FEEDING AMERICA

Hunger in America 2014

State Report for Georgia

HUNGER IN AMERICA 2014

A Report on Charitable Food Distribution in Georgia in 2013

Hunger in America 2014

State Report prepared for Feeding America

Authors

Gregory Mills, PhD, Urban Institute
Nancy S. Weinfield, PhD, Westat
Christine Borger, PhD, Westat
Maeve Gearing, PhD, Urban Institute
Theodore Macaluso, PhD, consultant
Sybil Mendonca, Urban Institute
Jill Montaquila, PhD, Westat
Tracy Vericker, PhD, Urban Institute
Sheila Zedlewski, Urban Institute

September 2014

Prepared for:
Feeding America
35 East Wacker Drive, Suite 2000
Chicago, IL 60601

Prepared by:
Urban Institute and Westat

Urban Institute
2100 M Street NW
Washington, DC 20037

Westat
An Employee-Owned Research Corporation®
1600 Research Boulevard
Rockville, Maryland 20850-3129
(301) 251-1500

Table of Contents

Chapter		Page
	Executive Summary	1
1	Introduction and Background	5
	1.1 Charitable Food Assistance Network Serves a Critical Need	5
	1.2 Weak Economy Has Increased Challenges for Clients	7
	1.3 How Feeding America Network Delivers Food Assistance	8
	1.4 This Study Updates the Public on Use of Charitable Food Assistance	10
2	Meeting the Challenge of Collecting Data about Food Programs and Clients	12
	2.1 Study and Sample Design	13
	2.1.1 Study Design	13
	2.1.2 Program Types	15
	2.2 Agency Survey Implementation	17
	2.2.1 Sample of Partner Agencies	17
	2.2.2 Agency Survey Data Collection	17
	2.2.3 Agency Survey Resource Materials	18
	2.2.4 Agency Survey Field Period	18
	2.2.5 Agency Survey Monitoring	18
	2.3 Training of Food Bank Hunger Study Coordinators and Volunteer Data Collectors	19
	2.4 Client Survey Implementation	19
	2.4.1 Client Survey Translation	20
	2.4.2 Client Data Collection Procedures	20
	2.4.3 Client Survey Field Period	22
	2.4.4 Client Survey Resources	22

Chapter			Page
	2.5	Response Rates…….....	22
	2.6	Methodological Considerations in Understanding and Interpreting Findings……..	23
		2.6.1 Changes in Program Types between HIA 2010 and HIA 2014…..	23
		2.6.2 Underrepresentation of Children Served by the Feeding America Network…….	24
		2.6.3 Survey Respondents, Their Households, and Food Program Clients……	24
		2.6.4 Volunteer Data Collection Efforts……..	25
		2.6.5 Changes from Past Hunger in America Studies to Hunger in America 2014……..	25
	2.7	Summary of Analytical Approach……...	26
		2.7.1 Weighting Survey Data……... ...	27
		2.7.2 Valid Survey Responses……..	27
		2.7.3 Tabular Presentation……...	28
		2.7.4 Client Counts……..	28
3	Services of Partner Agencies and Programs…….		30
	3.1	Organization of the Network of Food Banks…….....	30
	3.2	Number and Types of Partner Agencies and Programs……...	31
	3.3	Hunger-Relief Services……	32
	3.4	Other Food-Related and Nonfood Services……	35
	3.5	Agency and Program Resources…….	38
4	Characteristics of Clients and their Households……..		41
	4.1	Counts of Individuals and Households Served……...	41
	4.2	Selected Demographic Characteristics of Clients……..……...	44
	4.3	Household Composition and Characteristics …….	46
	4.4	Work and Barriers to Work……..……	48
	4.5	Health and Income……..……	50

Contents (continued)

Chapter		Page
5	Client Households' Use of Food Assistance……..	53
	5.1 Household Food Security Status……	53
	5.2 Client Households' Use of Other Food Assistance……	55
	5.3 Client Households' Strategies and Coping Efforts to Obtain Sufficient Food……...	59
6	Summary and Concluding Assessment……	63

Tables

1	Client Surveys Administered by Language…….……..	20
2	Unweighted Distribution of Program Visits by Program Category……..	23
3	Average Percentage of Total Food Distributed by Food Programs in the Past 12 Months, by Source……	34
4	Agencies Providing Nutrition Education Activities and Subtype of Activities Offered……...	36
5	Agencies Providing Services Related to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and Subtypes of Services Offered……...	37
6	Estimated Number of Clients and Client Households Served…….	42
7	Selected Demographic Characteristics of Food Bank Clients….……	44
8	Client Households by Size……..……	46
9	Household Annual Income as % of Poverty Level……..	52
10	Client Households by Reported Current Receipt of SNAP Benefits, and Among Those Not Currently Receiving Benefits, Whether They Have Applied ……..	56

Tables (continued)

		Page
11	Client Households Reporting Different Strategies for Food Assistance...	60
A1	Agency and Program Characteristics……..	65
A2	Client Counts……..	71
A3	Characteristics of Clients and their Households…….	72
A4	Clients Use of Food Assistance……..	77

Figures

1	Sources of Food and Channels of Food Distribution in the Feeding America Network……..…….	9
2	Food Bank Service Areas……..……	11
3	Program Type Categorizations Used in HIA 2014……...	16
4	Distribution of Meal and Grocery Programs, Among Food Programs…	32
5	Age Range of Volunteers, Among Food Programs with Volunteers During the Past 12 Months……..……..……..	33
6	Programs Reporting the Degree to Which They Had Food Available to Meet Needs of Clients During the Past 12 Months ……	35
7	Agencies Providing Assistance with Specific Government Programs Other Than SNAP……..	38
8	Types of Reductions, Among Agencies that Reported Cutting Back on Services During the Past 12 Months……...	39
9	Program Reported Effect of No Longer Receiving Food from the Food Bank……..	40
10	Client Households Residing in Non-Temporary or Temporary Housing	47

Figures (continued) Page

11 Client Household Reasons for Not Actively Seeking Work, Among Client Households Where Previously–Most Employed Person is Not Working…….. 49

12 Client Households by Health Status of Respondent…… 50

13 Client Households by Reported Annual Income Ranges……. 51

14 Client Households Reporting Frequency of Choosing between Food and Other Necessities in the Past 12 Months…….. 54

15 Client Households Reporting Select Reasons For Not Applying for SNAP Benefits, Among Households That Have Never Applied……. 57

16 Client Households by Participation in Programs Targeted to Children… 59

17 Client Households Reporting Top Three Desired Products Not Currently Receiving at Programs……. 60

18 Client Households by Strategies Used to Get Enough Food in the Past 12 Months……... 61

Acknowledgements

We wish to acknowledge the guidance and support provided to the Urban Institute by key members of the Hunger in America 2014 team from the national staff of Feeding America: Maura Daly, Elaine Waxman, PhD, Emily Engelhard, Theresa DelVecchio Dys, Monica Hake, Amaris Kinne, Brittany Morgan, Meghan O'Leary, and David Watsula. We have also benefited greatly from the input provided by Feeding America's Technical Advisory Group: Craig Gundersen, PhD, Alison Jacknowitz, PhD, and Robert Santos.

The design and oversight of the complex nationwide data collection effort that made these reports possible was conducted by the survey experts of Westat. We especially want to express our gratitude to Nancy Weinfield, PhD, Jill Montaquila, PhD, Christine Borger, PhD, and Jennifer Kawata.

At the Urban Institute, the core project team included Gregory Mills, PhD, Maeve Gearing, PhD, Tracy Vericker, PhD, and Sheila Zedlewski. We also want to recognize the meticulous programming support of Sybil Mendonca and Paul Johnson in the production of these reports.

We would also like to acknowledge and extend our sincere gratitude to the staff and volunteers at each of the participating food banks, agencies, and programs, who dedicated their time and efforts to the Hunger in America study and were integral to the implementation of the study in the field.

Finally, we acknowledge each of the clients who graciously agreed to share their stories with us through participation in the Client Survey. Their contributions made this study possible.

Executive Summary

Feeding America and its nationwide network of food banks have conducted the most comprehensive study of hunger in America every four years since 1993. Like the 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. HIA 2014 details how the various agencies operate, including the sources of food available to them, the types of programs they run, their use of volunteers, and the challenges they face. It also documents the number and characteristics of clients that seek assistance from the charitable food assistance network, including what other sources of food assistance are available to them. Its results are based on nationally representative surveys of food banks' partner agencies and their clients in 2013.

This report presents results from HIA 2014 for the state of Georgia, where 8 food banks serve individuals and families: America's Second Harvest of Coastal Georgia Inc, Atlanta Community Food Bank, Chattanooga Area Food Bank, Feeding the Valley Food Bank, Food Bank of Northeast Georgia, Golden Harvest Food Bank, Middle Georgia Community Food Bank, and Second Harvest of South Georgia, Inc. Findings are based upon these food banks and partner agencies that serve the state and the clients that utilize those services. For a discussion of the findings from the national study, see the Hunger in America 2014 National Report.

Methods

HIA 2014 follows the pattern of past Hunger in America studies by implementing two surveys—an Agency Survey and a Client Survey—through the collaborative effort of an extended research team. The first step of the study design was conducting the Agency Survey, which included all partner agencies identified by the food banks that serve Georgia on the agency lists they compiled and provided to Feeding America. The Agency Survey, conducted from October 2012 to January 2013, was used to enumerate eligible food programs and obtain basic information about those programs. Following the Agency Survey, a client sample was obtained using a multistage design. Food bank staff and volunteers carried out the Client Survey from April through August 2013.

The information in this report is based solely on the partner agencies and programs that participated in this study, adjusted by weighting to account for sampling and nonresponse, and has been aggregated to the state level based upon the geocoded address of the agency. When findings cannot be presented due to small sample size (fewer than five unweighted observations), the symbol "++" is shown. The Agency Survey yielded responses from 1,116 eligible agencies (54 percent). An estimated 3,397 eligible clients were sampled. Because children were not eligible respondents for the Client Survey, HIA 2014 focuses on the services provided to adult clients and their household members. Consequently, the study will generally underestimate the services provided to children by the Feeding America network.

Key Findings [1]

The food banks and their partner agencies continue to serve many clients facing various challenges. Key findings are as follows:

- **Agency Staff:** An estimated 38 percent of the food banks' partner agencies reported employing paid staff. The median number of paid full-time-equivalent staff (assuming a 40-hour work week) was 4.

- **Program Volunteers:** A total of 50,500 volunteers provided a total of 198,700 hours each week to programs in this state. This corresponded to a median of 8 volunteers and 25 hours per program per week.

- **Unduplicated Number of Clients Served:** The unduplicated client count measures the number of unique individuals or households who access food from the charitable food assistance network. Within Georgia, 156,500 unique clients are served in a typical week and 1,444,900 are served annually. An estimated 51,400 unique households are served in a typical week and 478,700 are served annually.

- **Duplicated Number of Clients Served:** The duplicated client count estimates the number of times individuals or households are reached through food distributions during a given time. Within Georgia, clients are reached 218,800 times in a typical week and 11,411,100 times annually. Households are reached 75,400 times in a typical week and 3,930,900 times annually.

[1] Here and throughout the report, percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

- **Client Demographics:** Nationally, the most common racial and ethnic groups are white, black or African American, and Hispanic or Latino. Within Georgia, 37 percent of clients identify themselves as white, 50 percent as black or African American, and 6 percent as Hispanic or Latino. Among all clients, 28 percent are children under age 18, and 18 percent are seniors age 60 and older.

- **Food Insecurity:**[2] An estimated 89 percent of households are food insecure, and 11 percent are food secure.[3]

- **Income and Poverty:** An estimated 13 percent of client households have no income, 47 percent have annual incomes of $1 to $10,000, and 26 percent have annual incomes of $10,001 to $20,000. Taking into consideration household size, 78 percent of client households have incomes that fall at or below the federal poverty level.[4]

- **Health:** An estimated 38 percent of households report at least one member with diabetes; 68 percent of households report at least one member with high blood pressure. Additionally, 34 percent of client households have no members with health insurance of any kind, and 76 percent of households chose between paying for food and paying for medicine or medical care at least once in the past 12 months.

---

[2] Food security means all people at all times can access enough food for an active, healthy life. The US Department of Agriculture (http://www.usda.gov) defines four levels of food security. High food security indicates no reported food-access problems. Marginal food security indicates reported problems that are typically anxiety over food sufficiency or shortage of food in the house, but with little or no indication of changes in diets or food intake. Low food security indicates reports of reduced quality, variety, or desirability of diet and little or no reduced food intake. Very low food security indicates reports of multiple disrupted eating patterns and reduced food intake. The food security measure used in HIA 2014 combines high and marginal food security into one category (*food secure*) and low and very low food security into another category (*food insecure*).

[3] Though most client households are food insecure, there are a variety of reasons why some may identify as food secure. When answering the questions on the food security module, clients may take into account the food they receive through the charitable food system or federal programs like SNAP, indicating that their food secure status is contingent on the help they receive. Additionally, households may make tradeoffs to ensure that they have enough food on the table (discussed later in this report). HIA 2014 also included non-emergency programs in its scope for the first time, thus capturing clients who are in need but may not classify as food insecure. A food secure status does not indicate a lack of need for charitable feeding support.

[4] Poverty guidelines vary by household size. In 2013, a single person falls under 100 percent of the poverty level with annual cash income of $11,490 or less, two people live in poverty with income of $15,510 and below, and families with three people live in poverty if income is $19,530 or below. For all guidelines, see US Health and Human Services Department "Annual Update of the HHS Poverty Guidelines," Federal Register, January 24, 2013.

- **Education:** An estimated 66 percent of all clients have attained a high school degree or General Equivalency Diploma (GED) or more, and an estimated 24 percent of all clients have post-high school education (including license or certification, some college, or a four-year degree).

- **Coping Strategies and Spending Trade-offs:** An estimated 77 percent of households reported that they had to choose between paying for food and utilities in the past 12 months, and 78 percent of households chose between paying for food and transportation in the past 12 months. An estimated 79 percent of households reported using multiple strategies for getting enough food in the past 12 months, including eating food past its expiration date, growing food in a garden, pawning or selling personal property, and watering down food or drinks.

- **Housing:** An estimated 94 percent of households reside in nontemporary housing, such as a house or apartment, and 6 percent of households reside in temporary housing, such as a shelter or mission, a motel or hotel, or on the street. An estimated 61 percent of households chose between paying for food and paying their rent or mortgage at least once in the past 12 months, and 23 percent of respondents have experienced a foreclosure or eviction in the past five years.

- **Employment:** An estimated 56 percent of households have a household member who had worked for pay in the last 12 months; in 69 percent of client households the most-employed person from the past 12 months is currently out of work.

- **SNAP Participation:** The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, formerly known as the Food Stamp Program and known in different states under alternative names) is the largest nutrition assistance program. Participating low-income households receive monthly SNAP benefit allotments in the form of electronic debit cards (also known as EBT, or electronic benefit transfer). An estimated 59 percent of client households currently receive SNAP benefits. An estimated 16 percent of client households neither currently receive SNAP nor have ever applied for SNAP benefits.

1. Introduction and Background

Hunger in America 2014 documents the critical role that Feeding America member food banks and their partner agencies play in supporting struggling families in the United States. Study results are based on nationally representative surveys conducted in 2012–13 of agencies that operate food programs in the charitable food assistance network supported by Feeding America and of clients that access services through that network. The current assessment occurs during historically high demand for food assistance in a persistently weak economy. The charitable food assistance network has expanded to serve the growing needs of individuals seeking to access food for themselves and their families.

Chapter 1 begins with national statistics and trends related to food insecurity and poverty, while chapters 2 through 5 present study results for food banks and partner agencies that serve Georgia.

1.1 Charitable Food Assistance Network Serves a Critical Need

The federal government annually measures household food security, defined as all people in a household having enough food for an active healthy life at all times. There are four levels of food security, from high to very low.[5] Households classified as having low or very low food security are combined into the food-insecure category. In 2012, more than one in seven US households (18 million, or 15 percent) experienced food insecurity at some time during the year.[6] All these households experienced limited or uncertain access to adequate food, including reduced quality, variety, or desirability of diet. About 7 million of these households had members who went hungry or skipped meals, an indication of very low food security.

Federal food assistance programs help alleviate hunger and poor nutrition for millions of food-insecure individuals. These programs are targeted at low-income households, with specific programs targeting vulnerable populations like children, seniors, and pregnant or postpartum

---

[5]The US Department of Agriculture defines four levels of food security. High food security indicates no reported food-access problems. Marginal food security indicates reported problems that are typically anxiety over food sufficiency or shortage of food in the house, but with little or no indication of changes in diets or food intake. Low food security indicates reports of reduced quality, variety, or desirability of diet and indicates little or no reduced food intake. Very low food security indicates reports of multiple disrupted eating patterns and reduced food intake. The food security measure used in HIA 2014 combines high and marginal food security into one category, in keeping with the USDA ERS annual reporting. Low and very low food security are also combined into another category (food insecure). Definitions are from www.usda.gov.

[6]Alicia Coleman-Jensen, Mark Nord, and Anita Singh, Household Food Security in the United States in 2012, ERR-155 (Washington, DC: US Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service, 2013). These numbers exclude the homeless and those in temporary housing, many of whom are served by the private food assistance network.

women. About six in ten (59 percent) food-insecure households participate in one or more of the three largest federal food and nutrition assistance programs: the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP); the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC); and the National School Lunch Program (NSLP).[7]

SNAP, formerly the Food Stamp program, is the largest federal food assistance program. SNAP provides low-income families with electronic benefits to be used toward the purchase of nutritious food items. The WIC program offers nutrition education and supplemental foods to low-income pregnant and postpartum women, and to infants and children up to age five who are found to be at nutritional risk. NSLP is a federal meal program that provides nutritionally balanced lunches at free or reduced prices to eligible children at school.[8] These programs, along with other aspects of the federal nutrition safety net, alleviate hunger and improve nutrition and health outcomes.

Nonetheless, despite providing critical assistance, federal nutrition assistance programs do not reach everyone at risk of hunger in the United States.[9] For example, an estimated 27 percent of the food-insecure population in 2012 had household incomes above the standard eligibility thresholds for federal nutrition assistance programs. For these individuals and families, charitable food assistance may be the only available source of support.

Feeding America supports a nationwide network of food banks that help to combat hunger through coordinated efforts with affiliated agencies in all 50 states, Washington D.C., and Puerto Rico. At the national level, Feeding America secures food from corporate manufacturers and retailers and facilitates the acquisition of government food supplies by the food banks, which distribute a combined total of more than three billion pounds of food and grocery products annually. Feeding America provides additional assistance to food banks in the form of grants to support local anti-hunger initiatives, technical assistance, and support to maximize participation

---

[7] Coleman-Jensen et al., Household Food Security in the United States in 2012, Table 2, p. 13.
[8] Program descriptions from www.fns.usda.gov.
[9] Numerous recent studies show how federal food assistance programs reduce food insecurity. For example, a 2013 study finds that participation in SNAP for about six months is associated with a 4.6 percent decrease in the number of food-insecure households; longer participation further reduces food insecurity. See James Mabli, Jim Ohls, Lisa Dragoset, Laura Castner, and Betsy Santos, *Measuring the Effect of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Participation on Food Security* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service, 2013). See also B. Kreider, J. Pepper, C. Gundersen, and D. Jolliffe, "Identifying the Effects of SNAP (Food Stamps) on Child Health Outcomes When Participation is Endogenous and Misreported," *Journal of the American Statistical Association* 107, no. 499 (2012): 958–75. Published studies by Caroline Ratcliffe, Signe-Mary McKernan, and Sisi Zhang, "How Much Does the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Reduce Food Insecurity?" *American Journal of Agricultural Economics* 93, no. 4 (2011): 1082–98; and by E. Mykerezi and B. Mills, "The Impact of Food Stamp Program Participation on Household Food Insecurity," *American Journal of Agricultural Economics* 92, no. 5 (2010): 1379–91 show that SNAP participation substantially decreases the risk of household food insecurity.

in SNAP and other previously mentioned federal nutrition assistance programs. Individual food banks also independently solicit food and financial donations from a variety of sources, including, but not limited to, regional manufacturers, retailers, and businesses. Each food bank works with a network of partner agencies to support local hunger relief programs by distributing food, helping clients access federal nutrition programs, and raising awareness about the scope of hunger within its service areas. Partner agencies may also offer additional services, such as the distribution of donated clothing or furniture, job-training or literacy programs, or nutrition education.

1.2 Weak Economy Has Increased Challenges for Clients

The economy has experienced an unusually slow recovery since the deep recession in 2008 and 2009. The nation's poverty rate reached 15.1 percent in 2010, the highest rate since 1993. The poverty rate remained at 15 percent in 2012 with 46.5 million people living in poverty. This is the largest number living in poverty since statistics were first published more than 50 years ago.

