



# Hunger in America 2014

Special Report for DuPage County, Illinois  
Prepared for Northern Illinois Food Bank



*Funded by: The DuPage Community Foundation  
and the Wheaton Bank & Trust Fund of  
The DuPage Community Foundation*



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**A Report on Charitable Food Distribution in 2013**

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# Chapter 1. Introduction and Background Information

From 2012-2013, Northern Illinois Food Bank participated in a national study, *Hunger in America 2014* (HIA 2014), commissioned by Feeding America, a national network of food banks. In addition to national data on charitable food assistance, the study resulted in nearly 200 local reports, one for each of the participating food banks in the Feeding America network, including Northern Illinois Food Bank. A subsequent analysis of the findings for Northern Illinois Food Bank was undertaken to focus more closely on the breadth of services and depth of need in DuPage County, Illinois. This report outlines the national HIA 2014 study design, but concentrates on the study's findings for the food bank's clients in DuPage County, taking into account outside data on the local social and economic conditions of the county.

**The major trends that emerged from HIA 2014 for DuPage County, which are discussed in further detail throughout this report, include the following:**

- 1. A significant number of children and seniors receive charitable food assistance.**
- 2. Client households are relatively highly educated, but face challenges in affording their education expenses.**
- 3. Despite relatively higher levels of education and employment, many client households are not earning enough to afford food and other basic necessities, such as utilities.**
- 4. There is room for increased participation in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, formerly the Food Stamp Program) among eligible residents in need.**
- 5. Although DuPage County is a relatively wealthy area, many residents are struggling to make ends meet and in need of food assistance, due in part to the area's high cost of living.**
- 6. Both the agencies partnered with Northern Illinois Food Bank and the clients receiving charitable food assistance indicated that additional nutrition education initiatives are needed.**

The remainder of this chapter provides an overview of DuPage County, the *Hunger in America* study, and the need for charitable food, along with response to that need by the Feeding America and Northern Illinois Food Bank networks.

## **i. DuPage County**

Situated directly west of Chicago, DuPage County is in the Northeast corner of the state of Illinois. DuPage County occupies nearly 328 square miles with a population density of nearly 2,800 persons per square mile. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the population of DuPage County exceeded 900,000 people in 2010 and continues to grow, making it one of the most populous counties in the state. DuPage County is also one of the state's wealthiest counties, with a median household income of nearly \$80,000 and high property values.<sup>1</sup>

## **ii. Hunger in America Study Series**

*Hunger in America* is a series of quadrennial studies that provides comprehensive demographic profiles of individuals and families seeking food assistance through the charitable sector and documents the response of hunger-relief services within the Feeding America network to meet their needs. Conducted since 1993, *Hunger in America* is nationally-representative and the largest study of charitable food distribution in the United States. The study findings provide insight into the challenges that many individuals face in accessing sufficient food to feed themselves and their families. The information gathered through the *Hunger in America* series aids in the development of effective hunger-relief programs, guides public policy and advocacy efforts focused on addressing food insecurity, and educates the public about the issue of hunger.

HIA 2014 is the sixth and most comprehensive iteration of the study. Like previous iterations of the *Hunger in America* study series, HIA 2014 was comprised of two components – an Agency Survey and a Client Survey – which were conducted in sequential phases between October 2012 and August 2013. The national results are based on responses from 32,000 partner agencies and more than 60,000 clients at 12,500 food programs within the Feeding America network.

As a member of the Feeding America network, Northern Illinois Food Bank (also to be referred to as “the food bank”), located in Geneva, Illinois, participated in HIA 2014. Among the 13 counties served by Northern Illinois Food Bank, DuPage County is one of its largest, and a large portion of the data gathered by the food bank came from agencies and clients within the county. All estimates referenced for DuPage County may be found in the data tables of the Appendix of this report; for more information on the national network's agencies and clients, please refer to *Hunger in America 2014*.<sup>2</sup> Information on all of Northern Illinois Food Bank's agencies and clients may be found in the food bank's comprehensive local report.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> U.S. Census Bureau: State and County QuickFacts

<sup>2</sup> Feeding America, *Hunger in America 2014*, National Report. August 2014. Available at: <http://www.feedingamerica.org/hunger-in-america/our-research/the-hunger-study/>

<sup>3</sup> Feeding America, *Hunger in America 2014*, Food Bank Report for Northern Illinois Food Bank. August 2014. Available at: <http://www.feedingamerica.org/hunger-in-america/our-research/the-hunger-study/local-reports.html>



### **iii. Study Design: Agency Survey and Client Survey**

The Agency Survey was fielded electronically to partner agencies of Feeding America member food banks that participated in the study, between October 2012 and January 2013. Partner agencies are nonprofit entities that operate one or more charitable food programs that distribute food to clients in need; many partner agencies also operate programs that provide non-food services, such as clothing or furniture distribution. Food programs may or may not be located in the same physical space as the “parent” agency. The study design was based on this organizational structure and partner agencies were asked to report, via the Agency Survey, the number and types of food and non-food programs that they operate. In addition, the Agency Survey contained questions about staffing and volunteers, sources of food, challenges that agencies and their programs face in distributing food, and others related to general operations and capacity.

The Client Survey was designed to better understand the circumstances of people seeking food assistance through the Feeding America network, the struggles they face in securing food, and the strategies they employ to cope with food insecurity. The Client Survey, available in five languages, was administered by more than 6,000 data collectors, between April and August 2013, to randomly sampled clients of charitable food programs across the country. Participating clients were asked to respond to a series of questions about themselves and their households electronically via a tablet. The survey questions covered a wide range of topics related to demographics, education, housing, health, employment status, military service, food security, use of charitable and public food assistance, and coping strategies used to access food among clients and their household members.

### **iv. Methodological Considerations in Understanding and Interpreting Findings**

The findings for this report on food insecurity and charitable food assistance in DuPage County represent a subset of the larger HIA 2014 national study. As such, the findings and analysis are consistent with the design of the national study. Although the *Hunger in America* study has been conducted regularly for nearly two decades, the most recent study is a departure from previous iterations in its scope and design. *Hunger in America 2010* focused on pantries, kitchens, and shelters, often known as emergency food programs. In contrast, HIA 2014 includes numerous other program types, thus broadening the spectrum of programs described and included in data collection. Client interviews were also conducted at approximately twice as many programs across the country as compared to *Hunger in America 2010*. Including this broader universe was intended to better capture the diversity of programs and clients in the Feeding America network.

HIA 2014 utilizes a new design, with food programs classified as either grocery or meal programs, rather than the three sub-types of emergency programs. Grocery programs distribute nonprepared foods, groceries and other household supplies for off-site use, usually for preparation in the client’s home. 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. One of the reasons for this division is the different way in which a client is defined at each of those program types. 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 residing 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, each member of the household is considered a client and together they are considered one household unit. When counting and sampling clients for grocery programs, sampling was done by counting household units. 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. The data tables in the Appendix include some data related to the characteristics of all clients, and other data related to client households; the latter allow for an understanding of the background and home circumstances of all clients, regardless of whether the entire household receives food program services.

The sampling process used in HIA 2014 was designed to produce data that are representative of each food bank's *service area*; it was not designed to guarantee that data at the smaller unit of *county* would be representative. Nonetheless, for the first time in the history of the *Hunger in America* series, HIA 2014 allowed for the production of data at the county level. County-level data tables were generated for each county in which at least 25 completed client surveys were collected from among at least five completed program visits. For this purpose, a program was designated as belonging in a particular county based on the address of the program's parent agency, recognizing that the actual service location of the program may or may not be in the same county as the parent agency. In order to be counted as complete, a survey must include responses to at least 50 percent or more of the 'core questions' which every client is asked, irrespective of skip patterns. In DuPage County, 18 program visits were completed and 99 completed client surveys were collected.

Along with information collected from the agencies located in DuPage County through the Agency Survey, the data gathered were weighted for nonresponse in order to estimate the quantity and circumstances of clients served in the county and the agencies and programs that provide those services. As a sample-based estimate, each percentage has a margin of error, and 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.

## **v. Underrepresentation of Children**

It is important to note that the study was not designed to be fully representative of the children served by the Feeding America network of food banks. Addressing the issue of hunger among children is an important focus of the Feeding America network; Northern Illinois Food Bank and food banks across the network provide food to many programs that uniquely serve children (e.g. Backpack Program and afterschool meals). Some information on these programs was gathered



through the Agency Survey; however, because children were ineligible for participation in the Client Survey due to research protocol that prohibits consent by minors, such programs were not eligible to be visited during the survey period. Additionally, children at meal programs were not asked to participate in the survey. The study does report on households with children who receive grocery program services, thus including children in the client estimates for grocery programs. However, the study underestimates the number of children served by member food banks in the Feeding America network, including Northern Illinois Food Bank and DuPage County.

## **vi. Overview of National Feeding America Network and Northern Illinois Food Bank Network**

Northern Illinois Food Bank is one member of the Feeding America national network of food banks. Founded in 1983, Northern Illinois Food Bank currently has three distribution centers, in Geneva, Lake County, and Loves Park, from which it distributes food to more than 350 partner agencies that serve clients across 13 counties: Boone, DuPage, DeKalb, Grundy, Kane, Kankakee, Kendall, Lake, McHenry, Ogle, Stephenson, Will and Winnebago. Combined, the population of Northern Illinois Food Bank's service area totaled approximately 4 million in 2013.

Feeding America is a nationwide network of approximately 200 member food banks, including Northern Illinois Food Bank, that collectively serve all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico. As the largest domestic hunger-relief charity in the United States, the Feeding America network provides food assistance to more than 46 million individuals in need each year.

The Feeding America national office, located in Chicago, Illinois, supports the member food banks across the country in a variety of ways, such as securing food from corporate manufacturers and retailers and facilitating the acquisition of government food supplies. The national office also supports programs that help to improve food security, provides assistance in the form of grants, and raises awareness about the issue of hunger. Due to their close proximity, Feeding America and Northern Illinois Food Bank often partner with one another informally and formally.

Northern Illinois Food Bank and its fellow member food banks are on the front lines of hunger relief, partnering with local agencies and food programs to distribute food to individuals and families in need. They work to secure food and funds through a variety of sources. In addition to support from the national office, food banks may receive federal hunger-relief funding in the form of commodities, meal reimbursements, or grants, as well as state and local funding to support their work. Each food bank distributes food to its own network of partner agencies that receive, store, and distribute the donated food and grocery products to clients in need.

The partner agencies operate food programs such as food pantries, kitchens, and shelters in order to provide food to individuals facing hunger in their area. Each food bank may work with hundreds of partner agencies. 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.

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. 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 may provide clients with outreach, education, referrals, and/or application assistance related to federal nutrition programs.

**Figure 1. DuPage County within the Service Area of Northern Illinois Food Bank<sup>4</sup>**



<sup>4</sup> 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.

Northern Illinois Food Bank works with local food manufacturers and retailers, companies, foundations, and individuals to procure food for the residents of its service area that are in need. The food bank distributes food to its partner agencies, which operate food programs, such as pantries, kitchens, and congregate feeding sites that provide food to clients. Northern Illinois Food Bank also operates a number of direct distribution programs in the community, including child nutrition programs, senior food boxes and Mobile Pantries. Additionally, members of Northern Illinois Food Bank's SNAP Outreach Team help local residents apply for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, formerly Food Stamps), benefits.

## **vii. The Need for Charitable Food Assistance**

Across the country, food banks like Northern Illinois Food Bank serve an important role in addressing food insecurity. While the federal government includes many safety net programs for low income people, including those specific to food assistance, like SNAP, the charitable sector provides an additional source of food for those who struggle to secure sufficient food. The federal government regularly measures the extent of households' challenges securing food, as does Feeding America.

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. In 2012, more than one in seven US households (18 million, or 15 percent) experienced food insecurity at some time during the year, meaning they experienced limited or uncertain access to adequate food, including reduced quality, variety, or desirability of diet.<sup>5</sup>

In Illinois, the overall food insecurity rate of 14 percent (1.8 million) in 2012 was slightly below the national average. While the magnitude of the problem is clear, national and even state estimates of food insecurity can mask the variation that exists at the local level. In addition, food banks are rooted in their local communities and need specific information at the ground level in order to be responsive to unique local conditions.

Feeding America's *Map the Meal Gap* research provides detailed information for every county and congressional district in the United States, including the food-insecurity rate, the number of individuals who are food insecure and their potential income-eligibility for federal programs. At nine percent, the overall food insecurity rate in DuPage County in 2012, essentially unchanged from 2011, was significantly lower than the state or national averages. However, because DuPage County is very populous, the number of individuals estimated to be struggling with food insecurity is large -

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<sup>5</sup> 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.

83,830. Poverty, a key national and county-level economic indicator that influences food insecurity, also stayed approximately the same (6 percent in 2011 compared to 7 percent in 2012), although unemployment, another key driver of the *Map the Meal Gap* food insecurity model, decreased (from 8 percent to 7 percent). While homeownership fell slightly from 2011 to 2012 (from 76 percent to 75 percent), median household income increased in 2012 (from \$77,598 to \$78,538).

Estimating food-insecurity rates by level of income can also provide important insight into the potential strategies that individuals can use to address hunger. Nationally, 29 percent of food-insecure households are above 185 percent of the poverty line and are typically ineligible for most food assistance programs. On the opposite end of the spectrum, 55 percent of the national food-insecure population are below 130 percent of the poverty line and are thus likely income-eligible for SNAP. The 16 percent between these two income thresholds likely qualify for other government programs like National School Lunch, School Breakfast, TEFAP and WIC. In DuPage County, however, a majority of food-insecure individuals have incomes above 185 percent of the poverty level (52%) while 35 percent are below 130 percent of the poverty level and 13 percent are between 130 percent and 185 percent of poverty.

