

Hunger in America 2014

Local Summary Report Food Bank of South Central Michigan



Food Bank of South Central Michigan
P.O. Box 408—Battle Creek, MI 49016
www.foodbankofscm.org



Dear Friends,

Where would we be without statistics? Numbers to inform us. Numbers to guide us. Numbers that enlighten us while inviting conversation.

Hunger in America 2014 is the newest in a series of reports overseen by Feeding America that serve as the largest, most in-depth analysis of hunger in the United States. It included 60,000 client surveys, 33,000 agency surveys and 195 food banks. Our local Hunger in America 2014 report that you are holding in your hand is a tie-in to this monumental, ground-breaking effort.

The logistics behind our local study were nothing short of heroic. Starting in July of 2012 through January 2013, the 280 non-profit organizations that belong to our hunger-relief network and distribute food to households in need across our eight-county service area were invited to participate in an extensive Agency Survey. 77% of them took up that invitation.

Then, from late April through the end of August, 2013, 50 volunteers in three separate teams visited 92 different emergency feeding sites, interviewing over 520 clients receiving food. That was more than two times the number of site visits compared to the previous study.

In the end, all of the data was compiled by Weststat, and then sent to the Urban Institute for further analysis. This final report contains not only statistical data, but equal amounts of significant demographic detail to further inform and deepen the conversation about who among us is going hungry, and why.

To conduct such an undertaking, involving labor-intensive field work, required funding from forward-thinking organizations who understood the importance of this project. They included: W.K. Kellogg Foundation, Irving S. Gilmore Foundation, Battle Creek Community Foundation, United Way of Jackson County, United Way of Greater Battle Creek/Kalamazoo Region, Weatherwax Foundation, Jackson Community Foundation, Kalamazoo Community Foundation, Lenawee Community Foundation, Consumers Energy Foundation, Hillsdale County Community Foundation, Non-Profit Alliance of Calhoun County, St. Joseph County United Way and the Albion Community Foundation.

We also want to thank the individuals, all 520 of them, who took the time to share their stories of hunger with us, even while in the middle of experiencing it. Their insight, wisdom and humility are an inspiration to us.

Very best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dave Karr".

Dave Karr, Executive Director
Food Bank of SCM

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dan Salerno".

Dan Salerno, Hunger Study Coordinator
Food Bank of SCM

Acknowledgements



Hunger in America 2014 was an extensive research project that involved much effort among Food Bank of South Central Michigan (FBSCM) volunteers, member agencies, staff and funders. The involvement of the following individuals and organizations helped make this study possible.

Funders:

W.K. Kellogg Foundation, Irving S. Gilmore Foundation, Battle Creek Community Foundation, United Way of Jackson County, United Way of Greater Battle Creek/Kalamazoo Region, Weatherwax Foundation, Jackson Community Foundation, Kalamazoo Community Foundation, Lenawee Community Foundation, Consumers

Energy Foundation, Hillsdale County Community Foundation, Non-Profit Alliance of Calhoun County, St. Joseph County United Way and the Albion Community Foundation.

Volunteers:

Battle Creek based team: Tiffany Blackman, Emerald Diamante & Dan Salerno (Team Leaders), Ana Cardenas, Rachel Chapin, Holly Cavinder, Wenda Dissinger, Bonnie Garbrecht, Tim Knowlton, Myriam Lerma, Bill Mabin, Julie Moore, Claudia Murch, Bruce & Karen Newhard, Harold Oswald, Mayela Rojas, Michael Stoltz, Dick Strader, Doug Sturdivant, Esther Gutierrez Tapic, Lisa Walker

Kalamazoo based team: Art Cole & Deb Josephson (Team Leaders), Chris Broadbent, Teresa Denton, Jennifer Johnson, Jean Kroph, Anne Lipsey, Bob Lohrmann, Helen Norris, Kimberly Schoetzow, and Sara Wick.

Jackson based team: Jill Yehl (Team Leader), Diane Neth Covell, Mary Davis, Latrese DeLoach, Katrina DeLoach, Robert Fairbanks, Jack & Susan Gahagan, Rachel McGonegal, Monica Wyles-Rogers.

Member Agencies:

The following non-profit organizations that belong to and distribute food from the FBSCM willingly served as client interview sites. Their support was crucial to the success of the study. Each of the following agencies operate food pantries or soup kitchens:

Barry County: Nashville UMC, Middleville Community Pantry, St. Ambrose Pantry, Freeport UMC FFI, Orangeville FFI & Senior Boxes, Thornapple Valley Pantry, Manna's Market, United Way FFI, Barry County COA.