Sustained high poverty rates arise in part from high unemployment and falling household incomes. The US unemployment rate exceeded 7 percent for five years between late 2008 and late 2013 (about 11 million people in any given month), the longest period of high unemployment in 70 years. While the unemployment rate indicates that a large number of people cannot find jobs, many others are employed part-time because they cannot find full-time work or have dropped out of the labor force after a long and unsuccessful job search. The government's measure of underemployment that includes all these groups averaged 14 percent in fiscal year 2013, compared with a prerecession rate of 8 percent in 2007. On average, about 24 million people were underemployed in 2013. Additionally, others may work full time but, because of low wages, their earnings do not lift them above the poverty level. Perhaps not surprisingly, real household income dropped 8 percent between 2007 and 2012. Poverty, unemployment, and income, along with other demographic characteristics, are key drivers of individual and household food insecurity across the country.

These economic trends have contributed to rapid growth in the numbers of households seeking and receiving federal food assistance. The number of people participating in SNAP, the largest federal food assistance program, rose to a new high of 47.6 million in 2013, up from 33.5 million in 2009. While some of this growth can be attributed to changes in SNAP program rules, recent studies conclude that the weak economy explains most of the increase.[10] Other government programs that provided nutrition assistance in 2013 also saw high enrollment levels. Almost 9 million people received WIC benefits in 2013. In the same year, more than 21 million children

[10] Ganong, Peter and Jeffrey B. Liebman. (2013). "Explaining Trends in SNAP Enrollment." (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University and NBER).

received free or reduced-price school lunches, and under the School Breakfast Program, over 11 million children received free or reduced-price school breakfasts.[11]

The increased need for food assistance observed within federal nutrition programs is mirrored nationally in the number of clients seeking help from the charitable food assistance network. Despite known undercounts of those seeking charitable help, government studies have documented increases in the number of individuals getting help from food pantries and emergency meal programs in 2012 compared with 2010.[12] Feeding America, as the nation's largest charitable food assistance organization, plays a critical role in helping those in need access nutritious food for themselves and their families.

1.3 How Feeding America Network Delivers Food Assistance

The Feeding America network secures and provides food to families struggling with hunger, operates programs that promote self-sufficiency among the clients served, educates the public about the issue of hunger, and advocates for legislative policies that protect people from going hungry.

Feeding America member food banks are on the front lines of hunger relief, partnering with local agencies and food programs. In addition to securing national food and funds through the Feeding America national office, food banks secure local resources. While Feeding America's national office does not receive federal funds, many food banks receive federal hunger-relief funding in the form of commodities, meal reimbursements, or grants. Food banks may also receive state and local funding to support their work. Food banks distribute food through a network of nonprofit partner agencies that receive, store, and distribute donated food and grocery products to needy clients (see Figure 1). Partner agencies distribute food through food programs such as food pantries, kitchens, and shelters in their service area. Each food bank may work with hundreds of partner agencies to get food to people facing hunger.

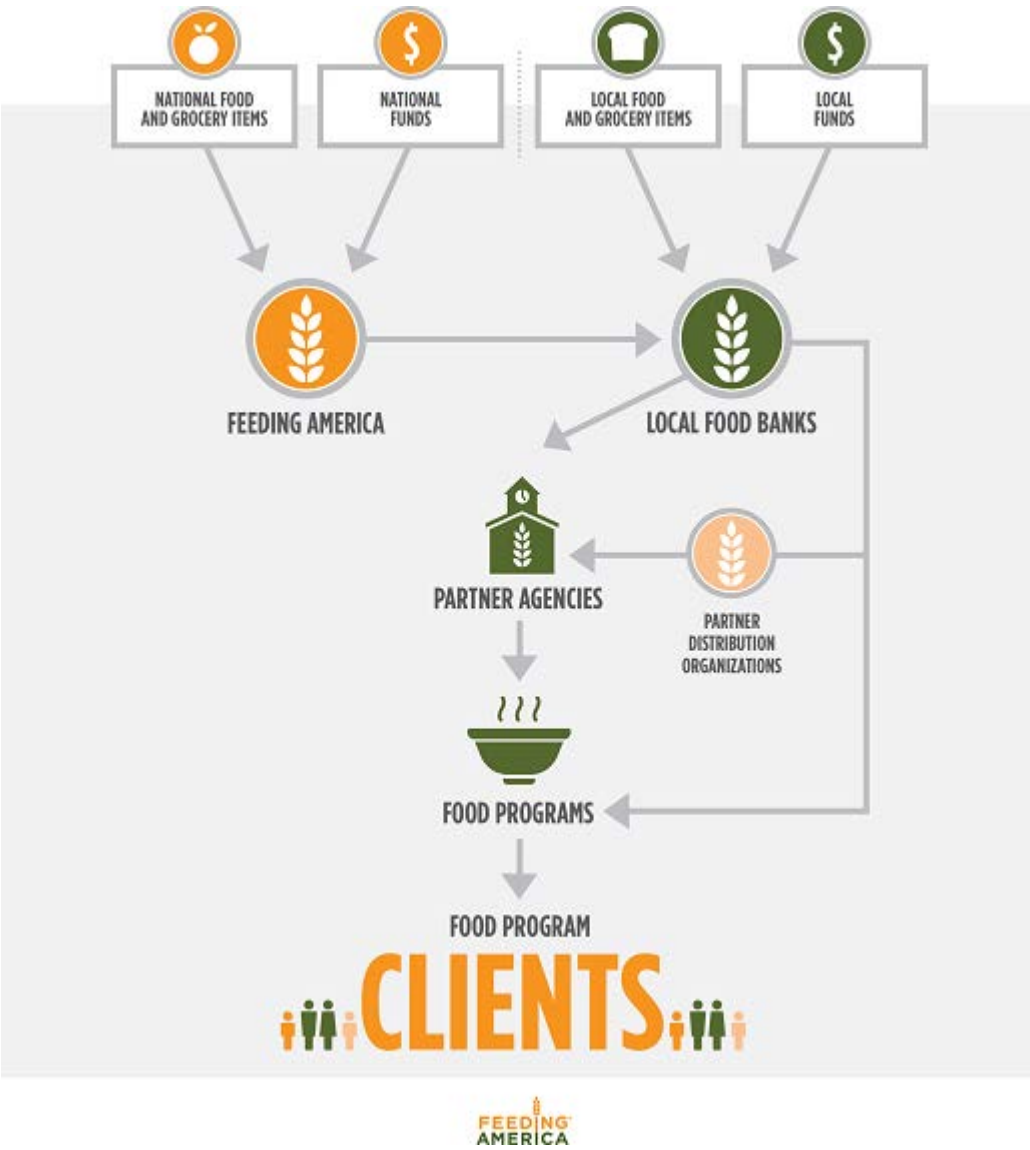
Partner agencies vary in size; some operate a single program, such as a food pantry in a small space, while others are large community organizations that distribute food through various programs at multiple locations.[13] Partner agencies can provide either emergency or nonemergency food assistance to clients, or, in the case of large multiservice agencies, both. Emergency programs include food pantries that distribute non-prepared foods and grocery products to clients who use these where they live, kitchens that provide prepared meals on site, and emergency shelters that serve meals to clients.

---

[11] Program data from www.fns.usda.gov.
[12] Coleman-Jensen et al., *Household Food Security in the United States in 2012.*
[13] Partner agencies are charitable organizations that have typically entered into agreements with a Feeding America member food bank that outlines the standards that must be adhered to by all the respective food bank's partner agencies. Other charitable agencies in the nation may provide services similar to those of partner agencies in the Feeding America network, but this study addresses only the services provided by those in the Feeding America network.

Nonemergency programs such as day care and senior congregate-feeding programs have a primary purpose other than emergency food distribution, but they also distribute food. Additionally, food banks and partner agencies provide clients with outreach, education, referral, and/or application assistance with federal nutrition programs.

Figure 1. Sources of Food and Channels of Food Distribution in the Feeding America Network



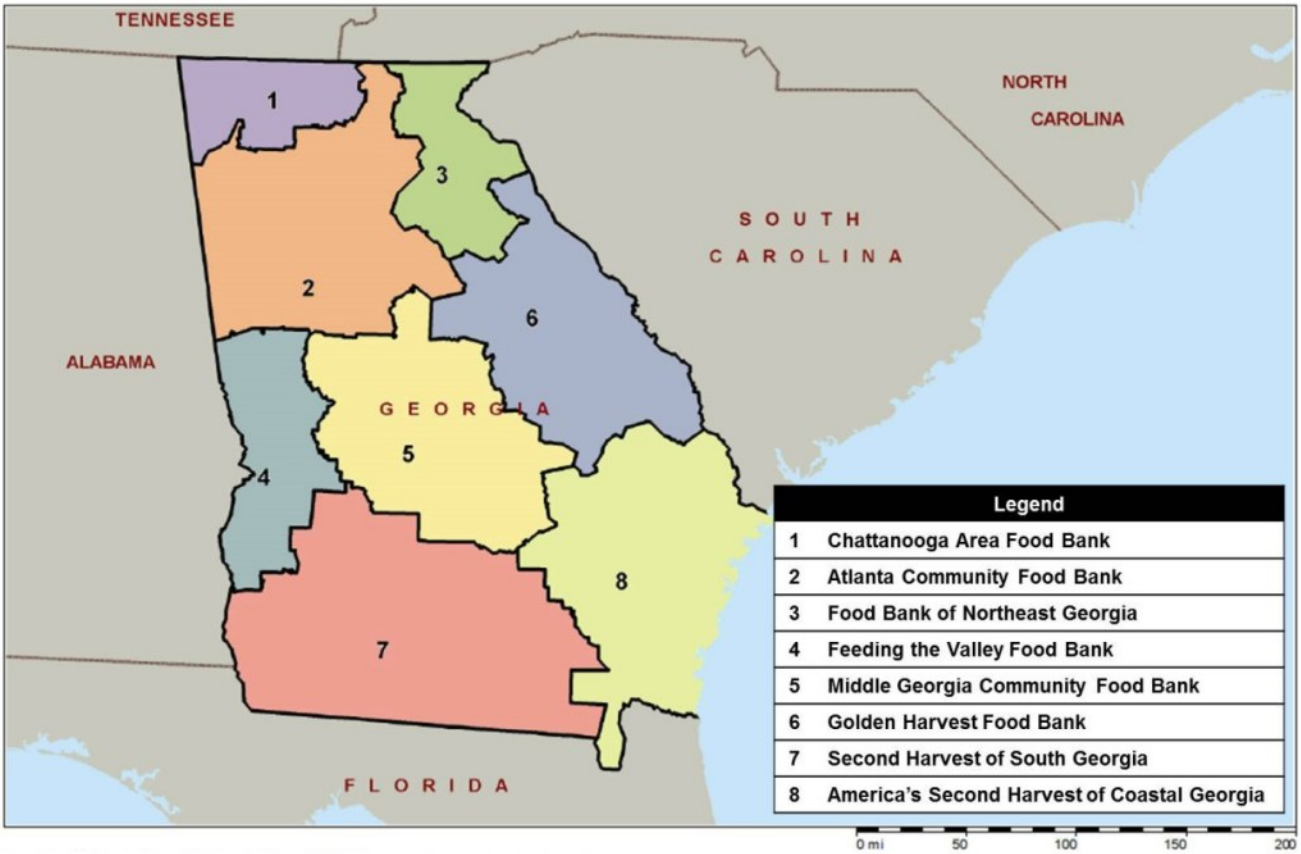
1.4 This Study Updates the Public on Use of Charitable Food Assistance

Given the important role that food banks play in reducing hunger across the United States, Feeding America supports quadrennial surveys to document these programs and the clients they serve. The Hunger in America 2014 study includes an agency survey and a client survey. The Agency Survey details how charitable agencies and their food distribution programs operate, including the sources of food available to them, their use of volunteers, and the challenges they see today and in the future. The Client Survey documents the number and characteristics of those who use charitable food assistance, including their use of other sources of food assistance. Ultimately, the results will help guide actions to reduce the prevalence and severity of hunger in America.

In Georgia, 8 food banks serve individuals and families: America's Second Harvest of Coastal Georgia Inc, Atlanta Community Food Bank, Chattanooga Area Food Bank, Feeding the Valley Food Bank, Food Bank of Northeast Georgia, Golden Harvest Food Bank, Middle Georgia Community Food Bank, and Second Harvest of South Georgia, Inc. For the 2014 report, 1,116 partner agencies participated in the agency survey; these were in turn affiliated with 2,967 participating food and non-food programs. Figure 2 shows the service areas of the food banks that serve Georgia.

The findings indicate that 1,444,900 unique clients were served in this area in the previous 12 months. In the following chapters, we report on the food banks, their partner agencies and programs, and the client households they serve.

Figure 2. Food Bank Service Areas



Copyright © and (P) 1988–2010 Microsoft Corporation and/or its suppliers. All rights reserved. http://www.microsoft.com/mappoint/Certain mapping and direction data © 2010 NAVTEQ. All rights reserved. The Data for areas of Canada includes information taken with permission from Canadian authorities, including: © Her Majesty the Queen in Right of Canada, © Queen's Printer for Ontario. NAVTEQ and NAVTEQ ON BOARD are trademarks of NAVTEQ. © 2010 Tele Atlas North America, Inc. All rights reserved. Tele Atlas and Tele Atlas North America are trademarks of Tele Atlas, Inc. © 2010 by Applied Geographic Systems. All rights reserved.

2. Meeting the Challenge of Collecting Data about Food Programs and Clients

The Hunger in America 2014 study followed the pattern of past Hunger in America studies by implementing two surveys—an Agency Survey and a Client Survey—through the collaborative effort of an extended research team. For the current study, the main collaborators were the Feeding America national office research team and their Technical Advisory Group, research teams at Westat and the Urban Institute, and the network of local Feeding America member food banks. Each local food bank identified one or more Hunger Study Coordinators (HSC), responsible for coordinating and facilitating local data collection efforts.

The Agency Survey, conducted from October 2012 to January 2013, surveyed the partner agencies of all participating food banks. It gathered information about the agencies' hunger-relief efforts and the specific programs the agencies operate. Only agencies that responded to the Agency Survey and listed at least one eligible food program could be selected for the Client Survey, which was a survey of the food program clients who receive services from member food banks in the Feeding America network. Visits to food programs to conduct Client Surveys were carried out by food bank staff and volunteers from April through August 2013. These surveys sought information from clients about their personal circumstances, household demographics, needs and challenges, and use of both government and charitable hunger-relief services. The information was aggregated to the state level, based upon the geocoded addresses of partner agencies. Agency Survey results are based upon responses from partner agencies with addresses in the state of Georgia, and Client Survey results are based upon responses from clients that visited food programs operated by a partner agency with an address in the state.

This chapter provides an overview of the research efforts that were a part of the HIA 2014 study, including the study and sample design, training of the data collection teams, implementation of the surveys, response rates, methodological issues to consider when interpreting the study's findings, and an overview of the approach to analyses for the food banks and partner agencies that serve Georgia. Further methodological details are provided in the Hunger in America 2014 National Report and Technical Volume.

2.1 Study and Sample Design

2.1.1 Study Design

A primary goal for Hunger in America 2014 was to design a study that allowed for selection of a probability sample of clients and for collection of data to support national-, state-, and food bank–level estimates of the total number of clients served. The Hunger in America 2014 study aimed to collect information directly from clients of the Feeding America network and to describe the number and characteristics of the clients who use the network for charitable food assistance.

Because conducting surveys with every client served by every program was not feasible, probability sampling was used to select a subset of programs at which data collection should occur, the days on which data collection should occur at those programs, and the clients who should be asked to complete the survey.

The first step of the study design was conducting the Agency Survey, which included all partner agencies identified by each participating member food bank on the agency list it compiled and provided to Feeding America. The Agency Survey was used to obtain an enumeration of eligible food programs in each food bank's network and to obtain basic information about those programs. The Agency Survey, conducted from October 2012 to January 2013, surveyed each food bank's partner agencies and gathered information about their hunger-relief efforts and the specific programs they operate.[14]

Following the Agency Survey, the sample of clients was obtained using a multistage design. Details of the multistage design appear in the Technical Volume of the National Report, but the four basic stages were as follows:

- **Stage 1** involved selecting agencies from the respondents to the Agency Survey. Agencies that distributed more food per year, measured by pounds as an indication of size, had a greater chance of being selected.

- **Stage 2** involved selecting a sample of programs within sampled agencies. Again, larger programs, as defined by programs distributing more poundage, had a higher chance of being selected.[15]

---

[14] The Agency Survey data collection deadline was extended in order to maximize the number of agencies that could participate in client data collection. For one or more food bank(s) in this state, fewer than 50 percent of the food bank's agencies had completed the Agency Survey by the January 7th, 2013, deadline. Therefore, the food bank(s) was given an additional week to submit information on questions deemed critical for agencies to become eligible for client data collection.

[15] One or more programs were added to one or more food banks' sampling plans in an effort to attain minimum-density status for one or more counties. Though the selection of programs to be added was random from within the county, pseudo-probabilities of selection were adjusted for all sampled programs in the food bank's sampling plans to account for what amounts to a two-phase sample supplementation for the county.

- **Stage 3** involved assigning a sampled program to a "survey day/hours" (a span of hours within a day during the survey data collection period). This was done in a manner that aimed to distribute data collection over the entire survey period and capture the ebbs and flows in how clients are served with respect to hours of the day, days of the week, and weeks of the month.

- **Stage 4** involved sending trained data collectors to the sampled program on the assigned survey day. The data collectors maintained a complete tally of all clients served during the survey hours and were provided with the protocol for selecting a random sample of clients to complete the Client Survey (a systematic sample that was based on a random start and a sampling interval provided to the data collectors).

It should be noted that the sampling frames were constructed based upon food banks' agency lists. As mentioned, the results were aggregated post-hoc based upon the addresses of the partner agencies.

The Client Survey was a survey of the food program clients who receive services from each member food bank and its partner agencies. Visits to programs to conduct Client Surveys were carried out by food bank staff and volunteers in the spring and summer of 2013. The Client Survey sought information from those served by partner agencies and the food programs operated by those agencies, including individual and household demographics and circumstances; health status, food insecurity, and coping strategies; and participation in government and charitable food assistance programs. The Client Survey excluded programs that serve only children or persons with severe cognitive or mental health disabilities, home delivery programs, and confidential locations such as domestic violence shelters where data collection would violate privacy. Within eligible programs, children and clients with severe cognitive or mental health disabilities were deemed ineligible for the survey. Although children were not eligible to participate as respondents, they are included in the client counts and other data when they are members of entire households served by food programs, as is the case with programs that provide groceries.

2.1.2 Program Types

Four major program types were used in HIA 2014 to categorize services provided by the agencies. Food programs included two types of programs, meal and grocery. Food programs were probed on the Agency Survey and potentially eligible for inclusion in the Client Survey.

- *Meal programs* provide prepared meals or snacks on site or in the client's home to clients in need who may or may not reside on the agency's premises. This category includes all congregate-feeding programs along with all other kitchens and shelter programs.

- *Grocery programs* distribute non-prepared foods, groceries, and other household supplies for off-site use, usually for preparation in the client's home. This includes all types of pantries, home-delivered groceries, mobile grocery programs, Commodity Supplemental Food Programs (CSFP), and community gardens.

Two other categories of programs were identified on the Agency Survey but were not eligible for the Client Survey because they do not distribute food.

- *Food-related benefit programs* provide resources that enable individuals in need to procure meals, groceries, or non-grocery products. These programs typically involve outreach, information and referrals, and/or application assistance to obtain state or federal food assistance benefits such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) or the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC).

- *Nonfood programs* have a purpose other than meal programs, grocery programs, or food-related benefit programs such as clothing/furniture assistance or legal assistance. Although nonfood programs are not directly related to the issue of hunger, they are included in the Agency Survey to show the diverse array of services provided through each food bank's network.

Figure 3 highlights the variety of program types throughout the Feeding America network and the mutually exclusive and exhaustive nature of the meal/grocery distinction across program types.