A closer look at income thresholds among the food-insecure population reflects significant variations in program income eligibility within states and across the nation. Across the country, there are 141 counties where the majority of food-insecure people are likely ineligible for government assistance programs and most of these (75%) are in metropolitan areas that tend to have higher-than-average median incomes. DuPage County, which is near Chicago, Illinois, has an estimated 83,830 food-insecure people, 65 percent of whom are likely *ineligible* for SNAP. DuPage County is also one of four counties in Illinois where a majority (50 percent or more) of food-insecure individuals are estimated to have incomes too high to be eligible for any federal nutrition assistance programs (above 185 percent of poverty). Thus, other strategies, including charitable feeding assistance, are particularly important for addressing food insecurity in counties like DuPage, where higher incomes render many ineligible for federal assistance and higher costs create pressure on food budgets for those families struggling to make ends meet.

## **viii. Charitable Food Assistance Network in DuPage County**

To help address food insecurity in DuPage County and throughout their service area, Northern Illinois Food Bank partners with local agencies to provide charitable food assistance.

According to HIA 2014, Northern Illinois Food Bank partners with 61 agencies in DuPage County. Together, these agencies report operating 76 food programs and 87 other programs providing non-

food or food-related benefits (e.g., food benefits applications) assistance.<sup>6</sup> Food programs include those that typically provide emergency assistance, such as food pantries, soup kitchens, and shelters, and those that provide nonemergency assistance, such as day care and senior-congregate feeding programs. Of all food programs in DuPage County, an estimated 18 percent of food programs are meal programs while the overwhelming majority (82%) are grocery programs. Typically, traditional food pantries are the most predominant subtype of grocery programs, although other program models, such as mobile pantries or home-delivered groceries exist as well. This balance of food program types is notably different than the balance at both the national level and for all of Northern Illinois Food Bank's service area, where the proportions are nearly identical. Nationally, 33 percent of food programs operated by partner agencies are meal programs and 67 percent are grocery programs. Similarly, the composition in Northern Illinois' service area is 32 percent meal programs and 68 percent grocery programs. In DuPage County, as in the rest of the nation, food pantries and other grocery programs are more common than meal programs.

While there may be overlap among clients using meal and grocery programs, HIA 2014 provides evidence that, as a group, clients who use meal programs are different than clients that use grocery programs. Nationally, client households attending grocery programs are much more likely than client households of meal programs to include a child. In addition, nearly two-thirds (65%) of meal program client households are comprised solely of non-senior adults, compared to under a third (33%) of grocery program client households.<sup>7</sup> The data collected in DuPage County were too limited to support an analysis of client household by age composition and program type; however, given the disproportionate presence of grocery programs, it merits further investigation in future research.

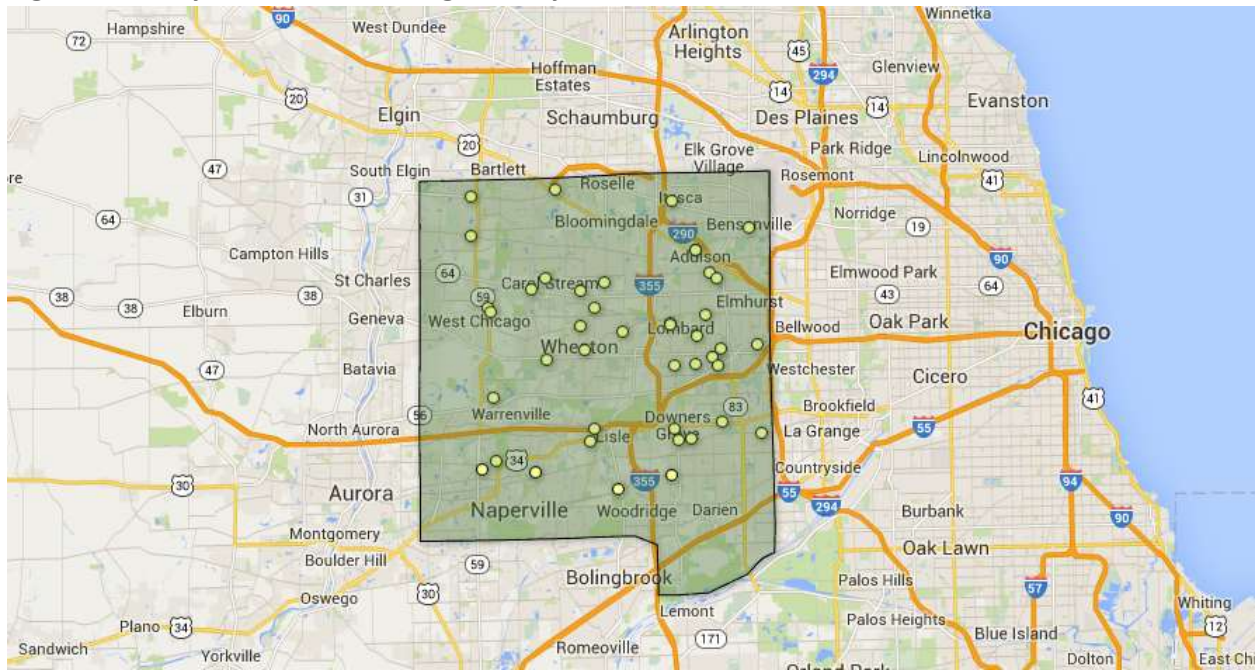
The schedules and locations of charitable food programs are two factors that greatly influence clients' access to food. The pantries available to clients in DuPage County are located in various communities throughout the county (see Figure 2). They operate varying schedules, with some available to clients as many as 40 hours each week, while others are open just a few hours each month, available in an emergency situation, or offered by appointment only. Access restrictions vary across these programs as well; some limit use to residents of the same geographical location, others require a referral from a particular service provider, and others enforce frequency of use restrictions, such as limiting visits by an individual household to once per month.

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<sup>6</sup> The numbers reported here are those documented at the time of data collection for the HIA 2014 study, in 2012-2013. The numbers may have shifted in the intervening time.

<sup>7</sup> Feeding America, *Hunger in America 2014*, National Report. August 2014.

**Figure 2. Pantry Locations in DuPage County**

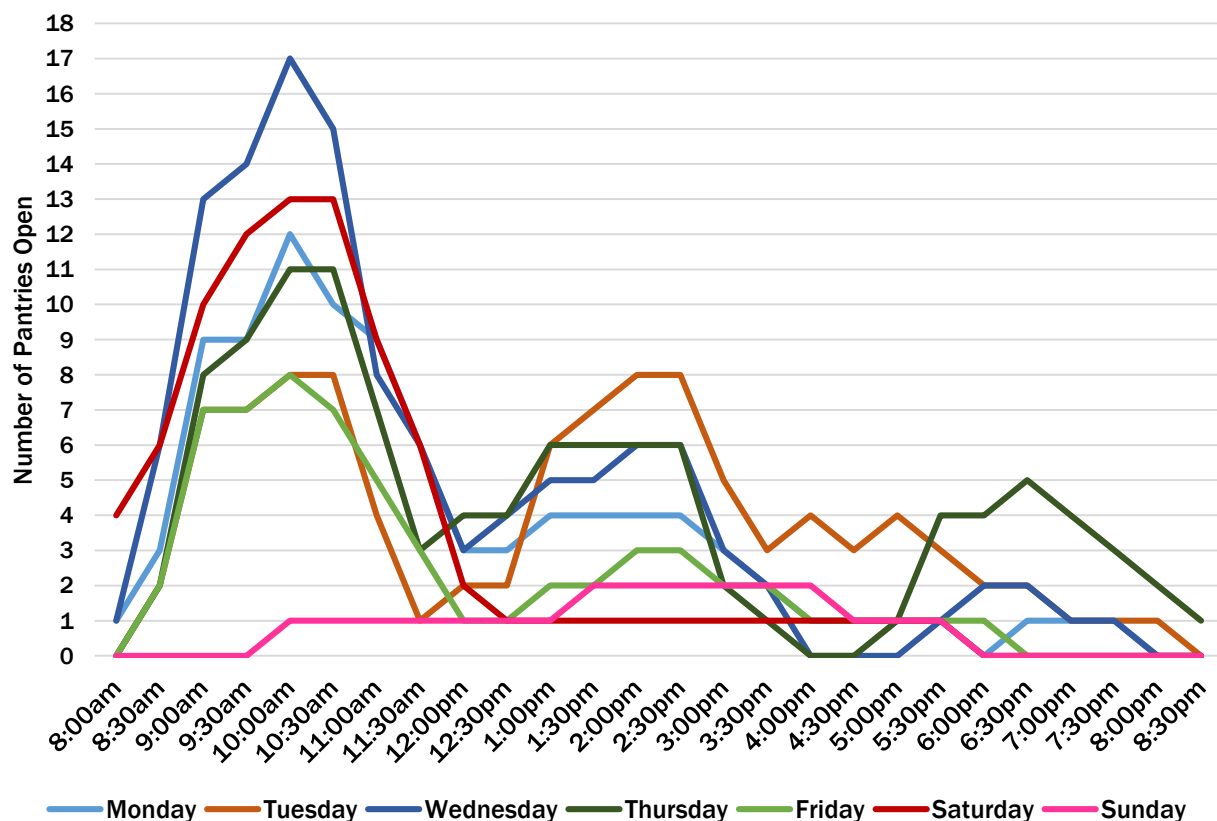


**Data Source:** Northern Illinois Food Bank.



Figure 3 presents the availability of food pantries in DuPage County during a typical week. Each line represents a particular day of the week and is graphed to indicate the number of different food pantry sites available at each hour of the day. Food pantry hours vary considerably, with the earliest opening at 8:00am and the latest closing after 8:00pm, and days of operation spanning all seven days of the week. Overall, food pantries in DuPage County are most commonly available during weekday mornings. Wednesdays give clients the most opportunity to acquire groceries, with 25 different food pantries open approximately 60 hours in total. In comparison, fewer pantries operate during the weekend, with only two pantries open a total of 11 hours on Sundays. The varying distribution schedules of food pantry programs is an important factor when considering accessibility, as clients' circumstances may preclude them from picking up groceries during the times which they are offered. For example, working households may only be available to pick up groceries outside of working hours or on the weekend, when fewer pantries tend to be operational. Considering the circumstances of DuPage County clients may help inform the distribution schedules of food pantries.

**Figure 3. DuPage County Food Pantries: Hours of Operation**



Data Source: Northern Illinois Food Bank.

As mentioned, the geographic location of food pantries is also a critical factor affecting clients' access to food assistance. In addition to some program eligibility requirements based on geography, location is important since clients utilize different means of transportation to access the services they need. Table 1 lists the cities and townships in which DuPage County food pantries operate, the total number of pantry locations, and operational hours across those locations. Across the 21 indicated locales, the number of pantries in operation ranges from one to five, while the combined quantity of hours of services ranges from two to more than 40.

**Table 1. DuPage County Partner Agencies by Locales, Hours, and Number of Pantries**

City	Hours/operation per week	Number of pantry locations
Addison	17	4
Bartlett	2	1
Bensenville	5	1
Carol Stream	24	2
Downers Grove	10.5	4
Elmhurst	9	1
Glen Ellyn	15.5	1
Hanover Park	3	1
Hinsdale	8	1
Itasca	3	1
Lisle	16	2
Lombard	30	5
Naperville	20.5	3
Oakbrook Terrace	41	2
Villa Park	6.5	2
Warrenville	5.5	1
Wayne	12.5	1
West Chicago	21	3
Westmont	5	1
Wheaton	22.25	3
Woodridge	15	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>292.25</b>	<b>41</b>

*Data Source: Northern Illinois Food Bank.*

## Chapter 2. DuPage County Agency and Program Findings

While Northern Illinois Food Bank's agency network is distributed throughout its 13-county service area, at least 61 of these agencies are located in DuPage County. These agencies are the primary vehicle for food distribution to clients in need and they vary substantially in format, characteristics, and capacity. While some agencies may be high-functioning multi-service organizations, others are smaller programs affiliated with an entity that has a different primary function, such as a church.

This chapter describes the network of agencies in DuPage County, including their capacity and services, as reported in the Agency Survey of the HIA 2014 study.

### i. Agency Type, Staff, and Volunteers

While two-thirds of the food bank's agencies identify as faith-based or located in a religious institution, 54 percent of DuPage County agencies are faith-based, suggesting that a greater proportion of DuPage County agencies are comprised of other charitable social service or governmental organizations. Staffing resources may vary significantly between agencies that are faith-based and those that are not, as religious institutions with limited funding may rely more heavily on volunteered aid than employed staff.<sup>8</sup>

When considering agencies that are operated exclusively by volunteers, 49 percent of DuPage County agencies report having no paid staff, compared to 52 percent of all agencies partnered with the food bank. The median number of volunteer hours reported by programs with volunteers in DuPage County (30) is also slightly lower than the food bank median number of hours (49). Programs at the county and food bank level report similar rates of difficulty recruiting (40%) and retaining volunteers (25%). In addition to reporting on volunteer recruitment and retention needs, programs also reported on areas where additional training is needed, among either volunteers or paid staff. While many of the training need areas are similar to those at the food bank- and national-level, DuPage County programs were more likely to report needing additional training with SNAP outreach and application assistance, as well as accessing local food resources.<sup>9</sup> The reported need for additional training around SNAP may reflect a growing demand among clients to enroll in SNAP and the agencies' desire to meet that demand.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> According to national data from HIA 2014, only 32 percent of faith-based agencies in the Feeding America network employ paid staff, compared to 78 percent of agencies that are not faith based nor located in a religious institution.

<sup>9</sup> Local food resources describe smaller donations from retailers and others that might not be routed through the food bank.

