

New Jersey

Hunger Prevention Advisory Committee:

Report to The Legislature

July 2006



Jon S. Corzine, Governor, State of New Jersey
James W. Smith Jr., Acting Commissioner, New Jersey Department of Human Services (DHS)

Submitted by:

Gina Williams, Chairperson, Hunger Prevention Advisory Committee

Prepared by:

Lisa Ashbaugh, Senior Planning Associate
DHS Division of Family Development and Staff to the Hunger Prevention Advisory Committee

Table of Contents

Executive Summary	1
Background on the Legislation	4
Hunger Prevention Advisory Committee	5
Rutgers Study	7
Twelve recommendations to enhance the EFP System	11
National Perspective	13
Populations Served by Emergency Food Providers in New Jersey	14
Overview of Funding and Expenditures	15
Hunger Web Site	18
Next Steps/Need for Legislative Support	19

Executive Summary

This report is a summary of activities of the Hunger Prevention Advisory Committee, as required under the New Jersey Hunger Prevention and Nutrition Assistance Program Act. The Hunger Prevention Advisory Committee has been meeting since late 2002 and has been carrying out efforts to assist food insecure New Jerseyans. This committee graciously acknowledges the ongoing support from the New Jersey Legislature on issues related to hunger.

National

America's Second Harvest, the nation's food bank network just released Hunger in America 2006, the largest and most comprehensive study of domestic hunger ever conducted. The study discusses how some people in our 'land of plenty' have to make the decision between paying for food or other household necessities. This study, which conducted 52,000 face-to-face client interviews and 30,000 surveys of local charitable agencies nationwide, found that 25.35 million low-income people each year (roughly 9 percent of all Americans) receive emergency hunger relief. This represents an 8 percent increase since Hunger in America 2001, and an 18 percent increase since Hunger 1997: the Faces and Facts.

66 percent of all households receiving emergency food have incomes below the federal poverty level.

The study found 66 percent of all households receiving emergency food have annual incomes below the federal poverty level, or less than \$15,670 a year for a family of three in 2004. The average monthly income for a household served is \$860, with 10 percent of all adults interviewed at emergency feeding sites having no income at all. In addition to low incomes, clients did not have a lot of resources; 12 percent were homeless, 47 percent did not have access to a working car, and only 35 percent were currently receiving food stamps. Of those receiving food stamp benefits, clients reported that the food stamp benefits only lasted an average of 2.5 weeks a

month. Too many clients indicated that they had been forced to choose between food and utilities (41 percent), food and rent/mortgage (35 percent), and food and medicine/medical care (32 percent).

Clients report that food stamp benefits only last an average of 2.5 weeks a month.

New Jersey

According to the Association of Children New Jersey (ACNJ), the number of New Jersey households living in poverty is also steadily increasing. Child poverty increased by 20 percent from 2000-2003; which is almost four times the national average of 4.6 percent.

According to ACNJ, in 2002, 19 percent of families with children in New Jersey were determined to be working poor or poor according to federal classifications of low income. However, in the same year, 34 percent of New Jersey families could not afford to pay for food, housing, child care, and transportation according to The Real Cost of Living 2005: The Self-Sufficiency Standard for New Jersey, which takes these costs into account.

The November 2000 New Jersey Hunger Prevention and Assistance Program Act included a provision for Rutgers University to conduct a statewide hunger assessment. This assessment entitled Improving Food Security for New Jersey Families: Identifying Food Source, Need and Tools for Connecting, observed that the number of people visiting New Jersey Emergency Food Providers (EFP). Seventy five percent of the 1,100 EFPs surveyed reported an increase in their client load from 2003 to 2004. Of the 19 percent who reported no change for that period, it is noted that many cap client growth due to a lack of labor and/or the food to serve additional people. The study also cites 43 percent of EFP clients are children; which is consistent with anecdotal



reports from the EFPs noting a significant increase in the number of families with small children being served. In addition, more than half of the food pantry patrons surveyed indicated that they did not have enough food to make it through the month, even when they added the food they got from a food pantry and other sources. This indicates a gap in food sufficiency for the majority of food pantry patrons.

During 2005, the EFP client increase was met with a dramatic decrease in the amount of food being donated to emergency food providers; intensifying the crisis situation. Many of the providers noted a 50-70 percent decrease in food donations, leaving many food bank and food pantry shelves bare. In some instances clients were turned away, in others the amount of food clients received was reduced, so that more families and individuals could be served. The cause of the food donation decline was attributed to “donor fatigue” following the natural disasters/hurricanes Katrina, Rita, and others that hit the southern coast of the United States. The increased need for food and the decline in food donations has created a dire need for additional funding for the EFPs.

The Hunger Prevention Advisory Committee determined that the identification of an ongoing funding source for supplemental food, including more high quality foods such as those rich in calcium and fresh fruits and vegetables are the number one issue. The committee also identified 12 priority recommendations for improving New Jersey's emergency food provider system, including:

Food

- Establish a line item in the budget or a funding strategy (license plates, tax return check-off) or other mechanism to subsidize EFP access to more high quality foods, including calcium rich foods and fresh fruits and vegetables.

Infrastructure

- Develop strategies to establish more soup kitchens, where needed.
- Develop volunteer recruitment/retention strategies for food pantries and soup kitchens.

EFPs lacked calcium rich food and fresh fruits and vegetables for their clientele.

Outreach

- Develop literature, in various languages, to inform low-income New Jerseyans of services provided by soup kitchens and food pantries.
- Encourage participation of low-income and food insecure children in free and reduced price school meal and summer feeding programs. Explore waivers to ease regulations for schools in New Jersey to more easily serve food insecure children.
- Create a “hunger” related Web site that will include information on food banks, soup kitchens, food pantries, shelters, nutrition education materials and recipes for EFP clients.

Access

- Many food pantries and soup kitchens do not have a computer or Internet access to obtain nutritional information to better assist their clients. Develop strategies to provide food pantries and soup kitchens with a computer and/or Internet access, as needed, to obtain nutritional information to better assist their clients.
- Develop strategies to assist EFPs in obtaining and maintaining suitable vehicles to transport food from donors.
- Develop strategies to access cold food storage, especially for high quality foods. Large-scale refrigerators and freezers are usually in short supply and yet much needed to warehouse large donations and food bank purchases.

Support Federal Feeding Programs

- Encourage more farm retailers to participate and to locate markets near WIC offices.
- Improve the capacity of farmers’ market retailers to use Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) technology to accept Food Stamps.

- Train EFP volunteers on the Food Stamp Screening Tool application so they can assist their clientele in determining their eligibility for benefits.

While the numbers of food insecure residents has been increasing, emergency food providers have noted significant decreases in food donations, some providers reporting a decline as much as 50 - 70 percent. This increased need for services, and decreased level of food donations has put New Jersey’s emergency food provider system into a crisis situation. The Hunger Prevention Advisory Committee has tried to respond to this situation, by allocating funds to the six regional food banks for the acquisition of food. Although the funding has helped temporarily, long term solutions need to be developed. Funding streams need to be identified to assist providers in acquiring food for individuals and families who are food insecure. In addition, funding is needed to enhance the emergency food provider system, as identified above.