Figure 3. Program Type Categorizations Used in HIA 2014

	GROCERY	MEAL	FOOD-RELATED BENEFITS	NON-FOOD
MIXED AGE GROUP	• Community Garden • Food Bank-Operated Pantry Program • Food Pantry • Home-Delivered Grocery Program • Mobile Market/Mobile Pantry • Other Pantry Program • School Pantry Program	• Community Kitchen • Food Bank-Operated Meal Program • Group Home • Rehabilitation Program • Residential Program • Shelter • [Soup] Kitchen • Transitional Housing	• Nutrition Education • Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) Outreach • Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Assistance and Outreach	• Clothing/Furniture Assistance • Financial Assistance • General Educational Development (GED) Programs • General Information and Referrals • Health Clinics • Housing Assistance • Job Training • Legal Assistance • Medicaid/Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) • Transportation Assistance • Utility/Heat Assistance
CHILDREN	• BackPack Program	• Afterschool Snack • Child Congregate Feeding Program (non-Kids Cafe) • Day Care • Kids Cafe • Summer Food Service Program (SFSP)	• National School Lunch Program (NSLP) Outreach • School Breakfast Program (SBP) Outreach	
SENIORS	• Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP) • Senior Brown Bag • Senior Grocery Program • Senior Mobile Pantry	• Home Delivered Meal (or Meals on Wheels) • Senior Congregate Meal		

FEEDING AMERICA

2.2 Agency Survey Implementation

2.2.1 Sample of Partner Agencies

A separate sample for the Agency Survey was composed for each participating food bank, comprised of each one's partner agencies. Each food bank provided the research teams with a list of their active agencies as well as information regarding programs operated directly by the food bank. The Agency Survey was intended as a census of the agencies of each participating food bank, so each active agency identified by the food bank received an invitation to complete the survey. The list was updated as needed during the survey period to reflect recognized omissions, identified inaccuracies, or agencies that had become inactive.[16]

2.2.2 Agency Survey Data Collection

One major innovation for HIA 2014 was web-based data collection for the Agency Survey. This mode of data collection was intended to (1) reduce burden on agency staff by automatically applying skip patterns and (2) increase the quality and efficiency of data collected. Beginning October 19, 2012, Westat sent Agency Survey invitation emails to all of the food banks' partner agencies.[17] The email included instructions for accessing and completing the survey, and for accessing additional resource documents.

The Agency Survey included two components: agency questions and program questions. As part of the agency questions, agencies enumerated the food and nonfood programs they operate, including grocery programs such as pantries; meal programs such as kitchens, shelters, or congregate meals; food-related benefits programs such as SNAP outreach and application assistance and nutrition education; and other nonfood programs such as legal or clothing assistance. Subsequently, agencies were asked in-depth questions about each food program, for up to 15 of their largest food programs.

For special circumstances when agencies could not complete the Agency Survey online, a paper/telephone version was made available upon request. The paper/telephone version was available only to agencies operating a single program.[18] The paper/telephone version asked the respondent to complete a hardcopy worksheet version of the survey and to follow up by calling the Westat research team to complete a telephone interview component with an interviewer who read the web survey questions to the respondent and entered responses directly into the respondent's web survey.

---

[16] Food banks may not ultimately have listed all of their partner agencies for the purposes of this study. Additionally, some agencies may not have reported on all their programs within the Agency Survey. The information in this report is based solely on the agencies and programs that participated in this study.

[17] Additional survey invitations were sent in later batches as the food banks updated their agency lists.

[18] A set of program-level survey questions for each program was based on program type. Multiple programs would make the paper version too onerous.

2.2.3 Agency Survey Resource Materials

Agencies had access to numerous resources and training materials to help them complete their Agency Survey. The Feeding America and Westat research teams developed tools in a range of media to help facilitate completion of the survey by agencies, as well as to equip food banks with sufficient information to similarly support their agencies. These resources included webinars emphasizing the survey's purpose and procedures and reference guides to help survey respondents navigate the study web site and gather the information and records needed to complete the survey. In addition, the research team created English and Spanish versions of the question-by-question instructions with screenshots of the web survey as a resource for agency staff.

Both Feeding America and Westat allocated staff whose principal role was to provide technical assistance to the food banks and partner agencies. Westat staffed two helpdesks, which fielded technical and survey content–related questions over email and phone. Feeding America staff supported food bank staff and agency representatives who wanted to discuss strategies for increasing agency response rates, needed additional help reaching out to agencies, or had difficulty answering particular questions. Additionally, each food bank's HSC was substantially involved in the Agency Survey data collection process to ensure that agencies could access the web-based survey and to promote a high completion rate of surveys among their agencies. To this end, many food banks offered incentives to agencies completing the survey, such as raffles for donated kitchen equipment or credits to use toward procuring food from the food bank.

2.2.4 Agency Survey Field Period

The Agency Survey field period was from October 19, 2012, to January 7, 2013. Survey invitations were sent beginning October 19 and continued as the agency lists were updated with newly identified agencies eligible for the survey.

The original Agency Survey field period was scheduled to end December 14, 2012, but it was extended by three weeks to January 7, 2013, to allow agencies more time to complete the survey and therefore be eligible for the Client Survey.

2.2.5 Agency Survey Monitoring

A web-based study management system (SMS) was developed to allow food bank staff to track their agencies' survey completion progress in real time. Each food bank appointed a Hunger Study Coordinator, or HSC, who was charged with coordinating, implementing, and monitoring all Hunger in America 2014 study operations for his or her respective food bank. HSCs could

view the survey status (not yet started, in progress, or complete) for each of their agencies, as well as the date of the most recent activity. The SMS also included filtering options and summary reports. HSCs used the SMS to guide their follow-up efforts as needed. Additionally, Feeding America and Westat used the SMS to monitor progress across all food banks.

2.3 Training of Food Bank Hunger Study Coordinators and Volunteer Data Collectors

HSCs were also responsible for all aspects of local Client Survey study execution. They coordinated with sampled agencies and their sampled food programs, and oversaw implementation of the data collection visits. HSCs were expected to recruit and train data collectors who would assist their food bank with the Client Survey data collection. Data collectors, who included both food bank staff members and volunteers from the community, were trained to go to the sampled food programs, conduct client sampling, gain client cooperation and consent to participate, and help administer the computerized survey.

To ensure that the HSCs were appropriately prepared to train their data collectors, all HSCs participated in an in-person training conducted by Westat and Feeding America staff. In addition to providing the HSCs with a full understanding of the requirements of the Client Survey data collection and the HSC responsibilities, the training comprehensively reviewed the topics and associated materials that the HSCs would use to train their own data collectors. Topics covered included the processes for sampling, recruiting, and consenting clients; setting up and using the equipment (e.g., tablets, keyboards, headphones); navigating the survey and being able to respond to client questions; handling any problems that might occur in the field; and submitting all necessary data and information at the end of the program visit.

Westat conducted three two-day in-person trainings in different regions of the country. Every HSC was expected to attend one training. In the few cases in which an HSC did not attend a scheduled in-person training, or a different HSC was newly assigned at a food bank, a follow-up training was conducted. After the trainings, Westat provided HSCs with all the materials and resources they would need to train their data collectors and to help ensure these trainings were conducted consistently across the food banks, including webinars, manuals, and study data collection forms, as well as resource documents with recommended guidance for recruiting, training, and overseeing volunteer data collectors.

2.4 Client Survey Implementation

As described in Section 2.1, the sample for the Client Survey was selected using a four-stage sampling approach: (1) agency, (2) program, (3) survey day/hours, and (4) clients. The following sections describe the details of how the Client Survey was implemented.

2.4.1 Client Survey Translation

The Client Survey was administered in five languages nationally that were identified with input from participating food banks, with the intent to reach the largest number of clients. Before HIA 2014, the Client Survey was offered only in English and Spanish. In Georgia, most of the completed surveys were administered in English, with other language translations used, as shown in Table 1. Although the survey was offered in multiple languages, a client's ability to take the survey in a particular language depended on the recruitment and availability of bilingual data collectors. Data collectors were responsible for inviting sampled clients to take the survey and collecting verbal consent; consequently, limited bilingual data collector availability may have precluded some clients from taking the survey.

Table 1. Client Surveys Administered by Language

	All Food Programs	
Language	Count	Percent
English	1,390	96.3%
Spanish	54	3.7%
Vietnamese	0	0.0%
Russian	0	0.0%
Mandarin Chinese	0	0.0%
Unweighted Total	1,444	100.0%

2.4.2 Client Data Collection Procedures

In early April 2013, Westat released the food bank sampling plans to the HSCs so they could prepare for data collection beginning in mid-April. HSCs called program staff to discuss visit logistics and formed data collection teams for each visit, with a lead data collector overseeing the equipment and data collection forms. The HSCs were instructed to make these preparations about two weeks before the program visit. For the sampled programs, the assignment of survey day/hours was randomized based on information about the program's days and hours of operation provided in the Agency Survey. Because of incomplete or inaccurate responses to these items, in many cases, the program was not operating during the assigned survey day/hours. Additionally, in some cases, it was not feasible for the food bank to arrange for data collection to occur during the assigned survey day/hours (e.g., owing to resource limitations or weather-related issues). If the HSC discovered that a visit could not be conducted during the assigned day/time, a prespecified procedure was used to assign a replacement survey day or

replacement survey hours.[19] Up to two replacements were permitted before a visit was finalized as "nonresponse" and the data collection did not take place.[20]

Sampling of clients at the programs was carefully specified to sample seven to eight clients at each program visit. On the day of a program visit, data collectors sampled clients waiting for services and invited those who were sampled to participate in the survey.
For those clients who agreed to participate, data collectors described all survey activities, informed clients that risks were minimal and the study voluntary, and obtained verbal consent to participate. The survey was administered via a tablet and an Audio Computer-Assisted Self-Interview (ACASI) instrument. ACASI is a system ideally suited to gathering information on sensitive subjects such as food insecurity; clients listen to questions using earphones and select responses to the questions using a tablet. Data collectors instructed the clients in the use of the tablet and the ACASI instrument before allowing the clients to complete the survey. Some food banks provided modest incentives for participation, such as cash or gift cards worth $10 or less, but not all food banks were able to offer incentives to clients. Incentives, when provided, were distributed after participation but did not require full survey completion.

After the close of each program visit, the lead data collector was required to complete a Site Survey for the program. The Site Survey summarized the results of each data collection visit, documenting key variables related to sampling including data collection start and end times and adjustments to sampling procedures required by visit logistics or program operations.[21] Additionally, the Site Survey included questions on the total client flow during the visit, participation status of each sampled client, and reasons for client ineligibility or nonresponse. Reasons for ineligibility included being a minor or having cognitive impairment or mental health disability that interfered with the ability to consent to participation. Nonresponse included any reason for nonparticipation by an eligible sampled client. These data were compiled in report format and were made available to HSCs and research team staff. HSCs could also review this information for local monitoring of their data collectors' efforts. A copy of the Site Survey appears in the Hunger in America 2014 National Report Appendix.

---

[19] Procedures were designed to be compatible with the initial sampling protocol, such as going on the same day of the week during the following week (for example replacing a Monday with the following Monday), or the same day and week of the following month (for example the first Monday of the month during the following month). The Westat helpdesk was available to assist with complex rescheduling needs.
[20] Final nonresponse was assigned as a status to any program that was eligible for sampling at the time of the Agency Survey and was sampled, but a program visit did not occur. Reasons for nonresponse included no longer partnering with the food bank, not open during the data collection period, refusal to participate, visit was rescheduled twice and did not occur, program operates only on an on-call basis, or any other reason an eligible sampled program would not be visited.
[21] Adjustments were typically required for nontraditional operational circumstances such as programs that opened before the scheduled time or programs that split clients into multiple lines to wait for services.

2.4.3 Client Survey Field Period

Client Survey data collection began on April 17, 2013, and continued through August 30, 2013. As designed, a slow rollout of the Client Survey was implemented in April to allow food banks time to adjust to the data collection effort. Food banks were given fewer assignments from April 17 through April 30. Because of either available program operation days or the need to reschedule visits, some food banks had no data collection visits during these first two weeks. From May through August 2013 assignments were steady, but rescheduling needs resulted in some visits being shifted to later in the data collection period.

2.4.4 Client Survey Resources

As with the Agency Survey, food bank staff and data collectors had access to various resources and support throughout client data collection. Westat's telephone and email helpdesk was operational many of the hours during which data collection took place. Feeding America staff were on call during business hours to take any overflow calls that could not be answered immediately by the Westat team. Common questions the helpdesk addressed included how to reschedule an assigned data collection window and how to count and sample clients in nontraditional circumstances (for example, at a food program with multiple client lines). Feeding America staff also supported food banks with volunteer recruitment, pre- and post-data collection documentation, and bolstering food banks' internal capacities for staff time dedicated to Hunger in America 2014.

2.5 Response Rates

The response rate is the ratio of units with completed surveys to units sampled and eligible for the survey. For purposes of this study, the units for which response rates were calculated include agencies, programs, clients, and client households. Response rates can be either unweighted or weighted. The unweighted rate, computed using the raw number of units, provides a useful description of the success of the operational aspects of the survey. The weighted rate better describes the success of the survey with respect to the population sampled, since the weights allow for inference of the sample data (including response status) to the population level. Both rates are usually similar. All unit response rates discussed in this section are unweighted.

At the agency level, of the 2,081 eligible agencies listed by Georgia, 54 percent (1,116) responded to enough questions on the Agency Survey to be included in the analysis sample for the Agency Survey data.[22]

[22] A survey needed to have responses to at least 50 percent of the core survey items to be considered complete. Core survey items were those that involved no possibility of valid skips due to survey skip logic. Because the survey had extensive skip logic, 50 percent of core items was deemed the minimum necessary for a survey to yield enough valid data for inclusion in analyses.

Standards for including agencies and their programs in the sampling frame for the Client Survey were less stringent than the standard for analytically complete surveys. Agencies were deemed sufficient for use in Client Survey sampling if they listed and provided basic information on the Agency Survey about at least one eligible food program. At the time of agency and program sampling for the Client Survey, 2,081 agencies were in the sampling frame. From those agencies, 595 food programs were sampled for Client Survey data collection, and 381 program visits were completed. The distribution of visits to the two broad types of food programs—meal and grocery—appears in Table 2.

Table 2. Unweighted Distribution of Program Visits by Program Category

	All Food Programs	
Type of program	Count	Percent
Meal	33	8.7%
Grocery	348	91.3%
Total	381	100%

Data Source: Hunger in America 2014 Agency Survey.

At the client level, across the 381 program visits completed, an estimated 3,397 eligible clients were sampled.[23]

2.6 Methodological Considerations in Understanding and Interpreting Findings

2.6.1 Changes in Program Types between HIA 2010 and HIA 2014

Hunger in America 2010 focused on pantries, kitchens, and shelters, often known as emergency food programs. Hunger in America 2014 includes numerous other program types, thus broadening the spectrum of programs described and included in data collection. As a result, the program type categorizations have changed in Hunger in America 2014. Food programs, which are included in both the Agency and Client Surveys, are now divided more broadly into those that provide meals and those that provide groceries. See Section 2.1.2 for details of program types.

[23] Clients could be deemed eligible but nonresponsive if they refused the survey or wished to take the survey but another factor prevented them from doing so. Tracked reasons for refusal or nonresponse included the following: the program was closing for the day, the sampled individual was picking up food as a proxy for a client, client was concerned about using the computer technology, client had a physical impairment that made completion of the survey too challenging, client needed to complete the survey in a language not offered, and other reasons not specified. Other reasons for client refusal were observed by data collectors and noted anecdotally, but not tracked. These reasons for refusal, as well as other unrecorded reasons, may have introduced some bias into the survey results that is difficult to quantify.

2.6.2 Underrepresentation of Children Served by the Feeding America Network

One important focus of the Feeding America network is to address the issue of hunger among children. The network provides food to many programs that uniquely serve children, including BackPack, Kids Cafe, Afterschool Snack, day care centers, child congregate feeding programs, and others. Although information on these programs for children was included in the Agency Survey, the programs were not eligible for participation in the Client Survey. Children could not consent to participate or provide the type of information sought on the surveys, nor were parents present at the programs able to consent or answer on their behalf. Similarly, children present during client data collection at eligible meal programs were not eligible to be sampled or invited to respond to the Client Survey. The study does report on households with children who receive grocery program services, thus including children in the client estimates for grocery programs, but the study will underestimate the services provided to children through member food banks in the Feeding America network.

2.6.3 Survey Respondents, Their Households, and Food Program Clients

In understanding the terminology and units of analysis for the Client Survey, it is necessary to consider the concept of the "client," as the definition varied slightly by program type.

- For **meal programs**, the client is the individual who receives the prepared meal or snack on site at the program. For example, an individual attending a senior congregate meal program receives services, but no one else at that individual's home may be a food program client. Consequently, when data collectors counted and sampled clients in meal programs, each eligible individual on site was counted and sampled separately. Sampled individuals served as the respondents.

- For **grocery programs**, every member of the household receiving the groceries may benefit from the grocery products brought home; thus, the entire household, or conceptualized differently, each individual within the household, is a client. When counting and sampling clients for grocery programs, sampling was done by counting each household group as one client. If the household was sampled, one adult household member volunteered to serve as the respondent on behalf of the household.

Clients who responded to the survey answered questions about themselves and their households. We report data in Chapter 4 on characteristics of clients and their households, to allow an understanding of the background and home circumstances of all clients, regardless of whether the entire household receives food program services. While we continue to report data on client households in Chapter 5, we focus specifically on client households' food security status and use of food assistance.

2.6.4 Volunteer Data Collection Efforts

Across the country, Hunger in America 2014 was largely carried out by volunteer data collectors. Each food bank's data collector pool varied substantially; whereas some food banks used only food bank staff for data collection activities, other food banks may have relied exclusively on external volunteers, interns, or paid data collectors. Although, at the national level, many data collectors were food bank staff engaged with study activities, the added generous efforts of volunteers made the study possible.

Nonetheless, relying on a volunteer workforce to help implement a complex and lengthy data collection presents inevitable challenges. Unlike full-time professional data collectors who are committed only to that task for months on end, volunteers are often able to give a limited amount of time scheduled around employment, school, and other commitments. This more limited availability may have meant some volunteers did not have the opportunity to accrue enough experience to master the data collection activities. Limited volunteer availability also presented a challenge for HSCs who needed to staff program visits to be carried out during pre-assigned days and times to comply with the sample design. Limited volunteer availability sometimes resulted in rescheduled and missed program visits or in too few data collectors at a visit to implement the procedures as intended, introducing some statistical error into the study data. Thus, while the volunteer workforce made the study possible, the limitations of this approach may also affect the precision of some estimates.

2.6.5 Changes from Past Hunger in America Studies to Hunger in America 2014

Hunger in America 2014 marks a departure from past Hunger in America studies in several ways. Each departure is important for considering Hunger in America 2014 in context and attempting to compare it to past results. Many of these changes were the result of feedback from previous studies. Readers are encouraged to exercise caution and fully understand the limitations of comparing the two studies before drawing conclusions about the differences between them. The novel features of HIA 2014 include these four:

- **Inclusion of additional program types.** Whereas previous Hunger in America studies focused solely on emergency food programs (specifically, pantries, kitchens, and shelters), HIA 2014 expanded the scope of the study to include both emergency and nonemergency programs. For the first time, agencies were asked to provide detailed information about all their programs on the Agency Survey, allowing for the inclusion of mobile pantry programs, senior programs, rehabilitation programs, and more in the Client Survey. Although HIA 2014's increase in scope required additional commitment from participating food bank and agency staff, it has provided a more representative picture of the services provided in the network and the clients who use those services.

- **Meal/grocery classification.** The shift to including nonemergency food programs created the need to broaden the category of programs. As described in Section 2.6.1, study findings for HIA 2014 are presented for meal programs and for grocery programs, instead of the former pantry, kitchen, and shelter categories. Although we present some key estimates for clients of pantries, kitchens, and shelters in the Appendix tables, the shift in design means that even those estimates are not fully comparable with previous years' estimates.

- **Digital data collection.** One of the most important changes from past Hunger in America studies was the introduction of digital data collection. As described earlier in Section 2.4.2, both the Agency Survey and the Client Survey were moved to a computer-based administration to allow for greater ease for respondents completing the surveys. The use of skip logic offered only the relevant survey questions to each respondent and a more secure and timely submission of survey responses. Data collectors were available on site to provide help to clients who struggled with the technological component. Other challenges inherent to the use of technology, such as temporary loss of Internet connection, may have affected some surveys; however, the potential for human error was minimized by the change from in-person client interviews to electronic surveys.

- **Additional survey language options.** Given the diversity of languages spoken within the Feeding America network, Hunger in America 2014 offered both the Agency and Client Surveys in additional languages. For the first time, the Agency Survey was translated into Spanish to accommodate any Spanish-speaking agency staff. The electronic Client Survey was offered in English, Spanish, Mandarin Chinese, Russian, and Vietnamese. Previously, the Client Survey had been offered only in English and Spanish. The three additional languages were selected based on feedback from food bank staff and recommendations from research experts.

2.7 Summary of Analytical Approach

The analytical approach in this report uses all usable responses from the two surveys. In this section, we review the methodology underlying the descriptive tabulations of our weighted survey data.