<sup>10</sup> Average monthly SNAP participation increased each year from 2009-2013. See: <http://www.fns.usda.gov/>

**Table 2. Reported Need for Additional Training among Food Programs**

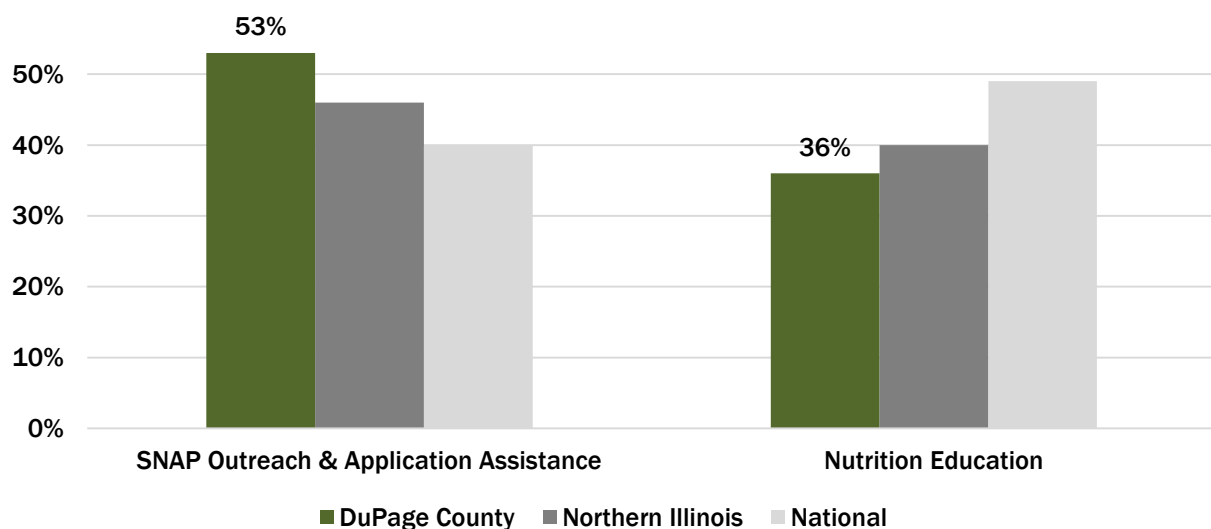
Programs Reporting Need for Additional Training with...	DuPage County	Northern Illinois Food Bank	Feeding America Nationally
Food safety & sanitation	38%	46%	39%
Fundraising & grant writing	38%	39%	38%
Accessing local food resources	37%	33%	33%
Nutrition education	36%	39%	39%
SNAP outreach & application assistance	31%	25%	25%

*Data Source: Hunger in America 2014 Agency Survey, Q49.*

## ii. SNAP Outreach and Nutrition Education

In addition to charitable food distribution, agencies and programs partnered with the food bank also carry out other roles, such as SNAP outreach or application assistance and nutrition education. DuPage County agencies were slightly more likely to provide SNAP-related services (53%) than agencies at either the food bank (46%) or national level (40%), suggesting a heightened awareness of clients' potential participation in federal nutrition assistance programs within DuPage County. While SNAP outreach at agencies was more prevalent, nutrition education was less common among DuPage County agencies. While slightly more than one-third (36%) of DuPage County agencies offer nutrition education, 40 percent of food bank and 49 percent of national agencies offer nutrition-related services, suggesting that there is opportunity for agencies in DuPage County to engage in efforts to teach clients about eating healthy foods (see Figure 4).

**Figure 4. Agencies Offering Services in Addition to Food Distribution**



*Data Source: Hunger in America 2014 Agency Survey, Q6 and Q10.*

## Chapter 3. DuPage County Clients and their Households

Northern Illinois Food Bank is serving 107,100 individuals in DuPage County.<sup>11</sup> The clients seek assistance from the charitable food network in order to ensure that they have sufficient food for themselves and their families. They face unique challenges relative to the characteristics of DuPage County, including educational attainment and the cost of living.

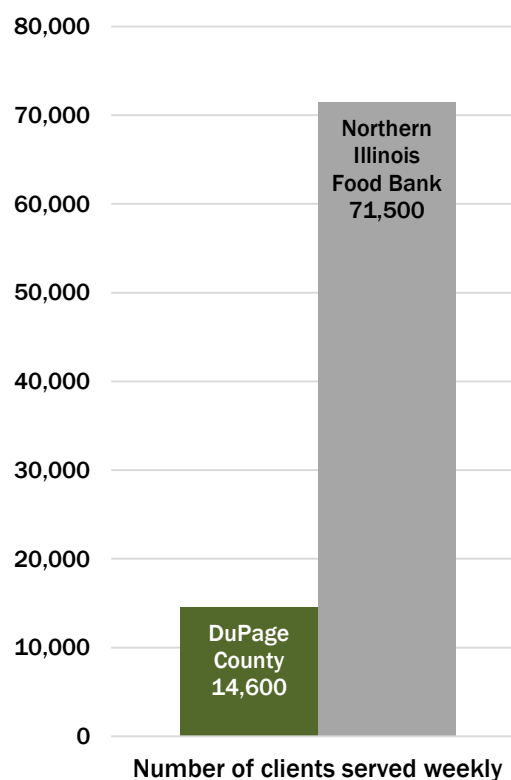
This chapter presents background information on the clients served by Northern Illinois Food Bank and its partner agencies in DuPage County, as well as an exploration of the characteristics and circumstances of the clients and their households.

### i. Demographic Profile of Clients Served

DuPage County has a population of approximately 932,100, comprising seven percent of the population of the state of Illinois. The proportion of county residents by age is similar to the proportions at the state level. Children under five years old make up six percent of DuPage County's population, while children under 18 years old make up nearly a quarter of the county's population. Senior citizens, aged 60 and years and older, comprise 19 percent of the population of DuPage County.<sup>12</sup>

Racially and ethnically, DuPage County differs somewhat from the state of Illinois. Individuals who identify as White non-Hispanic make up 69 percent of the county's

Figure 5. Weekly Unduplicated Client Count



<sup>11</sup> The number of clients served is different from the number of food insecure persons living in this county, as determined by Feeding America's *Map the Meal Gap* study. Some charitable food assistance recipients may not meet the U.S. Department of Agriculture's definition of food insecure. For instance, some clients may consider themselves to be food secure because they take into account any charitable food and/or federal benefits (e.g. SNAP benefits) they receive.

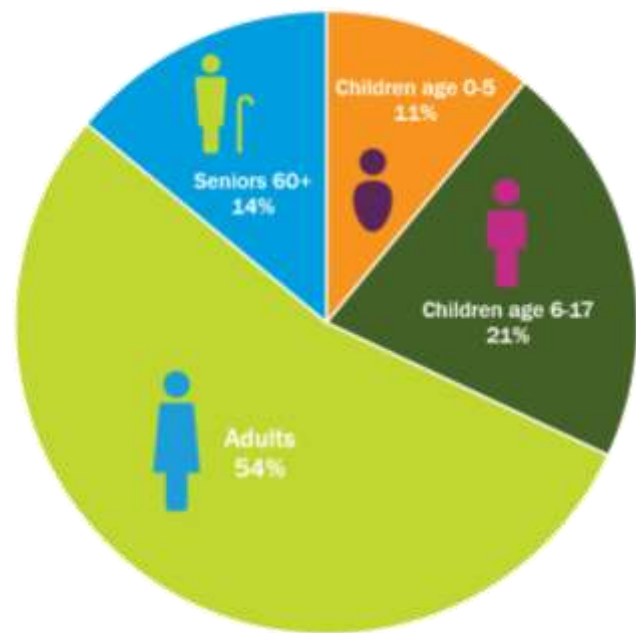
<sup>12</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, 2013 estimate: <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/17/17043.html> <accessed on 10.29.2014>. U.S. Census Bureau. (2013). Demographic and Housing Estimates: 2013 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates.

population (compared to 63% in the state). Non-Hispanic Black and Latino residents comprise four and 14 percent of the county’s population, respectively, both of which are lower than state levels. In contrast, individuals identifying as Asian people make up 11 percent of the population of DuPage County, compared to five percent in Illinois.<sup>13</sup>

The population of clients seeking the services of charitable food assistance programs is a unique subset in DuPage County. Using the HIA 2014 data, we estimate that Northern Illinois Food Bank serves 107,100 unique or “unduplicated” individuals in 29,300 households each year in DuPage County. Many clients receive food multiple times during the year, so estimating each time clients are reached through food distributions yields a “duplicated” estimate of 821,800 individual client interactions each year through food programs in this county. Based on these figures, each client in DuPage County makes an average of eight visits to food programs each year, though the patterns of individual households will vary based on unique personal circumstances. This average number of visits per client is consistent with the average at the food bank-level, as well as for the state. Figure 5 shows the number of clients served in a typical week by the food bank in DuPage County, relative to those in the entire service area. For comparison the national number of clients served in a typical week is nearly 5.4 million.

The characteristics of clients of Northern Illinois Food Bank in DuPage County are striking, in comparison to the general population. On an annual level, children and seniors comprise nearly half of all clients served in DuPage County; 32,000 children and 14,000 seniors are served annually, representing a substantial portion of the 200,000 children and 50,000 seniors served in the food bank’s entire service area. Children are disproportionately served as clients, relative to their overall representation in DuPage County, and there are likely even higher numbers of children served since the count is probably an underestimate (for reasons described in Chapter 1, section v.). Of the estimated 176,600 senior individuals residing

**Figure 6. Individual Clients by Age**



*Data Source: Hunger in America 2014 Client Survey, Q3.*

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

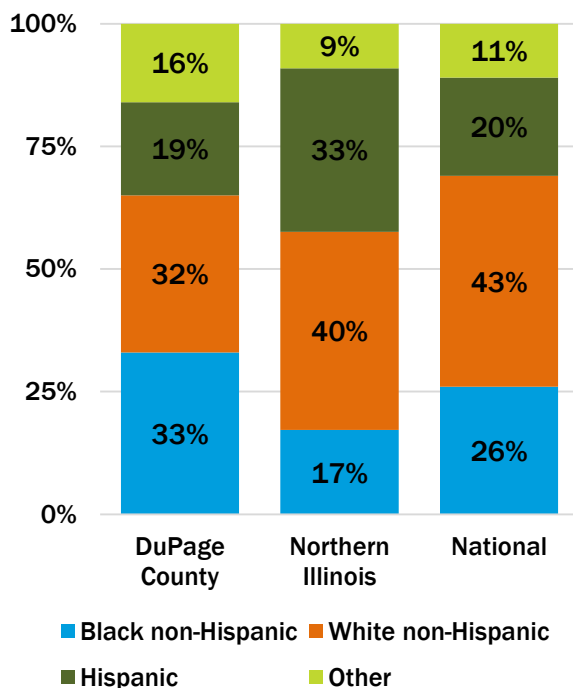


in DuPage County, 14,000 are served by the food bank, suggesting that one in twelve seniors in DuPage County receives food assistance through Northern Illinois Food Bank each year.<sup>14</sup>

Clients are also racially and ethnically diverse. While Black non-Hispanic residents comprise only four percent of the total population of DuPage County, they make up a third of food bank clients in the county, a frequency nearly twice as high as in the food bank's entire service area. There is some evidence to suggest that this may be attributable to a high population of African refugees in DuPage County.<sup>15</sup> Refugees may be more likely to be clients, in part due to the lingering effects of the Recession, including high unemployment. Additionally, a prominent organization that places refugees, World Relief, has offices in DuPage County, making placement in the area a likely option.

Hispanic clients are similarly over-represented, relative to their numbers in the county population; they comprise 19 percent of food bank clients in DuPage County and 14 percent of the overall county population. White non-Hispanic clients are 32 percent of the total client population; 69 percent of the population of DuPage County identifies as White non-Hispanic. Notably, 16 percent of all clients identify as other races/ethnicities, compared to just nine percent in the food bank's overall service area. This may be explained by the relatively higher proportion of Asian residents in DuPage County.

**Figure 7. Client Race/Ethnicity**



*Data Source: Hunger in America 2014 Client Survey, Q4.*

## ii. Educational Attainment among Client Households

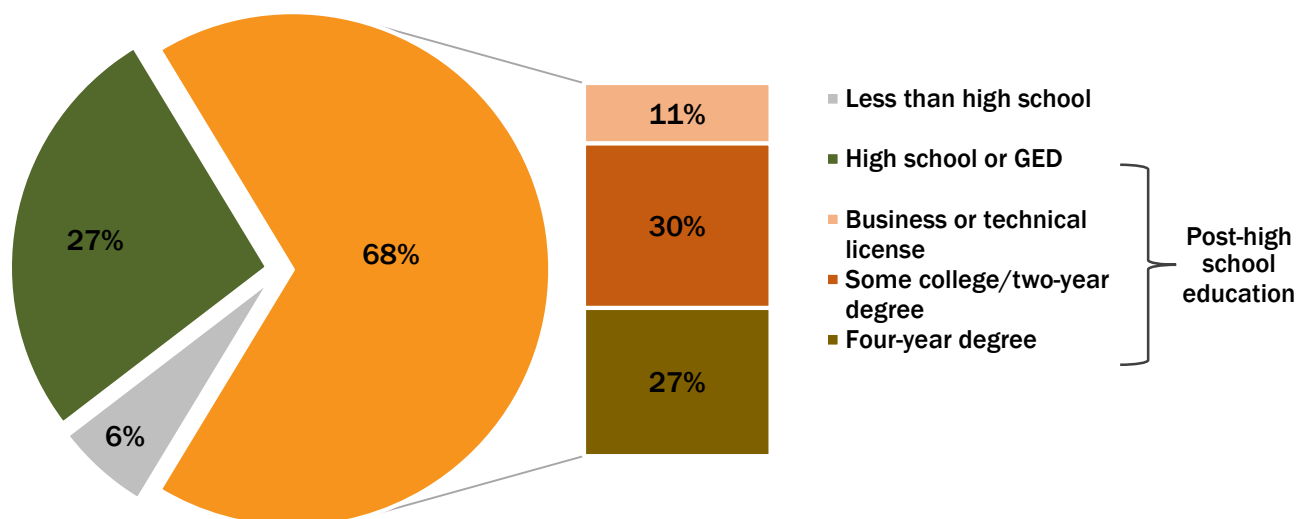
Client households in DuPage County have higher levels of educational attainment, as compared to client households across the national Feeding America network. In DuPage County, the vast majority (94%) of client households contain a member with at least a high school diploma or general equivalency diploma (GED), compared to 86 percent of client households nationally. When

<sup>14</sup> U.S. Census Bureau. (2013). Demographic and Housing Estimates: 2013 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates.