The New Jersey Legislature, Department of Human Services, Department of Agriculture, and the Hunger Prevention Advisory Committee need to work together to develop long term funding strategies to better address the growing issue of hunger in New Jersey, and the provision of emergency food provider services.



Background on the Legislation

The New Jersey Hunger Prevention and Nutrition Assistance Program Act was adopted on November 9, 2000, and appropriated \$5 million in one-time federal Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) funds. The program was established within the Department of Human Services and the purpose of the act is 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.

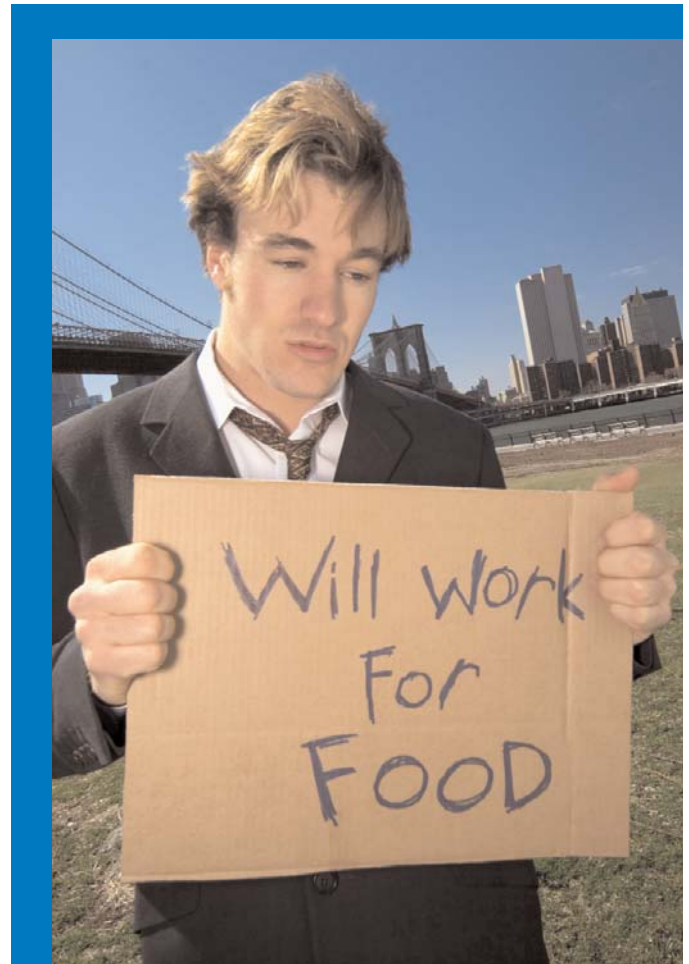
The specific goals of the program are to:

- 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 specifies that the Commissioner of Human Services shall contract with Rutgers, the State University to conduct a statewide needs assessment to:

- Identify and quantify, at all steps in the State's food delivery system, wholesome and nutritious food that goes to waste before it can be made available to those in need of such food;
- Identify and quantify the need for emergency or supplemental feeding for families and individuals in the state;
- Identify strategies and structures for minimizing spoilage of food resources;

- Develop a fiscally judicious plan to secure food from loss to deterioration or waste and to transport and apportion that food to emergency feeding programs throughout the State;
- Develop strategies for behaviorally focused educational outreach with at-risk families and individuals;
- Analyze nutritional sufficiencies and deficiencies in existing emergency food programs; and,
- Develop solutions to generating nutritionally complete, culturally acceptable diets.



Hunger Prevention Advisory Committee

The act established a 13 member Hunger Prevention Advisory Committee 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 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 public members, other than the executive directors serve during the term of office of the Governor who appointed them.

The 13 member Hunger Prevention Advisory Committee is comprised of the following individuals, who have been meeting since 2002:

Name	Agency	Seat	Term expires
Sandy Accomando	Apostles House & St. James CDC	Programs Serving Homeless	1/17/06
Carol Bryrd-Bredbenner	Rutgers University	Nutritionist	1/17/06
Kathleen DiChiara	Community Food Bank of NJ	Emergency Food Program	1/17/06
Hope Holland (for Secretary Kuperus)	Department of Agriculture	DOA	Indefinite
Joe Kunzmann	Somerset County Board of Social Services	CWA Director's Association	Indefinite
Jacques Lebel (for Commissioner Bass-Levin)	Department of Community Affairs	DCA	Indefinite
Bedzaida Mendez *	Food Bank of South Jersey	Emergency Food Provider	1/17/06
Jeanette Page Hawkins (for Acting Commissioner Smith)	Department of Human Services	DHS	Indefinite
Sheldon Presser (for Cecilia Zalkind)	Association for Children of NJ	ACNJ	Indefinite
Sharon Reilly-Tobin	Catholic Community Services	Knowledge of Emergency Food Programs	1/18/06
Mary Ellen Tango	Linden Department of Community Social Services	Municipal Welfare Association	Indefinite
Gina Williams (Chairperson)	Volunteers of America Delaware Valley	Programs serving homeless	1/17/06
VACANT		Knowledge of Emergency Food Programs	

* Ms. Mendez resigned from this post effective March 3, 2006.

Terms for many of the members expired during January 2006. The Department of Human Services has submitted recommendations on appointments/ reappointments to the Governor's Appointment Office.

Subcommittees

The committee also had two working subcommittees specifically focusing on the hunger study and food security.

The hunger study subcommittee worked with staff from Rutgers University who were conducting the hunger study as delineated in the Hunger Prevention and Nutrition Assistance Program Act. The subcommittee met with Rutgers staff from 2002 until October 2005 when the study was completed. Details on this study are described in a later section of this report.

The Food Security subcommittee, initially known as the Nutrition Education subcommittee, was formed to develop strategies to best meet the needs of individuals using Emergency Food Provider services. This group grappled with the enormity of the task, and the divergent needs throughout the state; and realized the best strategies to meet those needs would be through the development of a hunger-related Web site, which would include information on the following:

Service Descriptions

- ▶ What is a food pantry?
- ▶ What is a soup kitchen?

Resources

- ▶ Emergency Food Provider resources (food banks, soup kitchens, pantries, and shelters);
- ▶ Access to the Food Stamp Screening Tool;
- ▶ Links to 211 (211 is a telecommunication resource referral system for social services);
- ▶ Links to other providers such as Women Infants and Children (WIC), County Welfare Agencies (CWA), Municipal Welfare Departments (MWD) and the Department of Agriculture;
- ▶ Links to County Cooperative Extension Offices;
- ▶ Links to the Food Policy Institute;
- ▶ Transportation information to/from county agencies, food banks, soup kitchens and other establishments;

Nutritional Information

- ▶ Nutrition education links and materials including fact sheets providers could easily download for their clients;
- ▶ Recipes;

Food Safety

- ▶ Information on food safety and food handling

Frequently Asked Questions.

