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# The Emergency Food Assistance System— Findings From the Provider Survey

## Volume II: Final Report

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**The Emergency Food Assistance System—Findings From the Provider Survey, Volume II: Final Report.** By James Ohls, Fazana Saleem-Ismail, Rhoda Cohen, and Brenda Cox, Mathematica Policy Research, Inc., for the Food and Rural Economics Division, Economic Research Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture. Food Assistance and Nutrition Research Report No. 16-2.

## **Abstract**

Findings of the first comprehensive government study of the Emergency Food Assistance System (EFAS) suggest that public and private food assistance may work in tandem to provide more comprehensive food assistance than either could provide by itself. Five major types of organizations (emergency kitchens, food pantries, food banks, food rescue organizations, and emergency food organizations) operate in the EFAS. About 5,300 emergency kitchens provide more than 173 million meals a year, and 32,700 food pantries distribute about 2.9 billion pounds of food a year, which translates into roughly 2,200 million meals. Despite substantial amounts of food distributed by the system, the EFAS remains much smaller in scale than the Federal programs. This study, which was sponsored by USDA's Economic Research Service, provides detailed information about the system's operations and about each of the five types of organizations. This report presents the study results in detail. For a summary of the results, see *The Emergency Food Assistance System—Findings from the Provider Survey, Volume I: Executive Summary* at <http://www.ers.usda.gov/publications/fanrr16-1>. For more information on the survey methodology, see *The Emergency Food Assistance System—Findings from the Provider Survey, Volume III: Survey Methodology* at <http://www.ers.usda.gov/publications/efan01008>.

**Keywords:** Food pantry, emergency kitchen, food bank, food rescue organization, emergency food organization, TEFAP

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## Summary

Findings of the first comprehensive government study of the Emergency Food Assistance System (EFAS) suggest that public and private food assistance may work in tandem to provide more comprehensive food assistance than either could provide by itself. Five major types of organizations (emergency kitchens, food pantries, food banks, food rescue organizations, and emergency food organizations) operate in the EFAS. The study, which was sponsored by USDA's Economic Research Service, provides detailed information about the system's operations and about each of the five types of organizations. This report presents the study results in detail.

The EFAS helps ensure adequate nutrition for low-income Americans who may not have the resources to purchase sufficient food in stores and who may not be able to acquire enough through government programs. Throughout the country, thousands of emergency kitchens and food pantries provide year-round food assistance. Regional and national organizations, such as food banks and the food banks' national-level representatives, help the provider agencies obtain food and other resources necessary to accomplish their mission. The EFAS provides meals and food supplies that, for many recipients, complement existing government food assistance programs.

The study was conducted when the effects of the 1996 national welfare reform were becoming visible throughout the country. It affords an opportunity to examine how the EFAS is operating within the larger context of changes in America's low-income assistance policies and how the EFAS fits within the context of important government nutrition assistance programs. It updates past studies of the EFAS and extends them to provide a broader, more nationally representative view of the system. Additional information will be obtained in a survey of EFAS clients, planned for summer 2001.

### *Key findings:*

- About 5,300 emergency kitchens and 32,700 food pantries participate in the EFAS. The kitchens provide more than 173 million meals. The pantries distribute an estimated 2.9 billion pounds of food annually, which translates into roughly 6.0 million meals per day or 2,200 million meals per year.
- Despite the substantial amounts of food distributed by the system, the EFAS remains much smaller in scale than the Federal programs that provide food assistance to the poor.
- The EFAS is mostly locally based. It is characterized by a wide variety of program structures and innovative practices that meet differing local needs and that make use of local resources and opportunities.
- Many direct service providers in the EFAS—65 percent of emergency kitchens and 67 percent of food pantries—are faith-based organizations.
- The EFAS extensively uses volunteers.

- During the 12 months before our survey, about 25 percent of kitchens and 33 percent of pantries turned away people who requested services, mostly because the individuals in question were disruptive, had substance abuse problems, or failed to meet residency requirements or income guidelines. Most kitchens and pantries did not turn away people because of lack of food.
- Although most kitchens and pantries do not turn away people because of lack of food, they do limit their food distribution. In about 40 percent of pantries, households are limited to receiving food once per month or less, and one-third of kitchens serve meals only one day per week.
- About one-fourth of both emergency kitchens and food pantries perceived that there are unmet needs for their services. More than half of food banks and food rescue organizations reported facing unmet needs.
- In contrast to the geographic distribution of the low-income population, emergency kitchens are disproportionately available in metropolitan (versus nonmetropolitan) settings. For example, only 15 percent of kitchens are located in nonmetropolitan areas, whereas 21 percent of America's poor population lives in these areas. Furthermore, kitchens in nonmetropolitan areas tend to serve fewer people compared with their metropolitan counterparts.
- The EFAS may not provide consistent coverage across parts of the day or days of the week.
- About 89 percent of kitchens and 87 percent of pantries believed they could deal with a 5-percent increase in the need for their services, and about one-third thought that they could deal effectively with as much as a 20-percent increase in need.

# Introduction

The Emergency Food Assistance System (EFAS) plays a significant role in ensuring adequate food for low-income people in America who may not have the resources to purchase adequate food in stores. Throughout the country, thousands of emergency kitchens and food pantries provide food assistance to low-income people every week. Regional and national organizations, such as food banks and national food bank representatives, help the provider agencies obtain food and other resources necessary to accomplish their mission. The EFAS, which functions largely in the private sector, provides services that complement existing government programs designed to help the poor achieve adequate nutrition levels. (The Food Stamp Program (FSP) is one such government program.)

This report presents the results of the first comprehensive government study of the EFAS. Sponsored by the Economic Research Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), the study provides detailed information about the system's operations and about each of the major organizations involved in the system. USDA's decision to conduct the study partly reflects the department's specific involvement with certain parts of the EFAS, especially its provision of government commodities through The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP).

Mathematica Policy Research, Inc. (MPR), a private research firm headquartered in Princeton, New Jersey, conducted the study under contract with USDA. This introductory chapter describes the objectives of the study, provides background information about the EFAS and its key components, discusses previous research on the EFAS, and describes the methodology of the study.

## Objective of the Study

The overall objective of the study was to determine whether the EFAS has the flexibility to respond to future increases in the need for its services (for example, as a result of a downturn in the economy). This broad objective was embodied in the following specifications for the study:

- To develop an understanding, through a nationally representative sample, of the characteristics, operating structures, and service areas of food banks, food pantries, emergency kitchens, food rescue organizations, and emergency food organizations.
- To understand the resource bases of food banks, food pantries, emergency kitchens, food rescue organizations, and emergency food organizations, as well as the capacity of these providers to manage current and future changes in food demand and food resources.
- To develop a national estimate of the total number of recipients served and the total quantity and type of food, by source, that flows into food banks, food pantries, emergency kitchens, food rescue organizations, and emergency food organizations.

A key aspect of these supporting goals is that, for the most part, they are *descriptive* in nature. Our main goal was to develop a study that would provide basic information about the system. Detailed *behavioral modeling* of the decision processes of various components of the system was not a major objective. As we will see in the ensuing discussion, our goals have shaped the survey and analysis techniques we used.



## Description of the EFAS

Figure 1.1 provides a simplified overview of the EFAS. The overall goal of the system is to ensure adequate food to people who, because of low income or other factors, might not be able to obtain sufficient food through other means. These people are depicted in the box at the bottom of the figure.

There are two general categories of agencies in the EFAS: those directly serving people and those serving other providers. Local EFAS providers serve households directly; the most important ones are emergency kitchens and food pantries, which serve people in need of food. (We provide more precise definitions and descriptions of these organizations later in the chapter, after this overview.)<sup>1</sup> As shown in the figure, we estimate that there are 5,262 ongoing kitchens and 32,737 food pantries operating in the United States.

Several other types of institutions contribute to the system by providing key support for the direct providers. Food banks are regional organizations that obtain food in bulk and then distribute it to local providers in their areas. There are approximately 402 of them in the United States. Food rescue organizations play a role similar to that of food banks but focus on obtaining perishable foods, such as contributions and gleanings from farmers and surplus food from restaurants and other commercial food service operations. The current study included only the larger food rescue organizations, most of which are affiliated with national organizations. Ninety-one of these organizations were identified. Emergency food organizations—which operate in some, but not all, areas of the country—have a more specialized role, focusing on the distribution of government commodities to local providers. We identified 124 of them for this study.

At the national level, America's Second Harvest, which is a network of about 80 percent of the food banks identified for this study, supports the rest of the system in a number of ways. For example, it (1) obtains food for the system from national organizations, such as major food companies, and (2) provides technical assistance and other services to the

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<sup>1</sup>In addition to the kitchens and pantries, several other types of local providers—including shelters, substance abuse programs, senior centers, and day care centers—also provide emergency food in some situations, but they were not included in this study.

food banks and food rescue organizations. America's Second Harvest also represents the interests of the EFAS community in the national political process, such as by supporting Federal tax legislation to provide tax incentives to stores that contribute food to the EFAS.

The government sector—shown as USDA programs on the diagram in figure 1.1—affects the EFAS in at least two important ways. First, the Federal Government provides food to the system—422 million pounds in 2000—through The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP). In addition, the Federal Government itself operates a number of major nutrition programs aimed at target populations that overlap substantially with the population served by the EFAS. These include the Food Stamp Program (FSP), currently serving about 17 million people per month, and the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), which provides approximately 15 million free and reduced-price lunches each school day to children from low- and moderate-income households.<sup>2</sup> A 1998 study found that approximately 41 percent of EFAS clients were also receiving food stamps (Second Harvest, 1998, p. 185).

These short descriptions do not fully characterize the organizations providing EFAS services. For purposes of the current study, it has been important to define the various types of EFAS organizations as precisely as possible in order to develop a statistically valid picture of the system as a whole. The following sections describe the components of the EFAS in greater detail and explain how they have been defined in the study.

### Emergency Kitchens

Emergency kitchens—sometimes called “soup kitchens”—are defined for the current study as organizations that provide prepared meals onsite to recipients who do not reside on the agency's premises. Some emergency kitchens provide only food; others provide food in the context of other support services, such as employment assistance, substance abuse counseling, and help in applying for government benefits. The food, which is made available at little or no cost to recipients, is usually, but not always, cooked (some kitchens may serve only sandwiches). The meals generally are available to anyone who needs them, although some kitchens may be limited to specific target popu-

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<sup>2</sup>Statistics are from [www.fns.usda.gov](http://www.fns.usda.gov).

lations, defined in terms of such factors as residence location, the presence (or absence) of children in the household, or income guidelines.

An important issue in defining emergency kitchens is whether to include homeless shelters that serve food. There is a strong case for doing so, as the people who use homeless shelters are likely to overlap substantially with those using other emergency kitchens. However, because shelters had recently been studied in some detail in a different government project (Burt et al., 1999), it was decided at the outset to exclude food service operations at shelters *that serve only residents of the shelters*. The study does include shelters that serve “walk-in” users, but it focuses only on the food service to the nonresident users.

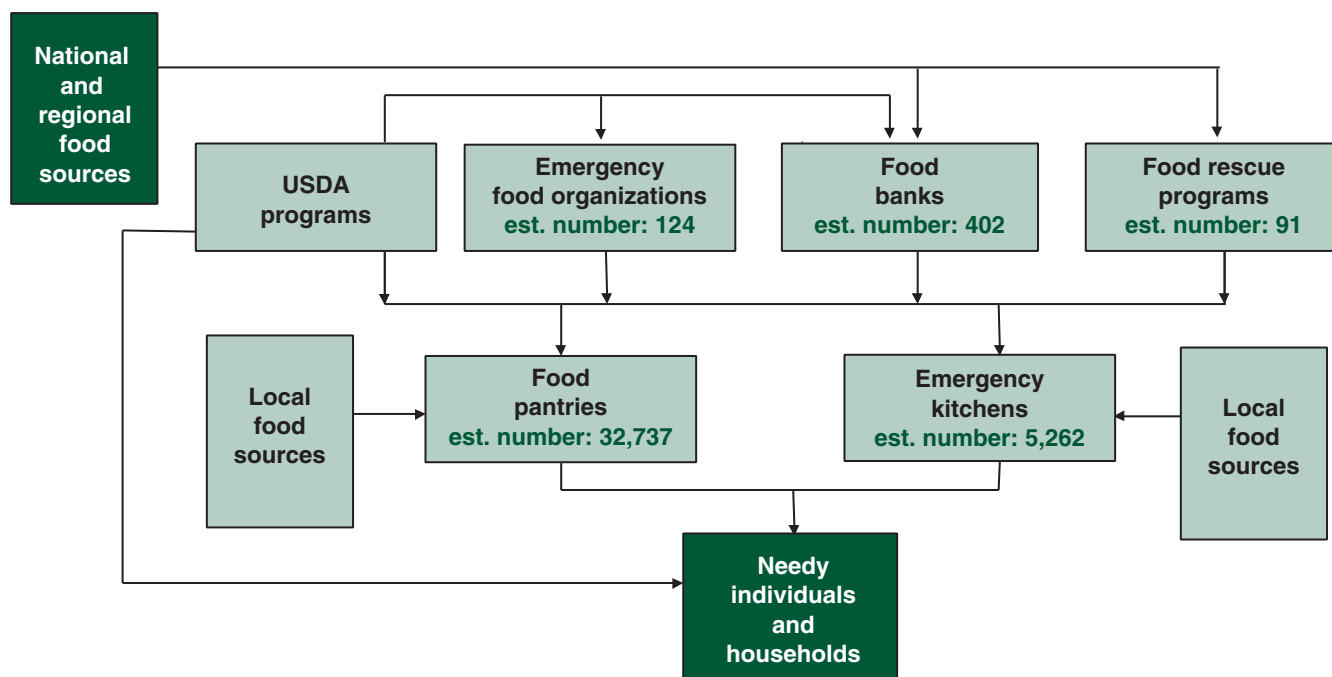
Similar issues arise when considering whether to include other types of institutions that serve food to low-income people but that also offer these people

other services. For example, the Elderly Nutrition Program, which is funded by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) and operated through local sponsors, provides both congregated (onsite) meal programs at community centers, usually lunches, and home-delivered meals to elderly people. Though donations usually are requested, there is no explicit cost for these meals, and many participants are people with low incomes (Ponza et al., 1996). Similarly, low-income children at day care centers—after-school programs, Head Start programs, and other child care facilities for low-income people—often receive meals at little or no cost.

All these programs are important sources of food for some low-income people who might otherwise rely on more traditional emergency kitchens. For instance, Ponza et al. found that 51 percent of Elderly Nutrition Program recipients of congregated meals had incomes below the poverty level. Similarly, the day care centers

Figure 1.1

### Emergency food assistance provider system



Notes: Emergency shelters are also considered part of the Emergency Food Assistance System but were not included in the present study. Food sources include donated food from manufacturers, wholesalers, retailers, and growers; food purchased at market prices from those same sources; field-gleaning and other donations of unsalable food; leftover food from service organizations, such as restaurants and schools; community donations; State programs; and other sources. For purposes of this study, the term “emergency food organization” was limited to “wholesale” organizations that distributed government commodities primarily to emergency kitchens and pantries. In some States, the term is used more broadly to include organizations that distribute commodities directly to households. This is discussed further in Ohls and Saleem-Ismail, 2001.

and homes served by USDA's Child and Adult Care Food programs are targeted principally at children living in families that are below or near the poverty line. Nevertheless, in the interest of maintaining a tight focus on institutions that function *principally* as EFAS providers, we decided to exclude these multiservice programs from the study. To state this more fully, for purposes of the current study, institutions for which the meal service provision was judged to be incidental to some other purpose (for example, recreation or child care) were excluded from the study. Of course, it is important to recognize that, as with other distinctions within the EFAS, this one often blurs in practice. Some degree of judgment was required to make this definition operational. For example, on a very close call, we decided to exclude "Kids Cafes," which provide food, recreational, and study assistance to low-income children.

### **Food Pantries**

Food pantries are defined as organizations that distribute groceries (nonprepared foods) and other basic supplies for offsite use, usually for preparation in a recipient's residence. In general, the foods the pantries provide—such as canned goods, cereals, rice, bread, and sometimes fresh fruits or meat—are intended for further cooking or processing at the recipient's home. As with emergency kitchens, some pantries tend to be freestanding, whereas others are just one component of a larger set of services to low-income people provided by an organization. Many pantries provide food to anyone who says they need it; others operate under income, residential location, or other guidelines that restrict the supply of food to certain groups. Most have limits on how much food can be obtained at a given visit and on how frequently people can receive food assistance. Government commodity programs such as TEFAP, under which many pantries receive food, set rules for how much can be distributed per household and on the income levels of recipients.

### **Food Banks**

Food banks are essentially the "wholesalers" of the system. They obtain food nationally and regionally and distribute it to individual providers. Some repackaging food in smaller units. For many food banks, these functions involve fairly extensive operations, with large warehouses and substantial distribution systems. Many food banks are co-located with food rescue organizations (described below). More formally, food banks are defined as organizations that solicit and distribute

wholesome, edible food (usually surplus) to local non-profit charities or client agencies, which then distribute the food directly to needy individuals and families.

Most, but not all, of the food banks in the country are members of America's Second Harvest, the main national organization of such institutions. Two classes of members operate within the America's Second Harvest framework: (1) direct affiliates, which are full members of the national organization; and (2) Subsidiary Distribution Organizations (SDOs), which largely function as freestanding food banks but are affiliated with Second Harvest through one of the direct affiliates. For purpose of this study, SDOs are treated as separate food banks.

For most food banks, the national America's Second Harvest organization is an important source of much of the food that they distribute. However, food donations obtained regionally are important as well.

Approximately 402 food banks operate in the United States. About 80 percent are Second Harvest affiliates; the others are independents. Some food banks serve EFAS providers throughout an entire State; more commonly, they serve part of a State or a metropolitan area.

### **Food Rescue Organizations**

Food rescue organizations perform a role similar to that of food banks but with a focus on *perishable* food. They seek sources of perishable food and ways to make it available to EFAS kitchens and pantries and to similar agencies. Important sources of food for food rescue organizations include gleanings from farmers' fields; already-harvested foods that farmers contribute; unused, prepared food from restaurants; and surplus foods from major gatherings, such as rock concerts or sports events. After obtaining these foods, the food rescue organizations break them down into units of smaller quantity, as necessary, and make them available to local EFAS providers. Because of the perishable nature of the foods, food rescue organizations generally have smaller warehouses and inventories than do food banks, and they emphasize transferring the food from the sources to the EFAS providers as quickly as possible.

At the beginning of this study, most of the major food rescue organizations in the country were affiliated with a national organization, Foodchain. During the course of the study, Foodchain and Second Harvest merged to become a single organization, now called America's Second Harvest.

## Emergency Food Organizations

Emergency food organizations (EFOs) are defined for this study as organizations that have a primary purpose other than emergency food distribution but that are designated by the States as official distributors for USDA commodities received by the State.<sup>3</sup> For purposes of the current report, we will limit the concept of

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<sup>3</sup>The principal government commodities program is The Emergency Food Assistance Program. It is described more fully in chapter 6.

EFO to organizations that distribute the food to other *organizations*, such as emergency kitchens, food bank, and other local charities. Thus, we exclude from the study's definition EFO organizations that distribute commodities directly to low-income individuals and families. (For our purposes, the latter are considered food pantries.) We note this distinction, which is conceptually useful for sampling and analysis purposes, because, as discussed in chapter 6, some States define the term "EFO" more broadly, to include organizations distributing TEFAP commodities directly to individuals and families.

## Origins of the Current EFAS

An understanding of the origins of EFAS and how it has evolved is important as a backdrop for assessing the findings of the current survey. This section highlights key aspects of the development of the system.

The origins of EFAS in the United States go back at least to the Great Depression in the 1930s. At that time, with poverty and deprivation existing throughout the country, the Federal Government provided commodities for widescale distribution. Breadlines and soup kitchens were also organized to feed destitute people with no other resources for obtaining food (Poppendieck, 1986; Eisinger, 1998).

Once World War II began and the U.S. economy finally emerged from the Depression, these highly visible breadlines and soup kitchens largely disappeared. However, during a period extending from the end of World War II to the late 1970s, the Federal Government continued to use commodity distribution programs periodically, both for assisting the poor and as a way of reducing agricultural surpluses (Berry, 1984). With the advent of the Kennedy Administration in the early 1960s, the Federal Government began to develop what has now evolved into the Food Stamp Program, again motivated both by wanting to provide assistance to the poor and by concern for the farm economy (Ohls and Beebout, 1993).

These antecedents notwithstanding, the beginning of the current EFAS is usually traced to the early 1980s (Eisinger, 1998; Poppendieck, 1998). At that time several forces came together to create the current EFAS.

First, a deep recession substantially increased the need for food assistance. Second, partly in response to the first factor, in 1981 Congress enacted a commodity distribution program that evolved into the Temporary Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) 2 years later. While the TEFAP initially focused on direct distribution of a limited number of government commodities, eventually it evolved into a broader program that provides a Federal subsidy for food distribution to needy individuals through the EFAS. (The TEFAP is discussed more fully in the next section in our discussion of relevant government policies.) This program was a significant factor in highlighting the need for additional food-related assistance to low-income people and for increasing the resources available for providing this assistance.

A third development, at approximately the same time, was the emergence of Second Harvest as a national organization representing the EFAS community. Originally started in the 1960s as a food bank in the Southwest, by the late 1970s Second Harvest had assumed a national role, directly obtaining food from producers for distribution to EFAS providers. Reflecting this role, in 1984, the organization moved to Chicago to be better positioned for its work (Daponte and Bade, 2000). Since then, Second Harvest has been active in obtaining donations of food from major food companies and has also assumed a leadership position in representing the EFAS community in the Federal political process. During the 1980s the work of Second Harvest—together with that of several other private national organizations concerned with hunger, including the Food Research and Action Center, Catholic Charities, the Salvation Army, and Bread for the World—significantly contributed to publicizing the need for food assistance. A result was an increase in the supply of food available for the EFAS, as well as in other forms of support such as cash contributions and volunteer service (Eisinger, 1998).

During the late 1970s and early 1980s a broad array of private pantries and kitchens emerged at the local level. While no reliable data are available on the growth in the number of food pantries and emergency kitchens during this time, it is safe to say that by the end of the 1980s the private EFAS had emerged in the basic form in which it exists today.

The future directions of the system, however, were still far from clear. As the system took shape in the early 1980s, it was widely assumed that it would be a temporary, stopgap measure that would substantially shrink, if not disappear entirely, when the Nation's economy recovered from the recession (Eisinger, 1998). Yet today the system is firmly institutionalized as a mainstay of the country's antihunger activities.

While the national forces described above have shaped the EFAS as it has emerged, it is important to recognize that its evolution has been largely a local process. The direct providers of food assistance in the system—that is, food pantries and emergency kitchens—have over time emerged in response to local needs. By and large, there has been no national coordination of the location of pantries and kitchens or of their number. Indeed, one of the important research issues in the current study is the degree to which the resulting coverage of various areas is adequate.

## Federal Assistance to the EFAS

The main Federal program that provides assistance to the EFAS is the successor to the original TEFAP, which has retained the acronym but is now called The Emergency Food Assistance Program.<sup>4</sup> Begun in the early 1980s, the TEFAP (then under a different name) was originally limited to the direct distribution of surplus cheese, with the dual objectives of alleviating hunger and reducing the amount of excess government commodities (our discussion of TEFAP draws substantially on Eisinger, 1998.) However, although the program had been intended as a very-short-term expedient, it proved extremely popular politically and has been renewed in successive legislation. Since its inception, it has evolved considerably. Relatively soon after the program was

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<sup>4</sup>EFAS providers, particularly food pantries, also sometimes distribute food under a second Federal program, the Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP). The CSFP channels nutritious commodities directly to certain target groups believed by Congress to be at particular risk of needing additional food, including: pregnant and breastfeeding women, other new mothers up to 1-year postpartum, infants, children up to age 6, and elderly people at least 60 years of age. However, while EFAS providers sometimes serve as CSFP distribution points, it appears that most CSFP food is distributed outside of the EFAS, and we have therefore not focused on the CSFP in the current study.

set up, the selection of commodities made available for distribution was greatly increased. Then, later in the 1980s as Federal commodity surpluses were reduced, Congress authorized USDA to purchase commodities on the open market for use in the program. Over time, these purchased commodities have become a major source of food available under the program.

The methods of distribution used in TEFAP have also evolved over time. Initially the food was directly distributed to needy households, often through State or local governmental agencies. More recently, the distribution of commodities has become more integrated into the EFAS. TEFAP food initially goes to the States, which have considerable flexibility in how they distribute it. In some instances, direct mass distributions are still used, either by the States themselves or by organizations they contract with that have no other connection to the EFAS. However, as will be seen in our survey findings below, the States more commonly work through the EFAS, distributing the commodities to food banks, which then channel them to food pantries and, in some instances, emergency kitchens.

By law, State agencies must establish income eligibility standards to ensure that TEFAP foods provided for household distribution go only to low-income households. However, no such standards are required for TEFAP foods used in meal preparations at emergency kitchens.

## Recent Research on the EFAS

Recent studies of the EFAS have tended to focus on three important areas:

- The operations of the EFAS itself, including the nature of providers, their resources, operating characteristics, and policies;
- The need for the EFAS, in terms of the number of people experiencing hunger or at risk of hunger who could be helped by EFAS services; and
- The size of the EFAS, in terms of the number of providers, the number of people that they serve, and the amount of food distributed.

We discuss each of these areas below.

### Operations of the EFAS

Much of the previous research on the EFAS has focused on describing its operations. In 1993 and again in 1997, Second Harvest conducted surveys of its members designed, in part, to obtain descriptive information about the institutions involved and their interactions in providing emergency food. The 1997 study, in particular, provides the most extensive analysis of the nature of pantries, kitchens, shelters, and food banks prior to the present study. The 1997 Second Harvest study also involved an extensive client survey that yielded important insight into the needs and characteristics of clients in the EFAS. (Second Harvest is currently conducting the third in this series of studies.)

Among the key findings of the 1997 Second Harvest study were that (1) EFAS provider agencies were heavily reliant on volunteer labor to accomplish their work; (2) the majority of provider organizations were relatively small, with annual budgets below \$10,000; (3) more than half of the pantries and kitchens were faith-based, with most of the rest being secular private, nonprofit institutions; and (4) many agencies reported that they needed more food than was available.

Significant insight into the operations of the EFAS has recently become available through the National Survey of Homeless Assistance Providers and Clients (Burt et al., 1999). While this study focused principally on homeless people and the organizations that serve them, the high overlap between those providers and the

EFAS make it a valuable source of information about emergency food providers. The study found that pantries were the most common providers of food-related services to the homeless,<sup>5</sup> followed by shelters and emergency kitchens.

Approximately 55 percent of the food programs surveyed were run by religious organizations and only about 5 percent by government agencies. A majority of the food program sponsors reported that they used no government funding at all, while most of the others reported only limited use of such funding. Burt et al. also found substantial variation across data collection areas in the ratio of client visits per day per 10,000 people below the poverty line. This suggests the possibility of considerable unevenness in service availability or need.

Taking a somewhat different research approach, Daponte and Bade (2000), in addition to examining the history of the EFAS, assessed its current workings by providing detailed case studies of the operations of two food banks, one in Connecticut and one in Pennsylvania. While the case study approach limits the general application of their findings, as compared with those of Second Harvest and Burt et al., it permits a more in-depth examination of the forces that shape food bank operations. In particular, Daponte and Bade provide rich details about the operations of the two food banks, including such basic characteristics as (1) organizational structure; (2) sources of food; (3) sources of other support; and (4) relationships between the food banks and other organizations in their communities. A common theme in the descriptions is the need for these organizations to develop innovative partnerships with other private and public sector institutions to maximize the effectiveness of their missions.

### Need for the EFAS

Another body of recent literature that provides an important context for the current study is the emerging research on food insecurity. Based on earlier work (Radimer et al., 1992; Wehler et al., 1991; and Bickel et al., 2000), the U.S. Census Bureau Current Population Survey began, in 1995, to collect household data once

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<sup>5</sup>Some food distributed by pantries, such as bread and certain canned goods, can be used without additional preparation and thus can be useful for the homeless.

a year on issues related to food insecurity and hunger. Eighteen of the questions in this module have been used by a USDA-sponsored research team to develop a formal index of food security (Hamilton et al., 1997), and this work has recently been extended to cover subsequent data (Andrews et al., 2000).

Based on the most recent data, the results of the USDA research suggest that 8.7 percent of households in the United States undergo “food insecurity,” defined as “limited or uncertain availability of nutritionally adequate and safe food or limited or uncertain ability to acquire acceptable foods in socially acceptable ways.” (The estimate is from Andrews et al. (2000); the definition is quoted in Bickel et al. (2000).) Further, about 2.8 percent of households are also estimated to have periods of hunger, defined as the “uneasy or painful sensation caused by lack of food...recurrent and involuntary lack of access to food” (Bickel et al., 2000).

These statistics help define the target population that the EFAS serves. More detailed research by the sources cited above has found that food insecurity and hunger tend to be particularly common in certain social and demographic groups, including:

- Households with children
- Female-headed households
- Non-Hispanic Blacks
- Hispanics
- Households below or near the poverty level

### **Size of the EFAS**

Because the EFAS is highly decentralized, with most of the service providers being independent local organizations, only limited information is available about the overall size of the system. Issues related to size, however, are crucial in examining how successful the system is in meeting the overall need for its services.

In recent years, the most commonly cited estimates of the size of the EFAS have been those of the 1997 Second Harvest study mentioned above. In assessing those figures, it is important to note that the Second Harvest study was limited to EFAS organizations receiving food from Second Harvest food banks. However, it is generally believed (and this is supported by evidence in later chapters of the current report) that

the Second Harvest network includes most, though not all, EFAS service providers.

Based on information from its 1997 survey of EFAS agencies, Second Harvest (1998) estimated that there were approximately 34,000 pantries in its network, serving more than 17.5 million people per year. The comparable estimates for emergency kitchens were approximately 7,700 kitchens serving 2.3 million people per year; the numbers for shelters were 5,800 providers and 1.6 million people. (To the extent possible, these estimates were intended to be “unduplicated,” in the sense that any person is counted only once for each provider type, even if that person uses it multiple times.)

Recently, an alternative set of relevant—though not directly comparable—numbers has become available from Burt et al. (1999). These numbers are based on a national survey of service providers identified as serving the homeless directly; thus the domain of this study may be somewhat more restricted than that of Second Harvest, particularly for food pantries, many of which may not routinely serve homeless people. Burt et al. estimate that there are approximately 4,000 emergency kitchens serving the homeless, a number considerably smaller than, but within the general range of, the Second Harvest estimate.<sup>6</sup> Their estimate of the number of food pantries (about 9,000) is much lower than that of Second Harvest, but the difference is probably accounted for, in large part, by the focus of Burt et al. on homeless providers. In particular, it is likely that Burt and her colleagues may have identified a substantial proportion of larger pantries, which tend to serve a broad clientele, but may not have included many smaller pantries that serve more limited populations such as an immediate neighborhood or people known to a particular religious organization.

Burt et al. also made estimates of the number of “program contacts,” or people served, on a typical day by the kitchens and pantries they interviewed. These numbers were approximately 0.57 million people for kitchens and 1.03 million households for pantries.

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<sup>6</sup>The 4,000 figure cited in the text includes the Burt et al. (1999) estimates for both kitchens with fixed locations and mobile emergency food providers.



## **Summary**

In U.S. Government estimates for 1999, nearly 27 million people in U.S. households undergo periods of food insecurity and more than 7 million of them may be hungry (Andrews et al., 2000). The EFAS is intended to provide food to people in this group who need assistance.

The available information about EFAS providers suggests that they consist of a large number of mostly

private local organizations. These organizations supply the poor with both groceries (in the case of pantries) and prepared meals (emergency kitchens and shelters). Many of the EFAS providers are faith-based institutions, and many rely heavily on volunteer staff to perform their work.

The current study builds upon earlier work to provide a detailed statistical picture of the institutions in the EFAS.

## Economic and Policy Context

The survey results presented in this report should be considered in light of the broad economic and policy contexts in which the EFAS operated during the period that the survey was undertaken—March through October 2000. Key economic and policy factors likely to have affected the EFAS during this time are discussed below.

### Impact of the Economy

At the time the survey was fielded, the U.S. economy had been in a period of prolonged economic growth and prosperity for most of the past decade. During that period, per capita income had risen steadily and the national unemployment rate had dropped to 4 percent, its lowest level in more than 20 years.

This prosperity had a potential impact on EFAS providers in at least two important ways. First, it meant that the level of need for EFAS services was probably lower than it would have been in a time of unfavorable economic conditions. Second, the expanding economy may have affected the resources available to the EFAS. As will be seen in later chapters, the EFAS is highly dependent on financial donations from local individuals and organizations; it also depends heavily on contributions of food from local as well as national sources. It seems likely that the economic prosperity the country was experiencing served to increase the ability and willingness of potential donors to support the system. However, an alternative argument is that the high levels of prosperity could have discouraged donations by making the need for them less evident to donors.

### Policy Context

At the time the current survey was undertaken, the most important policy affecting the EFAS was one set in motion 4 years earlier by a major piece of welfare reform legislation passed by Congress in 1996. This legislation, the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA), assigned greater control of the welfare system to the States and created incentives for them to find ways to reduce welfare roles. Concurrently, it replaced the former Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) program with the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program.

These welfare program changes, together with the continued economic prosperity and possibly other factors, had a substantial effect on the number of people receiving assistance in the United States. The average number of people on welfare dropped from about 11 million to 6 million between 1997 and 2000.

A related development during the same period was a large reduction in the number of households receiving food stamps. Between 1997 and 2000, the number of people in households receiving food stamps declined substantially, from 23 million to 17 million. There are multiple explanations for this. One important factor almost certainly was the strong overall economy and declining poverty rate. Also, PRWORA contained several provisions that tightened food stamp eligibility, particularly for able-bodied adults without dependents and for most legal aliens. However, it has also been suggested that the decline in food stamp users may have been associated directly with the changes in cash assistance programs. It is possible, for instance, that changes in local welfare office procedures could have discouraged food stamp participation or that the changes associated with welfare reform may have created a climate in which use of food stamps was viewed as less acceptable to potential clients. (These and other possible explanations for the decline in food stamp participation are discussed in Wilde et al. (2000).)

There are a number of possible effects of these changes in welfare and food stamps on EFAS providers. On the one hand, to the extent that the welfare system changes (or the growing economy) helped more households become self-sufficient, the changes may have decreased the need for EFAS services by helping low-income families become better off financially. On the other hand, to the extent that the welfare changes have placed increased pressure on households to forgo assistance before they were fully self-sufficient, it is possible that the need for EFAS services has increased. Indeed, at the time PRWORA was passed, there was concern within the advocacy community that the result would be increased requests for EFAS services. This issue is addressed more fully in a subsequent chapter, where we present survey data on the EFAS providers' perceptions of how the need for their services has changed.

## Overview of Methods Used in Current Study

To provide a basis for interpreting the findings to be presented, this section gives a short overview of the methods used in the study. A more complete description of the survey methods is presented in appendix A, while appendix E describes the statistical sampling methods. (For appendixes A through E, see *The Emergency Food Assistance System—Findings from the Provider Survey, Volume III: Survey Methodology* at <http://www.ers.usda.gov/publications/efan01008>.)

### Sampling and Data Collection

The results presented in this report are based on telephone surveys of five types of EFAS organizations:

- Emergency kitchens
- Food pantries
- Food banks
- Food rescue organizations
- Emergency food organizations

Nationally representative samples of 1,517 kitchens and 1,617 pantries were interviewed. These samples were drawn from 360 primary sampling units (PSUs), consisting of individual counties or contiguous county groupings,<sup>7</sup> drawn with probabilities proportional to their size.

Since no full lists of kitchens or pantries were available for sampling purposes, the sample frames for these surveys were compiled through (1) contacts with the food banks that served the areas sampled, and (2) extensive contacts with local informants in those areas, including staff of public and private social service agencies, churches, libraries, and similar organizations.

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<sup>7</sup>Some large counties received multiple “hits” in the sampling process so the number of separate, discrete PSUs drawn is 294.

For the other three types of organizations—food banks, food rescue organizations, and emergency food organizations—interviews were attempted with all the organizations that could be identified. The lists of these organizations were compiled through contacts with (1) national representatives of the organizations, (2) other national organizations and advocacy groups concerned about hunger, (3) State TEFAP directors, and (4) contacts with local EFAS providers.

The study used computer-assisted telephone interviewing (CATI) methods from MPR’s telephone interviewing facilities in New Jersey and Maryland. The fielding period lasted from March through October 2000. Response rates for the kitchen and pantry surveys were 94 and 95 percent, respectively. Those for the other types of providers ranged from 94 to 98 percent.

### Analysis

Reflecting the descriptive nature of the study, the analysis in this report consists largely of tabulations and cross tabulations of the survey data. In some situations, we have also drawn on information from the U.S. Census, USDA, and other sources to help place the survey data in context.

All tabulations of the kitchen and pantry survey data were performed using weights that correct for variation across PSUs in probabilities of selection, as well as adjusting for differences in nonresponse. The derivation of the weights is described in appendix E of the Survey Methodology (<http://www.ers.usda.gov/publications/efan01008>.)

Because the survey was clustered into a limited number of PSUs, the unadjusted measures of precision produced by standard statistical software programs do not reflect true precision levels. Therefore, we have estimated “design effect” adjustment factors for selected variables. The estimation of these design effects and the design effects themselves are described in appendix B.

# Emergency Kitchens

In many ways, emergency kitchens are the most visible component of the Emergency Food Assistance System (EFAS) network. They tend to serve large numbers of clients at the same time, and many of the people they serve are among the poorest of America's low-income population.<sup>8</sup> In this chapter, we describe these kitchens and their operations. In the next section, we draw on the survey data to estimate the total number of emergency kitchens in operation throughout the United States. The sections that follow describe some of the basic characteristics of these organizations; the meal services, including the number of meals served and policies that may affect the availability of food; and the types of foods typically available in emergency kitchens, including discussion of the types of foods that are reportedly scarce. The final section describes the kitchens' labor and capital resources.

## Number of Kitchens and Meals They Serve Each Day

As noted in chapter 1, there is no national listing of emergency food kitchens. Consequently, there are no definitive data on the number of kitchens in operation. This study has attempted to assemble the most comprehensive list possible of emergency kitchens in the geographic areas covered by the primary sampling units (PSUs), which are typically counties. For these counties, we generally have the best estimates available of the number of operating kitchens. Furthermore, because the sample of PSUs was selected with valid probability sampling methods, it is possible to generalize from the counties covered by the PSUs to the Nation as a whole.

It is highly likely that some kitchens, particularly smaller ones, could have been missed in the sampling work.

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<sup>8</sup>Data in Second Harvest (1998) indicate that 78 percent of households served by emergency kitchens in 1997 had annual incomes below \$11,500. The comparable number for emergency food pantries was 73 percent.

Therefore, in all likelihood, our estimates underestimate the actual number of kitchens operating. Nevertheless, the current estimates provide important new information about the number of emergency kitchens in the EFAS.

### Estimated Number

Table 2.1 presents our estimates of the total number of kitchens operating in the United States.<sup>9</sup> We interviewed 1,438 kitchens that had been identified in the initial listing of the sampling frame in the PSUs for the study. Interviews were also completed with an additional 79 kitchens, which we describe as "secondary sample" because they had not been identified in the initial listing process but were found during the initial interviews.<sup>10</sup> Thus the total interview sample is 1,517.

As described in appendix A, when appropriate survey weights are applied to the sample interviewed, reflecting both sample selection probabilities and the incidence of survey nonresponse, the weighted sum of interviews provides an estimate of the overall number of emergency kitchens in the country: 5,093 kitchens.

However, we believe that an additional adjustment is warranted. We anticipated from the outset of the project that the initial sample listings in the PSUs would not be comprehensive, and other kitchens—the "secondary sample"—were identified during the interviewing. But because the secondary cases were not known at the time of the original listing, they are not fully reflected in the weighting structure based on the initial sampling probabilities. To take this into account, we have made an adjustment for the initial undercoverage, shown in lines 8-10 of the table. Line 8 indicates that for every 100 completions with *primary* sample cases, we also completed 5 with *secondary* sample cases. This suggests that if we had interviewed all the esti-

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<sup>9</sup>Alaska and Hawaii were excluded from the survey.

<sup>10</sup>In some cases the secondary sample was found during calls made to locate the initially listed sample. In other cases, kitchens were identified through questions in the interview itself, which asked respondents for the names of other emergency kitchens in their counties.

mated 3,378 primary sample members we did not interview, an additional 169 kitchens would have been found (that is, 0.05 times 3,378).<sup>11</sup>

While there is no reason to believe this adjustment is precise, we believe it represents a reasonable approximation of the appropriate correction for the initial undercoverage. At a more intuitive level, the fact that the number of eligible secondary sample cases was quite low in relation to the primary sample suggests that the initial listing was reasonably accurate.

Overall, adding the 5,093 estimate from line 7 and the 169 adjustment from line 10 yields an estimated total of emergency kitchens in the United States of approximately 5,262.

### Comparisons With Previous Estimates

There are at least two prior estimates of the number of kitchens in the United States that serve as useful reference points for judging our estimate, one compiled

<sup>11</sup>This conclusion requires the assumptions that (1) all potential secondary cases would here have been identified in this way, and (2) that the ratio of secondary to primary completions would remain constant. While neither would probably hold exactly, we believe that the method yields a reasonable approximation.

through a survey by Second Harvest and one resulting from the recent study by Burt and her colleagues, discussed in chapter 1, of the homeless and the agencies that serve them. Below, we discuss our estimate in the light of the studies.

Based on a survey of providers in the Second Harvest<sup>12</sup> network conducted in 1997, Second Harvest (1998) estimated that 7,698 emergency kitchens are members of its network, which is 46 percent higher than our estimate of 5,269 kitchens. However, several factors would be expected to produce these different estimates, with the effects possible in either direction. On the one hand, the Second Harvest estimate is limited to kitchens in the Second Harvest network, whereas ours includes all emergency kitchens. Although one would therefore expect Second Harvest's estimates to be somewhat lower than ours, the two estimates would not be expected to differ greatly because of this, since, as we will see later in this chapter, most kitchens draw food supplies from Second Harvest food banks. (About 80 percent of kitchens receive food from food banks and approximately 80 percent of food banks are affiliated with Second Harvest.) On the other hand, our

<sup>12</sup>The Second Harvest organization is now called "America's Second Harvest."

**Table 2.1—Estimated number of emergency kitchens in the United States**

Variables	Emergency kitchens <i>Number</i>
<b>Base estimate:</b>	
Actual number of kitchens interviewed	
1. From "locatable" sample	1,438
2. From secondary sample	79
3. Total	1,517
Weighted number of kitchens	
4. From "locatable" sample	4,816
5. From secondary sample	277
6. Total	5,093
7. Estimated kitchens in universe, based directly on interviewing results	5,093
<b>Adjustment for possible undercoverage:</b>	
8. Ratio of potential secondary kitchens to "locatable kitchens"	0.05
9. Estimated number of "locatable kitchens," not directly interviewed	3,378
10. Potential additional "secondary" kitchens	169
<b>Adjusted estimate:</b>	
11. Total estimated kitchens, adjusted for possible undercoverage	5,262

"Locatable kitchens" = Kitchens found in initial sample frame.

"Secondary sample" = Kitchens found through a survey interview.

Lines 1 and 2 are unweighted counts of completions.

Lines 4 and 5 are weighted counts of completions with weights based on sampling probabilities and response rates, as described in appendixes A and E.

Line 7 = line 4 + line 5.

Line 8 = line 2 ÷ line 1.

Line 9 = line 4 - line 1.

Line 10 = line 8 x line 9.

Line 11 = line 7 + line 10.

Source: Based on data from the National Emergency Food Assistance System Survey (2000), weighted tabulations.

estimate excludes certain types of food service operations that are in the Second Harvest estimate, such as Kid Cafes that provide food as part of after-school programs. This factor by itself would set the expected difference in the opposite direction.

Further, the Second Harvest estimate, like ours, is based on survey data, and its results may have been affected by the high rates of nonresponse in the survey it is based on. Fewer than 50 percent of Second Harvest food banks that were asked to participate actually did so, and the response rate at the provider level was also below 50 percent. This could have significantly affected the estimated parameters used to calculate the proportion of all Second Harvest providers that were emergency kitchens.<sup>13</sup>

After taking all these factors into account, we believe that the estimated number of 5,262 emergency kitchens we derived is reasonable, although it may be somewhat on the low side.

Another estimate of the number of emergency kitchens in the country was made by Burt et al. (1999), and theirs falls below ours. In a study that focused on institutions serving the homeless, Burt et al. estimated that there are roughly 4,000 emergency kitchens in the United States.<sup>14</sup> It is likely that their number is some-

<sup>13</sup>The estimate of 7,698 Second Harvest kitchens was derived in Second Harvest (1998) by multiplying the estimated total number of programs in the Second Harvest network (94,093) by the proportion of providers that were estimated to be kitchens (0.082). It is quite sensitive to even a relatively small error in this proportion factor.

<sup>14</sup>Consistent with the definitions being used in the current study, the number 4,000 from the Burt et al. study cited in the text includes both emergency kitchens at fixed locations and mobile kitchens.

what lower than ours because they limited their focus to facilities serving the homeless, but the numbers are close enough to provide additional support to the view that our estimate is of the correct order of magnitude.

### Number of Meals Served

An additional measure of the size of the emergency kitchen network is the number of meals served. As will be discussed in greater detail in the section on meal service characteristics, some emergency kitchens do not operate every day of the week, and most do not serve three meals on the days they are open. Our approach to estimating the total number of meals served during an average day takes these factors into account.

The first column of table 2.2 shows our estimated number of kitchens as 5,262. The second column provides survey-based estimates of the percentages of all emergency kitchens that are open on an average day of the week, for each of the three meals. On an average day, about 38 percent of kitchens provide lunch, the most commonly served meal. Approximately 30 percent serve supper and approximately 23 percent serve breakfast.<sup>15</sup> The third column presents estimates based on our survey of average numbers of clients served at various meals. As shown in the last column, these estimates imply that emergency kitchens provide an average of approximately 474,000 meals per day. As we will see in the discussion on meal service characteristics, it is likely that the number is somewhat greater during weekdays and less on Saturdays and Sundays.

<sup>15</sup>We discuss these estimates in additional detail in the section on meal service characteristics, in which the operations of emergency kitchens are examined more fully. We introduce them here to obtain further estimates of the overall size of the system.

**Table 2.2—Meals served daily by emergency kitchens**

Meal	Estimated number of kitchens	Share of kitchens serving meal on average day <sup>1</sup>	Average number of people served <sup>2</sup>	Number of people served on average day <sup>3</sup>
	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Number</i>	
Breakfast	5,262	23.3	76	93,000
Lunch	5,262	37.5	112	221,000
Supper	5,262	29.5	103	160,000
Total	NA	NA	NA	474,000

<sup>1</sup>Averages were computed from data in table 2.13.

<sup>2</sup>Obtained from table 2.10. The relevant survey question asked about people served, not meals served. The calculations in the table assume one meal per person at any given eating occasion (such as breakfast or lunch). Of course, people can be counted as receiving more than one meal per day in these calculations, if they come for several meals.

<sup>3</sup>Computed as the product of the three preceding columns.

NA = Not applicable.

Source: National Emergency Food Assistance System Survey (2000), weighted tabulations.

## Characteristics of Emergency Kitchens

There is great diversity among America’s emergency kitchens, but there are also some general key themes that are important in understanding how the kitchens operate and the functions they serve. We explore these themes in this section.

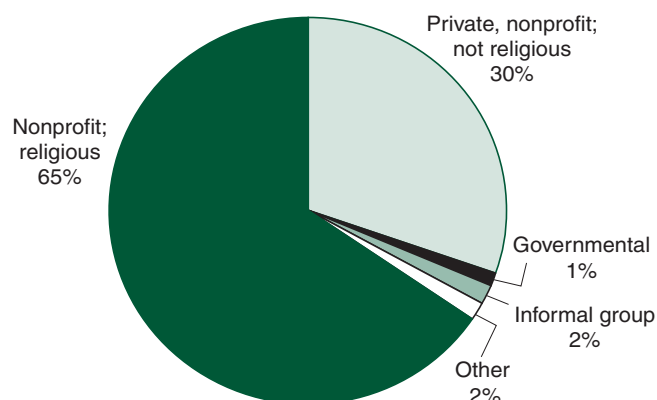
### Basic Characteristics

A substantial majority of emergency kitchens—approximately two-thirds—are operated by faith-based organizations, mostly churches (table 2.3; also shown in fig. 2.1). Most of the other kitchens are operated by nonsectarian, nonprofit organizations. Only a very small number are operated by governmental organizations.<sup>16</sup> (The governmental units include local housing authorities and county social service organizations.)

A substantial number of emergency kitchens are affiliated with one or more national organizations. Approximately one-fourth of respondents indicated a connection with the United Way. About 14 percent indicated that they were affiliated with the Salvation Army, and

<sup>16</sup>This classification is based on a question that read: “Is your emergency kitchen a nonprofit affiliated with a religious group; another private nonprofit organization; governmental; an informal group of people; or something else?”

Figure 2.1  
Types of organizations operating emergency kitchens



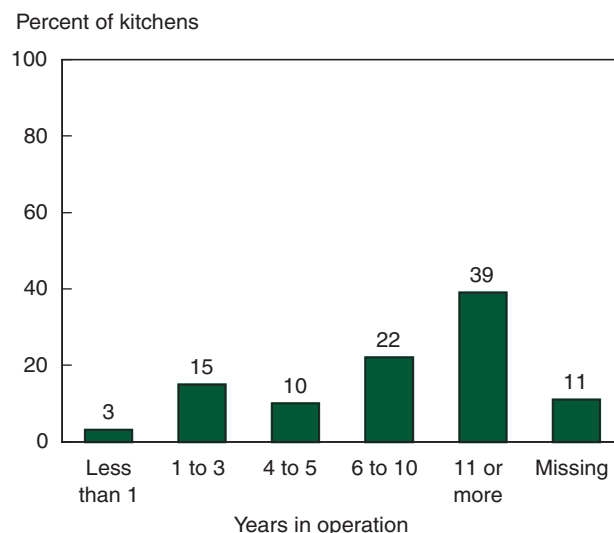
Source: National Emergency Food Assistance System Survey (2000), weighted tabulations.

another 9 percent were affiliated with Catholic Charities. The Red Cross and several other organizations also were mentioned. Although the survey did not collect detailed information about the nature of these reported affiliations, some of them may involve a significant degree of ownership or control by the larger organization, whereas others may principally involve funding relationships. (America’s Second Harvest is not included here as a possible affiliate organization because it is an organization of *food banks*, not kitchens and pantries. Some kitchens and pantries think of themselves as affiliated with America’s Second Harvest, because a food bank from which they obtain food is an affiliate. However, not all kitchens and pantries who receive donations from an America’s Second Harvest food bank think they are affiliated in this way.)

Many emergency kitchens appear to be relatively stable organizations. Roughly three-quarters of the kitchens in our sample had been operating for longer than 5 years, and about 39 percent had been operating for longer than 10 years (fig. 2.2).

Several dynamic change patterns are consistent with these data. On the one hand, kitchens might, over time, move relatively smoothly into and out of the system. On the other hand, two groups of kitchens might exist—one very stable over time, the second characterized by frequent entry and exit of individual kitchens.

Figure 2.2  
Length of time operating as an emergency kitchen



Source: National Emergency Food Assistance System Survey (2000), weighted tabulations.

**Table 2.3—Selected characteristics of emergency kitchens by metropolitan status**

Characteristics	All	Metropolitan status	
		Metropolitan	Nonmetropolitan
		<i>Percent</i>	
<b>Region:</b>			
West	20.6	19.3	28.8
Midwest	24.7	23.7	30.4
South	27.4	27.4	27.5
Northeast	27.4	29.6	14.1
<b>Type of organization</b>			
Nonprofit, associated with religious group	65.5	67.7	52.3
Nonreligious private nonprofit	30.1	28.4	40.5
Informal group of people	1.6	1.2	3.9
Governmental	1.1	1.0	1.9
Other	1.5	1.5	1.5
<b>Selected organizational affiliations<sup>1</sup></b>			
United Way	26.1	25.4	30.4
Salvation Army	14.0	13.8	15.0
Catholic Charities	8.9	9.6	4.4
Red Cross	4.8	4.3	8.4
Other nonprofit organization	18.4	17.7	22.7
<b>Length of time surveyed location has been operating</b>			
Less than 1 year	3.3	2.2	10.0
1 to 3 years	15.0	14.5	18.2
4 to 5 years	9.6	9.8	8.0
6 years or longer			
6 to 10 years	22.3	21.7	26.2
11 to 15 years	12.7	13.8	6.1
16 to 20 years	16.9	17.3	14.6
21 to 25 years	2.7	3.1	0.0
Longer than 25 years	6.8	6.8	7.1
Not specified	10.2	10.4	9.1
Missing data	0.4	0.4	0.6
<b>Programs with which emergency kitchen is co-located<sup>2</sup></b>			
Food pantry	39.5	40.1	36.2
Emergency shelter	6.6	5.6	12.2
Food rescue program	1.4	1.2	2.8
Food bank	1.0	.9	1.9
<b>Reasons originally began operating at current location<sup>3</sup></b>			
Need for new services	79.6	79.8	78.4
Moved to this site from old location	9.4	9.6	8.9
Program expanded, opened this site	3.0	3.4	0.6
Wanted to be closer to clients	4.3	4.5	3.0
Wanted to be closer to transportation	0.1	0.2	0
Untapped sources of prepared or perishable food	0	0	0
Wanted to be closer to food sources	0.1	0.1	0
More affordable location	0.4	0.2	1.9
Forced to move	0.4	0.3	0.6
Parent organization determined site	0.5	0.5	0
Needed larger facility	2.7	2.9	1.9
Needed handicapped accessible facility	0.4	0.2	1.6
Other	12.3	11.5	17.0
<b>Metropolitan status</b>	100.0	85.6	14.4
<b>Sample size (number)</b>	<b>1,517</b>	<b>1,438</b>	<b>79</b>

<sup>1</sup>Categories do not add to 100 percent because many kitchens do not have any organizational affiliations.

<sup>2</sup>Categories do not add to 100 percent because many kitchens are not co-located with another provider.

<sup>3</sup>Categories may sum to more than 100 percent because some kitchens fall into more than one category.

Co-located = Two different programs operating at the same location.

Source: National Emergency Food Assistance System Survey (2000), weighted tabulations.



Alternatively, the data are consistent with the possibility that the number of kitchens entering the system has increased in recent years. We do not have enough information to determine which of these models is more accurate.

Roughly 40 percent of emergency kitchens are co-located with a food pantry. In most instances, it is likely that the pantry is part of the same organization as the emergency kitchen, providing both prepared meals and food for clients to take with them. In other cases, the pantry may be a separate organization operating at the same location.

In order to obtain information on what determines the supply and distribution of emergency kitchen services, respondents were asked why their organizations had originally begun operating at their current locations. By far the most common response—by 80 percent of the respondents—was that the organization had moved to the current location because of a need for additional services in that area. Other common responses were that the organization had moved to the current location from a previous one, that the program had opened at the current site as part of an expansion, and that it wanted to be closer to its clients.

Emergency kitchens operate mostly in metropolitan areas; only about 15 percent are in locations classified by the U.S. Bureau of the Census as nonmetropolitan. However, about one-fifth of the U.S. population and one-fifth of the U.S. population with incomes below the poverty line live in nonmetropolitan locations.<sup>17</sup>

These estimates use the standard Census county-based definition of a metropolitan area (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1991). This classifies the entire population of a given county as either metropolitan or nonmetropolitan. Although the metropolitan-versus-nonmetropolitan distinction cannot be fully equated to urban or rural status, the correlation is high, and the data suggest that emergency kitchens are disproportionately (in relation to the distribution of poor people) an urban phenomenon.

It is likely that this tendency for kitchens to operate more in metropolitan locations partly reflects transportation costs, which are higher in nonmetropolitan

settings. The relatively large proportion of emergency kitchens in metropolitan settings raises the question of adequacy of coverage for low-income households in nonmetropolitan areas. Furthermore, as we will see later, this point is reinforced by the fact that nonmetropolitan kitchens tend to be smaller than their metropolitan counterparts. Issues concerning adequacy of coverage will be examined in detail in chapter 8.

Some emergency kitchens also provide *nonfood* services. As shown in table 2.4 and figure 2.3, about 16 percent provide eligibility counseling related to food stamps or WIC. This relatively low percentage may be of some policy concern; the EFAS would appear to be a natural resource for informing households about USDA nutrition assistance programs and how to gain access to them. These data suggest that this potential is underused.

Other services commonly provided by emergency kitchens include clothing distribution, nutrition counseling, transportation services, and substance-abuse counseling. For most services, more metropolitan than nonmetropolitan kitchens reported offering these services; however, transportation services were much more likely to be offered by nonmetropolitan kitchens. This pattern of findings may reflect the different demographic composition and needs of metropolitan and nonmetropolitan EFAS clients.

Where a kitchen does not provide nonfood services, other organizations at the same location may do so. This was true at 23 percent of the kitchens. The survey did not collect data on the nature of these services.

Table 2.5 shows characteristics of neighborhoods in which the kitchens are located; the neighborhoods are based on their five-digit ZIP Codes. These data confirm that emergency kitchens tend to be clustered in areas of high poverty concentration. For instance, in the Nation as a whole, only about 8 percent of five-digit ZIP Code areas have more than 30 percent of their populations below the poverty line. However, this is true of approximately 22 percent of five-digit ZIP Codes where kitchens in the sample were located. The data also indicate high concentrations of minorities in many of the neighborhoods where kitchens are located. In the country as a whole, only about 8 percent of ZIP Code areas are more than 30 percent African American. However, 22 percent of kitchens are located in ZIP Code areas with higher concentrations of African Americans.

<sup>17</sup>U.S. Census Bureau, *Current Population Survey*, Series P-60, Table 15.

**Table 2.4—Nonfood services offered by emergency kitchens by metropolitan status**

Service	All	Metropolitan status	
		Metropolitan	Nonmetropolitan
<i>Percent</i>			
<b>Nonfood services offered<sup>1</sup></b>			
Eligibility counseling for food stamps or WIC	16.0	16.4	13.4
Employment training for agencies/clients	18.5	18.8	16.2
Employment training for other people	12.1	12.1	12.0
Distribution of furniture or clothing	52.9	54.1	45.7
Transportation services	30.1	28.2	41.5
Substance abuse counseling	27.2	27.5	26.0
Housing or shelter <sup>2</sup>	24.3	23.0	32.4
Nutrition counseling or nutrition education	24.4	25.3	19.2
Health services	19.5	20.0	16.2
Basic adult education	18.5	18.8	16.7
Language translation, including sign language	15.0	16.1	8.5
Consumer counseling and assistance	12.9	13.3	10.2
Supported employment	12.0	11.9	12.7
Legal or accounting services	8.0	7.8	9.1
Missing data	1.6	1.5	1.9
<b>Number of nonfood services offered</b>			
0	25.6	24.7	31.0
1 to 2	31.5	32.2	27.5
3 to 5	22.4	22.7	20.6
More than 5	18.9	18.9	18.9
Missing data	1.6	1.5	1.2
<b>Does any other organization provide nonfood services at the site?</b>			
Yes	22.6	23.2	18.6
No	76.3	75.7	80.4
Missing data	1.1	1.1	1.0
<b>Sample size (number)</b>	<b>1,517</b>	<b>1,438</b>	<b>79</b>

<sup>1</sup>Categories sum to more than 100 percent because some kitchens provided more than one response.

<sup>2</sup>Refers in general to counseling and referral services—most kitchens do not directly provide housing services, and only 6.7 percent are at shelters.