Branch County: Son-Shine Ministries, Union City Pantry, Branch Area Food Pantry, Calvary Baptist Church, Branch County COA.

Calhoun County: Nursing Clinic of Battle Creek, Salvation Army (Pantry & Soup Kitchen), Helping Hand Ministry, Franklin Neighborhood Pantry, Albion Interfaith Ministries, Ministries of Bread of Life, Mt. Zion AME Pantry, Lakeview Neighborhood Pantry, Homer Caring & Sharing, Tri-County Labor Pantry, First Salem FFI, Northeast Neighborhood Pantry, Crossroads Bread of Life, Athens Christian Center, Christ Apostolic Church, Family Bible Church, Upton Ave. Original Church of God, Urandale Neighborhood Pantry, His Hand Compassionate Ministries.

Hillsdale County: Hill. Assembly of God, El Bethel, Hillsdale Baptist, Salvation Army (Pantry & FFI), Litchfield UMC, St. Anthony Family Center, Trinity Lutheran Church, Lifeline Pantry,

Jackson County: Trinity Wesleyan, First Church of Nazarene, North Parma UMC, 1st Church of Nazarene, Spring Arbor Food Pantry, Jackson Community Food Pantry, Christ's Kingdom Pantry, 1st Evangelistic COGIC Pantry, Immanuel Lutheran, Salvation Army, Springport UMC Pantry, Harmony Baptist, Michigan Center Pantry, St. John's United Church of Christ,.

Kalamazoo County: KLF Melzer Pantry, Alpha-Omega Ministries, Douglass MFI, Kalamazoo Gospel Mission, Salvation Army MFI, Christian Neighbors, Bronson Pantry KLF, Senior Services, New Beginnings, Wakeshma Community Pantry.

Lenawee County: St. Mary on the Lake, St. Mary's of Good Counsel, Manitou Rd. Baptist, St. Vincent DePaul, St. Mary's Conference, Hudson Ministerial Association, Fishes & Loaves.

St. Joseph County: ECN Three Rivers, White Pigeon ENC, Holy Angels Pantry, Mendon ECN, Sturgis Wesleyan FFI, Church of Nazarene, Centreville ECN, Bronson Community Pantry, ECN Colon, Salvation Army Soup Kitchen.

A special thanks to the 520 individuals who so graciously shared their lives with us during client interviews, without whom this study would not have been possible.

Additional Information:

For the complete **local Hunger in America 2014** report, check the Food Bank of South Central Michigan's website at: www.foodbankofscm.org

For the complete **national Hunger in America 2014** report, check Feeding America's website at: www.feedingamerica.org

For the complete **state Hunger in America 2014 report**, check the Food Bank Council of Michigan's website at: www.fbcmich.org

This is the fifth local study that the FBSCM has conducted (1998, 2002, 2006, 2010 and 2014).



Goals, Objectives & Scope of the Local Project:



Feeding America (FA) is the national network of foodbanking, serving 200 food banks across the nation, it serves as the nation's largest domestic hunger-relief organization, comprised of 200 food banks. Every four years, FA commissions a national hunger study, which includes state and local studies. Taken together the Hunger in America studies are the biggest and most comprehensive study on domestic hunger, including every county within the United States.

Like prior studies, Hunger in America 2014 (HIA 2014) documents the critical role that food banks and their partner agencies play in supporting struggling families in the United States. The information in this local report is based solely on the agencies and programs

that participated in this study, adjusted by weighting to account for sampling and nonresponse. The Agency Survey yielded responses from 179 agencies. The Agency Surveys were completed by 179 of the non-profit organizations belonging to the FBSCM's hunger-relief network between August, 2012 and January, 2013.

The Client Survey portion of the local HIA report involved visiting 92 different emergency feeding sites where a total of 520 clients completed client surveys between late April, 2013 and September, 2013.