This Web site, which is being developed by the DHS, Office of Information Technology, will serve the needs of provider agencies as well as individuals using EFP resources. The Web site, www.endhungernj.net, should be fully operational by the fall of 2006. As of this writing the logo was created, the homepage has been designed, the remaining pages are under development and the corresponding links are being programmed.

The Hunger Prevention Advisory Committee is creating an additional subcommittee to focus on community support, to enhance communication and technology for the EFPs. Many food pantries and soup kitchens lack computer hardware, Internet access, or both. Others have access within their parent organizations but lack technology at the operational/program site. The goals of this subcommittee would be twofold. First, to identify corporations that are willing to donate old/refurbished computers to EFPs; and second, to identify volunteers or volunteer organizations that could help support EFP technology (set up, maintenance, troubleshooting, etc) at the local level. One possibility is for the subcommittee to explore statewide Cooperative Programs; whereby college students could serve as interns to individual EFPs or a cluster of local EFPs to assist them with their technological needs.



Rutgers Study

The New Jersey Hunger Prevention and Nutrition Assistance Program Act allocated up to \$250,000 for Rutgers University to conduct the needs assessment pursuant to Section 5 of the Act. The Act specifies that the needs assessment includes:

1. Identify and quantify, at all steps in the State's food delivery system, wholesome and nutritious food that goes to waste before it can be made available to those in need of such food;
2. Identify and quantify the need for emergency or supplemental feeding for families and individuals in the state;
3. Identify strategies and structures for minimizing spoilage of food resources;
4. Develop a fiscally judicious plan to secure food from loss to deterioration or waste and to transport and apportion that food to emergency feeding programs throughout the State;
5. Develop strategies for behaviorally focused educational outreach with at-risk families and individuals; and
6. Analyze nutritional sufficiencies and deficiencies in existing emergency food programs.

The 400-page report was divided into numerous sections which are described below. A copy of the 'Introduction and Overview with Summary Findings and Recommendations' section is attached. A copy of the full report is provided on the enclosed CD-ROM.

Overview of EFP needs

The Overview of Programs, Needs, and Possibilities for Regional Cooperation component of the study investigated topical areas such as the transportation of food, storage, nutrition education, technology needs, regional cooperation and other issues EFPs face.

Key findings include:

Transportation and food storage

- EFPs are forced to turn away food due to a lack of storage space 20 percent of the time,

and due to food transportation problems 12 percent of the time.

- Providers, including food pantries and soup kitchens, drive to food banks and other sources to pick up about 80 percent of the food they distribute. The remaining 20 percent of the food is delivered.
- EFPs rely heavily on the use of staff and volunteers' personal vehicles for the transportation of food.
- 10 percent of providers are in need of additional refrigeration and 16 percent need additional freezer space. Both are critical to the EFPs ability to provide higher quality foods such as fresh fruits, vegetables, dairy, fish, meats, and eggs.
- 8 percent of providers need additional dry storage space.

Nutrition education

- While only 12 percent of EFPs offer nutrition education classes, 44 percent said they would like to.

Technology

- 75 percent of providers report having a computer and 70 percent claim to have internet access; however "access" was described as computers and internet connections that are owned by staff, volunteers, or parent organizations. In many locations, technical resources are not routinely available to the EFP because they are either shared and/or not housed at the EFP site.

Caseload

- 75 percent of EFPs report an increase in their client caseload from 2003-2004. Their client base is currently 57 percent adults and 43 percent children, with anecdotal information indicating a notable increase in families with small children.

Workforce

- Although not asked in the study, one out of ten EFPs commented about their volunteer workforce, which is the foundation of their existence. Concerns exist as this older population of volunteers ages out.

Survey of New Jersey's Food Manufacturers

A survey of New Jersey Food Manufacturers was conducted to determine if there are wholesome and nutritious foods that may be going to waste that could be contributed to hunger relief organizations. The survey also asked food manufacturers if they currently participate in hunger relief programs, and if not, if they would be interested in doing so. Of the 436 manufacturers contacted, 192 or 44 percent completed the survey. The key findings of this component of the study include:

- ▶ A total of 32 (18 percent) of food manufacturers surveyed indicated that they currently donate food to hunger relief organizations.
- ▶ Combined, these food manufacturers donate a total of 35,000 pounds of food per week to hunger relief organizations.
- ▶ Of the food manufacturers who are not currently donating food, 46 percent were interested in learning more about hunger relief or food-related waste recycling programs.

Survey of New Jersey's Food Pantries and Patrons

The New Jersey Food Pantries: An Overview of their Strengths and Challenges report focused on identifying strategies and structures for minimizing spoilage of food resources and maximizing the availability of wholesome and nutritious foods to those in need. Twenty-one pantries, representing one per county, were surveyed along with 761 food pantry patrons statewide. The key findings include:

- ▶ Nutrient analysis: the food pantries were most effective at providing protein rich foods, fruits, appropriate number of calories for adults

ages 19 - 50; and vitamin and mineral levels, with the exception of calcium.

- ▶ Half of the food pantry patrons reported they did not use all the food they received and one in ten did not know how to use particular foods they received. Fifty-four percent indicated they and their families ate almost all the food items they received from the pantry; and 42 percent said they ate at least half of the food items they received.
- ▶ The high degree of food acceptability and usability suggested the food distributed by the pantries is largely culturally acceptable.
- ▶ The amount of certain foods provided by food pantries, when analyzed by food groups, compared favorably to the recommended amounts for proteins and fruits. However, less than optimal comparisons were found for other food groups. Specifically, fats and sweets were provided in much higher amounts than recommended. Vegetable servings were half to two-thirds of those recommended, and the milk group servings were less than one-third of the daily recommendation.
- ▶ Calcium was significantly below recommended daily allowances.



- More than half of the patrons indicated that they did not have enough food to make it through the month. Even when they added the food received from a food pantry the quantity of food was still insufficient to meet the needs of the majority of food pantry patrons.
- In a survey of food insecure individuals, 27 percent were unfamiliar with the term “food pantry.” Many of these individuals stated they had never heard of a food pantry after it was defined for them; and
- 53 percent of food pantry patrons said that they did not have enough food to make it through the month. Despite the positive contributions food pantries make to food insecure patrons, the need for additional food remains.

Soup Kitchens

“New Jersey Soup Kitchens: An Overview of their Strengths and Challenges” report included the following key findings:

- Soup kitchens play a valuable role in supporting New Jersey’s citizens who are homeless and living in shelters.
- The total calories in the meals served averaged 1,424 per meal, which approached the recommended daily range for adults ages 19-50. This may be advantageous if this is the patrons only meal for the day. On the other hand, it may be an excessive amount of food for patrons who have additional meals per day. The number of meals consumed was not included in the data collection.

Calcium and other Vitamin D rich foods were lacking in food pantries and soup kitchens.

