

II. METHODS

This chapter provides a general description of the study design and methods used to collect information from nationally representative samples of adult clients receiving emergency food assistance from emergency kitchens and food pantries sampled in the EFAS Provider Survey. Section A provides an overview of the study design, Section B describes provider eligibility and response rates, and Section C briefly describes client interviewing methods, response rates, and sample sizes. Detailed information about the sample design and calculation of sample weights, data collection methods, and analytic methods are found in Appendices A through C.

A. STUDY DESIGN

The client survey portion of the EFAS study interviewed a sample of clients receiving emergency food assistance from the food pantries and soup kitchens that were sampled for the provider survey portion of the EFAS study.¹ The survey was designed to provide national estimates of the characteristics of individuals and households who receive food from emergency kitchens and food pantries, respectively. Discussed below are the main features of the study: the target population, the sample design, and the sample weighting procedures.

1. Population

The *target population* for the client survey is clients age 18 or older who received food from an emergency kitchen or food pantry during the survey's data collection period.² The

¹The sample frame for the EFAS Provider Survey was the 48 contiguous states and the District of Columbia.

²Data were also obtained on children accompanying adults at emergency kitchens, and the household composition of adult clients, so that use of emergency kitchens and pantries by children could be reported.

characteristics of individuals and households and the exact definition of a “client” varies for food pantries and emergency kitchens, as explained below.

a. Food Pantries

The target population for food pantries includes all households with at least one adult 18 or older receiving packages on- or off-site from a food pantry. We sampled each household as a single unit, not individual people, at food pantries. A household is typically defined as the group of people occupying the same housing unit, or, in the case of the homeless, living in the same place, including related family members and unrelated people, such as roommates, lodgers, foster children, wards, or employees who reside in the housing unit. Some portion of a pantry’s clients may be homeless.

b. Emergency Kitchens

The target population for emergency kitchens is clients age 18 or older receiving meals on- or off-site from an emergency kitchen. An emergency kitchen could also distribute prepared meals for clients to take off-site, such as brown bag lunches for weekend consumption when the kitchen is closed or bag lunches distributed in a park. For this study, an emergency kitchen was defined as a facility that provides prepared meals to clients in need who do not reside on the facility’s premises. Thus, kitchens co-located with shelters, which provide shelter and meals primarily (or only) to residents, are excluded from the client survey.³ Facilities distributing food under Title IIIC of the Older Americans Act, the Child and Adult Care Food Program, and the National School Lunch and Breakfast Programs were also excluded. When food distribution is

³ The target population for emergency kitchens are those which serve clients who can “walk-in” and receive a meal, rather than those which only serve meals to shelter residents. In order to target primarily non-resident clients, we excluded kitchens that were co-located with shelters from the sample frame.

incidental to other services, as in substance abuse treatment facilities, summer camps, Kids' Cafés™,⁴ and senior day care facilities, the facility was excluded from the study.

2. Sample Design

The sample design for the client survey builds upon the design and sample frame developed and used for the provider survey, as shown in Figure II.1. The provider survey collected information from food banks, food rescue organizations, and emergency food organizations, as well as from emergency kitchens and food pantries, from March through October 2000. The client survey focused on clients visiting emergency kitchens and food pantries from August through November 2001. The overall approach used for data collection in the client survey was as follows:

- We selected a stratified subsample of 60 of the 360 primary sampling units (PSUs) originally selected in the EFAS Provider Survey.⁵
- We selected a random subsample of pantries and kitchens within these 60 PSUs.
- We selected a particular time period for interviewing.
- We selected a systematic sample of adult clients for each selected kitchen and pantry.
- We conducted client interviews at the provider's sites, using cellular telephones dialed into MPR's computer-assisted telephone interviewing (CATI) facilities.