2.7.1 Weighting Survey Data

All usable responses to the Agency Survey and Client Survey have been weighted. Survey weights are the mechanism for using sample data to represent the 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 that the given sampled unit represents. For Hunger in America 2014, the unit could be an agency, a program, a household, or a client, depending on the data being addressed. Using clients as an example, a client's survey weight is the number of "similar" clients in the population that the given sampled client represents. As such, survey weights account for the sampling of clients. For example, within a given program visit, if one client in 20 is sampled, a weight of 20 is used to account for each of the sampled clients representing 20 clients in the population.

Survey weights also account for sample losses (i.e., nonresponse) throughout the stages of sampling and data collection. Across the various data sources for Hunger in America 2014, those sample losses were in the form of agencies partnered with participating food banks failing to complete the Agency Survey, program visits that did not occur, and clients who did not complete the Client Survey.

Programs covered by these surveys include both emergency and nonemergency food programs. As described previously, the Westat team worked with Feeding America to identify two broad food program type groupings: meal programs and grocery programs (see section 2.1.2 for descriptions of the program types). Westat developed weights that may be used to produce client-count estimates by meal or grocery program type, as well as other characteristics of clients. These weights account for the approach used for the Client Survey in sampling meal and grocery programs separately, for seasonal patterns in program utilization, and for client duplication (i.e., multiple visits to programs by the same client).

2.7.2 Valid Survey Responses

The tables in this report commonly display percentage distributions of valid survey responses. These percentages rely on valid responses, total weighted N, and weighted nonresponse. Valid responses occur when a survey respondent is eligible to answer a question and chooses an answer that is one of the presented response options. Total weighted N is the weighted number of units (agencies, programs, households, or individual clients) who were eligible to respond to a particular survey item, regardless of whether the respondent provided a valid response. Consequently, total weighted N includes both answers provided to a question and nonresponse. Weighted nonresponse for the Agency Survey and Client Survey accounts for cases that have missing data due to a participating respondent not answering a question. In the few questions where "don't know" or "I'd prefer not to answer" were presented as response options, endorsement of that option is treated as nonresponse. The percentages in the tables reflect the total weighted number of valid responses in the numerator and total weighted N minus

weighted nonresponse in the denominator. In addition to reporting the total weighted N in each table, we report the aggregate of all sources of weighted nonresponse, labeled as "weighted nonreporting" in the tables.

Because of skip patterns within the survey, some respondents were not eligible to answer some questions based on their previous answers, and the computerized survey skipped those questions. In such cases the skipped questions are called valid skips. Valid skips are not included in the total weighted N since the respondent was not eligible to answer the question.

2.7.3 Tabular Presentation

Chapter 3 of this report presents two types of tables: agency level and program level. Each table type is specified in the table title. Percentages in the agency-level tables are percentages of the total weighted number of agencies reporting, and those in the program-level tables are percentages of the total weighted number of programs operated by the agencies. Many program-level tables address only food programs operated by the agencies.

In Chapters 4 and 5 of this report, we present data on client households and on individual clients. Table titles indicate whether the table is at the household or individual level. Household data include the weighted number of households receiving grocery services (since the whole household receives food), plus the weighted number of households of the individual clients receiving meal services (representing the broader household of a single client). Individual client data include weighted percentages of individual food recipients, multiplying each grocery household by the number of household members, and including the single-person recipients at meal programs.

All data in the report are estimates based on survey responses that are weighted to reflect member food banks and partner agencies that serve Georgia. All the data have been aggregated to the state level based upon the geocoded addresses of partner agencies. As a sample-based estimate, each percentage has a margin of error. One expects that the actual value (if measured for the entire population) would fall within some range of the sample estimate. Appendix A shows the sample estimates presented in the main text and their corresponding margin of error. For each estimate, there is a 90 percent probability that the true value in the population falls within the interval equal to the sample estimate plus or minus the indicated margin of error. Throughout, the symbol "++" is shown when findings cannot be presented due to small sample size (fewer than 5 unweighted observations).

2.7.4 Client Counts

We present estimates in Section 4.1 for both duplicated and unduplicated client counts. Duplicated counts effectively count the number of times clients are reached through food

distributions during a given time period (week, month, or year). These estimates count clients each time they receive food: for meal programs, that is each time an individual receives a meal; and for grocery programs, each time an individual and their household members receive groceries. The counts include each member of a household for each grocery distribution. Unduplicated counts focus on the number of unique individuals served. Unduplicated counts recognize that any client may visit programs repeatedly, and these counts adjust for repetition. In the unduplicated count, the household that comes every month to get groceries from a grocery program will be counted only once in annual counts. We present weekly, monthly, and annual duplicated and unduplicated count estimates in tables.

3. Services of Partner Agencies and Programs

A total of 8 Feeding America member food banks serve the state of Georgia. Each member food bank is an integral partner in the Feeding America network. Local food banks link people in need of food to food and nutrition resources in the community through their own services and those of their partner agencies. These services and partnerships encompass both food provision and information on nutrition, social services, and other types of assistance available to clients.

This chapter describes the structure of the network of Feeding America member food banks that serve Georgia, the services provided through the food banks' partner agencies and programs, and the challenges they face in delivering charitable food assistance. The data in this chapter are based solely on the information gathered from partner agencies, which responded to questions about their agency operations and programs in the Agency Survey. Estimates presented in this chapter (and the corresponding margins of error) can be found in Appendix Table A1.

3.1 Organization of the Network of Food Banks

Food banks are charitable, nonprofit organizations that solicit and store donated food until it is distributed to charitable agencies that serve people in need in their service areas. Food banks also raise awareness about hunger, advocate on behalf of food-insecure people, and support programs and services that help people access the food they need. In addition, food banks fundraise to support programs and purchase food to better serve clients in their service area.

Each member food bank has a network of partner agencies to which they distribute food. Partner agencies, which vary substantially in size and scope, are typically nonprofit or religious organizations that operate one or more emergency or nonemergency food programs. In addition to food distribution, agencies may also operate nonfood programs, that are unaffiliated with the food bank, but that provide assistance to clients in need by providing nonfood goods such as clothing and furniture or providing assistance with job training or financial literacy, as examples.

The partner agencies' food programs are the mechanism for distribution of food directly to individuals in need. In addition to distributing food through their partner agencies, some food banks also distribute food directly to people through their own programs. For the purposes of Hunger in America 2014, food programs are categorized into meal programs, which provide prepared meals or snacks on site or in the client’s home; and grocery programs, which distribute nonprepared foods, groceries, and other household supplies for off-site use such as for preparation in the client’s home.

3.2 Number and Types of Partner Agencies and Programs

At the time of the Agency Survey, Feeding America member food banks that serve Georgia reported partnering with 1,656 agencies.[24] The data presented in this chapter are based on weights applied to the study's sample data that allow us to estimate the characteristics of the food banks' networks, including partner agencies that completed the Agency Survey and partner agencies that did not participate. Partner agencies include both faith-based agencies and agencies that are not faith-based.

- 74 percent of partner agencies are faith-based or located in a religious institution;
- 26 percent of partner agencies are not faith-based.

Each partner agency operates one or more local food programs that provide food assistance directly to clients. Food programs can be divided more broadly into those that provide meals and those that provide groceries.

In addition to food distribution, partner agencies may also offer various nonfood services to further assist clients in need. Although member food banks may not be directly affiliated with their partner agencies' nonfood programs, the Agency Survey probed respondents to enumerate their nonfood programs in an effort to get a full picture of the partner agencies' services. Nonfood programs include food-related benefits programs and other nonfood programs. Food-related benefits programs typically involve outreach, education, information and referrals, and/or application assistance to obtain federal or state food assistance benefits; they also encompass nutrition education programs, such as workshops on healthy eating. Other nonfood programs have a primary purpose other than meal programs, grocery programs, or food-related benefits programs such as clothing or furniture assistance, housing or utility and heat assistance (i.e. Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program), health clinics, legal assistance, job training, or financial assistance, including assistance with taxes or budgeting education.

In Georgia, agencies partnered with Feeding America member food banks operate a total of 2,967 programs, including both food and nonfood programs. The breakdown of these programs is as follows:

- 1,353 grocery programs,
- 630 meal programs,
- 60 food-related benefits programs, and
- 924 other nonfood programs.

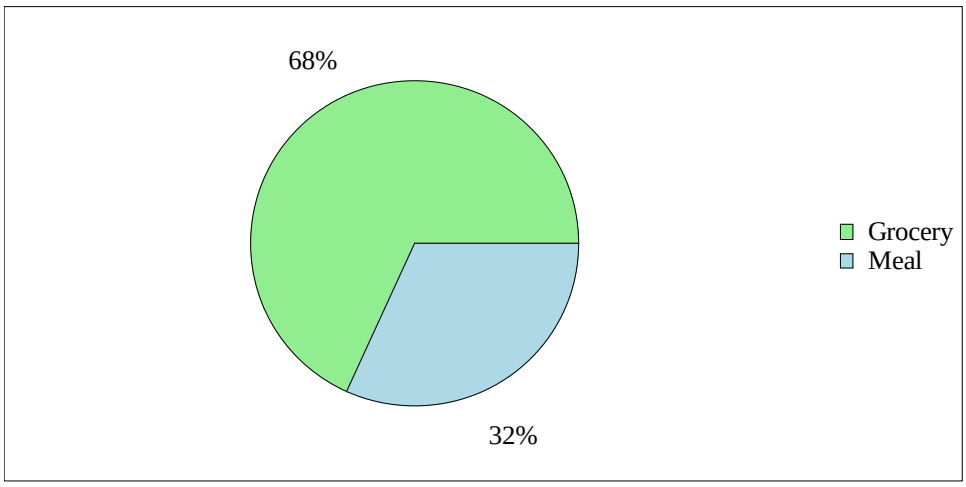
An estimated 28 percent of partner agencies report operating both food programs and nonfood programs.

---

[24] Because weighting takes the size of nonresponding agencies into account when producing an estimate, it is possible for the estimated number of agencies to fall slightly below or above the actual number of agencies.

Among food programs, grocery programs represent 68 percent of programs, while meal programs represent 32 percent (see Figure 4). Grocery programs include programs like food pantries and mobile pantries that distribute groceries, whereas meal programs are those that serve meals to clients at locations such as (soup) kitchens, shelters, and residential facilities. For a detailed breakdown of the types of programs included in Hunger in America 2014, as well as their target age group, please see Figure 3.

Figure 4. Distribution of Meal and Grocery Programs, Among Food Programs



Data Source: Hunger in America 2014 Agency Survey.
Notes: Total weighted food programs = 1,983. All data are weighted.

3.3 Hunger-Relief Services

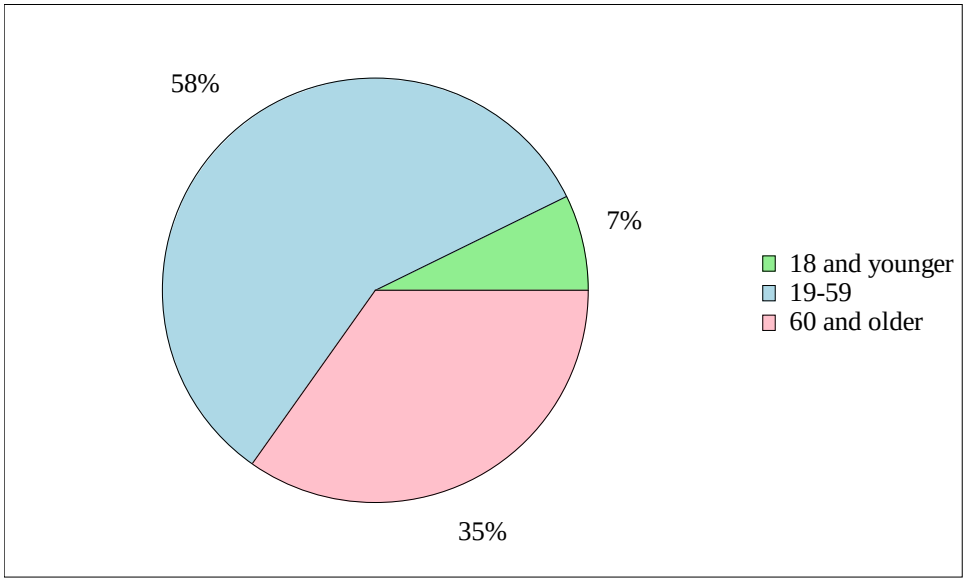
The food banks' partner agencies and their programs are on the forefront of service delivery. They are organized and staffed in ways that allow them to carry out their mission while remaining focused and operating within what is typically a limited budget. They obtain the food they distribute from the food banks and various other sources, and they distribute these meals and groceries to a diverse client base. Although partner agencies and their programs employ creative strategies to manage their clients' needs, some food programs perceive an increasing need for services in their service areas and some report struggling to accommodate client demand.

Agency and program administration is complex and often requires using both paid employees and volunteers. Partner agencies report staffing in full-time-equivalents (assuming a 40-hour work week), in which multiple part-time individuals could be recorded as equivalent to a full-time employee to allow for comparability across agencies despite different staffing models. An estimated 38 percent of partner agencies report employing paid staff. The median number of paid full-time-equivalent staff is 4.

On the program level, food programs often rely on a volunteer workforce to ensure that they can serve their clients. In total, 50,500 volunteers provide aid to food programs each week; the volunteers contribute a total of 198,700 hours per week. The median number of volunteers assisting at programs in a typical week is 8. The volunteers provide a median of 25 volunteer hours each week.

Volunteers are drawn from a diverse pool, both demographically and from different sources. For the food programs associated with Feeding America member food banks that serve Georgia, 7 percent of volunteers are age 18 or younger, 58 percent are between 19 and 59 years old, and 35 percent are age 60 or older (see Figure 5).

Figure 5. Age Range of Volunteers, Among Food Programs with Volunteers during the Past 12 Months



Data Source: Hunger in America 2014 Agency Survey, Q23.
Notes: Total weighted food programs = 1,983. Weighted nonreporting food programs = 256. All data are weighted.

The top three sources of program volunteers (with more than 51 percent of volunteers for programs) are “Connected to agency,” “Religious groups,” and “Clients.”

Staff and volunteers play a critical role in administering local programs, and this requires training. For the programs associated with food banks serving Georgia, the three most common training needs of staff and volunteers are “Fundraising/grant writing,” “Nutrition education,” and “Food safety and sanitation.”

At the program level, a main priority is to identify potential sources of food to be distributed to clients. While food is obtained from local Feeding America member food banks, food programs may also obtain food from other sources, such as donations and their own food purchases (see Table 3).

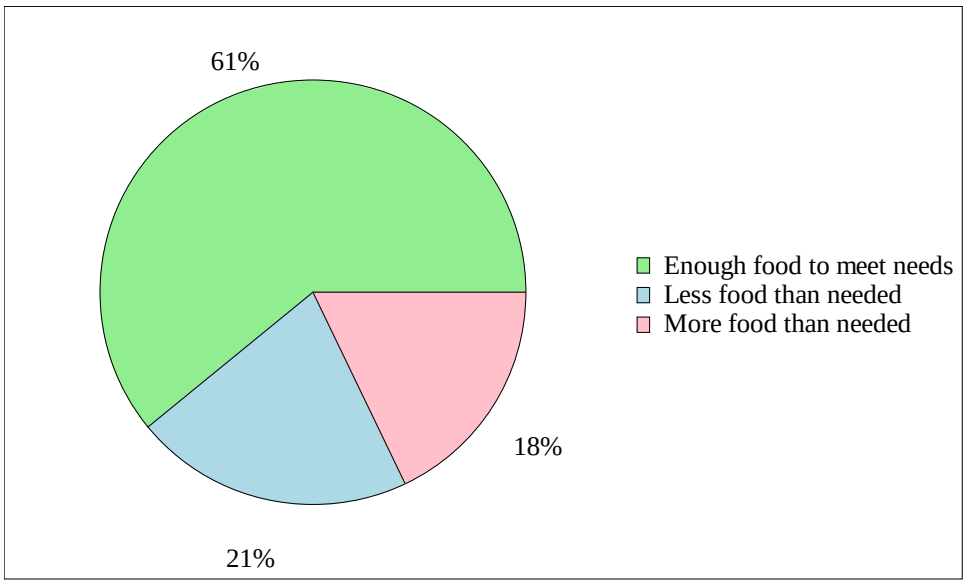
Table 3. Average Percentage of Total Food Distributed by Food Programs in the Past 12 Months, by Source

Source of Food	All Food Programs Percentage
Feeding America member food banks	70.9%
Donations	10.3%
Purchases	17.3%
Other	1.6%
Total	100%
Total weighted food programs	1,983
Weighted nonreporting food programs	101

Data Source: Hunger in America 2014 Agency Survey, Q26
Notes: All data are weighted.

Challenges such as staffing and procuring food may ultimately impact the ability of food programs to serve clients. The Agency Survey collected data about whether the food programs have enough food to meet clients’ needs and whether food programs have to turn away clients for any reason. Among the food programs affiliated with food banks serving Georgia, 21 percent report having less food than needed to meet clients’ needs (see Figure 6).

Figure 6. Programs Reporting the Degree to Which They Had Food Available to Meet Needs of Clients during the Past 12 Months



Data Source: Hunger in America 2014 Agency Survey, Q39.
Notes: Total weighted food programs =1,983. Weighted nonreporting food programs =185. All data are weighted.

Among food programs that reported turning away clients during the past 12 months, 30 percent of food programs did so “frequently” or “occasionally” because they ran out of food.

Food programs were also asked on the Agency Survey to identify any changes made to food receipt rules—that is, limitations on how often clients can receive food, including the number of times a client or household can get food in a given period. Different programs may place service receipt restrictions for different reasons. For instance, in some cases, food programs may elect to limit a household’s receipt of food to once every 30 days. For food banks that serve Georgia, 43 percent of food programs have some type of restriction. Of those programs with restrictions, the most common is "Monthly", with 29 percent of programs reporting this rule.

In the next section, we discuss other types of services provided by these food banks and their partner agencies and programs.

3.4 Other Food-Related and Nonfood Services

In addition to supplying clients with food, food banks and their partner agencies may offer aid with food-related benefits programs or other important nonfood services. For instance, some partner agencies offer services related to nutrition education (see Table 4).

Table 4. Agencies Providing Nutrition Education Activities and Subtype of Activities Offered

Type of activity	Percentage
Agencies that provide any type of nutrition services	35.6%
Fliers or written materials	29.9%
Cooking classes or demonstrations	17.5%
Nutrition workshops or classes or meetings with dietitians	23.5%
Referrals	17.4%
Other	7.5%
Agencies that do not provide any type of nutrition services	64.4%
Total	100.0%
Total weighted agencies	1,656
Weighted nonreporting agencies	5

Data Source: Hunger in America 2014 Agency Survey, Q6.
Notes: Because the survey allowed respondents to mark all nutrition education activities they provide, percentages do not sum to the total percentage that provide any nutrition education services.
All data are weighted.

Partner agencies may also provide services through food-related benefits programs. These programs help clients learn about and apply for government benefits that will enable them to procure meals, groceries, or nongrocery products. For many partner agencies that operate food-related benefits programs, assistance is provided as referrals to other programs, whose sole mission may be to help eligible individuals secure government benefits; for other agencies, outreach and direct assistance may be provided.

Agencies partnered with Feeding America member food banks that serve Georgia may also provide services related to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). An estimated 41 percent of these partner agencies provide some services to assist clients in accessing benefits through SNAP. Low-income households that participate in SNAP receive monthly benefit allotments in the form of electronic debit cards (EBT) to supplement their food budget. The SNAP-related activities provided by the agencies may include screening for eligibility, application assistance, recertification assistance, and educating clients about the program (see Table 5).

