per pound to distribute food. In 2003, the Community FoodBank in Hillside, the largest food bank in the state, conducted an audit to determine the actual cost to distribute a pound of food. In 2003, that amount was twenty-one cents per pound. To help offset the difference, the HPAC approved \$125,000 per year for four years to assist with food distribution costs. These funds were distributed to the six regional food banks through the Department of Agriculture, and were exhausted during December 2007. In July 2007 the administrative reimbursement rate was raised from eight to ten cents per pound. Then the rate was lowered back to the eight cents per pound. This decrease resulted from New Jersey accepting Federal Bonus Food funds which did not have administrative funding attached to it. Because New



Jersey was able to distribute 30 million pounds of food in FY '09, more than double the poundage distributed in FY '08, New Jersey faced storage issues for the additional food and had to pay for temporary warehouse space, until the food could be distributed. The decrease in the reimbursement to the EFPs from ten to eight cents allowed for the reallocation of funds to pay for the food storage costs. The New Jersey Department of Agriculture anticipates restoring the reimbursement rate back up to ten cents for federal FY '10 beginning in October 2009. Balances of federal commodities were stored by NJDA in its state contracted warehouses that do not earn federal administrative funding. Even with the administrative reimbursement rate being restored back up to ten cents, it is still inadequate to cover the cost of storage and distribution of federal bonus foods offered to the state agency during this economic climate. While the two cents per pound loss seems small given the amount of food being distributed, this translates into significant amounts; for example, for the Community Food Bank in Hillside this is a \$175,000 loss.

A recommended funding strategy for food distribution costs could be through a specialty license plate which could promote 'End Hunger in the Garden State', and/or a donation check off box on motor vehicle registration forms (similar to that on tax returns). Revenue from such an initiative could assist with subsidizing food distribution costs and perhaps also provide funding for other EFP infrastructure needs such as stoves, refrigerators,



walk-in refrigerators/freezers, and storage units for the food pantries and soup kitchens. Please note that while infrastructure needs are great, EFPs are focusing exclusively on distributing food during these difficult economic times. Once the economy improves and the demand for emergency food diminishes, EFPs will have the time to begin addressing infrastructure needs once again.

Evaluate Food Donation Legislation

Given the national recession and the increased demand for emergency food, some other states like California, Massachusetts, Mississippi, and Nevada have enacted or are considering laws to make it easier for restaurants to donate leftover food to charities. These new laws are being designed to add extra liability protection for food donors. While food donors are protected from liability under the 1996 Federal Bill Emerson Good Samaritan Food Donation Act, the act does not supersede state and local restrictions on food donations. During this recession with so many people struggling financially and going without food, it is recommended that the Legislature evaluate New Jersey's existing food donation legislation in an effort to maximize food resources and ensure that perfectly good food isn't being wasted at a time when people are going hungry.

Recommendation for a State-Wide “Hunger Doesn’t Take a Summer Vacation” Food Drive

As referenced in the accomplishments section of this report, the HPAC in collaboration with the NJ Department of Human Services conducted their 1st Annual, “Hunger Doesn’t Take a Summer Vacation” food drive in 2008, to collect non-perishable food which was then donated to the regional food banks. It is recommended that this food drive be expanded to all departments in state government in an effort to collect healthy, non-perishable food, at a time of year when food donations are lowest, and the need for emergency food increases as children are out of school and many school breakfast/lunch feeding programs are unavailable. This food drive could

be administered in a similar manner to the State’s Annual Toy Drive. The food drive should encourage staff to donate items such as:

- Infant formula
- Peanut butter
- Canned goods (meat, fruit, vegetables, beans)
- Healthy cereal
- Brown rice
- Pasta
- Tuna fish
- Powdered milk
- Soup
- Low-sodium and sugar-free items

If successful, such a drive could be expanded and include partnerships with county and municipal governments, schools, businesses, and other organizations in New Jersey. While many people donate food around the holiday season in November and December, we need to work together to change the mindset so people are cognizant that emergency food is needed year round.





FY 2010 HPAC GOALS



The Hunger Prevention Advisory Committee will be working on several initiatives during FY 2010, which include:

- Joining forces with national end hunger organizations to end childhood hunger in New Jersey by 2015. HPAC is in the process of creating a subcommittee to address childhood hunger issues, and will begin meeting on this issue in September 2009.
- HPAC continues to promote the www.endhungernj.org website. As part of this effort, HPAC members and emergency food providers also promote the Federal Food Stamp program, which is the first defense against hunger, and encourages food insecure New Jerseyans to apply for Food Stamps on-line.
- Encourage the EFPs to access the media through the use of public service announcements on public and cable television as well as the radio as a means to educate the public on issues surrounding hunger, volunteer opportunities, and food donations needed.
- Participate in a variety of end hunger initiatives including the Hunger Action Month event in September, and the DHS, “HungerDoesn’t Take a Summer Vacation,” Food Drive, among others.

