



The Face of Hunger in Clay County, Missouri



Recently-released data from *Hunger in America 2014* gives us a closer look at the face of hunger in Clay County, Missouri and shows us that **nearly 10% of the county's residents receive emergency food assistance** from Harvesters' partner agencies. This means that Harvesters' network of food pantries provides groceries more than 150,000 times a year to Clay County residents.

Conducted every four years by Feeding America, *HIA 2014* is the largest, most comprehensive study of hunger in the nation, and it gives us information for Harvesters' entire 26-county service area. This year, for the first time, we have also received data specific to Clay County. These numbers give us an even clearer picture of food assistance recipients – their circumstances, the challenges they face, and the difficult choices they make between food, rent, utilities, or health care while living on limited incomes.

The study shows us that **22,000 different people** in Clay County – 9.5 % of its residents – are served by the Harvesters network each year. This represents **7,600 different households** in the county. Of those households, 81.5% are living at or below the poverty level.

The study also shows us that the need continues to grow, with 42% of Clay County agencies reporting an increase in the number of clients served over the previous year.

If Harvesters were not available, 86% of Clay County agencies said it would have a major impact on their ability to deliver services to their clients.

Please see the attached for additional information from the study.

Under-employment is a key factor driving the need in Clay County households that receive food assistance, despite the fact that three-fourths of clients have an education at the high school level or beyond.

Most Employed Household Member

Worked for pay in last 4 weeks	46%
Worked for pay in the last year	60%
Is currently out of work	54%

Client Education Level

Less than High School	25%
High School Diploma/GED	50%
At least some post-High School	25%

In addition to challenges regarding employment and food, these households face challenges related to their health and well-being and find themselves having to make difficult choices.

Household Health Status

Member in poor health	40%
Member with diabetes	14%
Member with high blood pressure	57%
Unpaid medical bills	77%

In past year, chose between food and...

Medicine/Medical Care	93%
Utilities	94%
Housing	73%
Transportation	78%

Housing Instability

% having faced foreclosure/eviction	27%
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Over a third of emergency food recipients are children and seniors.

Client Age

*17 & under	20%
18-29	22%
30-49	28%
50-59	17%
60+	14%

**In addition to the children captured in the HIA 2014 survey, Harvesters also serves children through weekend and afterschool feeding programs. There are 39 Clay County schools participating in BackSnack, serving 1,960 children and distributing nearly 65,000 backpacks of food over 33 weeks. Clay County also has 6 Kids Cafe sites, serving over 680 children with summer and afterschool meals.*