NYC Hunger Safety Net 2007 Highlights

EMERGENCY FOOD PROGRAM (EFP) PARTICIPANTS

NYC Population Relying on Emergency Food Programs (EFPs)

New York City’s network of emergency food programs (EFPs) provided food to approximately 1.3 million residents in 2007, a 24 percent increase from approximately 1 million in 2004.

Socio-Demographic Analysis of EPF Participants & Household Members

Household Age Composition: Among EFP households in 2007, almost one out of every three (31 percent) members was a child under age 17 (a 20 percent increase since 2004), 57 percent were working-age adults (18 to 64) and 12 percent were elderly adults ages 65 and older.

Country of Birth & Citizenship: More than two-thirds (68 percent) of EFP participants were born in the United States and 84 percent were U.S. citizens.

Language: In 2007, English was the primary language in almost three-quarters (74 percent) of EFP households.

Education: In 2007, approximately one-quarter (24 percent) of EFP participants had a college education (including some college, associate's, bachelor's and graduate degrees), up from 15 percent in 2004.
Annual Income: In 2007, the majority of EFP households (92 percent) had annual incomes below $25,000; 59 percent had incomes below $10,000, and 29 percent had incomes below $5,000.

Employment: More than one out of every five (21 percent) EFP participants was employed in 2007 and among them 57 percent worked full time — a 73 percent increase from 2004. Almost one-third (31 percent) of EFP participants were disabled, 19 percent were retired and 28 percent were unemployed/not working.

Income Support

Food Stamp Program (FSP): Almost one-half (46 percent) of EFP households received food stamps in 2007, up from 31 percent in 2004. On average, EFP households received $147 in food stamps per month ($37 per week). Almost one-quarter (24 percent) of EFP households ran out of food stamp benefits in one week or less, 60 percent ran out in two weeks and 84 percent ran out in three weeks.

Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC): More than one-half (54 percent) of EFP households with children under five received WIC in 2007, up from 32 percent in 2004.

School and Summer Meals Programs: More than three-quarters (79 percent) of EFP households with school age children participated in the National School Lunch Program, while 59 percent and 39 percent participated in the School Breakfast Program and Summer Food Service Program respectively.

Health

Health Insurance: More than one-fifth (21 percent) of EFP participants did not have health insurance in 2007. Most EFP households with insurance had Medicaid (65 percent) and Medicare (25 percent).
Health Conditions: EFP participant diagnoses included asthma (21 percent), diabetes (20 percent) and heart disease (10 percent). Diagnoses among EFP household members included asthma in almost one-fifth (19 percent) of children and diabetes in more than one-third (34 percent) of elderly adults.

Housing

More than three-quarters (79 percent) of EFP households rented, 7 percent owned and 11 percent were homeless in 2007. EFP households who rented their homes spent 59 percent of their total income on rent.

Civic Participation

A majority (86 percent) of EFP participants who are U.S. citizens were registered to vote — 93 percent of whom had voted at some time in the past.

EMERGENCY FOOD PROGRAMS (EFPS)

EFP Operations

Faith-Based Agencies: Among EFP agencies, 70 percent were faith-based.

Participant Awareness: Almost all EFPs (96 percent) had participants who become aware of their program through word of mouth, followed by social welfare agency referrals (63 percent) and religious organization referrals (59 percent).

Operating Budgets and Expenses: The average annual operating budget for EFPs was approximately $42,000. EFPs spent almost two-thirds (64 percent) of their budget on food in 2007 (up from 59 percent in 2004) and 12 percent of their budget on paid staff (a decrease from 15 percent in 2004).

Food Distribution
Types of Food: A majority (87 percent) of EFPs distributed fresh produce. The percentage of EFPs distributing fresh/frozen fruit and vegetables grew from 81 percent in 2004 to 88 percent in 2007.

Special Food Services: One-half (50 percent) of EFPs provided at least one form of specialized food service, including nutrition counseling (27 percent) and home-delivered packaged food (22 percent).

Distribution Days: On average, EFPs were open two days per week in 2007 — one day less than in 2004. The percentage of EFPs distributing food less than once per week increased from 1 percent in 2004 to 12 percent in 2007.

