

FACT SHEET NYC Hunger Experience 2009: A Year in Recession

The NYC Hunger Experience Report Series tracks annual trends in difficulty affording food among New York City residents. The Food Bank For New York City contracts with Marist College Institute for Public Opinion to conduct telephone interviews with a random and representative sample of city residents to determine which populations throughout the five boroughs are having the greatest difficulty affording food throughout the year. The research includes seven years of trend analysis from 2003 through 2009.¹

To provide a comprehensive picture of how the recession is impacting New Yorkers, the report also includes results from a survey of New York City's emergency food organizations (soup kitchens and food pantries).²

HUNGER EXPERIENCE POLL

NEW YORK CITY RESIDENTS

Difficulty Affording Food: Throughout 2009, 40 percent, or more than 3.3 million New York
City residents experienced difficulty affording needed food for themselves and their families.

Continuing an upward trend, the percentage having difficulty has increased 60 percent since 2003 (25 percent) and 5 percent since 2007 (38 percent). The percentage has dropped from crisis levels experienced in 2008 (48 percent).

Loss of Household Income: Almost one out of every five (18 percent), or more than 1.5 million, New York City residents would be unable to afford food immediately after losing their household income, a slight decrease from 2008 (23 percent).

A total of 39 percent of residents or almost 3.3 million people would not be able to afford food within three months of losing their household income.

EMPLOYMENT

 Difficulty Affording Food: Among unemployed New York City residents, 58 percent experienced difficulty affording food throughout 2009.

Among employed residents, 37 percent experienced difficulty affording food.

HOUSEHOLDS WITH CHILDREN

■ **Difficulty Affording Food:** Almost one-half (47 percent) of households with children experienced difficulty affording needed food for themselves and their families in 2009, up 47 percent since 2003 (32 percent) and up 4 percent since 2007 (45 percent). The percentage decreased from 2008 (56 percent).

Food Bank For New York City

FACT SHEET: NYC Hunger Experience 2009

¹ The 2009 data were collected in October 2009 and, therefore, reflect New York City residents' experiences from October 2008 through October 2009

October 2008 through October 2009.

The Food Bank conducted a survey of soup kitchens and food pantries throughout New York City to assess the impact of the recession on emergency food organizations. Data collected reflect experiences from 2008 so are likely a conservative reflection of the problem as demand has continued to increase in 2009.

AGE

Difficulty Affording Food: Among New York City residents ages 18 to 35, 39 percent experienced difficulty affording needed food in 2009, up 63 percent since 2003 (24 percent) and 22 percent since 2007 (32 percent). The percentage dropped from 45 percent in 2008.

Among residents ages 36 to 49, 40 percent experienced difficulty affording food, up 48 percent since 2003 (27 percent). The percentage dropped from 48 percent in 2008.

Among residents ages 50 to 64, 42 percent experienced difficulty affording food in 2009, up by 68 percent since 2003 (25 percent) and similar to 2007 (44 percent). The percentage dropped from 2008 (49 percent).

Among residents ages 65 and older, 39 percent experienced difficulty affording food in 2009, up 65 percent since 2003 (23 percent) and up 19 percent from 2007 (32 percent). The percentage dropped from 2008 (47 percent).

GENDER

Difficulty Affording Food: Almost one-half of women (46 percent) had difficulty affording food in 2009, up 64 percent since 2003 (28 percent) and up 10 percent since 2007 (42 percent). The percentage has decreased since 2008 (53 percent).

Approximately one-third (32 percent) of men had difficulty affording food, up 45 percent since 2003 (22 percent), yet decreased since 2007 (35 percent) and 2008 (43 percent).

HOUSEHOLD INCOME

■ **Difficulty Affording Food:** In 2009, 60 percent of New York City residents with annual household incomes of less than \$25,000 experienced difficulty affording needed food, up 22 percent from 2003 (49 percent) and up 5 percent since 2007 (57 percent). The percentage has decreased from 2008 (73 percent).

Almost one-half (47 percent) of New Yorkers with annual household incomes between \$25,000 and \$49,999 experienced difficulty affording food throughout the past year, more than doubled from 2003 (21 percent) and up 12 percent since 2007 (42 percent). The percentage represents a decrease from 2008 (59 percent).

Among residents with annual incomes of \$50,000 to \$74,999, 40 percent had difficulty affording food in 2009, almost tripled since 2003 (14 percent) and up 48 percent since 2007 (27 percent). The percentage is similar to 2008 (43 percent).

EMERGENCY FOOD SURVEY

EMERGENCY FOOD PARTICIPANTS

• First-Time Emergency Food Participants: More than nine in every ten (93 percent) emergency food sites experienced an increase in the number of individuals accessing emergency food for the first time.

More than one-half (53 percent) of emergency food sites saw the number of first-time emergency food participants increase by 25 percent *or more*.

• *Employed:* Almost two-thirds (63 percent) of soup kitchens and food pantries experienced an increase in the number of employed individuals accessing emergency food.

Almost one in every five (18 percent) emergency food sites saw the number of employed individuals accessing emergency food increase by 25 percent *or more*.

Recently Unemployed: Almost nine in every ten (87 percent) emergency food sites
experienced an increase in the number of recently unemployed individuals accessing food
assistance.

A total of 40 percent of emergency food sites saw an increase in the number of recently unemployed individuals accessing emergency food increase by 25 percent *or more*.

• *Children:* More than two-thirds (70 percent) of emergency food sites experienced an increase in the number of children accessing emergency food.

Approximately one-third (32 percent) of emergency food sites saw the number of children accessing food assistance increase by 25 percent *or more*.

• **Seniors:** Two-thirds (66 percent) of all food sites experienced an increase in the number of seniors accessing emergency food.

More than one-quarter (28 percent) of emergency food sites saw the number of seniors accessing emergency food increase by 25 percent *or more*.

EMERGENCY FOOD RESOURCES

- Running Out of Food: A total of 59 percent of soup kitchens and food pantries in New York
 City ran out of food in 2008. Approximately two-thirds (64 percent) of food pantries ran out of
 food, while 44 percent of soup kitchens ran out.
- **Reducing the Amount of Food:** More than two-thirds (69 percent) of emergency food sites had to reduce the amount of food per person or household.

Three-quarters (75 percent) of food pantries had to reduce the amount of food per person or household, while approximately one-half (49 percent) of soup kitchens had to reduce the amount of food per person or household.

 Turning Participants Away: Almost one-half (47 percent) of emergency food sites reported turning away individuals due to a lack of food or resources.

More than one-half (51 percent) of food pantries had to turn away individuals due to a lack of food or resources, compared with more than one-third (35 percent) of soup kitchens.

 Reducing Distribution Hours: Approximately one in every four (24 percent) emergency food sites reduced the number of days or hours of emergency food distribution.

More than one in every four (28 percent) food pantries had to reduce the days or hours of food distribution due to a lack of food or resources, while approximately one in ten (11 percent) soup kitchens had to reduce days or hours of food distribution.

 Volunteers: A total of 40 percent of soup kitchens and food pantries experienced an increase in the number of volunteers over the past year. Less than one out of every ten (8 percent) experienced a decrease.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:

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