



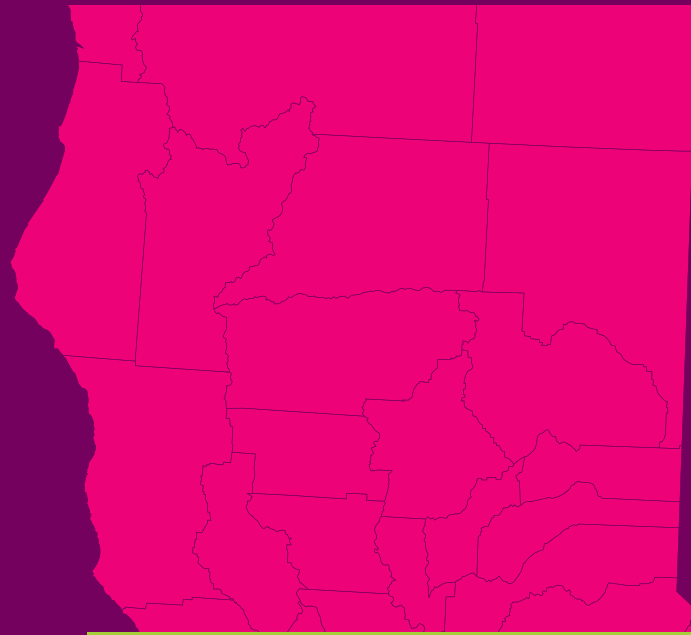
H U N G E R F A C T S

A REPORT BY THE LOS ANGELES
REGIONAL FOOD BANK

LOS ANGELES REGIONAL



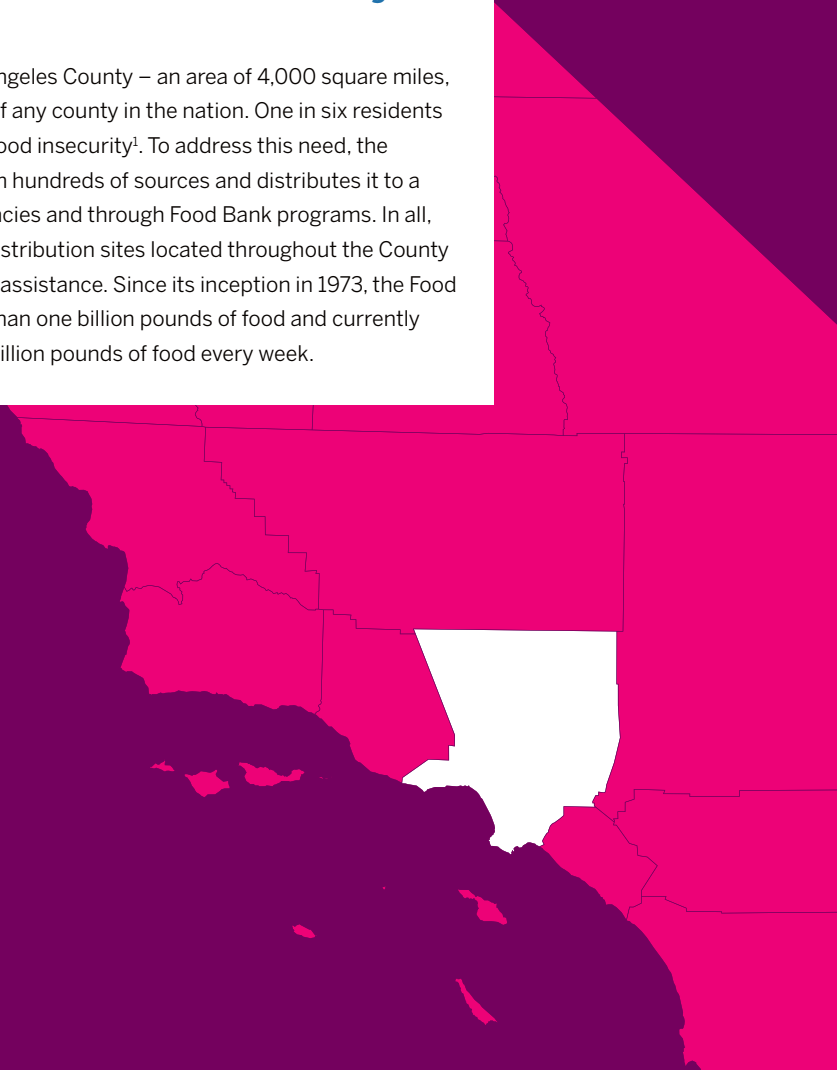
Fighting Hunger. Giving Hope.