<sup>15</sup> See, for example, <http://news.medill.northwestern.edu/chicago/news.aspx?id=178806> and [http://articles.chicagotribune.com/2008-06-30/news/0806290154\\_1\\_bosnian-family-english-lessons-parking-lot](http://articles.chicagotribune.com/2008-06-30/news/0806290154_1_bosnian-family-english-lessons-parking-lot)

considering the percentage of households that contain a member with a post-high school education, the differences are even more striking (67% of DuPage County client households versus 41% of client households nationally). The two-thirds of client households in DuPage County with a post-high school education include those that have a business, trade, or technical license, certificate, or degree (11%), some college or a two-year degree (30%), or a four-year degree (27%).

**Figure 8. Highest Education Level Attained in Household (DuPage County)**



*Data Source: Hunger in America 2014 Client Survey, Q5.*

*Note: Throughout the report, numbers in graphics may be slightly different than reflected in text and data tables due to rounding. In addition, numbers may not sum to 100 due to rounding.*

In DuPage County, client households are more likely to have a college-educated member than all client households throughout the national network, reflecting the higher college graduation rate among the general population of adults in this county. One-quarter (27%) of DuPage client households have a member with a four-year degree. This rate is considerably higher than the percentage of client households throughout the national network who have a member with a four-year degree (10%). In the general DuPage population, nearly half (47%) of residents age 25 and older have a four-year degree or higher<sup>16</sup>, which is also notably higher than the rate in the United States as a whole (30%). The high household educational attainment levels in DuPage County likely reflect the fact that county residents enjoy a wealth of local opportunities for higher education. Of the 19 educational institutions located in the county reported by the county government's website, 12 offer Bachelor's degrees, and eight offer Associate's degrees and/or Certificate programs.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>16</sup> Data come from the 2013 one-year ACS, Table DP02.

<sup>17</sup> The County of DuPage, IL. DuPageco.org.

In addition to inquiring about the highest level of household education, the Client Survey also inquired about the student status of any adult clients. In DuPage County, nearly 11 percent of adult clients are currently enrolled in school, with six percent enrolled full-time and four percent enrolled part-time, indicating that client households are continually working to improve their educational levels.<sup>18</sup> The percentage of adult clients currently enrolled in school is slightly higher in DuPage County than for the food bank's service area (8%) and for the national network (10%). The adult clients may be enrolled in higher education, or they may be in school to complete credits for their high school diploma or GED. Thus, adult clients in DuPage County may be less likely than those nationally to be currently enrolled in school since client households in this county tend to already have higher educational levels. Regardless, further educational attainment may provide client households with increased access to employment opportunities and financial security in the long-term.

While client households in DuPage County have higher levels of education, they are also more likely than client households throughout the national network to report struggling to afford school. Education can provide additional opportunities for employment, but tuition and course materials can become a significant financial burden in the short-term for low-income families. Among client households in DuPage, more than half (51%) reported having to choose between paying for education expenses and paying for food in the past 12 months, a rate considerably higher than in Northern Illinois Food Bank's service area (37%) and throughout the national network (31%). One out of four (26%) DuPage client households reported having to make this choice every month, compared to 17 percent in Northern Illinois service area, and 14 percent nationally. Although it is clear that educational expenses are common among DuPage County client households, likely given their high educational levels, it is unclear whether client households are struggling to afford the costs of higher education for any adult household members, the costs of elementary or high school education for children in the family, or a combination of these expenses.

### **iii. Client Household Employment**

Client households in DuPage County are more likely to have an employed member than client households throughout the national network; however, they face many of the same challenges, such as instability in employment and potential difficulty in accessing charitable food services that are primarily open during business hours. Nearly three-quarters (71%) of DuPage client households had at least one member that was employed in the past year. Client households without an employed member in the past year either were unemployed during this period or were out of the workforce for

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<sup>18</sup> Throughout the report, various data points that have been summed may be higher than their component parts, due to rounding.

reasons such as retirement, health challenges, or caregiving responsibilities. While the rate of employment in the past year among DuPage client households is lower than the rate for Northern Illinois Food Bank's service area (77%), it is considerably higher than the rate for client households nationally (54%).

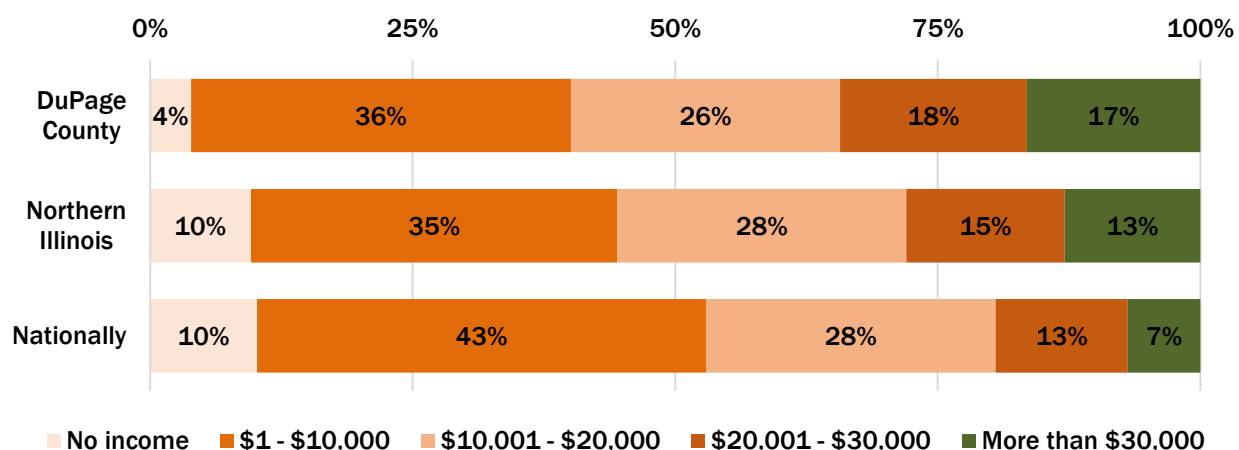
Despite a fairly high rate of labor force participation in the prior year, in many cases, employment status over a 12-month period was unstable: half (50%) of client households in DuPage County reported that at least one member had employment in the past four weeks (compared to 52 percent for the food bank's service area and 34 percent nationally), meaning that, at least in the year prior to data collection, many client households had employment statuses that fluctuated. There are many potential reasons for the change in employment status between the yearly and monthly figures. Some of these include recent job loss, temporary furlough, health problems, or other competing responsibilities, such as caregiving or education.

In addition to unstable employment, client households in DuPage County may face challenges in visiting local food programs given their common days and hours of operation. As previously discussed in Chapter 1, section viii, the days of operation among food pantries in this county span all seven days of the week. In addition, the food pantries distribute food across a wide range of hours, with some starting as early as 8:00 am and others distributing as late as approximately 8:00 pm. Although food pantries in this county offer diverse distribution times, they more commonly operate during weekday mornings. The days and hours of operation of charitable food programs may play a factor in households' ability to seek food assistance, especially the nearly three-quarters of client households in this county that had employment in the past year. For these client households and other working families that reside in the county, the evening and weekend food distributions may be the only or most convenient option, and these options are more limited for clients seeking assistance in DuPage.

#### **iv. Client Household Income and the Cost of Living**

In DuPage County, households that receive charitable food assistance report limited incomes, especially when taking into account the high local cost of living. Although client households in this county generally have employment and relatively high levels of education, they are struggling to earn enough to meet their basic needs, including food and housing. The majority (84%) of client households in DuPage County earn an annual income of \$30,000 or less, with more than two-thirds (66%) earning \$20,000 or less. Notably, despite having minimal incomes, client households in DuPage County still earn relatively higher incomes than do those in the wider food bank service area and nationally. For instance, a higher percentage of client households in the larger service area (87%) and nationally (93%) report annual incomes that are at or below \$30,000. While those in DuPage County may earn slightly higher incomes than do those in other regions, they are still not earning adequate incomes to afford their necessities in the local economy.

**Figure 9. Client Household Annual Income**



*Data Source: Hunger in America 2014 Client Survey, Q23.*

The local economy in DuPage County is characterized in part by the relatively high median income and high cost of housing. In 2013, the median household income in DuPage County was \$76,195,<sup>19</sup> substantially higher than the national median household income of \$51,939.<sup>20</sup> Given that the majority of households receiving food assistance have incomes at or below \$30,000, it is clear that the charitable food assistance network is serving low-income families that are particularly vulnerable to food insecurity. A comparison of poverty rates between client households and the general population in this county provide further insight into the heightened economic challenges experienced by client households. Whereas more than half (57%) of client households in DuPage County have incomes that fall at or below the poverty line, just under five percent of families in the general population in this area live in poverty.<sup>21</sup> As such, the households that receive food assistance from the charitable sector are particularly likely to struggle to afford all of their expenses.

## **v. Housing Transitions**

Many individuals living in DuPage County face additional economic challenges related to the local cost of housing. As compared to the state of Illinois, residents of DuPage County encounter high rent payments that, when living on minimal incomes, may make it difficult to afford housing. As an example, in the state of Illinois, the hourly wage necessary to afford the Fair Market Rent on a two-

<sup>19</sup> U.S. Census Bureau. (2013). Selected Population Profile in the United States: 2013 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates.

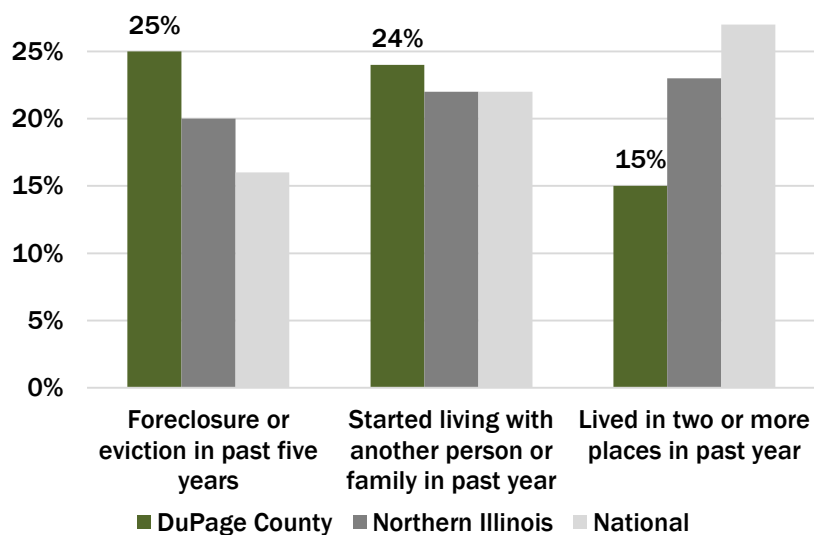
<sup>20</sup> DeNavas-Walt, Carmen and Bernadette D. Proctor, U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Reports, P60-249, *Income and Poverty in the United States: 2013*, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, DC, 2014.

<sup>21</sup> U.S. Census Bureau. (2013). Selected Population Profile in the United States: 2013 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates.

bedroom apartment is \$17.02, which equates to less than \$36,000 annually.<sup>22</sup> In DuPage County specifically, an individual or family would need to earn at least \$18.42 per hour to afford the Fair Market Rent on the same type of housing, which translates into more than \$38,000 annually.<sup>23</sup> Given that an overwhelming majority of client households report annual incomes at or below \$30,000, nearly all recipients of charitable food assistance in DuPage County are unable to afford the local cost of housing. In some cases, client households may be dedicating almost all or the entirety of their income to housing, which leaves them with little or no budget available to purchase food and other necessities, items that are also likely to be more expensive in an area with a generally high cost of living and a higher county-level food cost index than that of the state as a whole.<sup>24</sup> In other cases, client households may experience changes in their living situation as a result of financial challenges.

Recent trends in the housing market in DuPage County indicate relatively high foreclosure rates around the time of the survey, and households receiving charitable food assistance in this county have experienced these challenges related to housing firsthand. Prior to the Great Recession, DuPage County had the eleventh lowest foreclosure rate of the 102 counties in Illinois, with a foreclosure rate of three percent in 2008, which was much lower than the highest county-level foreclosure rate (10% in Alexander County).<sup>25</sup> Despite a strong housing market at the time, DuPage County has more recently seen considerable increases in

**Figure 10. Recent Housing Transitions by Respondent**



*Data Source: Hunger in America 2014 Client Survey, Q17, Q20, and Q21.*

<sup>22</sup> National Low Income Housing Coalition. (2013). Illinois. [http://nlihc.org/sites/default/files/oor/2013-OOR-IL\\_0.pdf](http://nlihc.org/sites/default/files/oor/2013-OOR-IL_0.pdf)

<sup>23</sup> National Low Income Housing Coalition. (2013). Illinois. [http://nlihc.org/sites/default/files/oor/2013-OOR-IL\\_0.pdf](http://nlihc.org/sites/default/files/oor/2013-OOR-IL_0.pdf)

<sup>24</sup> Feeding America's Map the Meal Gap (2014) finds that in 2012, the average meal cost across the continental U.S. was \$2.74, a slight increase from \$2.67 in 2011. While the average meal cost in both Illinois (\$2.46) and DuPage County (\$2.68) was lower than the national average, food prices in DuPage County were nearly 109 percent higher than the state average. This means DuPage ranks in the top 12% of counties with the highest food cost indices in Illinois, and the top 11% of counties with the highest average meal cost in the state.

<sup>25</sup> U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. (2008). HUD Provided Local Level Data: Illinois. [http://www.huduser.org/portal/datasets/nsp\\_foreclosure\\_data.html](http://www.huduser.org/portal/datasets/nsp_foreclosure_data.html)



foreclosures. As an example, the number of completed foreclosure auctions increased by 129 percent in DuPage County between 2011 and 2012, compared to a 74 percent increase in the same timeframe in the Chicago area.<sup>26</sup> Many clients of the charitable food assistance network in DuPage County have personal experience with the recent housing crisis.

In DuPage County, one in four (25%) survey respondents has experienced foreclosure or eviction in the past five years. This foreclosure rate is considerably higher than that of survey respondents nationally (16%) and in Northern Illinois Food Bank's service area more broadly (20%), indicating that individuals seeking food assistance from the charitable sector in DuPage County are particularly struggling with the local cost of housing.