- Soup kitchens are non-existent in some areas of the state.
- Nutrient analysis - calcium and other vitamin D rich foods were lacking from the meals. Sodium intake, however, far exceeded the daily recommended intake for adults.

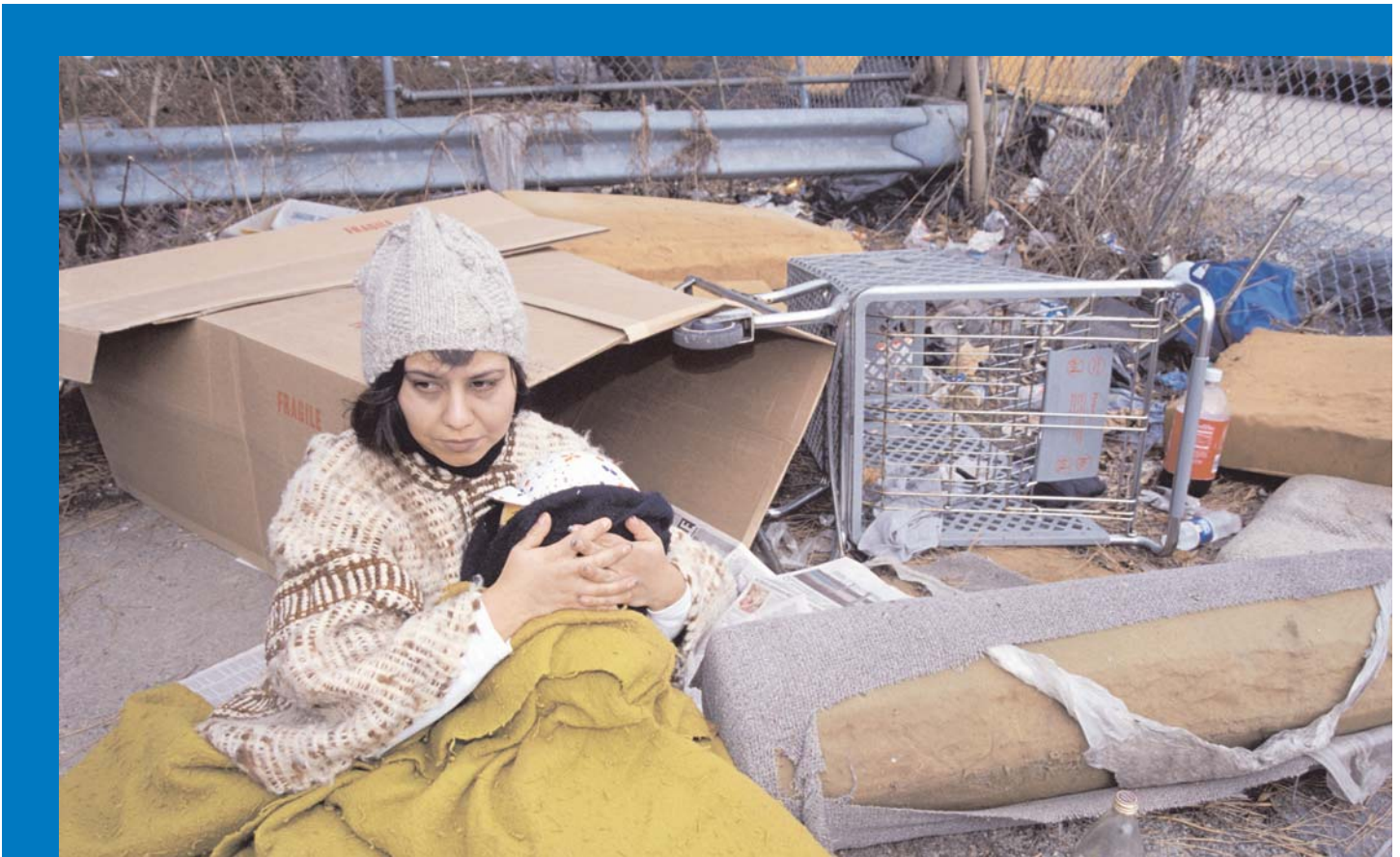
In a follow-up survey in three urban areas including Camden, Cumberland and Essex Counties, 267 individuals who do not use food pantries were interviewed. Nearly one-third of food insecure people interviewed did not know what a soup kitchen was, nor did they know how to find one. Vital resources that could assist families are not well known by the population in need. Community outreach and education needs to occur.

Gap Analysis

The Hunger Prevention Advisory Committee voted to include a Gap Analysis component to the hunger study. This new component used geographical information systems (GIS) mapping techniques to help identify priorities for policy and programmatic decisions. Overlay maps identified food needs, emergency food providers, and poverty data. Sources for data collection included the US Census; existing New Jersey based data resources, and a survey of emergency food providers.

Key findings from the gap analysis include:

- There are far fewer soup kitchens in New Jersey than food pantries. Gloucester County’s only soup kitchen closed and there is only one soup kitchen in the counties of Hunterdon, Salem, Somerset, and Warren.
- Nutrition Education services through the Federal Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) and the Food Stamp Nutrition Education Program (FSNEP) are located in predominantly New Jersey urban centers. Neither service is available in Atlantic, Bergen, Morris, Salem, or Sussex Counties (although services to Salem County are planned).
- Information on Free/Reduced School Meals is distributed to EFP clients less often than information on Food Stamps and WIC.
- WIC recipients are eligible for the Farmers Market Nutrition Program (FMNP) but low-income clients have a difficult time accessing FMNP authorized farmer stands due to transportation barriers. The 2004 WIC redemption rate for WIC recipients was only 61 percent; seniors however, had a 91 percent redemption rate as most counties provide seniors with organized transportation to the farmers markets.



- ▶ Food pantries and soup kitchens often do not have technology (computers and Internet access) to screen their clients for Food Stamp eligibility.
- ▶ New Jersey rural areas experience both significant levels of poverty and the relative lack of emergency food resources.

Nutrition Education

The New Jersey Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) and the New Jersey Food Stamp Nutrition Education Program (FSNEP) are the two nutrition education programs for low-income individuals.

The EFNEP mission is to provide nutrition education to low-income families with young children and to assist them in making behavior changes necessary for the maintenance of nutritionally sound diets. The EFNEP program provides nutrition education services in the counties of Camden, Cape May, Cumberland, Essex, Gloucester, Hudson, Mercer, Middlesex, and Passaic. In fiscal year 2004, EFNEP delivered classes to 4,663 adults and 7,787 youth. Static federal funding over the past 40 years has resulted in significant programmatic reductions over

time; specifically, staffing has decreased by half, the number of counties served has reduced from 11 to 8, and more reductions are planned.

The FSNEP program is funded as part of the State's Food Stamp Program under the USDA Food and Nutrition Service. The goals of FSNEP include improved diets and nutritional welfare; increased knowledge of the essentials of human nutrition; increased ability to select and buy food that satisfies nutritional needs; improved practices in food preparation, storage, safety and sanitation; and increased ability to manage food budgets and related resources such as food stamps.