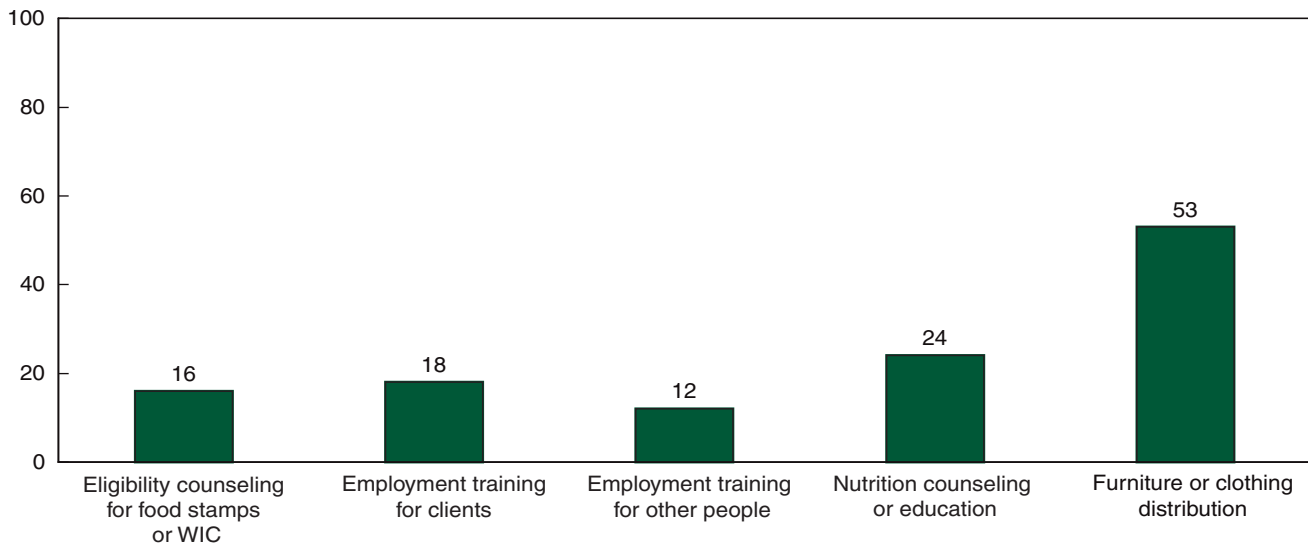
WIC = Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children.

Source: National Emergency Food Assistance System Survey (2000), weighted tabulations.

Figure 2.3

**Selected nonfood services offered by emergency kitchens**

Percent of kitchens



Source: National Emergency Food Assistance System Survey (2000), weighted tabulations.

## Characteristics by Size of Kitchen and Region

In order to examine whether basic operating characteristics varied according to kitchen size, we constructed a rough indicator of size based largely on the maximum number of clients a kitchen reported typically serving at a single meal service in a day. Kitchens were classified as “small” if their largest meal service provided fewer than 60 meals on a typical day, “medium” if they provided between 60 and 120 meals, and “large” if they provided more than 120 meals. If we had insufficient information to base the analysis solely on the number of meals served, then we also took the number of full-time staff into account.<sup>18</sup>

As indicated in tables 2.6 and 2.7, in general, basic operating characteristics were quite similar across the three groups. For example, at all size levels, most emergency kitchens have been operating for longer than 5 years and most are run as nonprofit organizations associated with religious groups. Moreover,

roughly 35 percent of the kitchens in each size group are co-located with food pantries.

Metropolitan location, however, is one characteristic that does vary by size. Large kitchens are much more likely to be located in urban areas than are small kitchens (roughly, 93 percent compared with 75 percent). Thus nonmetropolitan populations seem to be disproportionately underserved by emergency kitchens in two ways. First, we saw earlier that, in relation to households in poverty, there are proportionately fewer kitchens in nonmetropolitan areas. Second, as shown here, those kitchens that *are* in nonmetropolitan areas tend to serve fewer clients than their metropolitan counterparts.

Relatively little variation was found when the sample was examined after dividing it among the major regions of the country (tables 2.8 and 2.9). One interesting exception is that the frequency with which emergency kitchens provide eligibility counseling for USDA programs such as food stamps and WIC seems to be higher in the Northeast (table 2.9). It is not clear why this might be, but it may warrant further research, given the recent emphasis on ensuring that all eligible households have access to these programs if they need them.

<sup>18</sup>The precise classification algorithm is described in appendix D.

**Table 2.5—Characteristics of ZIP Code areas where emergency kitchens are located**

Characteristics of ZIP Code area	All U.S. ZIP Codes	Emergency kitchens	Metropolitan status	
			Metropolitan	Nonmetropolitan
<i>Percent</i>				
<b>Percent of people below poverty</b>				
Less than 20	77.5	55.9	52.5	76.2
20 to 30	14.4	14.6	15.6	8.5
More than 30	8.1	22.4	25.0	6.8
Missing data	0.0	7.1	6.9	8.5
<b>Percent White</b>				
Less than 70	12.9	41.5	46.6	11.7
70 to 80	6.2	9.2	9.9	5.6
More than 80	80.9	42.1	36.7	74.2
Missing data	0.0	7.1	6.9	8.5
<b>Percent African American</b>				
Less than 10	81.8	40.8	35.7	71.6
10 to 30	10.0	21.2	22.9	10.9
More than 30	8.2	30.9	34.6	9.1
Missing data	0.0	7.1	6.9	8.5
<b>Percent other races</b>				
Less than 5	80.4	51.7	48.7	69.8
5 to 15	12.2	24.0	24.7	20.0
More than 15	7.5	17.2	19.8	1.7
Missing data	0.0	7.1	6.9	8.5
<b>Sample size (number)</b>	<b>NA</b>	<b>1,517</b>	<b>1,438</b>	<b>79</b>

NA = Not Applicable.

Source: National Emergency Food Assistance System Survey (2000), weighted tabulations, and U.S. 1990 Decennial Census data.

**Table 2.6—Selected characteristics of emergency kitchens by size of kitchen**

Characteristics	All	Size of kitchen		
		Small	Medium	Large
			<i>Percent</i>	
<b>Region</b>				
West	20.6	19.0	18.1	25.2
Midwest	24.7	25.5	28.1	20.2
South	27.4	31.5	21.9	27.7
Northeast	27.4	24.1	31.9	27.0
<b>Metropolitan status</b>				
Metropolitan	85.6	74.7	90.7	93.5
Nonmetropolitan	14.4	25.3	9.3	6.5
<b>Type of organization</b>				
Nonprofit, associated with religious groups	65.5	59.4	71.1	67.2
Nonreligious private nonprofit	30.1	34.8	25.9	28.8
Informal group of people	1.6	1.8	1.4	1.6
Governmental	1.1	2.0	0.6	0.6
Other	1.5	2.0	0.9	1.6
<b>Selected organizational affiliations<sup>1</sup></b>				
United Way	26.1	25.8	26.8	26.1
Salvation Army	14.0	16.0	14.5	11.2
Catholic Charities	8.9	6.3	10.6	10.1
Red Cross	4.8	6.1	4.7	3.6
Other nonprofit organization	18.4	18.7	17.7	18.8
<b>Length of time survey location has been operating</b>				
Less than 1 year	3.3	3.6	3.3	2.9
1 to 3 years	15.0	19.6	12.5	11.6
4 to 5 years	9.6	18.7	8.5	9.1
6 years or longer				
6 to 10 years	22.3	21.9	26.3	19.2
11 to 15 years	12.7	10.3	14.2	14.5
16 to 20 years	16.9	16.1	14.9	19.9
21 to 25 years	2.7	1.9	2.9	3.5
Longer than 25 years	6.8	5.4	5.6	10.0
Not specified	10.2	10.3	11.5	8.7
Missing data	0.4	0.3	0.4	0.5
<b>Program with which emergency kitchen is co-located<sup>2</sup></b>				
Food pantry	39.5	41.8	38.2	37.7
Emergency shelter	6.6	10.8	3.0	4.6
Food rescue program	1.4	2.3	0.3	1.6
Food bank	1.0	0.8	0.1	2.3
<b>Reasons originally began operating at current location<sup>3</sup></b>				
Need for new services	79.6	79.0	82.2	77.7
Moved to this site from old location	9.5	9.0	7.8	11.9
Wanted to be closer to clients	4.3	4.9	4.9	2.8
Program expanded, opened this site	3.0	1.9	3.3	3.8
Needed larger facility	2.7	2.8	1.8	3.7
Parent organization determined site	0.5	0.7	0.5	0.2
Needed handicapped accessible facility	0.4	0.5	0.4	0.1
More affordable location	0.4	0.2	0.2	1.0
Forced to move	0.4	0.1	0.3	0.8
Wanted to be closer to transportation	0.1	0.3	0.0	0.1
Wanted to be closer to food sources	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.4
Untapped sources of prepared or perishable food	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Other	12.4	14.3	11.3	11.6
<b>Sample size (number)</b>	<b>1,517</b>	<b>471</b>	<b>495</b>	<b>540</b>

<sup>1</sup>Categories do not add to 100 percent because many kitchens do not have any organizational affiliations. <sup>2</sup>Categories do not add to 100 percent because many kitchens are not co-located with another provider. <sup>3</sup>Categories may add to more than 100 percent because some kitchens provided more than one response.

Co-located = Two different organizations operating at the same location.

Notes: Size variable is based on meals typically served, staffing, and amounts of food used. In general, "small" kitchens serve fewer than 60 people at a meal; "medium" kitchens serve 60 to 120 people; and "large" kitchens serve more than 120 people.

The sample numbers for kitchen sizes do not sum to the total sample because some kitchens did not provide answers and are not included.

Source: National Emergency Food Assistance System Survey (2000), weighted tabulations.

**Table 2.7—Nonfood services offered by emergency kitchens by size of kitchen**

Services	All	Size of kitchen		
		Small	Medium	Large
			<i>Percent</i>	
<b>Nonfood services offered<sup>1</sup></b>				
Eligibility counseling for food stamps or WIC	16.0	19.1	12.6	15.9
Employment training for agencies/clients	18.5	20.1	17.1	18.1
Employment training for other people	12.1	12.4	9.7	14.4
Distribution of furniture or clothing	52.9	49.6	51.0	58.3
Transportation services	30.1	30.5	31.1	28.4
Substance abuse counseling	27.2	29.9	23.1	27.8
Housing or shelter <sup>2</sup>	24.3	30.4	19.1	22.1
Nutrition counseling or nutrition education	24.4	26.9	26.0	19.5
Health services	19.5	17.8	16.2	24.3
Basic adult education	18.5	22.0	14.4	18.8
Language translation, including sign language	15.0	15.1	11.1	19.1
Consumer counseling and assistance	12.9	16.1	11.0	11.2
Supported employment	12.0	12.3	10.4	13.5
Legal or accounting services	8.0	7.0	5.1	12.0
Missing data	1.6	2.4	1.6	0.4
<b>Does any other organization provide nonfood services at the site?</b>				
Yes	22.6	16.8	23.6	29.2
No	76.3	82.0	76.1	69.1
Missing data	1.1	1.2	0.3	1.8
<b>Sample size (number)</b>	<b>1,517</b>	<b>471</b>	<b>495</b>	<b>540</b>

<sup>1</sup>Categories sum to more than 100 percent because some kitchens provided more than one response.

<sup>2</sup>Refers in general to counseling referral services—most kitchens do not directly provide housing services, and only 6.7 percent are at shelters.

WIC = Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children.

Notes: Size variable is defined on the basis of meals typically served, staffing, and amounts of food used. In general, "small" kitchens serve fewer than 60 people at a meal; "medium" kitchens serve 60 to 120 people; and "large" kitchens serve more than 120 people.

The sample numbers for kitchen sizes do not sum to the total sample because some kitchens did not provide answers and are not included.

Source: National Emergency Food Assistance System Survey (2000), weighted tabulations.

**Table 2.8—Selected characteristics of emergency kitchens by region**

Characteristics	All	Region			
		West	Midwest	South	Northeast
			<i>Percent</i>		
<b>Size of kitchen</b>					
Small	37.3	34.4	38.4	42.8	32.8
Medium	31.4	27.6	35.8	25.0	36.6
Large	30.7	37.6	25.1	31.0	30.2
Missing data	0.6	0.3	0.7	1.1	0.3
<b>Type of organization</b>					
Nonprofit, associated with religious group	65.5	55.7	66.7	69.4	68.0
Nonreligious private nonprofit	30.1	39.4	27.2	27.6	28.4
Informal group of people	1.6	1.9	3.8	0.2	0.8
Governmental	1.1	0.9	1.6	0.8	1.2
Other	1.5	2.1	0.7	2.0	1.3
<b>Selected organizational affiliations<sup>1</sup></b>					
United Way	26.1	21.4	24.3	24.9	32.5
Salvation Army	13.9	14.4	15.1	13.6	13.0
Red Cross	4.8	4.9	6.8	4.5	3.4
Other nonprofit organization	18.4	18.0	13.2	16.3	25.4
<b>Length of time surveyed location has been operating</b>					
Less than 1 year	3.3	3.3	4.0	4.2	1.7
1 to 3 years	15.0	11.1	12.7	20.9	14.2
4 to 5 years	9.6	8.2	6.7	12.7	10.1
6 years or longer					
6 to 10 years	22.3	22.9	19.6	22.9	23.7
11 to 15 years	12.7	14.3	12.0	10.3	14.7
16 to 20 years	16.9	17.4	19.3	12.2	19.2
21 to 25 years	2.7	2.3	3.4	2.0	2.9
Longer than 25 years	6.8	10.1	8.1	6.2	3.8
Not specified	10.2	9.8	14.2	8.1	9.1
Missing data	0.4	0.7	0.0	0.3	0.6
<b>Programs with which emergency kitchen is co-located<sup>2</sup></b>					
Food pantry	39.5	37.1	36.6	48.8	34.6
Emergency shelter	6.6	7.6	7.1	7.0	4.8
Food rescue program	1.4	1.7	1.9	1.4	0.8
Food bank	1.0	3.2	0.4	0.5	0.6
<b>Reasons originally began operating at current location<sup>3</sup></b>					
Need for new services	79.6	71.5	78.3	82.4	84.3
Moved to this site from old location	9.5	15.0	9.1	8.9	6.1
Program expanded, opened this site	3.0	5.1	2.3	1.8	3.3
Wanted to be closer to clients	4.3	5.3	3.3	4.7	4.1
Wanted to be closer to transportation	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.0	0.2
Untapped sources of prepared or perishable food	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Wanted to be closer to food sources	0.1	0.6	0.0	0.0	0.0
More affordable location	0.4	1.7	0.3	0.1	0.0
Forced to move	0.4	1.3	0.0	0.1	0.2
Parent organization determined site	0.5	0.3	0.0	0.5	0.7
Needed larger facility	2.7	4.2	2.9	1.5	2.7
Needed handicapped accessible facility	0.4	0.0	0.6	0.6	0.2
Other	12.3	15.5	11.5	13.3	10.2
<b>Sample size (number)</b>	<b>1,517</b>	<b>340</b>	<b>357</b>	<b>385</b>	<b>435</b>

<sup>1</sup>Categories do not add to 100 percent because many kitchens do not have any organizational affiliations.

<sup>2</sup>Categories do not add to 100 percent because many kitchens are not co-located with another provider.

<sup>3</sup>Categories may sum to more than 100 percent because some kitchens fall into more than one category.

Co-located = Two different programs operating at the same location.

Note: Size variable is based on meals typically served, staffing, and amounts of food used. In general, "small" kitchens serve fewer than 60 people at a meal; medium kitchens serve 60 to 120 people; and "large" kitchens serve more than 120 people.

Source: National Emergency Food Assistance System Survey (2000), weighted tabulations.

**Table 2.9—Nonfood services offered by emergency kitchens by region**

Service	All	Region				
		West	Midwest	South	Northeast	
			<i>Percent</i>			
<b>Nonfood services offered<sup>1</sup></b>						
Eligibility counseling for food stamps or WIC	16.0	16.3	11.5	14.2	21.6	
Employment training for agencies/clients	18.5	22.9	12.9	20.2	18.3	
Employment training for other people	12.1	14.6	8.4	13.1	12.5	
Distribution of furniture or clothing	52.9	53.5	50.7	50.4	56.9	
Transportation services	30.1	34.1	29.7	36.1	21.7	
Substance abuse counseling	27.2	33.6	16.6	30.8	28.5	
Housing or shelter <sup>2</sup>	24.3	32.4	21.0	28.4	17.3	
Nutrition counseling or nutrition education	24.4	24.1	19.0	24.9	29.1	
Health services	19.5	25.9	17.6	17.1	18.7	
Basic adult education	18.5	22.0	12.9	21.5	17.9	
Language translation, including sign language	15.0	22.8	8.5	12.6	17.3	
Consumer counseling and assistance	12.9	15.6	8.1	16.0	12.1	
Supported employment	12.0	12.6	8.8	13.0	13.6	
Legal or accounting services	8.0	11.5	4.3	6.4	10.4	
Missing data	0.6	2.7	1.3	1.0	1.7	
<b>Does any other organization provide nonfood services at the site?</b>						
Yes	22.6	27.2	18.9	22.2	22.7	
No	76.3	71.6	80.3	76.4	76.1	
Missing data	1.1	1.1	0.7	1.3	1.2	
<b>Sample size (number)</b>	<b>1,517</b>	<b>340</b>	<b>357</b>	<b>385</b>	<b>435</b>	

<sup>1</sup>Categories sum to more than 100 percent because some kitchens provided more than one response.

<sup>2</sup>Refers in general to counseling and referral services—most kitchens do not directly provide housing services, and only 6.7 percent are at shelters.

WIC = Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children.

Note: Size variable is defined on the basis of meals typically served, staffing, and amounts of food used. In general, “small” kitchens serve fewer than 60 people at a meal; “medium” kitchens serve 60 to 120 people; and “large” kitchens serve more than 120 people.

Source: National Emergency Food Assistance System Survey (2000), weighted tabulations.

## Meal Service Characteristics of Kitchens

Meal service characteristics vary substantially across kitchens. Most emergency kitchens do not serve meals every day of the week. About one-third serve only 1 day per week, and 14 percent serve meals 2 or 3 days per week (table 2.10). Approximately 51 percent serve meals 4 or more days per week (fig. 2.4).

More than 80 percent of kitchens serve meals on at least some weekdays, but only about half operate on weekends. These findings raise issues of possible undercoverage on weekend days. However, it is possible that some kitchens jointly organize their weekend schedules to try to provide sufficient coverage. We discuss these issues in greater detail in chapter 8.

About 10 percent of kitchens use mobile vans to distribute their meals. This is considerably more common in nonmetropolitan areas, which may reflect the greater dispersion of people needing meals in those areas. Kitchens located in metropolitan areas are about half as likely as those in nonmetropolitan areas to distribute food with vans.

Emergency kitchen staff at most of the kitchens interviewed (73 percent) apportion the food served rather

than permitting clients to serve themselves, and food availability generally appears to be adequate—70 percent of kitchens indicated that “seconds” are always or usually available. About half the kitchens that offered seconds did so on all items, and about half had seconds of only some items.

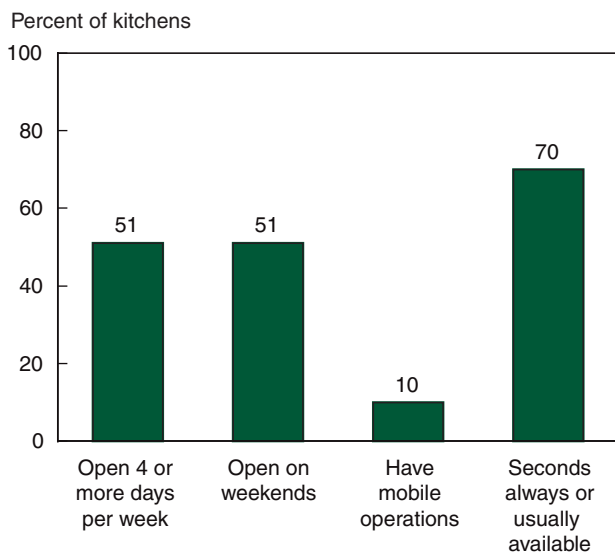
When respondents were asked how they dealt with the possibility of more people arriving for a meal than had been planned for, more than half said they prepared more food. About 15 percent said they reduced portions.

The number of people served varies considerably across kitchens. We focus here on lunches, which are the most commonly served meal; however, our general conclusions apply to the other meals as well. Many kitchens are quite small; about 33 percent serve fewer than 50 at a typical lunch. In contrast, about 14 percent of kitchens serve more than 200 lunches per day, with some serving as many as 600 or 700.<sup>19</sup> As a frame of reference, the food service in a typical suburban

<sup>19</sup>The survey questions were asked in terms of people served at each food service occasion. However, reviewers of this report have suggested that it is possible that some respondents may have been thinking about meals served, including seconds, rather than people. Thus, there could be a tendency for the reported numbers to be biased upward somewhat, though we do not believe this effect is substantial.

Figure 2.4

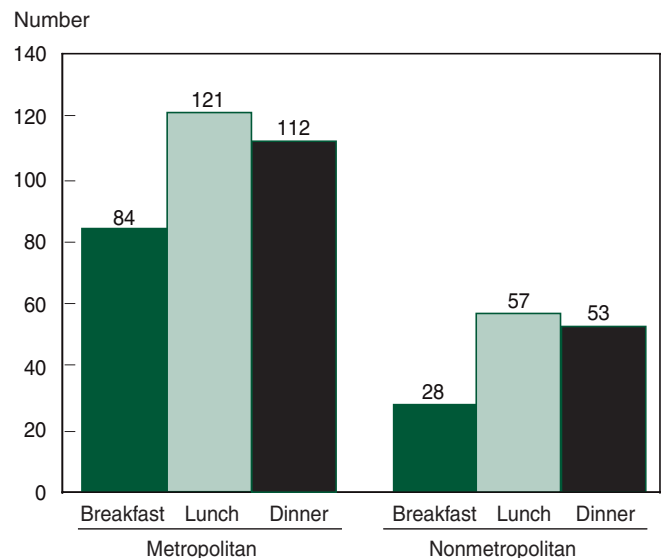
### Selected meal service characteristics of emergency kitchens



Source: National Emergency Food Assistance System Survey (2000), weighted tabulations.

Figure 2.5

### Average number of people served each meal type in emergency kitchens by metropolitan status



Source: National Emergency Food Assistance System Survey (2000), weighted tabulations.



elementary school might feed around 350 children on a typical day.<sup>20</sup>

The median number of people receiving lunch service in the metropolitan kitchens was 75, compared with 40 in nonmetropolitan areas. The means were 121 and 57, respectively (fig. 2.5). The larger disparity in the means, relative to the medians, reflects greater skewedness of the metropolitan distribution, which has a number of very large kitchens that serve several hundred clients each.

In general, most of the meal service characteristics appear to be reasonably similar when the data are cross-tabulated by kitchen size (table 2.11). Moreover, as indicated in table 2.12, meal service characteristics are quite similar in different regions of the country.

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<sup>20</sup>The example assumes that a typical elementary school has about 600 students and that approximately 60 percent would buy lunch on an average day.

Table 2.13 displays the percentages of kitchens serving each type of meal on any given day of the week.

Meal service patterns are quite similar on weekdays, with a slight tendency for more kitchens to serve meals on Wednesdays. Each type of meal is noticeably less available on weekends.

An important set of policy concerns revolves around the degree to which all low-income people have effective access to the EFAS. To explore this issue, we asked emergency kitchen staffs whether they had explicit policies as to who could receive food. Only about 15 percent of respondents reported having such policies (table 2.14). Excluding clients who were disruptive or had substance abuse problems was the policy most commonly reported, by 38 percent of respondents who had policies. Other kitchens based exclusions on other criteria, with geographic service areas and income requirements the most commonly mentioned ones. Restricting services to special target groups, such as the elderly or households with children, was also mentioned.

**Table 2.10—Selected food distribution characteristics of emergency kitchens by metropolitan status**

Distribution characteristics	All	Metropolitan status	
		Metropolitan	Nonmetropolitan
		<i>Percent</i>	
<b>Metropolitan status</b>	100.0	85.6	14.4
<b>Days per week serving meals</b>			
1	33.1	34.6	24.2
2 or 3	13.8	13.5	15.3
4 or 5	22.2	22.2	21.8
6 or 7	28.5	27.1	36.7
Missing data	2.5	2.5	2.0
<b>Days with meal service</b>			
Weekdays only	46.6	47.3	42.3
Weekend only	15.8	16.3	12.4
Weekdays and weekend	35.2	33.8	43.3
Missing data	2.5	2.5	2.0
<b>Meal type</b>			
Breakfast	30.0	29.9	31.0
Lunch	66.1	65.7	68.5
Supper	52.3	50.8	61.2
Snack	11.1	10.3	16.2
<b>Meal service delivery</b>			
Meals served only at kitchen	89.4	90.8	80.7
Meals served only via mobile vans	2.1	2.1	2.0
Meals served at kitchen and via mobile vans	8.3	6.8	17.3
Missing data	0.3	0.3	0.0
<b>Food portioning</b>			
Kitchen/mobile operation staff determine food portions	73.7	74.2	68.2
Clients determine food portions	17.9	17.2	22.0
Kitchen/mobile operation staff, clients determine portions	6.3	6.2	7.1
Other	0.2	0.3	0.0
Missing data	2.3	2.3	2.6
<b>Availability of seconds</b>			
Always or usually	69.8	68.7	76.8
Sometimes	19.5	20.2	15.3
Seldom or never	8.2	8.7	5.3
Missing data	2.5	2.5	2.6
<b>Items available as seconds<sup>1</sup></b>			
All items	52.4	49.4	70.0
Some items	46.2	49.4	28.1
Missing data	1.3	1.2	1.9
<b>Ways of dealing with the possibility that more people than planned for come to a meal</b>			
Change what we serve people at end of line	8.1	57.5	3.0
Reduce size of portions	5.5	13.7	4.4
Always plan for more people and prepare extra food	25.8	9.0	24.2
Prepare more food	58.0	5.7	60.8
Other	14.2	26.1	17.5

See notes at end of table.

—Continued

**Table 2.10—Selected food distribution characteristics of emergency kitchens by metropolitan status—Continued**

Distribution characteristics	All	Metropolitan status	
		Metropolitan	Nonmetropolitan
		<i>Percent</i>	
<b>Average number of people receiving breakfast on a typical day at kitchens serving breakfast (N = 494)</b>			
1 to 24	27.6	23.0	53.1
25 to 49	22.6	22.4	23.4
50 to 74	15.4	16.8	7.6
75 to 99	8.0	9.5	0.0
100 to 199	14.9	16.0	8.6
200 or more	8.5	10.0	0.0
Missing data	3.0	2.2	7.4
(Mean)	(76.0)	(84.2)	(27.7)
(Median)	(45.0)	(50.0)	(20.0)
<b>Average number of people receiving lunch on a typical day at kitchens serving lunch (N = 1,068)</b>			
1 to 24	12.2	10.3	22.8
25 to 49	20.5	18.0	34.7
50 to 74	17.5	17.2	19.4
75 to 99	10.4	11.6	3.2
100 to 199	22.8	24.3	14.2
200 or more	14.5	16.6	2.2
Missing data	2.2	2.0	3.4
(Mean)	(111.8)	(121.2)	(58.0)
(Median)	(70.0)	(75.0)	(40.0)
<b>Average number of people receiving supper on a typical day at kitchens serving supper (N = 777)</b>			
1 to 24	12.7	11.3	19.8
25 to 49	19.5	18.1	26.7
50 to 74	18.8	17.3	26.6
75 to 99	11.8	12.2	9.7
100 to 199	20.6	23.4	6.2
200 or more	13.0	14.8	3.9
Missing data	3.6	2.9	7.1
(Mean)	(103.0)	(112.1)	(53.4)
(Median)	(65.0)	(75.0)	(45.0)
<b>Average number of people receiving a snack on a typical day at kitchens serving snacks (N = 168)</b>			
1 to 24	35.6	31.1	52.0
25 to 49	26.6	23.5	37.9
50 to 74	19.1	21.5	10.1
75 to 99	3.7	4.7	0.0
100 or more	11.7	13.9	0.0
Missing data	3.3	4.2	0.0
(Mean)	(45.7)	(52.5)	(21.7)
(Median)	(30.0)	(38.0)	(23.0)
<b>Sample size (number)</b>	<b>1,517</b>	<b>1,438</b>	<b>79</b>

<sup>1</sup>If seconds are available.

Note: All tabulations include meals served in mobile operations.

Source: National Emergency Food Assistance System Survey 2000, weighted tabulations.

**Table 2.11—Selected food distribution characteristics of emergency kitchens by size of kitchen**

Distribution characteristics	All	Size of kitchen		
		Small	Medium	Large
			<i>Percent</i>	
<b>Size of kitchen</b>	100.0	37.3	31.4	30.0
<b>Days per week serving meals</b>				
1	33.1	26.9	38.9	35.2
2 or 3	13.8	14.1	15.5	11.6
4 or 5	22.2	23.2	23.5	19.6
6 or 7	28.5	33.6	19.8	31.0
Missing data	2.5	2.2	2.4	2.6
<b>Days with meal service</b>				
Weekdays only	46.6	44.3	54.5	41.6
Weekend only	15.8	13.5	17.2	17.2
Weekdays and weekend	35.2	40.0	26.0	38.6
Missing data	2.5	2.2	2.4	2.6
<b>Meal type</b>				
Breakfast	30.0	35.4	23.3	30.3
Lunch	66.1	65.1	64.5	69.0
Supper	52.3	58.6	48.9	48.3
Snack	11.1	16.3	8.8	6.8
<b>Meal service delivery</b>				
Meals served only at kitchen	89.4	91.0	92.3	84.4
Meals served only via mobile vans	2.1	2.0	1.9	2.4
Meals served at kitchen and via mobile vans	8.3	6.4	5.8	13.1
Missing data	0.3	0.6	0.0	0.1
<b>Food portioning</b>				
Kitchen/mobile operation staff determine food portions	73.7	65.6	77.1	78.4
Clients determine food portions	17.9	23.7	14.9	14.1
Kitchen/mobile operation staff/clients determine portions	6.3	8.5	5.1	5.0
Other	0.2	0.0	0.7	0.0
Missing data	2.3	2.2	2.2	2.5
<b>Availability of seconds</b>				
Always or usually	69.8	75.6	67.3	65.4
Sometimes	19.5	15.9	23.0	20.4
Seldom or never	8.2	6.2	7.4	11.4
Missing data	2.5	2.2	2.3	2.8
<b>Items available as seconds<sup>1</sup></b>				
All items	52.4	54.1	49.7	53.1
Some items	46.2	44.6	49.2	45.4
Missing data	1.3	1.3	1.1	1.6
<b>Ways of dealing with the possibility that more people than planned for come to a meal</b>				
Prepare more food	58.0	59.3	56.9	58.1
Always plan for more people and prepare extra food	25.8	24.9	25.6	27.0
Change what we serve people at end of line	8.1	6.7	10.7	7.3
Reduce size of portions	5.5	5.1	5.7	5.7
Other	14.2	18.0	11.7	12.0
<b>Sample size (number)</b>	<b>1,518</b>	<b>472</b>	<b>495</b>	<b>540</b>

<sup>1</sup>If seconds are available.

Notes: Size variable is based on meals typically served, staffing, and amounts of food used. In general, "small" kitchens serve fewer than 60 people at a meal; "medium" kitchens serve 60 to 120 people; and "large" kitchens serve more than 120 people.

The sample numbers for kitchen sizes do not sum to the total sample because some kitchens did not provide answers and are not included.

Source: National Emergency Food Assistance System Survey (2000), weighted tabulations.

**Table 2.12—Selected food distribution characteristics of emergency kitchens by region**

Distribution characteristics	All	Region			
		West	Midwest	South	Northeast
			<i>Percent</i>		
<b>Region</b>	100.0	20.6	24.7	27.4	27.4
<b>Days per week serving meals</b>					
1	33.1	24.2	36.9	30.5	39.0
2 or 3	13.8	11.8	15.0	12.1	15.9
4 or 5	22.2	21.6	22.7	20.4	23.9
6 or 7	28.5	40.3	22.9	33.6	19.4
Missing data	2.5	2.1	2.5	3.4	1.8
<b>Days with meal service</b>					
Weekdays only	46.6	40.8	52.6	45.3	46.8
Weekdays and weekend	35.2	45.6	30.1	39.5	27.6
Weekend only	15.8	11.5	14.8	11.8	23.8
Missing data	2.5	2.1	2.5	3.4	1.8
<b>Meal type</b>					
Breakfast	30.0	41.3	22.5	35.6	22.8
Lunch	66.1	70.5	60.7	66.8	67.1
Supper	52.3	56.9	56.6	53.7	43.7
Snack	11.1	12.8	8.0	16.7	7.0
<b>Meal service delivery</b>					
Meals served only at kitchen	89.4	84.7	92.5	85.6	93.8
Meals served at kitchen and via mobile vans	8.3	12.7	5.6	11.3	4.4
Meals served only via mobile vans	2.1	2.1	1.9	2.5	1.8
Missing data	0.3	0.5	0.0	0.6	0.0
<b>Food portioning</b>					
Kitchen/mobile operation staff determine food portions	73.7	70.4	72.5	71.0	78.6
Clients determine food portions	17.9	21.5	19.1	18.4	13.5
Kitchen/mobile operation staff, clients determine portions	6.3	5.6	6.1	7.7	5.7
Other	0.2	0.3	0.4	0.0	0.3
Missing data	2.3	2.3	1.9	3.0	2.0
<b>Availability of seconds</b>					
Always or usually	69.8	70.4	77.9	64.2	67.8
Sometimes	19.5	16.3	14.0	24.3	21.8
Seldom or never	8.2	10.6	5.9	8.5	8.1
Missing data	2.5	2.7	2.1	3.0	2.3
<b>Items available as seconds<sup>1</sup></b>					
All items	52.4	52.1	60.3	46.0	51.7
Some items	46.2	46.8	38.5	53.2	46.2
Missing data	1.3	1.1	1.2	0.8	2.1
<b>Ways of dealing with the possibility that more people than planned for come to a meal</b>					
Prepare more food	58.0	56.4	56.8	58.8	59.5
Always plan for more people and prepare extra food	25.8	25.5	27.8	21.4	28.7
Change what we serve people at end of line	8.1	6.2	9.3	8.0	8.7
Reduce size of portions	5.5	8.9	5.1	5.3	3.3
Other	14.2	16.0	14.5	15.4	11.4

See notes at end of table.

—Continued

**Table 2.12—Selected food distribution characteristics of emergency kitchens by region—Continued**

Distribution characteristics	All	Region			
		West	Midwest	South	Northeast
			<i>Percent</i>		
<b>Average number of people receiving breakfast on a typical day at kitchens serving breakfast (N = 494)</b>					
1 to 24	27.6	30.6	25.8	28.5	23.8
25 to 49	22.6	15.3	20.9	29.1	23.9
50 to 74	15.4	12.0	18.1	16.8	15.5
75 to 99	8.0	8.6	9.9	3.6	12.4
100 to 199	14.9	18.9	7.9	16.5	13.0
200 or more	8.5	12.1	11.0	4.2	8.0
Missing data	3.0	2.5	6.3	1.3	3.5
(Mean)	(76.0)	(96.5)	(74.5)	(57.6)	(78.0)
(Median)	(45.0)	(50.0)	(50.0)	(40.0)	(50.0)
<b>Average number of people receiving lunch on a typical day at kitchens serving lunch (N = 1,068)</b>					
1 to 24	12.2	14.4	13.9	16.6	4.4
25 to 49	20.5	23.5	15.8	22.0	20.4
50 to 74	17.5	11.8	24.4	17.4	16.5
75 to 99	10.4	5.8	9.1	10.3	15.2
100 to 199	22.8	23.0	22.1	16.7	29.3
200 or more	14.5	19.0	11.4	15.3	12.5
Missing data	2.2	2.5	3.2	1.7	1.7
(Mean)	(111.8)	(135.3)	(101.7)	(98.6)	(114.7)
(Median)	(70.0)	(70.0)	(65.0)	(60.0)	(80.0)
<b>Average number of people receiving supper on a typical day at kitchens serving supper (N = 777)</b>					
1 to 24	12.7	15.2	11.8	14.6	8.6
25 to 49	19.5	14.4	17.6	20.7	25.2
50 to 74	18.8	15.3	20.1	21.3	17.7
75 to 99	11.8	12.5	18.6	5.2	11.9
100 to 199	20.6	20.3	17.7	21.1	23.5
200 or more	13.0	19.1	11.0	11.8	10.9
Missing data	3.6	3.2	3.2	5.3	2.2
(Mean)	(103.0)	(130.2)	(95.9)	(94.3)	(95.3)
(Median)	(65.0)	(80.0)	(70.0)	(58.0)	(65.0)
<b>Average number of people receiving a snack on a typical day at kitchens serving snacks (N = 168)</b>					
1 to 24	35.6	34.5	38.7	44.8	13.5
25 to 49	26.6	29.0	27.9	23.9	27.0
50 to 74	19.1	25.1	15.1	20.5	11.5
75 to 99	3.7	1.8	5.3	2.0	8.6
100 or more	11.7	7.9	11.5	6.7	28.7
Missing data	3.3	1.7	4.3	2.1	10.7
(Mean)	(45.7)	(44.5)	(48.1)	(37.3)	(64.7)
(Median)	(30.0)	(25.0)	(30.0)	(25.0)	(50.0)
<b>Sample size (number)</b>	<b>1,517</b>	<b>340</b>	<b>357</b>	<b>385</b>	<b>435</b>

<sup>1</sup>If seconds are available.

Source: National Emergency Food Assistance System Survey (2000), weighted tabulations.

**Table 2.13—Meals served onsite by emergency kitchens on a given day of the week**

Day	Breakfast	Lunch	Supper	Snack
	<i>Percent</i>			
Sunday	20.8	24.5	24.2	6.3
Monday	24.4	39.8	30.4	9.5
Tuesday	24.4	42.3	30.7	9.0
Wednesday	24.6	43.2	33.4	9.4
Thursday	24.5	42.7	31.7	9.2
Friday	24.1	39.7	30.9	8.7
Saturday	20.7	30.6	25.6	6.4
Any day of the week	30.0	66.1	52.3	11.1

Note: Respondents were asked, "Which days of the week does this kitchen serve meals on site?" They were not asked the number of weeks per year the kitchen is open for business. Thus, for example, the percentages should be interpreted as follows: 20.8 percent of kitchens serve breakfast on at least some Sundays.

Source: National Emergency Food Assistance System Survey (2000), weighted tabulations.

**Table 2.14—Policies used by kitchens to limit who can receive food by size of kitchen**

Policies	All	Size of kitchen		
		Small	Medium	Large
	<i>Percent</i>			
<b>Have policies limiting people who can receive food</b>	15.0	18.6	13.2	12.3
<b>Policies to restrict people who can receive food<sup>1,2</sup></b>				
Exclude if drug or alcohol problem or behavior problem	38.5	32.1	43.0	46.7
Serves only older people	7.7	11.6	4.5	4.2
Must meet certain income guidelines	6.1	4.1	12.8	2.5
Serves only children	5.9	4.8	7.0	7.2
Must reside in service area	5.2	6.8	5.5	2.2
Must be referred by church or other agency	3.4	5.7	2.9	0.0
Must have children in household	3.0	2.9	1.1	5.2
Must pay a small fee	0.5	1.0	0.0	0.0
Must provide services to agency and/or make donations	0.5	0.4	0.0	1.3
Must have U.S. citizenship	0.2	0.4	0.0	0.0
Limited to some other target group	11.1	9.0	14.8	11.0
Other	18.0	21.4	9.2	18.1
<b>Sample size (number)</b>	<b>1,517</b>	<b>471</b>	<b>495</b>	<b>540</b>

<sup>1</sup>Includes emergency kitchens that have policies restricting people who can receive food.

<sup>2</sup>Categories may sum to more than 100 percent because some kitchens provided more than one response.

Notes: Size variable is defined on the basis of meals typically served, staffing, and amounts of food used. In general, "small" kitchens serve fewer than 60 people at a meal; "medium" kitchens serve 60 to 120 people; and "large" kitchens serve more than 120 people.

The sample numbers for kitchen sizes do not sum to the total sample because some kitchens did not provide answers and are not included.

Source: National Emergency Food Assistance System Survey (2000), weighted tabulations.

## Foods Used by Emergency Kitchens

Emergency kitchens draw on a wide variety of sources to obtain the food they use to prepare their meals (table 2.15 and fig. 2.6). Eighty-one percent obtain food from food banks.<sup>21</sup> Community donations, such as those from local food drives, are also a very important food source used by 77 percent of kitchens. Interestingly, about 76 percent also use commercial sources such as wholesalers and retailers, and 59 percent of kitchens in the overall sample reported obtaining at least some of their food at market prices.<sup>22</sup> The relatively high percentage of those obtaining at least some foods at market price is interesting, in that the food is obviously more expensive than if it were obtained free through a donation or at the low “shared maintenance fees” charged by the food banks. While we do not have direct information on this, a possible explanation is that much of this retail food is bought in relatively small amounts to provide items needed for planned meals but not available from lower cost sources.

In order to further explore the role of food banks in the EFAS, organizational characteristics were cross-tabulated by whether food banks were used as a food source (table 2.16). The results show relatively few clear patterns. There seems to be some tendency for kitchens in the South and the Northeast to use food banks and for larger kitchens to be more likely to use them. Also (and probably associated with the size differential), kitchens in metropolitan areas are more likely to use food banks.

As shown in table 2.17, many of the patterns having to do with overall sources of food are mirrored in tabulations of the kitchens’ primary food sources. Food banks, which represent the primary source for slightly less than half of all kitchens, place highest in this ranking. However, although food banks clearly are the most common “primary” source, they are far from being the only one, and there appear to be other important distribution channels on which many kitchens rely heavily. In particular, both commercial sources (for 32 percent of

kitchens) and community donations (for 24 percent) are significant sources. Larger kitchens are more likely to report using commercial sources; smaller kitchens are more likely to draw heavily on community donations.

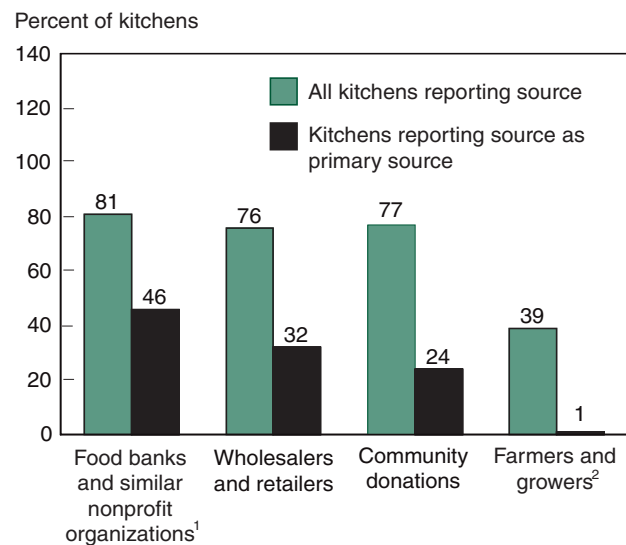
As with many food service operations, emergency kitchens sometimes find that they cannot use all the food they receive. This can happen, for instance, if inappropriate or unusable foods are received or if the pattern of food receipt over time makes it impossible to use all the food before it spoils. We asked kitchens whether they sometimes received food that they could not use because of spoilage or other problems, and about 44 percent indicated that this sometimes happens (table 2.18).

Of kitchens that reported having at least some unusable food, 52 percent indicated that no paid staff time per week was spent in dealing with it; 6 percent reported spending more than 2 hours of paid staff time. Volunteer time was more likely to be utilized in dealing with the unused food; 29 percent of respondents who had unused food indicated that more than 2 hours of volunteer time per week were spent dealing with it. This may simply reflect the greater reliance that kitchens place on volunteers as compared with paid labor.

Seventy-three percent of kitchens stated that the availability of food varies by time of year (table 2.19). However, the majority of those who said this—69

Figure 2.6

### Sources of food for emergency kitchens



<sup>1</sup>Includes those mentioning America's Second Harvest.

<sup>2</sup>Includes food purchased at retail prices, gleaned, left over, and salvaged. Source: National Emergency Food Assistance System Survey (2000), weighted tabulations.

<sup>21</sup>In the questions that asked respondents to provide food sources, “food banks” and “Second Harvest” were separate response categories. However, because many respondents seemed to use the two categories interchangeably, they have been aggregated in the analysis.

<sup>22</sup>The percentage given in the text is based on a variable (not shown separately in the table) that combines two lines of table 2.15, one being food purchased from retailers and wholesalers at market price and the other food purchased from farms and growers at market price.



percent—indicated that this variation does not pose a significant problem for them.

Most kitchens reported making use of a broad cross-section of types of food (table 2.20). The most commonly used food types, from a comprehensive list of 16 categories, were bread products, grain products, and meat, poultry, and fish. At least 95 percent of respondent kitchens used foods of each of these types. Smaller percentages of kitchens used snack foods (78 percent of respondents); baby food (45 percent); and complete meals, such as canned stew or frozen dinners (31 percent).

We had originally included a series of questions in the data collection instrument to elicit information about the amounts of foods that kitchens used. However, nearly 70 percent of the kitchens surveyed were unable to provide this information. Therefore, we are not

reporting these data because it is highly unlikely that the kitchens that did have the information are representative of kitchens overall. In particular it is likely that, on average, the reporting kitchens are larger and more sophisticated than nonreporting kitchens.

Seventy-eight percent of emergency kitchens indicated that there were additional kinds of food they could use more of (table 2.21). By far the most common category of food additionally needed was meat, poultry, and fish, mentioned by 63 percent of those who indicated a need for additional food types. Other food types frequently mentioned as being in short supply (and the percentage of kitchens mentioning them) were: fresh fruits and vegetables (38 percent); dairy products (29 percent); frozen and canned fruit and vegetables (23 percent); cereals, pasta, and rice (18 percent); and dry beans and eggs (13 percent).

**Table 2.15—Sources of food supplies for emergency kitchens by size of kitchen**

Policies	All	Size of kitchen		
		Small	Medium	Large
<i>Percent</i>				
<b>Allocations from food banks and/or similar nonprofit organizations, such as Second Harvest</b>	81.3	80.2	76.2	87.7
<b>Community donations</b>	76.6	77.1	74.2	79.2
<b>Wholesalers or retailers</b>	76.5	70.7	77.1	83.1
Purchased food at market price <sup>1</sup>	59.0	52.5	58.6	67.2
Received donation of a salable product <sup>1</sup>	38.6	37.1	36.3	43.0
Salvaged food <sup>1</sup>	30.1	28.6	26.1	36.5
<b>Leftovers from places that serve food</b>	45.1	49.6	35.5	49.9
<b>Farmers and growers</b>	38.9	42.0	31.4	43.5
Purchased food at market price <sup>2</sup>	2.9	2.4	2.6	3.8
Received a direct donation <sup>2</sup>	37.1	40.6	29.5	41.2
Received leftovers from farmers' markets <sup>2</sup>	15.8	17.6	13.5	16.4
Received food from field gleaning <sup>2</sup>	13.6	13.5	10.9	16.8
<b>State or Federal programs</b>	33.8	33.0	32.1	37.2
<b>Direct donations from manufacturers</b>	30.9	30.4	25.6	37.0
<b>Food rescue programs</b>	17.4	14.7	16.3	22.1
<b>Other sources</b>	8.1	7.7	6.7	10.2
<b>Service area sources<sup>3</sup></b>				
Manufacturers in service area	20.8	19.1	16.9	26.8
Farms in service area	28.4	33.2	22.9	28.5
<b>Sample size (number)</b>	<b>1,517</b>	<b>471</b>	<b>495</b>	<b>540</b>

<sup>1</sup>Subgroup percentages are based on all kitchens, not just those obtaining food from wholesalers or retailers.

<sup>2</sup>Subgroup percentages are based on all kitchens, not just those obtaining food from farmers and growers.

<sup>3</sup>Entries in this category may overlap with previous entries. The focus of this panel is receipt of food specifically from sources within each kitchen's service area.

Notes: Total exceeds 100 percent because respondent emergency kitchens reported using multiple sources for food supplies. Size variable is based on meals typically served, staffing, and amounts of food used. In general, "small" kitchens serve fewer than 60 people at a meal; "medium" kitchens serve 60 to 120 people; and "large" kitchens serve more than 120 people.

The sample numbers for kitchen sizes do not sum to the total sample because some kitchens did not provide answers and are not included.

Source: National Emergency Food Assistance System Survey (2000), weighted tabulations

**Table 2.16—Selected characteristics of emergency kitchens by whether they obtain food from food banks**

Characteristics	All	Obtain food from food bank?	
		Yes	No
		<i>Percent</i>	
<b>Size of kitchen</b>			
Small	37.3	36.7	38.8
Medium	31.4	29.4	39.5
Large	30.7	33.1	21.4
Missing data	0.6	0.7	0.4
<b>Region</b>			
West	20.6	19.5	26.5
Midwest	24.7	23.5	28.8
South	27.4	28.5	23.1
Northeast	27.4	28.4	21.7
<b>Metropolitan status</b>			
Metropolitan	85.6	87.1	78.6
Nonmetropolitan	14.4	12.9	21.4
<b>Type of organization</b>			
Nonprofit, associated with religious group	65.5	65.2	66.4
Nonreligious private nonprofit	30.1	31.0	26.9
Informal group of people	1.6	1.2	3.7
Governmental	1.1	1.1	1.3
Other	1.5	1.5	1.8
<b>Selected organizational affiliations<sup>1</sup></b>			
United Way	26.1	29.6	11.4
Salvation Army	14.0	15.6	7.2
Catholic Charities	8.9	9.5	6.0
Red Cross	4.8	5.2	3.1
Other nonprofit organization	18.4	21.0	7.1
<b>Length of time surveyed location has been operating</b>			
Less than 1 year	3.3	2.8	5.8
1 to 3 years	15.0	14.0	20.2
4 to 5 years	9.6	9.7	9.3
6 years or longer			
6 to 10 years	22.3	22.5	20.0
11 to 15 years	12.7	12.8	12.3
16 to 20 years	16.9	17.0	17.2
21 to 25 years	2.7	2.6	3.3
Longer than 25 years	6.8	7.4	3.9
Not specified	10.2	10.6	7.9
Missing data	0.4	0.4	0.2
<b>Programs with which emergency kitchen is co-located<sup>2</sup></b>			
Food pantry	39.5	41.8	28.9
Emergency shelter	6.6	6.2	8.5
Food rescue program	1.4	1.6	0.6
Food bank	1.0	0.8	2.2
<b>Sample size (number)</b>	<b>1,517</b>	<b>1,260</b>	<b>240</b>

<sup>1</sup>Categories do not add to 100 percent because many kitchens do not have any organizational affiliations.

<sup>2</sup>Categories do not add to 100 percent because many kitchens are not co-located with another provider.

Co-located = Two different programs operating at the same location.

Notes: Size variable is defined on the basis of meals typically served, staffing, and amounts of food used. In general, "small" kitchens serve fewer than 60 people at a meal; "medium" kitchens serve 60 to 120 people; and "large" kitchens serve more than 120 people..

The sample numbers for kitchen sizes do not sum to the total sample because some kitchens did not provide answers and are not included.

Source: National Emergency Food Assistance System Survey (2000).

**Table 2.17—Primary source of food supplies for emergency kitchens by size of kitchen**

Sources	All	Size of kitchen		
		Small	Medium	Large
		<i>Percent</i>		
<b>Allocations from food banks and/or similar nonprofit organizations<sup>1</sup></b>	46.3	45.5	45.9	47.6
<b>Wholesalers or retailers</b>	31.7	28.3	30.6	37.0
Purchased food at market price	26.6	25.4	24.8	30.2
Received donation of a salable product	3.3	2.9	3.7	3.2
Salvaged food	1.9	0.5	1.9	3.5
<b>Community donations</b>	23.9	28.0	22.7	20.4
<b>State or Federal programs</b>	6.8	4.9	7.4	8.5
<b>Leftovers from places that serve food</b>	2.4	3.5	1.0	2.5
<b>Food rescue programs</b>	2.0	1.5	1.9	2.8
<b>Direct donations from manufacturers</b>	1.6	1.4	1.3	2.0
<b>Farmers and growers</b>	0.9	0.3	0.8	1.8
Purchased food at market price	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.0
Received a direct donation	0.5	0.3	0.2	0.9
Received leftovers from farmers' markets	0.3	0.0	0.4	0.6
Received food from field-gleaning	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.2
<b>Other sources</b>	1.3	1.0	1.5	1.5
<b>Sample size (number)</b>	<b>1,517</b>	<b>471</b>	<b>495</b>	<b>540</b>

<sup>1</sup>Includes those mentioning America's Second Harvest.

Notes: Totals add up to slightly more than 100 percent because a few respondents could not name a single primary source and gave two or three responses.

The sample numbers for kitchen sizes do not sum to the total sample because some kitchens did not provide answers and are not included.

Source: National Emergency Food Assistance System Survey (2000), weighted tabulations.

**Table 2.18—Spoilage of food by size of kitchen**

Food-spoilage variables	All	Size of kitchen		
		Small	Medium	Large
		<i>Percent</i>		
<b>Does kitchen receive food that cannot be used, due to spoilage and other problems?</b>				
Yes	43.6	45.1	38.8	49.6
No	56.0	56.5	60.9	50.1
Missing data	0.4	0.4	0.3	0.2
<b>Estimated paid staff hours spent disposing of unusable food, per week<sup>1</sup></b>				
0	51.8	57.7	52.8	44.4
1	17.0	15.2	20.3	16.3
2	8.7	9.2	5.4	11.1
More than 2	16.6	14.9	14.5	20.2
Missing data	5.9	3.0	7.0	8.1
<b>Estimated volunteer hours spent disposing of unusable food, per week<sup>1</sup></b>				
0	32.2	40.4	28.1	27.3
1	20.1	19.0	22.0	19.7
2	12.6	9.8	16.7	12.4
More than 2	28.7	25.8	27.8	32.7
Missing data	6.4	5.0	5.3	8.0
<b>Sample size (number)</b>	<b>1,517</b>	<b>471</b>	<b>495</b>	<b>540</b>

<sup>1</sup>Includes emergency kitchens that receive food that cannot be used.

Notes: Size variable is based on meals typically served, staffing, and amounts of food used. In general, "small" kitchens serve fewer than 60 people at a meal; "medium" kitchens serve 60 to 120 people; and "large" kitchens serve more than 120 people.

The sample numbers for kitchen sizes do not sum to the total sample because some kitchens did not provide answers and are not included.

Source: National Emergency Food Assistance System Survey (2000), weighted tabulations.

**Table 2.19—Variation in food supply available to emergency kitchens by size of kitchen**

Food supply variables	All	Size of kitchen		
		Small	Medium	Large
		<i>Percent</i>		
<b>Does type and quality of food obtained vary by time of year?</b>				
Yes	72.8	76.2	68.6	72.6
No	25.5	22.1	29.7	25.6
Missing data	1.7	1.7	1.7	1.7
<b>Is this a problem in meeting client needs?</b>				
Yes	30.2	29.3	27.6	33.6
No	69.1	70.4	72.0	64.6
Missing data	0.8	0.2	0.4	1.8
<b>Sample size (number)</b>	<b>1,517</b>	<b>471</b>	<b>495</b>	<b>540</b>

Notes: Size variable is defined on the basis of meals typically served, staffing, and amounts of food used. In general, "small" kitchens serve fewer than 60 people at a meal; "medium" kitchens serve 60 to 120 people; and "large" kitchens serve more than 120 people.

The sample numbers for kitchen sizes do not sum to the total sample because some kitchens did not provide answers and are not included.

Source: National Emergency Food Assistance System Survey (2000), weighted tabulations.

**Table 2.20—Types of food obtained by emergency kitchens during the previous 12 months**

Food type	Emergency kitchens that receive food type
	<i>Percent</i>
Bread products	96.4
Cereal, pasta, and rice <sup>1</sup>	95.1
Meat, poultry, fish	95.2
Frozen, canned, and dried fruits and vegetables and fruit juice	94.9
Dry and canned beans, eggs, nuts, peanut butter	94.3
Desserts	93.2
Fats and oils	92.5
Spices and condiments	92.1
Soft drinks, coffee, tea, and other nonjuice beverages	91.5
Fresh fruit and vegetables	90.6
Dairy products	86.7
Snack foods	77.9
Baby food, formula, and nutritional supplements or aids	44.8
Complete meals, entrees, and prepared foods <sup>2</sup>	30.4
<b>Sample size (number)</b>	<b>1,517</b>

<sup>1</sup>Includes nonbread grain products, such as rice, barley, and noodles.

<sup>2</sup>Includes packaged meals drawing on multiple food groups, such as canned meat and vegetable products or frozen lasagna dinners.

Source: National Emergency Food Assistance System Survey (2000), weighted tabulations.

**Table 2.21—Types of foods for which emergency kitchens could use additional quantities**

Food shortfalls	Emergency kitchens
	<i>Percent</i>
<b>Could use additional quantities of food</b>	<b>78.1</b>
<b>Types of food needed<sup>1</sup></b>	
Meat, poultry, and fish	63.0
Fresh fruits and vegetables	37.6
Dairy products	29.0
Frozen, canned, and dried fruits and vegetables and fruit juices	23.2
Cereals, pasta, and rice	17.5
Dry and canned beans, eggs, nuts, peanut butter	12.8
Spices and condiments	8.3
Fats and oils	7.4
Soft drinks, coffee, tea, and other nonjuice beverages	6.4
Bread products	3.6
Baby food, formula, and nutritional supplements or aids	2.6
Desserts	2.6
Snack foods	1.5
Complete meals, entrees, and prepared foods <sup>2</sup>	2.4
All food types	7.7
<b>Sample size (number)</b>	<b>1,321</b>

<sup>1</sup>Percentage of kitchens needing more of the particular food type listed.

<sup>2</sup>Includes packaged meals drawing on multiple food groups, such as canned meat and vegetable products or frozen lasagna dinner.

Note: Due to an incorrect skip pattern in the survey, some kitchens were not asked this question. Hence, the sample size in this table is smaller than the one listed in previous tables.

Source: National Emergency Food Assistance System Survey (2000), weighted tabulations.

## Staffing and Other Resources

Emergency kitchens must have sufficient quantities of various kinds of resources to operate effectively. In particular, they need food, staff, and physical facilities and equipment to produce and serve meals. The previous section examined the availability of food. In this section, we examine staffing and other resources.

### Budgets

Operating budgets differ substantially across kitchens. Seven percent of kitchens reported operating with essentially no cash budget (table 2.22), while the median kitchen had an operating budget in the range of \$5,000 to \$10,000. More than a quarter of the kitchens had budgets in excess of \$20,000. When asked about their food-purchasing budgets, about 37 percent of kitchens reported spending less than \$5,000; 15 percent spent more than \$20,000. As shown in the table, there is some degree of correlation between the sizes of kitchens, as measured by number of clients served, and their operating budgets. However, this correlation is far from exact, and even some large kitchens apparently function with relatively small operating budgets.

### Staffing

Emergency kitchens are highly dependent on volunteer labor. Indeed, only about half the kitchens in our sample reported employing any *paid* staff at all, while

about 95 percent used volunteers (table 2.23 and fig. 2.7). The average kitchen with paid employees used about 107 hours of paid staff time per week; the comparable number for volunteer workers is 97 staff hours.

Paid staff members were used most commonly in supervisory positions. However, they also performed a variety of other functions, including clerical work and skilled and unskilled kitchen work. Although volunteers were most often used as unskilled help, they also frequently performed supervisory duties (in 55 percent of kitchens).

### Physical Capacity

About 28 percent of emergency kitchens own the building in which they operate (table 2.24). We also asked kitchens to estimate their available square footage. Only about half were able to give us an estimate; we do not present these data because they may not be representative of all kitchens.

Virtually all the kitchens reported having at least some refrigeration capacity, and about one-fourth had walk-in refrigerators. The comparable numbers for freezers are only slightly lower.

In order to explore whether there are systematic relationships between physical plant and size, table 2.25 displays cross-tabulations between physical capacity and kitchen size. As might be expected, larger kitchens are more likely than smaller ones to own their buildings and to have walk-in refrigerator capacity and off-site storage space.

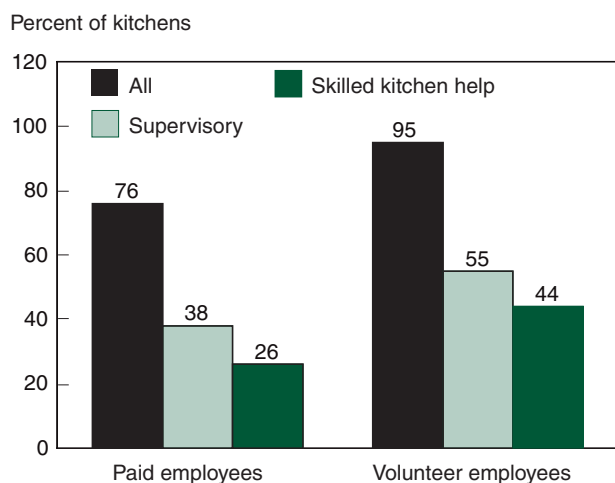
Given the potential importance of an emergency kitchen's owning its building for ensuring its long-term stability, it is of interest to examine the kitchen characteristics that are associated with building ownership. As shown in table 2.26, however, other than the apparent correlation with large size noted earlier, there seem to be no clear patterns in the data.