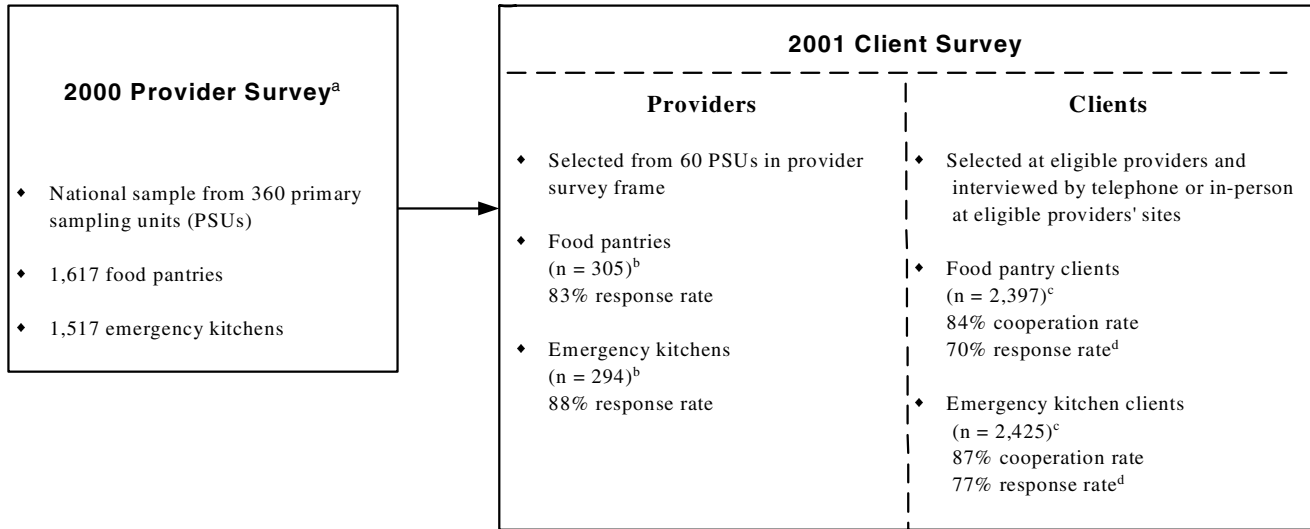
Figure II.1 provides the overall response rates and sample sizes for providers and clients in the client survey. Additional details about providers' eligibility rates and clients' response rates are below.

⁴Kids' Café™ is a charitable after-school feeding program sponsored by America's Second Harvest which provides free food and nutrition education to children at churches and community centers ("Kids Café," www.secondharvest.org/childhunger/kidscafe.html, June 6, 2002).

⁵For the provider survey, a random sample of 360 primary sampling units (PSUs) was drawn from the 48 contiguous states and the District of Columbia.

FIGURE II.1

OVERVIEW OF STUDY DESIGN



SOURCE: National Emergency Food Assistance System Study, 2000 and 2001.

^aThe provider survey also collected information from 395 food banks, 88 food rescue organizations, and 117 emergency food organizations.

^bNumbers reflect providers sampled.

^cNumbers reflect clients with complete interviews.

^dThe client response rate is the product of the provider response rate and the client cooperation rate.

3. Sample Weights

Estimates based on the client survey must account for the survey's complex sample design and for the biasing effects that nonresponse could have had. A number of practical considerations in implementing the design resulted in unequal probabilities of selection. Therefore, MPR constructed sampling weights that reflect the differential selection probabilities used to sample EFAS providers across PSUs. Furthermore, using the sampling weights for providers and information gathered during data collection, MPR constructed sampling weights that reflect the selection probabilities used to sample clients at pantries and kitchens.

Nonresponse can also lead to distortions of the respondent sample with respect to the total population. Adjustments were made to both the provider and client sampling weights to compensate for such distortions, using a weighting class method. In addition, the nonresponse-adjusted provider weights were adjusted through a poststratification procedure. Finally, because the sampling units are visits, and individuals can make multiple visits during the data collection period, reported information on how often a client visited an EFAS provider or providers is used to adjust for multiple selection opportunities, which results in an unduplicated client weight. Appendix A provides further details about the sample design and weights.