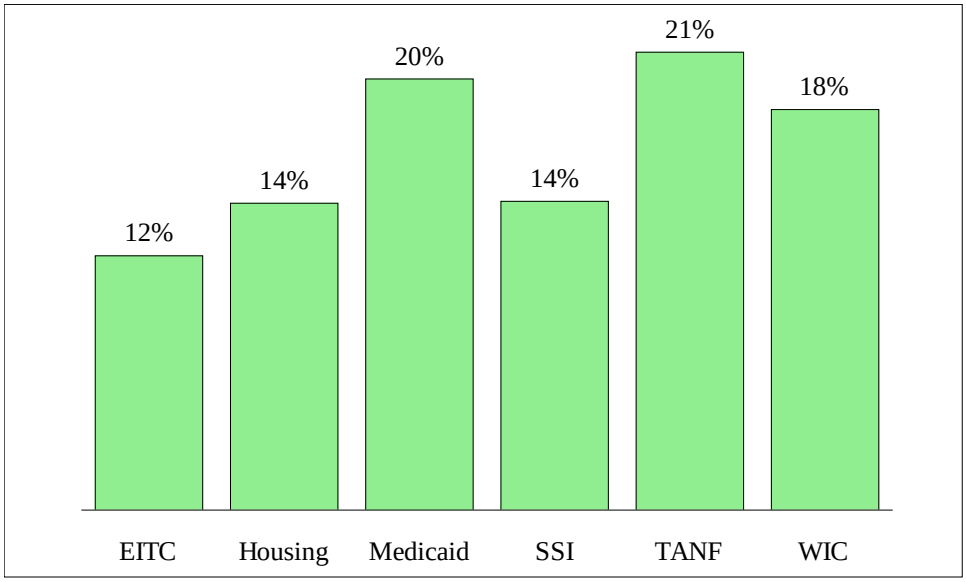
Table 5. Agencies Providing Services Related to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and Subtypes of Services Offered

Type of SNAP service	Percentage
Agencies that provide any SNAP-related services	40.6%
Application assistance	29.0%
Education about the program	32.1%
Recertification for the program	17.9%
Screening for eligibility	30.1%
Agencies that do not provide any SNAP-related services	58.6%
Total	100%
Total weighted agencies	1,656
Weighted nonreporting agencies	7

Data Source: Hunger in America 2014 Agency Survey, Q10.
Notes: Because the survey allowed respondents to mark all SNAP services they provide, percentages do not sum to the total percentage that provide any SNAP services.
All data are weighted.

The partner agencies of food banks serving Georgia may also offer help with services related to other federal programs. These programs may include the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), a program providing help for pregnant women, new mothers, infants and children up to age five; Medicaid; cash assistance—either Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) or Supplemental Security Income (SSI), payments for the aged, blind, or disabled; tax preparation (or Earned Income Tax Credit); and housing assistance (see Figure 7).

Figure 7. Agencies Providing Assistance with Specific Government Programs Other Than SNAP



Data Source: Hunger in America 2014 Agency Survey, Q12.
Notes: Total weighted agencies = 1,656. Weighted nonreporting agencies = 5. All data are weighted. EITC stands for Earned Income Tax Credit; SSI stands for Supplemental Security Income; TANF stands for Temporary Assistance for Needy Families; and WIC stands for The Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children.

Some partner agencies provide combinations of services. In addition to food provision:

- 17 percent of agencies provide one nonfood service;
- 5 percent of agencies provide two nonfood services;
- 4 percent of agencies provide three nonfood services; and
- 9 percent of agencies provide four or more nonfood services.

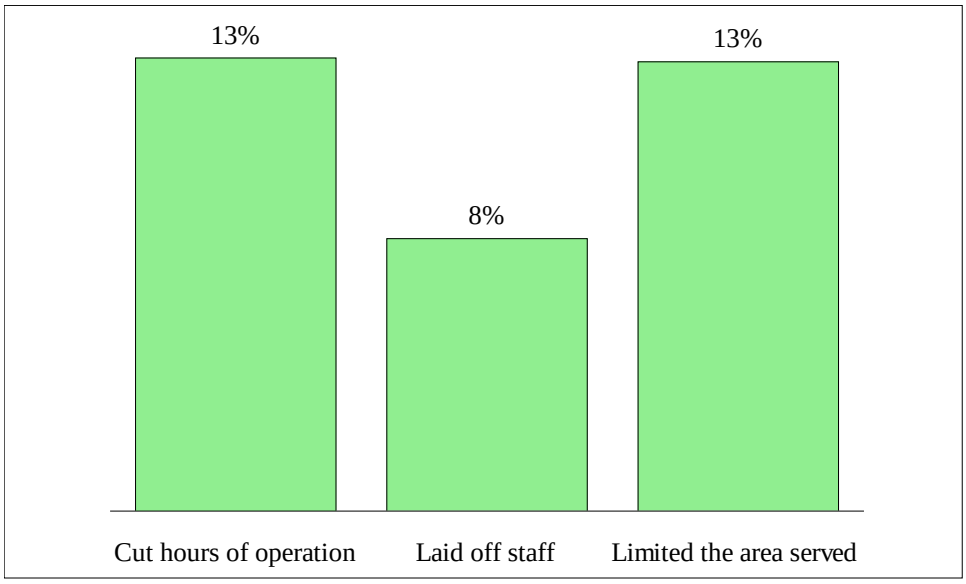
In the next section, we discuss the resources necessary to provide these services.

3.5 Agency and Program Resources

Partner agencies may receive funding from multiple sources, including the government, individuals, corporations, foundations, and religious institutions. On the Agency Survey, partner agencies were asked to report the level of funding that they receive from these various sources. Agencies partnered with food banks that serve Georgia most commonly reported receiving more than half of their total funding from individuals.

Economic conditions and other circumstances can have a significant impact on the ability of partner agencies to provide food and services and may result in agencies needing to cut back on their services. In Georgia, 25 percent of partner agencies reported that they had to cut back on services in the past 12 months. Of those agencies cutting back on services, 13 percent cut hours of operation, 8 percent laid off staff, and 13 percent limited the geographic area they serve (see Figure 8).

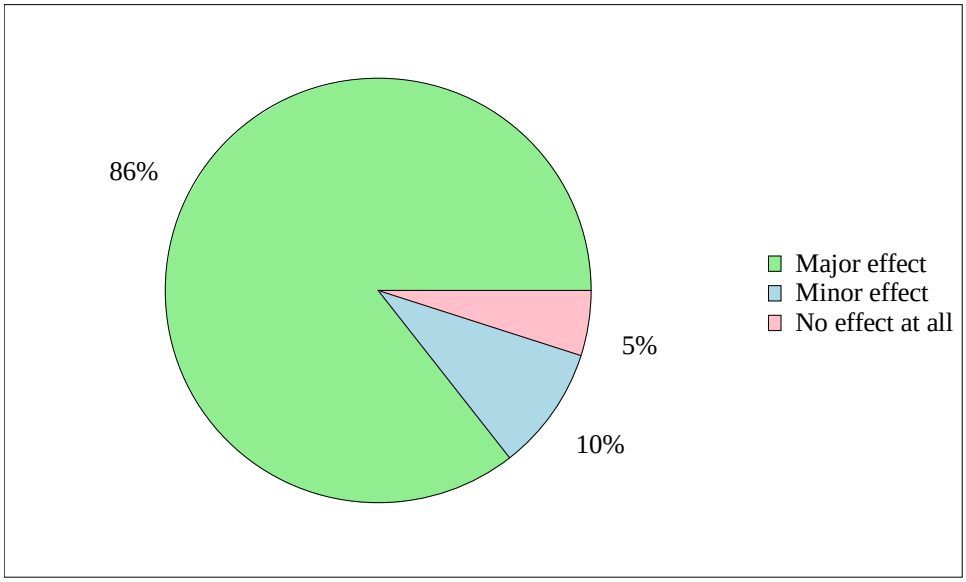
Figure 8. Types of Reductions, Among Agencies that Reported Cutting Back on Services During the Past 12 Months



Data Source: Hunger in America 2014 Agency Survey, Q16.
Notes: Total weighted agencies = 405. Weighted nonreporting agencies = 4. All data are weighted.

Food programs also reported the importance of support from member food banks in their mission. An estimated 86 percent of programs reported that no longer receiving food from the food bank would have a major effect on the program; 10 percent said it would have a minor effect; and 5 percent said it would have no effect at all (see Figure 9).

Figure 9: Program Reported Effect of No Longer Receiving Food from the Food Bank



Data Source: Hunger in America 2014 Agency Survey, Q27.
Notes: Total weighted food programs = 1,983. Weighted nonreporting food programs = 94. All data are weighted.

Finally, partner agencies also use their resources to bring attention to the problem of hunger in their communities. In Georgia, 31 percent of partner agencies reported bringing attention to the issue of hunger by actively taking part in local hunger networks; 65 percent of partner agencies reported educating the community or congregation on the issue of hunger; and 25 of partner agencies reported inviting politicians and other interested people to visit their agency.

In Chapters 4 and 5, we focus on the circumstances and level of need among the clients and households served by Feeding America member food banks in the state of Georgia.

4. Characteristics of Clients and their Households

In this chapter, we present background information on the clients served by Feeding America network food banks and partner agencies that operate in Georgia, through an exploration of the characteristics and circumstances of clients and their households. We illuminate both the diversity of clients and the challenges and barriers they face in ensuring they have sufficient food to meet their needs. We begin by presenting duplicated and unduplicated client counts, estimating the size of the population served by Feeding America network food banks and their partner agencies that serve this state.

We then describe client demographics and housing characteristics. We move on to employment and potential barriers to employment of household members. We explore health status and medical expenses faced by the households and conclude with an examination of household income and poverty.

Data in this chapter are from the Client Survey and are weighted to provide state–level estimates of clients' households. Throughout this chapter, household-level estimates are based on the monthly number of unduplicated households, whereas client-level estimates are based on the annual number of unduplicated clients served. The percentages presented in the figures are percentages of client households. Estimates presented in this chapter (and their corresponding margins of error) can be found in Appendix Table A.2.

4.1 Counts of Individuals and Households in Georgia Served by Feeding America Member Food Banks

This section presents the duplicated and unduplicated client count estimates for Feeding America network food banks that serve Georgia (see Table 6).

Table 6. Estimated Number of Clients and Client Households Served

	Weekly		Monthly		Annually	
	Duplicated counts	Unduplicated counts	Duplicated counts	Unduplicated counts	Duplicated counts	Unduplicated counts
Total number of individual clients, all programs	218,800 (+/-61,600)	156,500 (+/-34,300)	950,900 (+/-267,800)	527,600 (+/-112,800)	11,411,100 (+/-3,213,300)	1,444,900 (+/-308,900)
Total number of client households, all programs	75,400	51,400	327,600	175,200	3,930,900	478,700
Total number of individual clients by meal and grocery programs						
Meal programs	21,300	13,000	92,400	37,800	1,108,700	69,800
Grocery programs	197,600	154,500	858,500	521,000	10,302,400	1,435,600

Data Source: Hunger in America 2014 Client Survey.
Notes: Findings are not shown if based on fewer than five (unweighted) household responses. All data are weighted. Because the unduplicated count of all program clients removes double-counting of clients who reported using both meal and grocery programs, the unduplicated counts for meal and grocery programs separately do not sum to the total number of unduplicated clients for all programs.

The table includes individual clients and households served by all programs and individual clients by meal and grocery programs[25] in a typical week, a typical month, and the full year. The unduplicated and duplicated estimates of the number of individual clients are displayed at the 90 percent confidence interval, with margins of error displayed parenthetically underneath. Because the numbers of clients served are estimates based on a sample, they have an associated margin of error that includes sampling error. The 90 percent confidence interval is the margin of error on either side of the estimate, with the estimate at the midpoint. Although we believe the client count estimates best represent the data, the confidence intervals are the range of numbers in which we can say, with 90 percent confidence, that the true client counts fall. For additional confidence intervals, refer to Appendix Table A.3.

Estimating the duplicated and unduplicated counts of clients served by Feeding America network food banks and their partner agencies is an important way of quantifying the reach of these food banks. Duplicated counts are estimates of the number of times clients are reached through food distributions during a given period. These estimates count a client each time he or she receives food: for meal programs, that is each time an individual receives a meal; for grocery programs, that is each time an individual and his or her household members receive groceries. The counts include each member of a household for each grocery distribution. For example, a client visiting

[25] Because the count of all program clients removes double-counting of clients who reported using both meal and grocery programs, the counts for meal and grocery do not sum to the total number of clients for all programs.

a grocery program twice a month, picking up food for a household of five people, would be counted as 10 duplicated clients for the month. Similarly, if the same client instead visited a meal program four times in one month, he or she would be counted each time, resulting in four duplicated clients. Unduplicated counts are an estimate of the total number of *unique* clients served by Feeding America network food banks and their partner agencies serving Georgia and during a week, month, or year. Clients who report returning repeatedly for service are counted only once in this statistic, providing an estimate of the number of unique individuals helped by the food bank.

Because grocery programs distribute food to an entire household but meal programs distribute food to each person present to consume a meal or snack, the unit in which clients may be conceptualized differs. Entire households are clients for grocery programs, whereas individuals are clients for meal programs. Combining data on household clients for grocery programs and individual clients for meal programs can therefore be confusing. To avoid potential misunderstanding of the client count estimates, we present the information on duplicated and unduplicated clients in two ways: by individuals served and by households served.

When calculating estimates of **individuals** served, we multiply the number of client households receiving groceries by the number of people in each household,[26] expanding the estimate of grocery clients to represent the number of individuals who benefit from the groceries. We leave meal clients at the individual level. This allows meal and grocery clients to be described in the same unit—the number of individuals receiving food.

When calculating estimates of client **households** served, we adjust the estimate of individual meal clients to account for individuals from the same household who receive meal services, ultimately arriving at an estimated number of households in which at least one person is served by meal programs of a Feeding America network food bank and its partner agencies. We leave grocery clients at the household level. This allows both meal and grocery clients to be described in the same unit—the number of households receiving food. See Chapter 2 for further detail on methodology for estimating counts.

On a duplicated basis, we estimate that the Feeding America network food banks and their partner agencies that serve the state of Georgia distribute food to 218,800 individuals in a typical week, 950,900 individuals in a typical month, and 11,411,100 individuals annually. Looking at the number of households in which at least one member is served, we find that these food banks distribute food to 75,400 households in a typical week, 327,600 households in a typical month, and 3,930,900 households annually.

The next section describes clients and their households in more detail.

---

[26] Household size was reported on the Client Survey by each respondent.

4.2 Selected Demographic Characteristics of Clients of Food Banks and Partner Agencies that Serve Georgia

We first explore the demographic characteristics of the unduplicated (unique) **individuals** served directly by Feeding America network food banks and their partner agencies that serve Georgia annually, including age, race/ethnicity, and education level and student status of adult clients.

Table 7. Selected Demographic Characteristics of Feeding America Network Food Bank Clients in Georgia

Demographic Characteristics	All Food Programs	
	Count	Percent
Age		
0-5 years	99,300	8.1%
6-17 years	246,900	20.0%
18-29 years	163,900	13.3%
30-49 years	312,900	25.4%
50-59 years	182,900	14.8%
60-64 years	97,600	7.9%
65 years or older	129,700	10.5%
Total	1,233,200	100.0%
Total weighted N	1,444,900	
Weighted non-reporting clients	211,700	
Race/Ethnicity		
White	519,900	36.7%
Black or African American	713,300	50.4%
Hispanic, Latino	91,500	6.5%
Some other race	90,200	6.4%
Total	1,415,000	100.0%
Total weighted N	1,444,900	
Weighted non-reporting clients	29,900	
Education level of adult clients		
Less than high school (HS)	342,100	34.1%
HS diploma	330,200	32.9%
General equivalency diploma or GED	95,300	9.5%
License, certificate, or degree beyond HS	62,000	6.2%
Some college or two-year degree	126,400	12.6%
4-year college degree or higher	47,800	4.8%
Total	1,003,900	100.0%
Total weighted N	1,071,300	
Weighted nonreporting clients	67,400	
Student status of adult clients		
Full time student	55,500	5.7%
Part time student	28,900	3.0%
Not a student	883,300	91.3%

Table 7. Selected Demographic Characteristics of Feeding America Network Food Bank Clients in Georgia

Demographic Characteristics	All Food Programs	
	Count	Percent
Total	967,600	100.0%
Total weighted N	1,071,300	
Weighted nonreporting clients	103,600	

Data Source: Hunger in America 2014 Client Survey, Q3, Q4, Q5, Q6, and Q6a.
Notes: All data are weighted. Child clients are underestimated because of the exclusion of programs from the Client Survey that serve only children. Race/ethnicity categories were collapsed because of small sample size. Original race/ethnicity categories were White; Black or African; Hispanic or Latino; American Indian or Alaska Native; Asian; Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander; and other.

The age breakdown of clients is notable in several ways. Across all food programs the most common listed age range is 30-49 years, encompassing 25 percent of clients. Combining relevant categories, however, a full 28 percent of clients are children under age 18. We know that this figure, encompassing 346,200 children, is an underestimate as programs that only serve children were excluded from eligibility for the Client Survey, and children at multi-age meal programs were not eligible to be sampled for the survey and are thus not represented. The actual number of children served is likely much greater. Seniors are an important and potentially vulnerable group as well, with 18 percent of all clients 60 years old or older.

Clients are racially and ethnically diverse: 37 percent identify themselves as white, 50 percent as black or African American, and 6 percent as Hispanic or Latino. Additionally, 6 percent of clients are of some other race.

Educational qualifications often drive employment opportunities and, in turn, income. Based on reporting of the educational attainment of all adult members of client households, 42 percent of adult clients have attained a high school degree or General Equivalency Diploma (GED) and 24 percent have a post-high school education (including license or certification, some college, a two-year or four-year degree). Some adult clients are seeking to increase their levels of education, with 6 percent in school full-time and 3 percent in school part-time.

4.3 Household Composition and Characteristics

As context for household characteristics, we begin by presenting an overview of household size. Household size is an important indicator of the density of living conditions and the number of people needing food. Among the client households served by Feeding America network food banks and partner agencies that operate in Georgia, the most common household size is 2 to 3 members.

Table 8. Client Households by Size

	All Food Programs	
Household size	**Count**	**Percent**
1 member	41,498	24.7%
2 to 3 members	72,500	43.1%
4 to 6 members	44,042	26.2%
More than 6 members	10,090	6.0%
Total	168,129	100.0%
Total weighted client households	175,227	
Weighted nonreporting client households	7,098	

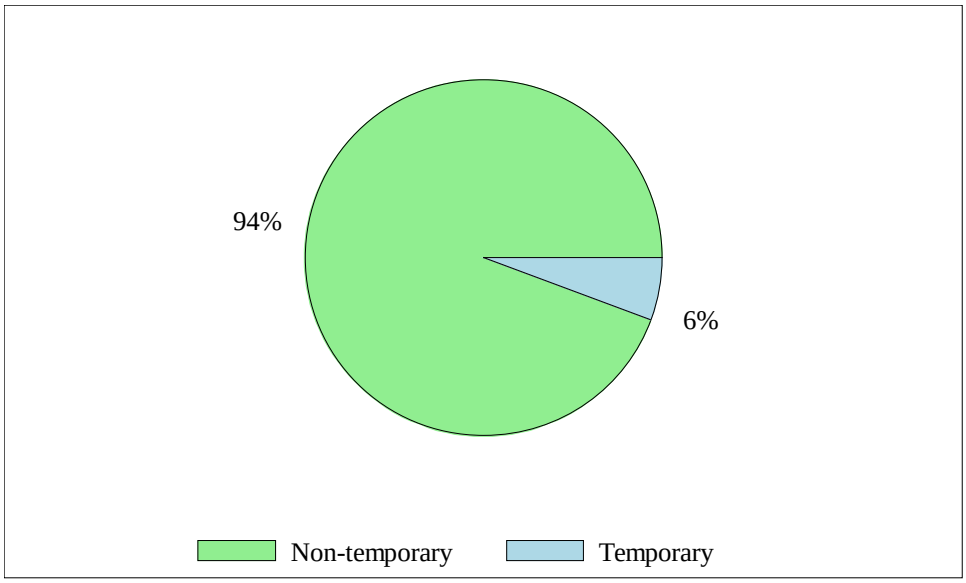
Data Source: Hunger in America 2014 Client Survey, Q1 and Q3.
Note: All data are weighted.

In addition to household size, the composition of the household is critical to understanding the specific needs of that household. For instance, whether or not a household contains children and/or seniors is critical to understanding the unique developmental and nutritional needs of the household. In this state,

- 41 percent of households contain a child under age 18.
- 36 percent of households contain a senior aged 60 or older.

Housing circumstances are also an important indicator of stability in the lives of clients. The Client Survey differentiated between temporary and non-temporary housing. Non-temporary arrangements are those that could be long-term residences, and temporary arrangements are those that, although they could be long-term situations, are not typically intended to house people long term. Client households in Georgia are distributed among the following living arrangements: 6 percent live in temporary housing and 94 percent live in non-temporary housing (see Figure 10). Non-temporary housing includes households reporting that they live in an apartment, house or townhouse, military housing, a mobile home or house trailer, or rented room in a rooming or boarding house while temporary housing refers to households reporting that they live in an abandoned building, bus or train station, park, campground, or airport, living in a vehicle, on the street, in a temporary hotel or motel room, in a residential treatment facility or supervised housing, and living in a shelter, mission, or transitional living situation.