#HungerFact

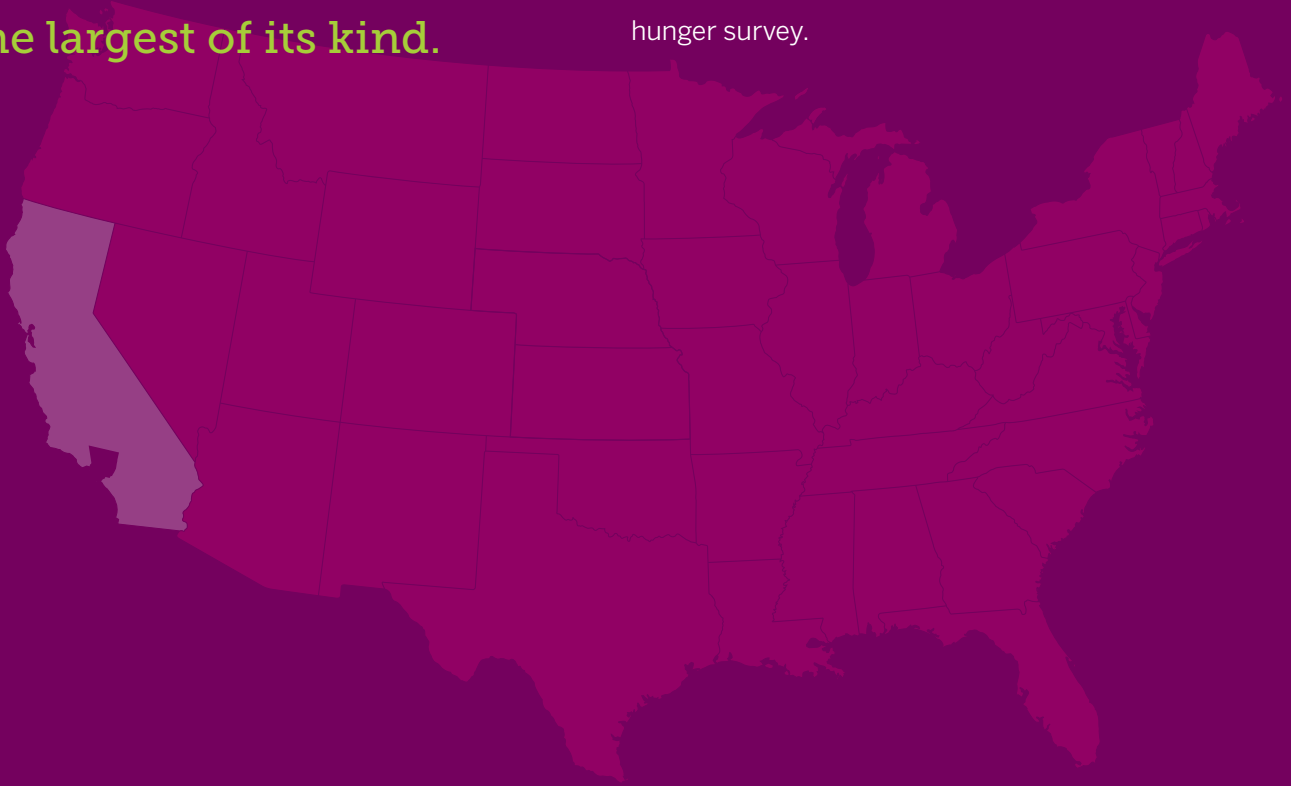
The Los Angeles Regional Food Bank is one of the oldest and largest affiliates in the Feeding America network.

The Food Bank serves Los Angeles County – an area of 4,000 square miles, with the largest population of any county in the nation. One in six residents of L.A. County experiences food insecurity¹. To address this need, the Food Bank collects food from hundreds of sources and distributes it to a network of 680 partner agencies and through Food Bank programs. In all, there are more than 1,000 distribution sites located throughout the County serving people seeking food assistance. Since its inception in 1973, the Food Bank has distributed more than one billion pounds of food and currently distributes more than one million pounds of food every week.



Every four years, Feeding America—the nation’s leading domestic hunger-relief charity—publishes *Hunger in America*, a national hunger study that is the largest of its kind.

As a member of Feeding America, the Los Angeles Regional Food Bank conducted the local survey of clients receiving food assistance and the agencies served by the Food Bank. This report summarizes the results of the client and agency surveys and compiles other local data regarding the state of hunger in our community. This is the fourth time that the Food Bank has participated in the national hunger survey.