### Funding

Emergency kitchens draw on a broad set of sources, most of them local, for their funding. About two-thirds reported receiving funds from local individuals or groups (table 2.27). On average, this funding source represented more than half the budgets for these kitchens. About 34 percent of kitchens reported receiving money through direct fundraising activities. Other significant funding sources included the United Way,

Figure 2.7

**Use of paid and volunteer staff by emergency kitchens for all and selected staff categories**



Source: National Emergency Food Assistance System Survey (2000), weighted tabulations.

grants from foundations, and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).<sup>23</sup>

One source of funding that—though relatively uncommon—is of particular interest is fees or contributions from clients. As shown in table 2.28, approximately 2 percent of kitchens indicated that they had a specified fee per meal, with the median fee being \$3.00. However, many clients are apparently unable to pay the fee or choose not to, since about half of the respondents (54 percent of kitchens) reported that 25 percent or fewer

of their clients actually paid. Voluntary contributions were even less common. Only about 1 percent of agencies reported receiving them, and most of those agencies received contributions only from small proportions of the people they serve.

In addition to cash support, many kitchens obtained assistance in the form of various in-kind donations. These include food, as discussed earlier, and also such donations as facilities, building maintenance, utilities, and transport of food (table 2.29). Some of these items can be very expensive, and it is likely that they are often critical to the operation of those emergency kitchens to which they are provided. Of particular importance are donations of facilities, which are received by about 41 percent of kitchens.

<sup>23</sup>FEMA regional offices distribute grants to State and local governments and private, nonprofit organizations to help them maintain preparedness for an emergency, such as a natural disaster. Many emergency kitchens receive such grants.

**Table 2.22—Operating budgets of emergency kitchens by size of kitchen**

Dollar amounts	All	Size of kitchen		
		Small	Medium	Large
		<i>Percent</i>		
<b>Total operating budget for past 12 months</b>				
0	7.4	9.1	8.0	4.3
1 to 1,000	4.8	7.0	5.6	1.3
1,001 to 5,000	18.1	23.3	18.3	11.5
5,001 to 10,000	14.7	14.6	14.4	15.1
10,001 to 20,000	11.6	13.0	11.4	10.3
More than 20,000	25.5	15.9	24.0	39.0
Missing data	18.1	17.1	18.4	18.4
<b>Budget for purchasing food for past 12 months</b>				
0	3.5	3.5	4.3	2.3
1 to 1,000	7.1	11.4	6.9	2.3
1,001 to 5,000	25.9	31.8	27.7	17.4
5,001 to 10,000	17.2	16.9	15.1	19.7
10,001 to 20,000	10.8	11.2	9.9	11.4
More than 20,000	15.2	5.9	13.9	27.7
Missing data	20.4	19.4	22.2	19.0
<b>Sample size (number)</b>	<b>1,517</b>	<b>471</b>	<b>495</b>	<b>540</b>

Notes: Size variable is defined on the basis of meals typically served, staffing, and amounts of food used. In general, "small" kitchens serve fewer than 60 people at a meal; "medium" kitchens serve 60 to 120 people; and "large" kitchens serve more than 120 people.

The sample numbers for kitchen sizes do not sum to the total sample because some kitchens did not provide answers and are not included.

Source: National Emergency Food Assistance System Survey (2000), weighted tabulations.

**Table 2.23—Type and number of staff hours used by emergency kitchens**

Staff category	Kitchens having staff type <sup>1</sup>	Average staff hours used per week for kitchens with staff type
	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Hours</i>
<b>Paid employees</b>	<b>46.5</b>	<b>106.7</b>
Supervisory personnel	38.0	49.9
Skilled kitchen help	25.7	45.1
Nonskilled help	21.7	46.7
Clerical staff	15.4	34.9
Nutritionists	4.7	20.1
Other help for program	7.5	48.7
<b>Volunteer employees</b>	<b>94.7</b>	<b>96.7</b>
Nonskilled help	86.4	62.4
Supervisory personnel	55.1	28.6
Skilled kitchen help	44.1	23.1
Clerical staff	29.1	14.6
Nutritionists	14.4	7.9
Other help for program	17.8	38.7
<b>Unpaid employees<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>39.7</b>	<b>32.1</b>
Nonskilled help	32.6	27.7
Skilled kitchen help	4.4	14.1
Supervisory personnel	3.2	30.7
Clerical staff	2.3	15.1
Nutritionists	1.0	10.8
Other help for program	4.0	16.7
<b>All employees</b>	<b>99.0</b>	<b>145.5</b>
Nonskilled help	92.3	78.3
Supervisory personnel	84.6	41.6
Skilled kitchen help	65.5	34.4
Clerical staff	42.0	22.9
Nutritionists	19.1	11.2
Other help for program	24.2	45.9
<b>Sample size (number)</b>	<b>1,517</b>	<b>NA</b>

<sup>1</sup>The base for all percentages is all emergency kitchens.

<sup>2</sup>Includes workers performing court-ordered community service or welfare-related work.

NA = Not applicable.

Note: Many emergency kitchens that reported having particular types of staff were unable to estimate the number of hours worked per week by staff type. Thus, the average number of full-time-equivalent employees is calculated based on 21 to 97 percent of the number of kitchens that have the staff type.

Source: National Emergency Food Assistance System Survey (2000), weighted tabulations.



**Table 2.24—Physical capacity, facilities, and equipment used by emergency kitchens by metropolitan status**

Capacity/equipment	All	Metropolitan status	
		Metropolitan	Nonmetropolitan
		<i>Percent</i>	
<b>Maximum number of people who can be seated and fed at one time</b>			
Fewer than 25	6.1	6.1	6.1
26 to 50	18.1	16.4	27.9
51 to 75	16.9	16.4	19.6
76 to 100	18.7	18.9	17.6
101 to 150	16.0	17.0	10.5
151 to 200	8.6	8.8	7.3
201 to 300	7.2	7.5	5.5
More than 300	2.8	3.3	0.0
Missing data	5.7	5.7	5.5
<b>Emergency kitchen owns building</b>	27.8	27.9	27.1
<b>Refrigeration capacity</b>			
Has home refrigerator onsite	55.9	53.7	68.7
Has other type of refrigerator onsite	38.1	39.3	30.7
Has walk-in refrigerator onsite	24.2	25.9	13.8
No refrigeration capacity onsite	0.8	0.9	0.0
<b>Freezer capacity</b>			
Has home freezer onsite	56.5	54.3	70.0
Has other type of freezer onsite	32.3	33.1	27.9
Has walk-in freezer onsite	22.4	23.6	15.3
No freezer capacity onsite	2.7	2.9	2.0
<b>Storage</b>			
Has separate warehouse for food storage	19.8	20.6	14.9
Has other offsite storage	9.6	9.3	11.3
<b>Food preparation equipment</b>			
Owns onsite equipment	67.4	66.7	71.0
Has onsite equipment but does not own it	25.6	25.8	24.7
Has access to equipment to prepare hot meals or components of meals offsite	3.6	4.0	1.4
Does not have access to equipment to prepare hot meals or components of meals	2.2	2.5	0.6
<b>Preservation or processing facilities</b>			
Has access to facilities to preserve or process perishable foods	19.6	19.9	17.9
Has access to refrigerated vehicles to transport prepared or perishable foods	6.2	7.0	1.2
<b>Repackaging equipment or facilities</b>			
Has access to equipment or facilities to repackage foods, such as rice or dry beans	29.2	29.9	25.6
<b>Transportation for delivery or pickup of food</b>			
Has vehicles but does not own them	45.5	46.2	41.7
Owns vehicles	37.3	37.2	38.0
Does not have vehicles	16.5	15.9	20.3
<b>Sample size (number)</b>	<b>1,517</b>	<b>1,438</b>	<b>79</b>

Source: National Emergency Food Assistance System Survey (2000), weighted tabulations.

**Table 2.25—Physical capacity, facilities, and equipment used by emergency kitchens by size of kitchen**

Dollar amounts	All	Size of kitchen		
		Small	Medium	Large
		<i>Percent</i>		
<b>Maximum number of people who can be seated and fed at one time</b>				
Fewer than 25	6.1	11.7	1.4	4.0
26 to 50	18.1	30.2	12.9	8.9
51 to 75	16.9	20.0	18.3	11.7
76 to 100	18.7	16.3	23.8	16.6
101 to 150	16.0	9.4	20.7	19.4
151 to 200	8.6	3.1	9.7	14.0
201 to 300	7.2	2.4	6.2	13.8
More than 300	2.8	1.1	2.7	5.0
Missing data	5.7	5.7	4.3	6.5
<b>Emergency kitchen owns building</b>	27.8	28.4	24.3	30.8
<b>Refrigeration capacity</b>				
Has home refrigerator onsite	55.9	67.4	54.9	43.1
Has other type of refrigerator onsite	38.1	29.6	44.0	42.3
Has walk-in refrigerator onsite	24.2	16.4	19.4	38.7
No refrigeration capacity onsite	0.8	0.7	0.8	0.8
<b>Freezer capacity</b>				
Has home freezer onsite	56.5	67.2	57.2	42.7
Has other type of freezer onsite	32.3	30.9	33.3	33.5
Has walk-in freezer onsite	22.4	13.5	20.3	35.5
No freezer capacity onsite	2.7	2.9	2.9	2.6
<b>Storage</b>				
Has separate warehouse for food storage	19.8	15.2	16.4	28.8
Has other offsite storage	9.6	8.3	7.8	13.3
<b>Food preparation equipment</b>				
Owns onsite equipment	67.4	68.4	65.2	69.2
Has onsite equipment but does not own it	25.6	24.2	28.5	24.1
Has access to equipment to prepare hot meals or components of meals offsite	3.6	4.5	2.4	3.6
Does not have access to equipment to prepare hot meals or components of meals	2.2	1.8	2.6	2.3
<b>Preservation or processing facilities</b>				
Has access to facilities to preserve or process perishable foods	19.6	22.1	16.0	20.5
Has access to refrigerated vehicles to transport prepared or perishable foods	6.2	4.8	6.2	8.0
<b>Repackaging equipment or facilities</b>				
Has access to equipment or facilities to repackage foods, such as rice or dry beans	29.2	29.8	29.9	28.1
<b>Transportation for delivery or pickup of food</b>				
Has vehicles but does not own them	45.5	47.9	48.7	39.2
Owns vehicles	37.3	31.4	34.7	47.2
Does not have vehicles	16.5	20.4	15.8	12.9
<b>Sample size (number)</b>	<b>1,517</b>	<b>471</b>	<b>495</b>	<b>540</b>

Notes: Size variable is based on meals typically served, staffing, and amounts of food used. In general, "small" kitchens serve fewer than 60 people at a meal; "medium" kitchens serve 60 to 120 people; and "large" kitchens serve more than 120 people.

The sample numbers for kitchen sizes do not sum to the total sample because some kitchens did not provide answers and are not included.

Source: National Emergency Food Assistance System Survey (2000), weighted tabulations.

**Table 2.26—Selected characteristics of emergency kitchens by whether they own their buildings**

Characteristics	All	Own building?	
		Yes	No
		<i>Percent</i>	
<b>Size of kitchen</b>			
Small	37.3	38.1	36.7
Medium	31.4	27.4	33.2
Large	30.7	34.0	29.5
Missing	0.6	0.5	0.6
<b>Region</b>			
West	20.6	22.6	19.4
Midwest	24.7	21.6	26.0
South	27.4	30.9	26.1
Northeast	27.4	24.9	28.5
<b>Metropolitan status</b>			
Metropolitan	85.6	85.9	85.8
Nonmetropolitan	14.4	14.1	14.2
<b>Type of organization</b>			
Nonprofit, associated with religious group	65.5	62.9	67.3
Nonreligious private nonprofit	30.1	33.8	28.2
Governmental	1.1	1.6	0.9
Informal group of people	1.6	0.9	1.6
Other	1.5	0.8	1.8
<b>Selected organizational affiliations<sup>1</sup></b>			
United Way	26.1	29.0	25.1
Salvation Army	14.0	15.6	13.3
Catholic Charities	8.9	9.2	8.8
Red Cross	4.8	5.9	4.1
Other nonprofit organization	18.1	16.8	19.3
<b>Length of time surveyed location has been operating</b>			
Less than 1 year	3.3	4.0	2.7
1 to 3 years	15.0	12.6	16.2
4 to 5 years	9.6	8.6	9.9
6 years or longer			
6 to 10 years	22.3	20.6	23.4
11 to 15 years	12.7	10.3	14.0
16 to 20 years	16.9	19.7	16.1
21 to 25 years	2.7	2.7	2.7
Longer than 25 years	6.8	12.5	4.4
Not specified	10.2	8.5	10.3
Missing data	0.4	0.4	0.4
<b>Programs with which emergency kitchen is co-located<sup>2</sup></b>			
Food pantry	39.5	43.0	38.4
Emergency shelter	6.6	10.0	5.1
Food rescue program	1.4	2.0	1.3
Food bank	1.0	0.7	1.2
<b>Sample size (number)</b>	<b>1,517</b>	<b>432</b>	<b>1,053</b>

<sup>1</sup>Categories do not add to 100 percent because many kitchens do not have any organizational affiliations.

<sup>2</sup>Categories do not add to 100 percent because many kitchens are not co-located with another provider.

Note: The sample sizes for "yes" and "no" responses do not sum to the total sample because some kitchens did not provide answers and are not included.

Co-located = Two different programs operating at the same location.

Source: National Emergency Food Assistance System Survey (2000), weighted tabulations.

**Table 2.27—Funding sources for emergency kitchens**

Source of funding	Kitchens that use source <sup>1</sup> (N = 1,517)	Operating budget from source (mean %) <sup>1,2,3</sup>
<b>Government sources</b>		<i>Percent</i>
FEMA funds	22.9	16.8
TEFAP administrative funds	4.0	26.8
Other government sources	18.0	33.2
<b>Nongovernment sources</b>		
Donations from local individuals or groups	69.4	60.0
Fundraising activities	33.7	28.7
Grants from foundations	21.2	19.4
United Way	19.9	17.4
Fees from clients	4.5	23.4
National organizations	3.3	20.8
Other sources	20.5	42.6
Missing data	3.9	NA
<b>Sample size (number)</b>	<b>1,517</b>	<b>NA</b>

<sup>1</sup>Total exceeds 100 percent because many respondent kitchens reported having multiple funding sources.

<sup>2</sup>When source is used.

<sup>3</sup>Many emergency kitchens that reported using a particular funding source were unable to estimate its contribution to the operating budget. Thus, the percentage that most sources of funding contribute to the operating budget is calculated based on 61 to 80 percent of the number of kitchens using the funding source.

FEMA = Federal Emergency Management Agency.

TEFAP = The Emergency Food Assistance Program.

NA = Not applicable.

Source: National Emergency Food Assistance System Survey (2000), weighted tabulations.

**Table 2.28—Fees and contributions received from clients of emergency kitchens by size of kitchen (percentages unless otherwise stated)**

Client contributions	All	Size of kitchen		
		Small	Medium	Large
		<i>Percent</i>		
<b>Fees from clients</b>				
Percent of kitchens charging a specific fee per meal	1.7	2.4	1.3	1.0
Median specified fee in dollars (N = 24) <sup>1</sup>	3.00	4.00	3.75	1.5
Average specified fee in dollars (N = 24) <sup>1</sup>	3.20	3.67	3.26	2.18
Percent of clients actually paying fee (N = 23)				
1 to 25	49.9	66.8	8.4	56.0
26 to 50	1.9	3.4	0.0	0.0
51 to 75	1.3	2.4	0.0	0.0
76 to 100	46.9	27.4	91.6	44.0
<b>Voluntary contributions from clients</b>				
Percent of kitchens receiving voluntary contributions	0.6	0.7	0.6	0.4
Median voluntary contribution (N = 12) <sup>2</sup>	1.00	0.70	1.00	2.50
Average voluntary contribution (N = 12) <sup>2</sup>	1.32	1.00	1.04	2.31
Percentage of clients actually making a voluntary contribution (N = 14)				
1 to 25	72.4	80.8	81.5	38.0
26 to 50	16.2	7.9	0.0	62.0
51 to 75	5.3	11.3	0.0	0.0
76 to 100	6.0	0.0	18.5	0.0
<b>Sample size (number)</b>	<b>1,517</b>	<b>471</b>	<b>495</b>	<b>540</b>

<sup>1</sup>Includes kitchens that reported charging a specific fee per meal.

<sup>2</sup>Includes kitchens that reported receiving voluntary contributions.

Note: The sample numbers for kitchen sizes do not sum to the total sample because some kitchens did not provide answers and are not included.

Source: National Emergency Food Assistance System Survey (2000), weighted tabulations.

**Table 2.29—Donated or reduced-price goods and services received by emergency kitchens by size of kitchen**

Donated goods and services	All	Size of kitchen		
		Small	Medium	Large
		<i>Percent</i>		
<b>Facilities</b>				
Building maintenance	43.8	41.2	51.6	39.2
Facilities, including rent or other space related costs	41.3	35.0	50.9	38.9
Utilities, including heating and air-conditioning	37.4	33.7	45.1	34.5
<b>Other</b>				
Transportation for food	42.3	40.3	49.1	38.1
Equipment maintenance, including equipment maintenance contracts	35.0	33.1	40.4	31.8
Materials for packaging food	32.3	30.8	36.6	29.7
Legal and accounting services	29.3	26.1	33.4	29.4
Computer equipment or training	24.1	23.7	25.7	22.9
Other	5.9	5.3	4.1	8.5
<b>Do not know about any donated or reduced-price goods and services</b>	3.7	3.9	4.8	2.3
<b>Sample size (number)</b>	<b>1,517</b>	<b>471</b>	<b>495</b>	<b>540</b>

Notes : Size variable is based on meals typically served, staffing, and amounts of food used. In general, "small" kitchens serve fewer than 60 people at a meal; "medium" kitchens serve 60 to 120 people; and "large" kitchens serve more than 120 people.

The sample numbers for kitchen sizes do not sum to the total sample because some kitchens did not provide answers and are not included

Source: National Emergency Food Assistance System Survey (2000), weighted tabulations.

## Food Pantries

Food pantries assist low-income households by providing them with packages of food items that usually require additional preparation. In this chapter, we describe food pantries and their operations and, when appropriate, compare them with emergency kitchens. The chapter begins with an estimate of the total number of pantries currently operating in the United States. The sections that follow describe pantries' basic characteristics and the demographic characteristics of the zip code areas in which they are located; their food distribution practices and the policies used to limit distribution; and the sources and types of food received, along with information on foods for which the pantries expressed an additional need. The final section describes the labor and capital resources of food pantries.

### Number of Food Pantries

We estimated the number of emergency food pantries in the United States based on the information developed during our sampling and survey operations. The methods are described below.

#### Estimated Number

Our approach to estimating the number of food pantries in the United States closely parallels the method described earlier to estimate emergency kitchens. Table 3.1 presents our estimates of the total number of food pantries operating in the United States.<sup>24</sup> For the study, we interviewed 1,592 pantries that had been identified in the initial listing of the sampling frame in the PSUs selected for the study.

Interviews were also completed with an additional 25 pantries, which we describe as “secondary sample” because they had not been identified in the initial

listing process but were found in the process of the initial interview.<sup>25</sup> Thus, the total interview sample is 1,617.

When appropriate survey weights are applied to the sample interviewed, reflecting both sample selection probabilities and the incidence of survey nonresponse, the weighted sum of interviews provides an estimate of the overall number of food pantries in the country: 32,254 pantries.

We believe, however, that an additional adjustment is warranted. From the outset of the project, we anticipated that the initial sample listings in the PSUs would not be fully comprehensive, and other pantries—the “secondary sample”—were identified during the interviewing. Because the secondary cases were not known at the time of the original listing, they are not fully reflected in the weighting structure based on the initial sampling probabilities, and an adjustment to account for this is in order. To take this into account, we have made an adjustment for the initial undercoverage, as shown in lines 8-10 of the table. Line 8 indicates that, for every 100 completions with *primary* sample cases, we also completed 1.6 with *secondary* sample cases. This suggests that, if we had interviewed all the estimated 30,181 primary sample members that we did not interview, an additional 483 pantries would have been found (that is, 0.016 times 30,181).<sup>26</sup> Overall, adding the 32,254 estimate from line 7 and the 483 adjustment from line 10 yields an estimated total of 32,737 pantries in the United States.

<sup>25</sup>In some cases, the secondary sample was found in the process of making calls to locate the initially listed sample. In other cases, it was identified through questions in the interview itself, which asked respondents for the names of other pantries in their counties.

<sup>26</sup>This conclusion requires the assumptions that (1) all potential secondary cases would have been identified in this way, and (2) the ratio of secondary to primary completions would remain constant. While it is unlikely that either would hold exactly, we believe that the method yields a reasonable approximation.

<sup>24</sup>Alaska and Hawaii were excluded from the survey.

Whereas our estimate of emergency kitchens in chapter 2 is somewhat lower than that of Second Harvest (1998), our estimate of pantries is similar. We estimate 32,737 pantries, while Second Harvest estimates about 34,000. As with kitchens, much of the explanation for the variation between our estimate and that of Second Harvest may lie in differing methodologies and response rates.

### **Pounds of Food**

It is also of interest to estimate the total amount of food that pantries distribute. One possible approach would be to base this on a survey question that was asked about total amounts of food distributed.

However, most pantries were not able to provide an estimate of this quantity directly, and those who did probably are not a representative sample.

A second approach draws on a set of factors that enable us to make an estimate of food distributed by each pantry that responded to the survey. During the survey, pantries were asked how often clients could obtain food (for instance, once a week or once a month) and how many different clients the pantry served during that period. These responses were used to estimate the number of visits to the pantry per month. For instance, if clients could pick up food twice a month and the number of clients served in a given half-month was

estimated at 45, then it was assumed that there were 90 household visits per month. In addition, pantries were asked to estimate how many pounds a household typically obtained during a visit. For each pantry, this information allowed us to estimate the amount of food it distributed per month.<sup>27</sup>

Once an estimate is obtained of the average amount of food per month distributed per pantry, we can draw upon the estimated number of pantries from table 3.1 to develop a national estimate of food distributed. The resulting estimate of food distributed by food pantries, computed in this way, is 239 million pounds per month (table 3.2).

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<sup>27</sup>A weakness of this approach is that we are not confident that pantries consistently have good estimates of the number of different clients served in a given period. We had initially intended to estimate pounds of food distributed using a slightly different set of survey variables, drawing on a variable showing the respondent's estimate of the average number of persons served each day that a pantry was open. However, the data on average visits per day proved to be inconsistent with other available information, including the numbers of different clients served. In particular, it appeared that the daily estimates probably were biased upward, although we have been unable to determine exactly why. Overall, we believe that the method described in the text provides the most accurate estimate from the survey data of poundage distributed.

**Table 3.1—Estimated number of food pantries in the United States**

Variables	Food pantries
	<i>Number</i>
<b>Base estimate</b>	
Actual number of pantries interviewed	
1. From "locatable" sample	1,592
2. From secondary sample	25
3. Total	1,617
<b>Weighted number of pantries</b>	
4. From "locatable" sample	31,773
5. From secondary sample	481
6. Total	32,254
7. Estimated pantries in universe, based directly on interviewing results	32,254
<b>Adjustment for possible undercoverage</b>	
8. Ratio of potential secondary pantries to "locatable pantries"	0.016
9. Estimated number of "locatable" pantries not directly interviewed	30,181
10. Potential additional "secondary" pantries	483
<b>Adjusted estimate</b>	
11. Total estimated pantries, adjusted for possible undercoverage	32,737

"Locatable pantries" = Pantries found in initial sample frame.

"Secondary sample" = Pantries found through survey interviews.

Lines 1 and 2 are unweighted counts of survey completions.

Lines 4 and 5 are weighted counts of survey completions, with weights based on sampling probabilities and response rates, as described in appendixes A and E.

Line 7 = line 4 + line 5.

Line 8 = line 2 ÷ line 1.

Line 9 = line 4 - line 1.

Line 10 = line 8 x line 9.

Line 11 = line 7 + line 10.

Source: Based on data from the National Emergency Food Assistance System Survey (2000), weighted tabulations.

**Table 3.2—Food distributed by pantries each month**

Size-related variable	Estimated value
Average number of different households using pantries in a month	106
Average number of visits during a month <sup>1</sup>	1.6
Pounds of food per household per visit	38.2
Total pounds of food distributed per month by average pantry <sup>2</sup>	7,295
Number of pantries	32,737
Total pounds of food distributed per month by pantries	239 million

<sup>1</sup>Excludes pantries that said they did not restrict the number of visits households could make in a month.

<sup>2</sup>Estimated from tabulations of the individual pantries. It is not necessarily the exact product of the sample means shown above in the table.

Source: Based on data from the National Emergency Food Assistance System Survey (2000), weighted tabulations.



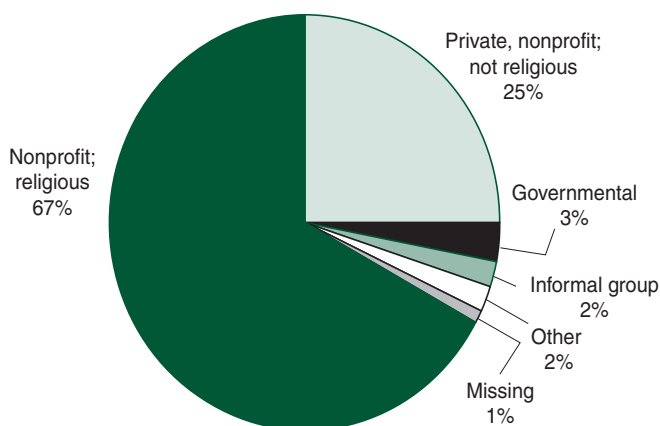
## Characteristics of Food Pantries

### Compared With Kitchens

Although pantries and kitchens have similar characteristics, they also exhibit some noteworthy distinctions (table 3.3). Kitchens are quite evenly distributed across the different regions of the country, whereas pantries are not. Forty percent of all pantries are located in the South; one-quarter are in the Midwest. As indicated in table 3.4, the greater number of pantries in the South reflects, in large part, the fact that the number of low-income people living in the South is greater. When we correct for this factor by computing the ratio of low-income people per pantry, the number for the South (953 persons in poverty per pantry) is very close to the national average (984). Indeed, when examined this way, the outlier is the West, where a relatively low number of pantries results in a ratio of 1,578 people in poverty per pantry.

As with kitchens, about two-thirds of pantries are faith-based, nonprofit organizations (fig. 3.1). Most of the others are nonreligious, nonprofit, private organizations. However, a few (about 3 percent) report that they are operated by governmental units. An examination of the names of the latter pantries indicates that most are operated by local units of government such as municipalities, townships, and, in some instances, counties.

Figure 3.1  
Types of organizations operating food pantries



Source: National Emergency Food Assistance System Survey (2000), weighted tabulations.

In general, both types of emergency food providers exhibit a considerable degree of stability, with more than 45 percent operating for longer than 5 years (fig. 3.2). However, pantries are more likely to be “young” organizations: 39 percent have been operating for 5 years or less, compared with 28 percent of kitchens. This could reflect a higher rate of turnover among pantries than among kitchens, or it could indicate the recent “birth” of many pantries that will remain in operation for an extended period.

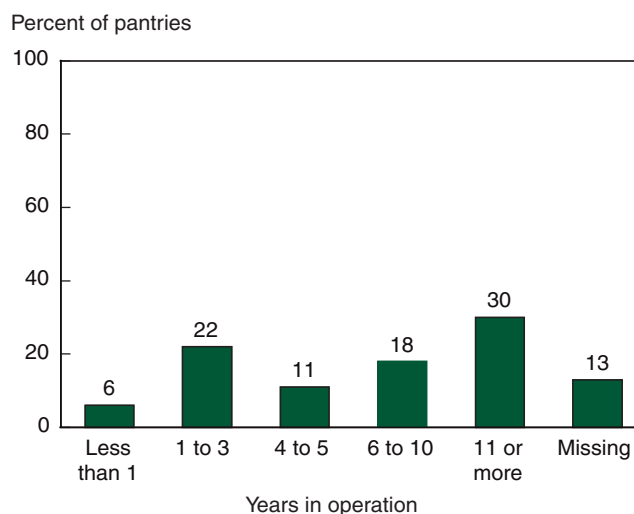
As with emergency kitchens, most food pantries indicated that they first began operating at their current location because of the perceived need for new services. Others mentioned that they had moved from a different location.

Like kitchens, a majority of pantries are located in metropolitan areas. However, pantries are much more likely than kitchens to be located in nonmetropolitan areas (30 percent and 15 percent, respectively).

### By Metropolitan Status and Size

Pantries located in metropolitan and nonmetropolitan areas exhibit similar operating characteristics (tables 3.5 and 3.6). Comparing pantries of different sizes, however, reveals some interesting variations, as described in tables 3.7 and 3.8. We constructed a measure of size by creating a new variable to calculate the number of household visits per month, which was based primarily on the num-

Figure 3.2  
Length of time operating as a food pantry



Source: National Emergency Food Assistance System Survey (2000), weighted tabulations.

**Table 3.3—Comparison of selected characteristics of food pantries and emergency kitchens**

Characteristics	Food pantries	Emergency kitchens
	<i>Percent</i>	
<b>Region</b>		
West	15.1	20.6
Midwest	24.6	24.7
South	40.1	27.4
Northeast	20.3	27.4
<b>Metropolitan status</b>		
Metropolitan	70.3	85.6
Nonmetropolitan	29.7	30.1
<b>Type of organization</b>		
Nonprofit, associated with religious group	67.1	65.4
Nonreligious private nonprofit	25.4	30.2
Governmental	3.0	1.1
Informal group of people	2.3	1.6
Other	1.6	1.5
Missing data	0.5	0.1
<b>Selected organizational affiliations<sup>1</sup></b>		
United Way	19.5	26.1
Salvation Army	11.0	14.0
Catholic Charities	8.4	8.9
Red Cross	6.0	4.8
Other nonprofit organization	17.6	18.4
<b>Length of time surveyed location has been operating</b>		
Less than 1 year	5.7	3.3
1 to 3 years	22.2	15.0
4 to 5 years	11.1	9.6
6 years or longer:		
6 to 10 years	17.9	22.3
11 to 15 years	10.1	12.7
16 to 20 years	12.5	16.9
21 to 25 years	2.8	2.7
Longer than 25 years	4.7	6.8
Not specified	12.3	10.2
Missing data	0.8	0.4
<b>Programs with which provider is co-located<sup>2</sup></b>		
Food bank	3.7	1.0
Food rescue program	1.4	1.4
Emergency shelter	0.5	6.6
<b>Reasons originally began operating at current location<sup>3</sup></b>		
Need for new services	76.7	79.6
Moved to this site from old location	11.4	9.5
Program expanded, opened this site	4.2	3.0
Wanted to be closer to clients	3.7	4.3
Needed larger facility	3.1	2.7
Parent organization determined site	1.7	0.5
More affordable location	0.6	0.4
Forced to move	0.4	0.4
Wanted to be closer to food sources	0.3	0.1
Untapped sources of prepared or perishable food	0.2	0.0
Needed handicapped accessible facility	0.1	0.4
Wanted to be closer to transportation	0.1	0.1
Other	11.8	12.3
<b>Sample size (number)</b>	<b>1,617</b>	<b>1,517</b>

<sup>1</sup>Categories do not add to 100 percent because many kitchens do not have any organizational affiliations.

<sup>2</sup>Categories do not add to 100 percent because many kitchens are not co-located with another provider.

<sup>3</sup>Categories may sum to more than 100 percent because some pantries provided more than one response.

Source: National Emergency Food Assistance System Survey (2000), weighted tabulations.

ber of different households served per month. Pantries were classified as “small” if they served fewer than 30 households per month, “medium” if they served between 30 and 150 households per month, and “large” if they served more than 150 clients. In cases where we lacked sufficient information to calculate this variable, we used the number of full-time- equivalent staff as an alternative measure of size. (Details are provided in appendix D of *The Emergency Food Assistance System—Findings from the Provider Survey, Volume III: Survey Methodology* at <http://www.ers.usda.gov/publications/efan01008>.)

Small pantries are somewhat more likely than large pantries to be faith-based (table 3.7). Overall, large pantries are more likely to be affiliated with national organizations than are small ones. Furthermore, perhaps because large pantries generally have greater resources at their disposal, they are much more likely to offer various types of nonfood services than are small pantries (table 3.8).<sup>28</sup> Three examples are particularly striking: (1) about one-third of large pantries offer nutrition counseling or education, but only 14 percent of small pantries do, (2) 22 percent of large pantries, compared with 13 percent of small pantries, offer eligibility counseling for food stamps and WIC, and (3) 60 percent of large pantries, but only 41 percent of small ones, distribute furniture or clothing.

### By Region

When comparing pantries across different regions of the country, several interesting variations become evident (table 3.9). About 75 percent of the pantries located in the South are faith-based, compared with only 55 percent in the West, 63 percent in the Midwest, and 64 percent in the Northeast. Also, compared with those in

<sup>28</sup>It is also possible that the differences in service provision between large and small pantries reflect either differences in economies of scale in producing the services or differences in their clientele.

other regions, pantries in the West are more likely to be governmental organizations. In the South, 47 percent of pantries have been operating for 5 years or less, compared with about one-third of pantries in other regions. Multiple explanations for the latter finding are possible. One is that the EFAS in the South may be undergoing higher rates of pantry turnover than other regions. Another possible explanation is that during the past 5 years, the rate of growth of pantries in the South may have exceeded that of pantries elsewhere.

Interesting regional differences also are seen with respect to the types of nonfood services offered (table 3.10). Twenty-eight percent of pantries in the Northeast offer their clients eligibility counseling for food stamps or for entry into the Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) program, compared with only 13 to 17 percent of pantries in other regions. As discussed in chapter 2, there are significant policy issues associated with whether all EFAS clients who need government nutrition assistance programs are applying for and receiving this assistance.

Pantries in the West are more likely than their counterparts from other regions to offer employment training and are much more likely to offer language translation. These differences may be attributable to the high proportion of immigrants living in the West.

### Demographic Characteristics of ZIP Code Areas Where Pantries Are Located

As is true of kitchens, food pantries are more likely to be located in areas with high concentrations of poverty. Twelve percent of pantries are in five-digit ZIP Code areas where more than 30 percent of the population have incomes below the poverty level (table 3.11).<sup>29</sup> In

<sup>29</sup>Data on poverty concentration by zip code are from the 1990 census. This analysis can be updated when the results of the 2000 census become available.

**Table 3.4—Ratio of people living in poverty to food pantries by region**

Variables	All	Region			
		West	Midwest	South	Northeast
Pantries in region <sup>1</sup>	32,737	4,943	8,053	13,122	6,646
People below poverty line in region (millions)	32.2	7.8	6.2	12.5	5.7
Low-income people per pantry	984	1,578	770	953	858

<sup>1</sup>Regional totals do not sum to overall total because of rounding error.

Source: National Emergency Food Assistance System Survey (2000), weighted calculations; [http://ferret.bls.census.gov/macro/032000/pov/new19\\_007.htm](http://ferret.bls.census.gov/macro/032000/pov/new19_007.htm).

**Table 3.5—Selected characteristics of food pantries by metropolitan status**

Characteristics	All	Metropolitan status	
		Metropolitan	Nonmetropolitan
		<i>Percent</i>	
<b>Region</b>			
West	15.1	16.5	11.8
Midwest	24.6	22.1	30.4
South	40.1	37.4	46.3
Northeast	20.3	24.0	11.5
<b>Type of organization</b>			
Nonprofit, associated with religious group	67.1	68.8	63.1
Nonreligious private nonprofit	25.4	24.5	27.6
Governmental	3.0	2.8	3.5
Informal group of people	2.3	1.6	4.0
Other	1.6	1.6	1.7
Missing data	0.5	0.7	0.2
<b>Selected organizational affiliations<sup>1</sup></b>			
United Way	19.5	20.9	16.3
Salvation Army	11.0	11.1	10.9
Catholic Charities	8.4	9.4	6.1
Red Cross	6.0	6.7	4.5
Other nonprofit organization	17.6	18.8	14.8
<b>Length of time surveyed location has been operating</b>			
Less than 1 year	5.7	4.9	7.6
1 to 3 years	22.2	21.5	23.9
4 to 5 years	11.1	11.0	11.4
6 years or longer:			
6 to 10 years	17.9	18.6	16.0
1 to 15 years	10.1	9.2	12.0
16 to 20 years	12.5	13.0	11.1
21 to 25 years	2.8	3.3	1.7
Longer than 25 years	4.7	5.2	3.7
Not specified	12.3	12.5	11.6
Missing data	0.8	0.6	1.0
<b>Programs with which food pantry is co-located<sup>2</sup></b>			
Emergency kitchen	9.1	10.5	5.8
Food bank	3.7	3.4	4.4
Food rescue program	1.4	1.4	1.6
Emergency shelter	0.5	0.4	0.7
<b>Reasons originally began operating at current location<sup>3</sup></b>			
Need for new services	76.7	76.9	76.1
Moved to this site from old location	11.4	12.3	9.2
Program expanded, opened this site	4.2	4.1	4.6
Wanted to be closer to clients	3.7	4.3	2.3
Needed larger facility	3.1	2.9	3.6
Parent organization determined site	1.7	1.8	1.3
More affordable location	0.6	0.3	1.1
Forced to move	0.4	0.3	0.6
Wanted to be closer to food sources	0.3	0.2	0.7
Untapped sources of prepared or perishable food	0.2	0.3	0.0
Wanted to be closer to transportation	0.1	0.1	0.0
Needed handicapped accessible facility	0.1	0.0	0.4
Other	11.8	11.0	13.6
<b>Sample size (number)</b>	<b>1,617</b>	<b>1,145</b>	<b>472</b>

<sup>1</sup>Categories do not add to 100 percent because many pantries do not have any organizational affiliations.

<sup>2</sup>Categories do not add to 100 percent because many pantries are not co-located with another provider.

<sup>3</sup>Categories may sum to more than 100 percent because some pantries provided more than one response.

Source: National Emergency Food Assistance System Survey (2000), weighted tabulations.

the country as a whole, only 8 percent of ZIP Code areas have this many people living in poverty. Fifty-eight percent of the pantries are located in areas that are more than 80 percent White, but another 27 percent operate in areas where less than 70 percent of the population is White. A considerable number of pantries (roughly 19 percent) can be found in areas where the population is more than 30 percent African American.

### Compared With Kitchens

The data in table 3.11, when compared with table 2.5, suggest that the demographic characteristics of the areas served by pantries and kitchens differ in several important ways. Pantries are less likely than kitchens to provide services in severely impoverished areas (12 percent versus 21 percent). Given this finding about relative concentrations of kitchens and pantries in high-poverty areas, and given the strong relationship

between poverty and race,<sup>30</sup> it is perhaps not surprising that pantries are less likely than kitchens to be located in neighborhoods that are heavily populated with non-Whites. For example, 19 percent of pantries, but 31 percent of kitchens, serve areas in which more than 30 percent of the population is African American.

### By Metropolitan Status

Metropolitan pantries are more likely than nonmetropolitan pantries to be located in extremely poor areas (table 3.11). About 12 percent of metropolitan pantries, but only 8 percent of nonmetropolitan ones, are located in ZIP Code areas where more than 30 percent of the population lives in poverty.

<sup>30</sup>The poverty rates for 1998 were 28.3 percent for African Americans, 29.4 percent for Hispanics, and 11.2 percent for Whites (*U.S. Statistical Abstract*, 2000).

**Table 3.6—Nonfood services offered by food pantries by metropolitan status**

Characteristics	All	Metropolitan status	
		Metropolitan	Nonmetropolitan
		<i>Percent</i>	
<b>Nonfood services offered<sup>1</sup></b>			
Eligibility counseling for food stamps or WIC	17.2	17.9	15.6
Employment training for agencies/clients	9.7	10.4	7.8
Employment training for other people	7.9	8.1	7.5
Distribution of furniture or clothing	48.3	49.5	45.3
Transportation services	23.8	24.6	22.0
Nutrition counseling or nutrition education	21.9	23.0	19.2
Language translation, including sign language	16.8	19.4	10.3
Substance abuse counseling	13.3	13.8	12.0
Housing or shelter <sup>2</sup>	12.6	11.9	14.3
Consumer counseling and assistance	12.0	12.8	10.3
Basic adult education	11.7	13.2	8.2
Health services	10.8	11.7	8.4
Supported employment	6.9	7.6	5.2
Legal or Accounting Services	3.5	4.1	2.1
Missing data	1.2	1.4	0.6
<b>Nonfood services offered</b>			
0	32.2	30.0	37.5
1-2	35.2	35.5	34.5
3-5	20.4	21.1	18.9
More than 5	11.0	12.0	8.6
Missing	1.2	1.4	0.6
<b>Does any other organization provide nonfood services at the site?</b>			
Yes	15.7	16.1	14.6
No	83.4	82.7	85.0
Missing data	1.0	1.2	0.4
<b>Sample size (number)</b>	<b>1,617</b>	<b>1,145</b>	<b>472</b>

<sup>1</sup>Categories sum to more than 100 percent because some parties provided more than one response.

<sup>2</sup>Refers in general to counseling and referral services—most pantries do not directly provide housing services.

WIC = Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children.

Source: National Emergency Food Assistance System Survey (2000), weighted tabulations.

**Table 3.7—Selected characteristics of food pantries by size of pantry**

Characteristics	All	Size of pantry		
		Small	Medium	Large
<b>Size of pantry</b>	100.0	37.9	<i>Percent</i> 35.3	24.8
<b>Region</b>				
West	15.1	8.7	15.9	24.5
Midwest	24.6	25.8	27.4	19.6
South	40.1	49.1	33.2	34.0
Northeast	20.3	16.5	23.5	21.9
<b>Metropolitan status</b>				
Metropolitan	70.3	61.6	73.7	79.4
Nonmetropolitan	29.7	38.4	26.3	20.6
<b>Type of organization</b>				
Nonprofit, associated with religious group	67.1	70.3	67.9	60.7
Nonreligious private nonprofit	25.4	22.2	24.7	32.3
Governmental	3.0	3.1	3.1	2.6
Informal group of people	2.3	2.7	2.1	1.9
Other	1.6	1.3	1.8	1.8
Missing data	0.5	0.5	0.4	0.7
<b>Selected organizational affiliations<sup>1</sup></b>				
United Way	19.5	13.7	19.9	28.1
Salvation Army	11.0	10.0	11.1	12.3
Catholic Charities	8.4	5.9	8.9	12.0
Red Cross	6.0	5.5	5.0	8.1
Other nonprofit organization	17.6	13.4	18.8	22.8
<b>Length of time surveyed location has been operating</b>				
Less than 1 year	5.7	5.5	4.8	7.3
1 to 3 years	22.2	21.3	0.5	25.1
4 to 5 years	11.1	11.6	12.6	8.1
6 years or longer:				
6 to 10 years	17.9	17.6	18.6	17.3
11 to 15 years	10.1	8.7	9.9	12.9
16 to 20 years	12.5	12.8	12.2	13.0
21 to 25 years	2.8	1.7	3.7	3.6
Longer than 25 years	4.7	4.8	3.9	5.6
Not specified	12.3	14.8	13.8	6.6
Missing data	0.8	1.3	0.0	0.5
<b>Programs with which food pantry is co-located</b>				
Emergency kitchen	9.1	7.8	7.5	13.2
Food bank	3.7	2.6	2.8	6.8
Food rescue program	1.4	1.5	1.1	1.4
Emergency shelter	0.5	0.3	1.0	0.2
<b>Reasons originally began operating at current location<sup>2</sup></b>				
Need for new services	76.7	78.7	79.0	70.0
Moved to this site from old location	11.4	9.4	10.5	16.2
Program expanded, opened this site	4.2	3.5	3.0	7.3
Wanted to be closer to clients	3.7	3.7	3.5	4.2
Needed larger facility	3.1	2.7	1.9	5.3
Parent organization determined site	1.7	1.3	2.0	2.0
More affordable location	0.6	0.6	0.4	0.7
Forced to move	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.5
Wanted to be closer to food sources	0.3	0.5	0.2	0.3
Untapped sources of prepared or perishable food	0.2	0.0	0.5	0.2
Needed handicapped accessible facility	0.1	0.2	0.4	0.0
Wanted to be closer to transportation	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.3
Other	11.8	13.5	10.5	11.0
<b>Sample size (number)</b>	<b>1,617</b>	<b>597</b>	<b>576</b>	<b>410</b>

<sup>1</sup>Categories do not add to 100 percent because many pantries do not have any organizational affiliations. <sup>2</sup>Categories may sum to more than 100 percent because some pantries provided more than one response. Co-located = Two different programs operating at the same location.

Notes: Size variable is defined based on number of households served, frequency of food distribution, and staffing. In general, "small" pantries have fewer than 30 household visits per month; "medium" pantries have 30 to 150 household visits per month; and "large" pantries have more than 150 household visits per month.

The sample numbers for food pantry sizes do not sum to the total sample because some food pantries did not provide answers and are not included.

Source: National Emergency Food Assistance System Survey (2000), weighted tabulations.

Pantries located in nonmetropolitan areas are much more likely to operate in predominantly White areas. Three-fourths of nonmetropolitan pantries, but roughly one-half of metropolitan pantries, are located in areas where more than 80 percent of the population is White. Similarly, almost one-fourth of metropolitan pantries, but only 10 percent of their nonmetropolitan counterparts, operate in areas whose population is more than 30 percent African American.

In part, these and the other differences between the metropolitan and nonmetropolitan data shown in table 3.11 may reflect the fact that ZIP Code areas in the relatively sparsely populated rural areas may tend to be larger and more heterogeneous than in urban areas. They could also reflect differences in racial composition,

since the percentage of the population that is Black varies between 14 percent for metropolitan areas and 9 percent for nonmetropolitan areas.<sup>31</sup>

Demographic differences between clients of pantries in metropolitan and nonmetropolitan areas are particularly dramatic when we examine the percentage of the population consisting of other races. Only 3 percent of nonmetropolitan pantries, but 15 percent of metropolitan pantries, are located in areas where people of “other” races comprise more than 15 percent of the population.

<sup>31</sup>Tabulations of U.S. Census Bureau Current Population Survey data, March 1998 survey.

**Table 3.8—Nonfood services offered by food pantries by size of pantry**

Characteristics	All	Size of pantry		
		Small	Medium	Large
		<i>Percent</i>		
<b>Nonfood services offered<sup>1</sup></b>				
Eligibility counseling for food stamps or WIC	17.2	12.6	19.3	21.8
Employment training for agencies/clients	9.7	5.7	10.7	14.6
Employment training for other people	7.9	5.4	8.4	11.1
Distribution of furniture or clothing	48.3	41.0	47.9	60.0
Transportation services	23.8	20.2	24.8	27.8
Nutrition counseling or nutrition education	21.9	14.4	23.0	32.2
Language translation, including sign language	16.8	9.6	16.4	28.9
Substance abuse counseling	13.3	10.1	12.3	19.1
Housing or shelter <sup>2</sup>	12.6	11.9	10.8	15.8
Consumer counseling and assistance	12.0	8.7	12.2	16.6
Basic adult education	11.7	7.0	12.9	16.7
Health services	10.8	7.4	10.9	16.0
Supported employment	6.9	4.6	7.0	10.6
Legal or accounting services	3.5	2.0	4.0	5.2
Missing data	1.2	0.6	1.6	1.6
<b>Number of nonfood services offered</b>				
0	32.2	42.7	31.2	17.9
1-2	35.2	34.0	35.1	37.0
3-5	20.4	16.4	21.3	25.6
More than 5	11.0	6.3	10.9	18.0
Missing	1.2	0.6	1.6	1.6
<b>Does any other organization provide nonfood services at the site?</b>				
Yes	15.7	12.7	18.2	16.8
No	83.4	86.7	80.8	81.7
Missing data	1.0	0.7	1.0	1.5
<b>Sample size (number)</b>	<b>1,617</b>	<b>597</b>	<b>576</b>	<b>410</b>

<sup>1</sup>Categories may sum to more than 100 percent because some pantries provided more than one response.

<sup>2</sup>Refers in general to counseling and referral services—most pantries do not directly provide housing services.

WIC = Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children.

Notes: Size variable is based on number of households served, frequency of food distribution, and staffing. In general, “small” pantries have fewer than 30 household visits per month; “medium” pantries have 30 to 150 household visits per month; and “large” pantries have more than 150 household visits per month.

The sample numbers for food pantry sizes do not sum to the total sample because some food pantries did not provide answers and are not included.

Source: National Emergency Food Assistance System Survey (2000), weighted tabulations.

**Table 3.9—Selected characteristics of food pantries by region**

Characteristics	All	Region			
		West	Midwest	South	Northeast
			<i>Percent</i>		
<b>Region</b>	100.0	15.1	24.6	40.1	20.3
<b>Size of pantry</b>					
Small	37.9	21.7	39.7	46.4	30.8
Medium	35.3	37.1	39.3	29.3	40.9
Large	24.8	40.2	19.7	21.0	26.8
Missing data	2.1	0.9	1.3	3.3	1.5
<b>Metropolitan status</b>					
Metropolitan	70.3	76.7	63.3	65.7	83.2
Nonmetropolitan	29.7	23.3	36.7	34.3	16.8
<b>Type of organization</b>					
Nonprofit, associated with religious group	67.1	55.4	63.4	75.3	64.1
Nonreligious private nonprofit	25.4	31.1	30.6	18.3	28.9
Governmental	3.0	7.4	1.9	2.2	2.7
Informal group of people	2.3	2.0	2.4	2.3	2.4
Other	1.6	3.6	1.0	1.6	0.9
Missing data	0.5	0.4	0.8	0.3	0.9
<b>Organizational affiliations<sup>1</sup></b>					
United Way	19.5	21.1	18.3	16.5	25.9
Salvation Army	11.0	15.2	13.6	8.1	10.5
Catholic Charities	8.4	8.2	7.9	8.0	10.0
Red Cross	6.0	5.2	9.4	4.7	5.0
Other nonprofit organization	17.6	24.1	19.1	14.1	17.8
<b>Length of time surveyed location has been operating</b>					
Less than 1 year	5.7	6.0	3.9	7.5	4.3
1 to 3 years	22.2	21.5	18.6	27.2	17.4
4 to 5 years	11.1	10.0	10.3	12.6	10.0
6 years or longer:					
6 to 10 years	17.9	19.3	15.3	17.8	20.0
11 to 15 years	10.1	9.6	12.5	8.9	9.8
16 to 20 years	12.5	13.2	15.4	8.6	16.1
21 to 25 years	2.8	4.0	4.4	1.3	3.1
Longer than 25 years	4.7	6.6	4.4	4.7	3.8
Not specified	12.3	9.7	15.1	10.4	14.5
Missing data	0.8	0.0	0.2	1.2	1.2
<b>Programs with which food pantry is co-located<sup>2</sup></b>					
Emergency kitchen	9.1	13.0	8.2	8.5	8.5
Food bank	3.7	6.0	3.6	3.1	3.3
Food rescue program	1.4	0.4	1.0	2.2	1.2
Emergency shelter	0.5	1.0	1.0	0.1	0.3
<b>Reasons originally began operating at current location<sup>3</sup></b>					
Need for new services	76.7	70.1	73.6	79.4	80.0
Moved to this site from old location	11.4	17.2	12.3	8.8	11.0
Program expanded, opened this site	4.2	3.8	6.2	3.6	3.6
Wanted to be closer to clients	3.7	6.4	3.3	3.0	3.4
Needed larger facility	3.1	3.5	3.0	2.6	3.9
Parent organization determined site	1.7	3.0	0.7	1.3	2.6
More affordable location	0.6	0.2	1.2	0.6	0.0
Forced to move	0.4	1.3	0.3	0.3	0.0
Wanted to be closer to food sources	0.3	0.3	0.2	0.4	0.3
Untapped sources of prepared or perishable food	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.6	0.0
Needed handicapped accessible facility	0.1	0.7	0.0	0.0	0.0
Wanted to be closer to transportation	0.1	0.4	0.0	0.0	0.0
Other	11.8	14.4	15.6	10.8	7.1
<b>Sample size (number)</b>	<b>1,617</b>	<b>252</b>	<b>402</b>	<b>648</b>	<b>315</b>

<sup>1</sup>Categories do not add to 100 percent because many pantries do not have any organizational affiliations. <sup>2</sup>Categories do not add to 100 percent because many pantries are not co-located with another provider. <sup>3</sup>Categories may sum to more than 100 percent because some pantries provided more than one service.

Co-located = Two different programs operating at the same locations.

Note: Size variable is defined based on number of households served, frequency of food distribution, and staffing. In general, "small" pantries have fewer than 30 household visits per month; "medium" pantries have 30 to 150 household visits per month; and "large" pantries have more than 150 household visits per month. Source National Emergency Food Assistance System Survey (2000), weighted tabulations.



**Table 3.10—Nonfood services offered by food pantries by region**

Services	All	Region			
		West	Midwest	South	Northeast
		<i>Percent</i>			
<b>Nonfood services offered<sup>1</sup></b>					
Eligibility counseling for food stamps or WIC	17.2	16.6	16.6	12.5	27.9
Employment training for agencies/clients	9.7	14.3	9.7	7.9	9.7
Employment training for other people	7.9	13.7	5.8	6.4	9.4
Distribution of furniture or clothing	48.3	51.9	44.3	50.6	45.7
Transportation services	23.8	23.6	24.8	22.9	24.6
Nutrition counseling or nutrition education	21.9	23.6	24.0	16.6	28.6
Language translation, including sign language	16.8	33.9	13.7	13.0	15.4
Substance abuse counseling	13.3	13.5	13.8	13.4	12.2
Housing or shelter <sup>2</sup>	12.6	17.2	13.8	11.4	9.9
Consumer counseling and assistance	12.0	12.4	12.7	10.7	13.6
Basic adult education	11.7	14.0	10.8	11.0	12.7
Health services	10.8	13.9	9.2	10.2	11.5
Supported employment	6.9	11.1	4.9	7.1	6.0
Legal or accounting services	3.5	4.0	2.9	2.7	5.6
Missing data	1.2	2.2	1.0	0.5	1.8
<b>Number of nonfood services offered</b>					
0	32.2	23.9	34.0	33.1	34.6
1-2	35.2	36.0	33.3	37.9	31.5
3-5	20.4	21.9	23.3	18.9	18.9
More than 5	11.0	16.0	8.5	9.6	13.2
Missing data	1.2	2.2	1.0	0.5	1.8
<b>Sample size (number)</b>	<b>1,617</b>	<b>252</b>	<b>402</b>	<b>648</b>	<b>315</b>

<sup>1</sup>Categories sum to more than 100 percent because some pantries provided more than one response.

<sup>2</sup>Refers in general to counseling and referral services—most pantries do not directly provide housing services.

WIC = Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children.

Source: National Emergency Food Assistance System Survey (2000), weighted tabulations.

**Table 3.11—Characteristics of ZIP Code areas where food pantries are located**

Characteristics of ZIP Code area	All U.S. ZIP Codes	All food pantries	Metropolitan status	
			Metropolitan	Nonmetropolitan
			<i>Percent</i>	
<b>Percent of people below poverty</b>				
Less than 20	77.5	66.1	65.2	68.1
20 to 30	14.4	15.7	14.7	18.1
More than 30	8.1	12.1	13.9	7.8
Missing data	0.0	6.2	6.2	6.1
<b>Percent White</b>				
Less than 70	12.9	26.7	32.9	12.0
70 to 80	6.2	9.2	9.9	7.5
More than 80	80.9	57.9	51.0	74.4
Missing data	0.0	6.2	6.2	6.1
<b>Percent African American</b>				
Less than 10	81.8	57.2	50.3	73.6
10 to 30	10.0	17.1	20.0	10.2
More than 30	8.2	19.5	23.4	10.1
Missing data	0.0	6.2	6.2	6.1
<b>Percent other races</b>				
Less than 5	80.4	64.1	57.5	79.9
5 to 15	12.2	17.8	20.8	10.8
More than 15	7.5	11.9	15.5	3.3
Missing data	0.0	6.2	6.2	6.1
<b>Sample size (number)</b>	<b>NA</b>	<b>1,617</b>	<b>1,145</b>	<b>472</b>

NA = Not applicable.

Source: National Emergency Food Assistance System Survey (2000), weighted tabulations, and 1990 Decennial Census data.

## Food Distribution Characteristics and Policies

To gain perspective about the operations of pantries, we asked respondents a series of questions about their food distribution practices and policies. The data were then cross-tabulated to determine whether pantry operations differed by metropolitan status, size, or region.

### Food Distribution Characteristics

About 30 percent of pantries distribute food 5 or more days per week (table 3.12). About half are open fewer than 3 days per week. In general, pantries do not have long hours of operation. Only about 32 percent are open for 5 or more hours on the days they are open (fig. 3.3).

Eighty-three percent of pantries reported that in an emergency they make food available to clients even when the pantries normally are closed. Forty-six percent sometimes make home deliveries to people who are unable to come to the pantries.

The client base for most pantries is small. Sixty percent of pantries serve 25 or fewer households per day. Only about 8 percent serve more than 100 households per day.<sup>32</sup>

We originally intended to estimate the total number of household visits per month at each pantry by multiplying the respondent's estimate of the number of clients who came on a typical day by the reported number of days per month the pantry was open. However, this led to an implausibly high estimate of monthly visits.<sup>33</sup> We therefore have used a different set of questions to estimate the

<sup>32</sup>The data on average visits per day should be used with some caution, since our editing checks found inconsistencies with other data items for some cases. In particular, we believe that in some instances the estimates are too high. However, the distribution gives a reasonably accurate sense of the range of scales of operations found within the pantry network.

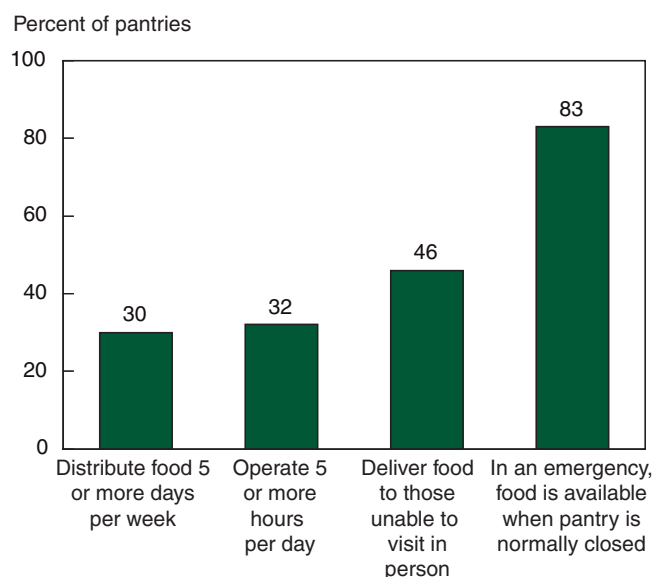
<sup>33</sup>When the number of visits estimated this way was multiplied by our estimate of the average pounds of food taken per visit, the result was an estimate of food distributed per month that seemed unreasonably high. The relevant data item (Question C11) about daily attendance was frequently inconsistent with responses to the question on the number of different people using the pantry over a longer period (Question C17-4). Also a series of "call-backs" to respondents indicated that the data recorded under C11 were often too high. While we are unsure of the exact reason for these discrepancies, we have relied on variables other than C11 for most of the analysis. We believe that there may have been a tendency for respondents to give us estimates of the visits per day that were closer to the maximum rather than the average on Question C11. (The data collection instrument is available in the file documentation for the project and can be obtained from ERS or MPR.)

number of visits to a pantry in a month. Respondents were asked how often (that is, how many times per period, such as a month) clients could obtain food from their pantry, with the respondent being allowed to choose the time period for which he or she responded. This information was converted to a frequency-per-month figure during the analysis. The respondents were also asked how many *different* clients were served by the pantry during the interval over which food pickups were allowed. The estimated number of different clients served in the stated interval times and the frequency per month with which they could pick up food was then used to calculate the estimate of household visits to the pantry in a given month.

The resulting data, displayed in the next panel of table 3.12, further highlight the wide variation in the scale at which various pantries operate. About 14 percent reported having 10 or fewer clients *per month*. Thirteen percent had client visits in the range of 50 to 100 a month. Approximately 12 percent reported in excess of 300 client visits in a month.

There is somewhat less variation in the amount of food the clients typically receive on a visit. Thirty-seven percent of respondents indicated that clients receive between 30 and 40 pounds, which is typically two to three large grocery bags. About 10 percent of pantries reported distributing more than 60 pounds per visit.