Figure 10. Client Households Residing in Non-temporary or Temporary Housing



Data Source: Hunger in America 2014 Client Survey, Q18.
Notes: Total weighted client households = 175,227. Weighted nonreporting client households=2,734. Findings are not shown if based on fewer than five (unweighted) household responses. All data are weighted.

- Among client households living in non-temporary housing, 13 percent of households own their home with a mortgage, 9 percent own their own home free and clear, 67 percent rent or lease their home, and 10 percent do not have to pay rent.

However, not all non-temporary housing arrangements are stable. An estimated 26 percent of respondents have lived in at least two places in the past 12 months, while 29 percent have started living with another person or family member in the past 12 months. Further, 23 percent of respondents have faced an eviction or foreclosure within the past five years.

Even those with more stable arrangements may lack access to *quality* housing. Being able to cook and store food at home are essential elements of preparing meals at home; however,

- 4 percent of households do not have cooking facilities, such as a stove or hot plate.
- 4 percent of households do not have access to a place to preserve fresh food, such as a refrigerator.

Languages spoken at home among clients in Georgia were also explored. More than one primary language could be selected by respondents. An estimated 96 percent of households speak English as the primary language among adults at home. Spanish is spoken by 6 percent of households. An estimated 0 percent of households speak some other language.[27]

The Client Survey also asked whether anyone in the client's household had ever served in the US military, and among households containing a member who has ever served, whether a household member was currently serving. US military service was defined as the Armed Forces, National Guard or their Reserve components. An estimated 18 percent of households report that someone in their household has served in the US Armed Forces or as a member of the military Reserve or National Guard. This percentage includes both households with a member who is currently serving and households with a member who has ever served. Additionally, 2 percent of households report that a household member is currently serving in the military.

4.4 Work and Barriers to Work

In analyzing household employment, we focus on the employment status of the household member who was employed the greatest number of months in the past 12 months (the most-employed person). In the Client Survey, the respondent was asked to provide both his or her own employment status, as well as the employment status of another person in the household who worked the greatest number of months. Between the respondent and this other household member, the individual who worked more months out of the year is identified as "the most-employed person." Employment circumstances were asked only about these two people in the household to ease survey burden on respondents. Because, in some households, such as those with seniors, there may be no persons working, in some cases the "most-employed person" may have not worked at all.

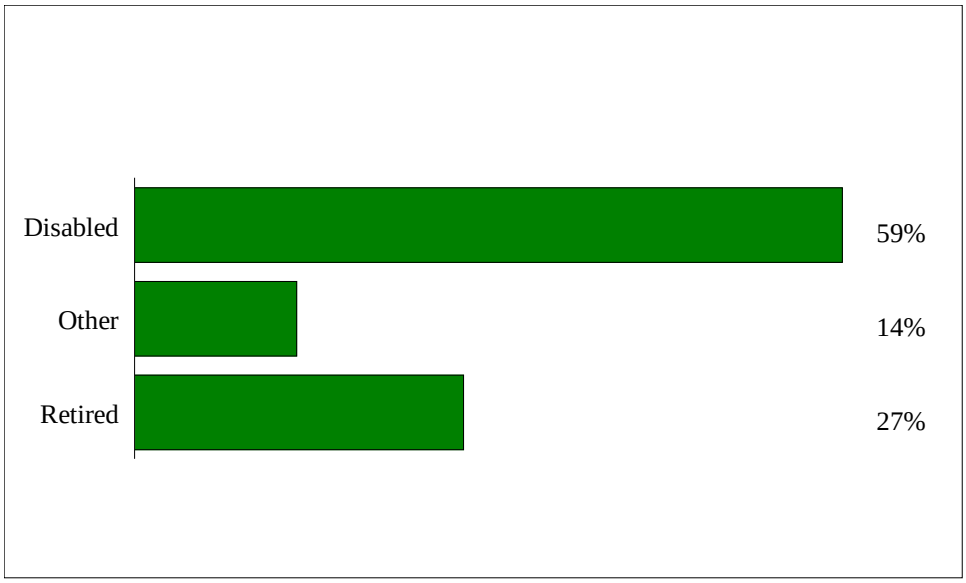
Employment status for the most-employed person is analyzed because this individual is typically a primary source of income for the household. As such, interruptions in this individual's employment may profoundly affect the household's ability to be self-sufficient, potentially increasing their need for charitable food program services.

- For 56 percent of client households, the most-employed person worked for pay in the last 12 months.
- For 31 percent of client households, the most-employed person worked for pay in the last four weeks.
- In 69 percent of client households, the most-employed person is not currently working.
- In 27 percent of households, the most-employed person is actively looking for work.

[27] Households could select more than one primary language.

- Among client households where the most-employed person is not working and not actively seeking work, 27 percent are retired, 59 percent are disabled, in poor health or act as a caretaker for another, and 14 percent indicate some other reason for not seeking work (see Figure 11).

Figure 11. Client Household Reasons for Not Actively Seeking Work, Among Client Households Where Previously-Most Employed Person is Not Working



Data Source: Hunger in America Client Survey, Q8
Notes: Total weighted client households = 117,253. Weighted nonreporting client households=48,300. Findings are not shown if based on fewer than five (unweighted) household responses. All data are weighted. Categories were collapsed because of small sample size. Original categories were retired, in school, disabled or in poor health, caretaker for another person, in job training, stopped looking because could not find job, and other reason.

Some households face additional potential barriers to employment. For instance, the adults may serve as the caretakers for grandchildren living with them, and this commitment may not allow them to secure employment. Another potential barrier to employment is if any household member has been released from prison in the previous year and may have difficulty finding employment for this reason.

- 17 percent of client households include grandparents who have responsibility for grandchildren who live with them.
- 3 percent of client households include a member who was released from prison in the past 12 months.

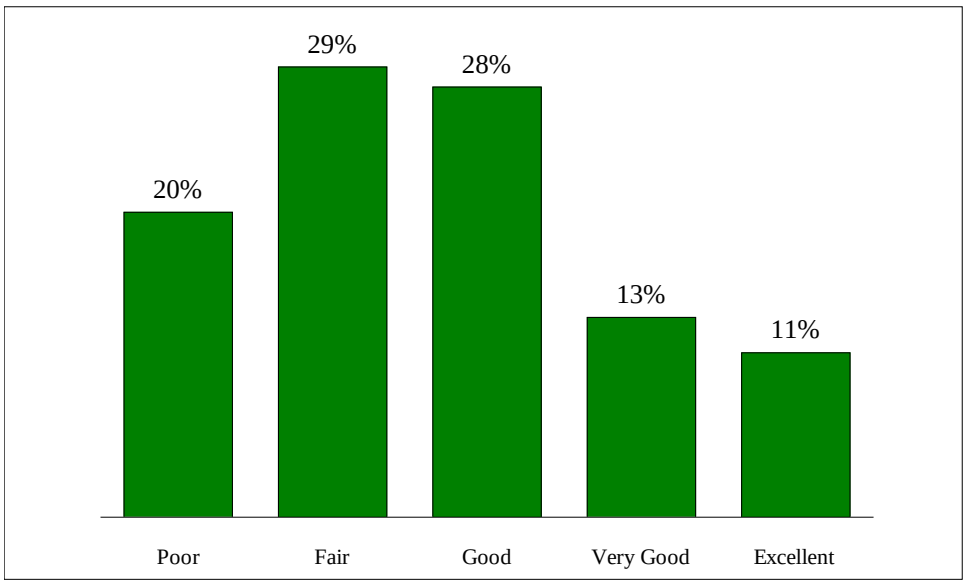
The next section discusses client health status, as well as household income.

4.5 Health and Income

In addition to challenges related to employment and food, client households in Georgia may face challenges to their well-being, including health status and health conditions, medical insurance status, and income and poverty. These challenges can keep people out of the workforce, increase expenses, and limit resources. Together, these challenges may increase the need for charitable food assistance.

The Client Survey asked respondents to characterize both their own health and the health of other household members. Respondents used a scale from "poor" to "excellent" to describe their health. In 20 percent of households, the respondent reports being in poor health, and in 29 percent of households the respondent reports being in fair health (see Figure 12).

Figure 12. Client Households by Health Status of Respondent



Data Source: Hunger in America 2014 Client Survey, Q13.
Notes: Total weighted client households = 175,227. Weighted nonreporting client households=3,709. Findings are not shown if based on fewer than five (unweighted) household responses. All data are weighted.

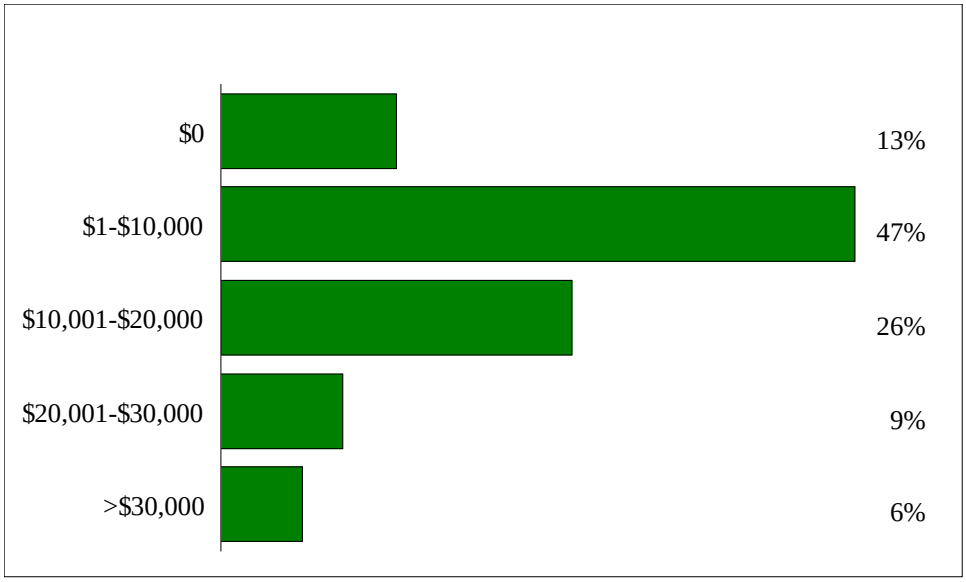
In addition to self-reported respondent health, the Client Survey also asked respondents whether another household member was in poor health. Reflecting this general view of household health, 28 percent of households have at least one member in poor health.

Illnesses and medical disorders require management and supervision, and medical care can present a substantial financial challenge. The Client Survey explored whether anyone in the clients' households has been diagnosed with diabetes or high blood pressure; whether anyone has health insurance, either private or government-sponsored (such as Medicaid or Medicare); and whether the households have any unpaid medical bills.

- 38 percent of client households have a member with diabetes.
- 68 percent of client households have a member with high blood pressure.
- 34 percent of client households lack health insurance of any kind (including Medicaid).
- 65 percent of client households have medical bills to pay.

Finally, reported household income and poverty status also demonstrate the financial struggles of clients in Georgia served by Feeding America network food banks and their partner agencies (see Figure 13).

Figure 13. Client Households by Reported Annual Income Ranges



Data Source: Hunger in America 2014 Client Survey, Q23.
Notes: Total weighted client households =175,227. Weighted nonreporting client households =31,425. Findings are not shown if based on fewer than five (unweighted) household responses. All data are weighted. Income categories have been collapsed from original categories because of low sample sizes. Original categories are $0, $5,000 or less, $5,001–$10,000, $10,001–$15,000, $15,001–$20,000, $20,001–$25,000, $25,001–$30,000, $30,001–$35,000, $35,001–$50,000, and more than $50,000.

- 13 percent of client households have no income, 47 percent have annual incomes of $1 to $10,000, and 26 percent have annual incomes of $10,001 to $20,000.

- The median annual income among client households in Georgia is $7,525.

- Looking at annual income as a percentage of the poverty level, 78 percent of client households fall at or below 100 percent of the poverty level.[28]

Table 9. Household Annual Income as % of Poverty Level

	All Food Programs	
Annual Income	**Count**	**Percent**
0% (no income)	18,209	12.7%
1%-50%	45,785	31.8%
51%-75%	24,641	17.1%
76%-100%	24,109	16.8%
101%-130%	15,114	10.5%
131%-150%	4,810	3.3%
151%-185%	6,802	4.7%
186% or higher	4,332	3.0%
Total	143,802	100.0%
Total weighted client households	175,227	
Weighted nonreporting client households	31,425	

Data Source: Hunger in America 2014 Client Survey, Q1 and Q23.
Note: All data are weighted.

Having established the vulnerable position of client households in Georgia served by Feeding America network food banks and their partner agencies, in the next chapter we investigate clients' use of food bank services and programs, as well as the gaps clients perceive in these services.

[28] Poverty guidelines vary by household size. In 2013, a single person falls under 100 percent of the poverty level with annual cash income of $11,490 or less, two people live in poverty with income of $15,510 and below, and families with three people live in poverty if income is $19,530 or below. For all guidelines, see US Health and Human Services Department "Annual Update of the HHS Poverty Guidelines," Federal Register, January 24, 2013.

5. Client Households' Use of Food Assistance

In this chapter we focus on food insecurity and the use of food assistance by clients of Feeding America member food banks and partner agencies that serve Georgia. We also describe clients' use of other federal or charitable nutrition programs, and the coping strategies clients use to secure enough food for themselves and their households.

5.1 Household Food Security Status

The use of food programs and the difficulty getting food to feed one's household are likely deeply intertwined. Households that experience enough limitations in access to adequate food to cause changes in diet or reduced food intake are deemed food insecure.[29] In this section, we examine the level of food insecurity of Feeding America member food bank client households in Georgia and the trade-offs they make to secure enough food.

In the Client Survey, we employed one of the food security modules used by the Economic Research Service of the US Department of Agriculture. We use the module to categorize households according to two possible levels of food security: food secure, indicating households have, at all times, access to sufficient foods for a healthy life; and food insecure, indicating that at some point households lacked access to sufficient food for an active and healthy life.

- 89 percent of client households in Georgia are food insecure in a given month;
- 11 percent of client households are food secure

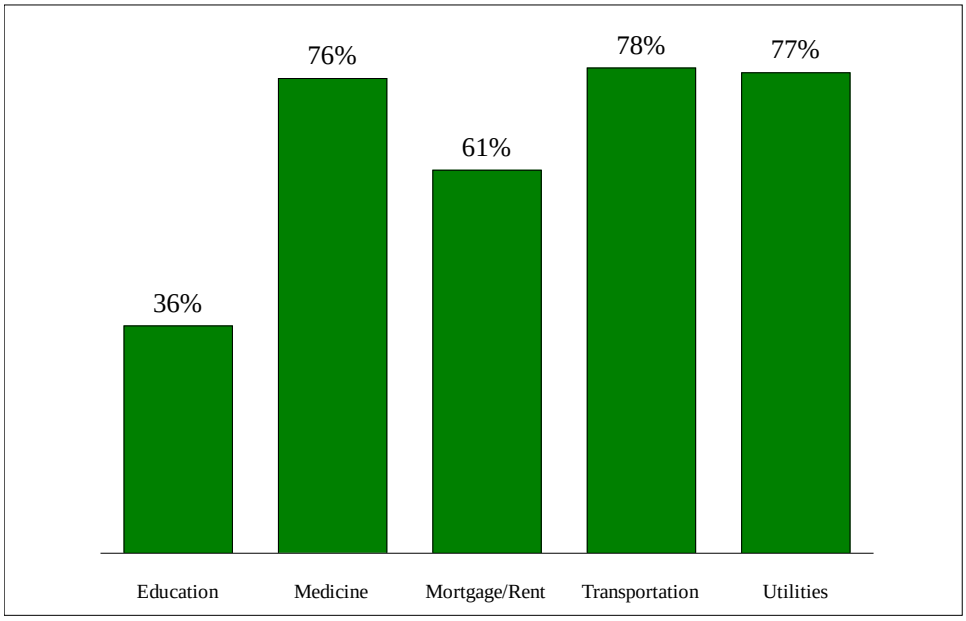
Though most client households are food insecure, there are a variety of reasons why some of the client households may identify as food secure. Respondents may take into account the food they receive through the charitable food system or federal programs like SNAP when they are answering the questions on the food security module. This could indicate that their food secure status is contingent on the help they receive. Furthermore, HIA 2014 included non-emergency programs in its scope, thus capturing clients who are in need but may not classify as food insecure. A food secure status does not indicate a lack of need for charitable feeding support.

Some client households made trade-offs between paying for food and paying for other necessities within the past 12 months (see Figure 14). For example:

[29] U.S. Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service, "Definitions of food security". http://www.ers.usda.gov/topics/food-nutrition-assistance/food-security-in-the-us/definitions-of-food-security.aspx.

- 36 percent of households report choosing between paying for food and paying for school loans, tuition, or other educational expenses at least once in the past 12 months; 18 percent face this choice every month.
- 76 percent of households report choosing between paying for food and paying for medicine or medical care at least once in the past 12 months; 35 percent face this choice every month.
- 61 percent of households report choosing between paying for food and paying their rent or mortgage at least once in the past 12 months; 31 percent face this choice every month.
- 78 percent of households report choosing between paying for food and paying for transportation or gas for a car at least once in the past 12 months; 41 percent face this choice every month.
- 77 percent of households report choosing between paying for food and paying for utilities at least once in the past 12 months; 39 percent face this choice every month.

Figure 14. Client Households Reporting Frequency of Choosing between Food and Other Necessities in the Past 12 Months



Data Source: Hunger in America 2014 Client Survey, Q25–Q29.
Notes: Total weighted client households =175,227 Weighted nonreporting client households= 1,845. Findings are not shown if based on fewer than five (unweighted) household responses. All data are weighted.

The next section examines the strategies clients and their households use to meet their food needs.

5.2 Client Households' Use of Other Food Assistance

Many client households using the services of Feeding America member food banks and partner agencies that serve Georgia also use government assistance to supplement their household food budget. Prominent among these services is the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, formerly the Food Stamp Program). SNAP provides monthly benefit allotments through an Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) debit card, which clients use to spend on food. As SNAP is administered by each state in its own way, the name of the program and of the EBT card varies from state to state. Within the survey, clients in Georgia were provided an image of their state's EBT card, along with various synonyms for the name SNAP, in order to ensure that the program was recognized. Eligibility and benefit rules also vary across the states, and many clients need help applying for benefits.

SNAP benefits are intended to supplement a household's groceries each month; typically, benefits do not last recipients the entire month. The Client Survey displayed an image of the state's SNAP debit card when asking about client households' participation in the program. In this state

- 59 percent of client households report participation in SNAP; and
- Across all households reporting current receipt of SNAP, 23 percent report that SNAP benefits last only one week or less; 34 percent report that benefits last two weeks; 33 percent reported that benefits last for three weeks; and 10 percent report that benefits usually last four weeks or more.

Although we know from income data presented in Table 9 that many clients live below the poverty level, not all clients participate in SNAP. There may be many reasons some clients do not receive SNAP benefits. They may not have applied because they did not know about the program, or perhaps they knew about the program but did not think they were eligible. Others may have applied but did not pass the eligibility screens, and others may have failed to complete the full application process. SNAP limits eligibility to households with incomes below certain limits, and other state-specific eligibility requirements may affect SNAP eligibility and participation rates. The client households not participating in SNAP may or may not be eligible for SNAP benefits; we cannot determine eligibility exactly given the limitations of the data collected in the study. Nonetheless, reported household cash income provides some indication of SNAP eligibility among nonparticipating households, and reasons for nonparticipation given among this group provide additional insight.

We estimate potentially income-eligible SNAP nonparticipants by looking at those in the survey who report not participating in SNAP and whose household income is at or below the state-specific threshold. The most common threshold for eligibility across the states is 130 percent of the poverty level; some states have higher income thresholds for SNAP participation—meaning that households with income greater than 130 percent are still eligible.[30] In Georgia, the threshold is 130 percent. Relative to this state's specific SNAP eligibility threshold, 71 percent of client households not currently receiving SNAP are potentially income-eligible. It is important to note that households classified as potentially income-eligible for SNAP may be ineligible for the program because of citizenship, assets, or other reasons.