OVERVIEW

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THE PEOPLE WE SERVE

#HungerFact

The Food Bank serves 280,500 unduplicated individuals on a monthly basis.

Many of these clients report returning to partner agencies multiple times in a single month due to their inability to purchase sufficient amounts of food.



#HungerFact

The Food Bank reaches nearly 7.1 million duplicated individuals annually through its network of partner agencies.

The vast majority of people served require food assistance multiple times throughout the year, with an estimated 7.1 million individuals served through food pantry distribution or meal programs. On average, clients receive food assistance approximately nine times annually.



#HungerFact

Nearly one quarter of clients served are children under the age of 18.

Though the most common client age group is between 30 and 49 years (26 percent), 24 percent of clients receiving food assistance are children under the age of 18². Seniors age 65 or older comprise 12 percent of all clients receiving food assistance.



Clients face enormous challenges and barriers to ensure they have a sufficient amount of food to eat.

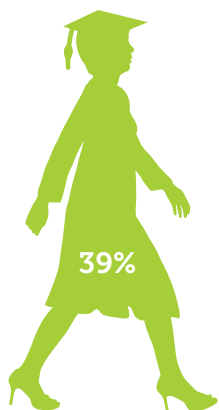
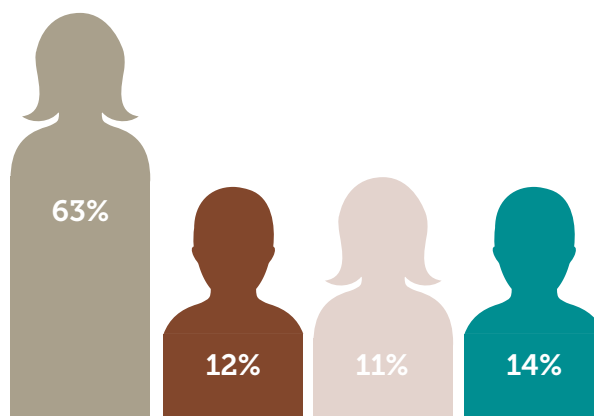
Hunger affects all groups of people regardless of education level, employment status or ethnicity.



#HungerFact

Minorities compose the majority of clients served by the Food Bank.

This includes 63 percent Latino, 12 percent Black or African American, 11 percent Caucasian and 14 percent some other race or ethnicity, including Asian or Pacific Islander.



#HungerFact

Most adult clients are high school graduates with one in seven clients seeking to increase their level of education.

The client study found that 39 percent of adult clients have attained a high school diploma or General Equivalency Diploma (GED), while 25 percent have attended some college or received a college degree. Nine percent of adult clients report being in school full time, while an additional five percent report attending school part time.

#HungerFact

Many households facing hunger include veterans or military personnel.

Approximately 13 percent of households report that at least one member of the household is a veteran of the United States Armed Forces, a member of the Reserves or a member of the National Guard.





Most clients live in permanent housing, but many face serious challenges.

#HungerFact

The “bread winner” in most client households has held a job in the last 12 months.

Employment status of the “most-employed person”³ in a client household has a profound effect on the household members’ need for food program services. For 59 percent of client households, the “most-employed person” worked for pay in the last 12 months. However, in 58 percent of client households, that person is not currently employed and 26 percent are actively looking for work. Among client households in which that person is not working or actively seeking work, 62 percent are disabled, 21 percent are retired and 17 percent include grandparents who are responsible for the grandchildren living with them.

#HungerFact

Forty-nine percent of client households earn less than \$10,000 per year.

According to the California Budget Project⁴, a single adult in Los Angeles needs an annual income of \$32,625 to “make ends meet.” This is defined as the ability to pay for rent, utilities, transportation, healthcare, food and taxes.

64% of clients live in households

WITH THREE PEOPLE OR FEWER



#HungerFact

Ninety-two percent of Food Bank clients live in permanent housing.

Many who live in permanent housing report struggling to pay the rent or mortgage because of tight budgets. Of these clients, 25 percent report living in at least two residences during the past 12 months, while 16 percent report facing an eviction or foreclosure within the past five years. The eight percent of client households that lack permanent housing report living in a shelter, temporary motel room, on the street or in their vehicle.

#HungerFact

Charitable food assistance is not just a safety net, it is essential to “make ends meet” for 76 percent of clients who incorporate charitable food assistance into their monthly food budgets – planning to acquire food from meal or grocery programs served by the Food Bank on a regular basis.

Twenty-four percent wait until they run out of food before seeking food assistance. In both cases, the income of clients is being allocated to pay for other basic necessities such as rent and utilities.