Figure 3.3  
**Selected food distribution characteristics of food pantries**



Source: National Emergency Food Assistance System Survey (2000), weighted tabulations.

### ***By Metropolitan Status***

In general, metropolitan and nonmetropolitan pantries appear to have similar food distribution characteristics (table 3.12). However, the groups differ in at least two respects. First, nonmetropolitan pantries serve fewer households per day: 49 percent of nonmetropolitan pantries, compared with 38 percent of metropolitan pantries, serve fewer than 10 households per day. In addition, pantries located in metropolitan areas are more likely than pantries in nonmetropolitan areas to distribute food 5 or more days per week (32 versus 25 percent).

It is likely that many of the smallest pantries represented in the table principally serve a small, specific clientele, such as the members of a single church or the residents of a small municipality or neighborhood. Further, in rural areas with low population densities, even a pantry targeted at all nearby residents may serve a limited number of people per day.

### ***By Size***

Not surprisingly, our constructed size variable is strongly related to the number of households served on an average day (table 3.13). In addition, small pantries operate for fewer hours than do large ones: 33 percent of small pantries operate for 2 or fewer hours per day, compared with 24 percent of large pantries.

### ***By Region***

A number of differences are seen when we compare pantries in different regions of the country (table 3.14). Pantries in the Northeast have shorter operating hours than those in other regions. For example, 36 percent of pantries in the Northeast operate for 2 or fewer hours per day, compared with 26 percent of pantries in the South. In contrast, those in the Midwest and South are more likely than those in the Northeast to operate for 7 or more hours per day.

In general, compared with those in the Northeast, pantries in the Midwest and South serve fewer households. This observation is consistent with the earlier finding that many large pantries are located in the Northeast, whereas many smaller pantries are found in

the South. Pantries in the Northeast are more likely to allow households to make their own food selections than are those in other regions.

### ***Policies Used To Limit Food Distribution***

Many pantries have implemented policies that control who can receive food and how often (table 3.15). Two-thirds of pantries reported that they limit the frequency with which households can obtain food.<sup>34</sup> About half of those that do so allow households to receive food packages 12 times per year, or about once a month, whereas only 13 percent allow them to do so more than once per week.

About 40 percent of pantries limit *who* can receive food packages. The criteria used most frequently by pantries with clientele restrictions are income (50 percent) and residence in the service area (40 percent). In many cases these restrictions reflect, in part, TEFAP and/or State regulations, which set constraints on who can get USDA food and on how often they may receive it.

### ***By Size***

In general, large pantries are more likely than small ones to control their distribution of food (table 3.15). About half of large pantries limit who can receive food, but only about one-third of small ones do.

### ***Compared With Kitchens***

Pantries are much more likely than kitchens to limit who can receive food from them (43 percent versus 15 percent) (table 3.16). Although many pantries use income or residency criteria, kitchens are much less likely to impose these restrictions, perhaps because they have a higher proportion of homeless clients. (See *Second Harvest* (1998) for a discussion of the incidence of homelessness among pantry and kitchen users.) Not surprisingly, a larger percentage of kitchens report having policies against serving people exhibiting unruly behavior or drug and alcohol problems.

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<sup>34</sup>The percentage reporting policies to limit food is lower than we expected. It is possible that some pantries, particularly small ones, do in fact have implicit policies but do not think of them as policies because they are not formalized.

**Table 3.12—Selected food distribution characteristics of food pantries by metropolitan status**

Distribution characteristics	All	Metropolitan status	
		Metropolitan	Nonmetropolitan
		<i>Percent</i>	
<b>Metropolitan status</b>	100.0	70.3	29.7
<b>Frequency of food distribution</b>			
7 days per week	5.3	5.2	5.3
5 or 6 days per week	24.8	26.9	20.0
3 or 4 days per week	14.7	13.8	16.9
1 or 2 days per week	34.9	35.9	32.3
2 or 3 days per month	7.1	6.5	8.6
Once per month	9.0	8.4	10.3
Missing data	4.3	3.2	6.6
<b>Operating hours per day</b>			
2 or less	30.5	30.7	30.1
3 or 4	30.1	30.3	29.4
5 or 6	13.9	14.5	12.5
7 or 8	13.9	14.6	12.5
More than 8	5.0	4.6	5.8
Missing data	6.6	5.4	9.7
<b>In an emergency, food is available from pantry when it is normally closed</b>	83.0	81.2	87.3
<b>Pantry delivers food to those unable to visit in person</b>	45.5	44.9	47.0
<b>Party responsible for determining selection of food item included in bag/box</b>			
Pantry staff	73.8	74.4	72.5
Households	15.4	14.9	16.5
Households and pantry staff	10.7	10.7	10.9
<b>Households served on an average day</b>			
Fewer than 10	41.1	37.8	49.0
10 to 25	18.5	19.1	17.1
26 to 50	14.2	16.2	9.5
51 to 75	5.9	6.8	3.9
76 to 100	3.8	3.6	4.5
101 to 200	4.6	5.1	3.4
201 to 300	1.5	1.8	0.8
301 to 500	0.9	0.9	0.9
501 to 800	0.3	0.3	0.1
More than 800	0.2	0.2	0.2
Missing data	8.8	8.1	10.6
(Mean)	(39.2)	(42.6)	(30.9)
(Median)	(15.0)	(15.0)	(10.0)
<b>Household visits in a month</b>			
Fewer than 10	13.9	10.9	21.2
10 to 25	13.8	13.6	14.4
26 to 50	12.8	12.5	13.5
51 to 100	13.4	13.3	13.5
101 to 300	16.1	17.9	11.9
More than 300	11.8	17.1	6.5
Missing data	18.1	17.8	18.9
<b>Average pounds of food received in a visit</b>			
Less than 10	3.9	3.7	4.2
10 to 20	19.2	19.4	18.6
21 to 30	15.3	14.7	16.7
31 to 40	37.4	39.0	33.6
41 to 50	10.1	9.3	12.0
51 to 60	4.1	4.0	4.4
More than 60	10.0	9.8	10.6
<b>Sample size (number)</b>	<b>1,617</b>	<b>1,145</b>	<b>472</b>

Source: National Emergency Food Assistance System Survey (2000), weighted tabulations.

**Table 3.13—Selected food distribution characteristics of food pantries by size of pantry**

Distribution characteristics	All	Size of pantry		
		Small	Medium	Large
		<i>Percent</i>		
<b>Frequency of food distribution</b>				
7 days per week	5.3	5.6	4.2	5.4
5 or 6 days per week	24.8	23.0	26.0	26.6
3 or 4 days per week	14.7	12.4	15.6	18.1
1 or 2 days per week	34.9	33.5	35.2	37.5
2 or 3 days per month	7.1	7.8	8.2	5.2
Once a month	9.0	10.9	8.8	5.3
Missing data	4.3	6.9	2.0	1.7
<b>Operating hours per day</b>				
2 or less	30.5	33.5	32.5	23.7
3 or 4	30.1	24.7	31.7	36.9
5 or 6	13.9	10.4	12.2	21.1
7 or 8	13.9	14.6	13.8	13.1
More than 8	5.0	4.6	5.9	4.2
Missing data	6.6	12.2	3.9	0.9
<b>In an emergency, food is available to households from pantry when it is normally closed</b>	83.0	83.3	82.2	84.0
<b>Pantry delivers food to those unable to visit in person</b>	45.5	45.5	44.7	47.3
<b>Party responsible for determining selection of food items included in bag/box</b>				
Pantry staff	73.8	73.3	71.2	77.9
Households	15.4	16.1	16.3	13.5
Households and pantry staff	10.7	10.5	12.4	8.6
<b>Households served on a typical day</b>				
Fewer than 10	41.1	67.3	35.0	11.1
10 to 25	18.5	10.2	28.8	17.4
26 to 50	14.2	4.7	17.3	25.4
51 to 75	5.9	1.9	6.2	12.1
76 to 100	3.8	0.9	4.0	8.4
101 to 200	4.6	1.4	3.4	11.1
201 to 300	1.5	0.0	0.5	5.4
301 to 500	0.9	0.2	0.2	3.1
501 to 800	0.3	0.0	0.1	0.9
More than 800	0.2	0.0	0.2	0.3
Missing data	8.8	13.5	4.4	4.9
(Mean)	(39.2)	(12.3)	(31.5)	(86.2)
(Median)	(15.0)	(4.0)	(15.0)	(45.0)
<b>Household visits in a month<sup>1</sup></b>				
Fewer than 10	13.9	36.8	0.0	0.0
10 to 25	13.8	36.5	0.0	0.0
26 to 50	12.8	5.3	30.6	0.0
51 to 100	13.4	0.0	38.0	0.0
101 to 300	16.1	0.0	17.6	39.9
More than 300	11.8	0.0	0.0	47.9
Missing data	18.1	21.4	13.8	12.3
<b>Average pounds of food received in a visit</b>				
Less than 10	3.9	3.7	3.0	5.4
10 to 20	19.2	19.9	21.0	16.9
21 to 30	15.3	13.1	17.8	16.3
31 to 40	37.4	43.8	29.8	35.1
41 to 50	10.1	6.9	12.9	11.3
51 to 60	4.1	3.5	4.8	4.1
More than 60	10.0	9.1	10.6	10.8
<b>Sample size (number)</b>	<b>1,617</b>	<b>597</b>	<b>576</b>	<b>410</b>

<sup>1</sup>Equal to the number of households visiting the pantry in a month times the average number of visits made by each household in the month.

Note: Size variable is based on number of households served, frequency of food distribution, and staffing. In general, "small" pantries have fewer than 30 household visits per month; "medium" pantries have 30 to 150 household visits per month; and "large" pantries have more than 150 household visits per month.

Source: National Emergency Food Assistance System Survey (2000), weighted tabulations.

**Table 3.14—Selected food distribution characteristics of food pantries by region**

Distribution characteristics	All	Region			
		West	Midwest	South	Northeast
		<i>Percent</i>			
<b>Frequency of food distribution</b>					
7 days per week	5.3	5.0	4.2	6.5	4.2
5 or 6 days per week	24.8	26.9	23.9	25.2	23.6
3 or 4 days per week	14.7	15.7	17.7	13.8	12.3
1 or 2 days per week	34.9	37.1	36.4	32.5	36.0
2 or 3 days per month	7.1	5.3	5.4	7.2	10.5
Once per month	9.0	8.8	9.9	8.4	9.1
Missing data	4.3	1.2	2.5	6.4	4.3
<b>Operating hours per day</b>					
2 or less	30.5	29.5	33.0	26.4	36.2
3 or 4	30.1	33.0	28.2	31.0	28.3
5 or 6	13.9	15.9	13.6	12.5	15.4
7 or 8	13.9	11.8	14.4	15.7	11.5
More than 8	5.0	5.8	5.1	5.1	3.9
Missing data	6.6	3.9	5.7	9.2	4.7
<b>In an emergency, food is available from pantry when it is normally closed</b>	83.0	80.2	80.9	82.9	87.9
<b>Pantry delivers food to those unable to visit in person</b>	45.5	41.9	44.4	47.4	46.1
<b>Party responsible for selection of food items included in bag/box</b>					
Pantry staff	73.8	75.2	71.4	78.9	65.6
Households and pantry staff	10.7	12.1	11.5	8.0	14.2
Households	15.4	12.7	16.9	13.0	20.1
<b>Households served on an average day</b>					
Fewer than 10	41.1	27.7	46.0	46.9	33.9
10 to 25	18.5	20.7	19.3	18.1	16.8
26 to 50	14.2	19.3	13.1	11.3	17.6
51 to 75	5.9	7.5	5.4	4.8	7.8
76 to 100	3.8	5.4	2.9	2.5	6.5
101 to 200	4.6	6.9	3.7	3.5	6.2
201 to 300	1.5	4.8	0.7	1.2	0.8
301 to 500	0.9	1.4	0.5	0.7	1.4
501 to 800	0.3	0.9	0.0	0.3	0.0
More than 800	0.2	0.4	0.0	0.3	0.0
Missing data	8.8	4.9	8.5	10.5	8.9
(Mean)	(39.2)	(62.4)	(28.1)	(34.4)	(43.8)
(Median)	(15.0)	(25.0)	(10.0)	(10.0)	(20.0)
<b>Household pantry visits in a month<sup>1</sup></b>					
Fewer than 10	13.9	6.7	16.1	18.3	8.1
10 to 25	13.8	7.5	14.4	16.6	12.3
26 to 50	12.8	10.5	13.6	13.1	12.9
51 to 100	13.4	14.6	15.3	10.7	15.4
101 to 300	16.1	21.5	16.9	12.4	18.2
More than 300	11.8	21.4	6.5	9.9	14.9
Missing data	18.1	17.7	17.0	18.8	18.2
<b>Average pounds of food received in a visit</b>					
Less than 10	3.9	5.1	3.3	4.6	2.2
10 to 20	19.2	23.1	14.7	18.6	22.8
21 to 30	15.3	17.8	14.8	15.0	14.5
31 to 40	37.4	30.2	37.1	37.5	43.0
41 to 50	10.1	12.1	11.7	9.7	43.0
51 to 60	4.1	3.7	4.4	4.7	2.7
More than 60	10.0	7.9	13.8	10.0	7.2
<b>Sample size (number)</b>	<b>1,617</b>	<b>252</b>	<b>402</b>	<b>648</b>	<b>315</b>

<sup>1</sup>Equal to the number of households visiting the pantry in a month times the average number of visits made by each household in the month.

Source: National Emergency Food Assistance System Survey (2000), weighted tabulations.

**Table 3.15—Policies used by food pantries to limit how often and which households can receive food by size of pantry**

Frequency and eligibility policies	All	Size of pantry		
		Small	Medium	Large
		<i>Percent</i>		
<b>Have set limits on how often each household can obtain food</b>	66.5	62.6	71.4	66.6
<b>Frequency with which households are permitted to obtain food distributed by food pantry<sup>1</sup></b>				
52 times per year or more	12.9	8.3	10.1	24.3
13 to 51 times per year	13.8	11.0	14.6	15.7
12 times per year	49.5	34.2	62.4	52.7
5 to 11 times per year	4.2	7.0	3.1	2.2
4 times per year	9.8	19.9	5.9	1.7
Less than 4 times per year	1.8	4.5	0.3	0.0
Other	6.8	14.0	2.5	2.3
Missing data	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.1
(Median)	(12.0)	(12.0)	(12.0)	(12.0)
<b>Have policies limiting who can receive food</b>	42.7	32.1	46.9	52.1
<b>Policies used by food pantries to restrict who can receive food<sup>2,3</sup></b>				
Must meet certain income guidelines	49.7	39.5	55.8	51.6
Must reside in service area	39.3	37.9	42.1	38.4
Must fall into a specific target group not dictated by age or presence of children	14.2	17.8	11.6	12.8
Must fall into a certain age group	2.8	3.5	1.7	3.8
Must be referred by church or other agency	8.1	10.0	9.0	4.9
Must not abuse program or come too often	2.7	3.8	2.8	1.2
Must have proper identification	2.6	1.6	2.0	4.5
Must not exhibit a drug, alcohol, or behavior problem	1.3	0.0	1.3	2.6
Must have children in the household	0.7	2.1	0.3	0.0
Must have U.S. citizenship	0.5	0.0	0.6	0.7
Must provide services to agency and/or make donations	0.5	0.9	0.4	0.4
Must pay a small fee	0.1	0.5	0.0	0.0
Other	6.7	5.4	4.9	9.5
<b>Sample size (number)</b>	<b>1,617</b>	<b>597</b>	<b>576</b>	<b>410</b>

<sup>1</sup>Includes food pantries that have policies restricting how often each household can obtain food. <sup>2</sup>Categories may sum to more than 100 percent because some pantries provided more than one response. <sup>3</sup>Includes food pantries that have policies restricting who can receive food.

Note: Size variable is defined based on number of households served, frequency of food distribution, and staffing. In general, "small" pantries have fewer than 30 household visits per month; "medium" pantries have 30 to 150 household visits per month; and "large" pantries have more than 150 household visits per month. Source: National Emergency Food Assistance System Survey (2000), weighted tabulations.

**Table 3.16—Comparison of policies used by food pantries and emergency kitchens to limit who can receive food**

Policies	Food pantries	Emergency kitchens	
		<i>Percent</i>	
<b>Have policies limiting who can receive food</b>	42.7	15.0	
<b>Policies used to restrict who can receive food<sup>1,2</sup></b>			
Must meet certain income guidelines	49.7	6.1	
Must reside in service area	39.3	5.2	
Must fall into a specific target group not dictated by age or presence of children	14.2	11.1	
Must be referred by church or other agency	8.1	3.4	
Must fall into a certain age group	2.8	13.6	
Must not exhibit a drug, alcohol, or behavior problem	1.3	38.5	
Must have children in the household	0.7	3.0	
Must provide services to agency and/or make donations	0.5	0.5	
Must pay a small fee	0.1	0.5	
Other	12.0	18.0	
<b>Sample size (number)</b>	<b>1,617</b>	<b>1,517</b>	

<sup>1</sup>Includes respondents that have policies restricting who can receive food.

<sup>2</sup>Categories may sum to more than 100 percent because some pantries provided more than one response.

Source: National Emergency Food Assistance System Survey (2000), weighted tabulations.

## Sources and Types of Foods Used by Food Pantries

### Sources of Food Supplies

Food pantries obtain the food they distribute from a number of sources (table 3.17). The sources reported most frequently were food banks or similar nonprofit organizations (80 percent), community donations (76 percent), and wholesalers or retailers (52 percent) (fig. 3.4).

These are the three sources that are also most frequently cited by kitchens. Kitchens, however, are much more likely than pantries to use commercial sources (76 percent versus 52 percent).

Although pantries use a variety of food sources, they draw on fewer sources, in general, than kitchens (table 3.18). Almost 60 percent of pantries reported using from one to three food sources, whereas only 39 percent of kitchens reported using this few.

Large pantries were more likely than small ones to use food banks and were more likely to use commercial sources (table 3.19). In general, large pantries have a higher number of food suppliers than small pantries. More than half the large pantries have four or more suppliers, whereas roughly only 26 percent of small pantries have this many (table 3.20). Significantly, 29 percent of small pantries rely on a single type of source for food supplies.

**Table 3.17—Comparison of sources of food supplies for food pantries and emergency kitchens**

Sources	Food pantries	Emergency kitchens
	<i>Percent</i>	
<b>Allocations from food banks and/or similar nonprofit organizations, such as Second Harvest</b>	79.9	81.3
<b>Community donations</b>	75.6	76.6
<b>Farmers and growers</b>	24.0	38.9
Received a direct donation <sup>1</sup>	22.7	37.1
Received leftovers from farmers' markets <sup>1</sup>	7.0	15.8
Received food from field-gleaning <sup>1</sup>	6.6	13.6
Purchased food at market price <sup>1</sup>	1.9	2.9
<b>Wholesalers or retailers</b>	52.0	76.5
Purchased food at market price <sup>2</sup>	35.8	59.0
Received donation of a salable product <sup>2</sup>	26.0	38.6
Salvaged food <sup>2</sup>	19.1	30.1
<b>Food rescue programs</b>	7.7	17.4
<b>State or Federal programs</b>	28.2	33.8
<b>Direct donations from manufacturers</b>	18.1	30.9
<b>Leftovers from places that serve food</b>	13.7	45.1
<b>Other sources</b>	8.9	8.1
<b>Service area sources<sup>3</sup></b>		
Manufacturers in service area	10.4	20.8
Farms in service area	15.9	28.4
<b>Sample size (number)</b>	<b>1,617</b>	<b>1,517</b>

<sup>1</sup>Subgroup percentages are based on all pantries or kitchens, not just those obtaining food from farmers and growers.

<sup>2</sup>Subgroup percentages are based on all pantries or kitchens, not just those obtaining food from wholesalers and retailers.

<sup>3</sup>Entries in this category may overlap with previous entries. The focus of this panel is receipt of food specifically from sources within the service areas of pantries and kitchens.

Notes: Total exceeds 100 percent because respondent pantries reported using multiple sources of food supplies.

Size variable is based on number of households served, frequency of food distribution, and staffing. In general, "small" pantries have fewer than 30 household visits per month; "medium" pantries have 30 to 150 household visits; and "large" pantries have more than 150 household visits per month.

Source: National Emergency Food Assistance System Survey (2000), weighted tabulations.



Most pantries do not draw heavily on local sources for their food supplies. Only 10 percent reported receiving foods from manufacturers in their service areas, and only 16 percent reported getting food from local growers (table 3.19).

As with kitchens, we investigated why some pantries use food banks and others do not by cross-tabulating pantry characteristics by whether they used food banks (table 3.21). No strong patterns are evident. There is, however, some tendency for pantries in the West to use food banks and for those in the South not to. Among food bank users, 16 percent are found in the West, whereas only 11 percent of nonusers are in the West. The corresponding numbers for the South are 39 percent and 44 percent, respectively.

When asked to report their primary food source, 57 percent of the pantries mentioned food banks and similar nonprofit organizations (table 3.22). About one-third reported receiving their food primarily from community donations (for example, through food drives). Roughly 40 percent of small pantries relied primarily on community donations for food, whereas only about one-quarter of large pantries did so.

Some of the food that pantries receive may not be usable or may spoil before it is distributed. In order to determine how much of the food received reaches pantry clients, we asked respondents what proportion

of the food they received was not used due to spoilage. Sixty percent of pantries reported distributing more than 95 percent of the food they received (table 3.23). Fifteen percent, however, reported distributing less than 85 percent of the food they received. This may reflect the limited ability of these pantries to store perishables and, possibly, a mismatch between the food that pantries receive and the food they need.

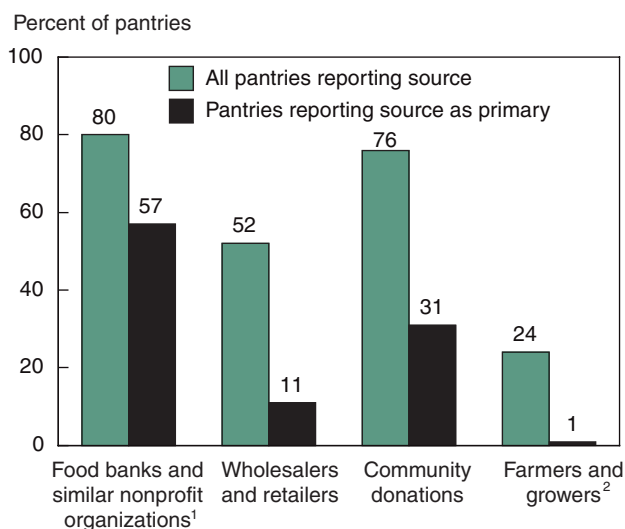
About two-thirds of pantries indicated some degree of seasonality in food availability. However, most of those thought it posed no significant problem in meeting client needs (table 3.24).

Table 3.25 breaks out the percentages of food pantries that receive foods of various types. In general, pantries appear to use fewer types of food than kitchens. In fact, only three food categories (cereal and pasta; dry or canned beans, eggs, and nuts; and frozen, canned, or dried fruits and vegetables) were used by more than 90 percent of pantries. Much smaller percentages of pantries distribute food prone to spoilage, such as fresh fruit and vegetables and dairy products. This finding is consistent with pantries being generally less likely to use perishable foods than kitchens, since pantries prepare food packages rather than meals.

The pattern of foods most commonly distributed did not vary substantially by pantry size (table 3.26). However, there is a clear tendency for the larger pantries to distribute more types of food, including foods that are somewhat less common. For instance, only 42 percent of small pantries reported distributing fresh fruits and vegetables, while the comparable percentages are 63 and 77 for the medium and larger pantries.

Figure 3.4

### Sources of food for food pantries



<sup>1</sup>Includes those mentioning America's Second Harvest.

<sup>2</sup>Includes food purchased at retail prices, gleaned, left over, and salvaged. Source: National Emergency Food Assistance System Survey (2000), weighted tabulations.

Table 3.18—Comparison of number of food sources used by food pantries and emergency kitchens

Number of known food sources	Food pantries	Emergency kitchens
	<i>Percent</i>	
1	19.9	10.0
2 or 3	40.0	29.0
4 or 5	25.1	29.2
6 or 7	10.5	20.8
8 to 10	3.7	10.0
Missing data	0.8	1.0
<b>Sample size (number)</b>	<b>1,617</b>	<b>1,517</b>

Source: National Emergency Food Assistance System Survey (2000), weighted tabulations.

About 82 percent of pantries indicated that they could use additional quantities of some types of foods (table 3.27). By a substantial margin, the most common class of food they wanted more of was meat, poultry, and fish, selected

by about 55 percent of the pantries who needed additional of food. Other food types frequently mentioned include frozen, canned, and dried fruits and vegetables and fruit juices; dairy products; and cereals, pasta, and rice

**Table 3.19—Sources of food supplies for food pantries by size of pantry**

Sources	All	Size of pantry		
		Small	Medium	Large
		<i>Percent</i>		
<b>Allocation from food banks and/or similar nonprofit organizations, such as Second Harvest</b>	79.9	67.4	87.0	90.0
<b>Community donations</b>	75.6	77.2	73.8	76.8
<b>Wholesalers or retailers</b>	52.0	41.4	55.0	64.5
Purchased food at market	35.8	30.1	38.7	40.9
Received donation of a salable product <sup>1</sup>	26.0	17.0	27.2	38.3
Salvaged food	19.1	10.4	20.9	30.5
<b>State or Federal programs</b>	28.2	15.1	30.8	45.2
<b>Farmers and growers</b>	24.0	17.3	24.6	33.9
Received a direct donation <sup>2</sup>	22.7	16.4	22.6	33.3
Received leftovers from farmers' markets <sup>2</sup>	7.0	4.3	7.6	11.1
Received food from field-gleaning <sup>2</sup>	6.6	3.3	6.1	12.4
Purchased food at market price <sup>2</sup>	1.9	1.7	1.6	2.8
<b>Direct donations from manufacturers</b>	18.1	10.6	16.4	32.1
<b>Food rescue programs</b>	7.7	3.2	7.6	15.1
<b>Leftovers from places that serve food</b>	13.7	7.8	14.3	21.8
<b>Service area sources<sup>3,4</sup></b>				
Manufacturers in service area	10.4	4.9	9.8	20.2
Farms in service area	15.9	13.0	15.3	21.2
Other sources	8.9	8.5	8.3	10.7
<b>Sample size (number)</b>	<b>1,617</b>	<b>597</b>	<b>576</b>	<b>410</b>

<sup>1</sup>Subgroup percentages are based on all pantries, not just those obtaining food from wholesalers and retailers.

<sup>2</sup>Subgroup percentages are based on all pantries, not just those obtaining food from farmers and growers.

<sup>3</sup>Includes respondents that turned away clients seeking food during the past 12 months.

<sup>4</sup>Entries in this panel of the table may overlap with previous entries. The focus of this panel is receipt of food specifically from sources within the pantry service area. Notes: Total exceeds 100 percent because respondent pantries reported using multiple sources of food supplies. Size variable is defined based on number of households served, frequency of food distribution, and staffing. In general, "small" pantries have fewer than 30 household visits per month; "medium" pantries have 30 to 150 household visits per month; and "large" pantries have more than 150 household visits per month.

The sample numbers for food pantry sizes do not sum to the total sample because some food pantries did not provide answers and are not included.

Source: National Emergency Food Assistance System Survey (2000), weighted tabulations.

**Table 3.20—Number of known food sources used by food pantries by size of pantry**

Number of known food sources	All	Size of pantry		
		Small	Medium	Large
		<i>Percent</i>		
1	19.9	28.5	16.0	11.0
2 or 3	40.0	44.0	42.2	30.8
4 or 5	25.1	20.1	28.3	29.0
6 to 7	10.5	4.7	9.8	20.5
8 to 10	3.7	1.1	3.1	8.7
Missing data	0.8	1.6	0.6	0.0
<b>Sample size (number)</b>	<b>1,617</b>	<b>597</b>	<b>576</b>	<b>410</b>

Notes: Size variable is based on number of households served, frequency of food distribution, and staffing. In general, "small" pantries have fewer than 30 household visits per month; "medium" pantries have 30 to 150 household visits per month; and "large" pantries have more than 150 household visits per month.

The sample numbers for food pantry sizes do not sum to the total sample because some food pantries did not provide answers and are not included.

Source: National Emergency Food Assistance System Survey (2000), weighted tabulations.

**Table 3.21—Selected characteristics of food pantries by whether they obtain food from food banks**

Characteristics	All	Obtain food from food bank?	
		Yes	No
		<i>Percent</i>	
<b>Size of pantry</b>			
Small	37.9	32.0	60.9
Medium	35.3	38.7	22.5
Large	24.8	27.9	12.8
Missing data	2.1	1.7	3.8
<b>Region</b>			
West	15.1	16.1	11.0
Midwest	24.6	24.4	25.6
South	40.1	39.0	43.8
Northeast	20.3	20.5	19.6
<b>Metropolitan status</b>			
Metropolitan	70.3	73.2	59.1
Nonmetropolitan	29.7	26.8	40.9
<b>Type of organization</b>			
Nonprofit, associated with religious group	67.1	66.7	68.7
Nonreligious private nonprofit	25.4	26.4	21.5
Governmental	3.0	2.6	4.8
Informal group of people	2.3	1.9	3.6
Other	1.6	1.8	1.0
Missing data	0.5	0.6	0.3
<b>Selected organizational affiliations<sup>1</sup></b>			
United Way	19.5	22.7	7.2
Other nonprofit organization	17.6	20.2	7.5
Salvation Army	11.0	12.2	6.7
Catholic Charities	8.4	9.5	4.1
Red Cross	6.0	6.8	3.1
<b>Length of time surveyed location has been operating</b>			
Less than 1 year	5.7	6.4	2.8
1 to 3 years	22.2	22.8	20.4
4 to 5 years	11.1	11.0	11.3
6 years or longer:			
6 to 10 years	17.9	16.9	22.0
11 to 15 years	10.1	10.5	7.3
16 to 20 years	12.5	12.6	11.9
21 to 25 years	2.8	3.1	2.1
Longer than 25 years	4.7	4.7	4.7
Not specified	12.3	11.6	15.4
Missing data	0.8	0.5	2.1
<b>Programs with which food pantry is co-located<sup>2</sup></b>			
Emergency kitchen	9.1	10.3	4.6
Food bank	3.7	3.7	3.9
Food rescue program	1.4	1.0	3.2
Emergency shelter	0.5	0.6	0.3
<b>Reasons originally began operating at current location<sup>3</sup></b>			
Need for new services	76.7	76.1	80.1
Moved to this site from old location	11.4	11.9	8.7
Program expanded, opened this site	4.2	4.9	1.0
Wanted to be closer to clients	3.7	3.8	3.2
Needed larger facility	3.1	2.9	4.2
Parent organization determined site	1.7	1.7	1.6
More affordable location	0.6	0.6	0.3
Forced to move	0.4	0.3	1.0
Wanted to be closer to food sources	0.3	0.3	0.3
Untapped sources of prepared or perishable food	0.2	0.3	0.0
Wanted to be closer to transportation	0.1	0.1	0.0
Needed handicapped accessible facility	0.1	0.1	0.0
Other	11.8	11.6	12.0
<b>Sample size (number)</b>	<b>1,617</b>	<b>1,294</b>	<b>309</b>

<sup>1</sup>Categories do not add to 100 percent because many pantries do not have any organizational affiliations.

<sup>2</sup>Categories do not add to 100 percent because many pantries are not co-located with another provider.

<sup>3</sup>Categories may sum to more than 100 percent because some pantries provided more than one response.

Co-location = Two different programs operating at the same location.

Notes: Size variable is based on number of households served, frequency of food distribution, and staffing. In general, "small" pantries have fewer than 30 household visits per month; "medium" pantries have 30 to 150 household visits per month; and "large" pantries have more than 150 household visits per month.

The sample sizes for "yes" and "no" responses do not sum to the total sample because some food pantries did not provide answers and are not included.

Source: National Emergency Food Assistance System Survey (2000).

**Table 3.22—Primary source of food supplies for food pantries by size of pantry**

Sources	All	Size of pantry		
		Small	Medium	Large
		<i>Percent</i>		
<b>Allocation from food banks and/or similar nonprofit organizations<sup>1</sup></b>	56.7	46.0	64.7	62.5
<b>Community donations</b>	31.4	42.5	25.5	22.3
<b>Wholesalers or retailers</b>	10.7	8.6	10.3	14.2
Purchased food at market price	8.0	7.4	8.0	8.3
Received donation of a salable product	2.1	1.3	1.2	4.4
Salvaged food	0.7	0.2	0.7	1.4
<b>State or Federal programs</b>	6.4	3.1	6.3	11.5
<b>Farmers and growers</b>	0.8	0.2	1.3	1.1
Received a direct donation	0.7	0.0	1.3	0.8
Purchased food at market price	0.1	0.2	0.0	0.0
Received food from field-gleaning	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.3
Received leftovers from farmers' markets	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
<b>Direct donations from manufacturers</b>	0.6	0.0	1.0	1.2
<b>Leftovers from places that serve food</b>	0.4	0.5	0.5	0.0
<b>Food rescue programs</b>	0.3	0.2	0.5	0.3
<b>Other sources</b>	2.0	2.6	1.8	1.3
<b>Sample size (number)</b>	<b>1,617</b>	<b>597</b>	<b>576</b>	<b>410</b>

<sup>1</sup>Includes those mentioning America's Second Harvest. Notes: Total exceeds 100 percent because respondent pantries reported using multiple sources of food supplies. Size variable is defined based on number of households served, frequency of food distribution, and staffing. In general, "small" pantries have fewer than 60 household visits per month; "medium" pantries have 60 to 300 household visits per month; and "large" pantries have more than 300 household visits per month. The sample numbers for food pantry sizes do not sum to the total sample because some food pantries did not provide answers and are not included. Source: National Emergency Food Assistance System Survey (2000), weighted tabulations.

**Table 3.23—Spoilage of food received by food pantries by size of pantry**

Food-spoilage variables	All	Size of pantry		
		Small	Medium	Large
		<i>Percent</i>		
<b>Percent of food received that is distributed</b>				
95 to 100	60.4	51.9	61.9	73.3
90 to 94	10.0	11.5	11.0	7.0
85 to 89	3.1	2.7	3.4	2.8
Less than 85	14.5	21.0	12.6	7.4
Missing data	11.9	12.8	11.1	9.4
<b>Does pantry receive food that cannot be used, due to spoilage and other problems?</b>				
Yes	45.7	41.2	47.8	50.6
No	53.9	58.3	52.0	49.2
Missing data	0.4	0.5	0.2	0.2
<b>Estimated paid staff hours spent disposing of unusable food, per week</b>				
0	71.7	77.0	72.4	63.9
1	14.1	14.9	14.6	12.8
2	3.4	1.5	3.8	5.5
More than 2	5.8	2.5	3.3	13.1
Missing data	5.0	4.2	5.9	4.7
<b>Estimated volunteer hours spent disposing of unusable food, per week</b>				
0	33.9	35.7	37.4	26.1
1	26.3	31.1	27.5	19.2
2	8.5	8.7	6.9	10.8
More than 2	23.0	16.3	19.0	37.6
Missing data	8.3	8.1	9.2	6.2
<b>Sample size (number)</b>	<b>1,617</b>	<b>597</b>	<b>576</b>	<b>410</b>

Note: The sample numbers for food pantry sizes do not sum to the total sample because some food pantries did not provide answers and are not included. Source: National Emergency Food Assistance System Survey (2000), weighted tabulations.

**Table 3.24—Variation in food supply available to food pantries by size of pantry**

Food-supply variables	All	Size of pantry		
		Small	Medium	Large
		<i>Percent</i>		
<b>Does type and quality of food obtained vary by time of year?</b>				
Yes	66.8	57.2	71.2	76.2
No	31.7	40.3	27.5	23.8
Missing data	1.5	2.5	1.3	0.0
<b>Is this a problem in meeting client needs?</b>				
Yes	39.2	29.9	42.4	45.8
No	60.1	69.5	57.0	53.2
Missing data	0.7	0.6	0.7	0.9
<b>Sample size (number)</b>	<b>1,617</b>	<b>597</b>	<b>576</b>	<b>410</b>

Notes: Size variable is defined based on number of households served, frequency of food distribution, and staffing. In general, "small" pantries have fewer than 30 household visits per month; "medium" pantries have 30 to 150 household visits per month; and "large" pantries have more than 150 household visits per month. The sample numbers for food pantry sizes do not sum to the total sample because some food pantries did not provide answers and are not included. Source: National Emergency Food Assistance System Survey (2000), weighted tabulations.

**Table 3.25—Comparison of types of food obtained by food pantries and emergency kitchens during the past 12 months**

Food type	Food pantries that receive food type	Emergency kitchens that receive food type
	<i>Percent</i>	
Cereal, pasta, and rice <sup>1</sup>	97.5	95.1
Dry/canned beans, eggs, nuts, peanut butter	97.1	94.3
Frozen, canned, and dried fruits and vegetables and fruit juices	94.2	94.9
Meat, poultry, and fish	85.3	95.2
Desserts	82.0	93.2
Snack foods	77.6	77.9
Bread products	74.8	96.4
Fats and oils	73.5	92.5
Soft drinks, coffee, tea, and other nonjuice beverages	72.0	91.5
Baby food, formula, and nutritional supplements or aids	71.8	44.8
Spices and condiments	66.8	92.1
Dairy products	61.2	86.7
Fresh fruits and vegetables	58.3	90.6
Complete meals, entrees, and prepared foods <sup>2</sup>	14.6	30.4
<b>Sample size (number)</b>	<b>1,617</b>	<b>1,517</b>

<sup>1</sup>Includes nonbread grain products, such as rice, barley, and noodles.

<sup>2</sup>Includes packaged meals drawing on multiple food groups, such as canned meat and vegetable products or frozen lasagna dinner.

Source: National Emergency Food Assistance System Survey (2000), weighted tabulations.

**Table 3.26—Food obtained by food pantries in past 12 months by size of pantry**

Food type	All	Size of pantry		
		Small	Medium	Large
<i>Percent</i>				
<b>Does type and quality of food obtained vary by time of year?</b>				
Cereal, pasta, and rice <sup>1</sup>	97.5	97.0	98.4	98.1
Dry/canned beans, eggs, nuts, peanut butter	97.1	96.3	97.9	97.2
Frozen, canned, and dried fruits/vegetables and fruit juices	94.2	91.6	95.2	96.5
Meat, poultry, and fish	85.3	79.4	89.4	89.2
Desserts	82.0	75.8	85.5	87.3
Snack foods	77.6	72.5	79.6	83.3
Bread products	74.8	60.7	81.0	88.4
Fats and oils	73.5	68.7	76.1	78.0
Soft drinks, coffee, tea, and other nonjuice beverages	72.0	68.1	73.6	75.9
Baby food, formula, and nutritional supplements or aids	71.8	68.5	72.2	77.3
Spices and condiments	66.8	64.1	66.8	71.1
Dairy products	61.2	53.3	64.9	68.6
Fresh fruits and vegetables	58.3	42.4	62.7	77.2
Complete meals, entrees, and prepared foods <sup>2</sup>	14.6	12.0	15.0	18.6
<b>Sample size (number)</b>	<b>1,617</b>	<b>597</b>	<b>576</b>	<b>410</b>

<sup>1</sup>Includes nonbread grain products, such as rice, barley, and noodles.

<sup>2</sup>Includes packaged meals drawing on multiple food groups, such as canned meat and vegetable products or frozen lasagna dinner.

Note: The sample numbers for food pantry sizes do not sum to the total sample because some food pantries did not provide answers and are not included.

Source: National Emergency Food Assistance System Survey (2000), weighted tabulations.

**Table 3.27—Types of foods for which food pantries could use additional quantities**

Food shortfalls	Food pantries
	<i>Percent</i>
<b>Could use additional quantities of food</b>	82.2
<b>Types of food needed<sup>1</sup></b>	
Meat, poultry, and fish	54.6
Frozen, canned, and dried fruits and vegetables and fruit juices	33.6
Dairy products	27.8
Cereals, pasta, and rice	27.8
Dry and canned beans, eggs, nuts, peanut butter	23.0
Fresh fruits and vegetables	22.1
Baby food, formula, and nutritional supplements or aids	8.9
Fats and oils	7.9
Bread products	7.9
Spices and condiments	6.9
Complete meals, entrees, and prepared foods	5.1
Soft drinks, coffee, tea, and other nonjuice beverages	3.2
Desserts	2.0
Snack foods	1.7
All food types	5.9
<b>Sample size (number)</b>	<b>1,232</b>

<sup>1</sup>As a percentage of the pantries that indicated they need additional food.

Source: National Emergency Food Assistance System Survey (2000), weighted tabulations.

## Staffing and Other Resources

### Budgets

Most food pantries reported fairly low operating budgets (table 3.28). Eighteen percent said they had no budget at all, and another 38 percent reported budgets of less than \$5,000. Only 10 percent had operating budgets in excess of \$20,000. Food budgets, as part of the overall budgets, were somewhat lower, with more of them reported as being under \$5,000 and only about 7 percent as being over \$20,000.

### Staffing

Pantries, like kitchens, are heavily dependent on volunteer labor; nearly 93 percent have volunteers (table 3.29), and only 24 percent have paid staff (fig. 3.5). On average, pantries with paid staff use 60 paid-staff hours per week.

A comparison of pantries and kitchens produces interesting findings. First, only about a fourth of pantries have paid staff, compared with roughly half the kitchens. Second, pantries are less likely than kitchens to have unpaid staff such as people satisfying court-ordered community service requirements (23 percent versus 41 percent). Third, kitchens use approximately double the average number of employee hours that pantries do. Because pantries are open less frequently and for fewer hours per day than kitchens, they probably require fewer employees.

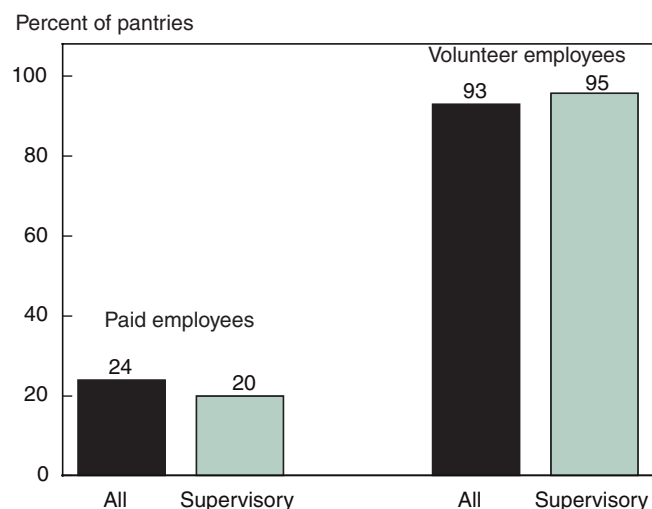
In addition, the work performed in pantries is generally less labor-intensive and somewhat less specialized than that in kitchens, reducing the need to hire paid workers.

### Facilities

In a physical sense, pantries are small operations. About a third of pantries reported occupying less than 250 square

Figure 3.5

### Use of paid and volunteer staff for all staff and selected staff categories



Source: National Emergency Food Assistance System Survey (2000), weighted tabulations.

Table 3.28—Operating budgets of food pantries by size of pantry

Dollar amounts	All	Size of pantry		
		Small	Medium	Large
		<i>Percent</i>		
<b>Total operating budget for past 12 months</b>				
0	17.6	28.1	13.3	9.1
1 to 1,000	10.8	18.3	7.9	3.4
1,001 to 5,000	27.4	28.3	32.0	19.8
5,001 to 10,000	12.6	8.1	14.8	16.6
10,001 to 20,000	9.2	3.6	10.4	15.9
More than 20,000	10.0	3.3	8.9	22.7
Missing data	12.4	10.4	13.5	12.5
<b>Budget for purchasing food for past 12 months</b>				
0	14.4	20.0	11.4	9.9
1 to 1,000	12.4	20.6	10.2	3.7
1,001 to 5,000	33.2	35.1	36.8	26.4
5,001 to 10,000	12.2	8.1	13.4	17.3
10,001 to 20,000	7.1	2.8	8.0	12.5
More than 20,000	6.8	1.7	6.7	15.3
Missing data	13.8	11.8	13.5	14.9
<b>Sample size (number)</b>	<b>1,617</b>	<b>597</b>	<b>576</b>	<b>410</b>

Notes: Size variable is based on number of households served, frequency of food distribution, and staffing. In general, "small" pantries have fewer than 30 household visits per month; "medium" pantries have 30 to 150 household visits per month; and "large" pantries have more than 150 household visits per month.

The sample numbers for food pantry sizes do not sum to the total sample because some food pantries did not provide answers and are not included.

Source: National Emergency Food Assistance System Survey (2000), weighted tabulations.

feet (table 3.30). This is roughly equivalent to two medium-size living rooms.<sup>35</sup> About 17 percent of pantries own their own building. Consistent with the fact that most pantries distribute nonperishable food, about 13 percent of those sampled did not have either onsite refrigeration or freezer capacity (not shown). Moreover, more than half cannot prepare hot meals because they lack access to the necessary equipment. Most have vehicles available for their use, but only 19 percent own them. As might be expected, large pantries are likely to have more kinds of equipment and facilities than smaller ones (table 3.31).

Because it may be related to a pantry's stability, we cross-tabulated pantry characteristics by whether the pantry owned the building it was using. The results,

<sup>35</sup>Two rooms that were 10 feet by 12 feet would occupy 240 square feet.

reported in table 3.32, show no major differences between those who own and those who do not. However, pantries that own are somewhat less likely to be faith-based and more likely to be nonreligious private nonprofit organizations.<sup>36</sup> Interestingly, pantries that own are also more likely to be affiliated with the United Way or the Salvation Army.

### Funding

Pantries receive funding from a number of sources, but they are heavily dependent on only a few (table 3.33). In particular, local sources appear to be major funding

<sup>36</sup>The question on the survey reads "Does the 'Pantry' or 'Kitchen' own the building?" In general, we believe that a pantry located in a room of a church or synagogue would have answered this question as "No," but there may have been some variation in interpretation among respondents.

**Table 3.29—Type and number of staff hours used by food pantries**

Staff category	Pantries with staff types	Average staff hours used per week for pantries with staff type
	Percent	Hours
<b>Paid employees</b>	<b>24.4</b>	<b>59.9</b>
Supervisory personnel	19.9	33.3
Clerical staff	10.1	24.9
Nonskilled help	6.0	35.4
Skilled kitchen help	2.7	41.0
Nutritionists	1.7	19.5
Other help for program	3.6	37.8
<b>Volunteer employees</b>	<b>92.6</b>	<b>52.6</b>
Nonskilled help	65.1	34.6
Supervisory personnel	57.4	16.6
Clerical staff	33.2	12.9
Skilled kitchen help	9.4	18.9
Nutritionists	8.7	10.5
Other help for program	23.3	35.7
<b>Unpaid employees<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>21.7</b>	<b>27.2</b>
Nonskilled help	13.6	23.4
Supervisory personnel	2.5	16.6
Clerical staff	2.4	17.6
Skilled kitchen help	1.3	14.9
Nutritionists	0.3	9.1
Other help for program	4.3	16.1
<b>All employees</b>	<b>96.6</b>	<b>66.5</b>
Supervisory personnel	73.4	22.5
Nonskilled help	68.0	40.9
Clerical staff	41.8	17.2
Skilled kitchen help	11.7	25.9
Nutritionists	10.4	12.2
Other help for program	27.3	37.7
<b>Sample size (number)</b>	<b>1,617</b>	<b>NA</b>

<sup>1</sup>Includes workers performing court-ordered community service or welfare-related work. NA = Not applicable.

Note: Many of the pantries that reported having particular types of staff were unable to estimate the number of hours worked per week by staff type. Thus, the average numbers of staff hours are calculated based on 87 to 96 percent of the number of pantries that have the staff type.

Source: National Emergency Food Assistance System Survey (2000), weighted tabulations.



**Table 3.30—Physical capacity, facilities, and equipment used by food pantries by metropolitan status**

Capacity/equipment	All	Metropolitan status	
		Metropolitan	Nonmetropolitan
		<i>Percent</i>	
<b>Square footage at site</b>			
Less than 100	13.1	12.3	15.0
100 to 249.99	19.6	18.2	22.7
250 to 499.99	10.5	10.4	10.6
500 to 749.99	6.2	6.4	5.6
750 to 999.99	3.5	3.7	2.9
1,000 to 1,999.99	8.2	7.7	9.5
2,000 to 2,999.99	3.7	4.2	2.5
3,000 to 4,999.99	1.4	1.6	1.0
5,000 or more	3.2	3.5	2.6
Missing data	30.7	32.0	27.7
(Mean, square feet)	(981.0)	(790.5)	(1,066.6)
(Median, square feet)	(300.0)	(225.0)	(300.0)
<b>Owns building</b>	17.3	18.1	15.3
<b>Refrigeration capacity</b>			
Have home refrigerator onsite	65.5	65.6	65.4
Have walk-in refrigerator onsite	6.0	6.8	4.1
Have other type of refrigerator onsite	12.7	14.7	8.1
Do not have refrigeration capacity onsite	19.6	17.1	25.5
<b>Freezer capacity</b>			
Have home freezer onsite	64.0	64.5	63.0
Have walk-in freezer onsite	5.7	6.6	3.8
Have other type of freezer onsite	15.0	16.8	10.6
Do not have freezer capacity onsite	17.6	14.9	23.9
<b>Storage</b>			
Have separate warehouse for food storage	10.5	11.1	9.3
Have other offsite storage	4.2	4.3	4.0
<b>Food preparation equipment</b>			
Own onsite food preparation equipment	12.7	14.7	8.1
Have onsite food preparation equipment but do not own it	16.5	17.9	13.2
Have access to equipment to prepare hot meals or components of meals	17.8	17.2	19.3
Do not have access to equipment to prepare hot meals or components of meals	52.3	49.5	59.0
<b>Preservation or processing facilities</b>			
Have access to facilities to preserve or process perishable foods	12.9	13.6	11.3
Have access to refrigerated vehicles to transport prepared or perishable foods	4.4	4.4	4.4
<b>Repackaging equipment or facilities</b>			
Have access to equipment or facilities to repackage foods, such as rice or dry beans	31.0	32.3	28.0
<b>Transportation for delivery or pickup of food</b>			
Own vehicles	19.0	20.6	15.0
Have vehicles but do not own them	61.7	62.0	61.0
Do not have vehicles	18.7	16.7	23.5
<b>Sample size (number)</b>	<b>1,617</b>	<b>1,145</b>	<b>472</b>

Source: National Emergency Food Assistance System Survey (2000), weighted tabulations.

**Table 3.31—Physical capacity, facilities, and equipment used by food pantries by size of pantry**

Capacity/equipment	All	Size of pantry		
		Small	Medium	Large
		<i>Percent</i>		
<b>Square footage at site</b>				
Less than 100	13.1	22.7	8.9	4.4
100 to 249.99	19.6	27.3	18.8	10.0
250 to 499.99	10.5	8.6	13.8	8.8
500 to 749.99	6.2	3.2	7.3	9.0
750 to 999.99	3.5	2.0	4.9	4.0
1,000 to 1,999.99	8.2	5.3	8.5	13.1
2,000 to 2,999.99	3.7	1.7	3.5	7.2
3,000 to 4,999.99	1.4	0.6	0.8	3.4
5,000 or more	3.2	0.8	1.9	9.0
Missing data	30.7	27.7	31.7	31.1
(Mean)	(981.0)	(470.9)	(811.1)	(2,071.4)
(Median)	(300.0)	(144.0)	(350.0)	(800.0)
<b>Food pantry owns building</b>	17.3	14.9	16.5	22.7
<b>Refrigeration capacity</b>				
Have home refrigerator onsite	65.5	60.5	70.5	66.5
Do not have refrigeration capacity onsite	19.6	29.0	15.4	11.3
Have other type of refrigerator onsite	12.7	10.1	13.3	16.2
Have walk-in refrigerator onsite	6.0	2.1	4.6	13.5
<b>Freezer capacity</b>				
Have home freezer onsite	64.0	59.1	68.8	65.8
Do not have freezer capacity onsite	17.6	26.6	13.1	9.4
Have other type of freezer onsite	15.0	10.8	16.9	19.6
Have walk-in freezer onsite	5.7	2.5	4.5	11.9
<b>Storage</b>				
Have separate warehouse for food storage	10.5	6.5	11.2	14.9
Have other offsite storage	4.2	2.2	4.4	7.3
<b>Food preparation equipment</b>				
Own onsite food preparation equipment	12.7	9.0	13.0	18.5
Have onsite food preparation equipment but do not own it	16.5	18.2	16.3	14.3
Have access to offsite equipment to prepare hot meals or components of meals	17.8	20.8	17.4	13.8
Do not have access to equipment to prepare hot meals or components of meals	52.3	52.0	52.5	52.6
<b>Preservation or processing facilities</b>				
Have access to facilities to preserve/process perishable foods	12.9	11.3	13.3	14.4
Have access to refrigerated vehicles to transport prepared or perishable foods	4.4	3.5	4.1	6.5
<b>Repackaging equipment or facilities</b>				
Have access to equipment or facilities to repackage foods, such as rice or dry beans	31.0	25.6	31.0	40.8
<b>Transportation for delivery or pickup of food</b>				
Own vehicles	19.0	14.1	15.9	31.7
Have vehicles but do not own them	61.7	63.1	66.0	54.6
Do not have vehicles	18.7	22.7	17.4	12.9
<b>Sample size (number)</b>	<b>1,617</b>	<b>597</b>	<b>576</b>	<b>410</b>

Notes: Size variable is based on number of households served, frequency of food distribution, and staffing. In general, "small" pantries have fewer than 30 household visits per month; "medium" pantries have 30 to 150 household visits per month; and "large" pantries have more than 150 household visits per month.

The sample numbers for food pantry sizes do not sum to the total sample because some food pantries did not provide answers and are not included.

Source: National Emergency Food Assistance System Survey (2000), weighted tabulations.

**Table 3.32—Selected characteristics of food pantries by whether they own their buildings**

Characteristics	All	Own building?	
		Yes	No
<b>Size of pantry</b>		<i>Percent</i>	
Small	37.9	32.6	39.2
Medium	35.3	33.7	35.7
Large	24.8	32.6	23.0
Missing data	2.1	1.1	2.2
<b>Region</b>			
West	15.1	17.7	14.5
Midwest	24.6	23.7	24.9
South	40.1	39.8	40.1
Northeast	20.3	18.9	20.5
<b>Metropolitan status</b>			
Metropolitan	70.3	73.7	69.6
Nonmetropolitan	29.7	26.3	30.4
<b>Type of organization</b>			
Nonprofit, associated with religious group	67.1	62.3	68.2
Nonreligious private nonprofit	25.4	30.9	24.1
Governmental	3.0	1.0	3.5
Informal group of people	2.3	3.7	2.0
Other	1.6	1.8	1.6
Missing data	0.5	0.3	0.6
<b>Selected organizational affiliation<sup>1</sup></b>			
United Way	19.5	25.9	18.0
Salvation Army	11.0	15.2	10.1
Catholic Charities	8.4	8.7	8.3
Red Cross	6.0	6.2	5.9
Other nonprofit organization	17.6	19.1	17.4
<b>Length of time surveyed location has been operating</b>			
Less than 1 year	5.7	5.5	5.8
1 to 3 years	22.2	20.5	22.6
4 to 5 years	11.1	8.5	11.6
6 years or longer:			
6 to 10 years	17.9	17.5	17.8
11 to 15 years	10.1	11.9	9.7
16 to 20 years	12.5	11.9	12.6
21 to 25 years	2.8	3.0	2.8
Longer than 25 years	4.7	7.8	4.1
Not specified	12.3	12.3	12.2
Missing data	0.8	1.0	0.7
<b>Programs with which food pantry is co-located<sup>2</sup></b>			
Food bank	3.7	4.0	3.6
Emergency kitchen	9.1	13.8	8.1
Food rescue program	1.4	1.2	1.4
Emergency shelter	0.5	0.9	0.4
<b>Reasons originally began operating at current location<sup>3</sup></b>			
Need for new services	76.7	77.2	76.7
Moved to this site from old location	11.4	13.2	11.0
Program expanded, opened this site	4.2	5.1	4.1
Wanted to be closer to clients	3.7	4.5	3.5
Needed larger facility	3.1	3.2	3.1
Parent organization determined site	1.7	1.6	1.7
More affordable location	0.6	0.2	0.7
Forced to move	0.4	0.0	0.5
Wanted to be closer to food sources	0.3	0.4	0.3
Untapped sources of prepared or perishable food	0.2	0.6	0.2
Wanted to be closer to transportation	0.1	0.0	0.1
Needed handicapped accessible facility	0.1	0.0	0.1
Other	11.8	12.9	11.5
<b>Sample size (number)</b>	<b>1,617</b>	<b>285</b>	<b>1,321</b>

<sup>1</sup>Categories do not add to 100 percent because many pantries do not have any organizational affiliations.

<sup>2</sup>Categories do not add to 100 percent because many pantries are not co-located with another provider.

<sup>3</sup>Categories may sum to more than 100 percent because some pantries provided more than one response.

Co-located = Two different programs operating at the same location.

Note: The sample sizes for "yes" and "no" responses do not sum to the total sample because some food pantries did not provide answers and are not included.

Source: National Emergency Food Assistance System Survey (2000), weighted tabulations.

streams. Sixty-five percent of pantries receive funding through donations from local individuals and groups, and about one-quarter obtain monetary support through fundraising activities. Donations account for, on average, 66 percent of the operating budgets of pantries that use this source. While we have no direct evidence of this, it is reasonable to speculate that this reliance on local donations may cause some pantries to be vulnerable to economic downturns, as compared, for instance, with the Food Stamp Program or some other government program that relies on Federal funding (which is unlikely to be cut back in a recession).

Another interesting finding is that sources that are not used much by pantries in general sometimes contribute a large portion of the operating budget for those that use them. For example, only 10 percent of pantries use “other” government sources that, on average, comprise about 40 percent of their budgets. (Respondents were not asked to specify these “other government sources.” One example may be funds from the municipal or county government.)

Ten percent of the pantries indicated that they received contributions from at least some of their clients, with the typical contribution being \$2 (table 3.34). It

**Table 3.33—Funding sources for food pantries**

Sources of funding	Food pantries that use source <sup>1</sup>		Operating budget source contributes (mean %) <sup>2,3</sup>
<b>Government sources</b>		<i>Percent</i>	
FEMA funds	16.3		26.1
TEFAP administrative funds	4.1		26.5
Other government sources	10.4		40.6
<b>Nongovernment sources</b>			
Donations from local individuals or groups	64.8		66.1
Fundraising activities	24.2		31.1
Grants from foundations	13.1		25.0
United Way	12.8		21.8
Fees from clients	2.0		25.0
National organizations	4.0		25.1
Other sources	18.9		45.8
Missing data	2.1		NA
<b>Sample size (number)</b>	<b>1,617</b>		<b>NA</b>

<sup>1</sup>Total exceeds 100 percent because many pantries reported having multiple funding sources. <sup>2</sup>When source is used. <sup>3</sup>Many of the food pantries that reported receiving donations from a particular source were unable to estimate contributions to their budgets. Thus, the contribution of most of the funding sources is calculated based on reports from the pantries who knew what portion of their operating budget came from that source. For example, 16 percent of all food pantries receive funds from FEMA. Seventy percent of these were able to relate the specific amounts to their overall budgets. The reported mean in this case is based on 11 percent of all pantries. FEMA = Federal Emergency Management Agency. TEFAP = The Emergency Food Assistance Program. NA = Not applicable.

Note: Total exceeds 100 percent because many pantries reported having multiple funding sources. Source: National Emergency Food Assistance System Survey (2000), weighted tabulations.

**Table 3.34—Voluntary contributions received from clients of food pantries by size of pantry**

Client contributions	All	Size of pantry		
		Small	Medium	Large
		<i>Percent</i>		
<b>Percent of pantries having clients who make voluntary contributions</b>				
Median contribution (N = 126) <sup>1,2</sup>	10.1	8.4	10.6	12.5
Average contribution (N = 126) <sup>1,2</sup>	2.00	3.00	2.00	1.00
	2.87	3.29	2.92	2.52
<b>Percent of clients actually making a voluntary contribution (N = 164)<sup>1</sup></b>				
1 to 25	78.2	77.7	79.0	78.8
26 to 50	11.5	4.1	14.5	13.8
51 to 75	2.0	4.6	0.0	1.9
76 to 100	8.4	13.7	6.5	5.5
<b>Sample size (number)</b>	<b>1,617</b>	<b>597</b>	<b>576</b>	<b>410</b>

<sup>1</sup>For sites where some clients make a contribution. <sup>2</sup>The reported “typical” entry is the average across sites of contributions within a site. Note: The sample numbers for food pantry sizes do not sum to the total sample because some food pantries did not provide answers and are not included. Source: National Emergency Food Assistance System Survey (2000), weighted tabulations.

appears, however, that most clients do not, in fact, contribute to the pantries receiving contributions; 78 percent of these pantries reported that 25 percent or fewer of their clients contribute.