During fiscal year 2004, FSNEP delivered classes to 3,406 adults and 14,900 youth in the counties of Burlington, Cumberland, Essex, Gloucester, Hunterdon, Mercer, Middlesex, Monmouth, Ocean, Passaic, Salem, Union and Warren. FSNEP services individuals that do not qualify for EFNEP or do not have EFNEP available to them. Five counties, specifically Atlantic, Bergen, Morris, Somerset, and Sussex, have neither the EFNEP nor the FSNEP program.

Recommendations

The hunger study, conducted by Rutgers University, includes approximately 65 recommendations. While the Hunger Prevention Advisory Committee is still reviewing the full report, the committee has voted to accept 12 as priority recommendations, in the categories of food, infrastructure enhancements, outreach, access to services, and support federal feeding programs. The recommendations include:

Food

- Establish a line item in the budget or a funding strategy (license plates, tax return check-off) or other mechanism to subsidize EFP access to more high quality foods. According to the 2005 nutrient analysis provided by food pantries and soup kitchens, the EFP most lacked calcium rich foods (including dairy alternatives) and fresh fruits and vegetables for their clientele. Funding under the 2000 NJ Hunger Prevention and Nutrition Assistance Program Act will be exhausted within FY '07.

Infrastructure

- Develop strategies to establish more soup kitchens, where needed. There are far fewer soup kitchens than food pantries in the state. For the lowest income populations, soup kitchens are in greater need because the homeless, for example, have no place to store or cook food resources. Gloucester County does not have a soup kitchen. Other areas in the state need additional sites to meet the growing needs of families with small children. In addition, service hours of existing providers need to expand and include evening hours and weekends so working poor families could access services.
- The emergency food providers which include soup kitchens, food pantries and shelters use volunteers to “staff” their agencies. Develop volunteer recruitment/retention strategies for food pantries and soup kitchens. Strategies need to be developed to assist in recruiting more volunteers, retaining those volunteers,

reimbursing volunteers for their expenses (travel reimbursements for delivering food, etc.) and rewarding volunteers.

Outreach

- Develop literature, in various languages, to inform low-income New Jerseyans of services provided by soup kitchens and food pantries. This literature could be distributed in municipal and county welfare offices, Community Action Agencies, Women Infants and Children (WIC) sites and other community-based locations to meet the needs of food insecure New Jerseyans who don't know what food pantries and soup kitchens are and how they could be accessed.
- Encourage participation of low-income and food insecure children in free and reduced price school meal and summer feeding programs. Explore waivers to ease regulations for schools in New Jersey to more easily serve food insecure children.
- Create a Hunger related Web site that will include information on food banks, soup kitchens, food pantries, shelters, (that want to be publicly listed); nutrition education materials and recipes for EFP clients; foster communication, strategic planning, best practices and training for EFP operators; describe/define the different kinds of emergency food and related services that are available including soup kitchens, food pantries, shelters, WIC, WIC Authorized Farm Markets, Food Stamps, County Welfare Offices, Municipal Welfare Offices, and other social service providers, free and reduced price school breakfast and lunch programs, nutrition education; provide electronic links to relevant sites and literature that may be of interest to New Jersey Emergency Food Providers and their clients; link with NJ Transit site for bus schedules, create GIS mapping of EFP sites; link to 211 call center; provide links to information fact

sheets on dietary controlled diseases such as blood pressure, diabetes, and cholesterol, to name a few. [Note: This recommendation is currently being implemented. The Web site will be known as www.endhungernj.net; and should be operational by the fall of 2006.

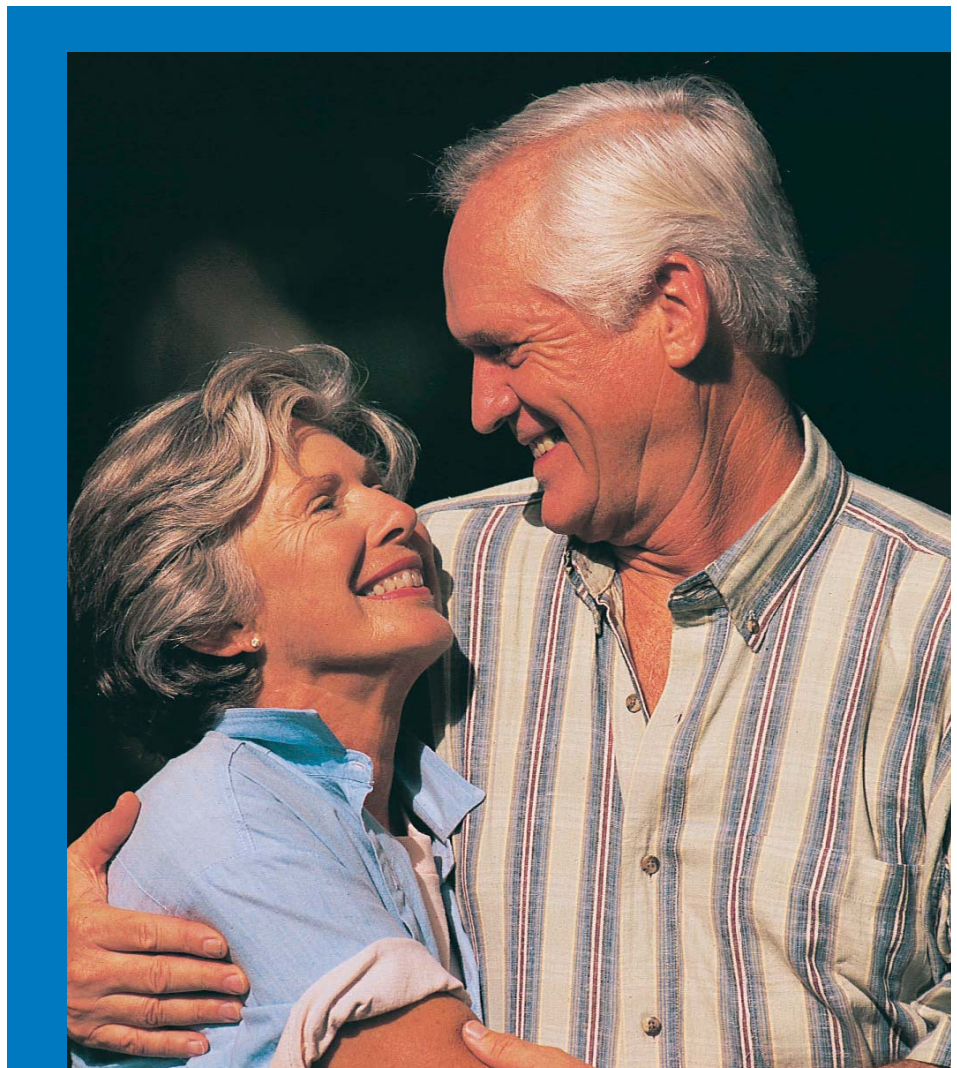
Access

- Develop strategies to provide food pantries and soup kitchens with a computer and/or Internet access, as needed, to obtain nutritional information to better assist their clients. Some EFPs have access to a computer and internet hook-up through their parent organizations (agencies, churches, etc.), although they are not readily accessible on their premises. Strategies need to be developed to acquire and/or refurbish computers and obtain internet access for food pantries and soup kitchens so they could access nutrition education information, best practices, and encourage communication between EFPs.
- Develop strategies to assist EFPs in obtaining and maintaining suitable vehicles to transport food from donors. Many EFPs struggle with vehicles that are in poor condition, borrowed, and not regularly available, and/or are not large enough. Some EFPs have no vehicles at all and rely on their volunteers vehicles to haul food from the food banks and/or to their home-bound clients. Some have to turn away food due to transportation difficulties.
- Develop strategies to assist EFPs in obtaining large scale refrigerators and freezers, as needed. EFPs have challenges in accessing cold food storage espe-