#HungerFact

The most common household size is two to three members.

Client household size is relatively small, with 64 percent having three or fewer members. Thirty-one percent of households have four to six members and only five percent have more than six members in the household.



"This is truly a blessing for this community," Cynthia Beck, a client in Pearblossom, said. "Half my income goes to rent. I don't have a car and there is limited public transportation. It's difficult living here and it's not easy to get food."



THE ORGANIZATIONS WE SERVE

Most of the Food Bank's partner agencies are volunteer-led, faith-based organizations that rely heavily on the Food Bank to provide a variety of nutritious food to a diverse base of clients throughout Los Angeles County.

#HungerFact

Agencies are struggling to meet client demand and have been forced to cut back on services.

Despite operating on very tight budgets with support from the Food Bank, 41 percent of agencies report having "somewhat less" or "a lot less" food than needed to meet their clients' needs. Government cutbacks and economic conditions have resulted in 30 percent of agencies reporting the need to cut back on services. To cope, 39 percent of agencies now limit how often clients can receive food during a given time period. Forty-three percent of agencies report turning away clients frequently or occasionally because they run out of food.



The Food Bank is a Critical Resource for Hunger-Relief Programs



"We would be devastated if we stopped receiving food from the Los Angeles Regional Food Bank," St. Francis Center Chief Operating Officer Jose Ramirez said. "About 75 percent of the food we distribute through our weekly Pantry Program comes from the L.A. Regional Food Bank. Our families currently receive, on average, about 50-60 pounds of fresh food each visit. Without the help of the Food Bank, our [clients] would struggle to provide healthy food for their families."

THE FOOD BANK PROVIDES

Nearly 70% of all food distributed by its partner agencies



60% of agencies are faith-based organizations



#HungerFact

If the Food Bank's partner agencies no longer received food from the Food Bank, 85 percent report that their ability to serve clients would be greatly affected.

Currently, the Food Bank provides nearly 70 percent of all food distributed by agency partners. If the Food Bank's operations were to be disrupted, many vulnerable populations – including children and seniors – would be at an increased risk for hunger.

#HungerFact

Agencies are predominantly volunteer-driven programs that are tied to faith-based institutions.

More than half of all Food Bank partner agencies, 51 percent, are operated solely by volunteers. Additionally, 60 percent of all agencies are faith-based organizations or located at a place of worship.

#HungerFact

While all of the Food Bank's partner agencies provide food assistance, nearly half of all agencies provide nutrition education services to clients.

Of those agencies, 22 percent provide cooking classes or demonstrations and 34 percent offer nutrition workshops, classes or meetings with dietitians. In addition, nearly 35 percent of partner agencies provide services that assist clients with accessing benefits from the CalFresh Program.⁵

32% of households lack health insurance of any kind (including Medicaid)



of client households have incomes of **\$10,000 OR LESS PER YEAR**

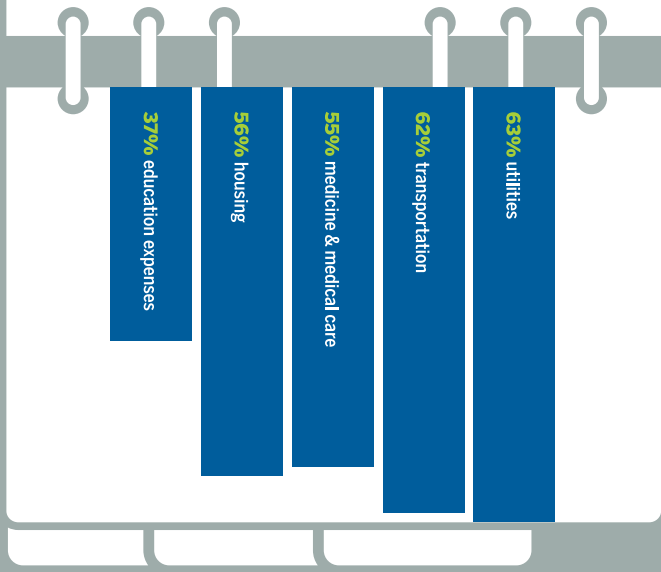
DIFFICULT CHOICES

76%

of households incorporate charitable food assistance into their monthly food budgets