In addition, it is important to note that **children were not eligible to respond** to the Client Survey. Because of this, HIA 2014 focuses on the services that the FBSCM provided to adult clients and their household members. Further, **because of this same challenge, the number and percentage of children included in various tables within this report may be under-reported.** Children present during client data collection at eligible meal programs (i.e. soup kitchens, community meals) were not eligible to be sampled or invited to respond to the Client Survey. HIA 2014 does report on households with children who receive grocery program services thus children are included in the client estimates for grocery programs (i.e. food pantries), but **HIA 2014 will generally underestimate FBSCM/Feeding America's services provided to children.**

The Client Survey portion of the study involved two major food program types:

- . **Meal programs** that provide prepared meals or snacks on site or in the client's home. This includes all congregate-feeding programs along with all other kitchens and shelter programs.
- . **Grocery programs** that distribute non-prepared foods, groceries and other household items for off-site use, including pantries, mobile programs, etc.

Weighing Survey Data & Client Counts

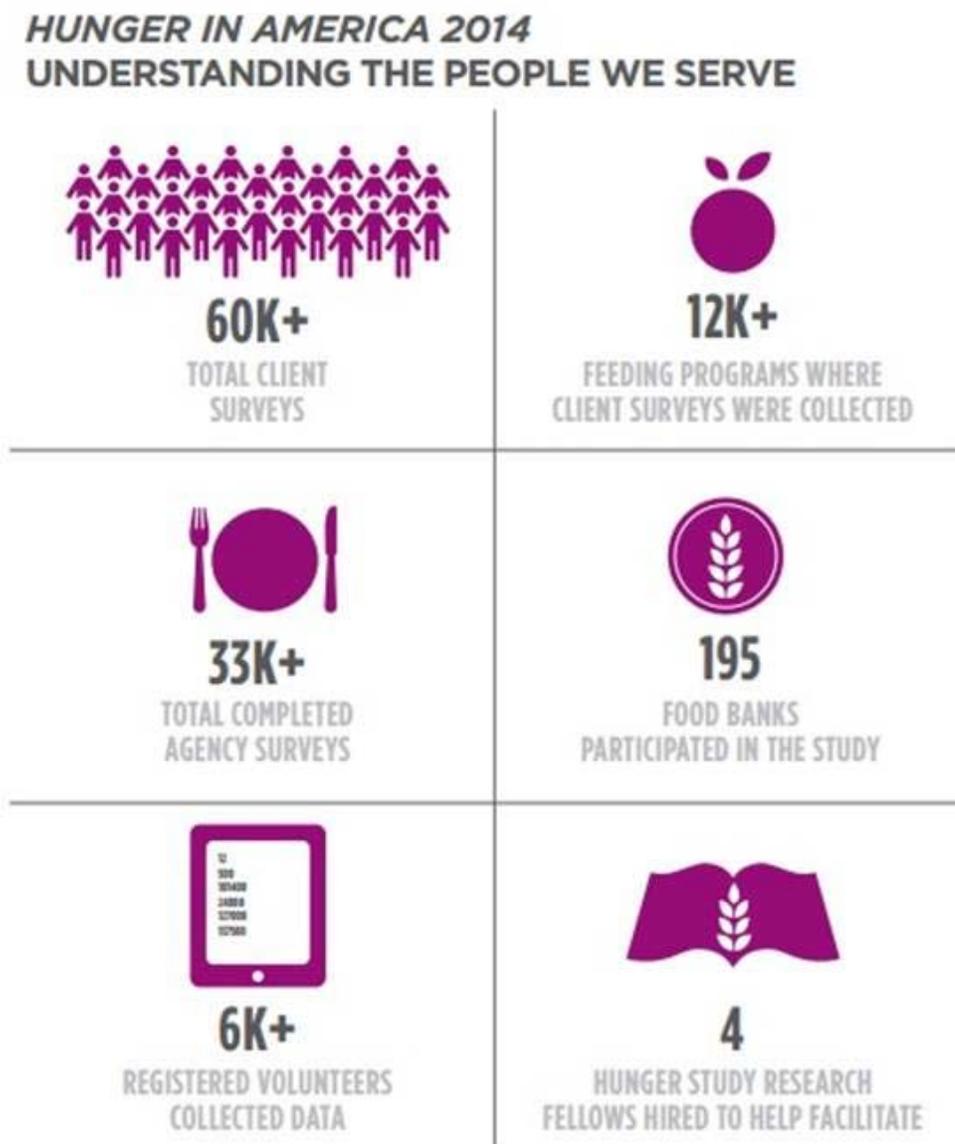
Survey weights are the mechanism for using sample data to represent a larger population from which the sample has been selected. A survey weight is a number that may be viewed as the number of "similar" units in the population the sampled unit represents. For HIA 2014 that unit could be an

agency, a program, a household, or a client. For example, within a given program visit, if one in 20 is sampled, a weight of 20 is used to account for each of the sampled clients representing 20 clients in the population.