### In-Kind Contributions

In addition to monetary support, in-kind contributions can be vital for a food pantry. Nearly half the pantries reported that they received in-kind contributions of

all or part of their needed space, and approximately the same number indicated that building maintenance was provided to them as a contribution (table 3.35). Other support was received in the form of packing material for food or for such services as food transport, utilities, and legal and accounting services. The probability of receiving donated goods and services does not seem to vary substantially by size of pantry (table 3.36).

**Table 3.35—Donated or reduced-price goods and services received by food pantries by size of pantry**

Donated foods and services	All	Size of pantry		
		Small	Medium	Large
<i>Percent</i>				
<b>Facilities</b>				
Facilities, including rent or other costs related to the building or space in building	48.2	49.0	50.9	44.0
Building maintenance	47.2	47.2	49.3	45.3
Utilities, including heating and air conditioning	42.2	44.2	45.1	36.4
<b>Services</b>				
Transportation for food	48.1	45.2	51.0	49.4
Materials for packing food	47.0	46.4	47.7	47.2
Equipment maintenance, including equipment maintenance contracts	36.7	36.3	37.7	37.2
Legal and accounting services	27.4	24.6	28.5	31.1
Computer equipment or training	24.0	18.0	24.8	32.6
Other	4.9	5.1	5.2	4.3
<b>Do not know about any donated or reduced-price goods and services</b>	1.9	1.2	2.6	2.0
<b>Sample size (number)</b>	<b>1,617</b>	<b>597</b>	<b>576</b>	<b>410</b>

Notes: Size variable is based on number of households served, frequency of food distribution, and staffing. In general, "small" pantries have fewer than 30 household visits per month; "medium" pantries have 30 to 150 household visits per month; and "large" pantries have more than 150 household visits per month. The sample numbers for food pantry sizes do not sum to the total sample because some food pantries did not provide answers and are not included.

Source: National Emergency Food Assistance System Survey (2000), weighted tabulations.

**Table 3.36—Donated or reduced-price goods and services received by food pantries by region**

Goods and services	All	Region			
		West	Midwest	South	Northeast
<i>Percent</i>					
<b>Facilities</b>					
Facilities, including rent or other costs related to the building or space in building	48.2	47.6	48.1	47.4	50.5
Building maintenance	47.2	45.8	48.1	45.5	50.8
Utilities, inc. heating and air conditioning	42.2	40.0	41.7	41.7	45.5
<b>Other</b>					
Transportation for food	48.1	47.9	48.9	47.2	48.9
Materials for packaging food	47.0	47.3	44.9	47.0	49.4
Equipment maintenance, including equipment maintenance contracts	36.7	56.4	36.2	35.3	40.2
Legal and accounting services	27.4	25.2	27.9	26.8	29.7
Computer equipment or training	24.0	26.9	20.8	23.2	27.4
Other	4.9	6.3	6.6	3.6	4.0
<b>Do not know about any donated or reduced-price goods and services</b>	1.9	1.6	1.4	1.7	3.3
<b>Sample size (number)</b>	<b>1,617</b>	<b>252</b>	<b>402</b>	<b>648</b>	<b>315</b>

Note: Total exceeds 100 percent because many pantries reported receiving multiple donated or reduced-price goods and services.

Source: National Emergency Food Assistance System Survey (2000), weighted tabulations.

## Food Banks

Food banks are the “wholesalers” of the Emergency Food Assistance System (EFAS). They primarily distribute food to emergency kitchens and food pantries that provide meals and food packages to low-income individuals or households. In addition, they provide food for other charitable organizations with food service operations, such as day care centers and hospitals (which were not included in the current study).

In this chapter, we describe food banks and their operations. We begin with an estimate of the total number of food banks operating in the United States, and then discuss the basic characteristics of these organizations—in general, by size, by affiliation (or nonaffiliation) with America’s Second Harvest, and by regional location. Next, we describe distribution procedures and then examine sources of the food, types and amounts of food received, and the commodities distributed by food banks, including types of foods for which food banks have expressed an additional need. The chapter concludes with a discussion of food bank labor and capital resources.

### Number of Food Banks

As noted in chapter 1, for purposes of this study, we attempted to conduct a nationwide census of food banks. In order to obtain a comprehensive list of the Nation’s food banks, we used a multifaceted approach. First, we requested from America’s Second Harvest the names of food banks in its network. We then used the *1998 International Food Bank Directory*,<sup>37</sup> together with phone calls to national organizations associated with the EFAS, to obtain the names of “independent” food banks (those not associated with America’s Second Harvest). In addition, as part of our survey, we

asked pantries and kitchens to provide us with the names of food banks that supplied them with food. By cross-checking these names with those on our lists, we were able to identify additional independent organizations. Finally, we obtained from State TEFAP administrators the names of emergency food organizations (EFOs). We had originally thought the organizations identified in this way distributed only USDA commodities, but we later learned that some distributed other groceries in addition to commodities. In general, we included EFOs that distributed commodities *and* other grocery items in the food bank sample as independent entities (although, in practice, the distinction sometimes blurred).

Using these sources, we compiled a list of 402 food banks. It is likely that the total number of food banks in the United States somewhat exceeds this figure, but we believe the actual difference is small. The list includes 320 food banks in the America’s Second Harvest network and 82 independent entities.<sup>38</sup> Second Harvest classifies its affiliates into two groups, Certified Affiliates and Subsidiary Distribution Organizations (SDOs). The Certified Affiliates are directly affiliated with Second Harvest, while the SDOs are affiliated with Second Harvest *through* a Certified Affiliate. For purposes of this study, Certified Affiliates and SDOs are treated alike.

The response rate among food banks was 98 percent: 395 of the 402 food banks we identified responded to our survey.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>38</sup>For purposes of this study, “independent” food banks or entities, or “independents,” are food banks that are not affiliated with America’s Second Harvest in any way. These food banks, however, may be affiliated with other organizations.

<sup>39</sup>Because nearly all food banks were interviewed, sampling error for this survey is negligible.

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<sup>37</sup>International Food Banking Services, Inc. (1998).

# Characteristics of Food Banks

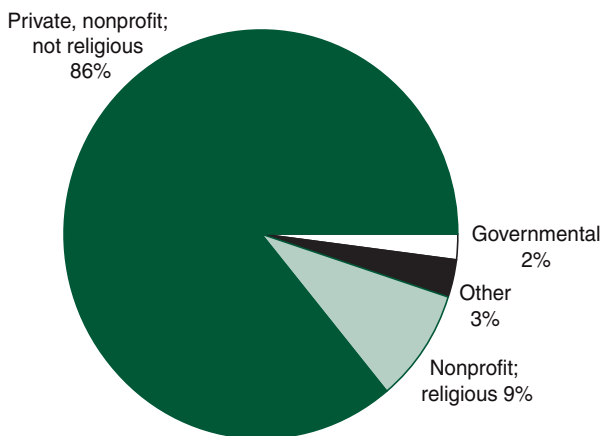
## Basic Characteristics

Food banks are not evenly dispersed across regions of the country. There are substantially more food banks in the South than in the Northeast or Midwest. About one-third are located in the South, for instance, compared with only about 15 percent in the Northeast (table 4.1). This finding may be attributed in part to differences in the size of the areas served by individual food banks. However, it also reflects the relatively high proportion of low-income households in the South (see table 3.4 in chapter 3).

Most of the Nation’s food banks (86 percent) are operated by private nonprofit organizations (table 4.1 and fig. 4.1). However, in contrast to emergency kitchens and pantries, only 9 percent of food banks are operated by faith-based organizations; for kitchens and pantries, the percentages are 65 and 67, respectively. Many food banks reported affiliations with one or more national organizations. A substantial majority, about 82 percent, are affiliated with America’s Second Harvest. About half reported connections with United Way and approximately two-fifths with Foodchain.<sup>40</sup> However, as with emergency kitchen data (chapter 2), the precise nature of these affiliations is unknown. Interestingly, more than

<sup>40</sup>Second Harvest and Foodchain merged their operations while the survey was being conducted.

Figure 4.1  
Types of organizations operating food banks



Source: National Emergency Food Assistance System Survey (2000).

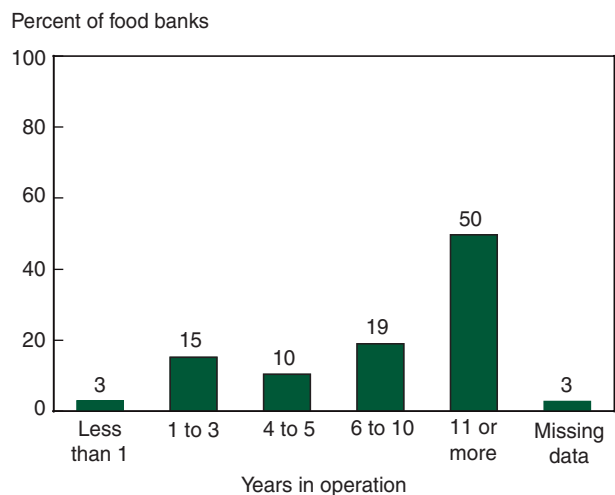
a third of the responding organizations indicated some connection with Catholic Charities or the Salvation Army, but most nevertheless described themselves as *not* being religious organizations. While the exact nature of the organizational relationships is not clear from the survey data, we have classified them as “nonreligious” in the “Type of Organization” panel of the table.

Food banks appear to be quite stable organizations; roughly 70 percent have been operating longer than 5 years and about half for longer than 10 years (fig. 4.2). While most food banks have been operating for a considerable time, a number of relatively new ones (about 18 percent) have been in operation for 3 years or less, and we focus on them in a later subsection. One-third of food banks are co-located with food rescue programs (organizations that focus primarily on distributing perishable food to EFAS providers).

In terms of schedules, most food banks appear to operate like businesses. Seventy-eight percent distribute food to client agencies 5 or more days per week, and about three-fourths are open for business 7 or more hours per day.

In addition to distributing food, food banks offer a variety of nonfood services to their client agencies. Many appear to place a high priority on safe food-handling practices, with roughly three-fourths providing training in food safety and sanitation (fig. 4.3). About 60 percent offer technical assistance and 30 percent provide training in fundraising. Food banks do not

Figure 4.2  
Length of time operating as a food bank



Source: National Emergency Food Assistance System Survey (2000).

**Table 4.1—Selected characteristics of food banks by size of food bank**

Characteristics	All	Size of food bank		
		Small	Medium	Large
		<i>Percent</i>		
Size of food bank	100.0	34.9	47.6	16.7
<b>Region</b>				
West	31.9	36.2	26.6	37.9
Midwest	20.8	18.1	23.9	18.2
South	32.2	26.8	36.2	30.3
Northeast	15.2	18.8	13.3	13.6
<b>Type of organization</b>				
Nonreligious private nonprofit	86.1	79.0	89.9	89.4
Nonprofit, associated with religious group	8.9	13.0	6.9	6.1
Governmental	2.0	5.1	0.5	0.0
Other	3.0	2.9	2.7	4.5
<b>Selected organizational affiliations<sup>1</sup></b>				
Second Harvest	82.3	71.0	86.7	93.9
United Way	51.6	49.3	53.7	53.0
Foodchain	41.3	21.0	48.9	60.6
Salvation Army	31.1	37.7	29.3	21.2
Red Cross	24.1	19.6	27.7	22.7
Catholic Charities	17.7	13.8	21.8	13.6
Other nonprofit organization	17.0	16.7	20.2	9.1
None	6.8	12.3	3.7	3.0
Missing data	1.3	3.6	0.0	0.0
<b>Length of time surveyed location has been operating</b>				
Less than 1 year	3.0	3.6	1.6	6.1
1 to 3 years	15.2	17.4	16.5	7.6
4 to 5 years	10.4	10.9	9.6	12.1
6 years or longer:				
6 to 10 years	19.0	23.2	16.0	19.7
11 to 15 years	14.9	12.3	15.4	19.7
16 to 20 years	29.9	19.6	37.8	25.8
21 to 25 years	2.5	2.9	1.6	4.5
Longer than 25 years	2.3	2.9	1.6	3.0
Not specified	2.5	7.2	0.0	0.0
Missing data	0.3	0.0	0.0	1.5
<b>Programs with which food bank is co-located<sup>2</sup></b>				
Food rescue program	33.2	28.3	36.7	33.3
Food pantry	10.1	15.9	8.5	3.0
Emergency kitchen	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Emergency shelter	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
<b>Frequency of food distribution</b>				
7 days per week	2.3	4.3	0.5	3.0
5 or 6 days per week	75.7	54.3	86.2	89.4
3 or 4 days per week	11.6	15.9	10.6	6.1
1 or 2 days per week	6.8	17.4	1.1	1.5
2 or 3 days per month	1.3	2.2	1.1	0.0
Once a month	1.3	3.6	0.0	0.0
Missing data	1.0	2.2	0.5	0.0
<b>Number of operating hours per day</b>				
As many as 2 hours	1.3	3.6	0.0	0.0
3 or 4	8.4	18.8	3.2	1.5
5 or 6	14.2	23.9	10.1	4.5
7 or 8	61.0	45.7	70.7	65.2
More than 8	14.9	7.2	16.0	28.8
Missing data	0.3	0.7	0.0	0.0

See notes at end of table.

—Continued



**Table 4.1—Selected characteristics of food banks by size of food bank—Continued**

Characteristics	All	Size of food bank		
		Small	Medium	Large
		<i>Percent</i>		
<b>Nonfood services offered<sup>1</sup></b>				
Training in food safety and sanitation	72.7	51.4	84.0	83.3
Technical assistance	60.8	42.0	71.8	69.7
Training in fundraising	29.4	21.0	33.5	36.4
Employment training for agency staff	26.3	23.9	28.7	22.7
Other	25.1	13.8	34.6	19.7
Missing data	0.8	0.7	0.5	0.0
<b>Number of nonfood services offered</b>				
0	16.2	33.3	6.4	9.1
1	13.7	18.1	11.2	12.1
2	28.9	21.7	31.4	37.9
3	24.1	18.1	27.7	24.2
More than 3	16.5	8.0	22.9	16.7
Missing data	0.8	0.7	0.5	0.0
<b>Does any other organization provide nonfood services at the site?</b>				
Yes	4.3	2.9	5.9	3.0
No	95.7	97.1	94.1	97.0
Missing data	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
<b>Sample size (number)</b>	<b>395</b>	<b>138</b>	<b>188</b>	<b>66</b>

<sup>1</sup>Categories sum to more than 100 percent because some food banks provided more than one response.

<sup>2</sup>Categories do not sum to 100 percent because many food banks are not co-located with another provider.

Co-located = Two different organizations operating at the same location.

Notes: Size variable is defined based on amounts of food used and staffing. In general, "small" food banks received less than 600 tons of food in the past 12 months; "medium" food banks received 600 to 4,000 tons; and "large" food banks received more than 4,000 tons.

The sample numbers for food bank sizes do not sum to the total sample because some food banks did not provide answers and are not included.

Source: National Emergency Food Assistance System Survey (2000).

appear to rely on other organizations to offer these services. In fact, only four percent reported having outside organizations provide nonfood services onsite.

### ***By Size of Food Bank***

In order to determine whether basic characteristics vary by food bank size, we constructed a measure of size based primarily on the weight of food received during the preceding year. In general, "small" food banks receive less than 600 tons of food annually, "medium" food banks receive 600 to 4,000 tons, and "large" food banks receive more than 4,000 tons. When data on the number of tons of food received were not available, we used the number of full-time-equivalent staff as an alternative measure of size.

For the most part, food banks of different sizes exhibit similar characteristics. However, large ones are less likely than medium or small ones to be co-located with food pantries (table 4.1). In addition, larger food banks were much more likely than smaller ones to report offering their large food banks food safety training,

compared with 51 percent of small ones. Similarly, 70 percent of large food banks offer technical assistance, compared with 42 percent of small ones.

A possible explanation for these differences is that small food banks may not have the resources to provide nonfood services with the frequency reported by larger banks. These findings suggest a possible need for additional food safety training, as well as other technical assistance, for EFAS providers served by small food banks. The possibility that some of these providers do not have access to these nonfood services may warrant more research attention and, possibly, increased services from the USDA Extension Service or other agencies.

Smaller food banks tend to operate for fewer days per week and hours per day. About 40 percent of them are open for business less than 5 days a week, compared with approximately 8 percent of large food banks. Similarly, about 22 percent of small food banks, but only 2 percent of large ones, are open for business fewer than 5 hours a day.

### By Affiliation

Most food banks in the country (about 80 percent) are affiliated with America's Second Harvest in some capacity (table 4.2). In order to examine possible differences in food banks according to Second Harvest affiliation, we tabulated characteristics for Second Harvest affiliates and independent entities separately.

The two groups differ in a number of dimensions. Members or affiliates of America's Second Harvest are more likely than independent food banks to be located in the South and are less likely to be found in the Northeast. In general, the food banks not affiliated with Second Harvest are relatively small organizations. Based on our definition of size, about 60 percent of independent food banks, versus only 29 percent of those affiliated with Second Harvest, are small. A large majority of both types of food banks are nonreligious nonprofits. However, independent food banks are about twice as likely as Second Harvest affiliates to be faith-based organizations. Perhaps consistent with these findings are the comparisons on non-Second Harvest organizational affiliations. About 42 percent of independents

are affiliated with the Salvation Army compared with 28 percent of Second Harvest affiliates. Almost 50 percent of Second Harvest food banks, but only 13 percent of independent ones, were affiliated with Foodchain.

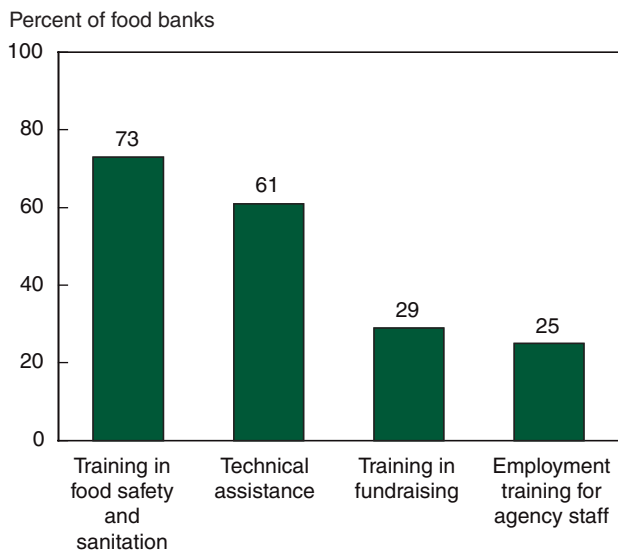
About 54 percent of Second Harvest affiliates have been operating for more than 10 years, compared with 31 percent of independent food banks. One-quarter of independent food banks, but only about 17 percent of Second Harvest affiliates, have come into existence within the past 3 years.

Because independents are smaller entities than Second Harvest affiliates and have shorter operating hours, they distribute food less frequently. About 20 percent of independent food banks are open 4 or fewer hours per day, and 28 percent are open fewer than 5 days a week. Comparative figures for Second Harvest affiliates are 7 and 19 percent, respectively.

In general, when compared with Second Harvest affiliates, independents are less likely to provide any type of nonfood service. Like Second Harvest affiliates, however, they rarely look to outside organizations to provide such services on their premises.

Figure 4.3

### Nonfood services offered by food banks



Source: National Emergency Food Assistance System Survey (2000).

### By Region

Food banks across regions are similar in many ways (table 4.3). However, they differ in their degree of collocation. Food banks in the Northeast are less likely than those in other regions to share facilities with food rescue programs and pantries. One-fourth of food banks in the Northeast are co-located with one of these EFAS providers, compared with more than one-third of those in the West and South

### By Age of Organization

In order to examine whether organizations just beginning as food bank operations differ from those that have provided food for some time, it is of interest to examine tabulations based on when food banks started (table 4.4). Overall, those that began operating more than 3 years ago are quite similar to those established more recently, but they tend to be somewhat bigger.

**Table 4.2—Selected characteristics of food banks by affiliation**

Characteristics	All	Affiliation	
		Second Harvest	Independent
		<i>Percent</i>	
<b>Affiliation</b>	100.0	80.3	19.7
<b>Size of food bank</b>			
Small	34.9	28.7	60.3
Medium	47.6	52.1	29.5
Large	16.7	18.9	7.7
Missing data	0.8	0.3	2.6
<b>Region</b>			
West	31.9	30.9	35.9
Midwest	20.8	22.4	14.1
South	32.2	33.4	26.9
Northeast	15.2	13.2	23.1
<b>Type of organization</b>			
Nonreligious private nonprofit	86.1	87.7	79.5
Nonprofit, associated with religious group	8.9	7.3	15.4
Governmental	2.0	1.3	5.1
Informal group of people	0.0	0.0	0.0
Other	3.0	3.8	0.0
<b>Selected organizational affiliations<sup>1</sup></b>			
United Way	51.6	53.3	44.9
Foodchain	41.3	48.3	12.8
Salvation Army	31.1	28.4	42.3
Red Cross	24.1	23.0	28.2
Catholic Charities	17.7	17.7	17.9
Other nonprofit organization	17.0	18.0	12.8
None	6.8	0.6	32.1
Missing data	1.3	1.6	0.0
<b>Length of time surveyed location has been operating</b>			
Less than 1 year	3.0	3.5	1.3
1 to 3 years	15.2	13.2	23.1
4 to 5 years	10.4	8.5	17.9
6 years or longer			
6 to 10 years	9.0	18.6	20.5
11 to 15 years	14.9	16.7	7.7
16 to 20 years	29.9	34.1	12.8
21 to 25 years	2.5	2.2	3.8
Longer than 25 years	2.3	1.3	6.4
Not specified	2.5	1.6	6.4
Missing data	0.3	0.3	0.0
<b>Programs with which food bank is co-located<sup>2</sup></b>			
Food rescue program	33.2	34.1	29.5
Food pantry	10.1	7.6	20.5
Emergency kitchen	0.0	0.0	0.0
Emergency shelter	0.0	0.0	0.0
<b>Frequency of food distribution</b>			
7 days per week	2.3	1.9	3.8
5 or 6 days per week	75.7	78.2	65.4
3 or 4 days per week	11.6	10.7	15.4
1 or 2 days per week	6.8	6.3	9.0
2 or 3 days per month	1.3	0.6	3.8
Once per month	1.3	1.3	1.3
Missing data	1.0	0.9	1.3

See notes at end of table.

—Continued

**Table 4.2—Selected characteristics of food banks by affiliation—Continued**

Characteristics	All	Affiliation	
		Second Harvest	Independent
		<i>Percent</i>	
<b>Operating hours per day</b>			
As many as 2 hours	1.3	0.6	3.8
3 or 4	8.4	6.0	17.9
5 or 6	14.2	13.2	17.9
7 or 8	61.0	65.6	42.3
More than 8	14.9	14.5	16.7
Missing data	0.3	0.0	1.3
<b>Nonfood services offered<sup>1</sup></b>			
Training in food safety and sanitation	72.7	77.6	52.6
Technical assistance	60.8	64.4	46.2
Training in fundraising	29.4	31.2	21.8
Employment training for agency staff	26.3	25.2	30.8
Other	25.1	24.9	25.6
Missing data	0.8	0.6	1.3
<b>Number of nonfood services offered</b>			
0	16.2	13.2	18.2
1	13.7	12.9	16.7
2	28.9	31.5	17.9
3	24.1	24.0	24.4
More than 3	16.6	17.7	11.5
Missing data	0.8	0.6	1.3
<b>Does any other organization provide nonfood services at the site?</b>			
Yes	4.3	4.4	3.8
No	95.7	95.6	96.2
Missing data	0.0	0.0	0.0
<b>Sample size (number)</b>	<b>395</b>	<b>317</b>	<b>78</b>

<sup>1</sup>Categories sum to more than 100 percent because some food banks provided more than one response.

<sup>2</sup>Categories do not sum to 100 percent because many food banks are not co-located with another provider.

Co-located = Two different organizations operating at the same location.

Note: Size variable is defined based on amounts of food used and staffing. In general, "small" food banks received less than 600 tons of food in the past 12 months; "medium" food banks received 600 to 4,000 tons; and "large" food banks received more than 4,000 tons.

Source: National Emergency Food Assistance System Survey (2000).

**Table 4.3—Selected characteristics of food banks by region**

Characteristics	All	Region			
		West	Midwest	South	Northeast
			<i>Percent</i>		
<b>Region</b>	100.0	31.9	20.8	32.2	15.2
<b>Size of food bank</b>					
Small	34.9	39.7	30.5	29.1	43.3
Medium	47.6	39.7	54.9	53.5	41.7
Large	16.7	19.8	14.6	15.7	15.0
Missing data	0.8	0.8	0.0	1.6	0.0
<b>Type of organization</b>					
Nonreligious private nonprofit	86.1	84.9	93.9	88.2	73.3
Nonprofit, associated with religious group	8.9	9.5	3.7	9.4	13.3
Governmental	2.0	2.4	0.0	0.0	8.3
Informal group of people	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Other	3.0	3.2	2.4	2.4	5.0
<b>Selected organizational affiliations<sup>1</sup></b>					
Second Harvest	82.3	80.2	85.4	85.0	76.7
United Way	51.6	52.4	50.0	54.3	46.7
Foodchain	41.3	33.3	47.6	44.9	41.7
Salvation Army	31.1	34.9	25.6	30.7	31.7
Red Cross	24.1	17.5	24.4	30.7	23.3
Catholic Charities	17.7	12.7	20.7	18.9	21.7
Other nonprofit organization	17.0	20.6	19.5	14.2	11.7
None	6.8	7.9	2.4	7.1	10.0
Missing data	1.3	1.6	0.0	1.6	1.7
<b>Length of time surveyed location has been operating</b>					
Less than 1 year	3.0	3.2	2.4	3.1	3.3
1 to 3 years	15.2	15.1	14.6	17.3	11.7
4 to 5 years	10.4	13.5	9.8	6.3	13.3
6 years or longer					
6 to 10 years	19.0	18.3	23.2	17.3	18.3
11 to 15 years	14.9	11.9	13.4	18.9	15.0
16 to 20 years	29.9	24.6	31.7	35.4	26.7
21 to 25 years	2.5	4.8	2.4	0.8	1.7
Longer than 25 years	2.3	4.8	1.2	0.8	1.7
Not specified	2.5	4.0	0.0	0.0	8.3
Missing data	0.3	0.0	1.2	0.0	0.0
<b>Programs with which food bank is co-located<sup>2</sup></b>					
Food rescue program	33.2	34.9	31.7	36.2	25.0
Food pantry	10.1	13.5	7.3	11.0	5.0
<b>Frequency of food distribution</b>					
7 days per week	2.3	3.2	2.4	0.8	3.3
5 or 6 days per week	75.7	68.3	86.6	81.9	63.3
3 or 4 days per week	11.6	14.3	4.9	13.4	11.7
1 or 2 days per week	6.8	10.3	4.9	1.6	13.3
2 or 3 days per month	1.3	0.8	0.0	2.4	1.7
Once a month	1.3	1.6	1.2	0.0	3.3
Missing data	1.0	1.6	0.0	0.0	3.3

See notes at end of table.

—Continued

**Table 4.3—Selected characteristics of food banks by region—Continued**

Characteristics	All	Region			
		West	Midwest	South	Northeast
			<i>Percent</i>		
<b>Operating hours per day</b>					
As many as 2	1.3	2.4	0.0	0.0	3.3
3 or 4	8.4	12.7	6.1	5.5	8.3
5 or 6	14.2	16.7	8.5	14.2	16.7
7 or 8	61.0	54.8	65.9	66.9	55.0
More than 8	14.9	13.5	19.5	13.4	15.0
Missing data	0.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.7
<b>Nonfood services offered<sup>1</sup></b>					
Training in food safety and sanitation	72.7	71.4	76.8	73.2	68.3
Technical assistance	60.8	60.3	74.4	50.4	65.0
Training in fundraising	29.4	28.6	35.4	26.0	30.0
Employment training for agency staff	26.3	27.0	31.7	22.0	26.7
Other	25.1	28.6	20.7	24.4	25.0
Missing data	0.8	0.8	0.0	1.6	0.0
<b>Number of nonfood services offered</b>					
0	16.2	15.9	9.8	19.7	18.3
1	13.7	11.9	11.0	17.3	13.3
2	28.9	31.0	32.9	25.2	26.7
3	24.1	26.2	26.8	20.5	23.3
More than 3	16.5	14.3	19.5	15.7	18.3
Missing data	0.8	0.8	0.0	1.6	0.0
<b>Does any other organization provide nonfood services at the site?<sup>2</sup></b>					
Yes	4.3	5.6	6.1	1.6	5.0
No	95.7	94.4	93.9	98.4	95.0
Missing data	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
<b>Sample size (number)</b>	<b>395</b>	<b>126</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>127</b>	<b>60</b>

<sup>1</sup>Categories sum to more than 100 percent because some food banks provided more than one response.

<sup>2</sup>Categories do not sum to 100 percent because many food banks are not co-located with another provider.

Co-located = Two different organizations operating at the same location.

Note: Size variable is defined based on amounts of food used and staffing. In general, "small" food banks received less than 600 tons of food in the past 12 months; "medium" food banks received 600 to 4,000 tons; and "large" food banks received more than 4,000 tons.

Source: National Emergency Food Assistance System Survey (2000).

**Table 4.4—Selected characteristics of food banks by age of food bank**

Characteristics	All	Age of food bank	
		3 years or less	More than 3 years
<i>Percent</i>			
<b>Size</b>			
Small	34.9	40.3	33.9
Medium	47.6	47.2	47.8
Large	16.7	12.5	17.4
Missing data	0.8	0.0	0.9
<b>Region</b>			
West	31.9	31.9	32.0
Midwest	20.8	19.4	20.8
South	32.2	36.1	31.4
Northeast	15.2	12.5	15.8
<b>Type of organization</b>			
Nonreligious private nonprofit	86.1	93.1	84.5
Nonprofit, associated with religious group	8.9	6.9	9.3
Governmental	2.0	0.0	2.5
Informal group of people	0.0	0.0	0.0
Other	3.0	0.0	3.7
<b>Selected organizational affiliations<sup>1</sup></b>			
Second Harvest	82.3	76.4	83.5
United Way	51.6	58.3	50.0
Food Chain	41.3	34.7	42.5
Salvation Army	31.1	23.6	32.6
Red Cross	24.1	20.8	24.5
Catholic Charities	17.7	13.9	18.3
Other nonprofit organization	17.0	19.4	16.5
None	6.8	8.3	6.5
Missing data	1.3	1.4	1.2
<b>Programs with which food bank is co-located<sup>2</sup></b>			
Food rescue program	33.2	27.3	34.2
Food pantry	10.1	11.1	9.9
Emergency kitchen	0.0	0.0	0.0
Emergency shelter	0.0	0.0	0.0
<b>Frequency of food distribution</b>			
7 days per week	2.3	4.2	1.9
5 or 6 days per week	75.7	77.8	75.2
3 or 4 days per week	11.6	9.7	12.1
1 or 2 days per week	6.8	6.9	6.8
2 or 3 days per month	1.3	0.0	1.6
Once a month	1.3	1.4	1.2
Missing data	1.0	0.0	1.2
<b>Operating hours per day</b>			
As many as 2	1.3	0.0	1.6
3 or 4	8.4	9.7	8.1
5 or 6	14.2	9.7	15.2
7 or 8	61.0	75.0	58.1
More than 8	14.9	5.6	16.8
Missing data	0.3	0.0	0.3
<b>Nonfood services offered<sup>1</sup></b>			
Training on food safety and sanitation	72.7	69.4	73.3
Technical assistance	60.8	61.1	60.6
Training on fundraising	29.4	26.4	29.8
Employment training for agency staff	26.3	19.4	27.6
Other	25.1	34.7	23.0
Missing data	0.8	0.0	0.9

See notes at end of table.

—Continued

**Table 4.4—Selected characteristics of food banks by age of food bank—Continued**

Characteristics	All	Age of food bank	
		3 years or less	More than 3 years
<i>Percent</i>			
<b>Number of nonfood services offered</b>			
0	16.2	18.1	15.8
1	13.7	9.7	14.6
2	28.9	33.3	28.0
3	24.1	25.0	23.9
More than 3	16.5	13.9	16.8
Missing data	0.8	0.0	0.9
<b>Does any other organization provide nonfood services at the site?</b>			
Yes	4.3	5.6	4.0
No	95.7	94.4	96.0
Missing data	0.0	0.0	0.0
<b>Sample size (number)</b>	<b>395</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>322</b>

<sup>1</sup>Categories sum to more than 100 percent because some food banks provided more than one response.

<sup>2</sup>Categories do not sum to 100 percent because many food banks are not co-located with another provider.

Co-located = Two different organizations operating at the same location.

Notes: Size variable is defined based on amounts of food used and staffing. In general, "small" food banks received less than 600 tons of food in the past 12 months; "medium" food banks received 600 to 4,000 tons; and "large" food banks received more than 4,000 tons.

The sample numbers for food bank ages do not sum to the total sample because some food banks did not provide answers and are not included.

Source: National Emergency Food Assistance System Survey (2000).



## Food Distribution Characteristics and Policies

To obtain more detailed information about food bank operations, we asked respondents to report on their food distribution practices and policies. We speculated that operations may vary according to particular food bank characteristics. To determine whether our assumption was correct, we cross-tabulated the data by size of food bank, affiliation, and region.

### Food Distribution Characteristics

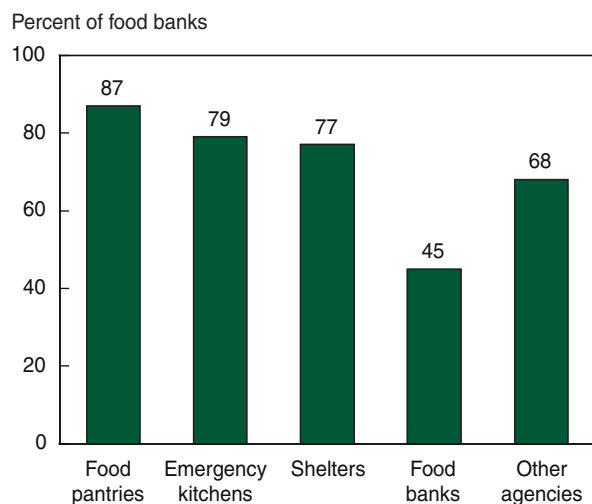
Most food banks distribute food to several types of client agencies (table 4.5 and fig. 4.4). About 87 percent of food banks serve pantries, 79 percent serve kitchens, and 77 percent serve shelters. Approximately 68 percent of food banks also distribute food to other nonprofit agencies, such as day care centers. About 45 percent of food banks serve other food banks. The median number of pantries served by food banks that serve pantries is 65. The corresponding figure for kitchens is 7, and for shelters, 4.

#### By Size of Food Bank

As expected, the number of agencies served by food banks varies by size (table 4.5). For example, the median large food bank serves 195 pantries and 25 kitchens on a regular basis. The respective numbers for the median small food bank are 19 and 3.

Figure 4.4

#### Types of agencies served by food banks



Note: "Other agencies" includes various charitable organizations that serve food, including day care centers, senior centers, and hospitals.

Source: National Emergency Food Assistance System Survey (2000).

#### By Affiliation

Independent food banks appear to serve a smaller variety of emergency food providers than those affiliated with America's Second Harvest (table 4.6). Pantries, kitchens, and shelters are served by more than 80 percent of Second Harvest affiliates. In contrast, smaller percentages of independent food banks serve each type of provider.

Consistent with our earlier finding that independent food banks are generally smaller than Second Harvest affiliates, they serve fewer client agencies. The median independent food bank serves 20 pantries, 4 kitchens, 3 food banks, 4 shelters, and 19 other providers. In contrast, the median Second Harvest affiliate serves 81 pantries, 8 kitchens, 4 food banks, 7 shelters, and 49 other providers.

#### By Region

The clientele of food banks is, in large part, similar across regions of the country (table 4.7). However, food banks located in the West tend to serve fewer clients than those in other regions. For example, the difference in number of pantries served by the median food bank in the West and the median food bank in the South is substantial: the former has 26 pantries as clients while the latter has almost 100.

#### By Market Areas Served

The geographic areas served by food banks vary substantially, from a single county to more than 50 counties (table 4.8). The median number of counties served is 5, while the average is nearly 11. The frequency distribution shows that about three-fourths of food banks serve fewer than 14 counties. However, because a few of the remaining food banks serve very large numbers of counties, the data are strongly skewed.

Reflecting these differences, the size of the areas served (measured by distance to farthest client agency) varies greatly as well. For a few food banks, this distance is less than 25 miles; more typically, it is about 80 miles.

### Food Distribution Policies

Many food banks have implemented policies to limit the client agencies that may obtain food and the amount of food they may receive. Of the 61 percent of food banks that limit food, 58 percent do so by linking the amount of food they provide to the number of people the agency serves (table 4.9). About three-fourths

**Table 4.5—Selected food distribution characteristics of food banks by size of food bank**

Distribution characteristics	All	Size of food bank		
		Small	Medium	Large
<i>Percent</i>				
<b>Types of agencies served</b>				
Pantries	87.1	87.0	88.8	83.3
Kitchens	79.2	70.3	86.2	80.3
Shelters	77.2	65.9	86.2	75.8
Food banks	44.6	34.1	44.1	68.2
Other agencies	67.6	50.7	78.2	72.7
Missing data	5.8	3.6	5.3	10.6
<b>Number of pantries served by food banks that serve pantries (N = 376)</b>				
1 to 25	24.2	55.8	9.9	1.6
26 to 50	15.7	17.1	19.8	1.6
51 to 75	10.1	7.8	12.6	8.1
76 to 100	10.4	5.4	15.4	6.5
101 to 150	12.8	6.2	17.6	12.9
151 to 200	5.9	0.8	4.9	19.4
201 to 300	5.6	0.0	6.0	14.5
More than 300	6.9	0.0	5.5	24.2
Missing data	8.5	7.0	8.2	11.3
(Mean)	(101.4)	(32.5)	(106.4)	(227.2)
(Median)	(65.0)	(19.0)	(82.0)	(195.0)
<b>Number of kitchens served by food banks that serve kitchens (N = 346)</b>				
1 to 5	37.9	63.8	31.6	13.1
6 to 10	18.8	14.3	24.3	11.5
11 to 25	15.6	8.6	18.6	19.7
26 to 50	11.0	2.9	11.3	23.0
51 to 100	5.5	2.9	2.8	18.0
More than 100	1.7	0.0	2.8	1.6
Missing data	9.5	7.6	8.5	13.1
(Mean)	(19.1)	(8.3)	(20.0)	(36.1)
(Median)	(7.0)	(3.0)	(8.0)	(25.0)
<b>Number of food banks served by food banks that serve food banks (N = 208)</b>				
1 or 2	30.8	42.6	31.0	19.2
3 or 4	14.9	14.8	18.0	9.6
5 or 6	10.6	5.6	10.0	15.4
7 or 8	6.7	5.6	5.0	11.5
9 or 10	6.3	5.6	5.0	9.6
11 to 20	10.6	11.1	10.0	11.5
More than 20	4.8	1.9	4.0	9.6
Missing data	15.4	13.0	17.0	13.5
(Mean)	(7.0)	(4.7)	(6.4)	(10.7)
(Median)	(4.0)	(3.0)	(4.0)	(6.0)
<b>Number of other agencies served by food banks that serve other agencies (N = 293)</b>				
1 to 10	20.5	42.7	16.9	0.0
11 to 25	12.6	18.7	12.5	5.5
26 to 50	16.7	13.3	18.8	16.4
51 to 75	5.5	4.0	8.1	0.0
76 to 100	8.2	4.0	11.9	3.6
101 to 150	9.9	8.0	7.5	20.0
151 to 200	6.5	2.7	7.5	7.3
201 to 300	6.8	0.0	5.6	20.0
More than 300	4.4	0.0	3.1	14.5
Missing data	8.9	6.7	8.1	12.7
(Mean)	(95.2)	(32.3)	(84.4)	(218.6)
(Median)	(43.0)	(14.0)	(49.0)	(145.0)

See notes at end of table.

—Continued

**Table 4.5—Selected food distribution characteristics of food banks by size of food bank—Continued**

Distribution characteristics	All	Size of food bank		
		Small	Medium	Large
<i>Percent</i>				
<b>Number of shelters served by food banks that serve shelters (N = 338)</b>				
1 to 5	41.1	66.7	35.0	16.9
6 to 10	19.2	18.2	23.2	10.2
11 to 15	7.1	5.1	9.6	3.4
16 to 20	5.9	1.0	6.8	11.9
21 to 25	3.3	0.0	4.0	5.1
26 to 50	8.6	1.0	9.0	20.3
More than 50	5.0	0.0	4.0	16.9
Missing data	9.8	8.1	8.5	15.3
(Mean)	(13.8)	(4.8)	(13.7)	(30.7)
(Median)	(6.0)	(3.0)	(8.0)	(21.0)
<b>Percent of food received that is distributed</b>				
Less than 85	12.7	14.5	12.2	10.6
85 to 89	7.8	3.6	9.6	10.6
90 to 100	74.5	75.4	75.0	72.8
Missing data	5.1	6.5	3.2	6.1
(Mean)	(93.1)	(93.4)	(93.0)	(93.1)
(Median)	(97.0)	(100.0)	(95.0)	(95.0)
<b>Sample size (number)</b>	<b>395</b>	<b>138</b>	<b>188</b>	<b>66</b>

Notes: Size variable is defined based on amounts of food used and staffing. In general, "small" food banks received fewer than 600 tons of food in the past 12 months; "medium" food banks received 600 to 4,000 tons; and "large" food banks received more than 4,000 tons.

The sample numbers for food bank sizes do not sum to the total sample because some food banks did not provide answers and are not included.

Source: National Emergency Food Assistance System Survey (2000).

of food banks limit the kinds of agencies that may receive food. The criterion respondents use most frequently to make this determination is that the agency must be a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. Just over 30 percent of food banks require agencies to complete a formal approval process.

In reviewing these data on agency requirements, it is important to note that the stated percentages may underestimate the true figures. The question was open-ended, with responses coded into prespecified categories. For any given category, the percentage responding may be low simply because some respondents did not think of their agency's policy when they were being interviewed, even though they had in fact used it. We suspect this underreporting may have occurred, for instance, for the 501(c)(3) tax status variable, since many food banks need this designation in their client agencies in order to protect their own tax-exempt status.

### **By Size of Food Bank**

More large food banks reported policies that limit food distribution than small ones (table 4.9). Almost three-fourths of large food banks limit the amount of food an agency may obtain, compared with about half of small banks. At least some of these policies may reflect USDA guidelines concerning TEFAP commodities. It

is also possible that large food banks have more-formalized policies than small food banks and that this, in some instances, contributes to their distribution limits.

### **By Affiliation**

Similar percentages of Second Harvest affiliates and independent food banks have policies that limit the amount of food client agencies may obtain (table 4.10). Food banks associated with America's Second Harvest, however, are more likely to impose restrictions on the types of agencies to which they distribute food; about 75 percent of Second Harvest affiliates do so, compared with 64 percent of independents. This finding may reflect, in part, guidelines specified by America's Second Harvest to its affiliates regarding food distribution.

For the most part, the criteria used to determine whether an agency is eligible to receive food are applied in similar proportions by Second Harvest affiliates and independent food banks. An interesting exception is that Second Harvest affiliates are about 50 percent more likely than independents to require agencies to complete an approval process before receiving food. This policy may be at least partly responsible for the difference in the percentages of Second Harvest affiliates and independent food banks that reported placing limits on whom they serve.

**Table 4.6—Selected food distribution characteristics of food banks by affiliation**

Distribution characteristics	All	Affiliation	
		Second Harvest	Independent
		<i>Percent</i>	
<b>Types of agencies served</b>			
Pantries	87.1	88.6	80.8
Kitchens	79.2	81.4	70.5
Shelters	77.2	81.1	61.5
Food banks	44.6	47.0	34.6
Other agencies	67.6	71.6	51.3
Missing data	5.8	6.3	3.8
<b>Number of pantries served by food banks that serve pantries</b>			
1 to 25	24.2	17.9	52.2
26 to 50	15.7	16.3	13.0
51 to 75	10.1	10.1	10.1
76 to 100	10.4	11.7	4.3
101 to 150	12.8	15.0	2.9
151 to 200	5.9	7.2	0.0
201 to 300	5.6	5.9	4.3
More than 300	6.9	7.5	4.3
Missing data	8.5	8.5	8.7
(Mean)	(101.4)	(111.9)	(54.5)
(Median)	(65.0)	(81.0)	(20.0)
<b>Number of kitchens served by food banks that serve kitchens</b>			
1 to 5	37.9	35.7	48.3
6 to 10	18.8	18.9	18.3
11 to 25	15.6	16.1	13.3
26 to 50	11.0	11.5	8.3
51 to 100	5.5	5.9	3.3
More than 100	1.7	2.1	0.0
Missing data	9.5	9.8	8.3
(Mean)	(19.1)	(20.8)	(11.4)
(Median)	(7.0)	(8.0)	(4.0)
<b>Number of food banks served by food banks that serve food banks</b>			
1 or 2	30.8	30.1	34.4
3 or 4	14.9	14.8	15.6
5 or 6	10.6	12.5	0.0
7 or 8	6.7	6.3	9.4
9 or 10	6.3	6.8	3.1
11 to 20	10.6	9.1	18.8
More than 20	4.8	5.1	3.1
Missing data	15.4	15.3	15.6
(Mean)	(7.0)	(7.1)	(6.9)
(Median)	(4.0)	(4.0)	(3.0)
<b>Number of shelters served by food banks that serve shelters</b>			
1 to 5	41.1	38.9	52.8
6 to 10	19.2	18.6	22.6
11 to 15	7.1	7.0	7.5
16 to 20	5.9	6.7	1.9
21 to 25	3.3	3.5	1.9
26 to 50	8.6	10.2	0.0
More than 50	5.0	5.3	3.8
Missing data	9.8	9.8	9.4
(Mean)	(13.8)	(14.8)	(8.5)
(Median)	(6.0)	(7.0)	(4.0)

See note at end of table.

—Continued

**Table 4.6—Selected food distribution characteristics of food banks by affiliation—Continued**

Distribution characteristics	All	Affiliation	
		Second Harvest	Independent
		<i>Percent</i>	
<b>Number of other agencies served by food banks that serve other agencies</b>			
1 to 10	20.5	17.3	38.6
11 to 25	12.6	12.9	11.4
26 to 50	16.7	17.7	11.4
51 to 75	5.5	5.6	4.5
76 to 100	8.2	8.4	6.8
101 to 150	9.9	10.8	4.5
151 to 200	6.5	6.8	4.5
201 to 300	6.8	8.0	0.0
More than 300	4.4	3.6	9.1
Missing data	8.9	8.8	9.1
(Mean)	(95.2)	(90.1)	(123.8)
(Median)	(43.0)	(49.0)	(19.0)
<b>Percent of food received that is distributed</b>			
Less than 85	12.7	12.6	12.8
85 to 89	7.8	9.5	1.3
90 to 100	74.5	72.9	80.8
Missing data	5.1	5.1	5.1
(Mean)	(93.1)	(93.1)	(93.1)
(Median)	(97.0)	(97.0)	(97.0)
<b>Sample size (number)</b>	<b>395</b>	<b>317</b>	<b>78</b>

Source: National Emergency Food Assistance System Survey (2000).

**Table 4.7—Selected food distribution characteristics of food banks by region**

Distribution characteristics	All	Region			
		West	Midwest	South	Northeast
			<i>Percent</i>		
<b>Types of agencies served</b>					
Pantries	87.1	87.3	91.5	83.5	88.3
Kitchens	79.2	78.6	85.4	75.6	80.0
Shelters	77.2	76.2	82.9	75.6	75.0
Food banks	44.6	50.0	48.8	40.9	35.0
Other agencies	67.6	61.1	79.3	65.4	70.0
Missing data	5.8	4.0	4.9	9.4	3.3
<b>Number of pantries served by food banks that serve pantries</b>					
1 to 25	24.2	47.4	13.6	8.9	25.5
26 to 50	15.7	16.4	21.0	11.3	16.4
51 to 75	10.1	12.9	11.1	8.9	5.5
76 to 100	10.4	5.2	11.1	15.3	9.1
101 to 150	12.8	5.2	18.5	15.3	14.5
151 to 200	5.9	3.4	6.2	6.5	9.1
201 to 300	5.6	1.7	3.7	9.7	7.3
More than 300	6.9	2.6	7.4	9.7	9.1
Missing data	8.5	5.2	7.4	14.5	3.6
(Mean)	(101.4)	(54.1)	(104.8)	(139.2)	(118.9)
(Median)	(65.0)	(26.0)	(81.0)	(99.0)	(85.0)
<b>Number of kitchens served by food banks that serve kitchens</b>					
1 to 5	37.9	54.3	31.2	29.8	32.0
6 to 10	18.8	21.0	20.8	17.5	14.0
11 to 25	15.6	13.3	16.9	15.8	18.0
26 to 50	11.0	4.8	13.0	12.3	18.0
51 to 100	5.5	1.0	6.5	7.0	10.0
More than 100	1.7	0.0	2.6	1.8	4.0
Missing data	9.5	5.7	9.1	15.8	4.0
(Mean)	(19.1)	(8.7)	(23.6)	(20.6)	(31.2)
(Median)	(7.0)	(5.0)	(10.0)	(9.0)	(12.0)
<b>Number of shelters served by food banks that serve shelters</b>					
1 to 5	41.1	61.5	33.8	33.6	25.5
6 to 10	19.2	11.5	25.7	20.4	23.4
11 to 15	7.1	4.8	10.8	8.0	4.3
16 to 20	5.9	4.8	5.4	5.3	10.6
21 to 25	3.3	1.0	1.4	3.5	10.6
26 to 50	8.6	6.7	9.5	8.8	10.6
More than 50	5.0	1.9	5.4	5.3	10.6
Missing data	9.8	7.7	8.1	15.0	4.3
(Mean)	(13.8)	(8.5)	(15.0)	(14.7)	(21.5)
(Median)	(6.0)	(4.0)	(7.0)	(8.5)	(10.0)
<b>Number of food banks served by food banks that serve food banks</b>					
1 or 2	30.8	31.4	26.1	27.9	45.8
3 or 4	14.9	11.4	17.4	16.2	16.7
5 or 6	10.6	17.1	4.3	10.3	4.2
7 or 8	6.7	5.7	13.0	4.4	4.2
9 or 10	6.3	7.1	6.5	5.9	4.2
11 to 20	10.6	12.9	13.0	8.8	4.2
More than 20	4.8	4.3	6.5	2.9	8.3
Missing data	15.4	10.0	13.0	23.5	12.5
(Mean)	(7.0)	(7.8)	(7.0)	(6.8)	(5.6)
(Median)	(4.0)	(5.0)	(5.0)	(4.0)	(2.0)

See note at end of table.

—Continued

**Table 4.7—Selected food distribution characteristics of food banks by region—Continued**

Distribution characteristics	All	Region			
		West	Midwest	South	Northeast
		<i>Percent</i>			
<b>Number of other agencies served by food banks that serve other agencies</b>					
1 to 10	20.5	28.9	18.8	17.5	13.6
11 to 25	12.6	14.5	13.0	12.4	9.1
26 to 50	16.7	20.5	17.4	13.4	15.9
51 to 75	5.5	3.6	4.3	6.2	9.1
76 to 100	8.2	4.8	13.0	8.2	6.8
101 to 150	9.9	8.4	13.0	10.3	6.8
151 to 200	6.5	0.0	8.7	4.1	20.5
201 to 300	6.8	9.6	4.3	6.2	6.8
More than 300	4.4	2.4	1.4	7.2	6.8
Missing data	8.9	7.2	5.8	14.4	4.5
(Mean)	(95.2)	(72.4)	(76.1)	(120.8)	(115.9)
(Median)	(43.0)	(34.0)	(45.0)	(44.0)	(78.0)
<b>Percent of food received that is distributed</b>					
Less than 85	12.7	15.1	11.0	11.8	11.7
85 to 89	7.8	7.1	4.9	10.2	8.3
90 to 100	74.5	71.4	80.5	72.4	76.6
Missing data	5.1	6.4	3.6	5.5	3.3
(Mean)	(93.1)	(92.2)	(94.0)	(93.1)	(93.9)
(Median)	(97.0)	(97.0)	(97.0)	(95.0)	(98.0)
<b>Sample size (number)</b>	<b>395</b>	<b>126</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>127</b>	<b>60</b>

Source: National Emergency Food Assistance System Survey (2000).

**Table 4.8—Service area characteristics of food banks**

Size/distance	Food banks
	<i>Percent</i>
<b>Number of counties in service area</b>	
1	26.6
2 to 4	20.8
5 to 7	12.2
8 to 10	7.3
11 to 13	6.6
14 to 16	3.8
17 to 19	4.1
20 to 29	8.4
30 to 49	4.1
50 or more	4.1
Missing data	2.3
(Mean)	(10.7)
(Median)	(5.0)
<b>Miles from furthest agency served</b>	
1 to 24	7.8
25 to 49	18.7
50 to 99	29.6
100 to 199	24.3
200 to 299	9.1
300 to 399	4.3
400 or more	3.8
Missing data	2.3
(Means)	(116.8)
(Median)	(80.0)
<b>Sample size (number)</b>	<b>395</b>

Source: National Emergency Food Assistance System Survey (2000).

**Table 4.9—Policies used by food banks to limit which agencies can receive food and how much food they can receive, by size of food bank**

Policies and methods	All	Size of food bank		
		Small	Medium	Large
		<i>Percent</i>		
<b>Have policies limiting amount of food an agency can obtain</b>	60.8	51.4	63.3	74.2
<b>Methods used to restrict the amount of food an agency can obtain<sup>1,2</sup></b>				
Link amount provided to number of recipients served by agency	57.9	53.5	63.9	51.0
Set limits on amount provided per visit or shipment	26.7	28.2	22.7	34.7
Restrict number of visits or shipments	10.4	12.7	7.6	14.3
Link amount provided to storage capacity	3.3	0.0	3.4	8.2
Link amount provided to urgency of need of agency recipients	1.3	1.4	1.7	0.0
Link amount provided to amount previously provided	1.3	1.4	1.7	0.0
Restrict on a case-by-case basis	0.4	0.0	0.8	0.0
Other	22.1	15.5	24.4	24.5
<b>Have policies limiting which agencies can receive food</b>	73.2	65.9	77.1	78.8
<b>Policies used to restrict which agencies can receive food<sup>2,3</sup></b>				
Must be a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization	73.7	70.3	75.9	73.1
Must be certified or complete an approval process by food bank	31.8	27.5	30.3	44.2
Must serve low-income households	18.3	11.0	21.4	21.2
Must have appropriate storage facilities	13.8	11.0	13.8	19.2
Must be located in service area or in specific ZIP Code(s)	12.1	7.7	12.4	19.2
Must serve households with children	5.9	3.3	7.6	5.8
Must be able to pay fees	4.5	1.1	5.5	7.7
Must be affiliated with church or other agency	4.2	2.2	5.5	3.8
Must provide own transportation	2.1	2.2	2.1	1.9
Must be referred by church or other agency	1.0	0.0	2.1	0.0
Must follow USDA TEFAP guidelines	2.4	3.3	2.8	0.0
Must meet food safety and handling guidelines	0.7	0.0	0.0	3.8
Must not sell food	2.4	3.3	1.4	1.9
Must be an emergency food provider	1.4	1.1	2.1	0.0
Must follow Second Harvest guidelines	2.1	1.1	3.4	0.0
Must meet State and Federal guidelines	1.0	0.0	1.4	1.9
Agency cannot place restrictions on clients seeking food	2.1	3.3	2.1	0.0
Must meet donor restrictions	1.7	0.0	2.8	1.9
Must have been in operation a certain length of time	0.3	0.0	0.0	1.9
Must sign a contract or agreement	0.3	1.1	0.0	0.0
Must be a pantry	0.3	1.1	0.0	0.0
Must comply with reporting requirements	0.7	0.0	1.4	0.0
Other	11.8	5.5	12.4	21.2
<b>Sample size (number)</b>	<b>395</b>	<b>138</b>	<b>188</b>	<b>66</b>

<sup>1</sup>Includes only food banks that have policies limiting the amount of food an agency can obtain.

<sup>2</sup>Categories sum to more than 100 percent because some food banks provided more than one response.

<sup>3</sup>Includes only food banks that have policies restricting which agencies can receive food.

Note: The sample numbers for food bank sizes do not sum to the total sample because some food banks did not provide answers and are not included.

Source: National Emergency Food Assistance System Survey (2000).



**Table 4.10—Policies used by food banks to limit agencies that can receive food and the amount they can receive by affiliation**

Distribution characteristics	All	Affiliation	
		Second Harvest	Independent
		Percent	
<b>Have policies limiting amount of food an agency can obtain</b>	60.8	61.5	57.7
<b>Methods used to restrict amount of food an agency can obtain<sup>1,2</sup></b>			
Link amount provided to number of recipients served by agency	57.9	57.4	60.0
Set limits on amount provided per visit or shipment	24.2	25.1	33.3
Restrict number of visits or shipments	10.4	9.7	13.3
Link amount provided to storage capacity	3.3	3.6	2.2
Link amount provided to urgency of need of agency recipients	1.3	1.0	2.2
Link amount provided to amount previously provided	1.3	1.0	2.2
Restrict on a case-by-case basis	0.4	0.0	2.2
Other	22.1	22.6	20.0
<b>Have policies limiting which agencies can receive food</b>	73.2	75.4	64.1
<b>Policies used to restrict which agencies can receive food<sup>2,3</sup></b>			
Must be a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization	73.7	72.4	80.0
Must be certified or complete an approval process by food bank	31.8	33.9	22.0
Must serve low-income households	18.3	18.8	16.0
Must have appropriate storage facilities	13.8	13.4	16.0
Must be located in service area in specific ZIP Code(s)	12.1	13.0	8.0
Must serve households with children	5.9	5.9	6.0
Must be able to pay fees	4.5	5.0	2.0
Must be affiliated with church or other agency	4.2	4.6	2.0
Must provide own transportation	2.1	0.8	8.0
Must be referred by church or other agency	1.0	0.4	4.0
Must follow USDA TEFAP guidelines	2.4	2.1	4.0
Must meet food safety and handling guidelines	0.7	0.8	0.0
Must not sell food	2.4	0.8	10.0
Must be an emergency food provider	1.4	1.7	0.0
Must follow Second Harvest guidelines	2.1	2.5	0.0
Must meet State and Federal guidelines	1.0	1.3	0.0
Agency cannot place restrictions on clients seeking food	2.1	1.3	6.0
Must meet donor restrictions	1.7	2.1	0.0
Must have been in operation a certain length of time	0.3	0.4	0.0
Must sign a contract or agreement	0.3	0.4	0.0
Must be a pantry	0.3	0.4	0.0
Must comply with reporting requirements	0.7	0.0	4.0
Other	11.8	11.7	12.0
<b>Sample size (number)</b>	<b>395</b>	<b>317</b>	<b>78</b>

<sup>1</sup>Includes only food banks that have policies limiting the amount of food an agency can obtain.

<sup>2</sup>Categories may sum to more than 100 percent because some food banks provided more than one response.

<sup>3</sup>Includes only food banks that have policies restricting which agencies can receive food.

Source: National Emergency Food Assistance System Survey (2000).

## Sources and Types of Food Used by Food Banks

### Sources of Food

Most food banks rely on a number of sources to obtain the food they distribute to other EFAS agencies. Six of the sources listed in the survey are used by at least 80 percent of food banks: wholesalers or retailers; allocations from other food banks and organizations, such as Second Harvest; State or Federal programs; direct donations from manufacturers; community donations; and farmers and growers (table 4.11 and fig. 4.5). Almost all food banks use the following three food sources: (1) wholesalers and retailers, (2) food banks and/or similar nonprofit organizations, and (3) community donations.

### By Size of Food Bank

It is noteworthy that large food banks are much more likely than small ones to purchase food at market prices (table 4.12). One might think that large food banks could avoid this through their presumably more extensive donor relationships. However, these organizations may be eager to provide more comprehensive

services to their client agencies, and may thus be more willing than small ones to spend their own funds on food because they have greater financial resources.