EVERY MONTH

L.A. households make choices between paying for food and: ➔



EMPLOYMENT

AGENCIES RELY HEAVILY ON THE FOOD BANK

THE FOOD BANK PROVIDES NEARLY

70%

of all food distributed by its partner agencies' food programs



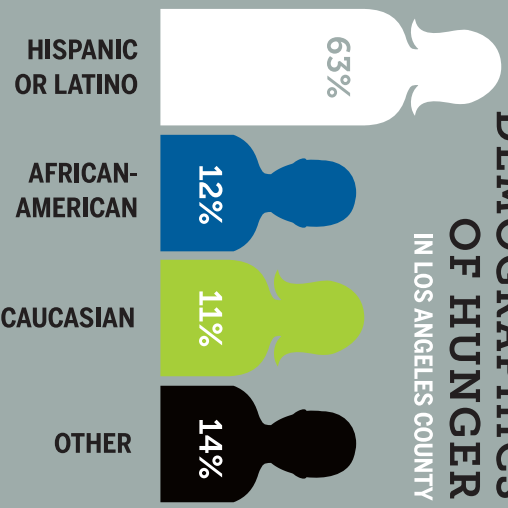
43%

of L.A. County-based agencies reported the necessity of reductions – **CUTTING HOURS OF OPERATION, LAYING OFF STAFF AND/OR LIMITING SERVICE AREA**

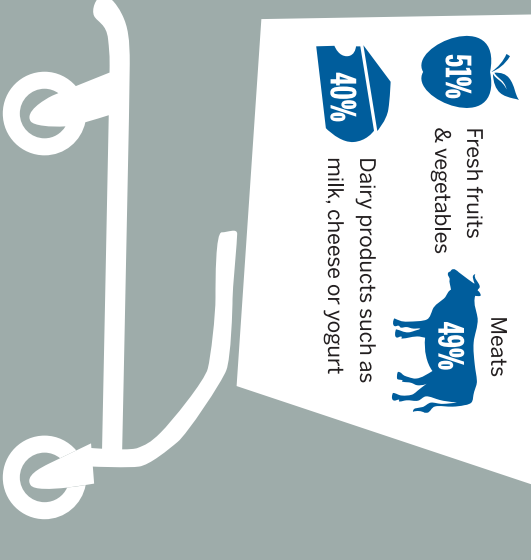
85%

of programs reported that no longer receiving food from the Food Bank **WOULD HAVE A MAJOR EFFECT ON THEIR PROGRAMS**

DEMOGRAPHICS OF HUNGER IN LOS ANGELES COUNTY



MOST-DESIRED PRODUCTS



HUNGER

IN LOS ANGELES COUNTY

H U N G E R F A C T S

THE FOOD BANK SERVES
280,500

INDIVIDUALS
MONTHLY

THE FOOD BANK REACHES
7.1 MILLION

INDIVIDUALS ANNUALLY

HUNGER IMPACTS

1 IN 6 PEOPLE
16% OF THE COUNTRY'S
POPULATION

(Equivalent to the total population
of the San Fernando Valley)

AGE

12% of clients served are
seniors age 65 or older

24% of clients served are children
under the age of 18



POVERTY

66% of client households in
Los Angeles County fall at or
below **100% OF THE FEDERAL**
POVERTY LEVEL



