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California Political News, Contra Costa and East Bay

Emergency food assistance in high demand

by BGR on February 5, 2010



A landmark study released today by the [Food Bank of Contra Costa and Solano](#) and Feeding America, the nation's largest domestic hunger-relief organization, reports that more than 130,000 people receive food each month through the food bank. The findings represent a **64 percent increase** since the findings reported in Hunger in America 2006.

This is the first research study to capture the significant connection between the recent economic downturn and an increased need for emergency food assistance. In Contra Costa and Solano counties, the unemployment rates are 11.2 percent and 12 percent respectively. 70.4 percent of those clients surveyed reported being currently unemployed and 44.7 percent reported being unemployed for more than two years. With 71 percent of households utilizing the Food Bank of Contra Costa and Solano services reporting income levels below the federal poverty level, a growing number of working poor Americans are becoming food insecure and experiencing hunger on a daily basis.

“The increase in service we have seen is larger than we ever could have expected. Frankly, it is quite frightening that many people are in need in our community,” said Larry Sly, Executive Director of the Food Bank of Contra Costa and Solano. The full report will be available mid-March 2010.

The methodology incorporated into the 2010 study includes data collected from February through June, 2009. The Food Bank of Contra Costa and Solano conducted face-to-face interviews with 448 people seeking emergency food at food pantries, soup kitchens and other emergency feeding programs.

Nationally, Feeding America collected quantitative and qualitative feedback from 61,000 face-to-face in-depth interviews with people seeking emergency food assistance and more than 37,000 agency surveys, making this study the largest, most-comprehensive ever conducted on domestic hunger.

USDA reported in November 2009 that an estimated 49 million people, including 17 million children, are at risk of hunger in this country. Hunger In America 2010 reinforces the dramatically increasing need for food assistance in the United States.

The full report will be released in mid-March 2010, and it will be available at www.foodbankccs.org at that time. The full national report is available on Feeding America's web site at [Hunger in America 2010](#).