In addition to foreclosure and eviction, survey respondents in this county report other types of recent housing transitions. For instance, in DuPage County, nearly one in four (24%) individuals who participated in the study report that they started living with another person or family in the past year, possibly because they had difficulty affording a place to live on their own. Like the foreclosure and eviction rate, respondents in this county were much more likely to report moving in with another person or family than those nationally (20%) or in the larger food bank service area (22%). These relatively high rates of housing transitions indicate that securing affordable housing is a common challenge in DuPage County among recipients of the charitable food network.

## **vi. Health Adversity**

DuPage County client households report a variety of challenges related to their health and medical care, which likely have negative implications in terms of their workforce participation and income available for food and other necessities. When asked to rate their own health status, nearly one in seven (14%) survey respondents in this county indicated that they have poor health. Furthermore, more than one-quarter (27%) report that another member in their household is in poor health. In some cases, the poor health status of a household member may affect his or her ability to seek or maintain employment.

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<sup>26</sup> Buitrago, Katie. (2013). Completed Foreclosures Skyrocket from 2011 to 2012, New Data Show. Woodstock Institute. <http://www.woodstockinst.org/press-release/completed-foreclosures-skyrocket-2011-2012-new-data-show>

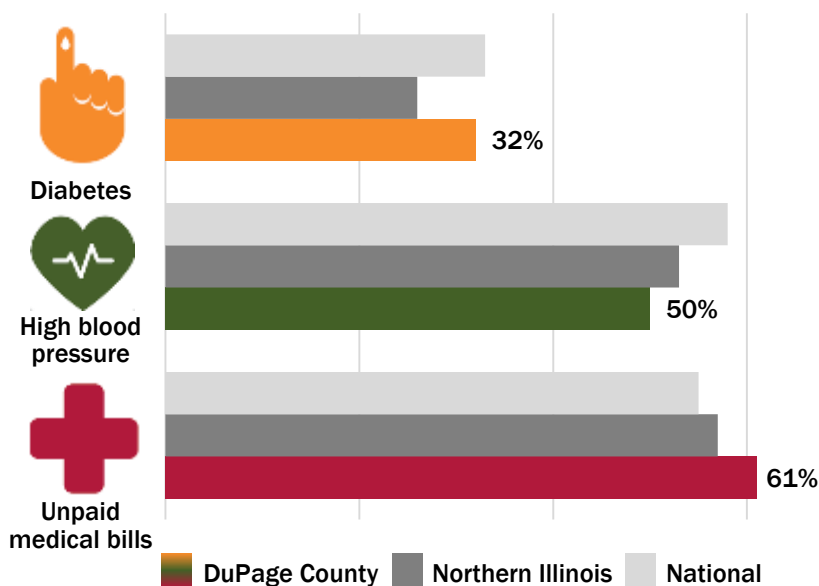
In addition to health status, the study inquired about the presence of select health conditions in the household. Nearly one in three (32%) client households in DuPage County has at least one member with diabetes. While this rate is consistent with that for client households nationally (33%), it is higher than that of client households in Northern Illinois Food Bank's full service area (26%). Furthermore, one in every two (50%) DuPage County client households has at least one member with high blood pressure; this is slightly lower than the rates for client households nationally (58%) and in the food bank's service area (53%). Since diet plays a critical role in management of both diabetes and high blood pressure, food insecurity and lack of nutrition likely have detrimental effects on individuals' ability to properly manage these health conditions. The charitable food assistance network provides them with more access to food, but increased nutrition education efforts may be needed to better address the links between nutrition and health.

In alignment with the relatively high rates of health challenges they are facing, DuPage County client households also report difficulties in affording their health care expenses. Three-fifths (61%) of DuPage County client households report having unpaid medical bills, which

indicates that client households in this county are facing slightly more medical debt than are those nationally (55%) or in the food bank's 13-county service area (57%). Given the high rates of health challenges and medical debt, client households in DuPage County often have to make difficult decisions between paying for food and medical care or medicine. Sixty-three percent of DuPage County client households make this choice each year, compared to 66 percent of client households nationally and 62 percent of client households in Northern Illinois Food Bank's full service area.

These relatively high rates of financial burden related to health care may have been exacerbated by the number of client households previously without health care coverage. At the time of the survey, more than one-third (37%) of DuPage County client households reported that they did not have any members with health insurance. While this rate is consistent with that of the food bank's service area (37%), it is higher than that of client households nationally (29%). Lack of access to healthcare coverage may mean that some client households need to pay high out of pocket costs for their medical care. It may also mean that some client households delay receiving treatment for their health conditions given the high cost of medical care. Since the Client Survey was administered prior to the implementation of the Affordable Care Act, it is unclear how client households in this county have

**Figure 11. Client Household Health**



*Data Source: Hunger in America 2014 Client Survey, Q14A-B and Q24.*

been affected by recent health care reforms.<sup>27</sup> Additional research is needed to understand whether client households have increased access to health care coverage and, if so, whether they have seen any recent improvements in their health status.

## **vii. Food Insecurity and Coping Strategies**

While the reported rate of food insecurity among client households in DuPage County is comparable to the national rate, DuPage client households utilize coping strategies at substantially different rates than client households across the national network. In DuPage County, 82 percent of client households identify as food insecure, which is roughly the same as in Northern Illinois Food Bank's service area (84%), and throughout the Feeding America network (85%). However, DuPage client households cope with food insecurity differently than the client population within Northern Illinois service area and across the national network. For example, 31 percent of DuPage county client households wait until they run out of food before visiting a food program, substantially less than the population within Northern Illinois service area (42%), and less than the national population (37%). Consequently, a larger share of DuPage client households report that they plan to seek charitable feeding assistance on a regular basis to supplement their monthly food budget when compared to their peers in adjacent counties and across the nation. The high costs of living in DuPage County and the resulting necessity of resource management may be contributing to this elevated reliance on charitable food assistance within the county.

Certain informal coping mechanisms are more common among DuPage client households as well. Coping mechanisms are a set of strategies, aside from formal federal assistance or the charitable food network, that individuals report employing in an effort to secure enough food for the household. Client households in DuPage County are more likely to sell or pawn personal property to buy food (49%) than those in Northern Illinois (40%) or the national population (35%). One possible explanation for the relatively higher rate in DuPage County may be that client households are more likely to possess assets to sell, such as a car, home, or other personal possessions. While the ability to sell one's property may point to provide a short-term solution for managing competing expenses, it may also pose complications down the line, particularly if the asset being sold (i.e. a vehicle) could potentially hurt a household's chances of becoming more food secure in the future (i.e., commute to a job or driving to a grocery store/pantry).

Another strategy that is more commonly employed by DuPage County households than clients elsewhere is receiving help from family or friends. Sixty-two percent of DuPage County households

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<sup>27</sup> The Affordable Care Act, which expands health care insurance coverage options for adults and children, particularly those who previously did not have health insurance, went into effect after the fielding period of the Client Survey.

report receiving help from family or friends in the past year, higher than the slightly more than half of Northern Illinois clients (55%) and national clients (53%) that report support from personal networks. The presence of a supportive social network is associated with reduced risks of poverty and food insecurity; consequently, the elevated use of this coping strategy among DuPage County households may be perceived as a positive practice.

The rates of other coping strategies among DuPage County client households correspond closely with Northern Illinois service area and the national population. For example, a majority of households report purchasing the cheapest food available, even if they knew it was not the healthiest option, in an effort to provide enough food for the household (72% in DuPage, versus 77% among food bank clients and 79% nationally). This practice could lead to serious health implications for vulnerable clients, particularly those with diabetes or hypertension, two conditions which require specific, healthy foods that are often expensive. More than a third of DuPage County client households (35%) also report watering down food or drinks, a rate that tracks roughly to food bank and national levels (40%). This coping strategy could also present health implications, particularly for children and seniors, as nutrition among these two vulnerable groups may be sacrificed when food or drink is diluted.

## **viii. Spending Tradeoffs**

Despite possessing higher rates of education and employment, client households in DuPage County also report more frequent spending tradeoffs between food and other living expenses, such as housing and utilities, than clients at the food bank or national level. The high rates of spending tradeoffs among DuPage County client households likely reflect the high local cost of living. The Self-Sufficiency Standard is a tool that estimates the wage needed to cover a family's basic needs, including housing, transportation, food, and personal care items, without receiving public or private assistance, in various geographic regions based on local costs. In 2009, the Self-Sufficiency Standard in DuPage County was \$29.31 per hour for a family of three, comprised of an adult, a preschooler, and a school-aged child.<sup>28</sup> Notably, the Self-Sufficiency Wage in DuPage County is the highest of any county in Illinois, equating to \$61,910 annually. Regardless of the high cost of living in DuPage County, the point at which an individual or family is eligible for federal benefits is similar throughout the United States and the same across Illinois. This can create a significant gap where an individual or family makes too much to qualify for benefits but too little to get by without assistance from local agencies. Households in DuPage County are facing particularly high living expenses and those

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<sup>28</sup> Social Impact Research Center at the Heartland Alliance for Human Needs & Human Rights. (2009). *Getting By & Getting Ahead: The 2009 Illinois Self-Sufficiency Standard*.

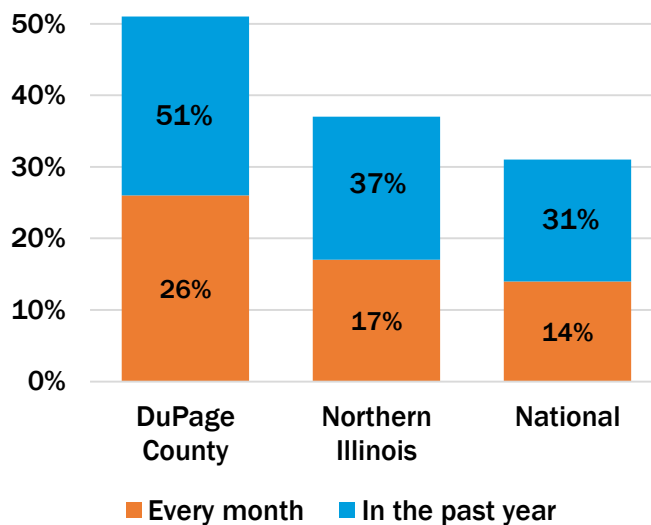
households earning low incomes may need to confront tough decisions about how to make ends meet.

When asked about the choices they face annually, the rates at which client households in DuPage County are facing the choice between paying for food and other basic necessities are notably higher than the rates for households of Northern Illinois Food Bank, as well as nationally. This is true for tradeoffs between food and education, food and utilities, food and transit, and food and housing. The majority of clients in DuPage County also face the choice between food and medical care, though at a slightly lower rate than at the national level.

As previously indicated, one in two client households in DuPage County chooses between paying for their education expenses and paying for food annually. This finding is stark, compared to clients at the food bank level and nationally who face this choice each year (37% and 31% respectively). Furthermore, among clients facing the choice annually, a quarter report facing this choice each month. While 25 percent of client households in DuPage County make the choice between paying for food and paying for education each month, 17 percent in Northern Illinois' service area and 14 percent nationally do so. This suggests that there is a potential for partnerships with local educational institutions and opportunities to provide financial support to students and their families.

As they are budgeting how to deploy their resources to meet basic needs, clients are also weighing the choice between housing and utilities. In a region with a high cost of living, 67 percent of client households in DuPage County face the choice between paying for food and paying for housing, and 82 percent make the tradeoff between food and utilities. While the rates of client households making these choices at the food bank and national levels are also high, they are markedly lower when compared to DuPage County. For a comparison with the national and food bank-level estimates, see Figure 13.

**Figure 12. Client Households Choosing between Paying for Food or Education**



*Data Source: Hunger in America 2014 Client Survey, Q29.*

**Figure 13. Client Household Tradeoffs: Comparing DuPage County to Food Bank and National Estimates**



*Data Source: Hunger in America 2014 Client Survey, Q25-29.*

Other necessities for general well-being and quality of life include the ability to pay for transportation and for medical care. For both of these essentials, client households in DuPage County face making the tradeoff for these items with food at high rates. More than three-quarters of clients households in DuPage County (77%) make the choice between food and transportation, compared to just over two-thirds at the national level (67%). It is important to note that transportation costs may be elevated in DuPage County since its public transportation network is not as extensive as in the adjacent metro area (Chicago) and because distances between sites are greater in suburban areas. As a result, client households may be more reliant on vehicles and gas costs, as opposed to more affordable, but more time-consuming, public transportation. Clients in DuPage County are slightly under the national level of trading off between food and medical care, and on par with all client households in Northern Illinois. While the rate of choosing between paying for food or medical care is similar, it is still important to revisit the fact that DuPage County households report a higher rate of unpaid medical bills than food bank or national clients,<sup>29</sup> suggesting that while the spending tradeoff between food and medical care may not be frequently faced, client households are still struggling with the costs associated with medical care.

Trading off between food and other necessities is one of many coping strategies that food bank client households may be utilizing when faced with the dilemma of how to secure enough food. Clients and their households have many competing needs and may be drawing on various resources, including charitable food assistance, to meet those needs. For example, in addition to receiving assistance at charitable food programs, many client households in DuPage County and across the nation are also relying on resources from federal nutrition programs.

<sup>29</sup> See Section VI. Health Adversity



## **ix. Client Household Participation in Federal Programs**

Federal nutrition programs available to low-income client households include the Supplemental Nutrition Program (SNAP, formerly the Food Stamp Program) and the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC). Additionally, client households with children may be participants in one or both of the federal school meal programs, the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and the School Breakfast Program (SBP).

SNAP is the largest federal nutrition assistance program, providing eligible households with monthly benefit allotments through an electronic benefits (EBT) card. Eligibility and participation rules vary by state, generally limited to households below a certain income or with a maximum amount of financial assets. In Illinois, SNAP eligibility is restricted to households with gross incomes at or below 130 percent of the poverty level (\$23,550 for a family of four in 2013<sup>30</sup>). The size of the SNAP benefit fluctuates with household size and net income. Over half (53%) of DuPage client households report currently receiving SNAP at the time of assessment. This rate is consistent with the food bank and just under the national level (55%). Amongst the half of client households in DuPage County not receiving SNAP, an estimated 58 percent are potentially income-eligible. This equates to about a quarter of client households in DuPage County who are not receiving SNAP benefits but are potentially eligible, based on reported income and household size. It is important to note, however, that other factors such as a household's overall assets, net income, or restrictions based on household composition are also used to determine eligibility for participation, and these elements were not assessed in the HIA 2014 study.