92%

of client households are residing in
NON-TEMPORARY HOUSING

HOUSING

of households do
not have a stove
or hot plate for
cooking

9%

do not have
access to a place
to preserve fresh
food, such as a
refrigerator

13%

HEALTH

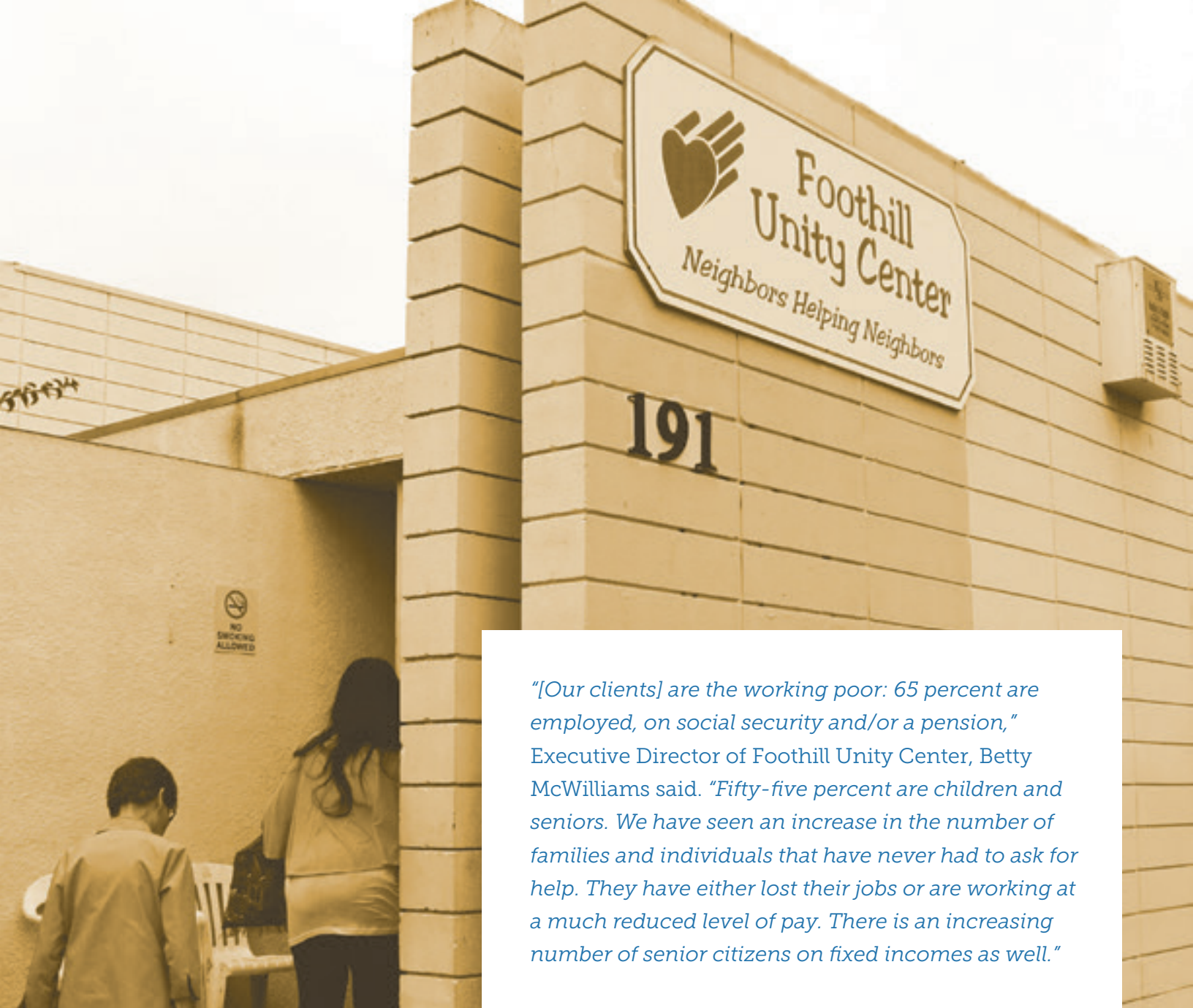
of households have a
member with diabetes

31%

of households
have a member
with high blood
pressure

52%

HOUSEHOLD SIZE



"[Our clients] are the working poor: 65 percent are employed, on social security and/or a pension," Executive Director of Foothill Unity Center, Betty McWilliams said. "Fifty-five percent are children and seniors. We have seen an increase in the number of families and individuals that have never had to ask for help. They have either lost their jobs or are working at a much reduced level of pay. There is an increasing number of senior citizens on fixed incomes as well."





FOOD INSECURITY IMPACTS

1.6 million
residents
OF LOS ANGELES COUNTY



The Impact of Hunger



#HungerFact

Food insecurity impacts one in six people in L.A. County.

Feeding America launched the *Map the Meal Gap*⁶ project in order to provide local estimates for the number of people experiencing food insecurity across the nation. An estimated 1.6 million L.A. County residents (16 percent of the population) live in households that experience food insecurity.

#HungerFact

Twenty-six percent of children in L.A. County live in households that experience food insecurity.

An estimated 620,000 children in the County are food insecure. For this reason, the Food Bank has designed programs that provide children with nutritious meals.

#HungerFact

Two thirds of client households fall at or below the poverty level.⁷

Comparing annual income to the federal poverty level, 66 percent of client households fall at or below 100 percent of the poverty level, with an additional 23 percent falling below 185 percent of the poverty level (the threshold used to calculate numerous federal benefits).

Hungry families make difficult trade-offs to ensure they have sufficient amounts of food.



#HungerFact

A majority of individuals report cutting the size of their meals or skipping meals in the last year.

Many client households report experiencing food insecurity and having to choose between paying for food or medicine (55 percent), food or utilities (63 percent), or food or transportation (62 percent) at some point throughout the year. Nearly one-third of households are faced with these difficult decisions every month.

#HungerFact

Almost a third of Food Bank client households lack health insurance of any kind.

