

## 1. HIGHLIGHTS OF FINDINGS

This report presents information on the clients and agencies served by Island Harvest and Long Island Cares. The information is drawn from a national study, Hunger in America 2010, conducted in 2009 for Feeding America (FA) (formerly America's Second Harvest), the nation's largest organization of emergency food providers. The national study is based on completed in-person interviews with more than 62,000 clients served by the FA national network, as well as on completed questionnaires from more than 37,000 FA agencies. The study summarized below focuses on emergency food providers and their clients who are supplied with food by food banks in the FA network. Emergency food programs are defined to include food pantries, soup kitchens, and emergency shelters serving short-term residents. It should be recognized that many other types of providers served by food banks are, for the most part, *not* described in this study, including such programs as Congregate Meals for seniors, day care facilities, and after school programs.

Key findings are summarized below:

### **HOW MANY CLIENTS RECEIVE EMERGENCY FOOD FROM ISLAND HARVEST AND LONG ISLAND CARES?**

- The FA system served by Island Harvest and Long Island Cares provides emergency food for an estimated 283,700 different people annually.
- About 64,900 different people receive emergency food assistance in any given week.

### **WHO RECEIVES EMERGENCY FOOD ASSISTANCE?**

FA agencies served by Island Harvest and Long Island Cares provide food for a broad cross-section of households. Key characteristics include:

- 39% of the members of households served by Island Harvest and Long Island Cares are children under 18 years old (Table 5.3.2).
- 10% of the members of households are children age 0 to 5 years (Table 5.3.2).
- 4% of the members of households are elderly (Table 5.3.2).
- About 30% of clients are non-Hispanic white, 40% are non-Hispanic black, 30% are Hispanic, and the rest are from other racial groups (Table 5.6.1).
- 48% of households include at least one employed adult (Table 5.7.1).
- 63% have incomes below the federal poverty level (Table 5.8.2.1) during the previous month.
- 6% are homeless (Table 5.9.1.1).

### **MANY CLIENTS ARE FOOD INSECURE WITH LOW OR VERY LOW FOOD SECURITY**

- Among all client households served by emergency food programs of Island Harvest and Long Island Cares, 74% are food insecure, according to the U.S. government's official food security scale. This includes client households who have low food security and those who have very low food security (Table 6.1.1.1).
- 37% of the clients have very low food security (Table 6.1.1.1).
- Among households with children, 80% are food insecure and 41% are food insecure with very low food security (Table 6.1.1.1).

### **MANY CLIENTS REPORT HAVING TO CHOOSE BETWEEN FOOD AND OTHER NECESSITIES**

- 47% of clients served by Island Harvest and Long Island Cares report having to choose between paying for food and paying for utilities or heating fuel (Table 6.5.1).
- 49% had to choose between paying for food and paying their rent or mortgage (Table 6.5.1).
- 36% had to choose between paying for food and paying for medicine or medical care (Table 6.5.1).
- 44% had to choose between paying for food and paying for transportation (Table 6.5.1).

- 34% had to choose between paying for food and paying for gas for a car (Table 6.5.1).

### **DO CLIENTS ALSO RECEIVE FOOD ASSISTANCE FROM THE GOVERNMENT?**

- 30% of client households served by Island Harvest and Long Island Cares are receiving Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits (Table 7.1.1); however, it is likely that many more are eligible (Table 7.3.2).
- Among households with children ages 0-3 years, 42% participate in the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) (Table 7.4.1).
- Among households with school-age children, 52% and 39%, respectively, participate in the federal school lunch and school breakfast programs (Table 7.4.1)
- Among households with school-age children, 8% participate in the summer food program (Table 7.4.1).

### **MANY CLIENTS ARE IN POOR HEALTH**

- 30% of households served by Island Harvest and Long Island Cares report having at least one household member in poor health (Table 8.1.1)

### **MOST CLIENTS ARE SATISFIED WITH THE SERVICES THEY RECEIVE FROM THE AGENCIES OF ISLAND HARVEST AND LONG ISLAND CARES**

- 95% of adult clients said they were either “very satisfied” or “somewhat satisfied” with the amount of food they received from their provider; 91% were satisfied with the quality of the food they received (Table 9.2.1).

