

Hunger in Central and Eastern Kentucky



A Special Report from God's Pantry Food Bank

This report sponsored in part by



2006

Introduction

Hunger in Central and Eastern Kentucky is a comprehensive look at who is hungry and who is serving the hungry in our communities, marking the second time data of this magnitude has been collected in the state of Kentucky. This report is part of *Hunger in America 2006*, an independent, nationwide study conducted by Mathematica Policy Research for America's Second Harvest – The Nation's Food Bank Network.

God's Pantry Food Bank, with warehouses in Lexington and Prestonsburg, Ky., provides food to more than 350 programs and agencies in 49 counties of central and eastern Kentucky. Our mission is to reduce hunger through community cooperation making the best possible use of all available resources.

During the winter of 2005, more than 52,000 interviews were conducted with clients at pantries, shelters, and soup kitchens across the country. These interviews provide an up-close picture of the face of hunger in our nation today. As part of *Hunger in America 2005*, God's Pantry Food Bank gathered board members, volunteers and staff to travel throughout our service area to food bank member agencies serving those in need. At 40 locations, the survey team interviewed 449 individuals seeking food assistance. Additionally, 213 food bank member agencies completed a questionnaire about their organizations and the services they provide.

This report is the culmination of these efforts, offering an in-depth look at hunger in the 49 counties of Kentucky served by God's Pantry Food Bank. Please take some time to read through the information offered within; get to know those that are in need in our communities; and become part of the solution to ending hunger by sharing your knowledge with others as we work to make a difference in the lives of thousands of Kentucky families each year.

This level of research could not have been done without the assistance of many caring individuals and entities. I would like to offer my sincere appreciation to the following for their support of this effort:

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Without the commitment of our Board of Directors, member agencies and the minimally resourced Kentuckians we serve, we would never have been successful. Thank you! It was an incredible experience for me personally and many of us involved, and it is impacting the decisions made at God's Pantry every day.

Sincerely,



Marian F. Blanchard
Executive Director, God's Pantry Food Bank

Who is hungry in Kentucky?

Mathematica Policy Research estimates that God's Pantry Food Bank is reaching as many as 159,000 different individuals. This represents one in ten people in our 49 county service area. Of those we serve:

- 64% have less than a high school education
- 20% of households have one or more adults employed
- 91% are white, 5% are black and 3% are Hispanic
- Among households with children, 24% are single-parent households
- 38% of adult clients are married
- 56% of client households have at least one member in poor health
- 39% of client households have unpaid medical or hospital bills
- 9% of client households have no health insurance at all
- 4% are homeless

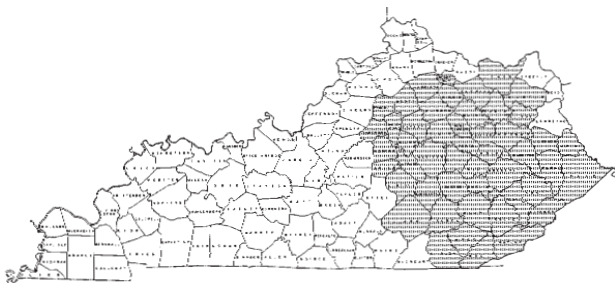


Hunger affects a disproportionate number of children and the elderly, those who are most affected by malnutrition and undernourishment:

- 28% of all client households include children under the age of 18
- 12% of all client households include someone age 65 or older

For many Kentuckians, wages have simply not risen enough to cover the increased cost of living. Food has become an unaffordable luxury. Income levels among Kentucky's poor families continue to lag behind national averages, exacerbating the problems that families face:

- 74% of all clients have monthly household incomes less than \$1,000
- Average annual household income is \$9,240



God's Pantry Food Bank serves some of the poorest counties in the nation.

<u>County</u>	<u>Poverty Rate</u>	<u>U.S. Rank</u>
Owsley	45.4%	6th
Clay	39.7%	14th
Martin	37%	23rd
Magoffin	36.4	25th
Wolfe	35.9	31st

Who is making a difference in the lives of Kentucky's hungry?



Christian Life Food Pantry, Barbourville, Ky.

God's Pantry Food Bank works with more than 350 nonprofit programs and agencies across 49 counties of central and eastern Kentucky. These agencies include food pantries, soup kitchens, homeless shelters, abuse shelters, childrens homes, senior citizens centers and others.

- 77% of the pantry programs are operated by faith-based nonprofits and 68% of them have no paid staff at all
- 66% of pantries, shelters and soup kitchens surveyed reported that there had been an increase since 2001 in the number of clients who come to their emergency food program sites

How are hungry Kentuckians making it from day to day?