Many clients struggle with poor health and many lack health insurance to cover their medical expenses. Nearly 12 percent report being in poor health, 33 percent report being in fair health, and 20 percent report that another member of their household is in poor health. Illnesses and a lack of medical insurance present a substantial financial burden for many clients.

#HungerFact

Most households purchase inexpensive, unhealthy food, even eating food past its expiration date.

Clients employ a variety of strategies to increase the amount of food they can purchase or make limited amounts of food last. These include purchasing inexpensive, unhealthy food (76 percent), eating food past its expiration date (50 percent), receiving help from family or friends (50 percent) and watering down food or drinks (43 percent).

#HungerFact

For 87 percent of clients on CalFresh, the food benefits do not last the month.

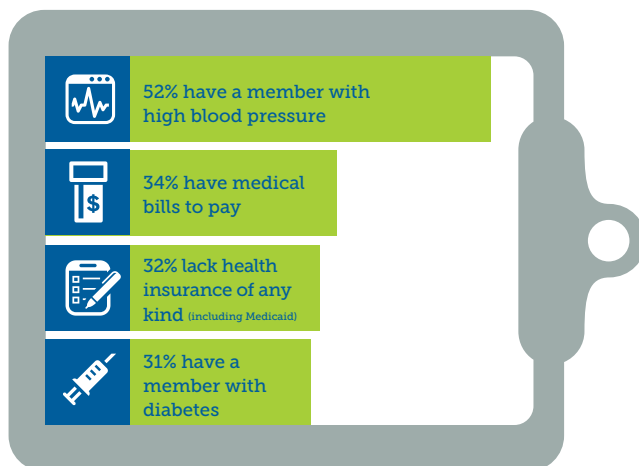
Food distribution – the primary function of the Food Bank – merely alleviates hunger, but does not solve the chronic problem. The government-funded CalFresh Program provides 37 percent of client households with food resources, which can be the foundation for developing long-range solutions to hunger. However, 87 percent of CalFresh recipients report that the benefit lasts less than three weeks, with 13 percent reporting that it lasts only one week or less.

#HungerFact

The majority of food-insecure clients are eligible for government assistance programs, but are not utilizing them.

According to *Map the Meal Gap* data provided by Feeding America, 60 percent of food-insecure people in L.A. County are eligible for the CalFresh Program based on their income. Though many clients are eligible for assistance, 34 percent of client households report never having applied for CalFresh. When asked why they have not applied, 40 percent of clients said they did not realize they were eligible.

A Poor Diet is Related to Poor Health in Client Households





"I like the fresh fruit and vegetables they offer, but I love the veggies most. You can do more, cook more, with vegetables. I'm on a bit of a health kick right now," Maria, a retired nurse said.

Without the food pantry, it would be much more difficult for Maria to eat well. *"Everywhere you look, the price of things are going up: rent, utilities, food, they all cost more than they did a few years ago. Prices go up, but my monthly check stays the same. The one check doesn't last the whole month anymore."*



IMPLICATIONS

#HungerFacts: A Report by the Los Angeles Regional Food Bank reflects that Los Angeles County has been slow to recover from the Great Recession of 2008 and 2009. A significant

segment of the population in the County continues to experience food insecurity, thereby increasing the demand for food assistance. The Food Bank's distribution volume has increased by more than 75 percent since the year before the recession and, even with this increase, demand for charitable food assistance continues to outpace supply.

Many residents of the County are surviving by making choices between paying for food and other basic necessities such as rent, utilities and medication. Given that the County's unemployment rate remains higher than the national average and rents are among the highest in the nation, the demand for food assistance is projected to continue at a high level for the foreseeable future.

The Food Bank, in partnership with 680 agencies, reaches 280,500 unduplicated clients monthly. Some of these clients access a food pantry once per month in order to receive food for themselves and their family, while others need food more frequently due to tight household budgets.

In addition to providing food assistance, the Food Bank provides application assistance for the CalFresh Program (known as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program at the federal level).

California has one of the lowest participation rates in the nation, so there is an ongoing opportunity to identify people who are eligible, but currently not receiving CalFresh benefits.

The Food Bank has also implemented programs to reach two vulnerable populations—children and seniors. Research has demonstrated that access to a nutritious diet is an important factor in long-term development and health, particularly for children and seniors. Other programs—such as federal child nutrition, senior Congregate Meals and Meals on Wheels—provide access to nutritious food for children and seniors.

There is no one solution to end hunger. Economic conditions such as employment, wages and affordable housing are key determinants for how many people experience food insecurity. Government policy and programs are other key factors that impact food insecurity. The fight against hunger must be a collaborative effort between private and public sectors and the Food Bank will continue to act as a catalyst to initiate positive change.

