The Ohio Association of Foodbanks is a statewide network of 12 foodbanks that serve all of Ohio’s 88 counties. As Ohio’s largest charitable response to hunger, the Ohio Association of Foodbanks and its network of foodbanks provide emergency food assistance to an estimated 2 million Ohioans in need each year, including 570,000 children and 280,000 seniors.

Along with Feeding America, the nation’s largest domestic hunger-relief charity, the Ohio Association of Foodbanks supports its member foodbanks by: securing food and funds for the foodbanks; building partnerships that benefit the network and provide support for foodbank programs; supporting programs that help improve food security among Ohio households and communities; raising awareness about the problem of hunger; and advocating on behalf of food insecure Ohioans.

In turn, the foodbanks distribute food to community-based hunger-relief agencies throughout Ohio and help support programs such as food pantries, soup kitchens, emergency shelters, senior centers, and mobile programs that directly serve people in need.
ABOUT HUNGER IN OHIO 2014

_Hunger in Ohio_ is part of a national series of quadrennial studies called _Hunger in America_ that provide comprehensive demographic profiles of people seeking food assistance through the Feeding America network. It is the largest study of its kind. The data collected help guide the development of programs and solutions that improve food security for individuals and their households and inform public awareness and policy development for addressing hunger in Ohio and the United States.

Hunger in Ohio 2014 is the sixth and most comprehensive study in the Hunger in Ohio series. Through interviews with more than 6,600 clients and 1,800 partner agencies in Ohio, we have a comprehensive understanding of the people who receive assistance through the Ohio Association of Foodbanks network, the personal and economic circumstances of their households, and the response of the partner agencies that provide assistance to those in need.

METHODOLOGY FOR HUNGER IN OHIO 2014

Rich data from two widely distributed surveys comprise the basis for the _Hunger in Ohio 2014_ results. For the first time in this study’s history, almost all data were collected through electronic surveys, which supports a higher level of data monitoring and quality checks. The surveys were conducted in two sequential stages: first, Ohio Association of Foodbanks network partner agencies completed the Agency Survey; then, clients at participating partner agencies’ food programs completed the Client Survey. The Agency Survey was fielded from October 2012 to January 2013 among the partner agencies of all participating foodbanks. The Agency Survey contained detailed questions about partner agencies’ services, capacity, and food distribution, including a specific set of additional questions regarding the individual food programs operated by the partner agency.

The Client Survey, fielded from April through August 2013, was implemented through a vast force of data collectors, a majority of whom were volunteers, recruited by each participating foodbank. Numerous data collectors were trained and registered to carry out client data collection in Ohio. In lieu of face-to-face interviews used in years past, _Hunger in Ohio 2014_ utilized touchscreen tablet computers and a proven computer software program that allows respondents to simultaneously read and have survey questions read to them through private headphones, maximizing confidentiality. Data collectors followed a prescribed study plan in order to select a random sample of clients at 1,829 partner agencies across the Ohio Association of Foodbanks network. In total, 6,694 clients responded to questions about themselves, their households, and the circumstances that led them to seek help from the emergency food network. Ohio’s participating foodbanks contributed to the successful execution of the study design by fulfilling important roles throughout data collection. The research vendor Westat conducted analysis of the data collected and, together with the Urban Institute, produced the national and local reports in the spring and summer of 2014 and the state reports in the fall of 2014.
THE OHIO ASSOCIATION OF FOODBANKS
IS A STATEWIDE NETWORK OF 12 FEEDING AMERICA MEMBER FOODBANKS

2,002 AGENCIES
IN OHIO’S EMERGENCY FOOD NETWORK OPERATE
2,559 FOOD PROGRAMS

64% PROVIDE GROCERIES
36% SERVE MEALS

71% ARE FAITH-BASED AGENCIES/PROGRAMS
29% ARE NOT FAITH-BASED AGENCIES/PROGRAMS
59% RELY ENTIRELY ON VOLUNTEERS
32 VOLUNTEER HOURS PER WEEK, PER PROGRAM

THE OHIO ASSOCIATION OF FOODBANKS NETWORK SERVES
2 MILLION PEOPLE EACH YEAR

OR
MORE THAN 1 IN 6 PEOPLE IN OHIO

570,000 CHILDREN (30%)
OVER 1 MILLION ADULTS (55%)
280,000 SENIORS (15%)
More than one in six Ohioans turns to the Ohio Association of Foodbanks network for food assistance.