It also appears that larger establishments use a greater variety of sources than smaller ones. As table 4.12 shows, the average food bank obtains food from seven sources, but the number of food sources varies considerably by food bank size. At the lower end of the spectrum, 40 percent of small food banks use two to five sources, compared with only about 9 percent of medium-size food banks and 5 percent of large ones. At the higher end, the percentages of small, medium, and large food banks that use 8 to 10 food sources are 21, 49, and 56 percent, respectively.

### By Affiliation

Independent food banks are less likely than Second Harvest affiliates to use any given source of food supplies (table 4.13). As expected, the source most commonly reported by Second Harvest affiliates is other food banks or nonprofit organizations; many of them also receive food from wholesalers and retailers, State and Federal programs, farmers and growers, and manufacturers (through donations). The source reported most frequently by independents is community donations. These food banks are much less likely to obtain food from State and Federal programs than are Second Harvest affiliates.

The majority of both independents and Second Harvest food banks also use local sources, such as manufacturers and farmers in their service area, to acquire food supplies.

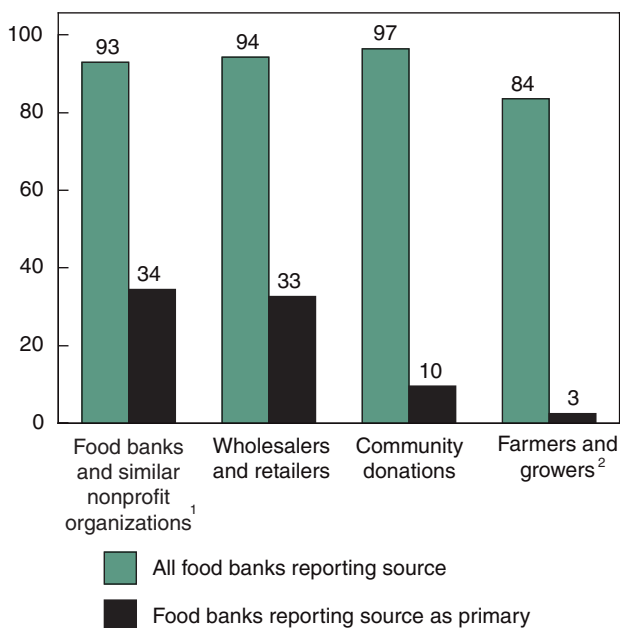
### By Primary Source of Food

About one-third of food banks reported that wholesalers and retailers are their *primary* food source; another third mentioned food banks and similar nonprofit organizations (table 4.14). The primary food sources appear to vary according to the size of the food bank. Almost half the small food banks obtain their food primarily from other food banks and similar kinds of organizations (including America's Second Harvest). It is likely that this reflects, in part, SDOs in the Second Harvest network that receive food from the food banks with which they are affiliated. The primary food source reported most commonly by medium-size food banks (38 percent) was wholesalers and retailers. Like small food banks, however, many medium-size ones (31 percent) also rely heavily on other food banks. In contrast to their small- and medium-size counter-

Figure 4.5

### Sources of food for food banks

Percent of food banks



<sup>1</sup>Includes those mentioning America's Second Harvest.

<sup>2</sup>Includes food purchased at retail prices, gleaned, left over, and salvaged.

Note: Includes food purchased at retail prices, gleaned, left over, and salvaged.

Source: National Emergency Food Assistance System Survey (2000).

**Table 4.11—Sources of food supplies for food banks by size of food bank**

Sources	All	Size of food bank		
		Small	Medium	Large
		<i>Percent</i>		
<b>Community donations</b>	96.5	92.0	98.4	100.0
<b>Wholesalers or retailers</b>	94.2	84.8	98.9	100.0
Received donation of a salable product <sup>1</sup>	78.0	60.9	87.8	86.4
Salvaged food <sup>1</sup>	75.2	55.1	84.0	90.9
Purchased food at market price <sup>1</sup>	52.2	43.5	55.9	60.6
<b>Allocations from food banks and/or similar nonprofit organizations<sup>2</sup></b>	92.9	85.5	97.3	95.5
<b>Direct donations from manufacturers</b>	84.6	68.1	92.0	97.0
<b>Farmers and growers</b>	83.5	71.0	89.9	92.4
Received a direct donation <sup>3</sup>	80.3	67.4	86.2	90.9
Received food from field-gleaning <sup>3</sup>	49.4	36.2	53.7	65.2
Received leftovers from farmers' markets <sup>3</sup>	39.2	27.5	44.7	48.5
Purchased food at market price <sup>3</sup>	5.3	1.4	7.4	7.6
<b>State or Federal programs</b>	81.0	65.9	90.4	86.4
<b>Leftovers from places that serve food</b>	49.4	37.7	56.4	53.0
<b>Food rescue programs</b>	39.7	31.2	40.4	56.1
<b>Other sources</b>	10.9	3.6	12.8	19.7
<b>Service area sources</b>				
Manufacturers in food bank's service area	65.1	46.4	71.3	86.4
Farmers in food bank's service area	72.7	58.7	78.7	86.4
<b>Sample size (number)</b>	<b>395</b>	<b>138</b>	<b>188</b>	<b>66</b>

<sup>1</sup>The subgroup percentages are based on all food banks in each size category, not just on those receiving food supplies from wholesalers and retailers.

<sup>2</sup>Includes those mentioning America's Second Harvest.

<sup>3</sup>The subgroup percentages are based on all food banks in each size category, not just those receiving food supplies from farmers and growers.

Notes: Total exceeds 100 percent because respondent food banks reported using multiple sources for food supplies.

Size variable is defined based on amounts of food used and staffing. In general, "small" food banks received less than 600 tons of food in the past 12 months; "medium" food banks received 600 to 4,000 tons; and "large" food banks received more than 4,000 tons.

The sample numbers for food bank sizes do not sum to the total sample because some food banks did not provide answers and are not included.

Source: National Emergency Food Assistance System Survey (2000)

**Table 4.12—Number of known food sources used by food banks by size of food bank**

Number of known food sources	All	Size of food bank		
		Small	Medium	Large
		<i>Percent</i>		
1	1.0	2.9	0.0	0.0
2 or 3	4.1	8.7	1.6	1.5
4 or 5	14.9	31.2	6.9	3.0
6 or 7	39.5	36.2	42.6	39.4
8 or more	40.5	21.0	48.9	56.1
(Mean)	(6.9)	(5.8)	(7.4)	(7.6)
(Median)	(7.0)	(6.0)	(7.0)	(8.0)
<b>Sample size (number)</b>	<b>395</b>	<b>138</b>	<b>188</b>	<b>66</b>

Notes: Size variable is defined based on amounts of food used and staffing. In general, "small" food banks received less than 600 tons of food in the past 12 months; "medium" food banks received 600 to 4,000 tons; and "large" food banks received more than 4,000 tons.

The sample numbers for food bank sizes do not sum to the total sample because some food banks did not provide answers and are not included.

Source: National Emergency Food Assistance System Survey (2000).

parts, large food banks are less dependent on other food banks as a primary source of food; instead, they rely primarily on wholesalers and retailers (42 percent) or on direct donations from manufacturers (33 percent).

As expected, the primary sources used by food banks, as well as the extent to which they are relied upon, differ based on whether the food banks are affiliated with America's Second Harvest (table 4.15). About 38 percent of Second Harvest affiliates rely on food banks and similar organizations as their primary suppliers of food, compared with 19 percent of independents.

In the previous section, we showed that a smaller percentage of independents, compared with Second Harvest affiliates, used State and Federal programs to obtain food. However, roughly one-quarter of independent food banks mentioned State and Federal programs as their primary source of food, compared with only 15 percent of Second Harvest affiliates.

### *By Amount of Food Received*

There is considerable variation across food banks in the amount of food they reported receiving during the pre-

ceding year. About 21 percent received less than 1 million pounds, which translates into about one truckload every other week (table 4.16).<sup>41</sup> About 14 percent received more than 8 million pounds, or about *four* truckloads of food per week. The median food bank received approximately 2.4 million pounds, enough to provide approximately 2 million meals to EFAS clients.

For the most part, the amount of food received is similar across food banks in different regions of the country. However, the median food bank in the West receives 18 to 34 percent fewer pounds of food than median food banks in other regions. The amounts received by Second Harvest affiliates are higher, on average, than those received by independents (table 4.17).

In order to determine whether food banks received consistent amounts and varieties of food throughout the year, they were asked if the type and quality of food they receive varies by season. Almost 85 percent

<sup>41</sup>A 48-foot tractor-truck can hold about 40,000 pounds (20 tons) of food. (Based on information supplied by Applegate Trucking Company, Cranbury, New Jersey.)

**Table 4.13—Sources of food supplies for food banks by affiliation**

Sources	All	Affiliation	
		Second Harvest	Independent
<i>Percent</i>			
<b>Community donations</b>	96.5	97.2	93.6
<b>Wholesalers or retailers</b>	94.2	95.3	89.7
Received donation of a salable product <sup>1</sup>	78.0	81.1	65.4
Salvaged food <sup>1</sup>	75.2	77.6	65.4
Purchased food at market price <sup>1</sup>	52.2	53.0	48.7
<b>Allocations from food banks and similar nonprofit organizations<sup>2</sup></b>	92.9	98.4	70.5
<b>Direct donations from manufacturers</b>	84.6	87.7	71.8
<b>Farmers and growers</b>	83.5	84.9	78.2
Received a direct donation <sup>3</sup>	80.3	82.0	73.1
Received food from field-gleaning <sup>3</sup>	49.4	51.7	39.7
Received leftovers from farmers' markets <sup>3</sup>	39.2	42.0	28.2
Purchased food at market price <sup>3</sup>	5.3	6.0	2.6
<b>State or Federal programs</b>	81.0	85.2	64.1
<b>Leftovers from places that serve food</b>	49.4	51.1	42.3
<b>Food rescue programs</b>	39.7	40.7	35.9
<b>Other sources</b>	10.9	12.6	3.8
<b>Service area sources</b>			
Manufacturers in food bank's service area	65.1	65.6	62.8
Farmers in food bank's service area	72.7	73.2	70.5
<b>Sample size (number)</b>	<b>395</b>	<b>317</b>	<b>78</b>

<sup>1</sup>The subgroup percentage are based on all food banks in each affiliation category, not just on those receiving food supplies from wholesalers and retailers.

<sup>2</sup>Includes those mentioning America's Second Harvest. <sup>3</sup>The subgroup percentages are based on all food banks in each affiliation category, not just those receiving food supplies from farmers and growers.

Note: Total exceeds 100 percent because respondent food banks reported using multiple sources for food supplies.

Source: National Emergency Food Assistance System Survey (2000).

reported in the affirmative (table 4.18). For more than two-thirds of these food banks, this variability in supply posed a problem in meeting clients' needs.

The extent to which food banks have supply fluctuations appears not to vary by size of food bank. However, larger food banks are more negatively affected by such variations. About 80 percent of large food banks, compared with 60 percent of small ones, reported that variation in supply hindered their ability to meet clients' needs.

### **By Receipt of Unusable Food**

Food banks were also asked a series of questions designed to obtain information on food spoilage and its effect on the EFAS. About 20 percent of food banks reported distributing less than 90 percent of the food they received (table 4.19).

We offer two possible explanations for the inability of some food banks to distribute all their food: (1) these food banks may receive more food than they can use or may find that some of the food spoils before they are able to distribute it, and (2) some of the food received may be old or spoiled from the outset and thus unfit for distribution.

More than three-fourths of food banks reported receiving food that could not be used, but we do not know the quantity of this. About half the food banks use more than 2 paid-staff or 2 volunteer hours per week to dispose of unusable food.

A greater percentage of large food banks report receiving unusable food than of smaller ones. Larger food banks also spend more hours of paid and volunteer time disposing of the food.

### **Types of Food**

Most food banks receive a wide variety of food items, which are then distributed to their clients. At least eight types of foods are received by more than 90 percent of food banks (table 4.20). Although the percentage of banks using baby food and fats and oils was smaller, it was still substantial (82 percent for each of these items). We had planned to present data on the amounts of each food type received during the past year in order to examine those used most often.

However, though many respondents were able to provide this information, we decided not to present it here because it is unlikely to be representative of the food bank population as a whole.

**Table 4.14—Primary sources of food supplies for food banks by size of food bank**

Sources	All	Size of food bank		
		Small	Medium	Large
<i>Percent</i>				
<b>Allocations from food banks and similar nonprofit organizations<sup>1</sup></b>	34.4	47.8	30.9	18.2
<b>Wholesalers or retailers</b>	32.7	20.3	37.8	42.4
Received donation of a salable product	18.0	8.7	21.3	27.3
Salvaged food	10.9	5.1	13.8	13.6
Purchased food at market price	3.8	6.5	2.7	1.5
<b>State or Federal programs</b>	17.2	21.0	16.5	12.1
<b>Direct donations from manufacturers</b>	15.2	5.8	15.4	33.3
<b>Community donations</b>	9.6	10.9	10.1	6.1
<b>Farmers and growers</b>	2.5	0.7	2.7	6.1
Received leftovers from farmers' markets	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Received food from field-gleaning	0.5	0.7	0.5	0.0
Purchased food at market price	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Received a direct donation	2.0	0.0	2.1	6.1
<b>Food rescue programs</b>	0.8	0.7	0.5	1.5
<b>Leftovers from places that serve food</b>	0.3	0.0	0.5	0.0
<b>Other sources</b>	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
<b>Sample size (number)</b>	<b>395</b>	<b>138</b>	<b>188</b>	<b>66</b>

<sup>1</sup>Includes those mentioning America's Second Harvest.

Notes: Totals add up to slightly more than 100 percent because a few respondents could not name a single primary source and gave two or three responses. Size variable is defined based on amounts of food used and staffing. In general, "small" food banks received less than 600 tons of food in the past 12 months; "medium" food banks received 600 to 4,000 tons; and "large" food banks received more than 4,000 tons.

The sample numbers for food bank sizes do not sum to the total sample because some food banks did not provide answers and are not included.

Source: National Emergency Food Assistance System Survey (2000).

**Table 4.15—Primary sources of food supplies for food banks by affiliation**

Sources	All	Affiliation	
		Second Harvest	Independent
<i>Percent</i>			
<b>Allocations from food banks and similar nonprofit organizations<sup>1</sup></b>	34.4	38.2	19.2
<b>Wholesalers or retailers</b>	32.7	32.5	33.3
Received donation of a salable product	18.0	18.3	16.7
Salvaged food	10.9	10.7	11.5
Purchased food at market price	3.8	3.5	5.1
<b>State or Federal programs</b>	17.2	14.8	26.9
<b>Direct donations from manufacturers</b>	15.2	16.4	10.3
<b>Community donations</b>	9.6	7.9	16.7
<b>Farmers and growers</b>	2.5	1.9	5.1
Received leftovers from farmers' markets	0.0	0.0	0.0
Received food from field-gleaning	0.5	0.6	0.0
Purchased food at market price	0.0	0.0	0.0
Received a direct donation	2.0	1.3	5.1
<b>Food rescue programs</b>	0.8	0.6	1.3
<b>Leftovers from places that serve food</b>	0.3	0.3	0.0
<b>Other sources</b>	0.0	0.0	0.0
<b>Sample size (number)</b>	<b>395</b>	<b>317</b>	<b>78</b>

<sup>1</sup>Includes those mentioning America's Second Harvest.

Note: Totals add up to slightly more than 100 percent because a few respondents could not name a single primary source and gave two or three responses.

Source: National Emergency Food Assistance System Survey (2000).

**Table 4.16—Amount of food received by food banks from all sources in the past 12 months by region**

Total pounds of food received (millions)	All	Region			
		West	Midwest	South	Northeast
<i>Percent</i>					
Less than 1	20.8	27.8	18.3	16.5	18.3
1 to 1.99	13.2	11.1	18.3	14.2	8.3
2 to 3.99	15.7	13.5	17.1	15.7	18.3
4 to 5.99	11.4	5.6	15.9	15.7	8.3
6 to 7.99	5.1	2.4	7.3	5.5	6.7
8 to 9.99	7.8	10.3	6.1	7.9	5.0
10 or more	6.3	7.9	7.3	4.7	6.7
Missing data	19.7	22.2	9.8	19.7	28.3
(Mean, million pounds)	(4,040.1)	(4,204.9)	(4,059.2)	(3,931.9)	(3,888.7)
(Median, million pounds)	(2,367.7)	(1,934.5)	(2,928.4)	(2,372.5)	(2,645.7)
<b>Sample size (number)</b>	<b>395</b>	<b>126</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>127</b>	<b>60</b>

Note: The survey was administered between March 2000 and October 2000. The 12-month period was therefore based on when respondents took the survey. For example, if a respondent was surveyed in April 2000, the "past 12 months" refers to the period May 1999 through April 2000.

Source: National Emergency Food Assistance System Survey (2000).

## Food Needs

To gain perspective on the needs of food banks and the agencies they serve, we asked respondents to name the types of foods for which they could use additional quantities. Seventy percent expressed a need for more meat, poultry, or fish of any type (table 4.21). Despite the fact that many food banks receive this type of food through

the USDA commodity program, as well as through other sources, the amount received appears insufficient to meet their needs. After meat, poultry, and fish, the foods most frequently mentioned by food banks as in short supply were dry and canned beans, eggs, nuts, and peanut butter (35 percent); frozen, canned, and dried fruits and vegetables and fruit juices (36 percent); and fresh fruits and vegetables (31 percent).

**Table 4.17—Amount of food received by food banks from all sources in the past 12 months by affiliation**

Total pounds of food received (millions)	All	Affiliation	
		Second Harvest	Independent
<i>Percent</i>			
<b>Allocations from food banks and similar nonprofit organizations<sup>1</sup></b>	34.4	38.2	19.2
Less than 1	20.8	19.6	25.6
1 to 1.99	13.2	13.9	10.3
2 to 3.99	15.7	18.0	6.4
4 to 5.99	11.4	11.7	10.3
6 to 7.99	5.1	6.3	0.0
8 to 9.99	7.8	9.5	1.3
10 or more	6.3	7.3	2.6
Missing data	19.7	13.9	43.6
(Mean, million pounds)	(4,040.1)	(4,303.8)	(2,404.4)
(Median, million pounds)	(2,367.7)	(2,700.0)	(1,054.0)
<b>Sample size (number)</b>	<b>395</b>	<b>317</b>	<b>78</b>

Note: Size variable is defined based on amounts of food used and staffing. In general, "small" food banks received less than 600 tons of food in the past 12 months; "medium" food banks received 600 to 4,000 tons; and "large" food banks received more than 4,000 tons.

The survey was administered between March 2000 and October 2000. The 12-month period was therefore based on when respondents took the survey. For example, if a respondent was surveyed in April 2000, the "past 12 months" refers to the period May 1999 through April 2000.

Source: National Emergency Food Assistance System Survey (2000).

**Table 4.18—Variation in food supply available to food banks by size of food bank**

Supply-related variables	All	Size of food bank		
		Small	Medium	Large
<i>Percent</i>				
<b>Does type and quality of food obtained vary by time of year?</b>				
Yes	84.8	78.3	89.9	84.8
No	14.2	20.3	9.0	15.2
Missing data	1.0	1.4	1.1	0.0
<b>Is this a problem in meeting client needs?<sup>1</sup></b>				
Yes	69.3	60.2	71.0	80.4
No	30.4	38.9	29.0	19.6
Missing data	0.3	0.9	0.0	0.0
<b>Sample size (number)</b>	<b>395</b>	<b>138</b>	<b>188</b>	<b>66</b>

<sup>1</sup>Includes only those food banks that responded that type and quality of food obtained varies by time of year.

Notes: Size variable is defined based on amounts of food used and staffing. In general, "small" food banks received less than 600 tons of food in the past 12 months; "medium" food banks received 600 to 4,000 tons; and "large" food banks received more than 4,000 tons.

The sample numbers for food bank sizes do not sum to the total sample because some food banks did not provide answers and are not included.

Source: National Emergency Food Assistance System Survey (2000).

**Table 4.19—Spoilage of food by size of food bank**

Food-spoilage variables	All	Size of food bank		
		Small	Medium	Large
		<i>Percent</i>		
<b>Percent of food received that is used</b>				
90 to 100	74.4	75.4	75.0	72.7
85 to 89	7.8	3.6	9.6	10.6
Less than 85	12.7	14.5	12.2	10.6
Missing data	5.1	6.5	3.2	6.1
<b>Does food bank receive food that cannot be used, due to spoilage and other problems?</b>				
Yes	78.2	71.0	81.9	83.3
No	21.5	29.0	17.6	16.7
Missing data	0.3	0.0	0.5	0.0
<b>Estimated paid staff hours spent disposing of unusable food, per week<sup>1</sup></b>				
0	19.7	31.6	16.9	5.5
1	12.0	16.3	12.3	3.6
2	11.7	16.3	7.1	16.4
More than 2	48.9	30.6	57.1	60.0
Missing data	7.8	5.1	6.5	14.5
<b>Estimated volunteer hours spent disposing of unusable food, per week<sup>1</sup></b>				
0	25.2	38.8	18.8	20.0
1	7.1	12.2	6.5	0.0
2	8.1	8.2	7.8	7.3
More than 2	51.8	34.7	61.0	58.2
Missing data	7.8	6.1	5.8	14.5
<b>Sample size (number)</b>	<b>395</b>	<b>138</b>	<b>188</b>	<b>66</b>

<sup>1</sup>Includes only those food banks that reported receiving unusable food.

Notes: Size variable is defined based on amounts of food used and staffing. In general, "small" food banks received less than 600 tons of food in the past 12 months; "medium" food banks received 600 to 4,000 tons; and "large" food banks received more than 4,000 tons.

The sample numbers for food bank sizes do not sum to the total sample because some food banks did not provide answers and are not included.

Source: National Emergency Food Assistance System Survey (2000).

**Table 4.20—Types of food received by food banks during the past 12 months**

Food type	Food banks that receive food type
	<i>Percent</i>
Cereal, pasta, and rice <sup>1</sup>	97.2
Frozen, canned, and dried fruits and vegetables and fruit juice	96.7
Desserts	93.7
Snack foods	92.7
Meat, poultry, fish	94.9
Soft drinks, coffee, tea, and other nonjuice beverages	92.2
Bread products	91.6
Dry and canned beans, eggs, nuts, peanut butter	93.4
Fresh fruit and vegetables	89.6
Spices and condiments	88.9
Dairy products	85.6
Baby food, formula, and nutritional supplements or aids	81.8
Fats and oils	82.0
Complete meals, entrees, and prepared foods <sup>2</sup>	53.7
<b>Sample size (number)</b>	<b>395</b>

<sup>1</sup>Includes nonbread grain products, such as barley and noodles.

<sup>2</sup>Includes packaged meals drawing on multiple food groups, such as canned meat and vegetable products or frozen lasagna dinners.

Note: The survey administered between March 2000 and October 2000. The 12-month period was therefore based on when respondents took the survey. For example, if a respondent was surveyed in April 2000, the "past 12 months" refers to the period May 1999 through April 2000.

Source: National Emergency Food Assistance System Survey (2000).



**Table 4.21—Types of foods of which food banks could use additional quantities**

Food shortfalls	Food banks
	<i>Percent</i>
<b>Types of food needed<sup>1</sup></b>	
Meat, poultry, and fish	70.1
Dry and canned beans, eggs, nuts, peanut butter	34.6
Frozen, canned, and dried fruits and vegetables and fruit juices	35.5
Fresh fruits and vegetables	30.8
Dairy products	29.1
Cereals, pasta, and rice <sup>2</sup>	20.3
Complete meals, entrees, and prepared foods <sup>3</sup>	9.9
Baby food, formula, and nutritional supplements or aids	9.3
Fats and oils	5.8
Bread products	1.5
Spices and condiments	1.7
Soft drinks, coffee, tea, and other nonjuice beverages	1.5
Snack foods	1.2
Desserts	0.6
All food types	9.3
<b>Sample size (number)</b>	<b>364</b>

<sup>1</sup>Percentage of food banks needing more food that could use additional quantities of the particular food type listed.

<sup>2</sup>Includes nonbread grain products, such as barley and noodles.

<sup>3</sup>Includes packaged meals drawing on multiple food groups, such as canned meat and vegetable products or frozen lasagna dinners.

Note: Due to an incorrect skip pattern in the survey, some food banks were not asked about their food needs. Hence, the sample size is smaller than the one listed in other tables.

Source: National Emergency Food Assistance System Survey (2000).

## Resources

In order to effectively carry out their mission, food banks must have adequate funding, labor, and other resources. In this section, we discuss the funding sources, staff, and facilities used by food banks.

### Funding

Since most food banks operate like businesses, only a few (2 percent) reported no operating budget (table 4.22). About one-quarter have operating budgets that exceed \$1 million. Some food banks obtain most of their food at no cost but pay for other aspects of their operations. Thus, the percentage that has zero dollars allocated for food purchases (11 percent) is substantially higher than that with no operating budget. Roughly one-third of food banks have food-purchase budgets that are at least \$100,000.

Both the operating budget and the food-purchase budget are correlated with the size of the food bank. About 20 percent of small food banks have operating budgets under \$50,000, while only about 2 percent of medium and large food banks have budgets this low.

Food banks acquire funding to support their operations from a number of sources (table 4.23). The most frequently mentioned is fundraising, engaged in by three-fourths of the banks.<sup>42</sup> Contributions from this source average about one-fifth of the operating budgets of banks that do fundraising. Fees from client agencies are another important source of monetary support, providing funding to about 70 percent of food banks and contributing, on average, one-third of their operating budgets. In general, food banks charge their client agencies a “shared maintenance fee” to help defray the cost of providing “wholesaler” operations. Fees will be discussed in greater detail in a later subsection.

### By Affiliation

Tabulation of funding sources by affiliation suggests that Second Harvest affiliates and independent food

banks rely on different sources for financial support (table 4.24). The sources mentioned most often among Second Harvest affiliates are fundraising (82 percent) and fees from clients and agencies (80 percent). Contributions from these sources to the operating budgets of those who use them average about 19 percent and 34 percent, respectively. The funding source that received the most mention among independent food banks is donations from local individuals or groups (65 percent), which contributes an average of nearly 40 percent to the operating budgets of independents that receive donations.

Independent food banks appear to rely on only a few sources, while Second Harvest affiliates seem to rely on many. For independent food banks, there are three sources that each contribute about one-third of the operating budgets of banks that use them. However, for Second Harvest affiliates, only one source makes such a large contribution.

### By Size of Food Bank

The funding sources used by food banks varied by size of the bank. The sources most commonly mentioned by larger food banks are fundraising and fees from client agencies (table 4.25). Local sources comprise the two sources most frequently reported among small food banks: donations from individuals or groups and fundraising activities.

The extent to which food banks depend on each funding source also appears to vary according to food bank size. For example, six sources are used by at least two-thirds of large food banks, while only one source is used by the same proportion of small ones, suggesting that small food banks obtain monetary support from only a few sources.

### By Region

As with organization size, the combination of funding sources used by food banks varies across regions. For example, roughly 75 percent of food banks in the South and Midwest obtain funding via fees from client agencies, but only 59 percent of food banks in the West receive funding from this source (table 4.26). Food banks in the Northeast are more likely to obtain funds through TEFAP (72 percent) or other government sources (75 percent) than are their counterparts in other regions. More than half of food banks in the West, Midwest, and South, but only one-third of those in the Northeast, receive monetary support through United Way.

<sup>42</sup>In the question that asked about funding sources, individual possible funding sources were read to respondents and they were asked to indicate whether they used each source. Fundraising was read early in the list; “donations from other local individuals or groups” occurred near the end. It is possible there could have been some overlap between the groups in respondents’ minds. But we believe they probably interpreted “fundraising” to be relatively broad-based money-raising activities, while “local individuals or groups,” may have connoted specific negotiations with individual potential donors, particularly possible larger donors.

## Fees and Contributions

Three-fourths of food banks obtain funds by charging their clients various types of fees (table 4.27). As mentioned, most food banks ask their clients to pay a shared-maintenance fee, which is assessed typically as a fee per pound of food received. In fact, 95 percent of food banks that charge a fee use this type; about 14 percent charge membership fees. The median shared-maintenance fee is 14 cents per pound.

One-fourth of food banks suggest or ask for voluntary contributions from their clients. Few client agencies make such contributions, possibly because many are already paying some type of fee.

### By Size of Food Bank

The use of fees and the receipt of voluntary contributions vary based on food bank size. Almost 90 percent of large food banks, but only 60 percent of small ones, charge any type of fee (table 4.27). Regardless of size, almost all of those who request payment from their clients charge a fee per pound. The median fee per pound is the same for small, medium, and large food banks.

An inverse relationship appears to exist between charging fees and requesting voluntary contributions. Small food banks are less likely than large ones to charge a fee; consequently, they are more likely to suggest that their clients make some type of contribution. The percentage of client agencies making such contributions is much higher for small food banks than for larger ones.

### By Affiliation

As noted earlier in this chapter, most affiliates of America's Second Harvest mention fees from client agencies as a funding source. Almost 88 percent of Second Harvest affiliates charge fees, compared with only 28 percent of independent food banks (table 4.28). Among those who charge fees, there is no difference in the fee per pound between the median Second Harvest affiliate and the median independent food bank.

Unlike the comparison between large and small banks in the previous subsection, however, charging fees does not seem to be inversely related to asking for contributions. In fact, although independents are less likely than their Second Harvest affiliates to charge fees, the percentage of independents that request such donations is only slightly higher than that of Second Harvest affiliates.

## Donated and Reduced-Price Goods and Services

In addition to financial contributions, many food banks receive in-kind donations or reduced-price goods and services. Legal and accounting assistance and transport for food appear to be the most commonly received services, mentioned by about two-fifths of the food banks (table 4.29).

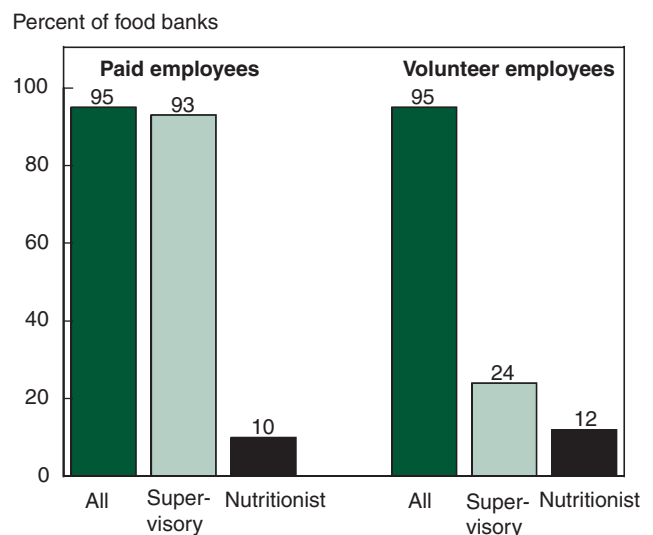
## Staffing

Food banks use a variety of employees. Ninety-five percent have paid staff, and 95 percent have volunteers (table 4.30 and fig. 4.6). In addition, 77 percent of food banks have unpaid staff, such as people performing court-ordered community service work or complying with welfare work requirements. Food banks with paid employees use an average of 411 staff hours per week (or about 10 full-time equivalents (FTEs)). Those with volunteers use about 263 hours of volunteer labor (or seven FTEs).

Different types of employees were used by food banks to perform different functions. Almost all food banks with paid staff used them in supervisory positions. Many (80 percent) also reported hiring paid employees for clerical positions. Volunteers were used most commonly in nonskilled positions such as packaging food or loading trucks. In roughly half the food banks, however, volunteers also performed clerical duties. As with volunteers, unpaid staff was primarily employed to provide unskilled help.

Figure 4.6

### Use of paid and volunteer staff for all staff and selected staff categories



Source: National Emergency Food Assistance System Survey (2000).

In general, food banks affiliated with America's Second Harvest have more employees of all types (paid, volunteer, unpaid) than do independent food banks (table 4.31). This finding may be attributed to the fact that Second Harvest affiliates are generally larger than independents and thus require more labor.

### Physical Capacity

It is important to consider whether food banks have sufficient resources to meet the needs of the client agencies that rely on their services. More than half the food banks own the building in which they operate (table 4.32). Almost all food banks have refrigerators and freezers onsite, and most own the vehicles in which they transport food.

### By Size of Food Bank

As expected, facilities and equipment available to food banks of different sizes vary considerably. Small food banks, having fewer resources, lack access to the kinds of facilities and equipment available to larger ones. For example, small food banks are much less likely than larger organizations to own the building in which they operate (table 4.32). Similarly, although most small

food banks have some type of refrigeration, the percentage of small food banks that do not far exceeds that of larger banks. Almost all large food banks have access to refrigerated vehicles to transport prepared or perishable foods, whereas only about one-third of small food banks do.

### By Region

In general, food banks in the different regions of the country have similar facilities and equipment. They do exhibit some variation, however. Only about one-third of food banks in the West own the building in which they operate, compared with roughly two-thirds of those in the Midwest, South, and Northeast (table 4.33). Similarly, the square footage of the typical (median) food bank in the West is considerably smaller than that of the median food bank in each of the other regions. Food banks in the Northeast are less likely than those in the West and Midwest to possess or have access to any food storage facilities. Compared with food banks in other regions, those in the West are more likely to have access to facilities for preserving or processing perishable foods, but are less likely to have access to refrigerated vehicles to transport these foods.

**Table 4.22—Operating budgets of food banks by size of food bank**

Dollars amounts	All	Size of food bank		
		Small	Medium	Large
		<i>Percent</i>		
<b>Total operating budget for past 12 months</b>				
0	2.3	4.3	1.1	1.5
1 to 49,000	5.6	15.2	0.5	0.0
50,000 to 99,999	7.1	16.7	2.7	0.0
100,000 to 249,000	17.2	29.0	14.9	0.0
250,000 to 499,999	18.7	13.0	29.3	1.5
500,000 to 999,999	15.2	3.6	22.3	19.7
1,000,000 to 2,499,999	16.7	2.9	17.6	43.9
2,500,000 or more	8.6	1.4	6.4	30.3
Missing data	8.6	13.8	5.3	3.0
<b>Budget for purchasing food for past 12 months</b>				
0	10.9	10.1	12.2	9.1
1 to 9,999	5.1	10.1	3.2	0.0
10,000 to 24,999	13.2	21.0	11.2	3.0
25,000 to 49,999	15.7	19.6	16.0	7.6
50,000 to 99,999	15.4	11.6	20.2	10.6
100,000 to 199,999	11.9	9.4	10.6	21.2
200,000 to 499,999	9.6	4.3	12.8	12.1
500,000 or more	9.6	1.4	8.5	30.3
Missing data	8.6	12.3	5.3	6.1
<b>Sample size (number)</b>	<b>395</b>	<b>138</b>	<b>188</b>	<b>66</b>

Notes: The survey administered between March 2000 and October 2000. The 12-month period was therefore based on when respondents took the survey. For example, if a respondent was surveyed in April 2000, the "past 12 months" refers to the period May 1999 through April 2000.

The sample numbers for food bank sizes do not sum to the total sample because some food banks did not provide answers and are not included.

Source: National Emergency Food Assistance System Survey (2000).

**Table 4.23—Funding sources for food banks**

Sources of funding	Food banks that use source	Operating budget that source contributes (mean %) <sup>1,2</sup>
		Percent
<b>Government sources</b>		
TEFAP administrative funds	64.3	11.8
FEMA funds	47.6	5.4
Other Government sources	49.9	19.4
<b>Nongovernment sources</b>		
Fundraising activities	75.4	18.6
Donations from local individuals or groups	71.1	20.7
Fees from client agencies	69.4	33.8
Grants from foundations	60.0	10.6
United Way	49.9	10.6
National organizations	8.4	5.6
Other sources	37.2	16.8
Missing data	3.3	NA
<b>Sample size (number)</b>	<b>395</b>	<b>NA</b>

<sup>1</sup>When source is used. <sup>2</sup>Many of the food banks that reported using a particular food source were unable to estimate its contribution to the operating budget. Thus, for most of the sources of funding, the percentage they contribute to the operating budget is calculated based on 87 to 95 percent of the number of food banks using the funding

FEMA = Federal Emergency Management Agency. TEFAP = The Emergency Food Assistance Program. NA = Not applicable.

Note: Total exceeds 100 percent because many respondent food banks reported having multiple funding sources.

Source: National Emergency Food Assistance System Survey (2000).

**Table 4.24—Funding sources for food banks by affiliation**

Sources of funding	Affiliation					
	All		Second Harvest		Independent	
	Food banks using source	Operating budget from source (mean %) <sup>1,2</sup>	Food banks using source	Operating budget from source (mean %) <sup>1,2</sup>	Food banks using source	Operating budget from source (mean %) <sup>1,2</sup>
<i>Percent</i>						
<b>Government sources</b>						
TEFAP administrative funds	64.3	11.8	69.7	11.1	42.3	17.3
FEMA funds	47.6	5.4	51.7	5.0	30.8	6.3
Other Government sources	49.9	19.4	51.4	16.5	43.6	33.2
<b>Nongovernment sources</b>						
Fundraising activities	75.4	18.6	82.0	18.7	48.7	18.6
Donations from local individuals or groups	71.1	20.7	72.6	16.5	65.4	38.8
Fees from clients and agencies	69.4	33.8	79.8	33.9	26.9	32.9
Grants from foundations	60.0	10.6	63.4	10.7	46.2	10.2
United Way	49.9	10.6	55.5	10.3	26.9	13.4
National organizations	8.4	5.6	9.1	5.2	5.1	10.3
Other sources	37.2	16.8	39.4	14.3	28.2	31.0
Missing data	3.3	NA	2.5	NA	6.4	NA
<b>Sample size (number)</b>	<b>395</b>	<b>NA</b>	<b>317</b>	<b>NA</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>NA</b>

<sup>1</sup>When source is used. <sup>2</sup>Many of the food banks that reported using a particular food source were unable to estimate its contribution to the operating budget. Thus, for most of the sources of funding, the percentage they contribute to the operating budget is calculated based on less than 100 percent of the number of food banks using the funding source.

FEMA = Federal Emergency Management Agency. TEFAP = The Emergency Food Assistance Program. NA = Not applicable..

Note: Total exceeds 100 percent because many food banks reported having multiple funding sources.

Source: National Emergency Food Assistance System Survey (2000).

**Table 4.25—Funding sources for food banks by size of food bank**

Sources of funding	All	Size of food bank		
		Small	Medium	Large
		<i>Percent</i>		
<b>Government sources</b>				
TEFAP administrative funds	64.3	50.7	72.9	69.7
FEMA funds	47.6	44.9	46.8	56.1
Other Government sources	49.9	42.8	55.3	51.5
<b>Nongovernment sources</b>				
Fundraising activities	75.4	55.8	83.0	93.9
Donations from local individuals or groups	71.1	65.9	75.0	71.2
Fees from clients and agencies	69.4	49.6	78.2	87.9
Grants from foundations	60.0	41.3	68.6	72.7
United Way	49.9	35.5	54.3	69.7
National organizations	8.4	5.8	10.6	0.6
Other sources	37.2	22.5	44.1	50.0
Missing data	3.3	5.1	2.1	3.0
<b>Sample size (number)</b>	<b>395</b>	<b>138</b>	<b>188</b>	<b>66</b>

FEMA = Federal Emergency Management Agency. TEFAP = The Emergency Food Assistance Program.

Notes: Total exceeds 100 percent because many food banks reported having multiple funding sources.

The sample numbers for food bank sizes do not sum to the total sample because some food banks did not provide answers and are not included.

Source: National Emergency Food Assistance System Survey (2000).

**Table 4.26—Funding sources for food banks by region**

Sources of funding	All	Region			
		West	Midwest	South	Northeast
		<i>Percent</i>			
<b>Government sources</b>					
TEFAP administrative funds	64.3	65.1	62.2	61.4	71.7
FEMA funds	47.6	60.3	42.7	41.7	40.0
Other Government sources	49.9	57.9	45.1	33.1	75.0
<b>Nongovernment sources</b>					
Fundraising activities	75.4	75.4	80.5	77.2	65.0
Donations from local individuals or groups	71.1	70.6	72.0	74.8	63.3
Fees from clients and agencies	69.4	58.7	76.8	78.7	61.7
Grants from foundations	60.0	57.9	59.8	61.4	61.7
United Way	49.9	51.6	51.2	55.1	33.3
National organizations	8.4	4.8	14.6	7.9	8.3
Other sources	37.2	39.7	41.5	33.9	33.3
Missing data	3.3	4.8	1.2	3.1	3.3
<b>Sample size (number)</b>	<b>395</b>	<b>126</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>127</b>	<b>60</b>

FEMA = Federal Emergency Management Agency. TEFAP = The Emergency Food Assistance Program.

Note: Total exceeds 100 percent because many food banks reported having multiple funding sources.

Source: National Emergency Food Assistance System Survey (2000).

**Table 4.27—Fees and contributions received from client agencies of food banks by size of food bank**

Client characteristics	All	Size of food bank		
		Small	Medium	Large
		<i>Percent</i>		
<b>Food banks that charge a fee</b>	75.9	60.1	82.4	89.4
<b>Type of fee charged<sup>1</sup></b>				
Membership fee	13.7	12.0	16.1	10.2
Fee per pound	95.3	92.8	95.5	98.3
Other	3.0	2.4	3.2	3.4
Missing data	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
<b>Median fee per pound (in dollars)<sup>2</sup></b>	0.14	0.14	0.14	0.14
<b>Percent of client agencies that pay fees to the food bank<sup>2</sup></b>				
1 to 25	2.1	2.6	1.4	3.4
26 to 50	3.1	2.6	2.0	6.9
51 to 75	4.5	5.2	3.4	6.9
76 to 100	88.8	88.3	91.2	82.8
Missing data	1.4	1.3	2.0	0.0
<b>Food banks that request voluntary contributions</b>	25.1	29.7	24.5	18.2
<b>Percent of client agencies that make voluntary contributions to the food bank<sup>3</sup></b>				
1 to 25	70.2	55.1	76.3	81.3
26 to 50	5.5	6.1	4.1	6.3
51 to 75	2.2	4.1	1.0	3.1
76 to 100	5.0	12.2	2.1	3.1
Missing data	17.1	22.4	16.5	6.3
<b>Sample size (number)</b>	<b>395</b>	<b>138</b>	<b>188</b>	<b>66</b>

<sup>1</sup>For those food banks that charge fees. <sup>2</sup>Based on responses of those food banks that charge a fee per pound. <sup>3</sup>For those food banks that request a voluntary contribution. Notes: The sample numbers for food bank sizes do not sum to the total sample because some food banks did not provide answers and are not included. Source: National Emergency Food Assistance System Survey (2000).

**Table 4.28—Fees and contributions received from client agencies of food banks by affiliation**

Type of fee/contribution	All	Affiliation	
		Second Harvest	Independent
		<i>Percent</i>	
<b>Food banks that charge a fee</b>	75.9	87.7	28.2
<b>Type of fee charged<sup>1</sup></b>			
Membership fee	13.7	13.3	18.2
Fee per pound	95.3	96.4	81.8
Other	3.0	2.9	4.5
Missing data	0.0	0.0	0.0
<b>Median fee per pound (in dollars)<sup>2</sup></b>	0.14	0.14	0.14
<b>Percent of client agencies that pay fees to the food bank<sup>2</sup></b>			
1 to 25	2.1	1.9	5.6
26 to 50	3.1	3.0	5.6
51 to 75	4.5	4.9	0.0
76 to 100	88.8	88.8	88.9
Missing data	1.4	1.5	0.0
<b>Food banks that request voluntary contributions</b>	25.1	24.3	28.2
<b>Percent of client agencies that make voluntary contributions to the food bank<sup>3</sup></b>			
1 to 25	70.2	72.7	58.1
26 to 50	5.5	5.3	6.5
51 to 75	2.2	2.7	0.0
76 to 100	5.0	4.7	6.5
Missing data	17.1	14.7	29.0
<b>Sample size (number)</b>	<b>395</b>	<b>317</b>	<b>78</b>

<sup>1</sup>For those food banks that charge fees. <sup>2</sup>Based on responses of those food banks that charge a fee per pound. <sup>3</sup>For those food banks that request a voluntary contribution. Source: National Emergency Food Assistance System Survey (2000).

**Table 4.29—Donated or reduced-price goods and services received by food banks by size of food bank**

Goods and services	All	Size of food bank		
		Small	Medium	Large
<i>Percent</i>				
<b>Facilities</b>				
Transportation for food	43.3	39.9	46.3	43.9
Building maintenance	23.0	26.8	22.3	16.7
Facilities, including rent or other costs related to the				
Equipment maintenance, including equipment				
building or space in building	21.3	28.3	16.0	22.7
Utilities, including heating and air-conditioning	8.1	14.5	3.2	9.1
<b>Other</b>				
Legal and accounting services	42.5	33.3	44.7	56.1
Computer equipment or training	35.7	27.5	38.3	47.0
Materials for packaging food	32.2	30.4	30.3	40.9
Equipment maintenance, including equipment				
maintenance contracts	25.3	25.4	28.2	16.7
Other	12.9	8.0	14.4	18.2
Missing data	1.8	2.2	1.1	1.5
<b>Sample size (number)</b>	<b>395</b>	<b>138</b>	<b>188</b>	<b>66</b>

Note: Total exceeds 100 percent because many food banks reported receiving multiple donated or reduced-priced goods and services.

Source: National Emergency Food Assistance System Survey (2000).

**Table 4.30—Type of staff and number of staff hours used by food banks**

Staff category	Food banks having staff type <sup>1</sup>	Average of staff hours used per week by food banks with staff type
	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Hours</i>
<b>Paid employees</b>		
Supervisory personnel	94.9	410.5
Clerical staff	92.9	133.7
Nonskilled help	79.7	86.8
Nutritionists	57.0	180.3
Skilled kitchen help	9.6	38.5
Other help for program	6.6	48.2
	44.3	211.7
<b>Volunteer employees</b>		
Nonskilled help	95.2	262.5
Clerical staff	76.2	186.5
Supervisory personnel	44.3	45.8
Nutritionists	23.8	52.6
Skilled kitchen help	12.4	7.0
Other help for program	7.1	42.9
	38.2	189.4
<b>Unpaid employees<sup>2</sup></b>		
Nonskilled help	77.0	106.1
Clerical staff	63.0	93.6
Supervisory personnel	9.9	28.9
Skilled kitchen help	1.5	54.5
Nutritionists	0.5	14.0
Other help for program	0.0	0.0
	14.4	108.3
<b>All employees</b>		
Supervisory personnel	99.7	691.0
Nonskilled help	97.7	139.4
Clerical staff	88.9	353.2
Nutritionists	87.6	104.4
Skilled kitchen help	21.5	21.2
Other help for program	11.9	51.2
	61.3	295.2
<b>Sample size (number)</b>	<b>395</b>	<b>NA</b>

<sup>1</sup>The base for all percentages is all food banks. <sup>2</sup>Includes workers performing court-ordered community service or welfare-related work. NA = Not applicable.

Note: Many of the food banks that reported having particular types of staff were unable to estimate the number of hours worked per week by staff type. Thus, the average number of full-time equivalent employees is calculated based on less than 100 percent of the number of food banks that reported having the staff type.

Source: National Emergency Food Assistance System Survey (2000).



**Table 4.31—Average staff hours used by food banks with staff type, by affiliation**

Staff category	All	Affiliation	
		Second Harvest	Independent
		<i>Hours</i>	
<b>Paid employees</b>	<b>410.5</b>	<b>454.1</b>	<b>215.7</b>
Supervisory personnel	133.7	145.0	82.8
Nutritionists	38.5	41.5	20.6
Clerical staff	86.8	93.1	48.0
Skilled kitchen help	48.2	50.4	39.2
Nonskilled help	180.3	190.9	113.1
Other help for program	211.7	216.1	179.0
<b>Volunteer employees</b>	<b>262.5</b>	<b>276.7</b>	<b>199.2</b>
Supervisory personnel	52.6	52.8	52.1
Nutritionists	7.0	6.6	10.0
Clerical staff	45.8	47.6	37.0
Skilled kitchen help	42.9	47.0	21.0
Nonskilled help	186.5	190.3	169.2
Other help for program	189.4	203.2	99.3
<b>Unpaid employees<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>106.1</b>	<b>113.0</b>	<b>70.0</b>
Supervisory personnel	54.5	70.0	8.0
Nutritionists			
Clerical staff	28.9	31.2	14.2
Skilled kitchen help	14.0	20.0	8.0
Nonskilled help	93.6	97.9	69.2
Other help for program	108.3	116.8	63.4
<b>All employees</b>	<b>691.0</b>	<b>766.0</b>	<b>388.2</b>
Supervisory personnel	139.4	151.9	87.4
Nutritionists	21.2	22.0	15.3
Clerical staff	104.4	114.3	55.6
Skilled kitchen help	51.2	56.0	32.0
Nonskilled help	353.2	374.7	253.1
Other help for program	295.2	316.0	174.5
<b>Sample size (number)</b>	<b>395</b>	<b>317</b>	<b>78</b>

<sup>1</sup>Includes workers performing court-ordered community service or welfare-related work.

Note: Many of the food banks that reported having particular types of staff were unable to estimate the number of hours worked per week by staff type. Thus, the average number of full-time equivalent employees is calculated based on less than 100 percent of the number of food banks that reported having the staff type.

Source: National Emergency Food Assistance System Survey (2000).

**Table 4.32—Physical capacity and facilities and equipment used by food banks by size of food bank**

Capacity/equipment	All	Size of food bank		
		Small	Medium	Large
		<i>Percent</i>		
<b>Square footage at site</b>				
Less than 1,000	3.8	10.9	0.0	0.0
1,000 to 9,999	21.8	42.0	14.4	0.0
10,000 to 19,999	23.8	19.6	31.4	12.1
20,000 to 29,999	14.2	2.9	22.9	13.6
30,000 to 39,999	9.6	1.4	11.7	21.2
40,000 to 59,999	8.1	2.2	8.0	19.7
60,000 to 99,999	5.6	1.4	3.2	19.7
100,000 or more	2.5	0.0	2.7	7.6
Missing data	10.6	19.6	5.9	6.1
(Mean, square feet)	(27,933.7)	(9,328.9)	(26,645.6)	(64,045.3)
(Median, square feet)	(17,000.0)	(6,000.0)	(20,000.0)	(38,739.0)
<b>Food bank owns building</b>	55.4	38.4	61.7	72.7
<b>Refrigeration capacity</b>				
Have home refrigerator onsite	11.9	21.0	7.4	4.5
Have walk-in refrigerator onsite	76.5	66.7	84.0	75.8
Have other type of refrigerator onsite	17.5	12.3	16.5	30.3
No refrigeration capacity onsite	5.8	14.5	1.1	1.5
<b>Freezer capacity</b>				
Have home freezer onsite	13.4	13.0	5.9	4.5
Have walk-in freezer onsite	78.7	72.5	83.0	78.8
Have other type of freezer onsite	17.5	28.3	18.1	24.2
No freezer capacity onsite	2.8	6.5	1.1	1.5
<b>Storage</b>				
Have separate warehouse for food storage	25.8	21.7	25.5	36.4
Have other offsite storage	24.1	14.5	27.7	34.8
<b>Food preparation equipment</b>				
Own onsite food preparation equipment	12.4	9.4	13.8	13.6
Have onsite food preparation equipment but do not own it	2.0	3.6	1.6	0.0
Have access to equipment to prepare hot meals or components of meals	12.2	13.0	12.8	9.1
Do not have access to equipment to prepare hot meals or components of meals	72.9	73.9	70.7	77.3
<b>Preservation or processing facilities</b>				
Have access to facilities to preserve or process perishable foods	13.9	10.9	16.5	13.6
Have access to refrigerated vehicles to transport prepared or perishable foods	66.3	34.1	78.2	98.5
<b>Repackaging equipment or facilities</b>				
Have access to equipment or facilities to repackage foods, such as rice or dry beans	48.9	38.4	51.6	60.6
<b>Transportation for delivery or pickup of food</b>				
Own vehicles	86.3	70.3	93.1	100.0
Have vehicles but do not own them	9.6	21.0	4.8	0.0
Do not have vehicles	3.3	8.0	1.1	0.0
<b>Sample size (number)</b>	<b>395</b>	<b>138</b>	<b>188</b>	<b>66</b>

Note: Size variable is defined based on amounts of food used and staffing. In general, "small" food banks received less than 600 tons of food in the past 12 months; "medium" food banks received 600 to 4,000 tons; and "large" food banks received more than 4,000 tons.

Source: National Emergency Food Assistance System Survey (2000).

**Table 4.33—Physical capacity and facilities and equipment used by food banks, by region**

Capacity/equipment	All	Region			
		West	Midwest	South	Northeast
			<i>Percent</i>		
<b>Square footage at site</b>					
Less than 1,000	3.8	4.8	0.0	4.7	5.0
1,000 to 9,999	21.8	30.2	22.0	15.7	16.7
10,000 to 19,999	23.8	19.0	23.2	29.1	23.3
20,000 to 29,999	14.2	13.5	18.3	13.4	11.7
30,000 to 39,999	9.6	7.9	4.9	15.0	8.3
40,000 to 59,999	8.1	4.8	8.5	9.4	11.7
60,000 to 99,999	5.6	3.2	8.5	5.5	6.7
100,000 or more	2.5	2.4	3.7	1.6	3.3
Missing data	10.6	14.3	11.0	5.5	13.3
(Mean, square feet)	(27,933.7)	(23,725.6)	(28,259.8)	(30,215.4)	(30,950.3)
(Median, square feet)	(17,000.0)	(10,250.0)	(18,000.0)	(19,000.0)	(18,500.0)
<b>Food bank owns building</b>	55.4	34.1	64.6	66.1	65.0
<b>Refrigeration capacity</b>					
Have home refrigerator onsite	11.9	18.3	8.5	9.4	11.7
Have walk-in refrigerator onsite	76.5	77.8	82.9	77.2	63.3
Have other type of refrigerator onsite	17.5	19.1	19.5	15.7	16.7
No refrigeration capacity onsite	5.8	4.0	1.2	6.3	15.0
<b>Freezer capacity</b>					
Have home freezer onsite	13.4	18.3	9.8	11.0	13.3
Have walk-in freezer onsite	78.7	77.8	81.7	79.5	75.0
Have other type of freezer onsite	17.5	16.7	17.1	19.7	15.0
No freezer capacity onsite	2.8	1.6	1.2	3.1	6.7
<b>Storage</b>					
Have separate warehouse for food storage	25.8	29.4	34.1	17.3	25.0
Have other offsite storage	24.1	29.4	25.6	23.6	11.7
<b>Food preparation equipment</b>					
Own onsite food preparation equipment	12.4	15.1	7.3	11.8	15.0
Have onsite food preparation equipment but do not own it	2.0	3.2	0.0	1.6	3.3
Have access to equipment to prepare hot meals or components of meals	12.2	11.1	12.2	12.6	13.3
Do not have access to equipment to prepare hot meals or components of meals	72.9	70.6	79.3	74.0	66.7
<b>Preservation or processing facilities</b>					
Have access to facilities to preserve or process perishable foods	13.9	23.0	13.4	10.2	3.3
Have access to refrigerated vehicles to transport prepared or perishable foods	66.3	57.1	73.2	74.8	58.3
<b>Repackaging equipment or facilities</b>					
Have access to equipment or facilities to repackage foods, such as rice or dry beans	48.9	57.9	54.9	43.3	33.3
<b>Transportation for delivery or pickup of food</b>					
Own vehicles	86.3	87.3	86.6	90.6	75.0
Have vehicles but do not own them	9.6	11.9	7.3	6.3	16.7
Do not have vehicles	3.3	0.8	4.9	3.1	6.7
<b>Sample size</b>	<b>395</b>	<b>126</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>127</b>	<b>60</b>

Source: National Emergency Food Assistance System Survey (2000).

# Food Rescue Organizations

Food rescue organizations are similar to food banks in that they operate as “wholesalers,” providing food to direct service providers such as emergency kitchens and pantries. However, where food banks handle primarily nonperishable food, food rescue organizations specialize in perishable food, including gleanings from farmers’ fields and leftovers from food service operations.

At the time the data collection began, most of the larger food rescue organizations were members of Foodchain, then the principal national organization of groups involved with food rescue. Foodchain has since combined with Second Harvest to form a single, renamed organization: America’s Second Harvest.

When the sampling for the current study was undertaken, most of the food rescue organizations, other than those associated with Foodchain,<sup>43</sup> were relatively small and functioned as informal groups of people, making it difficult to identify and define all the groups for the purpose of sampling. In light of this, it was decided to limit the sample frame of food rescue organizations to (1) Foodchain members; (2) members of Wholesalers to the Hungry—a second, smaller, organization of food rescue groups; and (3) a small number of other food rescue groups identified by the USDA Economic Research Service (ERS). In all, 91 food rescue organizations were identified in this way. We believe that this represents essentially all the large food rescue organizations, as well as some of the smaller ones. We attempted interviews with all the organizations and completed 88 of them, for a response rate of 97 percent.

## Basic Characteristics

Like traditional food banks, most food rescue organizations (76 percent) are private, nonreligious, nonprofit groups (table 5.1 and fig. 5.1). Reported affiliations included United Way (36 percent), Salvation Army (30 percent), and Catholic Charities (22 percent). In addition,

<sup>43</sup>The former Foodchain organization had more than 100 member agencies. However, some were corporate members not directly active in food recovery, while others were food banks that were engaged principally in food-banking activities and were included in the food bank sample for the study.

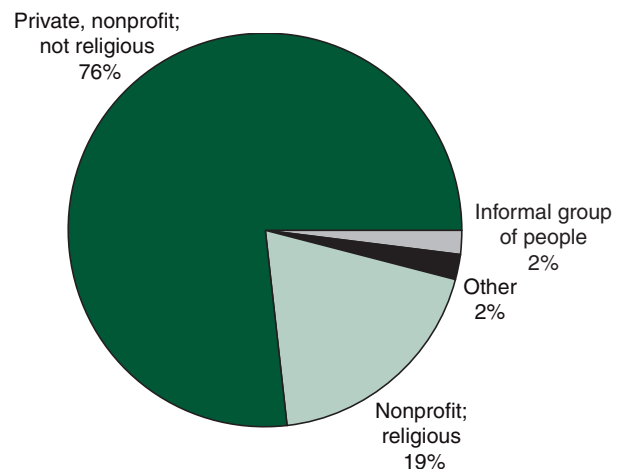
tion, even before the merger of Foodchain and Second Harvest, it was not unusual for a food rescue organization to be a member of both organizations.

About 60 percent of the food rescue organizations had been operating longer than 5 years at the time of the survey. A relatively small number reported that they were co-located with a food pantry (15 percent) or a food bank (14 percent).

Perhaps reflecting their focus on perishable food, where time is often of the essence for successful distribution, roughly one-fourth of the food rescue organizations indicated that they distributed food 7 days per week, and another 55 percent reported doing so 5 or 6 days per week (in contrast, only 2 percent of food banks said that they were open 7 days). The majority of food rescue organizations reported being open at least 6 hours on days they were in operation. Although a number of food rescue organizations offer nonfood services to their clients, they are not as likely as food banks to do so. Almost 60 percent of food rescue organizations provide training in food safety; roughly one-quarter reported providing technical assistance to their clients (table 5.2). As with food banks, only a handful mentioned using other organizations to provide nonfood services onsite.

Figure 5.1

### Types of organizations operating food rescue organizations



Source: National Emergency Food Assistance System Survey (2000).

**Table 5.1—Selected operating characteristics of food rescue organizations**

Characteristic	Have the characteristic <i>Percent</i>
<b>Type of organization</b>	
Nonprofit, associated with religious group	19.3
Nonreligious private nonprofit	76.1
Informal group of people	2.3
Governmental	0.0
Other	2.3
<b>Organizational affiliations<sup>1</sup></b>	
United Way	36.4
Salvation Army	29.5
Catholic Charities	21.6
Other nonprofit organization	21.6
Red Cross	14.8
None	22.7
<b>Length of time that surveyed location has been operating</b>	
Less than 1 year	5.7
1 to 3 years	20.5
4 to 5 years	13.6
6 years or longer	
6 to 10 years	39.8
11 to 15 years	10.2
16 to 20 years	8.0
21 to 25 years	0.0
Longer than 25 years	0.0
Not specified	2.3
Missing data	0.0
<b>Programs with which food rescue is co-located<sup>2</sup></b>	
Food pantry	14.8
Food bank	13.6
Emergency kitchen	1.1
Emergency shelter	0.0
<b>Frequency of food distribution</b>	
7 days per week	26.1
5 or 6 days per week	54.5
3 or 4 days per week	9.1
1 or 2 days per week	9.1
2 or 3 days per month	0.0
Once a month	0.0
Missing data	1.1
<b>Operating hours per day</b>	
As many as 2	6.8
3 or 4	14.8
5 or 6	18.2
7 or 8	40.9
More than 8	18.2
Missing data	1.1
<b>Sample size (number)</b>	<b>88</b>

<sup>1</sup>Categories sum to more than 100 percent because some food rescue organizations provided more than one response.