Duplicated counts effectively count the number of client or household visits per unit of time (week, month or year). **Unduplicated counts** focus on the number of unique individuals served. Unduplicated counts recognize that any clients may visit programs repeatedly, and these counts adjust for repetition.

In the unduplicated count, the household that comes every week to get groceries from a food pantry will be counted only once.

HIA 2014 is the most comprehensive examination of hunger in the United States. Nationally the study included over 32,000 surveys of partner agencies (non-profit organizations belonging to food banks) and more than 60,000 client surveys from 196 food banks across the country.



Highlights of Findings: FBSCM Hunger in America 2014 Study



The FBSCM serves 189,300 different individuals each year.

It comes as no surprise that these individuals are facing hard choices:

60% have to choose between getting food or paying the utility bill

39% have to choose between getting food or paying the rent/
mortgage

21% are in poor health

The importance of a strong, faith-based network is also apparent.

77% of all the 280 non-profit organizations receiving food from the

FBSCM said that elimination of FBSCM food would have a major effect on their food program.

How many unduplicated people does the FBSCM serve each year?

- . 189,300 unique individuals are served annually.
- . 63,300 unique households are served annually,

How extensive is the FBSCM's network?

- . 280 non-profit organizations operating over 500 programs

Who makes up the households served by the FBSCM?

- . 31% are 17 years of age or younger
- . 18% are 60 years of age or older
- . 70% are white
- . 16% are African-American or Black
- . 6% are Latino
- . 13% of households include grandparents who have responsibility for grandchildren
- . 27% of households have at least one person in poor health
- . 23% of households have at least one member who is a military veteran

What about education and income?

- . 42% have a high school diploma, equivalent, or some college
- . 28% have a license, some college or college degree
- . 47% of all households had annual income of less than \$10,000
- . 34% of all households have incomes between \$10,000 and \$20,000
- . 69% of all households are living below the poverty line

What hard choices do emergency food clients face?

In the past year:

- . 55% of households had to choose between paying for food or paying for medicine/medical care
- . 39% of households had to choose between paying for food or paying the rent/mortgage
- . 60% of households had to choose between paying for food or paying the utility bill
- . 56% of households had to choose between paying for food or paying for transportation or gas



What about SNAP (Food Stamps)?

- . 60% of client households reported participating in SNAP
- . 44% of these households reported SNAP benefits lasted 2 weeks or less

What About Coping Mechanisms To Get Food?

- . 84% reported purchasing unhealthy, inexpensive food
- . 59% reported eating expired food
- . 49% reported buying food in dented or damaged cans

What About the FBSCM's Hunger-Relief Network?

- . 63% are run by faith-based organizations
- . 32% are run by some other non-profit or private organization
- . 77% of FBSCM agencies said loss of FBSCM food would have a major effect on their program

What About the Significance of Volunteers?

- . There are 9,162 volunteers serving within the FBSCM's hunger-relief network
- . There were a median of 32 volunteer hours given each week, per program

A Word About Methodology



There were two parts to the local Hunger in America 2014 study. The first was the **Agency Survey**, from September, 2013 through early January, 2014, the 280 non-profit organizations belonging to the FBSCM's hunger-relief network were invited to complete a detailed Agency Survey. 78% of the FBSCM's network completed the survey.

From late April, 2013 through the end of August FBSCM staff and volunteers visited 92 different emergency feeding sites, inviting clients selected at random to complete a **Client Survey**. 520 individuals chose to do so.

Westat was the firm chosen by Feeding America to oversee the Agency Survey and selection of Client Survey sites. Westat also compiled all the data that was collected via on-line surveys (this was the first time an on-line survey was used). Once the data was compiled, the Urban Institute was chosen by Feeding America to analyze the data, breaking it out by food bank, and by counties when there was enough data to do so.

All told 195 food banks within the FA network participated in Hunger in America 2014, encompassing a total of 32,000 feeding sites with 60,000 client interviews. The Hunger in America series of studies constitutes the largest, most in-depth analysis of hunger in the United States.



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This Executive Summary can also be found on the Food Bank's website.

*The Food Bank of South Central Michigan is a member of **Feeding America**, the nation's largest domestic hunger organization, and the **Food Bank Council of Michigan**. The Food Bank also receives support from several **United Ways**.*