Similar to SNAP in its distribution of funds, WIC targets low-income pregnant and post-partum women and children up to age five who are at nutritional risk. In Illinois, as in most states, households with gross incomes at or below 185 percent of the federal poverty guidelines are eligible for WIC. In addition, individual families must be determined by a health professional to be at nutritional risk to be eligible.<sup>31</sup> Participation in WIC in DuPage County – 13 percent of all client households – is lower than at the food bank level, and surprisingly low relative to the number of young children in the county (10,600 age 0-6), though the rate of participation is calculated out of all client households, rather than just those with qualifying members (e.g., pregnant women, children).

Based on household income, children may also be eligible for a free or reduced-price lunch through NSLP and/or free or reduced-price breakfast through SBP, both federal programs. Families with incomes at or below 130 percent of the federal 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

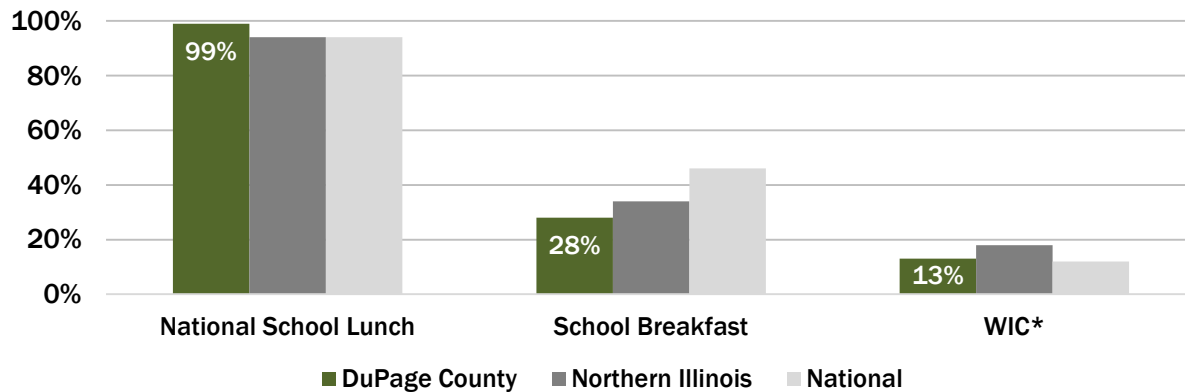
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<sup>30</sup> *Federal Register*, "2013 Poverty Guidelines," Vol. 78, No. 16, January 24, 2013, pp. 5182-5183

<sup>31</sup> See: <http://www.benefits.gov/benefits/benefit-details/2058>

lunch or breakfast.<sup>32</sup> While school lunch participation is notably high in DuPage County, participation in the School Breakfast Program is lower than the food bank level and nationally. Based on client households with school-aged children, 99 percent of client households in DuPage County participate in the NSLP, but only 28 percent participate in SBP.

**Figure 14. Household Participation in Federal Nutrition Programs Targeted at Children**



Data Source: *Hunger in America 2014 Client Survey*, Q34-35.

**NOTE:** WIC participation is among all households, while free- or reduced-price lunch or breakfast is among households with school-aged children.

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<sup>32</sup> See [www.fns.usda.gov/school-meals/income-eligibility-guidelines](http://www.fns.usda.gov/school-meals/income-eligibility-guidelines)

## Chapter 4. Opportunity for Further Exploration: Connecting Need with Resources

One area for continued research is to pinpoint geographic areas that are currently being underserved and identify corresponding operational changes that could potentially be implemented to better address the need in these areas. Doing so would involve analyzing the current need and existing resources within a given area.

This chapter describes an auxiliary analysis undertaken to serve as another source of data regarding the supply of services and potential gaps.

The Feeding America national office network development team and Northern Illinois Food Bank previously conducted an analysis, known as *Proximity of Resources and Need* (PRAN), to assess the connections between the food bank's existing food distribution sites and the local food-insecure population, with the intention of using the results to inform the selection of the locations and types of future distribution sites within the food bank's 13-county service area, including DuPage County. Through an interactive map, PRAN identifies regions that are currently being underserved in terms of the amount of food distributed and the number and locations of distribution sites in relation to the individuals in need. In addition, PRAN reveals which geographic areas are well-served, meaning that individuals and families coping with food insecurity have convenient access and means of transportation to local food programs.

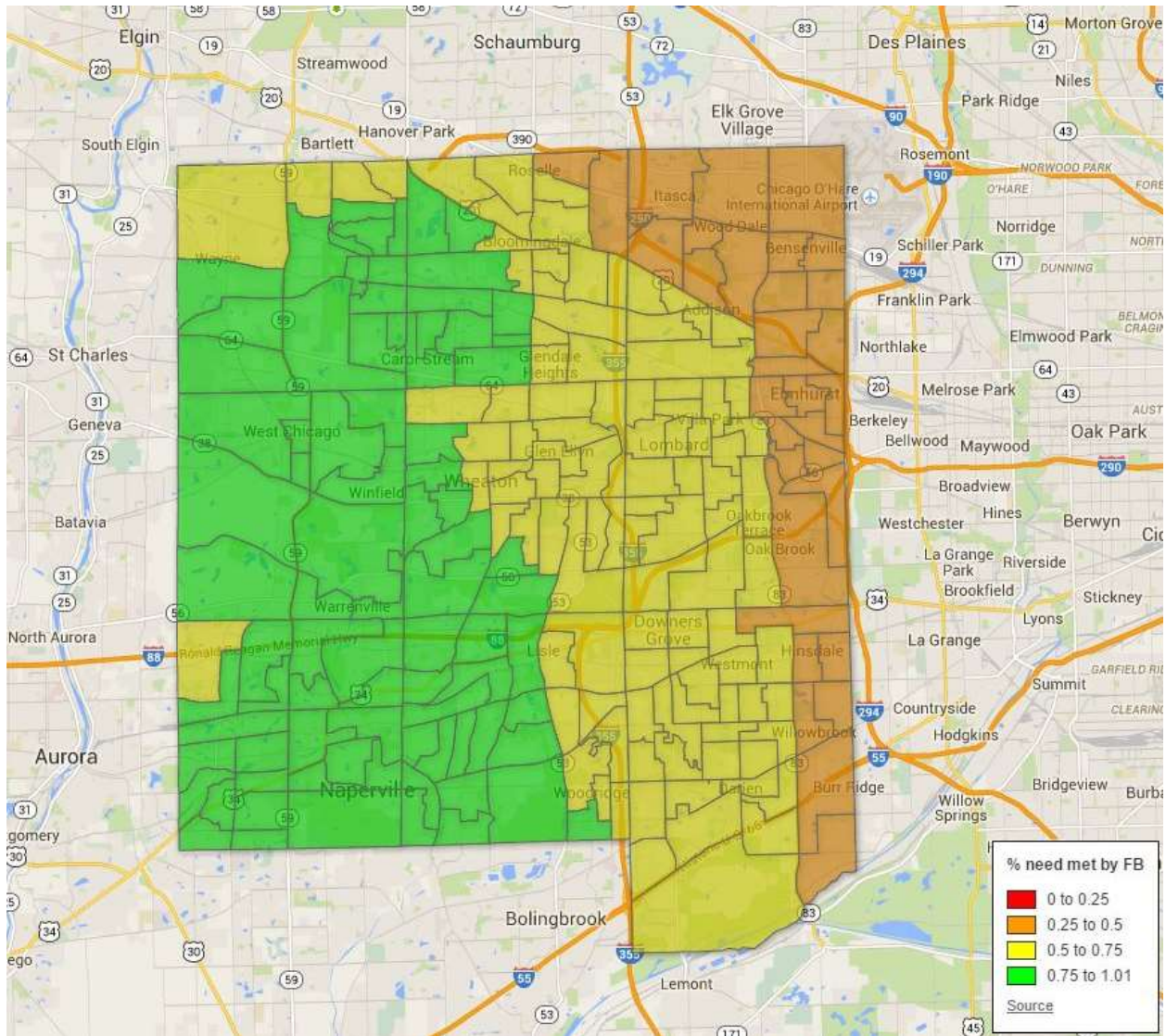
The PRAN analysis takes into account four factors that contribute to the scope and reach of charitable food programs in particular communities:

1. The number of food-insecure persons in each area, as determined through Feeding America's *Map the Meal Gap* study.
2. The number of pounds of food that are currently being distributed in each area, according to the food bank's administrative records.
3. The number and addresses of partner agencies that distribute food in each area, based on the food bank's internal database.
4. The level of access to these various distribution sites based on the local modes of transportation, as identified through mapping.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> Through mapping the specific locations of partner agencies and determining the number of miles between locations, the PRAN analysis identifies the extent to which community members can conveniently travel to the agencies by foot, car, or public transit. While the specific addresses of individuals in need are unknown, the interactive mapping tool helps to identify potential transportation issues for those that may not have access to a car or convenient access to public transit, such as a bus or train.

**Figure 15. Proximity to Resources and Need – DuPage County**



**Data Source:** Proximity of Resources and Need.

Together, these factors have been used to identify areas within the county that may have the highest degree of unmet need. In DuPage County, PRAN indicates that while the western regions of the county have a high amount of resources relative to the local level of need, this is not the case for the far eastern region (Figure 14). Thus, the food bank may wish to consider the possibilities of partnering with more agencies, distributing more food, or conducting more targeted outreach in the eastern region of its service area.

While the PRAN analysis provides a strong starting point for investigating the level of need among sub-county regions, there are limitations to the analysis to be considered. For one, it is not known whether those who experience food insecurity consider the receipt of charitable food assistance when assessing their situation (i.e., whether their receipt of charitable food assistance results in them feeling more food secure). As a result, offsetting the level of need by the amount of food distributed may not accurately reflect the circumstances in the regions in question, particularly as environmental factors such as unemployment and poverty are strong indicators of food insecurity, both of which cannot be alleviated by increased food distribution alone.

Additionally, it is possible that food-insecure individuals may reside in a particular region of the county, but commute and work near another region; while there may be food distribution sites in either of the two regions, programs' hours of operation, transit options, and overall accessibility may prevent clients from reaching these services, even if the region is evidently meeting the local need. Other factors such as these may need to be evaluated to more accurately assess the relationship between service and need in each community.

## Chapter 5. Summary & Implications

### i. Major Trends and Opportunities for Action

The findings from *Hunger in America 2014*, and specifically those pertaining to DuPage County, illustrate the breadth of the need that Northern Illinois Food Bank's network of agencies are addressing. Despite its relative wealth and education, many DuPage County clients face a variety of challenges as they cope with trying to secure enough food for themselves and their families.

This chapter serves as a summary of the findings presented in previous chapters, identifying the major trends observed and accompanying opportunities for action.

***A significant number of children and seniors utilize charitable food assistance.***

Each year, over 107,000 individuals are served in DuPage County, among which nearly half are children and seniors. That such a large portion of the food bank's clients are members of vulnerable populations suggests a need for renewed efforts to meet the unique needs of these groups. In addition to current programming, tailored services responding to the extent of children and seniors struggling with hunger is warranted. Such efforts for children may include advocacy to expand enrollment in Head Start programs and participation in school meal opportunities. The fact that nearly all client households with school-age children indicate participation in the National School Lunch Program, but only 28 percent participate in the School Breakfast program, points to a significant opportunity to reach children with breakfast. Furthermore, the expansion of after-school programs or summer feeding programs may help bridge a gap in time when children are unable to rely on school meals. Similarly, congregate meal programs or grocery programs targeting seniors, specifically in partnership with organizations focused on seniors – such as AARP and Meals on Wheels – would help older residents of DuPage County struggling with hunger. Considering that some senior citizens may be homebound or unable to retrieve groceries from distribution sites within a county that is more reliant on private transportation than more urban city centers, the home-delivery grocery program model for seniors should be considered as well.

***Client households in DuPage County are relatively highly educated, but struggling to afford education expenses.***

The high incidence of client households facing the choice between paying for food and paying for education in DuPage County is an indication that more could be done to support those who are taking steps to improve their economic condition through educational attainment, while at the same time struggling to put food on the table. In an effort to break this cycle, government or other organizations might intervene to provide financial support to students and their families, to help prevent the “one-or-the-other” choice between food and education. Partial scholarships for textbooks and supplies, tuition, or other expenses would relieve some financial burden. In addition, partnerships with local schools and colleges, as well as public libraries and other organizations that interface with student-clients could provide the type of assistance students need to be successful. Primary and secondary schools might expand use of the School Pantry model and encourage PTAs to put food assistance for vulnerable children on their radar. Colleges and universities might be the



partner that can provide a link between potential employers and students with certain skills and may entertain the possibility of operating a School Pantry as well. Additionally, the weekend BackPack program, which operates in schools and traditionally supplies easy-to-prepare grocery items to children in need on Fridays, could potentially be expanded in an effort to help alleviate burdens faced by families coping with both food insecurity and affording educational items. Many opportunities exist to support students, and families with students, who might be struggling with hunger.

***In addition to their struggle to afford education, many client households in DuPage County are not earning enough to afford food and basic living expenses, such as utilities, despite high levels of education and employment.***

The fact that clients are working, but still struggle to secure sufficient food, indicates that clients are unable to obtain work providing them with a sufficient salary to make ends meet. Working families face unique constraints on their time and also, due to their incomes, are in a unique position regarding eligibility for various federal benefits. A majority of the food insecure individuals in the county live above the threshold for SNAP, while many client households find themselves in a similar position. As a result, there should be careful consideration about how to maximize working families' incomes, as they are particularly vulnerable among the food insecure. For example, food assistance programs may consider distributing on evenings and weekends in an effort to better accommodate a working schedule. Also, targeted outreach to working families for benefits such as the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) could help provide the household with additional income. At the time of the HIA Agency Survey, less than a quarter of agencies report offering EITC assistance. These efforts, in addition to support such as financial resources, childcare programs, and financial literacy and budgeting assistance, have the potential to improve the food security of working families.