<sup>2</sup>Categories do not sum to 100 percent because many food rescue organizations are not co-located with another provider.

Source: National Emergency Food Assistance System Survey (2000).

**Table 5.2—Nonfood services offered by food rescue organizations**

Service	Food rescue organizations
	<i>Percent</i>
<b>Nonfood services offered</b>	
Provide training in food safety	59.1
Provide technical assistance	26.1
Provide employment training for agency staff	15.9
Provide training in fundraising	8.0
Other services provided	22.7
Missing data	1.1
<b>Number of nonfood services offered</b>	
0	28.4
1	30.7
2	25.0
3	10.2
More than 3	4.5
Missing	1.1
<b>Does any other organization provide nonfood services at the site?</b>	
Yes	5.7
No	94.3
Missing data	0.0
<b>Sample size (number)</b>	<b>88</b>

Source: National Emergency Food Assistance System Survey (2000).

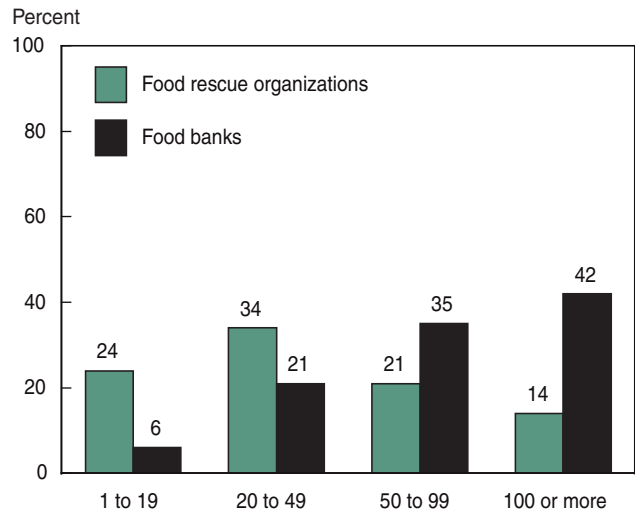
## Food Distribution Characteristics

Most food rescue organizations tend to serve fairly small numbers of direct providers, typically, about 10 pantries and 5 kitchens (table 5.3). (The corresponding medians for food banks are 67 pantries and 7 kitchens.) Interestingly, the ratio of pantries to kitchens is five times higher for food banks than for food rescue organizations. This may reflect the fact that kitchens are more likely than pantries to use the types of perishable food in which food rescue organizations specialize.

Relative to food banks, food rescue organizations tend to serve small areas. Almost 41 percent serve a single county, and another 31 percent serve two to four counties (table 5.4 and fig. 5.2). Similarly, the median food rescue organization is 34 miles from its farthest client agency, less than half the distance between the median food bank and its farthest client.

Figure 5.2

### Distance to farthest client agency for food banks and food rescue organizations in miles



Note: Percentages may not add to 100 because of missing data.

Source: National Emergency Food Assistance System Survey 2000.

**Table 5.3—Selected food distribution characteristics of food rescue organizations**

Distribution characteristics	Food rescue organizations Percent
<b>Nonfood services offered</b>	
Provide training in food safety	59.1
<b>Types of agencies served<sup>1</sup></b>	
Kitchens	64.8
Shelters	64.8
Pantries	59.1
Food banks	26.1
Other agencies	54.5
Missing data	12.5
<b>Number of pantries served by food rescue organizations that serve pantries (n = 65)</b>	
1 to 25	60.0
26 to 50	6.2
51 to 75	6.2
76 to 100	4.6
More than 100	3.1
Missing data	20.0
(Mean)	(24.5)
(Median)	(10.0)
<b>Number of kitchens served by food rescue organizations that serve kitchens (n = 69)</b>	
1 to 5	43.5
6 to 10	14.5
11 to 25	15.9
26 to 50	4.3
51 to 100	2.9
More than 100	1.4
Missing data	17.4
(Mean)	(13.6)
(Median)	(5.0)
<b>Number of food banks served by food rescue organizations that serve food banks (n = 37)</b>	
1 or 2	37.8
3 or 4	8.1
5 or 6	2.7
More than 6	13.5
Missing data	37.8
(Mean)	(3.8)
(Median)	(2.0)
<b>Number of shelters served by food rescue organizations that serve shelters (n = 69)</b>	
1 to 5	27.5
6 to 10	23.2
11 to 15	8.7
16 to 20	8.7
More than 20	14.4
Missing data	17.4
(Mean)	(14.3)
(Median)	(9.0)
<b>Number of other agencies served by food rescue organizations that serve other agencies (n = 60)</b>	
1 to 10	33.3
11 to 25	18.3
26 to 50	11.7
More than 50	16.7
Missing data	20.0
(Mean)	(46.0)
(Median)	(17.0)
<b>Sample size (number)</b>	<b>88</b>

<sup>1</sup>Categories sum to more than 100 percent because some food rescue organizations provided more than one response.  
Source: National Emergency Food Assistance System Survey (2000).



**Table 5.4—Service area characteristics of food rescue organizations**

Size/distance	Food rescue organizations
	<i>Percent</i>
<b>Number of counties in service area</b>	
1	40.9
2 to 4	30.7
5 to 7	6.8
8 to 10	8.0
11 to 19	3.4
20 to 29	1.1
30 to 49	2.3
50 or more	4.5
Missing data	2.3
Mean <sup>1</sup>	7.7
Median <sup>1</sup>	3.0
<b>Miles from farthest agency served</b>	
1 to 9	6.8
10 to 19	17.0
20 to 29	17.0
30 to 49	17.0
50 to 74	14.8
75 to 99	5.7
100 to 199	8.0
200 or more	5.7
Missing data	8.0
Mean <sup>1</sup>	56.2
Median <sup>1</sup>	34.0
<b>Sample size (number)</b>	<b>88</b>

<sup>1</sup>Includes only those cases that provided a nonzero response.

Source: National Emergency Food Assistance System Survey (2000), weighted tabulations.

## Food Distribution Policies

About two-thirds of food rescue organizations limit the types of agencies that can obtain food from them. The most common limitation is the client organization's nonprofit status, mentioned by about half the respondents.

Roughly 20 percent of food rescue organizations had policies limiting the amount of food agencies could obtain (table 5.5). These limits included restrictions

linking food distribution to the number of people served by client agencies, as well as restrictions on the amount an agency can obtain in one visit or shipment and on the number of visits or shipments. The percentage of food rescue organizations with policies that limit the amount of food is lower than that of food banks. This may reflect the need of a food rescue organization to distribute its perishable goods quickly. Timeliness is less of an issue for food banks, which mainly distribute nonperishable supplies.

**Table 5.5—Policies used by food rescue organizations to limit agencies that can receive food and the amount they can receive**

Policies	Food rescue organizations Percent
<b>Have policies limiting which agencies can receive food</b>	67.0
<b>Policies used to restrict which agencies can receive food<sup>1</sup></b>	
Must be 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization	61.0
Must be certified or complete an approval process	27.1
Must serve low-income households	15.3
Must have appropriate storage facilities	11.9
Must be located in service area or in specific ZIP Code(s)	5.1
Must be affiliated with church or other agency	8.5
Must serve households with children	3.4
Must provide own transportation	1.7
Must be referred by church or other agency	0.0
Must be able to pay fees	0.0
Must meet food safety and handling guidelines	8.5
Must not sell food	8.5
Agency cannot place restrictions on clients seeking food	1.7
Must sign a contract or agreement	3.4
Must be a food bank	1.7
Other	11.9
<b>Have policies limiting the amount of food an agency can obtain</b>	18.2
<b>Methods used to restrict the amount of food an agency can obtain<sup>2</sup></b>	
Link amount provided to number of recipients agency serves	50.0
Set limits on amount provided per visit or shipment	25.0
Restrict number of visits or shipments	18.8
Link amount provided to storage capacity	12.5
Link amount provided to urgency of agency recipients	0.0
Link amount provided to amount previously provided	0.0
Restrict on a case by case basis	6.3
Other	12.5
<b>Sample size (number)</b>	<b>88</b>

<sup>1</sup>Includes only food rescue organizations that have policies restricting which agencies can receive food (n = 58).

<sup>2</sup>Includes only food rescue organizations that have policies limiting the amount of food an agency can obtain (n = 17).

Source: National Emergency Food Assistance System Survey (2000).

## Sources of Food Supplies

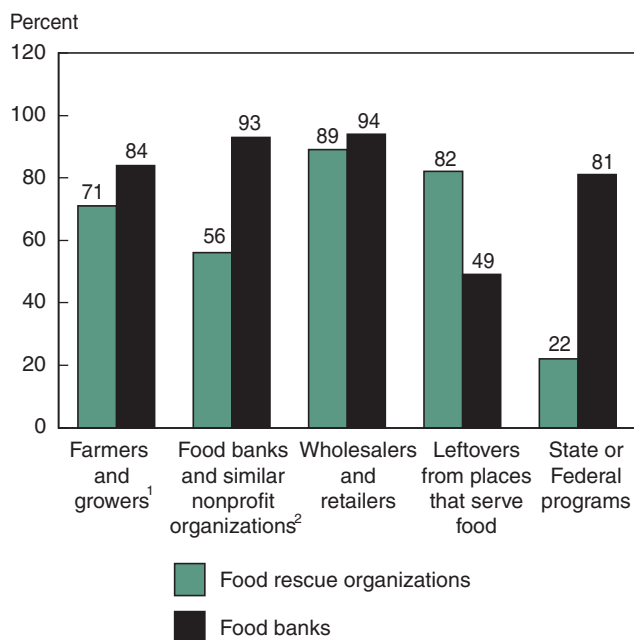
Approximately 89 percent of the food rescue organizations obtained food from wholesalers and retailers (table 5.6 and fig. 5.3). The bulk of this food was from either donations of salable products or of salvaged food that could not be sold. Roughly 80 percent of the organizations received food as leftovers from places that served food. Farmers and growers represent another major source of food for food rescue organizations, with a substantial number of organizations receiving food through direct donations, leftovers at farmers' markets, and field-gleaning.

Forty-two percent of food rescue organizations report that wholesalers and retailers are their primary source of food (table 5.7). About one-third receive most of their food in the form of leftovers from places that serve food.

About 20 percent of food rescue organizations reported receiving less than 250,000 pounds of food per year, while about 30 percent handled upwards of 1 million pounds (not shown). The median poundage was about 500,000 pounds, much lower than that of the median food bank, which received more than 2.3 million pounds of food per year.

Figure 5.3

### Sources of food used by food rescue organizations, compared with food banks



<sup>1</sup>Includes food purchased at retail prices, gleaned, left over, and salvaged.

<sup>2</sup>Includes those mentioning America's Second Harvest.

Source: National Emergency Food Assistance System Survey (2000).

**Table 5.6—Sources of food supplies for food rescue organizations**

Sources	Food rescue organizations
	<i>Percent</i>
<b>Wholesalers or retailers</b>	88.6
Purchased food at market price <sup>1</sup>	18.2
Received donation of a salable product <sup>1</sup>	64.8
Salvaged food <sup>1</sup>	61.4
<b>Leftovers from places that serve food</b>	81.8
<b>Community donations</b>	78.4
<b>Farmers and growers</b>	70.5
Purchased food at market price <sup>1</sup>	1.1
Received a direct donation <sup>1</sup>	64.8
Received leftovers from farmers' markets <sup>1</sup>	46.6
Received food from field gleaning <sup>1</sup>	46.6
<b>Allocations from food banks and/or similar nonprofit organizations<sup>2</sup></b>	55.7
<b>Food rescue programs</b>	28.4
<b>State or Federal programs</b>	21.6
<b>Direct donations from manufacturers</b>	62.5
<b>Other sources</b>	11.4
<b>Service area sources</b>	
Manufacturers in food rescue organization's service area	50.0
Farmers in food rescue organization's service area	60.2
<b>Sample size (number)</b>	<b>88</b>

<sup>1</sup>The base of the percentages for these subcategories is all food rescue organizations.

<sup>2</sup>Includes those mentioning America's Second Harvest

Source: National Emergency Food Assistance System Survey (2000)

**Table 5.7—Primary source of food supplies for food rescue organizations**

Sources	Food rescue organizations
	<i>Percent</i>
<b>Wholesalers or retailers</b>	42.0
Received donation of a salable product	25.0
Salvaged food	13.6
Purchased food at market price	2.3
<b>Leftovers from places that serve food</b>	31.8
<b>Farmers and growers</b>	12.5
Received a direct donation	10.2
Received food from field gleaning	2.3
Purchased food at market price	0.0
Received leftovers from farmers' markets	0.0
<b>Allocations from food banks and/or similar nonprofit organizations<sup>1</sup></b>	4.5
<b>Food rescue programs</b>	5.7
<b>State or Federal programs</b>	2.3
<b>Direct donations from manufacturers</b>	2.3
<b>Community donations</b>	5.7
<b>Other sources</b>	1.1
<b>Sample size (number)</b>	<b>88</b>

<sup>1</sup>Includes those mentioning America's Second Harvest.

Note: Total adds up to slightly more than 100 percent because a few respondents could not name a single primary source and gave two or three responses.

Source: National Emergency Food Assistance System Survey (2000).

## Food Supplies

A large majority of food rescue organizations (85 percent) reported that the type and quality of food they receive varies by time of year (table 5.8). Sixty percent of these organizations (about half of all food rescue organizations) believed this variation in supply hindered their ability to meet the needs of their client agencies.

Most food rescue organizations reported that they were able to distribute all or most of the food they received (table 5.9). However, roughly 60 percent of them receive unusable food from time to time. About one-quarter have paid staff who spend more than 2 hours per week disposing of unusable food. One-third spend more than 2 hours per week in volunteer time discarding food unfit for distribution.

Since food rescue organizations primarily distribute perishable foods, it is not surprising that fresh fruits and vegetables and bread products were among the foods most commonly mentioned by respondents when asked to list the types of food they receive (table 5.10). Interestingly, however, only 72 percent of food rescue organizations receive dairy products and only 74 percent receive meat, poultry, and fish.

Almost every food rescue organization in the study reported needing additional food (table 5.11). Although nearly all the organizations said they receive fresh fruits and vegetables, many apparently believe the amount they obtain is not enough. Roughly half of those that said they could use additional quantities of food reported needing more fresh fruits and vegetables. A little more than two-thirds said they needed more meat, poultry, and fish, and more than one-third said they needed dairy products.

**Table 5.8—Variation in food supply available to food rescue organizations**

Supply-related variable	Food rescue organizations <i>Percent</i>
<b>Does type and quality of food obtained vary by time of year?</b>	
Yes	85.2
No	13.6
Missing data	1.1
<b>Is this a problem in meeting client needs?<sup>1</sup></b>	
Yes	60.0
No	38.7
Missing data	1.3
<b>Sample size (number)</b>	<b>88</b>

<sup>1</sup>Includes only those food rescue organizations that said food varied by time of year.  
Source: National Emergency Food Assistance System Survey (2000).

**Table 5.9—Spoilage of food received by food rescue organizations**

Food spoilage variables	Food rescue organizations
	<i>Percent</i>
<b>Percent of food received that is distributed</b>	
90 to 100	85.2
85 to 89	3.4
Less than 85	8.0
Missing data	3.4
Mean	94.0
Median	100.0
<b>Does food rescue organization receive food that cannot be used, due to spoilage and other problems?</b>	
Yes	61.4
No	37.5
Missing data	1.1
<b>Estimated paid staff hours spent disposing of unusable food, per week<sup>1</sup></b>	
0	44.4
1	16.7
2	5.6
More than 2	25.9
Missing data	7.4
<b>Estimated volunteer hours spent disposing of unusable food, per week<sup>1</sup></b>	
0	35.2
1	13.0
2	11.1
More than 2	33.3
Missing data	7.4
<b>Sample size (number)</b>	<b>88</b>

<sup>1</sup>Includes only those food rescue organizations that reported receiving unusable food.  
Source: National Emergency Food Assistance System Survey (2000).

**Table 5.10—Types of food received by food rescue organizations during the past 12 months**

Food type	Food rescue organizations that received food type
	<i>Percent</i>
Fresh fruit and vegetables	94.3
Desserts	87.5
Bread products	83.0
Cereal, pasta, and rice <sup>1</sup>	78.4
Frozen, canned, and dried fruits and vegetables and fruit juice	75.0
Meat, poultry, fish	73.9
Dairy products	71.6
Complete meals, entrees, and prepared foods <sup>2</sup>	69.3
Dry and canned beans, eggs, nuts, peanut butter	68.2
Snack foods	64.8
Soft drinks, coffee, tea, and other nonjuice beverages	63.6
Spices and condiments	47.7
Baby food, formula, and nutritional supplements	45.5
Fats and oils	40.9
<b>Sample size (number)</b>	<b>88</b>

<sup>1</sup>Includes nonbread grain products, such as barley and noodles.

<sup>2</sup>Includes packaged meals drawing on multiple food groups, such as canned meat and vegetable products or frozen lasagna dinners.

Note: The survey was administered between March and October 2000. The 12-month period was therefore based on when respondents took the survey. For example, if a respondent was surveyed in April 2000, the "past 12 months" refers to the period May 1999 through April 2000.

Source: National Emergency Food Assistance System Survey (2000).

**Table 5.11—Types of foods for which food rescue organizations could use additional quantities**

Food shortfall	Food rescue organizations
	<i>Percent</i>
<b>Could use additional quantities of food</b>	93.8
<b>Types of food needed</b>	
Meat, poultry, fish	68.0
Fresh fruit and vegetables	48.0
Dairy products	37.3
Frozen, canned and dried fruits and vegetables and fruit juices	16.0
Cereal, pasta, and rice <sup>1</sup>	13.3
Dry and canned beans, eggs, nuts	13.3
Complete meals, entrees, and prepared foods <sup>2</sup>	9.3
Bread products	2.7
Soft drinks, coffee, tea, and other nonjuice beverages	2.7
Fats and oils	2.7
Spices and condiments	1.3
Snack foods	1.3
Desserts	0.0
Baby food, formula, and nutritional supplements or aids	0.0
All food types	5.3
<b>Sample size (number)</b>	<b>80</b>

<sup>1</sup>Includes nonbread grain products, such as barley and noodles.

<sup>2</sup>Includes packaged meals drawing on multiple food groups, such as canned meat and vegetable products or frozen lasagna dinners.

Note: Due to an incorrect skip pattern in the survey, some food rescue organizations were not asked about their food needs. Hence, the sample size is smaller than the one listed in other tables.

Source: National Emergency Food Assistance System Survey (2000).

## Resources

The operating budgets of food rescue organizations are much smaller than those of food banks. About 42 percent of food rescue organizations have operating budgets under \$100,000 (table 5.12); the corresponding figure for food banks is 15 percent. There are, however, some large-scale food rescue organizations: 15 percent have operating budgets of \$500,000 or more. As mentioned above, most food rescue organizations receive food supplies at no cost. This finding is supported by the fact that roughly half the food rescue organizations reported having no food-purchase budget.

The most common sources of funding for the food rescue organizations included donations from local individuals and groups, grants from foundations, and fundraising activities (table 5.13). Between 66 and 77 percent of food rescue organizations mentioned receiving money from these sources. Besides being the most common sources of support, these sources also tended to be the largest, each supplying, on average, between

25 and 30 percent of the funding of organizations to which they give. Few food rescue organizations receive funding from government sources such as TEFAP administrative funds and FEMA funds.

In addition to (or, in some cases, instead of) monetary support, many food rescue organizations receive donated or reduced-price goods and services. Between two-fifths and one-half receive computer equipment or training, legal and accounting services, transport for food, and facilities, at no cost or at a discounted price (table 5.14).

In general, food rescue organizations have a smaller workforce, and rely more heavily on volunteers, than food banks. About 78 percent of food rescue organizations reported having paid staff (compared with 95 percent of food banks) (table 5.15). For those food rescue organizations that had paid employees, the average number of paid staff hours used per week was about 236 (or six full-time equivalents). Ninety-two percent of the food rescue organizations had volunteers; however,

**Table 5.12—Operating budgets of food rescue organizations**

Budget (dollars)	Food rescue organizations Percent
<b>Total operating budget for past 12 months</b>	
0	8.0
1 to 9,999	11.4
10,000 to 49,999	13.6
50,000 to 99,999	9.1
100,000 to 149,999	19.3
150,000 to 199,999	10.2
200,000 to 499,999	9.1
500,000 or more	14.8
Missing data	4.5
Mean (dollars)	707,185.4
Median (dollars)	100,000.0
<b>Budget for purchasing food for past 12 months</b>	
0	52.3
1 to 1,000	4.5
1,001 to 5,000	10.2
5,001 to 10,000	2.3
10,001 to 20,000	10.2
More than 20,000	17.0
Missing data	3.4
Mean (dollars)	16,770.9
Median (dollars)	0
<b>Sample size (number)</b>	<b>88</b>

Note: The survey was administered between March and October 2000. The 12-month period was therefore based on when respondents took the survey. For example, if a respondent was surveyed in April 2000, the "past 12 months" refers to the period May 1999 through April 2000.

Source: National Emergency Food Assistance System Survey (2000).



the average volunteer labor force (in terms of staff hours) is smaller than the average paid workforce.

Due to the quick turnaround between the time a food rescue organization receives food and when it distributes the food to its clients, these organizations are much less likely to have food storage or food processing equipment than food banks. Only about 61 percent of

food rescue organizations have some type of refrigeration, and only about 56 percent have freezer capacity (table 5.16). The respective figures for food banks are 94 percent and 97 percent. The fact that two-thirds of food rescue organizations own the vehicles in which they transport food to be picked up or delivered highlights the importance of having stable, reliable transportation options.

**Table 5.13—Funding sources for food rescue organizations**

Sources	Food rescue organizations using source	Operating budget from source (mean %) <sup>1,2</sup>
	<i>Percent</i>	
<b>Government sources</b>		
FEMA funds	28.4	8.1
TEFAP administrative funds	5.7	16.5
Other government sources	22.7	16.4
<b>Nongovernment sources</b>		
Donations from local individuals or groups	77.3	28.7
Grants from foundations	71.6	25.1
Fundraising activities	65.9	30.1
United Way	28.4	10.6
Fees from clients and agencies	12.5	16.8
National organizations	12.5	24.4
Other sources	29.5	21.4
Missing data	0.0	NA
<b>Sample size (number)</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>NA</b>

<sup>1</sup>When source is used. <sup>2</sup>Many of the food rescue organizations that reported a particular food source were unable to estimate its contribution to their operating budgets. Thus, for most of the sources of funding, the percentage they contribute to the operating budget is based on 87 to 95 percent of the number of food rescue organizations using the funding source.

FEMA = Federal Emergency Management Agency. TEFAP = The Emergency Food Distribution Program. NA = Not applicable.

Note: Total exceeds 100 percent because some food rescue organizations reported having multiple funding sources.

Source: National Emergency Food Assistance System Survey (2000).

**Table 5.14—Donated or reduced-price goods and services received by food rescue organizations**

Goods and services	Food rescue organizations
	<i>Percent</i>
<b>Facilities</b>	
Transportation of food	42.0
Facilities, including rent or other space-related costs	40.9
Building maintenance	33.0
Utilities, including heating and air conditioning	28.4
Other	20.5
<b>Other</b>	
Computer equipment and training	48.9
Legal and accounting services	44.3
Materials for packaging food	35.2
Equipment maintenance, including equipment maintenance contracts	27.3
Missing data	1.1
<b>Sample size (number)</b>	<b>88</b>

Note: Total exceeds 100 percent because many food rescue organizations reported receiving multiple donated or reduced-price goods and services.

Source: National Emergency Food Assistance System Survey (2000).

**Table 5.15—Type and number of staff hours used by food rescue organizations**

Employee category	Food rescue organizations having staff type <sup>1</sup>	Average staff hours used per week by food rescue organizations with staff type
	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Hours</i>
<b>Paid employees</b>	<b>78.4</b>	<b>236.4</b>
Supervisory personnel	73.9	93.2
Clerical staff	44.3	50.9
Nonskilled help	43.2	119.1
Nutritionists	9.1	26.9
Skilled kitchen help	17.0	77.5
Other help for program	33.0	88.2
<b>Volunteer employees</b>	<b>92.0</b>	<b>216.9</b>
Nonskilled help	68.2	194.0
Supervisory personnel	37.5	68.7
Clerical staff	37.5	12.3
Nutritionists	20.5	19.2
Skilled kitchen help	13.6	26.5
Other help for program	26.1	117.3
<b>Unpaid employees<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>39.8</b>	<b>109.2</b>
Nonskilled help	34.1	66.1
Clerical staff	4.5	13.8
Supervisory personnel	3.4	62.7
Nutritionists	1.1	10.0
Skilled kitchen help	1.1	20.0
Other help for program	3.4	383.7
<b>All employees</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>409.2</b>
Supervisory personnel	90.9	104.5
Nonskilled help	76.1	257.0
Clerical staff	63.6	44.0
Nutritionists	29.5	22.1
Skilled kitchen help	25.0	70.2
Other help for program	47.7	148.4
<b>Sample size (number)</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>NA</b>

<sup>1</sup>The base for all percentages is all food organizations.

<sup>2</sup>Includes workers performing court-ordered community service or welfare-related work.

Note: Many of the food rescue organizations that reported having particular types of staff were unable to estimate the number of hours worked per week by staff type. Thus, the average number of staff hours is calculated base on less than 100 percent of the number of food rescue organizations that reported having the staff type.

Source: National Emergency Food Assistance System Survey (2000).

**Table 5.16—Characteristics of facilities and equipment used by food rescue organizations**

Facility/equipment	Food rescue organizations
	<i>Percent</i>
<b>Food rescue organization owns building</b>	11.4
<b>Refrigeration capacity<sup>1</sup></b>	
No refrigeration capacity onsite	38.6
Has walk-in refrigerator onsite	34.1
Has home refrigerator onsite	18.2
Has other type of refrigerator onsite	18.2
<b>Freezer capacity<sup>1</sup></b>	
No freezer capacity onsite	43.2
Has walk-in freezer onsite	29.5
Has home freezer onsite	22.7
Has other type of freezer onsite	17.0
<b>Storage</b>	
Has separate warehouse for food storage	18.2
Has other off-site storage	15.9
<b>Food preparation equipment</b>	
Owens onsite equipment	18.2
Has onsite equipment but does not own it	5.7
Has access to equipment to prepare hot meals or components of meals	13.6
Does not have access to equipment to prepare hot meals or components of meals	62.5
<b>Preservation or processing facilities</b>	
Has access to facilities to preserve or process perishable foods	13.6
Has access to refrigerated vehicles to transport prepared or perishable foods	62.5
<b>Repackaging equipment or facilities</b>	
Has access to equipment or facilities to repackage foods, such as rice or dry beans	37.5
<b>Transportation for delivery or pickup of food</b>	
Owens vehicles	67.0
Has vehicles but does not own them	25.0
Does not have vehicles	6.8
<b>Sample size (number)</b>	<b>88</b>

<sup>1</sup>Categories sum to more than 100 percent because some food rescue organizations provided more than one response.

Source: National Emergency Food Assistance System Survey (2000).

# Interactions Between USDA Commodity Programs and the Emergency Food Assistance System

As noted in chapter 1, the creation of The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) in the early 1980s is widely viewed as a significant factor in the emergence of the EFAS in its current form. Throughout the history of the program, TEFAP and the EFAS have remained highly interconnected, with substantial amounts of TEFAP commodities being distributed through the EFAS. The EFAS also represents a significant distribution channel for a second government commodity program that was also described in chapter 1, the Community Supplemental Food Program (CSFP). However, because CSFP distribution appears to occur mostly outside of the EFAS, the discussion below will focus on TEFAP.

In this chapter, we draw on the survey data and other sources to describe the interaction of these commodity programs and the EFAS.<sup>44</sup>

## USDA Commodities as a Share of the Food Distributed by EFAS

About half the kitchens and pantries in the survey reported using USDA commodities, while roughly 84

<sup>44</sup>It should be noted that we do not report direct survey estimates of the pounds of commodities distributed by the pantries and kitchens in our sample. We attempted to obtain these data, but fewer than 50 percent of respondents were able to provide meaningful estimates for these variables. We are therefore not reporting estimates computed from these data because of concerns about nonresponse bias.

percent of food banks did so (table 6.1 and fig. 6.1). These estimates may somewhat understate the true numbers, particularly for kitchens, since some kitchens may not necessarily have known they were handling USDA commodities. Unlike pantries, which must comply with government regulations concerning to whom and how often they distribute TEFAP commodities, kitchens do not face distribution restrictions. This, coupled with the fact that many of these commodities are no longer packaged with USDA markings, may result in lack of awareness among emergency kitchen staff that they are receiving government commodities through their food bank allocations.

As shown in table 6.1, larger EFAS agencies are more likely to use USDA commodities than smaller agencies. This may reflect greater sophistication in dealing with the system or their need for more food than they can obtain locally, or both.

Based on preliminary USDA administrative data, in 2000 TEFAP distributed 422 million pounds of food. This was approximately 14 percent of all food distributed by the EFAS. This estimate is derived in table 6.2, which displays information on TEFAP and CSFP commodities as a proportion of the total amount of food used or distributed by the EFAS providers included in the current study. The first panel of the table presents estimates of the total food distributed by EFAS pantries and kitchens, as derived in chapter 8. These estimates, discussed in detail in that chapter, are that some 3,621 million pounds of food are distributed by pantries and kitchens annually.

**Table 6.1—EFAS providers using USDA commodities**

Providers	All	Size		
		Small	Medium	Large
		<i>Percent</i>		
Emergency kitchens	54.9	50.0	53.0	63.3
Pantries	51.5	36.4	56.0	68.0
Food banks	83.5	75.4	87.8	87.9

Source: National Emergency Food Assistance System Survey (2000); tabulations for kitchens and pantries are weighted.

As shown in the second panel, estimates from USDA indicate that total food distribution for 2000 under TEFAP was about 422 million pounds (fig. 6.2).

Together, the above estimates imply that the share of these commodities in EFAS food distribution is on the order of 14 percent. In assessing this figure, it should be noted that, in all likelihood, it is an *upper-bound* estimate of the true proportion for 2000, because not

all TEFAP food is distributed through EFAS pantries and kitchens. Some of this food may be distributed directly by the States and, probably more important, some of it may enter the EFAS through food banks but be distributed to such non-EFAS food providers as shelters and group homes, which were not included in the current study.

Despite these factors, pantries and kitchens are the largest group of users of these commodities, and we believe that the 14 percent figure provides a useful indication of the importance of these commodity programs within the EFAS. Further, it should be noted that the amount of available commodities varies considerably from year to year, so that the share of commodities distributed by the EFAS also varies. For instance, based on USDA records, in 1999, approximately 311 million pounds of TEFAP commodities were distributed, which is lower than the 2000 figures shown in the chart.<sup>45</sup>

**Table 6.2—USDA commodities as a share of food distribution by the EFAS, 2000**

Distribution variables	Food distributed Million pounds
<b>All food distributed by EFAS direct providers<sup>1</sup></b>	
Pantries	2,868
Kitchens	249
Total	3,117
<b>Commodities distributed by TEFAP</b>	422
<b>TEFAP distribution as a share of all food distributed by EFAS (percent)<sup>2</sup></b>	13.5

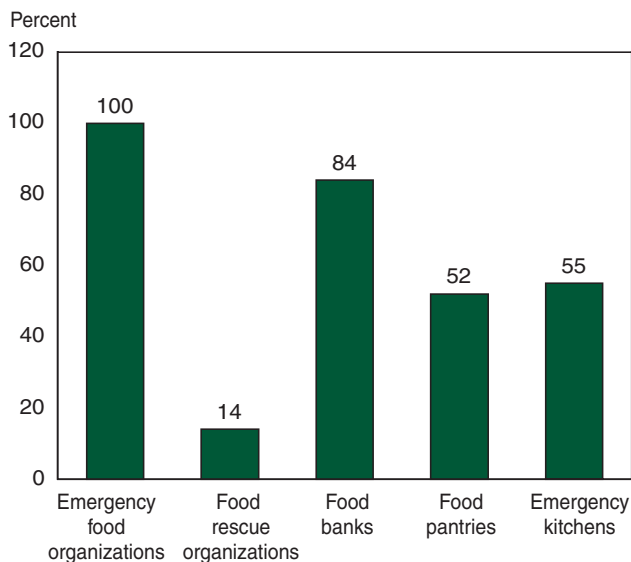
<sup>1</sup>EFAS estimates for pounds distributed are drawn from "meal equivalent" data described in chapter 8, using an assumption (discussed in that chapter) that 1.3 pounds of ingredients are used per meal.

<sup>2</sup>This estimate may overstate the share of TEFAP commodities that are distributed by the EFAS because some government commodities are distributed to such service providers as shelters and group homes, which are not included in the current study.

Source: National Emergency Food Assistance System (2000); weighted tabulations and program data supplied to MPR by USDA, FNS on December 28, 2000.

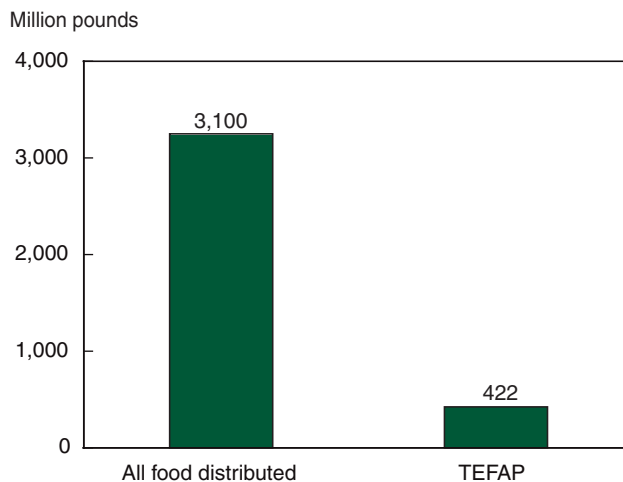
<sup>45</sup>As a check on the validity of the estimates in the text, we note that America's Second Harvest (2000) reports in table 32 that approximately 20 percent of the product that food banks in their system distributed in 1999 was Federal commodities. However, as we have seen, emergency kitchens and food pantries have many sources of food in addition to the food they receive from food banks. Taking this into account, the estimate that commodities make up about 14 percent of total EFAS food distribution seems consistent with the America's Second Harvest data.

Figure 6.1  
**Use of USDA commodities by EFAS providers**



Source: National Emergency Food Assistance System Survey (2000).

Figure 6.2  
**Estimated pounds of food distributed annually by the EFAS in relation to the size of the TEFAP, 2000**



Source: National Emergency Food Assistance System Survey (2000), USDA administrative records.

## Types of Commodities Used

The EFAS agencies that reported using or distributing USDA commodities used a broad range of food types (table 6.3). For kitchens, more than 80 percent of all respondents reported using each of the following commodities: canned or frozen meat, poultry, or fish; canned or frozen vegetables or fruit; rice and pasta; and peanut butter. For pantries, the list of most commonly used foods was similar, but it also included dry beans.

Fresh fruits and vegetables were among the commodities reportedly used the least. This probably reflects

the limited availability of these foods: respondents to a different question reported fresh fruits and vegetables to be among the types of food they most commonly needed in larger quantities than were available (tabulated in earlier chapters).

In general, pantries appear less likely than other providers to receive perishable foods from USDA commodity programs. For instance, they are substantially less likely than kitchens to receive such perishables as frozen meat, pastry, fish, and fresh fruit and vegetables.

**Table 6.3—Use of USDA commodities by EFAS providers**

Commodities	Kitchens	Pantries	Food banks	Food rescue organizations
	<i>Percent</i>			
<b>Use USDA commodities</b>	<b>54.9</b>	<b>51.5</b>	<b>83.5</b>	<b>13.6</b>
<b>Types of commodities used<sup>1</sup></b>				
Canned meat, poultry, or fish	86.8	91.1	97.3	75.0
Canned or frozen vegetables	84.1	86.2	94.2	66.7
Rice	81.8	84.4	89.4	58.3
Canned or frozen fruit	81.8	83.2	93.9	58.3
Pasta	81.0	81.6	92.1	58.3
Juices	80.5	82.8	93.9	66.7
Peanut butter	80.1	89.0	93.6	83.3
Dried beans	78.4	82.2	87.3	75.0
Frozen meat, poultry, or fish	74.0	56.3	85.8	66.7
Nonfat dry milk	67.5	78.6	86.1	66.7
Canned or frozen potatoes	67.1	69.1	77.6	41.7
Vegetable oil	61.9	48.7	62.7	33.3
Ready-to-eat cereal	55.4	73.0	73.3	41.7
Oats, grits, or cornmeal	50.7	60.4	66.7	50.0
Flour	49.6	42.6	55.2	33.3
Dried fruit	48.2	56.9	81.5	33.3
Fresh fruit	39.0	26.3	54.2	41.7
Fresh potatoes	36.1	25.6	25.5	8.3
Fresh vegetables	34.6	21.6	28.8	16.7
Egg mix	22.9	21.8	37.6	16.7
Other	4.3	6.1	7.0	0.0
<b>Sample size (number)</b>	<b>1,517</b>	<b>1,617</b>	<b>395</b>	<b>88</b>

<sup>1</sup>For providers using commodities.

Source: National Emergency Food Assistance System Survey (2000); tabulations for kitchens and pantries are weighted.

## Emergency Food Organizations

Emergency Food Organizations (EFOs) are closely linked to TEFAP, since government commodities are generally the main type of food distributed by these organizations. EFOs were identified through a list obtained from State TEFAP directors. The directors identified 124 EFOs for the study, and interviews were completed with 117 of them, for a response rate of 94 percent.

### Definition

For purposes of the current study, an EFO is any organization which (1) has a primary purpose other than emergency food distribution; (2) is designated by the State TEFAP director as an official distribution organization for TEFAP commodities; and (3) distributes the TEFAP food primarily to other EFAS agencies, such as emergency kitchens and pantries (rather than distributing directly to people and households).

It should be noted that this definition is limited to organizations that distribute food to EFAS *providers*, such as emergency kitchens and pantries. Thus, it is limited to organizations that function at the “wholesale” level, as food banks do; it does not include similar organizations that receive State TEFAP allocations but then distribute the food *directly* to individual needy people. For purposes of the current study, the latter organizations were treated as pantries rather than EFOs, since, like pantries, they perform a retail-like function.

This distinction was made for sampling purposes to avoid including the same programs in multiple sampling frames (for example, EFOs and pantries). However, it has some potential to create confusion, because in some States the term “Emergency Food Organization” is used to refer *both* to some organizations distributing TEFAP food to EFAS suppliers *and* to those distributing directly to people and households.<sup>46, 47</sup>

<sup>46</sup>The official, more inclusive definition is given in the U.S. Code of Federal Regulations, at Section 251.3C.

<sup>47</sup>In principle, EFO-like organizations distributing directly to individuals were eligible for inclusion in our pantry sample frame and may have been identified and listed during the extensive calling of local contacts that was done in assembling the pantry sample frame (see appendix A). Also, information obtained from State TEFAP directors, when it was received in time, was fed back into the pantry-sampling process. We do not know how many of these part-pantry/part-EFO organizations were actually included in the survey. We do note, however, that it is possible that some were missed, because, as discussed above, EFOs typically operate as EFAS organizations only on a periodic basis, depending on when TEFAP commodities become available.

Typically, EFOs are organizations that exist for a purpose other than food distribution.<sup>48</sup> Some, for instance, are units of local governments; others are “community action programs,” nonprofit community organizations that exist primarily to provide community services or to encourage community development. These organizations usually focus on activities besides food distribution, but several times a year, when TEFAP commodities become available from the State, they arrange to distribute the commodities to local organizations in their communities. From the point of view of the EFOs, it is an opportunity both to provide useful food to their communities and to consolidate their positions within the communities by providing tangible benefits.

### Organizational Structure of EFOs

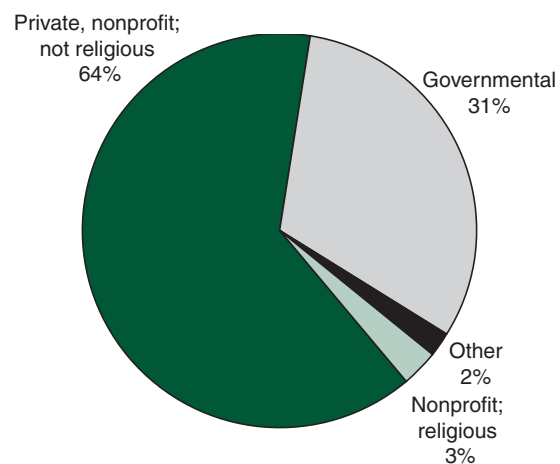
Emergency food organizations are the only type of EFAS organization considered in this study in which a substantial number of the organizations—about 31 percent—are government entities (table 6.4 and fig. 6.3). In particular, it is relatively common for emergency food organizations to be county or city governments. Most of the nongovernment EFOs are nonprofit secular organizations.

Sixty percent of these organization have been operating longer than 5 years. They are seldom co-located with another EFAS provider.

<sup>48</sup>The description of the “typical” EFO in the text is based on informal discussions with people in the EFAS.

Figure 6.3

### Types of organizations operating emergency food organizations



Source: National Emergency Food Assistance System Survey (2000).

**Table 6.4—Selected characteristics of emergency food organizations**

Characteristics	Organizations <i>Percent</i>
<b>Region</b>	
West	12.0
Midwest	48.7
South	15.4
Northeast	23.9
<b>Type of organization</b>	
Nonreligious private nonprofit	63.2
Nonprofit, associated with religious group	3.4
Governmental	30.8
Informal group of people	0.0
Other	1.7
Missing data	0.9
<b>National organizational affiliations<sup>1</sup></b>	
United Way	28.2
Salvation Army	25.6
Red Cross	14.5
Catholic Charities	15.4
Other nonprofit organizations	12.8
None	53.8
Missing data	3.4
<b>Length of time surveyed location has been operating</b>	
Less than 1 year	0.0
1 to 3 years	10.3
4 to 5 years	7.7
6 years or longer	
6 to 10 years	14.5
11 to 15 years	6.8
16 to 20 years	18.8
21 to 25 years	10.3
Longer than 25 years	10.3
Not specified	19.7
Missing data	1.7
<b>Programs with which EFO is co-located</b>	
Food rescue program	2.6
Food pantry	0.0
Emergency kitchen	0.9
Emergency shelter	0.0
<b>Frequency of food distribution</b>	
7 days per week	6.0
5 or 6 days per week	23.1
3 or 4 days per week	9.4
1 or 2 days per week	10.3
2 or 3 days per month	5.1
Once a month	10.3
4 to 7 times a year	17.1
3 or fewer times a year	6.8
Missing data	12.0
<b>Operating hours per day</b>	
As many as 2	12.0
3 to 4	15.4
5 to 6	13.7
7 to 8	45.3
More than 8	11.1
Missing data	2.6
<b>Nonfood services offered<sup>1</sup></b>	
Training in food safety and sanitation	45.3
Technical assistance	55.6
Training in fundraising	7.7
Employment training for agency staff	29.1
Other	23.1
Missing data	4.3
<b>Sample size (number)</b>	<b>117</b>

<sup>1</sup>Categories may sum to more than 100 percent because some EFOs provided more than one response.

Source: National Emergency Food Assistance System Survey (2000).



About 45 percent of EFOS offer training on food safety and sanitation to the agencies they serve. This is substantially lower than the comparable percentage (73 percent) for food banks (chapter 4). The difference may reflect the fact that, for many EFOs, food handling is not their main activity. It is possible that, implicitly or explicitly, they assume that food safety training will, when necessary, be provided by the food banks from which pantries and kitchens obtain their food.

### **Operating Characteristics**

Compared with food banks and food rescue organizations, emergency food organizations tend to serve relatively small numbers of kitchens and pantries (table 6.5); most serve fewer than 25 pantries and between 1 and 5 kitchens. Many of these organizations serve shelters, and a few serve food banks and other agencies.

About 46 percent of EFOs reported having policies that limit the amount of food client agencies can obtain (table 6.6). The most common one was linking the amount provided to the number of people or households served by the agency. About 62 percent indicated they had policies about the types of agencies that could receive food. Policies frequently mentioned included the requirements that the client agency be a nonprofit organization, that it go through a formal certification process organized by the EFO, that it serve low-income households, and that it have appropriate storage facilities.<sup>49</sup>

### **Sources of Food**

Because of the way that EFOs were defined and the way the sample frame was obtained (that is, from State TEFAP directors), all the EFOs obtain food from government services.<sup>50</sup> Further, more than 80 percent of

<sup>49</sup>The percentages in the table provide lower-bound estimates of the number of EFOs with various policies. In an open-ended question, the EFOs were asked what their policies were, and the answers were then coded. It is possible that more agencies do use some of the policies but didn't think to mention them.

<sup>50</sup>Five of the 117 EFOs in the sample did not directly report obtaining government food. However, after checking their names to confirm that they appeared to be EFOs, and after checking their other answers to confirm that they were indeed distributing food, we decided to leave them in the sample and to edit their responses to the "food source" question accordingly. Our results would not be substantially changed if they were omitted.

respondents listed such programs as their *primary* source of food (tables 6.7 and 6.8).

Some emergency food organizations also obtained food from other sources. For example, 46 percent got food from wholesalers and retailers and 34 percent got it from farmers and growers.

The EFOs may be getting food from other sources through informal arrangements with other groups, to take advantage of "targets of opportunity." For instance, a food bank that finds itself with more of a perishable food item than it can use may call up a nearby EFAS organization—in some instances, an EFO—to see if that organization can use the item. The EFO may also acquire non-TEFAP foods in connection with other activities. For example, some EFOs may operate training programs for jobs in the food trade. In the context of those programs, they may purchase or otherwise acquire non-TEFAP foods they need for this activity.

About 37 percent of EFOs indicated that they sometimes receive food they cannot use, due to spoilage or other problems (table 6.9). For most EFOs, however, this apparently is not a large problem, since about 89 percent indicated that they are able to distribute at least 90 percent of the food they get. The EFOs who did have food they could not distribute generally indicated that they either spent no substantial staff time disposing of it or only 1 or 2 hours per week.

Sixty-five percent of the EFOs reported some seasonal variation in the availability of food (table 6.10). Of those reporting a variation, 38 percent indicated that it posed problems in their efforts to meet client needs.

### **Resources**

Most of the emergency food organizations (about 89 percent) had paid employees (table 6.11). The average number of paid staff hours per week for those EFOs was about 51. About 74 percent of emergency food organizations use volunteer staff, a somewhat smaller percentage than reported by the other types of EFAS organizations examined, but nonetheless a substantial percentage.

**Table 6.5—Selected food distribution characteristics of emergency food organizations**

Distribution characteristics	Organizations Percent
<b>Types of agencies served</b>	
Pantries	83.8
Kitchens	45.3
Shelters	46.2
Food banks	20.5
Other agencies	21.4
Missing data	1.7
<b>Number of pantries served by emergency food organizations that serve pantries (N = 100)</b>	
1 to 25	80.0
26 to 50	12.0
51 to 75	2.0
76 to 100	0.0
101 to 150	1.0
151 to 200	0.0
201 to 300	1.0
More than 300	2.0
Missing data	2.0
(Mean)	(24.0)
(Median)	(9.5)
<b>Number of kitchens served by emergency food organizations that serve kitchens (N = 55)</b>	
1 to 5	76.4
6 to 10	10.9
11 to 25	3.6
26 to 50	1.8
51 to 100	1.8
More than 100	1.8
Missing data	3.6
(Mean)	(10.2)
(Median)	(3.0)
<b>Number of food banks served by emergency food organizations that serve food banks (N = 26)</b>	
1 or 2	57.7
3 or 4	11.5
5 or 6	0.0
7 or 8	11.5
9 or 10	3.8
11 to 20	3.8
More than 20	3.8
Missing data	7.7
(Mean)	(7.2)
(Median)	(1.5)
<b>Number of other agencies served by emergency food organizations that serve other agencies (N = 27)</b>	
1 to 10	74.1
11 to 25	0.0
26 to 50	3.7
51 to 75	7.4
76 to 100	0.0
101 to 150	3.7
151 to 200	3.7
201 to 300	0.0
More than 300	0.0
Missing data	7.4
(Mean)	(21.6)
(Median)	(5.0)
<b>Number of shelters served by emergency food organizations that serve shelters (N = 58)</b>	
1 to 5	89.7
6 to 10	1.7
11 to 15	7.7
16 to 20	0.0
21 to 25	0.0
26 to 50	0.0
More than 50	0.0
Missing data	6.9
(Mean)	(2.4)
(Median)	(2.0)
<b>Sample size (number)</b>	<b>117</b>

Source: National Emergency Food Assistance System Survey (2000).

Not surprisingly, given the function of the emergency food organizations within the EFAS, the two major sources of funding they cited were (1) TEFAP administrative funds, and (2) other government sources (table 6.12). Some also received funding from donations and through fundraising.

It is not clear why all EFOs did not say they were getting TEFAP administration funds, but it is possible that they included such funds under the “other” government category. It is also possible that these funding arrangements do not exist in practice in all States in all situations.

## Conclusions

This section has developed an outline of how EFOs operate, but a number of interesting questions remain that might be addressed through future, perhaps more qualitative, research. For instance, it would be helpful to have a better understanding of how States choose between EFOs and food banks to distribute TEFAP commodities. Similarly, it would help to have more information about the effects of the choice, in terms of how efficiently TEFAP commodities get distributed and to whom.

**Table 6.6—Policies used by emergency food organizations to limit the amount of food they distribute**

Policies	Have the policy
	<i>Percent</i>
<b>Have policies limiting the amount of food an agency can obtain</b>	46.2
<b>Methods used to restrict the amount of food an agency can obtain<sup>1,2</sup></b>	
Link amount provided to number of recipients served by agency	70.4
Set limits on amount provided per visit or shipment	20.4
Restrict number of visits or shipments	5.6
Link amount provided to storage capacity	5.6
Link amount provided to urgency of need of agency recipients	1.9
Link amount provided to amount previously provided	5.6
Other	9.3
<b>Have policies limiting which agencies can receive food</b>	62.4
<b>Policies used to restrict which agencies can receive food<sup>2,3</sup></b>	
Must be 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization	39.7
Must be certified or complete an approval process by EFO	21.9
Must serve low-income households	17.8
Must have appropriate storage facilities	21.9
Must be located in service area or/in specific ZIP Code(s)	12.3
Must be affiliated with church or other agency	4.1
Must provide own transportation	2.7
Must be referred by church or other agency	0.0
Must not sell food	2.7
Must be an emergency food provider	2.7
Must meet State and Federal guidelines	4.1
Agency cannot place restrictions on clients seeking food	1.4
Must sign an agreement or contract	9.6
Must follow TEFAP guidelines	2.7
Must be a pantry	4.1
Must comply with reporting requirements	5.5
Other	9.6
<b>Sample size (number)</b>	<b>117</b>

<sup>1</sup>Includes only EFOs that have policies limiting the amount of food an agency can obtain.

<sup>2</sup>Categories may sum to more than 100 percent because some EFOs provided more than one response.

<sup>3</sup>Includes only EFOs that have policies restricting which agencies can receive food.

Source: National Emergency Food Assistance System Survey (2000).

**Table 6.7—Sources of food supplies for emergency food organizations**

Source	Use the source <i>Percent</i>
<b>State or Federal programs</b>	100.0
<b>Wholesalers or retailers</b>	46.2
Received donation of a salable product	29.1
Salvaged food	17.1
Purchased food at market price	24.8
<b>Allocations from food banks and/or similar nonprofit organizations, such as Second Harvest</b>	43.6
<b>Food rescue programs</b>	10.3
<b>Direct donations from manufacturers</b>	31.6
<b>Community donations</b>	51.3
<b>Farmers and growers</b>	34.2
Received a direct donation	30.8
Received food from field-gleaning	15.4
Received leftovers from farmers' markets	8.5
Purchased food at market price	0.9
<b>Leftovers from places that serve food</b>	12.8
<b>Other sources</b>	8.5
<b>Use of local sources</b>	
Obtain food from manufacturers in kitchen's service area	22.2
Obtain food from farmers in EFO's service area	26.6
<b>Sample size (number)</b>	<b>117</b>

Note: Total exceeds 100 percent because respondent EFOs reported using multiple sources for food supplies.

Source: National Emergency Food Assistance System Survey (2000).

**Table 6.8—Primary sources of food supplies for emergency food organizations**

Source	Source is primary <i>Percent</i>
<b>State or Federal programs</b>	81.2
<b>Community donations</b>	12.8
<b>Wholesalers or retailers</b>	9.4
Received donation of a salable product	2.6
Salvaged food	0.9
Purchased food at market price	6.0
<b>Allocations from food banks and/or similar nonprofit organizations, such as Second Harvest</b>	11.1
<b>Food rescue programs</b>	0.9
<b>Direct donations from manufacturers</b>	0.9
<b>Farmers and growers</b>	3.4
Received a direct donation	2.6
Received food from field-gleaning	0.9
Received leftovers from farmers' markets	0.0
Purchased food at market price	0.0
<b>Leftovers from places that serve food</b>	0.9
<b>Other sources</b>	0.0
<b>Sample size (number)</b>	<b>117</b>

Note: Total exceeds 100 percent because respondent EFOs reported using multiple sources for food supplies.

Source: National Emergency Food Assistance System Survey (2000).

**Table 6.9—Spoilage of food received by emergency food organizations**

Spoilage-related variables	Organizations
<b>Percentage of food received that is distributed</b>	<i>Percent</i>
90-100	88.9
85-89	0.9
Less than 85	4.3
Missing data	6.0
<b>Does EFO receive food that cannot be used, due to spoilage and other problems?</b>	
Yes	36.8
No	63.2
Missing data	0.0
<b>Estimated paid staff hours spent disposing of unusable food, per week</b>	
0	41.9
1	34.9
2	2.3
>2	16.3
Missing data	4.7
<b>Estimated volunteer hours spent disposing of unusable food, per week</b>	
0	46.5
1	25.6
2	11.6
>2	14.0
Missing data	2.3
<b>Sample size (number)</b>	<b>117</b>

Source: National Emergency Food Assistance System (2000).

**Table 6.10—Variation in food supply of emergency food organizations**

Food supply variables	Organizations
	<i>Percent</i>
<b>Does type and quality of food obtained vary by time of year?</b>	
Yes	65.0
No	34.2
Missing data	0.9
<b>Is this a problem in meeting client needs?</b>	
Yes	38.2
No	60.5
Missing data	1.3
<b>Sample size (number)</b>	<b>117</b>

Source: National Emergency Food Assistance System (2000).

**Table 6.11—Full-time-equivalent staff employed by emergency food organizations**

Employee category	Emergency food organizations	Average staff hours used per week for emergency food organizations with staff type
	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Hours</i>
<b>Paid employees</b>	88.9	51.1
Supervisory personnel	78.6	27.9
Clerical staff	36.8	21.6
Nonskilled help	23.1	40.4
Nutritionists	6.0	11.0
Skilled kitchen help	0.9	1.0
Other help for program	12.0	31.5
<b>Volunteer employees</b>	74.4	154.6
Nonskilled help	55.6	154.7
Clerical staff	21.4	29.0
Supervisory personnel	29.9	30.8
Nutritionists	10.3	6.9
Skilled kitchen help	4.3	1.0
Other help for program	10.3	50.0
<b>Unpaid employees<sup>1</sup></b>	41.0	33.0
Nonskilled help	29.1	27.2
Clerical staff	1.7	13.0
Supervisory personnel	2.6	4.3
Skilled kitchen help	0.0	0.0
Nutritionists	0.0	0.0
Other help for program	6.8	60.5
<b>All employees</b>	97.4	161.1
Supervisory personnel	87.2	35.1
Nonskilled help	69.2	162.0
Clerical staff	52.1	27.0
Nutritionists	15.4	9.0
Skilled kitchen help	5.1	1.0
Other help for program	23.1	57.7
<b>Sample size (number)</b>	<b>117</b>	<b>NA</b>

<sup>1</sup>Includes workers performing court-ordered community service or welfare-related work. NA = Not applicable. Note: Many of the Emergency Food Organizations were unable to estimate the number of hours worked per week by staff type. Thus, the average number of FTE employees is based on less than 100 percent of the number of Emergency Food Organizations that reported having the staff type. Source: National Emergency Food Assistance System Survey (2000).

**Table 6.12—Funding sources for emergency food organizations**

Sources of funding	Emergency food organizations that use source	Operating budget that source contributes (mean %) <sup>1</sup>
	<i>Percent</i>	
<b>Government</b>		
FEMA funds	21.4	13.0
TEFAP administrative funds	71.8	46.9
Other government sources	46.2	62.7
<b>Nongovernment</b>		
Donations from local individuals or groups	22.2	19.5
Fundraising activities	14.5	12.1
United way	12.0	9.7
Grants from foundations	7.7	15.0
National organizations	1.7	10.5
Fees from clients	1.7	6.0
Other sources	7.7	31.1
Missing data	10.3	NA

<sup>1</sup>When source is used. Many of the EFOs that reported using a particular food source were unable to estimate its contribution to the operating budget. Thus, for most sources of funding, the percentage they contribute to the operating budget is calculated based on 77 to 87 percent of the EFOs using the funding source. FEMA = Federal Emergency Management Agency. TEFAP = The Emergency Food Assistance Program. NA = Not applicable. Note: Total exceeds 100 percent because many respondent EFOs reported having multiple funding sources. Source: National Emergency Food Assistance System Survey (2000).

## Changes Over the Past 3 Years in EFAS Services and Possible Unmet Needs

There has been considerable interest in recent years in whether (and if so, how) the need for EFAS services has been changing. This chapter reports estimates by the respondents to the provider survey of changes in their scale of operation over the past 3 years. It also presents related data on possible unmet needs for EFAS services. We begin by discussing the policy context within which changes are of interest. Next, we describe the relevant survey data and its limitations and then discuss the survey findings in light of other recent estimates of changes in EFAS services. Subsequent sections report provider estimates of the extent to which the food supplies available to EFAS providers have changed and the views of providers about their ability to increase the size of their operations, if the need arises.

### Background

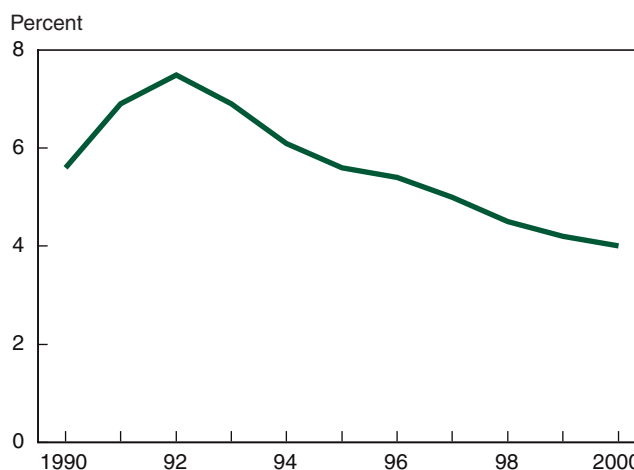
As noted in chapter 1, the 1997-2000 period was characterized by major changes in U.S. low-income-assistance policy. The Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA) of 1996 substantially increased emphasis on helping welfare clients find employment, while tightening standards for those who did not find work.

Simultaneously, throughout much of the Nation a robust economy was generating new jobs and economic opportunities. By the year 2000, the unemployment rate was at its lowest in 20 years (fig. 7.1), and real disposable income per capita rose from \$21,838 to \$23,739 between 1997 and 2000.<sup>51</sup>

The decrease in unemployment and increase in per capita income have been major factors in a substantial decrease in the number of people receiving cash assistance, which declined between 1997 and 2000 from

<sup>51</sup>U.S. Council of Economic Advisors 2001, table B.31.

Figure 7.1  
U.S. unemployment rate, 1990-2000



Source: U.S. Council of Economic Advisors (2001).