### **HOW LARGE IS ISLAND HARVEST AND LONG ISLAND CARES?**

- Island Harvest and Long Island Cares included approximately 702 agencies at the administration of this survey, of which 609 have responded to the agency survey. Of the responding agencies, 408 had at least one food pantry, soup kitchen, or shelter.

## **WHAT KINDS OF ORGANIZATIONS OPERATE EMERGENCY FOOD PROGRAMS OF ISLAND HARVEST AND LONG ISLAND CARES?**

- 70% of pantries, 59% of kitchens, and 10% of shelters are run by faith-based agencies affiliated with churches, mosques, synagogues, and other religious organizations (Table 10.6.1).
- At the agency level, 62% of agencies with at least one pantry, kitchen, or shelter and 44% of all agencies including those with other types of programs are faith-based (Table 10.6.1).
- Private nonprofit organizations with no religious affiliation make up a large share of other types of agencies (Table 10.6.1).

## **HAVE AGENCIES WITH EMERGENCY FOOD PROVIDERS REPORTED CHANGES IN THE NUMBER OF CLIENTS SEEKING SERVICES?**

- Among programs that existed in 2006, 86% of pantries, 65% of kitchens, and 47% of shelters of Island Harvest and Long Island Cares reported that there had been an increase since 2006 in the number of clients who come to their emergency food program sites (Table 10.8.1).

## **WHERE DO AGENCIES WITH EMERGENCY FOOD PROVIDERS OBTAIN THEIR FOOD?**

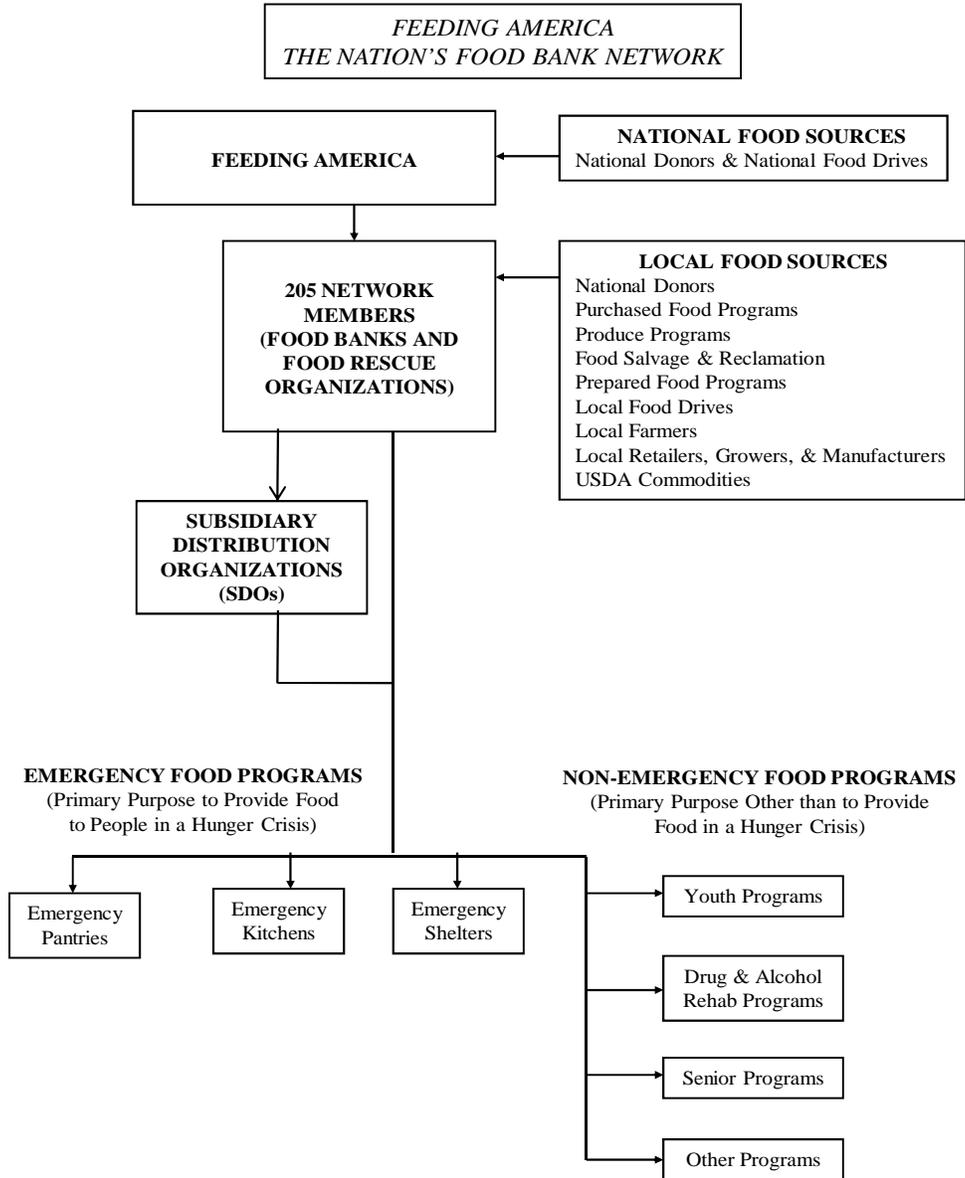
- Food banks are by far the single most important source of food for agencies with emergency food providers, accounting for 69% of the food distributed by pantries, 39% of the food distributed by kitchens, and 45% of the food distributed by shelters (Table 13.1.1).
- Other important sources of food include religious organizations, government, and direct purchases from wholesalers and retailers (Table 13.1.1).
- 85% of pantries, 60% of kitchens, and 71% of shelters receive food from The Emergency Food Assistance Program (Table 13.1.1).