You too can help share these #HungerFacts. To the right are some ways that you can make an immediate impact and fight hunger in L.A. County.



WHAT YOU CAN DO

DONATE



Every \$1 donated allows the Food Bank to distribute the equivalent of four meals through our agency network or Food Bank programs.

PARTICIPATE



On an annual basis, more than 27,000 volunteers donate their time to help us fight hunger throughout L.A. County. Whether on an individual basis or through a group, volunteers make a difference in our work.

COORDINATE



You can help the Food Bank save time and resources incurred through a traditional Food Drive by organizing a Virtual Food Drive instead. Contributions will be used to acquire the most needed and nutritious items, including fresh fruits and vegetables.

ADVOCATE



Share the hunger facts. Tell your government representatives about this report and post a #HungerFact on your social media pages. Raising awareness helps to address the issue of hunger in L.A. County.

METHODOLOGY

The information in this report is based on the agencies and programs that participated in this study, adjusted by weighting to account for sampling and nonresponse.

The first step of the study was conducting the agency survey, which included all partner agencies identified by the Los Angeles Regional Food Bank on the agency list the Food Bank compiled and provided to Feeding America and Westat. The agency survey, conducted from October 2012 to January 2013, compiled data from 503 agencies (out of 578 eligible for this study). Agencies enumerated the food and non-food programs they operated, including grocery programs such as pantries; meal programs such as kitchens, shelters, or congregate meals; food-related benefits programs such as CalFresh Program outreach and application assistance and nutrition education; and other non-food programs.

Following the agency survey, a client sample was obtained using a multi-stage design. Food Bank staff administered the client survey from April to August 2013. The Food Bank sent trained data collectors to randomly selected agencies, offering the client survey in multiple languages using computer tablets, allowing the clients to complete the survey themselves. Data collectors also conducted a site survey to summarize the results of the visit and collect information on items such as participation and total client flow. Of the 875 eligible clients sampled across 97 agency visits, 494 (56 percent) responded to the client survey. Because children were not eligible respondents for the client survey, the focus is on the services provided to adult clients and their household members. Consequently, the study generally underestimates the services provided to children.

Westat, a social policy research firm based in Maryland, was responsible for overseeing all aspects of the data collection and compiling the results from the surveys.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS & NOTES

Funding to underwrite the costs related to this study was generously provided by the RGK Foundation. For additional information, including a link to the national study, please visit lafoodbank.org.

1. Food Insecurity is defined as a household lacking access to sufficient food for an active and healthy lifestyle. For more information, visit the Economic Research Service of the United States Department of Agriculture: www.ers.usda.gov/topics/food-nutrition-assistance/food-security-in-the-us.aspx
2. This figure—encompassing 150,000 children—is an underestimate as programs that only serve children, such as the Backpack program or Kids Cafe®, were excluded from eligibility for the Client Survey. In addition, children at multi-age meal programs were not eligible to be sampled, and are thus not represented.
3. The Client Survey measured the employment status of the individual who worked more months out of the year than anyone else in the household because this “most-employed person” is typically a primary source of income for the household.
4. California Budget Project. *Making Ends Meet: How Much Does It Cost to Raise a Family in California?* December, 2013 <http://www.cbp.org/MakingEndsMeet>
5. Known at the federal level as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (formerly the Food Stamp Program), CalFresh provides participating low-income households with monthly benefit allotments in the form of electronic debit cards (EBT) to supplement their food budget. Agencies may screen for eligibility, and provide application assistance, recertification assistance and education resources.
6. *Map the Meal Gap* data is derived from analyzing the relationship between food insecurity and indicators of food insecurity and child food insecurity (poverty, unemployment, median income, etc.) at the state level. The coefficient estimates from this analysis, plus information on the same variables defined at the county level, are used to generate estimated food insecurity rates for individuals or children at the county level. feedingamerica.org/hunger-in-america/our-research/map-the-meal-gap/
7. Poverty guidelines vary by household size. In 2014, the guidelines for a single person living in poverty (falling under 100 percent of the poverty level) was an annual income at or below \$11,670; for two people an annual income at or below \$15,730 ; and for three people an annual income at or below \$19,790. For all guidelines, see the Federal Register by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services under the authority of 42 U.S.C. 9902(2). aspe.hhs.gov/poverty/14poverty.cfm

Our Mission

To mobilize resources to fight hunger in our community.

Our Vision

No one goes hungry in Los Angeles County.

LOS ANGELES REGIONAL



Fighting Hunger. Giving Hope.



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