B. ELIGIBILITY AND RESPONSE OF PROVIDERS

As shown in Figure II.1, 305 food pantries and 294 emergency kitchens were selected from the provider survey frame. Providers were contacted from July through November 2001 to inform them that their site had been selected for surveying clients, to verify and update information on current operations, and to enlist their cooperation. Table A.1 (Appendix A) shows the results of our contacts to selected providers. Approximately one-fourth of providers (27 percent of pantries and 26 percent of kitchens) were determined to be ineligible for the following reasons:

- 16 percent of pantries and 10 percent of kitchens were “no longer in business.”
- 8 percent of pantries served fewer than five clients per day.⁶
- 14 percent of kitchens were co-located with a shelter.
- 1 percent of kitchens and 4 percent of pantries were ineligible for other reasons such as “distribution to off-site only” and “emergency operation only.”

Eligibility could not be determined for 24 providers (6 percent of pantries and 2 percent of kitchens). We could not contact these providers either through multiple telephone attempts, or, in many cases, through in-person visits to the provider’s address to determine if they were still in operation (Table A.1). We interviewed clients at 88 percent of the pantries known to be eligible and 91 percent of the kitchens known to be eligible (referred to as the cooperation rate in Table II.1). The provider refusal rate, 4 percent, was low. The overall response rate is the product of the eligibility determination rate and the cooperation rate. The overall response rates for pantries and kitchens are 83 percent and 88 percent, respectively.

Visits to providers to interview clients were conducted with a total of 180 pantries and 191 kitchens. We compared the general characteristics of these providers with the total sample of providers in the provider survey, using the appropriate sample weights to reflect the population of kitchens and pantries. Tables II.2 and II.3 show the results of these comparisons for pantries and kitchens, respectively. For both pantries and kitchens, in general, the mean characteristics for metropolitan status, type of organization and affiliations, and length of time in operation were similar for the providers surveyed in 2000 and the providers visited in 2001 for the client survey (all of the tabulations in Tables II.2 and II.3 are based on providers’ responses at the time of the

⁶To be eligible for the client survey, providers had to meet a minimum size requirement of five or more clients per day to assure data collection.

TABLE II.1
 ELIGIBILITY DETERMINATION AND RESPONSE RATES
 FOR CONTACTING EFAS PROVIDERS

	Food Pantries	Emergency Kitchens
Response Category		
Eligible, respondent	180	191
Eligible, nonrespondent	25	20
Ineligible	83	76
Eligibility unknown	<u>17</u>	<u>7</u>
TOTAL	305	294
Response Rates (%)		
Eligibility determination rate	94	98
Cooperation rate	88	91
Response rate ^a	83	88

SOURCE: National Emergency Food Assistance Study Client Survey (2001).

^aProduct of the eligibility determination rate and the cooperation rate.

TABLE II.2

COMPARISON OF SELECTED CHARACTERISTICS OF FOOD
PANTRIES BY PARTICIPATION STATUS (Weighted Percentages)

Characteristics	All Food Pantries Surveyed in the 2000 Provider Survey	Food Pantries Selected and Visited in the 2001 Client Survey	Food Pantries Selected, but No Longer in Operation, at the Time of the 2001 Client Survey
Region			
West	15.1	20.5	7.9
Midwest	24.6	22.9	44.5
South	40.1	28.0	36.4
Northeast	20.3	28.5	11.2
Metropolitan Status			
Metropolitan	70.3	71.1	74.1
Nonmetropolitan	29.7	28.9	25.9
Size of Pantry			
Small	37.9	9.7	30.3
Medium	35.3	37.1	33.5
Large	24.8	52.4	31.9
Type of Organization			
Nonprofit, associated with religious group	67.1	65.1	74.1
Nonreligious private nonprofit	25.4	28.1	24.3
Governmental	3.0	3.9	0.0
Informal group of people	2.3	2.0	0.9
Other	1.6	0.6	0.0
Missing data	0.5	0.2	0.7
Selected Organizational Affiliations^a			
United Way	19.5	22.9	14.5
Salvation Army	11.0	9.2	9.0
Catholic Charities	8.4	12.0	0.4
Red Cross	6.0	4.9	0.5
Other nonprofit organization ^b	17.6	22.1	19.7
Programs with Which Provider Is Co- Located^c			
Food bank	3.7	5.1	20.5
Food rescue program	1.4	1.0	0.0
Emergency shelter	0.5	0.0	0.0
Emergency kitchen	9.1	5.9	23.5

