

Hunger Here at Home

With the U.S. and world economies in crisis, more unemployed workers, working poor families and seniors on limited incomes than ever are living at the margins of poverty and need help from the nation's network of food banks and the charities they serve. Food Stamp benefits, income deductions and other qualifications for federal nutrition assistance have not kept pace with inflation, nor do they accurately reflect rising household and living expenses, such as the price of health care, home energy, food or medicine.

- **Forty-five percent of the people who receive food from the Community FoodBank of NJ are children and 10 percent are elderly. Eighteen percent of clients with children said that their children sometimes skipped meals because there was not enough money for food during the previous 12 months.**

Feeding America study with Mathematica Policy Research: Hunger in America 2010

- **Fifty percent of clients served by the Community FoodBank of NJ report having to choose between paying for food and paying their rent or mortgage (up from 40 percent in 2006); 49 percent of clients report having to choose between paying for food and paying for utilities or heating fuel (up from 41 percent in 2006); 35 percent had to choose between paying for food and paying for medicine or medical care. (up from 31 percent in 2006).**

Feeding America study with Mathematica Policy Research: Hunger in America 2010

- **The number of Americans who don't always have access to a dependable and adequate source of food jumped to 49 million in 2008, including nearly 17 million children. This is the highest number since the government began keeping track. The number of children whose food shortages were so severe they sometimes missed meals rose from nearly 700,000 to almost 1.1 million.**

USDA's Economic Research Service's "Household Food Security Report," November 16, 2009

- **Job seekers now outnumber openings six to one, the worst ratio since the government began tracking open positions in 2000. According to the Labor Department's latest numbers, from July, only 2.4 million full-time permanent jobs were open.**

New York Times, September 27, 2009

- **A comparison of average monthly client totals at emergency pantries served by the Community FoodBank of NJ during the first 6 months of 2009 shows a 69 percent increase in the number of people seeking food assistance over the same period in 2007, before the recession was underway. Comparing the first 6 months of 2009 with 2008, after the recession had started, shows a 28.4% increase.**

The Community FoodBank of New Jersey, August 2009

- **Participation in the SNAP/Food Stamp Program is still on the increase. In September, 37.2 million people (one in eight Americans) in nearly 17 million households received benefits. The number of participants in New Jersey increased by 19.2 percent in the last year and by more than 40 percent from 5 years ago.**

Food Research and Action Center, December 2009

- **The Department of Labor reports that average weekly unemployment benefits in June (including the additional \$25 per week that was added as part of the economic recovery package) were \$330, which translates into an average monthly benefit of \$1,432. Even with COBRA and the temporary federal subsidy for the jobless, health care can consume the bulk of unemployment benefits.**

Economic Policy Institute, July 2009

- **The number of U.S. students who receive free and reduced-cost meals at school could hit a 41-year high during the 2009-10 school year, as record job losses and high unemployment push thousands more children into poverty, many for the first time.**
McClatchy-Tribune News Service and The Star Ledger, August 16, 2009
- **In the first six months of 2009, foreclosure filings in New Jersey increased 31.6 percent – to 31,603 – compared with the first half of 2008 according to the state judiciary.**
The Star Ledger, August 14, 2009
- **The poverty rate in America increased from 12.5% to 13.2% between 2007 and 2008, representing an additional 2.6 million people living in poverty. The poverty rate for children was 19% in 2008, representing 14.1 million kids living in poverty. In 2008, over one-third (35.3%) of all people living in poverty were children.**
U.S. Census Bureau, September 2009
- **The official federal poverty level for a family of four in 2009 is \$22,050 a year.**
U.S. Census Bureau 2009
- **The federal minimum wage was raised to \$7.25 an hour, or \$15,080 a year as of July 2009. Seven states have passed a higher minimum wage of at least \$8.00 an hour. While some economists say this will increase unemployment, others say this will put more money into the hands of people who need it most and will help stimulate the economy.**
CNNMoney.com, July 24, 2009
- **Seventy-six percent of workers whose wages were raised to \$7.25 an hour are age 20 or older. Sixty-three percent of minimum wage workers are women. The inflation adjusted value of the minimum wage is 17% lower in 2009 than it was in 1968.**
Economic Policy Institute, July 2009
- **Poverty is a root cause of many other problems for children. Children who grow up poor are more likely to fail in school, rely of public assistance as adults, and to be in ill health.**
Association for Children of New Jersey, “New Jersey Kids Count 2008”
- **One of the ways this recession differs from past downturns is that it has been unusually hard on experienced workers. Data show that long-term unemployment, defined as being without a job for at least six months, is disproportionately high among workers over 45.**
Economic Policy Institute, May 15, 2009
- **In New Jersey, the Fair Market Rent for a 2-bedroom apartment is \$1,202. In order to afford this level of rent and utilities, without paying more than 30% of income on housing, a household must earn \$48,000 a year.**
National Low Income Housing Coalition, 2009

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