- 63% of clients are receiving food stamps
- For 81% of those receiving food stamps, the stamps last for less than three weeks

Other forms of assistance:

- 74% of households with children ages 0-5 participate in the Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) Program
- 80% of households with school age children utilize the school lunch program
- 51% of households utilize Medicare or Medicaid
- 13% of households utilize Kentucky's Children's Health Insurance Program (KCHIP)



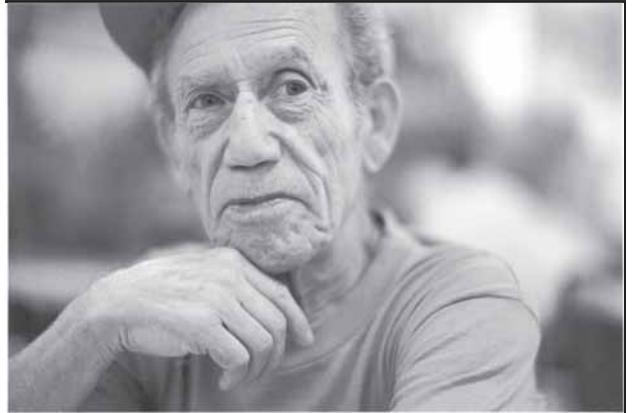
God's Pantry Food Bank plays an important role in the fight against hunger:

- In the last fiscal year, God's Pantry distributed more than 12 million pounds of product to more than 350 programs and agencies serving those in need.
- Without the support of God's Pantry Food Bank, 55% of the pantries, 20% of the kitchens, and 24% of the shelters believe their programs would face tremendous obstacles.
- An additional 40% of the pantries, 70% of the kitchens, and 44% of the shelters would face significant changes if God's Pantry Food Bank were not there to help.

Key Findings:

Far too many Kentuckians lead a fragile existence.

Poverty and hunger go hand in hand, and thousands of Kentucky families are turning to emergency food assistance to supplement their nutritional and caloric intake. Low levels of education, poor health, and a tough economy create difficult choices for families in need.



- When asked what they would do if the agency weren't there to help them, 25% of clients said they would eat less, skip meals, or reduce the size of meals.
- 15% said they had no other place to go for assistance

Those serving the hungry also lead a fragile existence. The majority of emergency food providers are nonprofit agencies run entirely by volunteers. They occupy church basements and small buildings across the rural landscape of our state. Their doors stay open because countless caring individuals are dedicated to reducing hunger, determined to reach out to those in need, and persevering in the face of adversity.

- 65% of food distributed by pantries, 35% by soup kitchens and 25% by shelters comes from the food bank
- More than half the pantries, kitchens and shelters surveyed said they still needed more than 110 pounds more food a month to meet the growing demand for services in their counties

74% of client households reported that during the previous 12 months they had been in a situation where the food they bought “just didn’t last and they didn’t have money to get more.”

How does hunger affect Kentucky's families?



In the previous 12 months:

- 46% of clients said they ate less than they felt they should because there was not enough money to buy food
- adults in 18% of households had to cut the size of their meals or skip meals almost every month because there wasn't enough money for food
- 16% of adult clients did not eat for a whole day at least once because there was not enough money for food

Hungry families also face tough choices between food and basic necessities:

- 32% had to choose between paying for food and paying for medicine or medical care
- 18% had to choose between paying for food and paying for rent or mortgage
- 41% of households had to choose between paying for food and paying for utilities and heating fuel

How We Work:

Kentucky's Hungry:

Working Poor, Newly Unemployed,
Single Parent Families, Battered Women, Homeless,
Mentally Ill, Abused Children, Troubled Youth,
Elderly, Infants, Disabled, Physically Ill



Nonprofit Food Bank Member Agencies:

Pantries, Soup Kitchens, Shelters, Residential
Treatment Centers, Youth Programs, Senior Centers,
Day Cares, Rehabilitation Centers



God's Pantry Food Bank serves 49 counties of central and eastern Kentucky through a network of more than 350 programs and agencies. Last year, God's Pantry distributed more than 12 million pounds of food and grocery products, provided emergency food boxes to thousands of families in Fayette County, educated low-income parents about nutrition and important life skills, and fed hungry children through Kids Cafe sites in Fayette, Fleming, Clark and Harlan Counties. For more information, visit our website at www.godspantry.org.



America's Second Harvest is the largest domestic hunger-relief organization in the United States, feeding hungry people by soliciting and distributing food and grocery products through a nationwide network of over 200 certified affiliate food banks and food-rescue programs. Last year, America's Second Harvest distributed 1.4 billion pounds of food to needy Americans. To find out more, please visit the website at www.secondharvest.org.



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Hunger in Kentucky

- God's Pantry Food Bank serves nearly 159,000 hungry individuals each year
- 74% of clients have monthly household incomes less than \$1,000
- 40% of households had to choose between paying for food and paying for utilities and heating fuel in the last year; 32% had to choose between paying for food and paying for medicine or medical care
- 28% of all households served include children
- 56% of client households have at least one member in poor health



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