TABLE II.2 (continued)

Characteristics	All Food Pantries Surveyed in the 2000 Provider Survey	Food Pantries Selected and Visited in the 2001 Client Survey	Food Pantries Selected, but No Longer in Operation, at the Time of the 2001 Client Survey
Length of Time Surveyed Location Has Been Operating^d			
Less than 1 year	5.7	11.6	9.1
1 to 3 years	22.2	22.0	39.0
4 to 5 years	11.1	10.4	8.9
6 years or longer			
6 to 10 years	17.9	13.7	5.4
11 to 15 years	10.1	12.1	21.3
16 to 20 years	12.5	13.3	6.5
21 to 25 years	2.8	5.3	0.0
Longer than 25 years	4.7	4.2	8.6
Not specified	12.3	6.6	1.2
Missing data	0.8	0.8	0.0
Sample Size	1,617	180	48

SOURCE: National Emergency Food Assistance System Provider Survey (2000) and Client Survey (2001).

^aCategories do not add to 100 percent because many providers do not have any organizational affiliations.

^bOther nonprofit organizations not included in this estimate include America's Second Harvest. Providers were asked directly about their affiliation with America's Second Harvest, but there was underreporting since many providers do not realize that the food that they receive is from a Second Harvest-affiliated food bank. Therefore, we do not provide a separate estimate for America's Second Harvest affiliation.

^cCategories do not add to 100 percent because many providers are not co-located with another provider.

^dLength of time in operation reflects the provider's response at the time of the survey in 2000.

TABLE II.3

COMPARISON OF SELECTED CHARACTERISTICS OF EMERGENCY KITCHENS BY PARTICIPATION STATUS (Weighted Percentages)

Characteristics	All Emergency Kitchens Surveyed in the 2000 Provider Survey	Emergency Kitchens Selected and Visited in the 2001 Client Survey	Emergency Kitchens Selected, but No Longer in Operation at the Time of the 2001 Client Survey
Region			
West	20.6	17.5	10.6
Midwest	24.7	27.2	23.6
South	27.4	21.0	17.3
Northeast	27.4	34.2	48.5
Metropolitan Status			
Metropolitan	85.6	87.8	78.9
Nonmetropolitan	14.4	12.2	21.1
Size of Emergency Kitchen			
Small	37.3	28.6	41.9
Medium	31.4	32.2	39.3
Large	30.7	39.1	18.8
Type of Organization			
Nonprofit, associated with religious group	65.5	58.3	69.3
Nonreligious private nonprofit	30.1	37.9	28.1
Governmental	1.1	0.9	0.0
Informal group of people	1.6	0.0	0.0
Other	1.5	2.9	2.6
Selected Organizational Affiliations^a			
United Way	26.1	35.4	20.2
Salvation Army	14.0	14.7	7.4
Catholic Charities	8.9	6.6	11.5
Red Cross	4.8	5.1	7.2
Other nonprofit organization ^b	18.4	17.9	1.9
Programs with Which Provider Is Co-located^c			
Food bank	1.0	0.0	5.8
Food rescue program	1.4	0.6	13.9
Emergency shelter	6.6	0.0	0.0

TABLE II.3 (continued)