*Hunger in Ohio 2014* reveals that each year, about 2 million unduplicated individuals receive food assistance through the Ohio Association of Foodbanks network. This translates to an estimated 662,000 households served by the network each year. Each week, 233,500 unduplicated individuals receive food assistance through the Ohio Association of Foodbanks network.

Studying the regularity of use of programs among clients gives a duplicated client count—the number of times individual clients are reached through food distributions on an annual basis. Using this definition, the Ohio Association of Foodbanks network provides assistance to 16.7 million duplicated clients each year, illustrating that many individuals are routinely turning to the Ohio Association of Foodbanks network to meet their nutrition and food budget needs.

Households served by the Ohio Association of Foodbanks network represent a diversity of households. Clients face a wide array of obstacles to food security, such as health status, education levels, housing instability, unemployment, and insufficient income.

**CLIENT FOOD INSECURITY**

Food security refers to reliable access to an adequate amount of food for an active, healthy life for all household members. Using the USDA Economic Research Service’s validated six-item Core Food Security Model, *Hunger in Ohio 2014* reveals that 83 percent of Ohio Association of Foodbanks client households are food insecure, meaning that they were without reliable access to a sufficient quantity of affordable, nutritious food at some point during the past year.

**HOUSEHOLD FOOD INSECURITY**

83% of all households served by the network are food insecure.
INCOME AND POVERTY
Ohio Association of Foodbanks clients subsist on lower incomes, with a majority reporting that they live below the poverty line.

71% OF HOUSEHOLDS LIVE IN POVERTY
A majority (71%) of client households are living in households with annual incomes at or below the federal poverty level. Most households (80%) have annual household incomes of less than $20,000.

The federal poverty guidelines are used to determine income eligibility for federal assistance programs such as SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) and WIC (Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children). Although eligibility for federal nutrition assistance programs is contingent on a variety of criteria, household income can be an indicator of a household’s potential eligibility for these safety net programs.

51% EXHAUST SNAP BENEFITS IN 2 WEEKS
Thirty-eight percent of Ohio Association of Foodbanks client households reported not currently receiving SNAP, although an estimated 57 percent of those households were potentially income-eligible for the program.

Of those receiving SNAP, half reported exhausting their monthly SNAP benefits within two weeks or less, and 85 percent reported exhausting their SNAP benefits within three weeks or less.

EMPLOYMENT AND EDUCATION
Employment status is a critical factor affecting client households’ income and, thus, access to food. Half of client households report that at least one household member has been employed in the past year, and 34 percent have at least one household member that has been employed in the last four weeks.

Over half (54 percent) of employed households report the longest-employed person worked full-time (over 30 hours per week). However, 46 percent of employed households report that the longest-employed person worked part-time (less than 30 hours per week), suggesting limitations in the household’s earning potential.

Sixty-six percent of client households have no member currently employed, which includes client households where at least one member is unemployed and

50% OF HOUSEHOLDS WERE EMPLOYED IN THE PAST YEAR
has sought work in the past four weeks as well as households where at least one member is out of the workforce due to a disability, poor health, or retirement. Additionally, 16 percent of households reported they were responsible for the care of grandchildren in their household.

Forty-one percent of households have at least one adult member with education beyond high school. This includes those with a business, trade, or technical license/certificate, some college, as well as those with two or four-year college degrees. Twenty-six percent of all adult clients have an educational level beyond high school.

6 IN 10 HOUSEHOLDS RELY ON THE OHIO ASSOCIATION OF FOODBANKS NETWORK REGULARLY
LASTING IMPACTS: HOUSEHOLD HEALTH STATUS

62% of households have a member with high blood pressure
35% of households have a member with diabetes
59% of households have unpaid medical bills

MAKING TOUGH CHOICES: HOUSEHOLD SPENDING TRADEOFFS IN THE PAST YEAR

70% had to choose between food and utilities
68% had to choose between food and transportation
66% had to choose between food and medicine or medical care
55% had to choose between food and housing
29% had to choose between food and education

MAKING ENDS MEET: HOUSEHOLD COPING STRATEGIES IN THE PAST YEAR

81% purchase inexpensive, unhealthy food
55% receive help from friends or family
55% eat food past expiration
41% water down food or drinks
38% sell or pawn personal property
30% grow food in a garden