***Client households in DuPage County may be underutilizing SNAP benefits.***

Client households should also be encouraged to take full advantage of SNAP when it is a viable option. About half of client households in DuPage County report not currently receiving SNAP benefits. While income or other reasons might preclude eligibility for some client households, more than half (58%) of the client households not currently participating in SNAP appear to be income eligible. The most logical point of contact, where unenrolled clients might be connected to SNAP education, are agencies that currently operate food programs. Through the HIA Agency Survey, many agencies expressed an interest in receiving training on SNAP outreach and application assistance, although only about a half of agencies currently offer these services. The food bank offers training and encourages member agencies to take part in this and is considering incentives to obtain greater participation. Additionally, the food bank and agencies could consider assisting with the SNAP recertification process as clients' benefits lapse, in order to ensure that eligible households do not lose the benefits that may be contributing to their food security. Additional investment in outreach programs and partnership with social service organizations, libraries, WIC offices and senior residences to distribute informational materials on SNAP might also increase clients' participation and awareness about their eligibility for the program.



***Though a wealthy community overall, DuPage County is home to many individuals in need of assistance.***

A wealthy community with a high cost of living serves as the backdrop for client households in DuPage County. Client households in DuPage County are struggling to afford expenses related to housing and utilities, and the foreclosure and eviction rate is high. Investment in programs that assist with utilities, such as the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) may help families make ends meet. Exploring ways to connect families with affordable housing in DuPage County may also ameliorate some of the financial burden they bear. Initiatives such as rental assistance or rental application assistance, assistance with credit or background checks, and helping families understand fair housing rights would put them in a better position to secure appropriate housing for their circumstances.

***All of the data on agencies and clients in DuPage County described in this report underscore a need for additional nutrition education initiatives.***

Through the survey, agencies express interest in providing nutrition education, and many clients report coping with food insecurity with unhealthy practices, such as buying food with low nutritional value or watering down food or drink. Considering that nearly half of DuPage County clients are children or seniors, both groups particularly vulnerable to the consequences of undernourishment, nutrition education becomes an even more critical priority for the charitable food network in the region. Investment in nutrition education programs, as well as venues that provide sources of nutritious foods, such as local farmers' markets, would support clients' own efforts to secure healthier food for themselves and their families. An additional avenue, which is a burgeoning movement, is for the food bank or partner agencies to look into partnering with medical providers, hospitals, and clinics in DuPage County. As primary caregivers, medical professionals are uniquely positioned to identify signs of food insecurity and to refer patients to the appropriate resources, such as the food bank, to help with access to food. Additionally, with elevated rates of diabetes and high blood pressure among DuPage County clientele, making the connection between food insecurity and health becomes an even greater imperative.

## **ii. Implications and Opportunities for Additional Research**

The HIA 2014 findings provide significant insight into the circumstances and challenges of individuals and their families that seek charitable food assistance in DuPage County. Like other research studies, the study findings also suggest opportunities for future investigation, including further exploration related to those who are in need but not utilizing charitable food assistance and particularly vulnerable populations.

While HIA 2014 documents the struggles of recipients of charitable food assistance in accessing enough food, it does not provide information about those in need who are not currently connected to food programs within the Feeding America network. In addition, since only clients of Northern Illinois Food Bank's network were surveyed for this study, the reasons why other community members in need may not be utilizing charitable food programs remains unknown. It may be that some of these individuals and families are unaware that local food programs exist. They may also be concerned that they do not qualify for support, or are unable to visit food programs due to

transportation challenges. They may also not be utilizing charitable food assistance if they are already participating in federal programs, such as SNAP or WIC. Additionally, community members in need may be reluctant to frequent charitable food assistance due to stigma associated with receiving charity. An exploration of the reasons why those experiencing food insecurity are not seeking charitable food assistance would illuminate potential avenues for meeting the needs of the broader community. Thus, it may be helpful in the future to survey non-clients from the local community about their experiences and perceptions of charitable assistance. Some methods of identifying community members in need may include visiting social service organizations that assist low-income families outside of the food assistance network, speaking with friends or neighbors of charitable food assistance recipients, as well as representatives from religious institutions who may be intimately connected with the needs of their constituency.

The results of HIA 2014 indicate that children and working families are two of the most vulnerable client populations residing in DuPage County. Continued research focused on the specific circumstances of client households with children, particularly those that are employed, may provide new insight into how to best support these families. As an example, HIA 2014 findings highlight that education is a major source of financial stress for client households; however, it remains uncertain if these financial strains are primarily related to education costs for adult students or for school-aged children in the household. Increased information about the types of educational costs that struggling families are facing would highlight ways to better support clients, such as providing scholarship programs, offering afterschool programs, or holding more school pantry distributions.

While these and other topics for investigation could not be addressed given the scope of this particular study, the HIA 2014 study outlines many of the challenges experienced by individuals and families in DuPage County and reveals opportunities for continued research to ensure that adequate resources are provided to address their needs.

## Appendices

**Table A1 Agency and Program Characteristics**

Characteristic	Percentage		
	Count	Estimate	Margin of Error (+/-)
Partner Agency by Type			
Faith-based or located in a religious institution	33	54.2%	10.0%
Not faith-based	28	45.8%	10.0%
Total excluding nonresponse	61	100.0%	
Number of Programs by Type			
Meal	14	8.3%	3.7%
Grocery	62	38.2%	6.4%
Food-related benefits	9	5.7%	3.1%
Non-food	78	47.8%	6.6%
Total excluding nonresponse	163	100.0%	
	Median	Sum	Margin of Error (+/-)
Agency Staffing			
Agency full-time equivalent staff at time of survey	5	564	502
	Count	Estimate	Margin Of Error (+/-)
Number of agencies with no full-time equivalent staff at time of survey	Median	Sum	Margin of Error (+/-)
	9	4,133	1,372
Program Volunteers			
Number of program volunteers (weekly)	Min	Max	Median
	0	3,996	30
Total volunteer hours per week per program			
Average percentage of program volunteers by age			
18 and younger		6.3%	
19-59		52.4%	
60 and older		41.2%	
Total excluding nonresponse		100%	
	Count	Estimate	Percentage Margin of Error (+/-)
Program Challenges			
Difficulty obtaining volunteers (some or a lot of difficulty)	30	39.7%	9.6%
Difficulty retaining volunteers (some or a lot of difficulty)	19	25.0%	8.6%

## Table A1 Agency and Program Characteristics

Characteristic	Count	Percentage	
		Estimate	Margin of Error (+/-)
Areas of volunteer/staff training needs			
Accessing local food resources	30	37.2%	9.2%
Food safety and sanitation	31	38.0%	9.1%
Advocacy training	19	23.4%	8.1%
Client choice	16	19.7%	7.7%
Food Stamp (SNAP) application assistance and outreach	25	31.2%	8.8%
Fundraising/grant writing	31	38.0%	9.1%
Nonprofit management/board governance	17	20.5%	7.7%
Nutrition education	29	36.4%	9.2%
Social media	17	20.8%	7.7%
Summer feeding	8	10.5%	5.9%
Technology assistance	23	28.2%	8.5%
Volunteer recruitment/retention/staff succession planning	19	23.1%	8.0%
Source of Program Volunteers	No Volunteers	Count Half of total volunteers or less	More than half of total volunteers
Connected to agency	6	27	36
Religious groups	17	32	14
United Way	48	5	0
Other civic/nonprofit	31	23	0
Companies or business groups	33	23	0
Kindergarten through 12th grade school programs	31	24	0
Colleges/universities	33	21	1
Court-ordered community service	31	24	0
Clients	34	16	0
Volunteers connected to food bank	48	4	1
Some other source	32	18	4
Average Percentage of Total Program Food Distributed			
Northern Illinois Food Bank		62.2%	
Other		0.2%	
Donations		24.6%	
Purchased		13.1%	
Total excluding nonresponse		100.0%	

		Percentage	
	Count	Estimate	Margin of Error (+/-)
Program Access to Vehicles			
Owns truck(s), van(s), or car(s) for pickups	27	42.6%	10.7%
Rents/leases truck(s), van(s), or car(s) for pickups	4	7.0%	5.7%
Depends on personal truck(s), van(s), or car(s) of staff or volunteers for pickups	39	64.4%	10.5%
Works with other programs to share the responsibility for pickups	1	1.8%	2.9%
Food and groceries are delivered to program	47	73.8%	9.5%

## Table A1 Agency and Program Characteristics

Characteristic	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	36	48.6%	9.9%
About the same	33	44.4%	9.8%
Saw any decrease	5	6.9%	5.0%
Total excluding nonresponse	75	100.0%	
Food available to meet needs of clients			
More food than needed	21	27.4%	8.8%
Enough food to meet needs	42	54.8%	9.8%
Less food than needed	14	17.8%	7.5%
Total excluding nonresponse	76	100.0%	
Programs Turning Clients Away in the Past 12 Months			
Programs turning clients away for any reason	26	34.2%	9.3%
Programs turning clients away frequently or occasionally due to:			
Program ran out of food	3	12.0%	11.3%
Clients came more often than program rules allow	7	28.0%	15.7%
Client lived outside the program's service area	11	44.0%	17.3%
No ID	8	32.0%	16.3%
Income too high	4	16.0%	12.8%
Other	8	32.0%	16.3%
Program Restrictions			
Any type of service restriction	41	54.9%	9.9%
Daily	0	0%	0%
Weekly	4	10.3%	8.3%
Monthly	32	79.5%	11.0%
Quarterly/seasonally	0	0%	0%
Annually	4	10.3%	8.3%
Agency Nutrition and Health Services			
Agencies that provide any type of nutrition services	22	35.6%	9.6%
Fliers or written materials	21	33.9%	9.5%
Cooking classes or demonstrations	12	20.3%	8.1%
Nutrition workshops or classes or meetings with dietitians	11	18.6%	7.8%
Referrals	15	23.7%	8.6%
Other	6	10.2%	6.1%
Agencies that do not provide any type of nutrition services	39	64.4%	9.6%
Total excluding nonresponse	61	100.0%	
For those offering nutrition services how many led by:			
Agency staff	15	73.7%	17.5%
Agency volunteers	11	55.0%	19.2%

## Table A1 Agency and Program Characteristics

Characteristic	Count	Percentage	
		Estimate	Margin of Error (+/-)
Local nutritionists or other health professionals in partnership with agency	10	50.0%	19.3%
Staff from food bank	1	5.9%	10.0%
Staff from Farm Bureau or Cooperative extension	4	23.5%	18.1%
Staff from local colleges/universities	2	11.8%	13.7%
Someone else	1	5.9%	10.0%
<b>Agency Obstacles to Distribution of Healthier Foods</b>			
Client reasons (unwillingness to eat, inability to store, etc.)	33	54.2%	10.0%
Too expensive to purchase healthier foods	47	76.3%	8.6%
Inability to store/handle healthier foods	19	30.5%	9.3%
Lack of knowledge about healthier foods	3	5.2%	4.5%
Healthier food not a priority	12	20.7%	8.2%
Inability to obtain healthier foods from other donors/food sources	27	44.1%	10.0%
<b>Agency Services Related to Government Programs</b>			
Agencies that provided any SNAP-related services	31	52.6%	10.3%
Screening for eligibility	23	38.6%	10.0%
Application assistance	23	38.6%	10.0%
Education about the program	30	50.9%	10.3%
Recertification for the program	16	26.8%	9.2%
Agencies that did not provide any SNAP-related services	27	45.6%	10.2%
<b>Total excluding nonresponse</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	
<b>Agency Reasons for Not Offering SNAP Services, Among Agencies Reporting Not Offering Them</b>			
Staff-related issues	19	78.3%	14.6%
Not enough time	16	65.2%	16.9%
Lacking physical space or equipment	19	81.8%	14.0%
SNAP is not part of what this agency does	22	87.5%	11.4%
Other reason	3	16.7%	15.3%
<b>Agency Services Related to Other Non-SNAP Programs</b>			
Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women Infants and Children (WIC)	19	30.5%	9.3%
Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program	24	39.0%	9.8%
Medicaid or other health care programs	26	42.4%	9.9%
Supplemental Security income (SSI)	14	22.0%	8.3%
Tax preparation or Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) assistance	15	23.7%	8.6%
Housing assistance like Section 8	14	22.0%	8.3%
<b>Agencies Providing Combinations of Other non-SNAP Program Services</b>			
One non-food service	9	15.3%	7.2%
Two non-food services	4	6.8%	5.1%
Three non-food services	2	3.4%	3.6%
Four or more non-food services	11	18.6%	7.8%

### Table A1 Agency and Program Characteristics

Characteristic	Count	Percentage	
		Estimate	Margin of Error (+/-)
<b>Agency Reductions in the Past 12 Months</b>			
Experienced reductions	18	28.8%	9.1%
Cut hours of operation	8	13.6%	6.9%
Lay off staff	6	10.2%	6.1%
Limit the area served	10	16.9%	7.5%
Did not experience reductions	44	71.2%	9.1%
<b>Total excluding nonresponse</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	

### Agencies Reporting Challenges Associated with Continuing to Provide Services

Not enough money	9	15.3%	7.2%
Not enough food supplies	8	13.6%	6.9%
Not enough paid staff or personnel	7	11.9%	6.5%
Not enough volunteers	7	11.9%	6.5%
Not enough money for transportation	5	8.5%	5.6%
Building or location problems	7	11.9%	6.5%
Not enough leadership	3	5.1%	4.4%
Not enough community support	4	6.8%	5.1%
Community doesn't need this program	1	1.7%	2.6%

	No Funding	Half of total funding or less	More than half of total funding
<b>Agency Funding</b>			
Government	36	14	6
Individuals	4	25	26
Corporations	25	26	0
Foundations	28	20	0
Religious institutions	10	32	11
Client fees	43	5	1
Other	33	15	1

Program Reliance on Food Bank <i>Effect if program no longer received food from food bank</i>	Count	Percentage	
		Estimate	Margin of Error (+/-)
Major effect	63	83.6%	7.3%
Minor effect	9	12.3%	6.5%
No effect at all	3	4.1%	3.9%
<b>Total excluding nonresponse</b>	76	100.0%	