Characteristics	All Emergency Kitchens Surveyed in the 2000 Provider Survey	Emergency Kitchens Selected and Visited in the 2001 Client Survey	Emergency Kitchens Selected, but No Longer in Operation at the Time of the 2001 Client Survey
Food pantry	39.5	40.3	52.4
Length of Time Surveyed Location Has Been Operating^d			
Less than 1 year	3.3	2.6	6.4
1 to 3 years	15.0	10.8	25.8
4 to 5 years	9.6	9.4	23.3
6 years or longer			
6 to 10 years	22.3	20.8	3.8
11 to 15 years	12.7	10.1	11.3
16 to 20 years	16.9	28.8	12.6
21 to 25 years	2.7	1.7	0.0
Longer than 25 years	6.8	6.3	2.4
Not specified	10.2	9.6	14.4
Missing data	0.4	0.0	0.0
SAMPLE SIZE	1,517	191	31

SOURCE: National Emergency Food Assistance System Provider Survey (2000) and Client Survey (2001).

^aCategories do not add to 100 percent because many kitchens do not have any organizational affiliations.

^bOther nonprofit organizations not included in this estimate include America's Second Harvest. Providers were asked directly about their affiliation with America's Second Harvest, but there was underreporting since many providers do not realize that the food that they receive is from a Second Harvest-affiliated food bank. Therefore, we do not provide a separate estimate for America's Second Harvest affiliation.

^cCategories do not add to 100 percent because many kitchens are not co-located with another provider.

^dLength of time in operation reflects the provider's response at the time of the survey in 2000.

2000 survey; that is, providers were not interviewed again in 2001). Some regional differences exist between the two samples, with fewer providers in the South and more in the Northeast for the 2001 sample. As expected, the client survey providers have a smaller proportion of ‘small’ providers⁷ because we excluded those seeing fewer than five clients per day for operational reasons.

In addition, we report the characteristics of providers who are no longer in operation. The majority of these providers were in business from one to five years, at the time of the 2000 provider survey. Kitchens no longer in operation are more likely to be in the Northeast and co-located with a food pantry or a food rescue program. Pantries no longer in operation are more likely to be in the Midwest and co-located with an emergency kitchen or a food bank. Although the overall sample sizes are too small to draw definitive conclusions, this provides some general information about the characteristics of kitchens and pantries that left the EFAS system during the year before the client survey.

We speculate that EFAS providers who go out of business are replaced by other providers who enter the system, as evidenced by the finding that 5 percent of pantries and 3 percent of kitchens were in operation for less than one year at the time of the 2000 survey. However, it is unclear whether those providers who enter the system serve a smaller, greater, or similar number of clients as those providers who left the system.

⁷Kitchen size was classified by the number of meals at their largest meal service on a typical day. “Small” is fewer than 60 meals; “medium” is between 60 and 120 meals; and “large” is more than 120 meals. Pantry size was classified by the number of households served in a typical month; “small” is fewer than 30 households; “medium” is between 30 and 150 households; and “large” is more than 150 households per month (Ohls et al. 2001).

C. CLIENT INTERVIEWS

1. Data Collection Methods

Client interviews were conducted from August 13 through November 17, 2001 using cellular telephones and CATI methods. Two trained enumerators/interviewers visited each provider site selected for the study.⁸ Adult clients, 18 years of age or older, were selected based on an interval sampling plan implemented at each of the sampled EFAS sites. In general, the survey took about 15 minutes to administer. In areas without cellular telephone reception, trained interviewers administered the interview in-person, using hard-copy questionnaire. Respondents received a \$10 cash remuneration for their participation.

The interviews asked clients about their reasons for visiting the emergency kitchen or food pantry, how often they used emergency food assistance services, their demographic and socioeconomic characteristics, their current and past participation in federal nutrition assistance and other benefit programs, Food Stamp Program eligibility, events that led them to seek emergency food assistance, the frequency with which they seek such assistance, their satisfaction with the amount and variety of food received, and their household food security. Appendix B describes the process used to develop and test the survey instrument, the use of proxy respondents and translators, and administration by CATI and hard-copy formats.