Food Supply: Approximately one-half (49 percent) of EFP agencies ran out of food one out of every six times (17 percent) they were open in 2007.

Turning Participants Away: Almost one-half (47 percent) of EFP agencies turned participants away — 70 percent cited lack of food as the main reason.

Outreach & Direct Services

Government & Nutrition Assistance Program Outreach: More than one-half (56 percent) of EFP agencies provided information on the Food Stamp Program (56 percent). Many agencies also offered information on TANF (30 percent), WIC (29 percent), EITC (27 percent), the School Lunch and Breakfast Programs (33 and 30 percent respectively) and the Summer Food Service Program (40 percent).

Direct Services: A majority of EFP agencies (84 percent) offered at least one type of direct service, including clothing distribution, senior services, health services, transportation and job training.

Staff & Volunteers
Paid Staff: In 2007, EFPs had an average of two paid staff positions — one less than in 2004. More than one-half (52 percent) of EFPs had an insufficient number of paid staff to run their programs well.

Unpaid Volunteers: Most EFPs (93 percent) relied on unpaid volunteers and more than one-half (53 percent) relied entirely on volunteers to run their programs.

Contact with Elected Officials

From 2004 to 2007, almost one-half (49 percent) of EFP agencies contacted an elected official and 39 percent were visited by at least one elected official.

ACCESS TO FOOD ASSISTANCE (EFPs, FSP and WIC)

Access to Food Assistance by Poverty Level 2007

NYC Population Not Accessing Food Assistance by Poverty Level: Among residents living below 125 percent of the poverty level, more than 72,000 (4 percent) were not accessing EFPs, FSP or WIC in 2007. The population not accessing food assistance rose to 378,000 people (16 percent) below 150 percent of poverty, 872,000 people (31 percent) below 185 percent of poverty and more than 1.1 million people (36 percent) living below 200 percent of poverty.

Total NYC Population Accessing EFPs by Poverty Level: Approximately two-thirds (65 percent) of residents living below 125 percent of the poverty level accessed EFPs in 2007. The percentage accessing EFPs decreased to 54 percent among the population below 150 percent of poverty, 45 percent among the population below 185 percent poverty and 41 percent among the population below 200 percent of the poverty level.

Total NYC Population Accessing FSP/WIC by Poverty Level: Among residents living below 125 percent of the poverty level, 61 percent accessed FSP/WIC. This percentage dropped to 55 percent among the population below 150 percent of poverty, 46 percent among the population below 185 percent of poverty and 43 percent among the population below 200 percent of the poverty level.
below 185 percent of poverty and to 42 percent among the population living below 200 percent of the poverty level.

**Access to Food Assistance Trends 2004–2007[1]**

Population Not Accessing Food Assistance 2004–2007: The percentage of NYC residents living below 125 percent of the federal poverty level not accessing EFPs, FSP or WIC decreased from 28 percent in 2004 to 1 percent in 2007.

Population Accessing Only FSP/WIC 2004 to 2007: The decrease in the population not accessing services was caused in part by a 39 percent increase in the population accessing only FSP and/or WIC, from less than one-quarter (23 percent) in 2004 to almost one-third (32 percent) in 2007.

Population Accessing EFPs, FSP/WIC 2004 to 2007: Also factoring into the drop in the population below 125 percent of poverty not accessing services was a rise in the population accessing EFPs and FSP and/or WIC, which more than doubled from 12 percent in 2004 to almost one-third (31 percent) in 2007.

Total Population Accessing EFPs 2004 to 2007: In total, EFPs served more than two-thirds (67 percent) of the NYC population living below 125 percent of the poverty level in 2007, up from one-half (50 percent) in 2004.

Total Population Accessing FSP/WIC 2004 to 2007: The total percentage of the New York City population living below 125 percent of poverty accessing FSP/WIC increased from 35 percent in 2004 to 63 percent in 2007.

[1] Findings on access to food assistance among the New York City population living below 125 percent of poverty as compared to 2004 are based on American Community Survey (ACS) 2005 Census data. ACS 2006 data used for analysis of access to food assistance at varying levels of poverty are not comparable to 2004 findings due to changes in Census survey methodology and inclusion of populations living in group quarters.