## Table A2 Client Counts

	Weekly		Monthly		Annually	
	Duplicated counts	Unduplicated counts	Duplicated counts	Unduplicated counts	Duplicated counts	Unduplicated counts
Total number of individual <b>clients</b> , all programs	15,800 (+/-3,200)	14,600 (+/-2,900)	68,500 (+/-13,800)	38,900 (+/-9,700)	821,800 (+/-165,600)	107,100 (+/-26,100)
Total number of client <b>households</b> , all programs	4,200 (+/-1,200)	3,800 (+/-1,000)	18,400 (+/-5,400)	10,600 (+/-2,900)	221,200 (+/-64,200)	29,300 (+/-7,800)
<i>Total number of individual clients by meal and grocery programs</i>						
Meal programs	++	++	++	++	++	++
Grocery Programs	15,800 (+/-3,200)	14,700 (+/-2,900)	68,500 (+/-13,800)	39,400 (+/-9,400)	821,800 (+/-165,600)	108,400 (+/-25,400)
<i>Total number of individual clients by selected program subtypes (not mutually exclusive)</i>						
Pantries	15,800	14,600	68,500	38,900	821,800	107,100
Kitchens	++	++	++	++	++	++
Shelters	++	++	++	++	++	++

## Table A3 Characteristics of Clients and their Households

Characteristic	Count	Percentage	
		Estimate	Margin of Error (+/-)
Client Age			
0-5	10,645	10.5%	5.2%
6-17	21,703	21.4%	4.1%
18-29	20,081	19.8%	6.9%
30-49	24,577	24.3%	5.5%
50-59	10,248	10.1%	3.1%
60-64	5,512	5.4%	1.2%
65 or older	8,513	8.4%	2.8%
Total excluding nonresponse	101,278	100.0%	
Client Race/Ethnicity			
White Non-Hispanic	33,970	31.7%	7.5%
Black Non-Hispanic	35,718	33.3%	15.2%
Hispanic	19,985	18.7%	21.8%
Other	17,469	16.3%	9.1%
Total excluding nonresponse	107,142	100.0%	
Household Size			
1 member	2,284	22.4%	5.6%
2 to 3 members	2,616	25.7%	4.1%
4 to 6 members	4,335	42.5%	4.3%
More than 6 members	961	9.4%	1.3%
Total excluding nonresponse	10,197	100.0%	
Primary Language Spoken By Adults at Home			
English	8,344	86.6%	7.9%
Spanish	1,602	16.6%	15.6%
Other	1,107	11.5%	8.4%
Housing			
Non-temporary housing	++	++	++
House or townhouse	++	++	++
Apartment	++	++	++
Mobile home or house trailer	++	++	++
Other	++	++	++
Temporary housing	++	++	++
Total excluding nonresponse	++	++	++
Households without access to stove, microwave or hot plate	++	++	++
Households without access to refrigeration	++	++	++

## Table A3 Characteristics of Clients and their Households

Characteristic	Count	Percentage	
		Estimate	Margin of Error (+/-)
<i>Housing payment arrangements (non-temporary housing)</i>			
Own with mortgage			
Own free and clear	++	++	++
Rent or lease	++	++	++
Do not have to pay rent	++	++	++
<b>Total excluding nonresponse</b>	<b>++</b>	<b>++</b>	<b>++</b>
Respondents lived at least two places in the past 12 months	1,617	15.2%	5.5%
Respondents started living with another person or family	2,508	24.3%	6.1%
Respondents experienced foreclosure or eviction in the past five years	2,591	25.4%	4.9%
<b>Education</b>			
<i>Household Highest Education Level</i>			
Less than high school	654	6.2%	4.4%
High school diploma	1,747	16.5%	2.2%
General equivalency diploma or GED	1,071	10.1%	8.2%
Business, trade, technical license, certificate, or degree beyond high school	1,167	11.1%	10.3%
Some college beyond high school or a 2-year college degree	3,110	29.5%	6.9%
Four-year college degree or higher	2,808	26.6%	10.9%
<b>Total excluding nonresponse</b>	<b>10,559</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	
<i>Client Education level</i>			
Less than high school	12,249	17.9%	6.1%
High school diploma	17,981	26.2%	10.6%
General equivalency diploma or GED	5,242	7.6%	7.7%
Business, trade, technical license, certificate, or degree beyond high school	7,735	11.3%	10.8%
Some college beyond high school or a 2-year college degree	15,579	22.7%	1.8%
Four-year college degree or higher	9,754	14.2%	9.0%
<b>Total excluding nonresponse</b>	<b>68,540</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	
<b>Military Service</b>			
No household member has ever served	++	++	++
At least one household member has served	++	++	++
Not currently serving	++	++	++
Household member currently serving	++	++	++
Unknown if currently serving	++	++	++
<b>Total excluding nonresponse</b>	<b>++</b>	<b>++</b>	<b>++</b>

## Table A3 Characteristics of Clients and their Households

Characteristic	Count	Percentage Estimate	Margin of Error (+/-)
<b>Household Employment (of the person who worked the most in the past 12 months; in some households, this person may not be working)</b>			
<i>Work Status</i>			
Worked for pay in the last 4 weeks	4,959	49.7%	16.9%
Worked for pay in the last 12 months	7,313	71.3%	4.6%
Currently out of work	5,023	49.0%	15.0%
Currently out of work, but actively looking in the last 4 weeks	3,286	31.3%	12.4%
<i>Hours worked per week, among persons who worked the most in the household</i>			
1-10 hours per week	++	++	++
11-20 hours per week	++	++	++
21-30 hours per week	++	++	++
31-40 hours per week	++	++	++
Over 40 hours per week	++	++	++
<b>Total excluding nonresponse</b>	<b>++</b>	<b>++</b>	<b>++</b>
<i>Time out of work, among households where previously most employed person is not working</i>			
Less than 1 month	++	++	++
1-6 months	++	++	++
7-12 months	++	++	++
More than 1 year	++	++	++
<b>Total excluding nonresponse</b>	<b>++</b>	<b>++</b>	<b>++</b>
<i>Out of the workforce, in the past 4 weeks, and not looking for work because</i>			
Retired	++	++	++
Disabled/poor health; caretaker for another person	++	++	++
Other	++	++	++
<b>Total excluding nonresponse</b>	<b>++</b>	<b>++</b>	<b>++</b>
<b>Potential Barriers and Bridges to Employment</b>			
Respondent responsible for grandchildren in household	1,992	19.3%	15.1%
Household member(s) released from prison in the past 12 months	++	++	++
<i>Adult client student status</i>			
Full-time student(s)	4,367	6.4%	0.7%
Part-time student(s)	2,823	4.1%	2.0%
<b>Health, Health Insurance, and Medical Bills</b>			
<i>Health status of respondent</i>			
Excellent	549	5.3%	4.3%
Very good	1,199	11.5%	3.5%
Good	3,788	36.4%	13.1%
Fair	3,390	32.6%	15.3%
Poor	1,471	14.1%	5.9%
<b>Total excluding nonresponse</b>	<b>10,396</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	

## Table A3 Characteristics of Clients and their Households

Characteristic	Percentage		
	Count	Estimate	Margin of Error (+/-)
Health status of household			
Household member in poor health	2,636	27.2%	5.4%
Household member with diabetes	3,098	31.9%	9.8%
Household member with high blood pressure	5,071	50.0%	4.2%
Household: no member has health insurance	3,867	37.0%	4.7%
Household with unpaid medical bills	6,262	61.2%	9.0%
Income and Poverty			
Household Annual Income			
\$0	334	3.9%	3.9%
\$1 - \$10,000	3,136	36.2%	14.5%
\$10,001 - \$20,000	2,217	25.6%	6.7%
\$20,001 - \$30,000	1,541	17.8%	3.5%
More than \$30,000	1,428	16.5%	18.0%
Total excluding nonresponse	8,655	100.0%	.
Household Annual Income as % of Poverty Level			
0% (no income)	++	++	++
1% - 50%	++	++	++
51% - 75%	++	++	++
76% - 100%	++	++	++
101% - 130%	++	++	++
131% - 150%	++	++	++
151% - 185%	++	++	++
186% or higher	++	++	++
Total excluding nonresponse	++	++	++
Household Monthly Income			
\$0	659	6.7%	3.5%
\$1 - \$1,000	4,495	45.4%	19.4%
\$1,001 - \$2,000	2,164	21.9%	19.7%
\$2,001 - \$3,000	1,936	19.6%	9.4%
More than \$3,000	639	6.5%	10.1%
Total excluding nonresponse	9,893	100.0%	
Households living in poverty	4,913	56.8%	22.0%

## Table A4 Clients' Use of Food Assistance

Characteristic	Count	Percentage	
		Estimate	Margin of Error (+/-)
<b>Food Security</b>			
Food secure	1,671	17.6%	11.0%
Food insecure	7,819	82.4%	11.0%
<b>Total excluding nonresponse</b>	<b>9,490</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	
<b>Spending Tradeoffs</b>			
<i>Choose between paying for food and paying for other expenses (ever in the past 12 months)</i>			
Medicine/medical care	6,141	63.4%	10.6%
Utilities	7,432	82.4%	11.7%
Housing	6,398	66.9%	5.8%
Transportation	6,798	77.1%	11.3%
Education	4,714	50.6%	6.4%
<i>Choice of food versus medical care</i>			
Every month	2,849	29.4%	8.9%
Sometimes	3,292	34.0%	18.9%
Never	3,552	36.6%	10.6%
<b>Total excluding nonresponse</b>	<b>9,692</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	
<i>Choice of food versus utilities</i>			
Every month	3,062	34.0%	16.8%
Sometimes	4,370	48.5%	27.6%
Never	1,582	17.6%	11.7%
<b>Total excluding nonresponse</b>	<b>9,015</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	
<i>Choice of food versus housing</i>			
Every month	3,297	34.5%	14.4%
Sometimes	3,101	32.4%	18.1%
Never	3,172	33.1%	5.8%
<b>Total excluding nonresponse</b>	<b>9,571</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	
<i>Choice of food versus transportation</i>			
Every month	2,516	28.5%	2.4%
Sometimes	4,283	48.6%	11.7%
Never	2,018	22.9%	11.3%
<b>Total excluding nonresponse</b>	<b>8,816</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	
<i>Choice of food versus education</i>			
Every month	2,382	25.6%	3.8%
Sometimes	2,332	25.0%	4.6%
Never	4,596	49.4%	6.4%
<b>Total excluding nonresponse</b>	<b>9,310</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	

## Table A4 Clients Use of Food Assistance

Characteristic	Percentage		
	Count	Estimate	Margin of Error (+/-)
<b>Household SNAP Participation</b>			
Currently receiving SNAP	5,412	52.5%	15.9%
Not currently receiving SNAP	4,900	47.5%	15.9%
Never applied	++	++	++
Have applied	++	++	++
Unknown	++	++	++
<b>Total excluding nonresponse</b>	<b>10,313</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	
<i>Time to exhaustion of benefits for households receiving SNAP</i>			
1 week or less	++	++	++
2 weeks	++	++	++
3 weeks	++	++	++
4 weeks	++	++	++
More than 4 weeks	++	++	++
<b>Total excluding nonresponse</b>	<b>++</b>	<b>++</b>	<b>++</b>
<i>Potential SNAP income eligibility among client households not receiving SNAP</i>			
Not income-eligible	1,863	42.0%	8.7%
Potentially income-eligible	2,571	58.0%	8.7%
At 130% threshold	2,571	58.0%	8.7%
At higher broad-based categorical eligibility (BBCE) threshold	++	++	++
<b>Total excluding nonresponse</b>	<b>4,434</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	
<i>Reasons for not applying for SNAP, among households that have never applied</i>			
Didn't think eligible	1,744	74.7%	17.6%
Personal reasons	++	++	++
Too difficult to apply	++	++	++
Never heard of program	++	++	++
Other	++	++	++
<b>Other Program Participation</b>			
<i>Household participation in programs targeted at school-aged children (among households with child ages 5-18)</i>			
Free or reduced-price school lunch programs	3,036	98.5%	1.3%
Free or reduced-price school breakfast programs	861	27.9%	25.0%
Afterschool snack or meal programs	++	++	++
BackPack weekend food programs	++	++	++
Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) (among all households)	1,307	12.9%	10.3%



## Table A4 Clients Use of Food Assistance

Characteristic	Percentage		
	Count	Estimate	Margin of Error (+/-)
<i>Households participating in at least one child nutrition program</i>			
One program	2,357	22.7%	4.7%
Two or more programs	3,769	36.2%	16.1%
<b>Strategies for Food Assistance</b>			
I usually wait to come to this program until I run out of food	2,964	31.1%	4.3%
I plan to get food here on a regular basis	6,564	68.9%	4.3%
<b>Total excluding nonresponse</b>	<b>9,528</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	
<b>Top Products Desired by Clients but Not Currently Receiving at Program</b>			
Beverages such as water or juice	970	10.0%	4.7%
Dairy products such as milk, cheese or yogurt	3,653	37.5%	3.4%
Fresh fruits and vegetables	5,825	59.8%	8.7%
Grains such as bread or pasta	1,194	12.2%	13.9%
Non-food items like shampoo, soap, or diapers	3,728	38.2%	9.8%
Nothing	++	++	++
Other foods or products	1,769	18.1%	19.4%
Protein food items like meats	4,098	42.0%	10.3%
This is my first time coming to this program	1,104	11.3%	5.4%
<b>Coping Strategies</b>			
<i>Types of household coping strategies used in the past 12 months</i>			
Eaten food past expiration date	6,712	70.1%	7.2%
Grew food in garden	1,935	20.7%	2.4%
Sold or pawned personal property	4,698	49.2%	7.2%
Purchased food in dented or damaged packages	5,422	60.8%	7.0%
Purchased inexpensive, unhealthy food	6,845	71.5%	6.9%
Received help from family or friends	5,981	62.3%	7.8%
Watered down food or drinks	3,255	35.1%	10.2%
<i>Number of household coping strategies used</i>			
None	1,120	11.5%	7.8%
1	1,383	14.2%	10.1%
2	927	9.5%	6.4%
3 or more	6,305	64.8%	7.9%
<b>Total excluding nonresponse</b>	<b>9,735</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	