



Press Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

LANDMARK NEW STUDY REVEALS 25 PERCENT INCREASE IN WASHINGTON METRO AREA RESIDENTS SEEKING EMERGENCY FOOD ASSISTANCE

Largest, Most Comprehensive Report Shows 478,000 People Facing Hunger; Nearly Half are Children

Washington, D.C., February 2, 2010 – In the shadow of the Capitol, amid our nation’s worst economic crisis, thousands of local residents are silently suffering from hunger and the situation is getting worse. The landmark study, “*Hunger in America 2010*,” released today by the CAFB and Feeding America, the nation’s largest domestic hunger-relief organization, reports that more than 478,100 people, including 224,707 children, receive emergency food each year through the food bank and its network of 700 partner agencies.

Hunger in America 2010 is the first research study to capture the significant connection between the recent economic downturn and an increased need for emergency food assistance. In the Washington, D.C. Metropolitan Area, an alarming number of client households are experiencing low or very low food security or hunger – about 70 percent. An estimated 88,400 people receive emergency food assistance each week from a food pantry, soup kitchen, or other agency served by the Capital Area Food Bank – 19,000 more than four years ago.

The study also reveals that over 50 percent of those receiving food assistance have jobs – they are educated people experiencing underemployment, the working poor and even retirees who have had to resume working. When faced with paying rent or a mortgage, or other living expenses like utilities and buying food, 40 percent had to make a choice, and food is often the most flexible line item in a budget, so it gets cut.

Says Lynn Brantley, president and CEO of the Capital Area Food Bank, “the study reflects what we have been seeing for the past several years – record numbers of Americans suffering from hunger. This year, we are commemorating our 30th Anniversary and while the food bank started as an emergency food provider, it was never our mission to be a mainstay. But the need for the food bank is greater than ever; and neither people nor our partner agencies can make it without us serving as the hub for sourcing and distributing food in this community. The *Hunger in America* study should open the eyes and hearts of the community and our elected leaders to ensure that everyone has access to food. In 2010, with our vast resources, it is unimaginable that we have so many children, families and individuals going without one of life’s most basic needs – food. Hunger is unacceptable.”

Nationally, Feeding America, through its network of food banks and the agencies they serve, provides emergency food assistance to 37 million people each year, including nearly 14 million children and 3 million seniors. This represents a 46 percent increase in the number of people receiving emergency food assistance compared to four years ago.

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Similar to the local situation, the number of children and adults experiencing food insecurity nationally has significantly increased. More than one in three of the client households served by Feeding America (5.3 million) are *experiencing very low food security—or hunger*. Additionally, many people struggling with unemployment, difficult choices about food and basic necessities, and the pressures of skyrocketing healthcare costs are in need of emergency food assistance.

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***The Capital Area Food Bank**, a member of Feeding America, is the Washington, D.C. metro area's largest public, nonprofit food and nutrition education resource - serving over 478,000 people through 700 nonprofit partner agencies. The CAFB takes a comprehensive approach to addressing hunger by increasing access to nutritious food; promoting social justice through advocacy; and creating sustainability with outreach and training for those at risk of hunger. The Capital Area Food Bank has served the National Capital Region over 30 years. For more information on hunger, visit our website at CapitalAreaFoodBank.org.*