Table 10. Client Households by Reported Current Receipt of SNAP Benefits, and Among Those Not Currently Receiving Benefits, Whether They Have Applied

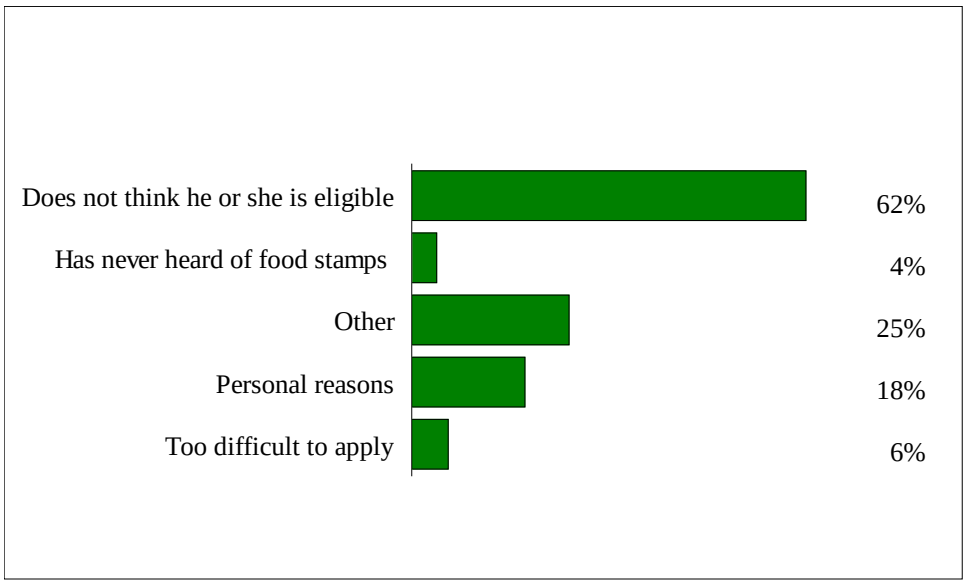
	All Food Programs	
SNAP status	Count	Percent
Currently receiving SNAP	98,596	58.7%
Not currently receiving SNAP	69,267	41.3%
Never Applied	27,824	15.9%
Have Applied	39,901	22.8%
Unknown	1,542	0.9%
Total	167,863	100.0%
Total weighted client households	175,227	.
Weighted nonreporting client households	7,364	.

Data Source: Hunger in America 2014 Client Survey, Q30 and Q31.
Notes: Findings are not shown if based on fewer than five (unweighted) household responses. All data are weighted.

Among client households that are SNAP nonparticipants and did not apply for SNAP benefits, 62 percent did not apply because they did not think they were eligible (see Figure 15).

[30] In some circumstances, Broad-Based Categorical Eligibility (BBCE) allows some households whose incomes exceed 130 percent of poverty to be eligible for SNAP if their household income falls below a higher state-set income threshold. The following states and territories served by the Feeding America network employ BBCE levels above 130 percent of the poverty level: AZ, CA, CT, DC, DE, FL, HI, IA, MA, MD, ME, MI, MN, MT, NC, ND, NH, NJ, NM, NV, NY, OR, PA, RI, TX, VT, WA, WI. Whenever this occurred, we incorporated the state-specific threshold into our analysis. For states whose thresholds remain at 130 percent, no additional percentage of potentially-income households can be identified; instead these appear as ++.

Figure 15. Client Households Reporting Select Reasons For Not Applying for SNAP Benefits, Among Households That Have Never Applied



Data Source: Hunger in America Survey, Q31A
Notes: Total weighted client households = 26,741. Weighted nonreporting client households = 1,237. Findings are not shown if based on fewer than five (unweighted) household responses. All data are weighted. 'Other' reasons cannot be determined given the limitations of the survey data.

Other large federal food assistance programs focus on households with pregnant and postpartum women and children.[31] The Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) provides supplemental foods for low-income pregnant and postpartum women and children up to age 5 who are at nutritional risk. WIC eligibility restricts benefits to families with incomes below 185 percent of the federal poverty level (states may use lower income cut-offs). School-based programs may also be an important source of food assistance. Most schools serve lunch, and low-income children qualify for a free or reduced-price lunch through the National School Lunch Program (NSLP).[32] Many schools also offer breakfast, and children in low-income families may receive a free or reduced-price breakfast through the School Breakfast Program (SBP). Households with children may also benefit from after-school snack and meal programs, and weekend BackPack Programs. These programs are not available in all

[31] The federal government offers additional, smaller, nutrition programs. See www.fns.usda.gov/programs-and-services for a full listing.
[32] Families with incomes below 130 percent of the poverty level qualify for a free lunch or breakfast; and families with incomes between 130 and 185 percent of the poverty level qualify for a reduced-price lunch or breakfast.

communities, but are available in some schools for households that qualify. Households served by member food banks and partner agencies that serve Georgia may also participate in one or more of these programs targeted at children (see Figure 16). Based on their clients' responses to the survey:

- 96 percent participate in NSLP, and 41 percent participate in SBP. We cannot identify the eligible population, but nationally about 72 percent of eligible students participate in the school lunch program and 49 percent participate in the school breakfast program.[33]
- 5 percent participate in the after-school snack or meal program.

In addition,

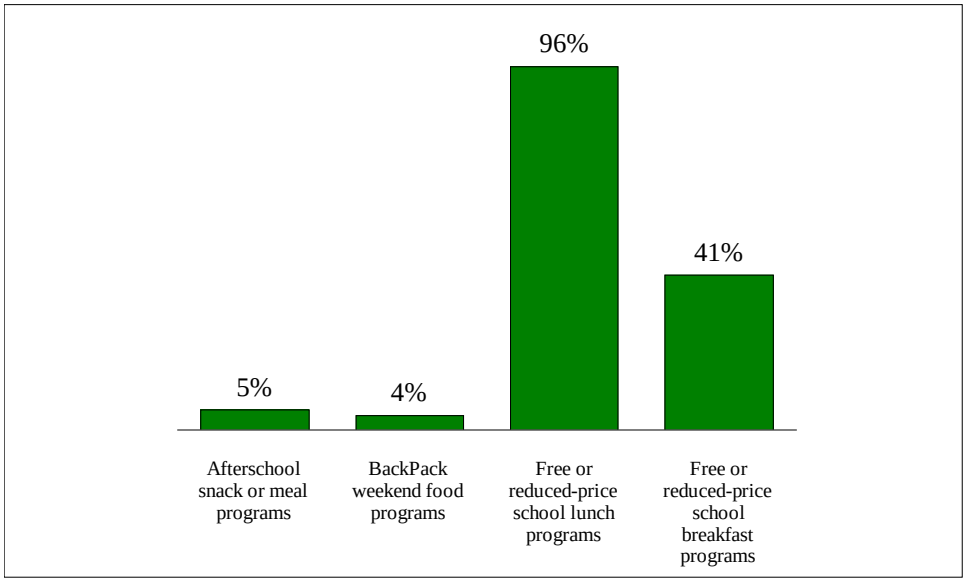
- 9 percent participate in WIC. Because the survey did not ask about the presence of pregnant women or nutritional risk, it is not possible to determine the eligibility rate within client households; however, nationally, about 61 percent of eligible households participate.[34]

Some households participate in multiple programs at the same time. An estimated 21 percent of households report participating in two or more programs.

---

[33] MW Dahl, MW, and JK Scholz JK (2011), "The National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program: Evidence on Participation and Noncompliance," (University of Wisconsin Working Paper, March 9, 2011), working paper.
[34] "National and State-Level Estimates of Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) Eligibles and Program Reach, 2000–2009," Nutrition Assistance Program Report Series, Report No. WIC-11-ELIG.

Figure 16. Client Households by Participation in Programs Targeted to Children



Data Source: Hunger in America 2014 Client Survey, Q34 and Q35.
Notes: Total weighted client households =44,108. Weighted nonreporting client households=8,591. Findings are not shown if based on fewer than five (unweighted) client responses. All data are weighted.

Despite all these programs, food insecurity is still a significant challenge for clients. The next section examines other strategies that client households use to cope with food insecurity.

5.3 Client Households' Strategies and Coping Efforts to Obtain Sufficient Food

The use of charitable food assistance is a critical resource for clients; many clients incorporate assistance received through food banks into their overall monthly strategy for obtaining food. Among client households served by Feeding America member food banks and partner agencies that operate in this state (see Table 11),

- 57 percent plan to get food on a regular basis; and
- 43 percent wait to come until they run out of food.

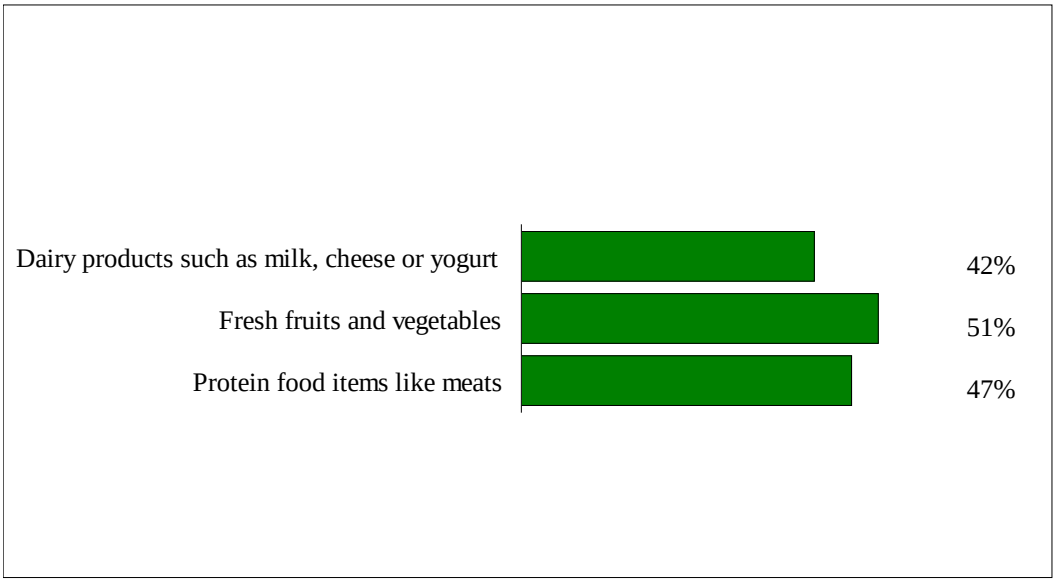
Table 11. Client Households Reporting Different Strategies for Food Assistance

Planned use of programs	All Food Programs Count	Percent
I usually wait to come to this program until I run out of food	70,527	43.5%
I plan to get food here on a regular basis	91,733	56.5%
Total	162,259	100.0%
Total weighted client households	175,227	.
Weighted nonreporting client households	12,968	.

Data Source: Hunger in America 2014 Client Survey, Q41.
Notes: Findings are not shown if based on fewer than five (unweighted) household responses. All data are weighted.

Unfortunately, food bank programs may not meet all the food needs of their clients. Among client households, many report desiring items that they do not usually get from food programs (see Figure 17).

Figure 17. Client Households Reporting Top Three Desired Products Not Currently Receiving at Programs

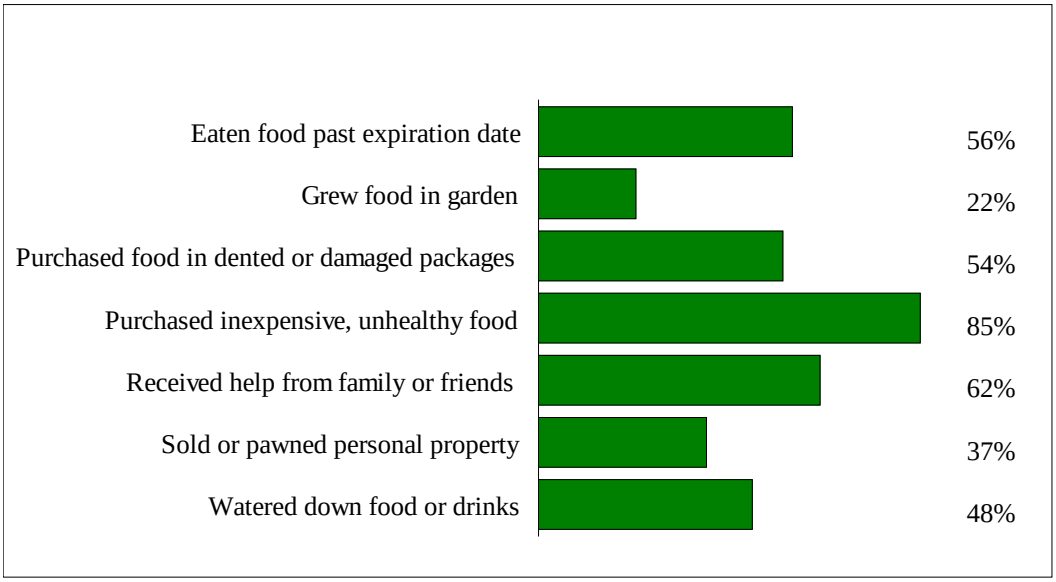


Data Source: Hunger in America 2014 Client Survey, Q42.
Notes: Total weighted client households =175,227. Weighted nonreporting client households=9,156. Findings are not shown if based on fewer than five (unweighted) client responses. All data are weighted.

These unmet needs may lead households to look for other ways to get enough food. When faced with the threat of food insecurity, individuals are forced to engage in various coping strategies that range from relatively small changes in eating practices to extreme changes. Coping strategies are immediate responses to avoid hunger and its consequences and the Client Survey probed about some of these strategies. Client households report using a variety of coping strategies during the past year.[35] The two most commonly reported strategies are indicated below. Among client households:

- 85 percent report 'Purchasing inexpensive, unhealthy food' as the most common strategy; and
- 62 percent report 'Receiving help from family or friends' as the second most common strategy.

Figure 18. Client Households by Strategies Used to Get Enough Food in the Past 12 Months



Data Source: Hunger in America Survey, Q43A-Q43G
Notes: Total weighted client households =175,227. Weighted nonreporting client households= 7,403. Findings are not shown if based on fewer than five (unweighted) household responses. All data are weighted.

[35] Clients were asked about "expiration date" on the survey, which they may have interpreted as either the sell-by date or the best-by date since either can be displayed on products.

Most households are employing multiple coping strategies, in addition to seeking federal or charitable food assistance, to try to secure enough food, demonstrating that they are expending great effort to piece together solutions to reduce the likelihood of hunger in their households. The local food bank is a vital component of how clients cope. The Feeding America member food banks and partner agencies that operate in Georgia serve a diverse population of vulnerable households through direct food provision as well as nutrition and program assistance. Using staff and volunteer labor, the agencies and programs help fight hunger and improve the well-being of households facing a host of employment, health, and other challenges.

6 Summary and Concluding Assessment

Hunger in America 2014 is the most comprehensive examination of hunger in the United States. Conducted every four years since 1993, the Hunger in America study documents the critical role that Feeding America member food banks and their partner agencies play in supporting people facing hunger across the country, and the demographics and challenges of people using the charitable food assistance network. Nationally, the study includes over 32,000 surveys of partner agencies that provide food assistance services and more than 60,000 surveys of clients served by these agencies and the food programs they operate. The survey results, weighted to provide representative estimates, profile the partner agencies that provide food assistance services and the clients that receive those services. The study provides the most up-to-date and complete picture of this critical part of the US charitable sector.

Data collection, which was completed between October 2012 and August 2013, occurred during historically high national demand for public and private food assistance. National unemployment and poverty rates remained high after 2008's Great Recession, and the number of households receiving nutrition assistance from the federal government's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program increased approximately 42 percent between 2009 and 2013.[36] National demand for charitable food assistance also expanded during this time, though patterns differed greatly by local geographic area.

This report describes food banks, partner agencies and programs that serve in Georgia, including the services they provide, how their staffing and funding operate, and the challenges they face. The report also details the number and characteristics of clients served by these agencies, including clients' demographic characteristics, housing circumstances, education status, employment, and household income. The food security status and use of other nutrition assistance programs among client households complete this profile. The results provide a unique and comprehensive description of the food assistance programs and clients in Georgia, and will help guide future policy decisions about meeting the food needs of residents within this state.

The study tells the story of programs determined to help clients and their households meet their food needs, and of a population that critically needs this assistance. Across the nation, the weak economy with its historically low employment rate and high poverty rate has challenged this

[36] See 'Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Participation and Costs (Data as of August 8, 2014),' US Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service, www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/pd/SNAPsummary.pdf.

system. Many agencies face a growing demand for help. The clients seeking this assistance have varying levels of education, training, and language skills. Many have health conditions that prevent work, and many of those working have found only part-time or part-year jobs. Among food assistance clients, the rates of household poverty and food insecurity are typically very high.

While recent declines in the national unemployment rate suggest that demand for food assistance may slow down, it is still too soon to know. In certain areas of the country, unemployment rates are down in part because many who have been looking for work for a long time have simply dropped out of the labor market. Many workers at the bottom of the labor market have not seen a real increase in wages for many years.

The food banks and partner agencies that serve in Georgia, as part of the Feeding America network, are important to local populations in need. They work to serve clients with unique needs and circumstances, thus playing a critical role in addressing hunger in America.

Table A1 Agency and Program Characteristics

Characteristic	Count	Percentage Estimate	Margin of Error (+/-)
Partner Agency by Type			
Faith-based or located in a religious institution	1,225	74.3%	1.9%
Not faith-based	424	25.7%	1.9%
Total excluding nonresponse	**1,649**	**100.0%**	**.**
Number of Programs by Type			
Meal	630	21.2%	1.9%
Grocery	1,353	45.6%	2.2%
Food-related benefits	60	2.0%	0.6%
Non-food	924	31.1%	2.0%
Total excluding nonresponse	**2,967**	**100.0%**	**.**
	Median	**Sum**	**Margin of Error(+/-)**
Agency Staffing			
Agency full-time equivalent staff at time of survey	4	6,200	1,073
	Count	**Estimate**	**Margin Of Error(+/-)**
Number of agencies with no full-time equivalent staff at time of survey	1,019	61.6%	2.2%
	Median	**Sum**	**Margin of Error(+/-)**
Program Volunteers			
Number of program volunteers (weekly)	8	50,500	5,143
	Min	**Max**	**Median**
Total volunteer hours per week per program	0	3,000	25
Average Percentage of Program Volunteers by Age			
18 and younger		7.3%	
19-59		57.9%	
60 and older		34.8%	
Total excluding nonresponse		**100%**	
	Count	**Percentage Estimate**	**Margin of Error(+/-)**
Program Challenges			
Difficulty obtaining volunteers (some or a lot of difficulty)	742	42.0%	2.8%
Difficulty retaining volunteers (some or a lot of difficulty)	555	31.8%	2.6%

Table A1 Agency and Program Characteristics

Characteristic	Count	Percentage Estimate	Margin of Error (+/-)
Areas of volunteer/staff training needs			
Accessing local food resources	579	31.9%	2.5%
Food safety and sanitation	590	32.4%	2.7%
Advocacy training	474	26.5%	2.5%
Client choice	386	21.5%	2.5%
Food stamp (SNAP) application assistance and outreach	467	25.9%	2.5%
Fundraising/grant writing	778	42.6%	2.8%
Nonprofit management / board governance	424	23.6%	2.5%
Nutrition education	650	35.5%	2.7%
Social media	448	24.9%	2.6%
Summer feeding	358	19.9%	2.2%
Technology assistance	482	26.8%	2.6%
Volunteer recruitment/retention/staff succession planning	545	30.3%	2.7%

	Count		
	No Volunteers	**Half of total volunteers or less**	**More than half of total volunteers**
Source of Program Volunteers			
Connected to agency	383	511	699
Religious groups	445	516	571
United Way	1,197	76	4
Other civic/nonprofit	1,037	253	27
Companies or business groups	1,061	240	10
Kindergarten through 12th grade school programs	1,082	226	8
Colleges/Universities	1,057	248	7
Court-ordered community service	1,021	292	9
Clients	958	320	29
Volunteers connected to food bank	1,206	73	4
Some other source	1,032	223	28

Average Percentage of Total Program Food Distributed	
Feeding America member food bank(s)	70.9%
Other	1.6%
Donations	10.3%
Purchases	17.3%
Total excluding nonresponse	**100.0%**

	Count	Percentage Estimate	Margin of Error(+/-)
Program Reported Changes in Demand and Supply in the Past 12 months			
Volume of clients compared to prior year			
Saw any increase	1,028	57.9%	2.8%
About the same	638	35.9%	2.7%
Saw any decrease	111	6.2%	1.6%