cially for high quality foods. Large-scale refrigerators and freezers are usually in short supply and yet much needed to warehouse large donations and food bank purchases.

Support Federal Feeding Programs

- Encourage more farm retailers to participate and to locate markets near WIC offices.
- Improve the capacity of farmer's market retailers to use Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) technology to accept Food Stamps.
- Train EFP volunteers on the Food Stamp Screening Tool application so they can assist their clientele in determining their eligibility for benefits.



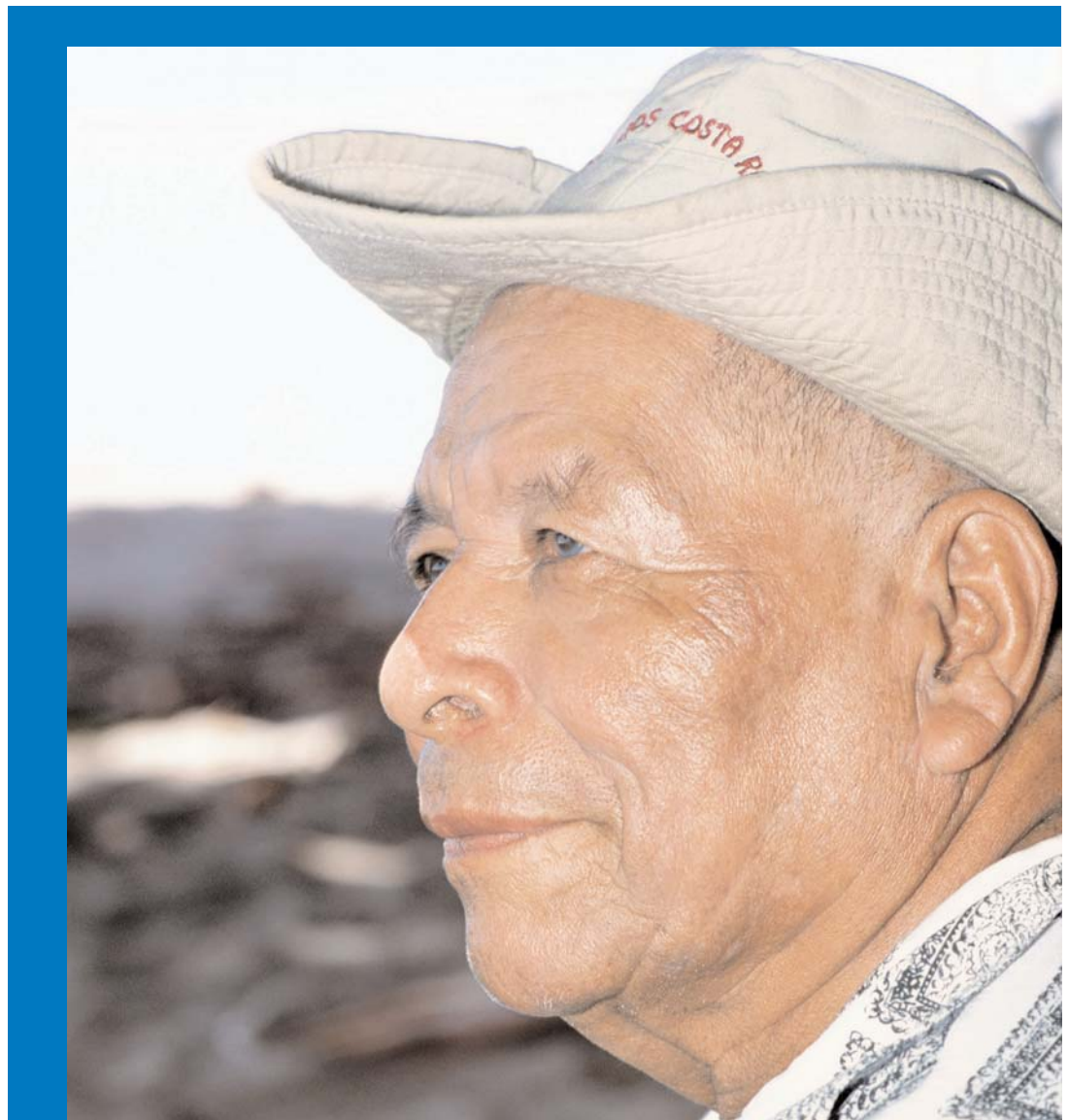
National Perspective

America's Second Harvest, the nation's food bank network has released Hunger in America 2006, the largest and most comprehensive study of domestic hunger ever conducted. The study discusses how some people in our 'land of plenty' have to make the decision between paying for food or other household necessities. This study, which conducted 52,000 face-to-face client interviews and 30,000 surveys of local charitable agencies nationwide found that 25.35 million low-income people each year, or roughly 9 percent of all Americans receive emergency hunger relief. This represents an 8 percent increase since the Hunger in America 2001, and an 18 percent increase since Hunger 1997: the Faces and Facts reports were released.

The study found 66 percent of all households receiving emergency food have annual incomes below the federal poverty level, or less than \$15,670 a year for a family of three in 2004. The average monthly income for a household served is \$860, with 10 percent of all adults interviewed at emergency feeding sites having no income at all. In addition to low incomes, clients did not have a lot of resources; 12 percent were homeless, 47 percent did not have access to a working car, and only 35 percent were currently receiving food stamps. Of those receiving food stamp benefits, clients reported that the food stamp benefits only

lasted an average of 2.5 weeks a month. Too many clients indicated that they had been forced to choose between food and utilities (41 percent), food and rent/mortgage (35 percent); and food and medicine/medical care (32 percent).

In 2005, more than one third (36 percent) of all households served through the American's Second Harvest Network had one or more adults working. Unfortunately for many recipients, income from employment is not sufficient to make ends meet.