2. Client Response and Reasons for Nonresponse

As shown in Table II.4 the cooperation rates for pantry and kitchen clients are 84 percent and 87 percent, respectively. The overall response rates, which take into consideration both provider and client nonresponse, are 70 percent for pantry clients and 77 percent for kitchen clients.

⁸Large providers had a maximum of three scheduled visits to conduct client interviews.

TABLE II.4

ELIGIBILITY DETERMINATION AND RESPONSE RATES FOR CLIENTS

	Food Pantries	Emergency Kitchens
Response Category		
Eligible, respondent ^a	2,408 (83.7%)	2,444 (84.4%)
Eligible, refusal	374 (13.0%)	316 (10.9%)
Eligible, other nonresponse ^b	70 (2.4%)	42 (1.4%)
Ineligible	26 (0.9%)	95 (3.3%)
TOTAL	2,878 (100%)	2,897 (100%)
Response Rates (%)		
Provider response rate	83%	88%
Client cooperation rate	84%	87%
Client response rate ^c	70%	77%

SOURCE: National Emergency Food Assistance System Study Client Survey (2001).

^aOf the eligible respondents, 19 kitchen interviews and 11 pantry interviews were later excluded from data analysis because they did not meet the criteria for a complete interview. Respondents needed to answer questions about their EFAS use, age, gender, and education level at a minimum to be defined as a complete interview (that is, responding through question number C4 of the instrument).

^bClients with mental or physical impairment who were selected, but unable to complete the interview, and for whom no proxy was available.

^cProduct of the provider response rate and the client cooperation rate.

The reasons for client nonresponse vary from choices that clients made because of severe weather, transportation problems, personal safety, lack of time, and apathy to operations problems, such as telephone communication problems and the decision to cancel a visit for interviewer safety. (See Appendix B, section 3.g for more information on the specific reasons for client nonresponse.)

3. Data Analysis

The data shown in this report reflects data analyzed with households as the level of observation for food pantry clients and with individuals as the unit of observation for emergency kitchen clients. Important information on household characteristics, and children or other family members accompanying adult clients at emergency kitchens, is used to report (1) the numbers of adults and children served by pantries and kitchens, and (2) food program eligibility and participation by EFAS clients and their families. These study findings are reported in separate chapters for pantry client households and kitchen clients. For pantries, we also report sociodemographic characteristics of the main household respondent. Table II.5 shows the subgroup sample sizes of emergency kitchen and food pantry clients by race/ethnicity and gender, and by four age groups and gender. Table D.1 (Appendix D) provides subgroup sample sizes by the four age groups, race/ethnicity, and gender. Small subgroup sample sizes limited our ability to analyze some domains of interest.

The same survey instrument was used with both pantry and kitchen clients. The only difference between the kitchen and pantry samples is the wording of the questions on kitchen and pantry use. The survey data were edited and reviewed with consistent editing and coding procedures applied to the kitchen and pantry samples. Our analytic procedures and definitions for key analytic variables are described in Appendix C.

TABLE II.5
SAMPLE SIZES OF INTERVIEWED CLIENTS

Characteristic	Emergency Kitchen Clients			Food Pantry Clients		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
RACE/ETHNICITY						
Non-Hispanic White	451	280	731	269	656	925
Non-Hispanic Black	906	367	1,273	275	518	793
Hispanic	175	98	273	137	425	562
Other Race/Ethnicity	88	40	128	43	53	96
Unknown Race/Ethnicity	12	7	20 ^a	6	15	21
AGE GROUP						
Ages 18 – 29 years	155	114	269	62	229	291
Ages 30 - 44 years	648	345	993	251	600	851
Ages 45 – 59 years	692	217	909	249	439	688
Ages 60 years and older	137	115	252	166	396	562
Total^b	1,632	792	2,425	730	1,667	2,397

SOURCE: National Emergency Food Assistance Study Client Survey (2001).

^aIncludes one case with missing gender.

^bIncludes up to seven cases with missing age and one case with missing gender.