Table A1 Agency and Program Characteristics

Characteristic	Count	Percentage Estimate	Margin of Error (+/-)
Total excluding nonresponse	**1,777**	**100.0%**	**.**
Food available to meet needs of clients			
More food than needed	322	17.9%	2.3%
Enough food to meet needs	1,096	60.9%	2.8%
Less food than needed	382	21.2%	2.2%
Total excluding nonresponse	**1,799**	**100.0%**	**.**
Programs Turning Clients Away in the Past 12 Months			
Programs turning clients away for any reason	434	23.8%	2.3%
Programs turning clients away frequently or occasionally due to			
Program ran out of food	129	29.7%	4.9%
Clients came more often than program rules allow	150	34.6%	5.0%
Client lived outside the program's service area	113	25.9%	4.7%
No ID	84	19.2%	4.1%
Income too high	70	16.2%	4.3%
Other	119	27.4%	4.6%
Program Restrictions			
Any type of service restriction	855	43.1%	2.7%
Daily	43	2.2%	0.9%
Weekly	110	5.5%	1.4%
Monthly	568	28.6%	2.5%
Quarterly/Seasonally	53	2.7%	0.8%
Annually	79	4.0%	0.8%
Agency Nutrition and Health Services			
Agencies that provide any type of nutrition services	587	35.6%	2.2%
Fliers or written materials	494	29.9%	2.2%
Cooking classes or demonstrations	290	17.5%	1.6%
Nutrition workshops or classes or meetings with dietitians	390	23.5%	1.9%
Referrals	287	17.4%	1.7%
Other	124	7.5%	1.2%
Agencies that do not provide any type of nutrition services	1,063	64.4%	2.2%
Total excluding nonresponse	**1,651**	**100.0%**	**.**
For those offering nutrition services how many led by:			
Agency staff	323	65.0%	4.9%
Agency volunteers	376	70.5%	4.5%
Local nutritionists or other health professionals in partnership with agency	246	51.5%	5.3%
Staff from food bank	47	10.6%	3.3%
Staff from Farm Bureau or Cooperative extension	36	8.2%	2.1%
Staff from local colleges/universities	81	17.9%	4.1%
Someone else	128	28.5%	4.8%

Table A1 Agency and Program Characteristics

Characteristic	Count	Percentage Estimate	Margin of Error (+/-)
Agency Obstacles to Distribution of Healthier Foods			
Client reasons (unwillingness to eat, inability to store, etc.)	629	39.7%	2.3%
Too expensive to purchase healthier foods	948	59.0%	2.3%
Inability to store/handle healthier foods	612	38.5%	2.3%
Lack of knowledge about healthier foods	159	10.2%	1.4%
Healthier food not a priority	332	21.2%	2.1%
Inability to obtain healthier foods from other donors/food sources	845	51.1%	2.3%
Agency Services Related to Government Programs			
Agencies that provided any SNAP-related services	670	40.6%	2.2%
Screening for eligibility	491	30.1%	2.1%
Application assistance	473	29.0%	2.1%
Education about the program	524	32.1%	2.1%
Recertification for the program	288	17.9%	1.6%
Agencies that did not provide any SNAP-related services	966	58.6%	2.2%
Total excluding nonresponse	**1,649**	**100.0%**	**.**
Agency Reasons for Not Offering SNAP Services, Among Agencies Reporting Not Offering Them			
Staff-related issues	552	62.7%	3.6%
Not enough time	373	43.3%	3.7%
Lacking physical space or equipment	414	47.8%	3.7%
SNAP is not part of what this agency does	646	70.4%	3.1%
Other reason	175	21.7%	3.2%
Agency Services Related to Other Non-SNAP Programs			
Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women Infants and Children (WIC)	302	18.3%	1.9%
Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program	344	20.9%	1.9%
Medicaid or other health care programs	321	19.7%	1.8%
Supplemental Security income (SSI)	231	14.1%	1.6%
Tax preparation or Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) assistance	190	11.6%	1.6%
Housing assistance like Section 8	228	14.0%	1.6%
Agencies Providing Combinations of Other non-SNAP Program Services			
One non-food service	273	16.5%	1.5%
Two non-food services	87	5.2%	1.0%
Three non-food services	61	3.7%	0.8%
Four or more non-food services	150	9.1%	1.3%

Table A1 Agency and Program Characteristics

Characteristic	Count	Percentage Estimate	Margin of Error (+/-)
Agency Reductions in the past 12 Months			
Experienced cutbacks	405	24.8%	2.0%
Cut hours of operation	211	12.8%	1.4%
Lay off staff	127	7.7%	1.1%
Limit the area served	209	12.7%	1.7%
Did not experience cutbacks	1,229	75.2%	2.0%
Total excluding nonresponse	**1,634**	**100.0%**	**.**
Agencies reporting challenges associated with continuing to provide services			
Not enough money	247	14.9%	1.5%
Not enough food supplies	221	13.3%	1.4%
Not enough paid staff or personnel	153	9.3%	1.1%
Not enough volunteers	152	9.2%	1.2%
Not enough money for transportation	151	9.1%	1.1%
Building or location problems	146	8.8%	1.2%
Not enough leadership	91	5.5%	1.0%
Not enough community support	143	8.6%	1.3%
Community doesn't need this program	36	2.2%	0.5%

	Count		
	No Funding	**Half of total funding or less**	**More than half of total funding**
Agency funding			
Government	1,180	218	136
Individuals	210	834	515
Corporations	1,005	405	34
Foundations	1,075	347	27
Religious institutions	562	551	414
Client fees	1,211	171	54
Other	1,059	280	57

	Count	Percentage Estimate	Margin of Error(+/-)
Program Reliance on Food Bank: Effect if program no longer received food from food bank			
Major effect	1,617	85.5%	2.0%
Minor effect	180	9.5%	1.6%
No effect at all	94	4.9%	1.3%
Total excluding nonresponse	**1,891**	**100.0%**	**.**

Table A1 Agency and Program Characteristics

Characteristic	Count	Percentage Estimate	Margin of Error (+/-)
Agencies bringing attention to hunger through:			
Actively taking part in local hunger networks	500	30.8%	2.1%
Calling and/or writing letters to politicians (local, state, and federal)	262	16.2%	1.6%
Educating the community or congregation on the problem of hunger	1,063	65.2%	2.2%
Helping food banks by connecting them with clients who are willing to tell their stories to the press/media	265	16.3%	1.5%
Inviting politicians and other interested people (like chamber of commerce members and farm bureau representatives) to visit agency	409	25.4%	2.0%
Visiting politicians to educate them on the problem of hunger (local, state, and federal)	194	12.1%	1.4%
Writing letters to the editor and opinion columns for local newspapers	221	13.8%	1.8%

Table A2 Client Counts

	Weekly		Monthly		Annually	
	Duplicated counts	Unduplicated counts	Duplicated counts	Unduplicated counts	Duplicated counts	Unduplicated counts
Total number of individual clients, all programs	218,800 (+/-61,600)	156,500 (+/-34,300)	950,900 (+/-267,800)	527,600 (+/-112,800)	11,411,100 (+/-3,213,300)	1,444,900 (+/-308,900)
Total number of client households, all programs	75,400 (+/-21,800)	51,400 (+/-11,400)	327,600 (+/-94,900)	175,200 (+/-36,800)	3,930,900 (+/-1,138,800)	478,700 (+/-100,200)
Total number of individual clients by meal and grocery programs						
Meal programs	21,300 (+/-11,300)	13,000 (+/-7,100)	92,400 (+/-49,300)	37,800 (+/-20,600)	1,108,700 (+/-591,100)	69,800 (+/-39,700)
Grocery programs	197,600 (+/-60,600)	154,500 (+/-34,900)	858,500 (+/-263,500)	521,000 (+/-114,300)	10,302,400 (+/-3,162,000)	1,435,600 (+/-313,200)
Total number of individual clients by selected program subtypes (not mutually exclusive)						
Pantries	195,700	151,500	850,300	511,900	10,203,700	1,410,400
Kitchens	5,800	900	25,000	1,400	300,400	2,400
Shelters	9,000	1,300	39,200	5,500	470,300	10,400

Table A3 Characteristics of Clients and their Households

Characteristic	Count	Percentage Estimate	Margin of Error (+/-)
Client Age			
0-5	99,337	8.1%	1.0%
6-17	246,909	20.0%	1.9%
18-29	163,934	13.3%	2.0%
30-49	312,933	25.4%	2.5%
50-59	182,875	14.8%	1.6%
60-64	97,563	7.9%	2.5%
65 or older	129,683	10.5%	1.4%
Total excluding nonresponse	**1,233,233**	**100.0%**	**.**
Client Race/Ethnicity			
White Non-Hispanic	519,915	36.7%	5.8%
Black Non-Hispanic	713,347	50.4%	12.3%
Hispanic	91,538	6.5%	3.9%
Other	90,228	6.4%	3.5%
Total excluding nonresponse	**1,415,027**	**100.0%**	**.**
Household Size			
1 member	41,498	24.7%	2.9%
2 to 3 members	72,500	43.1%	3.3%
4 to 6 members	44,042	26.2%	3.8%
More than 6 members	10,090	6.0%	2.2%
Total excluding nonresponse	**168,129**	**100.0%**	**.**
Primary Language Spoken By Adults at Home			
English	166,175	96.4%	2.7%
Spanish	10,136	5.9%	3.9%
Other	655	0.4%	0.3%
Housing			
Non-temporary housing	162,745	94.3%	2.1%
House or townhouse	79,581	46.1%	5.4%
Apartment	50,252	29.1%	3.0%
Mobile home or house trailer	25,062	14.5%	3.8%
Other	7,850	4.6%	1.8%
Temporary housing	9,748	5.7%	2.1%
Total excluding nonresponse	**172,493**	**100.0%**	**.**
Households without access to stove, microwave or hot plate	6,585	4.0%	1.0%
Households without access to refrigeration	7,184	4.4%	0.7%

Table A3 Characteristics of Clients and their Households

Characteristic	Count	Percentage Estimate	Margin of Error (+/-)
Housing payment arrangements (non-temporary housing)			
Own with mortgage	21,051	13.2%	2.1%
Own free and clear	14,982	9.4%	3.3%
Rent or lease	107,587	67.3%	3.9%
Do not have to pay rent	16,266	10.2%	1.9%
Total excluding nonresponse	**159,885**	**100.0%**	**.**
Respondents lived at least two places in the past 12 months	47,405	26.3%	4.7%
Respondents started living with another person or family	49,678	29.0%	3.0%
Respondents experienced foreclosure or eviction in the past five years	39,497	23.2%	2.5%
Education			
Household Highest Education Level			
Less than high school	34,030	19.7%	7.1%
High school diploma	56,432	32.7%	2.1%
General equivalency diploma or GED	19,866	11.5%	2.8%
Business, trade, or technical license, certificate, or degree beyond high school	14,534	8.4%	2.3%
Some college beyond high school or a 2-year college degree	32,668	18.9%	5.5%
Four-year college degree or higher	15,072	8.7%	2.2%
Total excluding nonresponse	**172,602**	**100.0%**	**.**
Client Education level			
Less than high school	342,148	34.1%	8.9%
High school diploma	330,234	32.9%	5.3%
General equivalency diploma or GED	95,259	9.5%	2.4%
Business, trade, or technical license, certificate, or degree beyond high school	62,012	6.2%	1.5%
Some college beyond high school or a 2-year college degree	126,412	12.6%	3.0%
Four-year college degree or higher	47,809	4.8%	1.0%
Total excluding nonresponse	**1,003,874**	**100.0%**	**.**
Military Service			
No household member has ever served	137,189	82.3%	3.3%
At least one household member has served	29,578	17.7%	3.3%
Not currently serving	23,799	14.3%	2.0%
Household member currently serving	4,039	2.4%	1.2%
Unknown if currently serving	1,740	1.0%	1.3%
Total excluding nonresponse	**166,767**	**100.0%**	**.**

Table A3 Characteristics of Clients and their Households

Characteristic	Count	Percentage Estimate	Margin of Error (+/-)
Household Employment (of the person who worked the most in the past 12 months; in some households, this person may not be working)			
Work Status			
Worked for pay in the last 4 weeks	53,590	31.4%	3.2%
Worked for pay in the last 12 months	96,140	56.2%	5.3%
Currently out of work	117,253	68.6%	3.2%
Currently out of work, but actively looking in the last 4 weeks	47,886	27.5%	5.5%
Hours worked per week, among persons who worked the most in the household			
1-10 hours per week	16,265	17.2%	7.7%
11-20 hours per week	13,537	14.3%	4.7%
21-30 hours per week	22,775	24.0%	6.6%
31-40 hours per week	32,627	34.5%	7.2%
Over 40 hours per week	9,499	10.0%	5.2%
Total excluding nonresponse	**94,703**	**100.0%**	**.**
Time out of work, among households where previously most employed person is not working			
Less than 1 month	5,912	5.2%	1.6%
1-6 months	19,821	17.5%	3.6%
7-12 months	12,392	10.9%	7.2%
More than 1 year	75,269	66.4%	6.1%
Total excluding nonresponse	**113,394**	**100.0%**	**.**
Out of the workforce, in the past 4 weeks, and not looking for work because			
Retired	18,921	27.4%	4.9%
Disabled/poor health; caretaker for another person	40,715	59.0%	5.7%
Other	9,317	13.5%	6.0%
Total excluding nonresponse	**68,954**	**100.0%**	**.**
Potential Barriers and Bridges to Employment			
Respondent responsible for grandchildren in household	29,486	17.4%	3.0%
Household member(s) released from prison in the past 12 months	4,853	2.8%	1.5%
Adult client student status			
Full-time student(s)	55,475	5.7%	1.1%
Part-time student(s)	28,861	3.0%	0.9%

Table A3 Characteristics of Clients and their Households

Characteristic	Count	Percentage Estimate	Margin of Error (+/-)
Health, Health Insurance, and Medical Bills			
Household: Health status of respondent			
Excellent	18,116	10.6%	6.2%
Very good	22,124	12.9%	4.0%
Good	47,624	27.8%	4.2%
Fair	49,838	29.1%	2.5%
Poor	33,815	19.7%	5.9%
Total excluding nonresponse	**171,518**	**100.0%**	**.**
Household member in poor health	42,566	27.6%	3.2%
Household member with diabetes	60,576	38.1%	4.2%
Household member with high blood pressure	107,542	67.7%	4.0%
Household: no member has health insurance	59,071	34.2%	5.8%
Household with unpaid medical bills	110,628	65.2%	5.1%
Income			
Household Annual Income			
$0	18,209	12.7%	2.4%
$1 - $10,000	67,585	47.0%	8.1%
$10,001 - $20,000	37,260	25.9%	5.2%
$20,001 - $30,000	12,706	8.8%	2.8%
More than $30,000	8,043	5.6%	1.9%
Total excluding nonresponse	**143,802**	**100.0%**	**.**
	Median		
Median household annual income	7,525	.	.
Household Annual Income as % of Poverty Level			
0% (no income)	18,209	12.7%	2.4%
1% - 50%	45,785	31.8%	3.3%
51% - 75%	24,641	17.1%	5.9%
76% - 100%	24,109	16.8%	3.6%
101% - 130%	15,114	10.5%	2.7%
131% - 150%	4,810	3.3%	1.1%
151% - 185%	6,802	4.7%	2.3%
186% or higher	4,332	3.0%	1.2%
Total excluding nonresponse	**143,802**	**100.0%**	**.**
Household Monthly Income			
$0	22,043	13.9%	2.8%
$1 - $1,000	64,282	40.5%	3.1%
$1,001 - $2,000	52,214	32.9%	3.1%
$2,001 - $3,000	12,802	8.1%	1.9%
More than $3,000	7,265	4.6%	2.4%
Total excluding nonresponse	**158,606**	**100.0%**	**.**

Table A3 Characteristics of Clients and their Households

Characteristic	Count	Percentage Estimate	Margin of Error (+/-)
Households living in poverty	112,744	78.4%	4.2%

Table A4 Clients Use of Food Assistance

Characteristic	Count	Percentage Estimate	Margin of Error (+/-)
Food Security			
Food secure	18,702	11.2%	2.1%
Food insecure	148,874	88.8%	2.1%
Total excluding nonresponse	**167,576**	**100.0%**	**.**
Spending Tradeoffs			
Choose between paying for food and paying for other expenses (ever in the past 12 months)			
Medicine/medical care	127,713	75.9%	4.5%
Utilities	126,052	76.8%	2.6%
Housing	101,206	61.2%	3.1%
Transportation	130,180	77.6%	3.3%
Education	60,191	36.4%	4.6%
Choice of food versus medical care			
Every month	59,012	35.1%	2.7%
Sometimes	68,701	40.8%	4.0%
Never	40,597	24.1%	4.5%
Total excluding nonresponse	**168,310**	**100.0%**	**.**
Choice of food versus utilities			
Every month	63,967	39.0%	3.1%
Sometimes	62,085	37.8%	2.0%
Never	38,089	23.2%	2.6%
Total excluding nonresponse	**164,141**	**100.0%**	**.**
Choice of food versus housing			
Every month	51,177	30.9%	3.0%
Sometimes	50,029	30.2%	3.5%
Never	64,254	38.8%	3.1%
Total excluding nonresponse	**165,460**	**100.0%**	**.**
Choice of food versus transportation			
Every month	69,193	41.2%	2.9%
Sometimes	60,987	36.4%	3.8%
Never	37,562	22.4%	3.3%
Total excluding nonresponse	**167,742**	**100.0%**	**.**
Choice of food versus education			
Every month	30,187	18.3%	2.3%
Sometimes	30,004	18.2%	3.6%
Never	104,984	63.6%	4.6%
Total excluding nonresponse	**165,175**	**100.0%**	**.**

Table A4 Clients Use of Food Assistance

Characteristic	Count	Percentage Estimate	Margin of Error (+/-)
Household SNAP Participation			
Currently receiving SNAP	98,596	58.7%	3.0%
Not currently receiving SNAP	69,267	41.3%	3.0%
Never Applied	27,824	15.9%	3.0%
Have Applied	39,901	22.8%	3.6%
Unknown	1,542	0.9%	0.9%
Total excluding nonresponse	**167,863**	**100.0%**	**.**
Time to exhaustion of benefits for households receiving SNAP			
1 week or less	22,412	23.3%	3.9%
2 weeks	32,912	34.2%	8.1%
3 weeks	31,430	32.7%	6.0%
4 weeks	6,692	7.0%	1.6%
More than 4 weeks	2,785	2.9%	2.0%
Total excluding nonresponse	**96,232**	**100.0%**	**.**
Potential SNAP income eligibility among client households not receiving SNAP			
Not income-eligible	19,197	28.9%	5.2%
Potentially income-eligible	47,136	71.1%	5.2%
At 130% threshold	47,136	71.1%	5.2%
At higher broad-based categorical eligibility (BBCE) threshold	++	++	++
Total excluding nonresponse	**66,334**	**100.0%**	**.**
Reasons for not applying for SNAP, among households that have never applied			
Didn't think eligible	16,407	62.3%	8.9%
Personal reasons	4,726	17.9%	6.8%
Too difficult to apply	1,532	5.8%	3.5%
Never heard of program	1,083	4.0%	4.1%
Other	6,561	24.9%	8.3%
Other Program Participation			
Household participation in programs targeted at school-aged children (households with children ages 5-18)			
Free or reduced-price school lunch programs	33,995	95.7%	2.1%
Free or reduced-price school breakfast programs	14,527	40.9%	10.1%
Afterschool snack or meal programs	1,881	5.3%	3.7%
BackPack weekend food programs	1,380	3.9%	2.9%
Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) (among all households)	14,851	9.3%	1.9%

Table A4 Clients Use of Food Assistance

Characteristic	Count	Percentage Estimate	Margin of Error (+/-)
Households participating in at least one child nutrition program			
One program	79,850	47.0%	2.5%
Two or more programs	36,144	21.3%	3.3%
Strategies for Food Assistance			
I usually wait to come to this program until I run out of food	70,527	43.5%	2.7%
I plan to get food here on a regular basis	91,733	56.5%	2.7%
Total excluding nonresponse	**162,259**	**100.0%**	**.**
Top Products Desired by Clients but Not Currently Receiving at Program			
Beverages such as water or juice	29,811	18.0%	2.7%
Dairy products such as milk, cheese or yogurt	69,008	41.6%	9.5%
Fresh fruits and vegetables	84,124	50.7%	5.0%
Grains such as bread or pasta	21,053	12.7%	2.6%
Non-food items like shampoo, soap, or diapers	34,807	21.0%	3.4%
Nothing	13,981	8.4%	4.8%
Other foods or products	15,108	9.1%	2.1%
Protein food items like meats	77,698	46.8%	2.6%
This is my first time coming to this program	21,950	13.2%	3.0%
Coping Strategies			
Types of household coping strategies used in the past 12 months			
Eaten food past expiration date	90,100	56.3%	3.6%
Grew food in garden	35,432	21.6%	4.2%
Sold or pawned personal property	60,904	37.2%	5.2%
Purchased food in dented or damaged packages	88,083	54.1%	5.3%
Purchased inexpensive, unhealthy food	137,902	84.8%	2.2%
Received help from family or friends	100,658	62.4%	5.3%
Watered down food or drinks	76,462	47.5%	4.4%
Number of household coping strategies used			
None	11,430	6.8%	1.7%
1	23,542	14.0%	2.2%
2	39,280	23.4%	8.1%
3 or more	93,438	55.7%	7.6%
Total excluding nonresponse	**167,689**	**100.0%**	**.**