



Press Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MORE THAN HALF A MILLION PEOPLE TURN TO CAPITAL AREA FOOD BANK TO MAKE ENDS MEET

“Hunger in America” Study Reveals the Current Face of Hunger

WASHINGTON, DC, August 18 – More than 530,700 people in the Washington metro region, 12 percent of the area’s population, turn to food pantries and meal service programs to feed themselves and their families, according to a new study released today by the Capital Area Food Bank and Feeding America. *Hunger in America 2014* is the largest and most comprehensive study of people seeking food assistance in the United States ever conducted.

The study documents household demographics and offers a snapshot of the people served by the CAFB – their circumstances, the challenges they face and the choices they are forced to make living on extremely limited household incomes. It is also the first nationally-representative study that assesses the prevalence of past and current members of the U.S. Military and adult students receiving charitable food assistance.

“What jumps out is the staggering number of individuals who are not only struggling with hunger, but with heart disease, diabetes and other diet-related illnesses. It confirms our work in nutrition education and we will continue to amplify our efforts to positively impact the health of those we serve,” said Nancy Roman, President and CEO of the Capital Area Food Bank.

Highlights of the study reveal that many clients served by the food bank face diet-related illnesses, such as diabetes and high blood pressure; are forced to make difficult choices between buying food and other necessities; and have U.S. Military status.

“The *Hunger in America 2014* findings demonstrate the urgent need for all of us to address hunger in our communities,” said Bob Aiken, CEO of Feeding America. “This data provides a factual basis for decisions about how we as a nation approach hunger relief and protect our most vulnerable citizens.”

Key statistics from the report include:

WIDESPREAD USE OF FOOD ASSISTANCE ACROSS THE WASHINGTON METRO REGION

- The Capital Area Food Bank serves 530,733 people annually, that’s 12 percent of the region’s population.
- 66 percent of CAFB food assistance partners saw an increase in clients compared to previous year.
- 21.2 percent of individuals in the Washington metro region who serve or formerly served in the military have received assistance from the Capital Area Food Bank and its partners.

CLIENTS STRUGGLING WITH HEALTH ISSUES

- 70 percent of households report purchasing inexpensive, unhealthy food because they could not afford healthier options.
- 62 percent of households report having to choose between paying for food and paying for medicine or medical care.
- 22 percent of households include a member with diabetes.
- 48 percent households have a member with high blood pressure.

MAKING TOUGH CHOICES AND TRADE-OFFS TO KEEP FOOD ON THE TABLE

Following are the choices client households reported making in the past 12 months:

- 65 percent report choosing between paying for food and paying for utilities.
- 67 percent report making choices between paying for food and paying for transportation.
- 62 percent report choosing between paying for food and paying for medicine/medical care.
- 61 percent report choosing between paying for food and paying for housing (i.e. rent, mortgage).

Hunger in America 2014 was conducted using rigorous academic research standards and was peer reviewed by a technical advisory team including researchers from American University, University of Illinois at Champaign-Urbana and the Urban Institute. Nationally, confidential responses were collected on electronic tablets by 6,000 trained data collectors, majority of whom were volunteers.

The study was funded by The Howard G. Buffett Foundation.

A summary of the findings is available at capitalareafoodbank.org.

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The Capital Area Food Bank is the largest hunger relief organization in the Washington metro area serving over 530,000 people through direct food distribution programs and a network of 500 partner agencies. This year, the Capital Area Food Bank distributed 42 million pounds of food – the equivalent of 35 million meals – including 17.5 million pounds of fresh fruits and vegetables. A member of Feeding America, CAFB takes a comprehensive approach to addressing hunger by increasing access to nutritious food, initiating change through skill-building and advocacy, and creating sustainability with outreach and training for those at risk of hunger. To learn more, visit: www.capitalareafoodbank.org, or find the Capital Area Food Bank on Facebook at [facebook.com/ CapitalAreaFoodBank](https://www.facebook.com/CapitalAreaFoodBank), and Twitter at [@foodbankmetrodc](https://twitter.com/foodbankmetrodc).