The HPAC will report back on the progress made on these initiatives in next year’s annual report to the Legislature.



BACKGROUND ON THE LEGISLATION/ BUDGET INFORMATION

The New Jersey Hunger Prevention and Nutrition Assistance Program Act (P.L. 2001, c.62) was signed into law on April 19, 2001. The legislation appropriated \$5 million in one-time Federal Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) funds. The program was established within the Department of Human Services with the statutory purpose to:

- Improve the health and nutritional status of New Jersey residents in need of food assistance;
- Supplement the efforts of emergency food programs in the state to reduce hunger; and
- Enable families and individuals to become food secure and self-sufficient.

The specific goals of the program are to:

- Enhance the accessibility and availability of safe, nutritious food and food-related resources;
- Develop and provide comprehensive nutrition education programs;
- Periodically conduct assessments of the needs of persons requesting food assistance and hunger related issues to ensure program funds are used effectively; and
- Empower persons requesting food assistance or at risk of needing food assistance to increase their independence from emergency food assistance programs.

The legislation specified that the Commissioner of Human Services shall contract with Rutgers, the State University, to conduct a statewide needs assessment. This assessment was completed during the fall of 2005 and details of that assessment were included in the July 2006 Hunger Prevention Advisory Committee Report to the Legislature.



HPAC Expenditures

As of July 2009, the HPAC expenditures from the original \$5 million allocation in the New Jersey Hunger Prevention and Nutrition Assistance Program Act include:

\$ 90,000	For Gleaning (funds to Department of Agriculture)
\$600,000	Funds for food, distributed to six regional food banks (CY 2002)
\$1,500,000	Funds for food, distributed to six regional food banks (CY 2004)
\$500,000	Funds for food, distributed to six regional food banks (1/1/05-6/30/05)
\$250,000	Rutgers Study (Legislatively mandated)
\$500,000	To DOA, to support emergency feeding organizations(\$125,000 for four years)
\$1,000,000	Funds for food, distributed to six regional food banks 11/05
\$250,000	Funds for food, distributed to six regional food banks 7/08
\$4,690,000	Total expenditures to date
\$310,000	Balance available

Details on these expenditures were provided in the 2007 report.

While \$40,000 in funding was originally obligated in 12/05 for the development of the website, the project was completed in-house and funding was not utilized.

HUNGER PREVENTION ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

The New Jersey Hunger Prevention and Nutrition Assistance Program Act established a 13- member Hunger Prevention Advisory Committee (HPAC) in the Department of Human Services. The membership consists of the Secretary of Agriculture, Commissioner of Human Services, and the Commissioner of Community Affairs or their designees, who serve ex officio and ten public members appointed by the Governor who include: two representatives of emergency food programs in the State; two representatives of programs serving homeless individuals in the State; the Executive Directors of the County Welfare Directors' Association of New Jersey; the Municipal Welfare Directors' Association of New Jersey and the Association for Children of New Jersey, or their designees; a nutritionist; and two members of the public who are knowledgeable about emergency food programs. The 13-member HPAC has been meeting since 2002. As of July 2009, the committee is comprised of the following individuals:

NAME	AGENCY	SEAT
Mary Ann Barkus for Acting Commissioner Charles Richman	Department of Community Affairs	Department of Community Affairs
Daniel Boas	Burlington County Board of Social Services	County Welfare Directors' Association
Carol Byrd-Bredbenner	Rutgers University	Nutritionist
Emma Davis-Kovacs for Secretary Douglas H. Fisher	Department of Agriculture	Department of Agriculture
Kathleen DiChiara	Community FoodBank of New Jersey	Emergency Food Programs
Rosemary Gilmartin	Interfaith Food Pantry	Emergency Food Programs
Jeanette Page-Hawkins for Commissioner Jennifer Velez	Department of Human Services	Department of Human Services
Sheldon Presser (for Cecilia Zalkind)	Association for Children of New Jersey	Association for Children of New Jersey
William Southrey	Atlantic City Rescue Mission	Programs serving Homeless Individuals
Mary Ellen Tango	Linden Department of Community Social Services	Municipal Welfare Directors' Association
Sharon Reilly-Tobin	Catholic Charities	Knowledge of Emergency Food Programs
Gina Williams-Deas (Chairperson)	Volunteers of America	Programs Serving Homeless Individuals
Peter Wise	Formerly of the Trenton Area Soup Kitchen	Knowledge of Emergency Food Programs



"We have faced many challenges this past year due to space constraints, increased gas prices and the effects of a bad economy. However, even though we are saddened that so many people are in need, we are pleased that so far we have been able to meet that need and we will continue to do whatever we can to aid in hunger relief in our community."

***Helene Meissner, Director
NORWESCAP Foodbank***

