



**National Report Prepared for Feeding America**

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**Chapter 15.1 – Changes in Client and Agency  
Characteristics: Demographic Profiles  
(Excerpted from Hunger in America 2010)  
[www.feedingamerica.org](http://www.feedingamerica.org)**

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## 15.1 DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

In this section, we examine changes in the composition of clients seeking emergency food services through tabulations of household composition, employment, education, housing, income, and other characteristics. Table 15.1.1 estimates changes in a set of demographic characteristics including age, household size, and residential location.

TABLE 15.1.1  
CHANGES IN DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

	Pantry		Kitchen		Shelter		All Programs	
	2005	2009	2005	2009	2005	2009	2005	2009
<b>Age</b>								
Households with children (under 18)	39.2%	39.7%	23.5%	25.1%	16.5%	19.7%	36.4%	37.7%
Households with children (0-5)	8.8%	8.8%	5.1%	6.2%	5.2%	6.3%	8.2%	8.5%
Households with elderly	10.5%	8.0%	9.0%	7.7%	2.4%	2.0%	10.0%	7.9%
<b>Race and Ethnicity</b>								
Non-Hispanic white	40.0%	40.5%	37.5%	39.5%	42.4%	40.2%	39.8%	40.3%
Non-Hispanic black	37.1%	32.2%	42.0%	39.6%	36.0%	39.1%	37.9%	33.6%
Hispanic	17.9%	21.8%	15.8%	15.2%	15.5%	14.0%	17.4%	20.5%
<b>Household Size</b>								
Households with 1 member	32.8%	30.6%	60.2%	59.7%	81.7%	82.8%	40.7%	37.4%
Households with more than 1 member	67.2%	69.4%	39.8%	40.3%	18.3%	17.2%	59.3%	62.6%
Households with single parents	17.3%	14.9%	6.5%	6.7%	6.7%	6.9%	14.8%	13.3%
Households with U.S. citizen	92.4%	87.8%	94.6%	94.0%	94.7%	96.4%	93.0%	89.1%
Clients in suburban/rural areas	47.9%	52.5%	24.9%	29.3%	27.2%	24.7%	42.6%	47.8%
Less than high school	39.6%	35.5%	30.6%	30.0%	32.0%	28.9%	37.5%	34.3%
<b>Clients that live in a House</b>								
Mobile home/trailer	11.4%	12.3%	3.3%	4.4%	1.4%	0.7%	9.3%	10.6%
Apartment	37.9%	36.9%	31.7%	32.8%	4.9%	6.2%	34.6%	34.7%

TABLE 15.1.1 (continued)

Clients that are homeless	3.0%	2.8%	26.1%	23.8%	80.4%	83.0%	12.1%	9.9%
<b>SAMPLE SIZE (N)</b>	<b>37,986</b>	<b>42,441</b>	<b>10,667</b>	<b>13,552</b>	<b>4,225</b>	<b>5,092</b>	<b>52,878</b>	<b>61,085</b>

SOURCE: This table was constructed based on usable responses to questions 2, 3, 5, 6, 6a, 6b, 10, 11, 11a, 12, and 16 of the client survey. The 2009 estimates in this table can be found in Tables 5.2.1, 5.3.1, 5.5.1, 5.6.1, and 5.9.1.1.

NOTES: All usable responses were weighted as described in Chapter 3 and in the Technical Appendix volume to represent all emergency food clients of the FA National Network. The sample sizes (N) also include missing data.

Between 2005 and 2009, the following changes took place:

- The percentage of non-Hispanic white clients increased from 39.8% to 40.3%. The percentage of non-Hispanic black clients decreased from 37.9% to 33.6%.
- The percentage of client households with single parents decreased by 14.8% to 13.3%.
- The percentage of adult clients living in suburban or rural areas increased from 42.6% to 47.8%.
- The percentage of adult clients with less than a high school education decreased from 37.5% to 34.3%.
- The percentage of adult clients that are homeless decreased from 12.1% to 9.9% across all program sites and increased from 80.4% to 83.0% at shelters.

Table 15.1.2 describes changes in the employment status of all adults in client households and changes in the characteristics of the income distribution.

TABLE 15.1.2  
CHANGES IN EMPLOYMENT AND INCOME CHARACTERISTICS

	Pantry Client Households		Kitchen Client Households		Shelter Client Households		All Client Households	
	2005	2009	2005	2009	2005	2009	2005	2009
Current employment status of all adults in client households								
Full-time	14.5%	13.1%	15.9%	11.7%	12.9%	9.1%	14.6%	12.8%
Part-time	13.4%	13.6%	12.8%	13.7%	10.4%	13.3%	13.2%	13.6%
Unemployed	72.1%	73.3%	71.3%	74.6%	76.7%	77.6%	72.2%	73.6%
<b>SAMPLE SIZE (N)</b>	<b>65,773</b>	<b>77,335</b>	<b>14,882</b>	<b>19,530</b>	<b>4,647</b>	<b>5,647</b>	<b>85,302</b>	<b>102,512</b>
Percentage of client households with one or more adults employed	37.3%	37.9%	35.1%	30.3%	24.3%	22.8%	36.0%	36.0%
Percentage of households with incomes below the official federal poverty level during previous month	68.3%	70.5%	66.8%	71.4%	73.9%	81.1%	68.5%	71.2%
Monthly income among valid responses (in 2009 dollars) <sup>a</sup>								
Average	979	990	902	810	605	530	946	940
Median	825	800	704	670	275	220	825	770
Percentage of client households receiving Unemployment Compensation	3.4%	7.7%	2.7%	6.6%	1.9%	5.7%	3.2%	7.4%
<b>SAMPLE SIZE (N)</b>	<b>37,986</b>	<b>42,441</b>	<b>10,667</b>	<b>13,552</b>	<b>4,225</b>	<b>5,092</b>	<b>52,878</b>	<b>61,085</b>

SOURCE: This table was constructed based on usable responses to questions 6 and 27 of the client survey. The 2009 estimates in this table can be found in Tables 5.2.1, 5.7.2, and 5.8.2.1.

NOTES: All usable responses were weighted as described in Chapter 3 and in the Technical Appendix volume to represent all emergency food clients of the FA National Network. The sample sizes (N) also include missing data.

<sup>a</sup> For the calculation of the average and the median, responses given as a range were recoded to be the midpoint of the range.

Between 2005 and 2009, the following changes took place:

- The percentage of unemployed members of client households increased from 72.2% to 73.6%.
- The percentage of members of client households employed full-time decreased from 14.6% to 12.8%.
- The percentage of households with incomes below the federal poverty level during the previous month increased from 68.5% to 71.2%.
- The average monthly income level for client households decreased from \$946 to \$940 and the median monthly income level for client households decreased from \$825 to \$770.
- The percentage of households receiving unemployment compensation increased from 3.2% to 7.4%.