## **VOLUNTEERS ARE EXTREMELY IMPORTANT IN THE FA NETWORK**

- As many as 88% of pantries, 92% of kitchens, and 35% of shelters in Island Harvest and Long Island Cares use volunteers (Table 13.2.1).
- Many programs rely *entirely* on volunteers; 56% of pantry programs and 57% of kitchens have no paid staff at all (Table 13.2.1).

CHART 2.2.1

SOURCES OF FOOD AND CHANNELS OF FOOD DISTRIBUTION FOR FOOD BANKS



<sup>a</sup> Non-Emergency food programs were not sampled for client data collection.

For this research, there are two general categories of food programs that FA network members serve: emergency and nonemergency. Emergency food programs include food pantries, soup kitchens, and shelters. Their clients typically need short-term or emergency assistance.

- ***Emergency Food Pantries*** distribute nonprepared foods and other grocery products to needy clients, who then prepare and use these items where they live. Some food pantries also distribute fresh and frozen food and nutritious prepared food. Food is distributed on a short-term or emergency basis until clients are able to meet their food needs. An agency that picks up boxed food from the food bank to distribute to its clients was included as a food pantry. The study excluded from this category any agency that does not directly distribute food to clients or distributes bulk food only on a basis other than emergency need (such as U.S. Department of Agriculture [USDA] commodities to all people over age 60). On the other hand, a food bank distributing food directly to clients, including clients referred from another agency, qualified as a food pantry.
- ***Emergency Soup Kitchens*** provide prepared meals served at the kitchen to needy clients who do not reside on the premises. In some instances, kitchens may also provide lighter meals or snacks, such as fresh fruit, vegetables, yogurt and other dairy products, and prepared food such as sandwiches, for clients to take with them when the kitchen is closed. This category includes “Kids Cafe” providers.
- ***Emergency Shelters*** provide shelter and serve one or more meals a day on a short-term basis to low-income clients in need. Shelter may be the primary or secondary purpose of the service. Examples include homeless shelters, shelters with substance abuse programs, and transitional shelters such as those for battered women. The study did not categorize as shelters residential programs that provide services to the same clients for an extended time period. Other excluded programs are mental health/retardation group homes and juvenile probation group homes.

Nonemergency organizations refer to any programs that have a primary purpose other than emergency food distribution but also distribute food. Examples include day care programs, senior congregate-feeding programs, and summer camps.

