

Poverty Statistics

Hunger persists in the U.S.

- 34.9 million people-including 13.1 million children-live in households that experience hunger or the risk of hunger. This represents approximately one in ten households in the United States (11.1 percent).¹
- 3.5 percent of U.S. households experience hunger. Some people in these households frequently skip meals or eat too little, sometimes going without food for a whole day. 9.3 million people, including 567,000 children, live in these homes.¹
- 7.6 percent of U.S. households are at risk of hunger. Members of these households have lower quality diets or must resort to seeking emergency food because they cannot always afford the food they need. 25.5 million people, including 12.5 million children, live in these homes.¹
- Preschool and school-aged children who experience severe hunger have higher levels of chronic illness, anxiety and depression, and behavior problems than children with no hunger, according to a recent study.²

People facing hunger are increasingly turning to the Food Stamp Program for assistance in feeding their families.

- Following years of decline, participation in the food stamp program has been on the rise over the past two years. In October 2003, over 23 million people participated in the food stamp program.⁶
- While it is not possible to determine what caused the increase in participation from the data available, the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities argues it is likely that the majority of the increase can be attributed to the economic downturn. Due to loss of employment and income, more families probably became eligible for the food stamp program.³

Churches and charities are straining to serve rising requests for food from their pantries and soup kitchens, especially from working people.

- The U.S. Conference of Mayors reports that in 2003 requests for emergency food assistance increased an average of 17 percent. The study also found that 59 percent of those requesting emergency food assistance were members of families with children and that 39 percent of adults requesting such assistance were employed. High housing costs, low-paying jobs, unemployment and various employment-related problems led the list of reasons contributing to the rise.⁴
- 56% of the cities surveyed in the Mayors' report said they are not able to provide an adequate quantity of food to those in need. And just over half of the cities reported they had to decrease the quantity of food provided and/or the number of times people can come to get food assistance. An average of 14 percent of the demand for emergency food assistance is estimated to have gone unmet in the survey cities.⁴



Attachment One (Continued)

Lesson Two: Poverty and Human Rights

Poverty Statistics

- America's Second Harvest, the nation's largest network of food banks, reports that 23.3 million people turned to the agencies they serve in 2001, an increase of over 2 million since 1997. Forty percent were from working families. ⁵

Cites and links to source material:

1. US Department of Agriculture, "Household Food Security in the United States, 2002." ERS Research Report Number 35, 10/2003.
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2. Pediatrics, Vol. 110 No. 4, October 2002
www.pediatrics.org/cgi/content/abstract/110/4/e41
3. Joseph Llobrera, "Food Stamp Caseloads are Rising," Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, November, 19, 2002. www.cbpp.org/1-15-02fa.htm
4. U.S. Conference of Mayors, Sodexo Hunger and Homelessness Survey 2003, December 2003. [no longer available]
5. Hunger in America 2001, America's Second Harvest, now Feeding America
<http://feedingamerica.org/>
6. "Food Stamp Program Monthly Data." Food and Nutrition Service Department of Agriculture, 22 December 2003. [no longer available]

<http://www.bread.org/hungerbasics/domestic.html> Bread for the World Institute January 13, 2004