Populations Served by Emergency Food Providers in New Jersey

The 2005 The Ends Don't Meet report published by the Association of Children of New Jersey (ACNJ) indicates the trajectory of New Jersey households living in poverty is steadily increasing. This fact continues to be obscured by the co-existing wealth in the state. In 2003, New Jersey had the highest median household income in the country. However, ACNJ notes that New Jersey ranks the 42nd worst in the United States for income parity. In addition, child poverty increased 20 percent from 2000-2003; this is almost four times the national average of 4.6 percent. The statistics in New Jersey reflect a national trend away from economic security for all. Yet New Jersey's situation is particularly severe. Federal poverty guidelines are calculated using the cost of food alone. The guidelines do not take into consideration the cost of housing, child care, transportation, health care and different tax burdens.

In 2002, 19 percent of families with children in New Jersey were calculated to be working poor or poor according to federal classifications of low income. However in the same year, 34 percent of New Jersey families could not afford to pay for food, housing, child care, and transportation according to The Real Cost of Living 2005: The Self-Sufficiency Standard for New Jersey, which takes these costs into account. Self-Sufficiency Standards have been completed in New Jersey in 1999, 2002, and 2005. The rising self-sufficiency wage requirements are due to an increase in the cost of housing, child care, and transportation, as well as an increase in taxes.

According to the hunger study Improving Food Security for New Jersey Families: Identifying Food Source, Need and Tools for Connecting, conducted by Rutgers University, the number of people visiting New Jersey Emergency Food Providers is rising. Preliminary data suggests that the number and percent of children and families, working poor and new immigrant groups account for a large part of this increase.

In their survey of New Jersey EFPs, 75 percent of the providers reported an increase in their client load from 2003 through 2004. Of the 19 percent who reported no change for that period, it is known that

many cap client growth as they do not have the labor or the food to serve additional people.

The study cites 43 percent of EFP clients are children. This is consistent with anecdotal reports from the EFPs noting a significant increase in families with small children. It also notes that food pantries appear to be a greater source of nutrition for families, including children, than are soup kitchens.

43 percent of emergency food provider clients are children.

Of the food insecure persons interviewed through the study:

- 22 percent of those who used a food pantry were employed; and
- 18 percent of those who used a soup kitchen were employed;

This group of working poor, as defined as the population between 130 percent (maximum income for Food Stamp eligibility) and 200 percent of the US Census Poverty Guidelines, often live in the urban fringe, mingle with more economically secure populations, and have little experience in availing themselves of emergency food resources. Some are unfamiliar with EFP services or perceive themselves as ineligible; others have language barriers, cultural reticence, or social stigma creating a challenge for them. This population of working poor is growing and is significantly impacting the emergency food provider system. This fact, coupled with a recent decline in food donations to food banks, pantries, and soup kitchens, has created a dire need for additional funding for the EFPs. As delineated in a later section of this report, the Hunger Prevention Advisory Committee has provided supplemental funds to the six regional food banks for the acquisition of food to serve those who are food insecure. Unfortunately, funds are now running low, and strategies need to be developed to secure a funding stream to assist the EFPs. Ideas for funding include a check off on the state income tax and/or a specialty license plate; however, legislative sponsorship is needed.

Overview of Funding and Expenditures

Funding: \$5 million allocation from one-time federal TANF funds through the New Jersey Hunger Prevention and Nutrition Assistance Program Act.

Expenditures:

\$4,190,000	Allocated to the six regional food banks for the acquisition of food (84 percent)
\$ 250,000	Allocated to Rutgers University, for a hunger study (five percent)
\$ 40,000	Allocated for the development and operational costs of a hunger Web site (one percent)
<u>\$ 520,000</u>	Pending obligation (10 percent)
\$5,000,000	

84 percent of funds were for the allocation of food through the six regional food banks.

Details on the Expenditures

Supporting Emergency Feeding Organizations (EFO) \$500,000. The Department of Agriculture requested \$125,000 for each of four years, for a total of \$500,000 to assist in supporting the emergency feeding organizations in New Jersey. These funds assisted with the administrative costs associated with the distribution of United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) food commodities through The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP), which distributes in excess of ten million pounds of food to needy families and children throughout New Jersey. TEFAP reimburses agencies eight cents per pound to handle food. According to food bank audit reports, actual costs to distribute food are documented at twenty-one cents per pound. Funds were utilized to pay the difference.

During 2004, the Hunger Prevention Advisory Committee approved the allocation of \$250,000 for two years of funding, from January 1, 2004 through December 31, 2005. During December 2005, the Committee approved the remaining allocation of an additional \$250,000 for the period of January 1, 2006 through December 31, 2007.

For the first year of funding, a complete records review of EFO summary reports for the month of July 2004 was conducted, to determine the number of TANF eligible families and children served

through the initiative. The results for that month were as follows:

- ▶ Total Recipients served at food pantries (for one month) 133,953
- ▶ Total TANF eligible families served at food pantries (for one month) 26,923
- ▶ Total TANF eligible recipients served at food pantries (for one month) 98,296
- ▶ Percent of recipients who are TANF eligible 73 %

Gleaning \$90,000

Farmers Against Hunger is a fresh produce collection and distribution program that annually distributes approximately 1.3 million pounds of food to New Jersey residents who are food-insecure.

As many as 50 farmers donate fresh produce to Farmers Against Hunger each year. They donate the produce for various reasons; sometimes there is an overabundance of a particular item and the market is flooded with this item, making the price they receive very low. Other times the produce may be “seconds,” which often means it is too large, too small, or misshapen. This produce does not meet the strict Jersey Fresh standards, but is still perfectly good to eat.

Farmers Against Hunger collects the produce and takes it to central distribution sites, currently located in Browns Mills, Camden, Mount Holly, Princeton and Trenton. At these sites representatives from hunger-relief organizations gather to receive produce for their community members who are food insecure. In addition, during the entire harvest season extra produce is taken to the state’s food banks for

distribution. Nearly 6,000 people are helped each week by Farmers Against Hunger through organizations at the various locations.

Each year Farmers Against Hunger holds many gleanings at farms. This is where community members come to the farm and pick the produce. Gleaners include school students, volunteers from corporate America and inmates from the New Jersey Department of Corrections. Gleanings are an excellent way to teach the non-farm public about agriculture in New Jersey, and allow them to experience first-hand what takes place on our farms today. The gleaning piece of the program has grown each year and now includes over 1,000 volunteers each harvest season. The \$90,000 in funding assisted in the hiring of a full-time program coordinator, a full time driver, and two part-time employees during the busy summer months.