CHART 3.5.2

ORGANIZATIONS AND INDIVIDUALS INVOLVED IN THE RESEARCH PROCESS

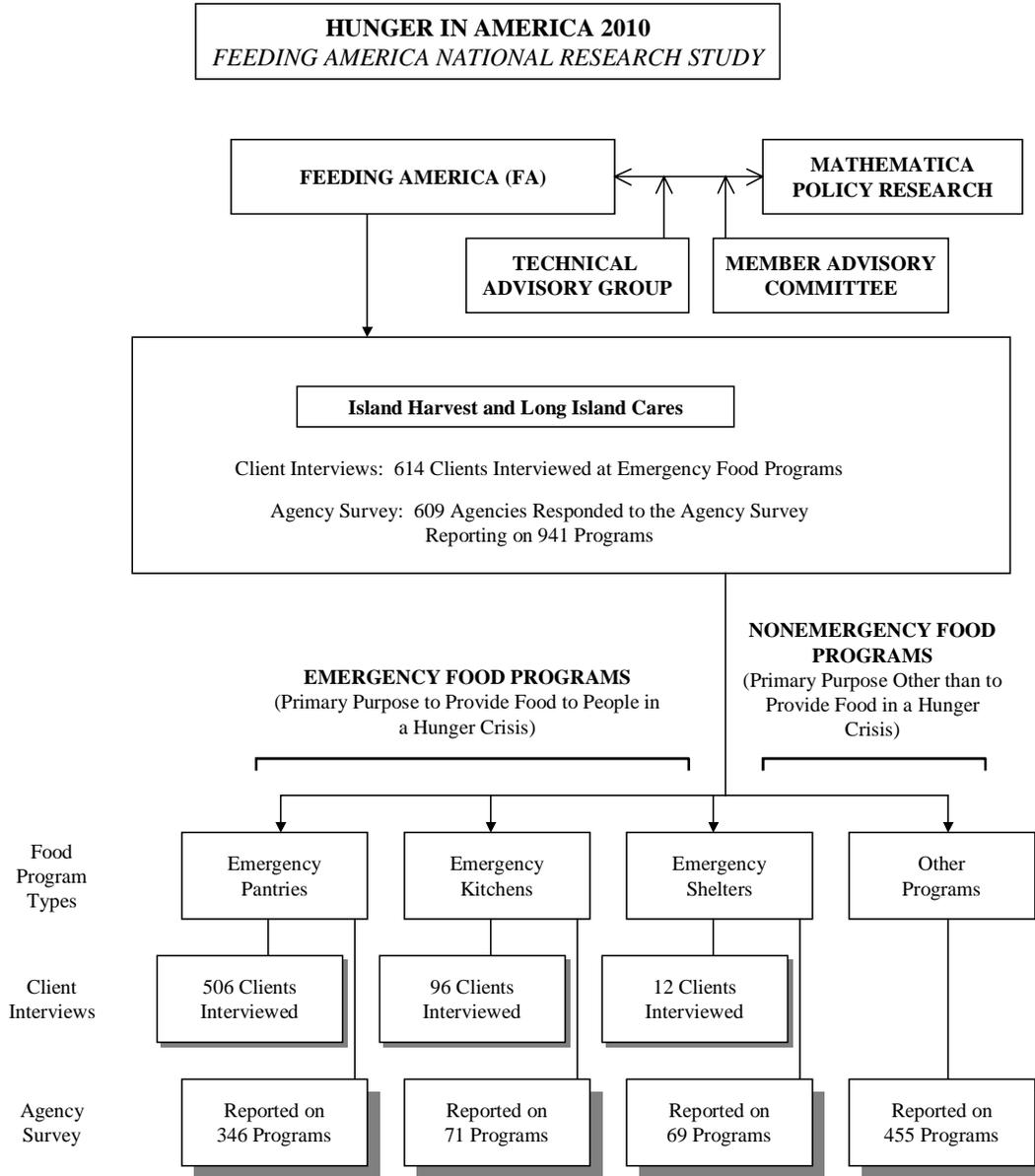


CHART 3.5.3

ISLAND HARVEST AND LONG ISLAND CARES SERVICE AREA