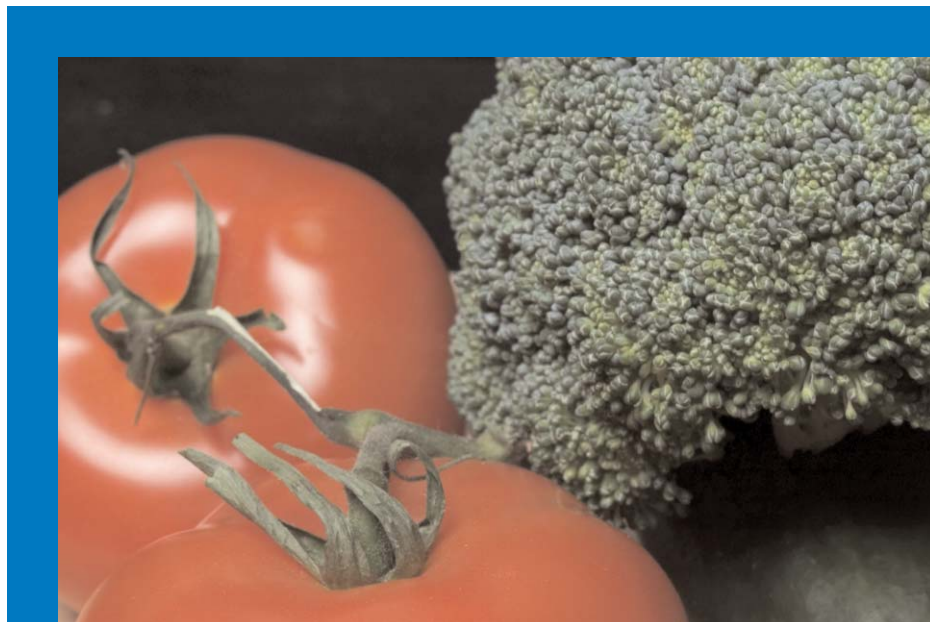
Rutgers Study \$250,000

As specified in the legislation, up to \$250,000 could be allocated to Rutgers University to conduct a hunger study. The full allocation was utilized for the study which was completed during October 2005. Details on this study are included in an earlier section of this report.

Funds for Food, CY 2002 Allocation of \$600,000

\$600,000 in funds was distributed to the six regional food banks for the acquisition of food to serve individuals and families that were food insecure. Funds were distributed to:

- Community Food Bank of New Jersey, Hillside
- Community Foodbank of NJ (Southern Branch), Egg Harbor Twp.
- Mercer Street Friends Food Cooperative, Trenton
- NORWESCAP Food Bank, Phillipsburg



- Foodbank of Monmouth and Ocean Counties, Neptune
- Foodbank of South Jersey, Pennsauken

Funds for Food, CY 2004 Allocation of \$1,500,000 were also distributed to:

- Community Food Bank of New Jersey, Hillside
- Community Foodbank of NJ (Southern Branch), Egg Harbor Twp.
- Mercer Street Friends Food Cooperative, Trenton
- NORWESCAP Food Bank, Phillipsburg
- Foodbank of Monmouth and Ocean Counties, Neptune
- Foodbank of South Jersey, Pennsauken

129,196 unduplicated families and 569,929 individuals were served by this allocation which covered the contract period of January 1, 2004 through December 31, 2004.

Funds for Food, February 2005 allocation (\$500,000)

Food donations decreased for most of the food banks, soup kitchens, and food pantries in New Jersey. The number of people and families with children, who were requesting food assistance at the Emergency Food Provider agencies, was increasing.

EFPs were having a difficult time serving those who were food insecure, so the Hunger Prevention Advisory Committee allocated \$500,000 in funding for the purchase of food to the six regional food banks, as identified above.

The contract period for this allocation was January 1, 2005 through June 30, 2005. This allocation allowed the food banks to service 74,011 unduplicated families and 487,574 individuals.

Funds for Food, November 2005 allocation (\$1 million)

New Jersey Food Banks, Soup Kitchens, and Food Pantries were all experiencing significant declines in donations during 2005. Some EFPs stated their cupboards were bare, others stated donations had declined as much as 50-70 percent. Many were speculating that decline was a type of “donor fatigue” following hurricane Katrina, Rita, and others.

The Hunger Prevention Advisory Committee allocated \$1 million for distribution to the six regional food banks, for the purchase of food. The allocations were developed from a formula, based upon population served.

Data on the number of individuals and unduplicated families served through this funding allocation will be available sixty days after the contract period ends. The contract period for this allocation was December 1, 2005 through November 30, 2006.

Of the \$5 million in TANF funds allocated under the New Jersey Hunger Prevention and Nutrition Assistance Program Act, \$4,480,000 has been expended and/or obligated to date. A balance of \$520,000 remains. Discussions are underway to utilize remaining funds for improvements to the EFP system and infrastructure, as identified in the Committee’s recommendations.



Hunger Web Site (\$40,000)

The Hunger Prevention Advisory Committee, through its Food Security subcommittee, is in the process of creating a Web site to fulfill the primary goal of nutrition education. The Web site, which will be known as www.endhungernj.net will be operational by the fall of 2006 and will increase clients' access to hunger related resources and nutrition education materials including:

- ▶ What is a Food Pantry;
- ▶ What is a Soup Kitchen;
- ▶ Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ);
- ▶ Emergency Food Provider resources (food banks, soup kitchens, pantries, and shelters);
- ▶ Access to the Food Stamp Screening Tool;
- ▶ Links to 211 (211 is a telecommunication resource referral system for social services);
- ▶ Nutrition Education links and materials including fact sheets providers could easily download for their clients;
- ▶ Recipes;
- ▶ Information on Food Safety and Food Handling;
- ▶ Links to other providers such as Women Infants and Children (WIC), County Welfare Agencies, Municipal Welfare Agencies, and the Department of Agriculture;
- ▶ Links to County Cooperative Extension offices;
- ▶ Links to the Food Policy Institute; and

- ▶ Transportation information to/from county agencies, food banks, soup kitchens and other establishments

This Web site, which is being developed by the DHS Office of Information Technology, will serve the needs of provider agencies as well as individuals using EFP resources.



Next Steps/Need for Legislative Support

The working poor population in New Jersey continues to grow and is significantly impacting upon the emergency food resources in the state. With 75 percent of the emergency food providers surveyed reporting an increase in their client growth from 2003 through 2004; and others capping their client growth as they do not have the labor or the food to serve additional people, food insecurity remains a major issue. Preliminary data suggests that the number and percent of children and families, working poor and new immigrant groups account for a large part of this increase.

75 percent of EFPs surveyed reported an increase in their client load.

While the number of food insecure residents has been increasing, emergency food providers have noted significant decreases in food donations, some providers reporting a decline as much as 50-70 percent. This increased need for services, and decreased level of food donations has put New

Jersey's emergency food provider system into a crisis situation. The Hunger Prevention Advisory Committee has tried to respond to this situation, by allocating funds to the six regional food banks for the acquisition of food. Although the funding has helped, long term solutions need to be developed. Funding streams need to be identified to assist providers in acquiring food for individuals and families who are food insecure. In addition, funding is needed to enhance the emergency food provider system.

Although a small amount of the original TANF funding remains, an ongoing funding stream needs to be identified to assist with the acquisition of emergency food, and to enhance the emergency food provider system. The Department of Human Services, the Legislature, and the Hunger Prevention Advisory Committee need to work together to develop long term funding strategies to address the issue of hunger in New Jersey. Current funding is limited, with no potential for renewal. New funding strategy ideas include a check off box on State income tax returns, a specialty license plate or creating a line item in the budget.