10.9 million to 5.8 million (fig. 7.2). In addition, the number of people participating in the Food Stamp Program (FSP) declined substantially, falling from about 22.8 million in 1997 to 17.1 million in 2000 (fig. 7.2).<sup>52</sup>

There are indications that the declining assistance rolls reflect genuine economic gains for at least some of America's low-income population. The percentage of households below the official U.S. poverty level declined from 13.3 in 1997 to 11.8 in 1999 (fig. 7.3).<sup>53</sup> Further, there is evidence that at least some gains have been experienced by even the poorest segments of the population. The percentage of the population living in households with incomes below 50 percent of the poverty line declined from 5.4 to 4.6 over the same period (fig. 7.3).<sup>54</sup>

<sup>52</sup>USDA, FNS Website [www.fns.usda.gov/pd/fsfypart.htm](http://www.fns.usda.gov/pd/fsfypart.htm).

<sup>53</sup>HHS. Census Historical Series. [www.census.gov/incomehistpov](http://www.census.gov/incomehistpov), table 5.

<sup>54</sup>Ibid.

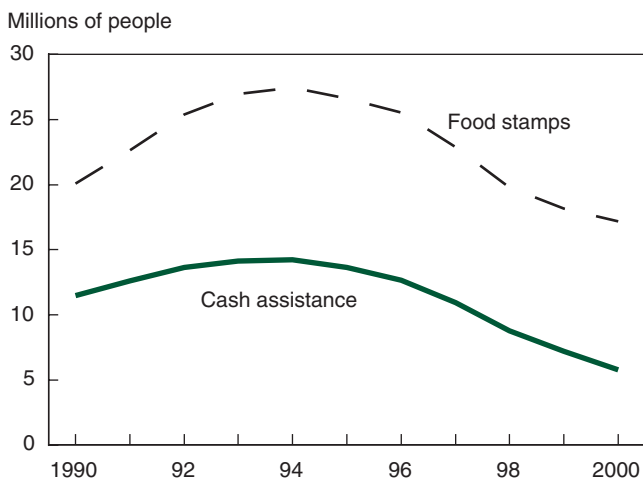
It is in the context of these gains that considerable attention has recently been focused on whether the need for emergency food assistance has changed, and if so, in what ways. This issue has direct significance for assessing the capacity of the EFAS to serve clients who rely on it. In addition, some observers view changes in the EFAS as a barometer of the impacts of the 1996 welfare reform. To the extent that welfare reform measures have achieved their objective of helping households reach self-sufficiency, they presumably have reduced the need for EFAS services. However, if the reforms have had the effect of moving people off welfare without giving them adequate tools to provide for themselves, then people who once relied on welfare assistance may now have an increased need for the EFAS.

A related interest in the need for EFAS services revolves around the exceptionally strong U.S. economy. Some

analysts believe that a strong economy improves conditions for all income groups. Others have questioned whether people at the lowest end of the income spectrum benefit fully from economic growth (Bernstein et al., 2000). Observing the use of EFAS services over time provides evidence that may help determine which view is the more accurate one.

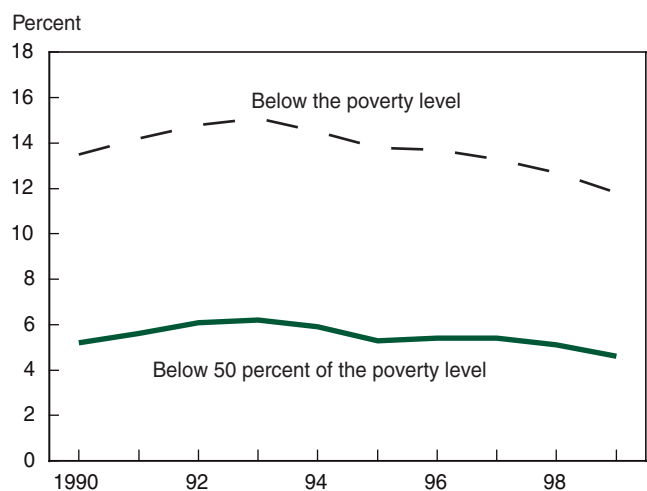
The data available to the current study team do not enable us to choose definitively between these hypotheses. However, by presenting EFAS providers' perceptions of how the need for their services has changed, we can potentially inform this debate. In this chapter, we bring together evidence from our survey about recent changes in the demand for system services, and we place our results in the context of data from three other data sets that relate to similar issues.

Figure 7.2  
**U.S. population receiving cash assistance and food stamps, 1990-2000**



Source: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Program Data (2000), USDA Program Data (2000).

Figure 7.3  
**U.S. population below the poverty level and below 50 percent of poverty, 1990-99**



Source: U.S. Council of Economic Advisors (2001).



## Data from the EFAS Provider Survey

Below, we review the provider survey data available for examining how providers believe the EFAS has changed in response to the forces discussed above.

### Overview of Data

As part of the survey, EFAS agencies were asked whether the use of their services had changed during the previous 3 years, from 1997 to 2000. For respondents who reported a change, we obtained the approximate percentage increase or decrease in the number of meals, clients, or client agencies they served. Information was also obtained on (1) changes in the amount of food available to the providers over the 3-year period; (2) changes in the frequency with which the respondents had to turn away clients or client agencies due to lack of food; and (3) respondents' perceptions of whether they could handle a future increase in the need for their services, and if they could, how large an increase.

### Limitations

In assessing the results reported below, several significant data limitations need to be kept in mind. Perhaps most important, the data generally reflect agencies' *perceptions* concerning changes in service usage, rather than actual changes based on service records. In addition, the accuracy of the information reported depends heavily on providers' ability to recall experiences from 3 years ago.

Because of the highly decentralized nature of the EFAS and its heavy reliance on volunteers, many EFAS providers do not maintain accurate or consistent records of their services. Further, many of the records that *are* kept are not consistent across providers and, even within a provider type, in the measures used. (For instance, pantries that keep records may measure their services in terms of pounds distributed, total household visits, the number of households served, or some similar measure.) To address this lack of consistency in recordkeeping and obtain comparable data from a broad range of agencies, the question sequences in the

provider survey focused on provider *perceptions*. Some agencies may have consulted records in developing their answers, but most probably did not.

Another limitation results from the fact that the questions were about changes over a 3-year period. Because of this, the sample for these data includes only those providers who were in operation during the entire period; providers who had been in operation for less than 3 years at the time of the interviews, and those who had been in operation 3 years prior to the study but had stopped providing EFAS services before the survey was administered, could not be included in this questioning sequence. Omitting these two groups may have had substantial effect on our estimates of change in EFAS usage, but we lack information with which to assess the net effect. (We do not have precise data on the number of organizations that have left the system in the past 3 years. However, we do know that, as reported in appendix A, at least 156 agencies in our sample had apparently once been operating but had stopped doing so. Also, we do know from tabulations in previous chapters that 18 percent of emergency kitchens and 28 percent of food pantries have entered the system in the past 3 years.)

In addition, to encourage respondents to give their "best estimates" of the variables of interest despite uncertainty as to the exact values, the questions on changes were asked using intervals expressed as percentages. This makes it necessary to impose certain assumptions when computing an average estimate of net change. In parts of the analysis that follow, we directly report frequency distributions of responses in terms of ranges. It is also useful, however, to make estimates of average *net changes*. To do this, we first imputed values equal to the midpoint of the interval selected by each provider and then calculated the average net change. (In these calculations, the figure used if a provider selected the highest interval category—more than 200 percent—was 220 percent.)<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>55</sup>This category is not shown separately in the tables we present because in preparing the table the intervals in the question were collapsed into a smaller number of categories for clarity.

## Changes in Use of Services

All five types of EFAS agencies included in this study reported an increase in use of their services over the 1997-2000 period. Here we review these findings.

### Findings

For emergency kitchens, approximately half the respondents indicated that the number of meals they were serving increased during the preceding 3 years (table 7.1). Thirty-five percent reported serving about the same number of meals, and approximately 14 percent reported serving fewer meals.

About half of those serving more meals reported a 10- to 25-percent increase during the 3-year period. About 30 percent reported an increase of more than 25 percent. The sizes of the reported decreases in meals served tended to be somewhat smaller, with only 11 percent of respondents reporting decreases in excess of 25 percent.<sup>56</sup>

Kitchens reported an average net increase in use of 12 percent between 1997 and 2000. This translates into a *yearly* average increase of about 4 percent (fig. 7.4).

The pattern of responses observed for pantries is similar to that for kitchens. However, a somewhat higher percentage of pantries reported that the use of their services (measured in terms of the number of households served) had increased, and the average net increase was slightly higher than for kitchens, 17 percent, or about 5 percent per year.

The percentages of food banks and food rescue organizations reporting increased use of their services (measured in terms of the number of agencies served) were somewhat greater—75 and 74 percent, respectively. The average annual net changes were approximately 7 percent for food banks and 11 percent for food rescue organizations.

Somewhat fewer emergency food organizations (EFOs)—approximately 40 percent—reported increas-

<sup>56</sup>As with the other tabulations in this report, the data reported in the text on changes in services supplied are not weighted by size of provider. Thus, for instance, a 6-percent change in a large kitchen counts the same as a 6-percent change in a small one. As discussed later in the text, large agencies have, on average, experienced larger changes. Thus our estimates of the changes would be somewhat larger if weights were used. However, the basic pattern of results would not be different.

es in the number of agencies they served between 1997 and 2000. In interpreting this finding, it is important to remember that the EFOs are tied specifically to TEFAP; thus, their observed changes may not reflect broader changes in the much larger private component of the EFAS.

It is somewhat difficult for us to put these changes in service usage into perspective because we lack comparable data on observed changes over a different 3-year period. However, overall, the changes reported appear to be substantial.

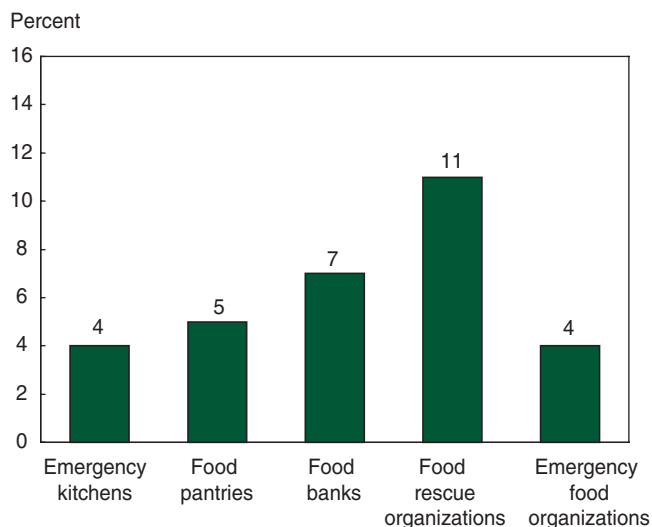
### Patterns of Change in Relation to Provider Characteristics and Locational Variables

To determine whether there were relationships between changes in use and the characteristics or locations of providers, we examined reported changes in service use across different types of locations.

**Kitchens.** For kitchens, the characteristic that appears most strongly related to increases in the number of meals served is kitchen size (table 7.2). Large kitchens were about 13 percentage points more likely than small kitchens to report an increase in meals served; also, the average net change in the number of meals served by large kitchens over the 3-year period was substantially higher than for small ones.

Location in a ZIP Code area with a very high (or very low) poverty rate did not seem to systematically affect

Figure 7.4  
Annual increase in the use of EFAS services, 1997-2000



Source: National Emergency Food Assistance System Survey (2000).

the probability of reporting an increase.<sup>57</sup> Similarly, as shown in the next two panels of the table, there seem to be no clear patterns linking the racial composition of the ZIP Code area with reported rates of change in kitchen use.<sup>58</sup>

State-level data were also linked to the kitchen information on the file. A change in State population does not appear to be closely related to changes in demand, nor are changes in State food stamp caseloads or in State per capita personal incomes. Classifying the data by region of the country also fails to reveal any clear-cut patterns.

<sup>57</sup>The text discusses the relationship between changes in kitchen use and levels of poverty. It would also be interesting to relate changes in kitchen use to changes in poverty. However, the available ZIP Code-based data do not enable us to conduct this analysis.

<sup>58</sup>It is possible that five-digit ZIP Codes are too fine a level of aggregation with which to meaningfully examine the data. However, we believe that three-digit ZIP Code areas would be too large to represent neighborhoods.

**Pantries.** Metropolitan status and pantry size appear to be related to changes in the number of households served by pantries (table 7.3). Large pantries were much more likely than small ones to report an increase (72 percent versus 37 percent). Also, 55 percent of metropolitan pantries reported an increase in number of households served, compared with 47 percent of nonmetropolitan pantries. Interestingly, neither changes in the size of the State population nor decreases in the number of food stamp participants appear closely connected with increases in the number of households served by pantries.

**Food Banks.** Changes in demand for services appear to be strongly related to the size of food banks. While similar percentages of medium-size and large food banks reported increases, the percentage of small food banks reporting increases was 18 to 20 percentage points lower (table 7.4). The percentage of the State population living in a metropolitan area was also positively associated with higher growth.<sup>59</sup>

<sup>59</sup>Tabulations of characteristics were not done for food rescue organizations and emergency food organizations because of small sample sizes.

**Table 7.1—Changes in use of service reported by EFAS agencies, 1997-2000**

Increase/decrease in service	Type of EFAS provider				
	Kitchens	Pantries	Food banks organizations	Food rescue	Emergency food organizations
	<i>Percent</i>				
<b>Changes in the use of services<sup>1</sup></b>					
More	47.7	52.9	75.2	73.8	38.8
Fewer	14.1	10.9	2.5	1.5	4.9
About the same	35.2	33.5	20.5	23.1	53.4
Missing data	3.0	2.8	1.9	1.5	2.9
<b>Percent increase in the use of services<sup>2</sup></b>					
Less than 10	15.3	11.8	14.5	8.3	17.5
10 to 25	52.5	49.5	52.1	37.5	42.5
26 to 50	19.9	20.1	21.9	29.2	27.5
More than 50	10.3	15.6	9.5	20.8	7.5
Missing data	2.0	3.0	2.1	4.2	5.0
<b>Percent decrease in the use of services<sup>3</sup></b>					
Less than 10	35.5	23.4	37.5	100.0	60.0
10 to 25	53.3	45.9	37.5	0.0	40.0
26 to 50	8.0	23.0	25.0	0.0	0.0
More than 50	2.7	4.7	0.0	0.0	0.0
Missing data	0.4	3.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
<b>Average net change</b>	<b>+12.2</b>	<b>+16.5</b>	<b>+21.1</b>	<b>+34.8</b>	<b>+10.9</b>
<b>Sample size (number)</b>	<b>1,257</b>	<b>1,154</b>	<b>322</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>103</b>

<sup>1</sup>Services = Meals served for emergency kitchens; households served for pantries; and agencies served for food banks, food rescue organizations, and emergency food organizations. <sup>2</sup>For agencies with increases. <sup>3</sup>For agencies with decreases.

Note: The sample includes only EFAS agencies operating in 1997, based on responses to the question, "When did this agency begin operating at this location?" Source: National Emergency Food Assistance System Survey (2000).

## Comparisons With Other Data Sets

**U.S. Conference of Mayors Survey.** As it has done periodically since 1985, the U.S. Conference of Mayors conducted a survey of officials in selected cities in the year 2000 to obtain information about hunger and homelessness. The survey questionnaire was sent to local officials in each city selected, and they were asked to gather information from EFAS service providers and other knowledgeable respondents in their respective cities.

Based on data collected in the 2000 survey, the Conference of Mayors estimated that the demand for EFAS food had increased by 17 percent during the previous 12 months. Its 1999 and 1998 surveys had produced annual estimates of 18 percent and 14 percent, respectively, implying a total increase in demand for EFAS food of approximately 57 percent over the 3-year period.<sup>60</sup>

The Conference of Mayors data thus suggest a considerably larger increase in the use of EFAS services than do the data from the current survey. However, it is important to note that the data from these two surveys are not directly comparable. Unlike the survey used for this study, the U.S. Conference of Mayors Survey is not based on a nationally representative sample. Also the direct respondents are city officials rather than EFAS providers.

**Current Population Survey Data.** Another source that provides information on possible changes in the use of the EFAS is the Current Population Survey (CPS), conducted monthly by the U.S. Census Bureau. The CPS is designed to provide the basis for the Federal Government's official unemployment statistics and to obtain data on other social and economic indicators. In one month of each year since 1995, CPS respondents who passed certain screening criteria have been asked whether they or anyone in their household had used a food pantry or an emergency kitchen during the previous 12 months.<sup>61</sup> Analysis of these data is complicated by the fact that both the survey-screening criteria and the month the survey has been administered have changed several times between 1995 and 1999. Furthermore, the CPS sample frame omits people who do not live in homes. This omission of the homeless may represent a significant limitation in a study of the EFAS, particularly a study of emergency kitchens. However, the sampling procedures have essentially been constant

<sup>60</sup>U.S. Conference of Mayors (2000).

<sup>61</sup>In general, the screening criteria are based on household income and are designed to avoid asking questions about food security for higher-income households for which they are not relevant.

during the relevant period, mitigating some of these effects for time series analysis of changes.

Within the context of these qualifications, table 7.5 presents preliminary tabulations of the relevant data. These tabulations have not yet been officially released by the Government and must be considered preliminary; thus, they should be treated with considerable caution.

The estimated percentage of U.S. households using food pantries "in the previous year" has been somewhat unstable during the 1995 through 1999 period. While it declined from 2.96 percent to 2.36 percent between 1995 and 1999, there is considerable fluctuation overall in the numbers from year to year in both directions. When 1997 is used as the starting point of the data series, placing the data in a roughly comparable period to that covered by the EFAS provider survey, an increase in pantry use (from 2.10 to 2.36 percent) is observed.<sup>62</sup>

A similar pattern is seen in the CPS data on use of emergency kitchens. The proportion of households estimated to have used emergency kitchens dropped from 0.46 of 1 percent in 1995 to 0.40 of 1 percent in 1999. Again, however, the conclusions seem to be quite sensitive to the reference year. If the period 1997-99 is examined, the estimated use rises from 0.35 to 0.40 of 1 percent, an increase of 14 percent.

**Second Harvest Data.** Another time series data set that provides information on the size of the EFAS is provided by America's Second Harvest. It contains the amounts of food that America's Second Harvest food banks report distributing to their affiliates each year.<sup>63</sup> This increased substantially between 1998 and 1999—from 1.18 billion pounds of food to 1.37 billion pounds, an increase of 16 percent (table 7.6).<sup>64</sup> (We focus on only these 2 years because available data from 1997 are not comparable and 2000 data have not yet been compiled.)

It is important to note that these data are not directly comparable with those contained in the other data sets. The Second Harvest data set provides information on the *supply* of food to EFAS providers, while the other data sets relate more directly to the *use* of EFAS service.

<sup>62</sup>Given the large sample sizes in the CPS, the food insecurity rates are measured with considerable precision and the differences are very unlikely to have been due to chance variation.

<sup>63</sup>All Second Harvest food banks are included in this administrative report.

<sup>64</sup>Based on internal administration data provided by America's Second Harvest.

## Summary

The data sources we have reviewed suggest that there have been increases in the use of EFAS services over the 1997-2000 period. The results of the present survey imply an increase of 4 to 5 percent annually over this period. However, the findings of the U.S. Conference of Mayors suggest a considerably larger average increase of approximately 14 percent per year during the same period. The CPS data on the percentage of

households using the EFAS show an annual increase of about 7 percent for kitchens, while the America's Second Harvest data show a 16-percent increase over the 1-year period for which comparable data are available.

In comparing these figures, several points should be noted. First, the four sources are reporting information on conceptually different (although related) variables. For instance, the current study asked about increases in actual number of clients served (or, in the case of

**Table 7.2—Changes in number of meals served by emergency kitchens by location characteristics, 1997-2000**

Location-related characteristics	Kitchens reporting increase in number of meals served	Average change in number of meals served over all kitchens in category	Sample size <i>Number</i>
	-----Percent-----		
<b>Size of kitchen</b>			
Small	43.0	8.7	362
Medium	44.9	13.3	421
Large	56.1	14.9	467
<b>In ZIP Codes with:<sup>1</sup></b>			
Less than 20 percent poverty	47.3	12.1	561
20 to 30 percent poverty	48.6	14.5	229
More than 30 percent poverty	48.0	12.5	385
<b>In ZIP Codes with:<sup>1</sup></b>			
More than 80 percent White	45.5	12.4	362
70 to 80 percent White	41.8	9.2	116
Less than 70 percent White	50.9	13.4	697
<b>In ZIP Codes with:<sup>1</sup></b>			
Less than 10 percent African American	43.9	12.4	423
10 to 30 percent African American	50.1	13.1	242
More than 30 percent African American	51.0	12.6	510
<b>Percent change in State population, 1996-98<sup>2</sup></b>			
Decrease or increase of less than 1	45.7	10.0	574
Increase of 1 to 3	50.3	14.4	454
Increase of more than 3	47.7	13.5	229
<b>Percent change in State food stamp participants, 1996-98<sup>3</sup></b>			
Decrease of more than 25 .	43.9	10.8	516
Decrease 20 to 25	48.1	12.8	352
Decrease or increase of less than 20	51.2	13.4	389
<b>Percent increase in State per capita personal income, 1995-98<sup>4</sup></b>			
More than 10	51.1	14.0	235
9 to 10	48.4	13.9	619
8 to 9	43.8	8.1	184
Less than 8	46.1	9.9	219
<b>Location</b>			
Metropolitan	47.6	11.8	1,199
Nonmetropolitan	48.2	14.6	58
<b>Region</b>			
West	50.5	18.2	293
Midwest	44.9	9.2	298
South	47.9	11.3	300
Northeast	47.8	11.0	366

<sup>1</sup>Based on 1990 U.S. Census data. <sup>2</sup>Based on U.S. Census projections. <sup>3</sup>Based on USDA program data. <sup>4</sup>Based on 1999 U.S. Statistical Abstract.  
Note: The sample includes only kitchens operating since 1997 or earlier, based on responses to the question, "When did this kitchen begin operating at this location?" Another potentially interesting variable, recent changes in State poverty levels, is not available.  
Source: National Emergency Food Assistance System Survey (2000), weighted tabulations, and other sources indicated above.

kitchens, number of meals served), whereas the U.S. Conference of Mayors study asked about changes in “need,” which could be different if significant proportions of the need were not being met.

The CPS asks whether respondents have *ever* used the EFAS during the 12-month period prior to the survey. Thus, with the CPS, if the same people began using

EFAS services more intensively or over more time, it is possible that the actual usage and need for the services could go up without the observed number of users increasing. Further, the reference periods covered by the CPS data and our study are not exactly the same. The America’s Second Harvest data only show food distributed by food banks; they do not pertain directly to service provision at the pantry and kitchen level.

**Table 7.3—Changes in number of households served by food pantries by location characteristics, 1997-2000**

Location-related characteristics	Pantries reporting increase in number of households served	Average change in number of households served over all pantries in category	Sample size
	-----Percent-----		Number
<b>Size of pantry</b>			
Small	37.3	7.6	428
Medium	57.5	19.6	431
Large	71.6	26.5	277
<b>Location</b>			
Metropolitan	55.2	17.5	837
Nonmetropolitan	46.9	14.2	317
<b>In ZIP Codes with:<sup>1</sup></b>			
Less than 20 percent poverty	51.1	15.8	762
20 to 30 percent poverty	57.0	18.5	181
More than 30 percent poverty	60.3	19.9	142
<b>In ZIP Codes with:<sup>1</sup></b>			
More than 80 percent White	51.4	16.4	686
70 to 80 percent White	53.9	18.2	97
Less than 70 percent White	57.2	16.7	302
<b>In ZIP Codes with:<sup>1</sup></b>			
Less than 10 percent African American	52.3	17.1	688
10 to 30 percent African American	49.2	14.8	179
More than 30 percent African American	59.5	17.0	218
<b>Percent change in State population, 1996-98<sup>2</sup></b>			
Decrease or increase of less than 1	53.1	15.6	481
Increase of 1 to 3	50.7	16.8	445
Increase of more than 3	57.1	17.9	228
<b>Percent change in State food stamp participants, 1996-98<sup>3</sup></b>			
Decrease of more than 25	52.0	15.8	433
Decrease of 20 to 25	54.2	16.2	254
Decrease of less than 20	53.0	17.4	467
<b>Percent increase in State per capita personal income, 1995-98<sup>4</sup></b>			
More than 10	49.9	19.3	246
9 to 10	58.1	17.8	501
8 to 9	47.5	12.8	200
Less than 8	48.5	13.8	207
<b>Region</b>			
West	56.2	18.3	184
Midwest	49.5	15.8	313
South	51.1	15.5	415
Northeast	57.7	17.8	242

<sup>1</sup>Based on 1990 U.S. Census data. <sup>2</sup>Based on U.S. Census projections. <sup>3</sup>Based on USDA program data. <sup>4</sup>Based on 1999 U.S. Statistical Abstract.  
Note: The sample includes only kitchens operating since 1997 or earlier, based on responses to the question, "When did this kitchen begin operating at this location?"

Source: National Emergency Food Assistance System Survey (2000), weighted tabulations, and other sources indicated above.

In addition to these conceptual differences across the surveys, there are substantial *methodological* differences. Three of the four sources rely largely on retrospective self-reports rather than detailed records; the America's Second Harvest information draws on actual records, but is based on the administrative records of food banks rather than those of direct service providers such as pantries and kitchens.

The CPS, in contrast to the other sources, is a household survey, but it is known to underrepresent at least one part of the population that uses the EFAS—the homeless. Also, it is important to note that the CPS estimates of EFAS usage have fluctuated somewhat over the 5 years during which they have been compiled, and it happens that 1997, the base year in the current comparisons, was the year with the lowest

reported usage, particularly for pantries. It is possible that for some reason the CPS estimate for that year is somewhat anomalous and that this atypical estimate is partly driving the CPS results. If, for instance, 1996 is used as the base year instead of 1997, the observed change in CPS measures for pantry use between the base year and 1999 is a *decrease* rather than the increase observed using 1997 as the baseline. Also, with the 1996 start date, the observed increase in kitchen usage becomes much smaller.

Overall we believe that, when taken together, the results reviewed above provide evidence that there may have been an increase in the use of EFAS services during the 1997-2000 period. Additional data are needed to assess whether any trend exists and if so, its direction and magnitude.

**Table 7.4—Changes in number of agencies served by food banks by location characteristics, 1997-2000**

Location-related characteristics	Food banks reporting increase in number of agencies	Average change in number of agencies served over all food banks in category	Sample size
	-----Percent-----		Number
<b>Size</b>			
Small	62.4	16.7	109
Medium	82.5	23.7	154
Large	80.4	22.7	56
<b>Percent change in State population, 1996-98<sup>1</sup></b>			
Decrease or increase of less than 1	73.9	16.2	92
Increase of 1 to 3	76.0	21.0	146
Increase of more than 3	75.0	26.6	84
<b>Percent change in State food stamp participants, 1996-98<sup>2</sup></b>			
Decrease of more than 25	79.2	25.5	125
Decrease of 20 to 25	69.9	18.8	56
Decrease or increase of less than 20	73.8	18.0	141
<b>Percent increase in State per capita personal income, 1995-98<sup>3</sup></b>			
More than 10	74.4	22.2	78
9 to 10	82.0	22.4	133
8 to 9	65.9	18.4	41
Less than 8	68.6	19.0	70
<b>Percent State population that is in a metropolitan area<sup>3</sup></b>			
Less than 75	69.7	20.5	122
75 to 85	75.2	18.5	109
85 to 95	80.5	26.8	41
More than 95	84.0	23.8	50
<b>Region</b>			
West	72.8	22.4	103
Midwest	68.7	15.7	67
South	80.0	25.6	101
Northeast	78.4	16.7	51

<sup>1</sup>Based on U.S. Census projections. <sup>2</sup>Based on USDA program data. <sup>3</sup>Based on 1999 U.S. Statistical Abstract. Note: The sample includes only those kitchens operating since 1997 or earlier, based on responses to the question, "When did this kitchen begin operating at this location?"  
Source: National Emergency Food Assistance System Survey (2000), weighted tabulations, and other sources indicated above.

**Table 7.5—Households using food pantries and emergency kitchens, 1995-99**

Providers	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
			<i>Percent</i>		
Food pantries <sup>1,2</sup>	2.96	2.49	2.10	2.52	2.36
Emergency kitchens <sup>2</sup>	0.46	0.38	0.35	0.36	0.40

<sup>1</sup>The relevant question for pantries was: "In the last 12 months did (you/your or other adults in the household) ever get emergency food from a church, a food pantry, or food bank?" The kitchen question is comparable. Note that these questions did not capture frequency or duration of use.

<sup>2</sup>Data do not include the homeless.

Note: Staff of the Economic Research Service tabulated the data for 1995 and 1999. In conducting the tabulations, they used techniques that controlled for changes between years in the survey screening criteria. Data for the intervening years were tabulated by Mathematica Policy Research, Inc., but do not correct for changes in the survey criteria. For the 1 year of overlap in the ERS and MPR tabulations, 1995, the corrections for these changes do not materially affect the results.

Source: U.S. Census, Current Population Survey data.

**Table 7.6—Food distributed by America's Second Harvest food banks, 1997-2000**

Food source	1997	1998	1999	2000
			<i>Million pounds</i>	
Donated food	NA	839.0	988.3	NA
USDA commodities	NA	242.4	279.0	NA
Purchased food	NA	97.9	107.1	NA
<b>Total</b>	<b>NA</b>	<b>1,179.3</b>	<b>1,374.4</b>	<b>NA</b>

NA = Not available.

Source: America's Second Harvest Administration Reports.



## Changes in the Supply of Food to EFAS Agencies

Additional insight into the changes in operations that may have been taking place in EFAS agencies over the past 3 years is provided by their responses to survey questions about their food supplies. When asked whether, and how, the quantity of food they received had changed in the 1997-2000 period, the EFAS providers gave responses that for the most part are consistent with the service-use data reported in the preceding section. About half the kitchens and pantries indicated that they were receiving more food at the time of the survey than they had received 3 years earlier. This percentage is somewhat higher for food banks and food rescue organizations (table 7.7).

### Analysis by Source of Food

We also examined changes in the sources of food (table 7.8). In particular, respondents were asked whether they had added new sources of supplies and whether they had food sources that had increased the amount of food offered since 1997. Slightly fewer than half the pantries and kitchens indicated that this had happened. The new or added sources most commonly mentioned as having

been added are those that receive the most mention in earlier chapters. They include wholesalers and retailers, food banks, and community donations.

Twenty-six percent of kitchens and 19 percent of pantries indicated that they had dropped a food source or substantially reduced their dependence on a particular supplier. The specific types of food sources mentioned in response to this set of questions were similar to those mentioned as having been added by those organizations who reported new sources.

### Incidence of Declining Food

Related to issues of food supply and adequacy is whether agencies found it necessary to decline free or subsidized food that was offered to them (table 7.9). About 20 percent of kitchens and 14 percent of pantries indicated that they had to decline some food. The percentages for food banks and food rescue organizations were considerably higher—45 and 35, respectively. Lack of storage space was by far the most commonly mentioned reason for having to refuse food. In addition, about 10 percent of each type of provider who reported declining free or subsidized food did so because the food was spoiled or the expiration date on the package had passed.

**Table 7.7—Changes in amounts of food received by EFAS agencies, 1997-2000**

Type of change	Type of EFAS provider				
	Kitchens	Pantries	Food banks	Food rescue organizations	Emergency food organizations
	<i>Percent</i>				
<b>Change in amount of food received</b>					
More	43.3	50.2	77.3	73.8	53.4
Less	8.9	8.4	5.0	9.2	14.6
About the same	43.1	38.2	15.8	16.9	26.2
Missing data	4.7	3.2	1.9	0.0	5.8
<b>Percent increase in food,<sup>1</sup></b>					
Less than 10	17.0	16.3	12.9	10.4	14.5
11 to 25	54.3	47.1	45.8	37.5	49.1
26 to 50	15.6	20.6	24.1	31.3	21.8
More than 50	7.9	10.9	14.1	18.8	9.1
Missing data	5.3	5.0	3.2	2.1	5.5
<b>Percent decrease in food<sup>2</sup></b>					
Less than 10	18.7	16.5	12.5	33.3	33.3
11 to 25	2.7	53.7	62.5	16.7	40.0
26 to 50	22.3	23.8	18.8	50.0	13.3
More than 50	4.4	2.5	6.3	0.0	0.0
Missing data	1.9	3.5	0.0	0.0	13.3
<b>Average net change</b>	<b>+10.1</b>	<b>+13.1</b>	<b>+25.6</b>	<b>+29.9</b>	<b>+12.0</b>
<b>Sample size (number)</b>	<b>1,258</b>	<b>1,154</b>	<b>332</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>103</b>

<sup>1</sup>For agencies reporting increases. <sup>2</sup>For agencies reporting decreases. Note: The sample includes only EFAS agencies operating since 1997 or earlier, based on responses to the question, "When did this agency begin operating at this location?"

Source: National Emergency Food Assistance System Survey (2000), weighted tabulations.

**Table 7.8—Changes in sources of food received by EFAS agencies, 1997-2000**

Type of change	Type of EFAS provider				
	Kitchens	Pantries	Food banks	Food rescue organizations	Emergency food organizations
	<i>Percent</i>				
<b>Have sources been added or have sources significantly increased supplies?</b>					
Yes	47.3	43.2	77.6	92.3	43.7
No	47.0	53.4	19.9	7.7	53.4
Missing data	5.7	3.3	2.5	0.0	2.9
<b>Sources added or increased for agencies adding sources</b>					
Allocation from food banks and/or similar nonprofit organizations	35.1	39.3	28.0	11.7	28.9
Wholesaler or retailer	34.0	25.2	51.2	61.7	20.0
Community donations	30.4	36.9	20.8	10.0	20.0
State or Federal programs	9.2	10.3	23.2	3.3	44.4
Farmers or growers	7.7	3.4	30.4	26.7	20.0
Direct donations from manufacturers	6.4	5.0	29.6	10.0	6.7
Other sources	5.0	7.0	9.2	5.0	11.1
Leftovers from places that serve food	4.8	0.7	3.6	35.0	2.2
Food rescue programs	3.9	1.0	4.4	1.7	4.4
<b>Have sources been dropped or significantly reduced supplies?</b>					
Yes	26.3	19.4	46.3	63.1	21.4
No	68.2	76.8	49.4	35.4	77.7
Missing data	5.5	3.8	4.3	1.5	1.0
<b>Sources dropped or reduced for agencies dropping or reducing sources</b>					
Wholesaler or retailer	32.4	27.3	42.3	39.0	27.3
Allocation from food banks and/or similar nonprofit organizations, such as Second Harvest	31.5	32.4	15.4	2.4	4.5
State or Federal programs	20.4	18.5	16.8	4.9	54.5
Community donations	9.7	13.4	7.4	9.8	4.5
Leftovers from places that serve food	5.1	0.6	0.7	24.4	0.0
Direct donations from manufacturers	4.6	8.2	30.9	17.1	13.6
Food rescue programs	4.4	0.8	0.7	2.4	0.0
Other sources	3.3	9.1	8.1	12.2	27.3
Farmers or growers	3.2	1.7	5.4	4.9	0.0
<b>Sample size (number)</b>	<b>1,257</b>	<b>1,154</b>	<b>322</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>103</b>

Source: National Emergency Food Assistance System Survey (2000), weighted tabulations.

**Table 7.9—Incidence of EFAS agencies that declined free or subsidized food**

Foods declined and reasons	Type of EFAS provider				
	Kitchens	Pantries	Food banks	Food rescue organizations	Emergency food organizations
	<i>Percent</i>				
<b>Did agency ever decline free or subsidized foods in past 12 months?</b>					
Yes	20.5	14.5	44.6	35.2	11.0
No	77.8	83.8	53.9	64.8	88.0
Missing data	1.6	1.6	1.5	0.0	0.9
<b>Types of food declined</b>					
Fresh fruit and vegetables	31.7	36.3	40.9	54.8	38.5
Meat, poultry, fish	25.3	27.4	14.2	6.5	30.8
Frozen, canned, dried fruits and vegetables	19.2	23.0	33.5	19.4	46.2
Bread products	15.2	13.1	13.6	16.1	0.0
Complete meals, entrees <sup>1</sup>	12.0	5.7	5.1	6.5	7.7
Dairy products	8.0	9.4	15.3	6.5	23.1
Dry/canned beans, eggs, nuts	7.1	3.1	4.0	6.5	0.0
Cereal, pasta, etc. <sup>2</sup>	6.7	4.2	5.1	3.2	7.7
Desserts	3.2	2.0	10.2	9.7	0.0
Spices and condiments	1.2	1.6	5.7	0.0	0.0
Snack foods	0.4	1.6	13.6	9.7	0.0
Nonjuice beverages	0.3	0.8	8.0	3.2	0.0
Fats and oils	0.2	0.8	1.7	0.0	0.0
Baby food and nutritional supplements	0.0	0.9	2.8	0.0	0.0
<b>Reasons for declining food</b>					
Not enough storage space	41.7	41.6	41.5	32.3	61.5
Food was spoiled or had expired dates	10.5	11.0	10.8	9.7	0.0
Did not need additional food	10.2	5.7	9.7	9.7	0.0
Did not have facilities to process, prepare, or store food	8.2	11.6	5.1	9.7	7.7
No transportation available to pick up food	5.3	7.8	9.1	25.8	0.0
Did not use that type of food	4.2	1.6	4.0	6.5	0.0
Slow demand for this food	3.8	2.4	8.0	9.7	0.0
No refrigerated transportation available	2.8	9.1	5.7	6.5	23.1
Insufficient staff or volunteer labor to obtain or process food	2.0	1.6	1.7	9.7	7.7
Did not have sufficient materials to package food	1.7	0.0	0.6	3.2	0.0
Could not pay for food	0.2	0.4	5.1	3.2	0.0
Other	17.6	15.0	15.3	6.5	38.5
<b>Sample size (number)</b>	<b>1,517</b>	<b>1,617</b>	<b>395</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>117</b>

<sup>1</sup>Includes packaged meals drawing on multiple food groups, such as canned meat and vegetable products or frozen lasagna dinners.

<sup>2</sup>Includes nonbread grain products, such as rice, barley, and noodles.

Source: National Emergency Food Assistance System Survey (2000).

## Possible Indicators of Unmet Needs

The previous section examined limitations in food supply as a possible indication of unmet need. Here we examine some more direct indicators.

### Turning Away People or Client Agencies Due to Lack of Food

Approximately 25 percent of the emergency kitchens reported turning away people in the preceding 12 months (table 7.10 and fig. 7.5). By far the most common reasons for doing so involved substance abuse by clients or other behavioral issues.

Approximately 17 percent of kitchens that had turned people away (about 4 percent of all kitchens) reported doing so for lack of food. About half of these kitchens reported having to do so more than 9 weeks of the year.

About a third of pantries reported turning away clients who requested food. The most common reasons were that clients were not eligible or came at the wrong time. Only 5 percent said that the refusal was directly due to lack of food.

The survey respondents were also asked about changes in the frequency of turning away clients due to lack of food over the past 3 years. Their answers suggest no

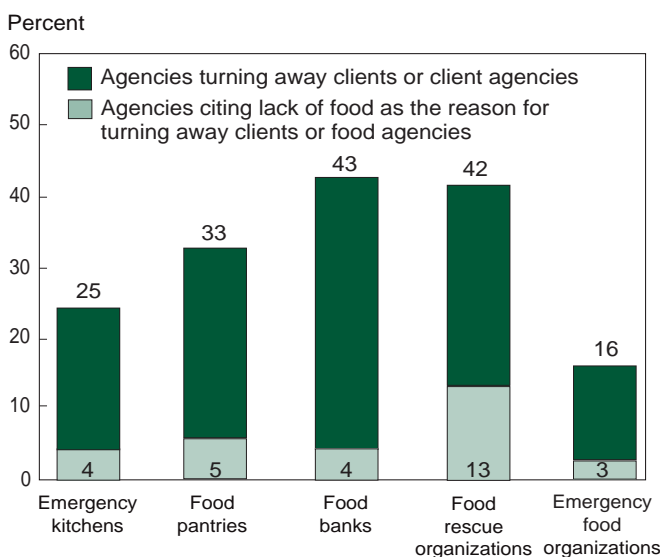
substantial change in unmet need as measured by this dimension. For instance, the majority of kitchens (69 percent) said they never turned away people for lack of food, while most of the rest indicated that the percentage had stayed about the same over the 3-year period. Only 2 percent indicated they were turning away more clients due to a lack of food, whereas 5 percent indicated that they were turning away fewer for this reason. Similar results are seen for pantries. This finding is particularly interesting in light of the fact that about half of pantries and kitchens and about three-fourths of food banks and food rescue organizations reported an increase in the use of their services. (The possibility that EFAS providers may respond to a lack of food by reducing the amount of food distributed to clients will be discussed in the next subsection.)

### Limiting Food Distribution

A less drastic response to being short of food may be to limit the distribution of certain types of food rather than to turn away clients altogether. Approximately 21 percent of emergency kitchens and 39 percent of food pantries reported doing so in the previous 12 months (table 7.11). Among those limiting distribution, about half believed it had caused problems in meeting client needs. The commonly reported reasons for having to limit foods include running out of the foods, not receiving adequate supplies from regular food sources, and not having sufficient funds to purchase the foods.

The types of foods that had to be limited most often were similar to those that EFAS agencies reported needing more of. In particular, meats, poultry, and fish, along with fresh fruits and vegetables, were often mentioned.

Figure 7.5  
Incidence of EFAS agencies turning away clients or client agencies



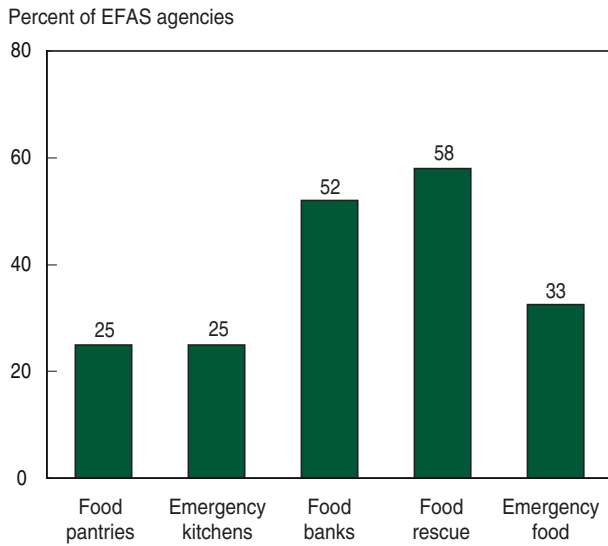
Source: National Emergency Food Assistance System Survey (2000), weighted tabulations.

### Agency Perceptions of Unmet Needs

Survey respondents were also asked directly whether they believed there were additional food-related services they were unable to fill. Approximately one-quarter of both kitchens and pantries believed that there are unmet needs for their services (table 7.12 and fig. 7.6). The proportions of food banks and food rescue organizations reporting unmet needs are greater—around 55 percent. This difference may reflect the fact that food banks and food rescue organizations supply food to substantial numbers of kitchens and pantries, so that even if there are only a few kitchens and pantries with unmet needs in a food bank's service area, the bank may view itself as facing unmet needs. It is also possible that operators of the food bank and food rescue organizations have a broader perspective than local providers of areas of possible need.

Figure 7.6

### Unmet need perceived by EFAS agencies



Source: National Emergency Food Assistance System Survey (2000), weighted tabulations.

Among agencies reporting unmet needs, most identified a need both to provide more services to existing clients and to serve additional clients. Additional services mentioned included extending hours of operation and increasing the amount and variety of foods. One-fifth of kitchens and pantries also wanted to provide nutrition education to their clients. Other target groups that the agencies would like to serve are people outside their service areas (in the case of all the providers) and additional agencies (in the case of food banks and food rescue organizations).

### Conclusions

A somewhat complicated picture of unmet needs emerges from these tabulations. It appears that many—perhaps the majority of—agencies perceive themselves as keeping up adequately with the need for their services. Only about 25 percent of kitchens and 33 percent of pantries reported turning people away, and the reasons involved client behavior more than lack of food. Similarly, most of the direct-provider agencies reported they had not had to limit the distribution of food due to lack of supplies.

Additional, and persuasive, evidence that client needs are being met reasonably well at most kitchens and pantries is that a substantial majority of these providers, when asked directly, said that they did not perceive unfilled needs for their services. (Further support for this conclusion will be provided in the next section, when we see that most agencies believe they could respond effectively to at least a modest increase in need.)

However, the numbers summarized above also suggest that—while it may not be typical—there probably are significant unmet needs for the EFAS, considering that some agencies have had to turn away clients and some have had to limit food distribution. Further, more than half of food banks and food rescue organizations responded in the affirmative to the question on unmet needs.

**Table 7.10—Incidence of EFAS agencies turning away clients or client agencies**

Variables surveyed	Type of EFAS provider				
	Kitchens	Pantries	Food banks	Food rescue organizations	Emergency food organizations
	<i>Percent</i>				
<b>During past 12 months, have turned away people or agencies that requested food</b>	25.2	33.1	42.8	42.0	16.2
<b>Reasons for turning people or agencies away<sup>1</sup></b>					
Lacked food to serve clients	16.5	16.0	8.3	29.7	21.1
Drug or alcohol problem or behavior problem	70.5	9.4	NA	NA	NA
Came at wrong time or came too often	5.2	27.1	NA	NA	NA
Client lacked proper identification	0.3	5.0	NA	NA	NA
Client/agency ineligible or could not prove eligibility	2.4	41.4	69.2	35.1	68.4
Client/agency unable to afford fees	0.8	0.0	0.6	0.0	0.0
Not located in service area	NA	6.6	4.7	2.7	0.0
Agency did not serve target population	NA	NA	1.2	2.7	0.0
Not able to provide transportation	NA	NA	0.0	2.7	0.0
Lack of processing/storage facilities	NA	NA	6.5	8.1	0.0
Agency was selling food	NA	NA	3.0	8.1	0.0
Agency was not a nonprofit	NA	NA	3.6	2.7	0.0
Duplication within service area	NA	NA	4.1	5.4	15.8
Agency did not pay bills	NA	NA	1.8	0.0	0.0
Agency placed conditions on distribution	NA	NA	1.2	0.0	0.0
Bad record keeping	NA	NA	1.8	0.0	0.0
Agency did not meet food safety and handling guidelines	NA	NA	0.6	8.1	0.0
Other	7.9	7.3	8.3	10.8	5.3
<b>Number of weeks turned away people in past 12 months for lack of food<sup>2</sup></b>					
Less than 5	37.2	52.9	69.2	18.2	75.0
5 to 9	17.0	18.1	0.0	18.2	0.0
10 to 24	32.4	17.4	7.7	18.2	25.0
25 to 40	1.4	4.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
More than 40	10.7	5.0	7.7	45.5	0.0
Missing data	1.3	2.6	15.2	0.0	0.0
<b>Compared with 3 years ago, how often are EFAS agencies turning away clients due to lack of food?<sup>3</sup></b>					
More often	2.2	4.3	8.4	7.7	2.9
Less often	5.1	9.4	5.9	4.6	4.9
About the same	21.0	29.4	32.3	35.4	35.9
Never turn away clients for lack of food	69.5	54.7	51.6	50.8	52.4
Missing data	2.3	2.2	1.8	1.5	3.9
<b>Sample size (number)</b>	<b>1,517</b>	<b>1,617</b>	<b>395</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>117</b>

<sup>1</sup>Includes only EFAS agencies that turned away people or agencies seeking food during the past 12 months.

<sup>2</sup>Includes only EFAS agencies that turned away people or agencies seeking food during the past 12 months due to lack of food.

<sup>3</sup>Includes only EFAS agencies operating since 1997 or earlier, based on responses to the question, "When did this agency begin operating at this location?"

NA = Not applicable

Source: National Emergency Food Assistance System Survey (2000), weighted tabulations.

**Table 7.11—Incidence of EFAS agencies limiting distribution of food in past 12 months**

Variables surveyed	Type of EFAS provider				
	Kitchens	Pantries	Food banks	Food rescue organizations	Emergency food organizations
	<i>Percent</i>				
<b>Did agency limit distribution of certain kinds of foods in past 12 months?</b>					
Yes	21.1	38.5	53.9	31.8	32.5
No	77.1	60.2	45.1	67.0	66.7
Missing	1.7	1.3	1.0	1.1	0.9
<b>Was that a problem in meeting client needs?</b>					
Yes	56.9	59.4	81.2	46.4	60.5
No	42.2	39.5	18.8	50.0	39.5
Missing data	0.9	1.1	0.0	3.6	0.0
<b>Types of food limited for agencies limiting certain types</b>					
Meat, poultry, fish	59.9	59.0	72.8	30.8	65.2
Fresh fruit and vegetables	32.5	21.8	23.7	38.5	17.4
Frozen, canned, dried fruits and vegetables	24.6	33.5	42.2	7.7	43.5
Dairy products	21.1	25.7	20.8	30.8	34.8
Cereal, pasta, etc. <sup>1</sup>	18.8	26.7	23.1	0.0	13.0
Dry/canned beans, eggs, nuts	16.2	17.0	27.7	0.0	21.7
Bread products	8.5	7.3	4.6	15.4	17.4
Fats and oils	8.0	7.1	7.5	0.0	4.3
Snack foods	7.0	2.9	6.9	0.0	4.3
Complete meals, entrees <sup>2</sup>	5.6	4.9	9.8	7.7	4.3
Desserts	5.6	2.6	5.2	0.0	0.0
Baby food and nutritional supplements	5.3	6.9	10.4	0.0	0.0
Nonjuice beverages	5.2	3.2	11.0	0.0	4.3
Spices and condiments	4.6	4.3	5.2	0.0	0.0
<b>Reasons for limiting food distribution</b>					
Ran out of these foods	33.4	39.3	38.7	38.5	26.1
Did not receive these food types in sufficient quantity from TEFAP or other USDA distributions	22.0	22.4	32.9	15.4	73.9
Received little or none of this type of food from usual suppliers	30.3	27.6	30.1	30.8	30.4
Could not afford to purchase these types of food from wholesale/retail supplier	18.1	13.3	6.4	0.0	13.0
Other	18.2	22.1	13.3	23.1	26.1
Missing data	3.0	1.9	5.2	7.7	0.0
<b>Sample size (number)</b>	<b>1,517</b>	<b>1,617</b>	<b>395</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>117</b>

<sup>1</sup>Includes nonbread grain products, such as rice, barley, and noodles.

<sup>2</sup>Includes packaged meals drawing on multiple food groups, such as canned meat and vegetable products or frozen lasagna dinners.

Source: National Emergency Food Assistance System Survey (2000), weighted tabulations.

**Table 7.12—Agency perceptions of unmet needs for their services**

Need-related variables	Type of EFAS provider				
	Kitchens	Pantries	Food banks	Food rescue organizations	Emergency food organizations
	<i>Percent</i>				
<b>Are there current additional needs for food-related services EFAS agencies are not able to fill?</b>					
Yes	25.1	25.4	52.4	58.0	32.5
No	70.5	71.6	45.1	40.9	66.7
Missing data	4.4	3.0	2.5	1.1	0.9
<b>Perceived additional needs<sup>1</sup></b>					
More services to current clients	90.6	86.1	91.8	80.4	81.6
Services to new clients	82.0	80.1	87.4	84.3	92.1
<b>Additional services mentioned<sup>2</sup></b>					
Serve more meals each week	21.2	NA	NA	NA	NA
Provide nutrition education	18.9	20.3	1.1	7.3	6.5
Provide increased amount of food	14.7	24.7	35.3	48.8	45.2
Provide increased variety of food	12.7	23.4	28.9	31.7	41.9
Extend hours of operation	12.0	9.8	10.0	7.3	16.1
Provide food resource management	4.5	6.5	14.2	14.6	3.2
Other	63.6	59.6	67.9	46.3	58.1
<b>Additional groups of clients mentioned<sup>3</sup></b>					
Clients outside of service area	15.0	12.0	19.3	27.9	11.4
People not meeting income guidelines	6.8	8.6	NA	NA	NA
People without referrals	6.5	9.6	NA	NA	NA
Non-U.S. citizens	5.7	2.9	NA	NA	NA
Households without children	5.3	3.9	NA	NA	NA
More pantries	NA	NA	32.0	34.9	42.9
More shelters	NA	NA	17.1	34.9	22.9
More emergency kitchens	NA	NA	16.6	25.6	11.4
Other	74.3	70.8	56.9	46.5	54.3
<b>Sample size (number)</b>	<b>1,517</b>	<b>1,617</b>	<b>395</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>117</b>

<sup>1</sup>Among those indicating additional needs.

<sup>2</sup>Among those needing additional services for current clients.

<sup>3</sup>Among those needing services for new clients.

Source: National Emergency Food Assistance System Survey (2000), weighted tabulations.



## Capacity To Handle Future Changes in Demand

A further important issue is whether the EFAS has the resources to respond effectively to increased needs for its services if they arise. The current structure and size of the emergency food network reflects a long period of economic prosperity in the United States, one in which poverty rates have decreased significantly. An end to this prosperity, with the country in a recession and more people once again becoming impoverished, would likely increase the need for EFAS services—perhaps substantially. Would the current system be able to meet that need?

Most providers believe they could cope with an increased demand for their services over the next year (table 7.13 and fig. 7.7). Ninety percent of kitchens and 87 percent of pantries say that they could respond successfully to at least a 5-percent increase in demand, and roughly 69 percent of kitchens and 61 percent of pantries believe that they could handle at least a 10-percent increase. When respondents were asked about a 20-percent increase, the percentage responding affirmatively decreased substantially; only about a third thought they could handle that volume.<sup>65</sup>

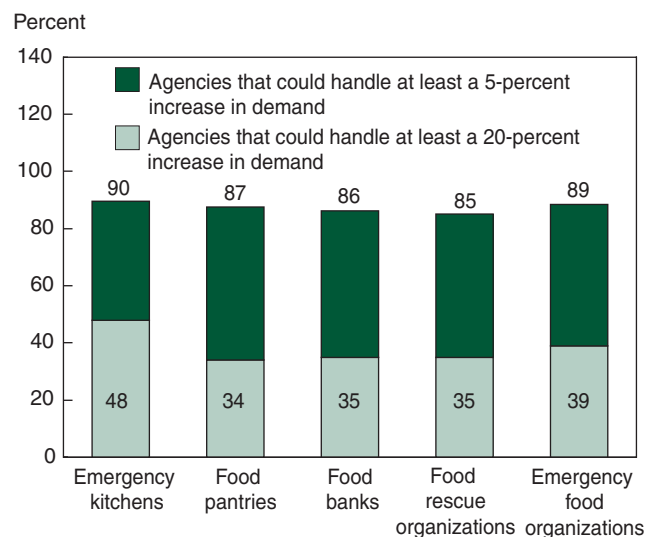
Overall, these data seem to indicate some capacity in the system to handle increased need, should it arise. The data also suggest that most EFAS providers believe that they are meeting the current needs for their services (since a belief that additional demand could be accommodated presumably reflects a perception that current demand is being adequately met). As

<sup>65</sup>A somewhat puzzling question is why the percentages of kitchens and pantries that said they could handle a 5-percent increase in demand is greater than the percentages (shown in table 7.12) that said that they did not face unmet needs. For instance, 89 percent of kitchens said that they could handle a 5-percent increase in demand, whereas only 71 percent said that they did not have unmet needs. This means that some kitchens must have given the seemingly paradoxical set of answers that they had unmet needs but nevertheless they could handle an increase in demand for their services. How could this be? While we cannot know exactly what was in respondents' minds when they answered the two lines of questioning, one conjecture is the following: it may be that many of the respondents who answered positively to the questions about unmet needs were thinking broadly of additional services they could provide and additional client groups that they could serve; whereas in answering the question about whether they could respond to a 5-percent increase in demand, they may have been thinking more narrowly of a 5-percent increase in their current clientele for the services they are currently providing.

discussed in the previous section, EFAS providers appear to have coped reasonably well with the increase in demand for food between 1997 and 2000, providing additional evidence of their ability to deal with future increases in food demand. However, it is also important to note that most respondents thought they could accommodate only a *limited* increase in demand—less than 20 percent. Thus, additional support for the system might be required in the context of a very large increase in need. Furthermore, we do not know exactly how respondents interpreted the concept of responding to increased demand. In particular, we do not know the extent to which they had in mind stretching existing food supplies, as compared with tapping additional resources to maintain their current levels of service.

During the questioning sequence in the interviews, once a maximum potential increase in services had been determined, respondents were asked what constraints there would be on increasing their services beyond that point. As shown in table 7.13, a broad range of answers was received, including lack of volunteers and funding and difficulty obtaining food supplies. The most common response, however, was that the respondent thought his or her agency would reach “maximum capacity.” Unfortunately, this response is somewhat difficult to interpret with the available data. In particular, it is not clear whether this response (1) was given

Figure 7.7  
EFAS agency perceptions of capacity to handle increased demand



Source: National Emergency Food Assistance System Survey (2000), weighted tabulations.

as a substitute for one of the more specific reasons, (2) had to do with physical plant, or (3) reflected a general sense that the EFAS staff could not easily conceptualize how they would deal with the requirements of significant expansion.

Interestingly, the one type of agency that did not focus primarily on this “maximum capacity” response was food rescue organizations. Their response patterns suggest quite clearly that lack of volunteers and available foods were key obstacles to growth for them.

**Table 7.13—Agency perceptions of capacity to handle increased demand**

Increased-demand variables	Type of EFAS provider				
	Kitchens	Pantries	Food banks	Food rescue organizations	Emergency food organizations
	<i>Percent</i>				
<b>Agencies that could handle increase in demand of at least 5 percent</b>	89.5	87.1	86.1	85.2	88.9
<b>Size of increase agencies could handle<sup>1</sup></b>					
5 to 9 percent	17.6	23.3	23.2	24.0	20.2
10 to 19 percent	30.5	31.8	32.9	32.0	30.8
20 to 29 percent	12.0	13.3	15.0	21.3	11.5
30 or more percent	34.3	25.3	25.6	20.0	32.7
Missing data	5.6	6.4	3.2	2.7	4.8
<b>Constraints on handling greater demand<sup>2</sup></b>					
Not enough paid staff	10.9	4.8	20.0	8.3	16.7
Not enough volunteers	15.3	18.2	18.0	41.7	8.3
Not enough funding	19.7	24.2	14.0	8.3	25.0
At maximum capacity	53.5	39.0	66.0	41.7	50.0
Cannot obtain adequate food supply	13.0	28.9	16.0	50.0	16.7
Other	14.4	11.9	16.0	33.3	33.3
<b>Sample size (number)</b>	<b>1,517</b>	<b>1,617</b>	<b>395</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>117</b>

<sup>1</sup>Among those that could handle a 5-percent increase in demand.

<sup>2</sup>Among those that could not handle a 5-percent increase in demand.

Source: National Emergency Food Assistance System Survey (2000), weighted tabulation.

## Key Issues Related to the Emergency Food Assistance System

To conclude the report, this chapter draws on data presented up to this point to examine a number of important *cross-cutting* themes concerning the EFAS as a whole. These themes include:

- The variety of approaches the EFAS uses to provide emergency food assistance.
- The overall size of the EFAS relative to government programs that provide food assistance to low-income households.
- The evidence available on how the size of the system has changed during the past several years.
- Possible differences in the availability of EFAS services across different times of the day and week and between metropolitan and nonmetropolitan locations.
- Whether the EFAS is able to serve all the households that seek its services.
- Whether the EFAS would have the capacity to expand its services, should the need arise.

### Variety Within the EFAS

A salient feature of the EFAS that soon becomes apparent to anyone studying the system is the high degree of innovation and diversity with which EFAS providers have adapted to local conditions and needs. The providers have developed many kinds of partnerships with each other and with other members of their local communities. Because program operations are planned and carried out almost entirely at the local level, there is great variation in such factors as staffing patterns, facilities, and sources of supplies.

It is difficult to convey this creative variety in a largely statistical study like the current one, but there is evidence of it in much of the material covered in the previous chapters. For example, our examination of funding sources for emergency kitchens, pantries, and food banks found that these organizations draw on a large set of sources, with no single one accounting for a predominant share of support. Similarly, local operators cobble together the food supplies they need from many

different sources, including national organizations like America's Second Harvest, local food drives, contributions from local retailers, government programs such as TEFAP and the CSFP, and food rescue operations that salvage food that might otherwise go to waste. They also purchase some of their food at market prices, as necessary.

On a more anecdotal plane, some of the innovative practices we have encountered while performing this study are as follows:

- Providers in a local area set the schedules of their kitchens' operations cooperatively, to guarantee that some coverage will be consistently available to people who need it.
- A food bank establishes an arrangement with a nearby prison to obtain food grown on the prison farm, which it distributes to its client agencies.
- Food rescue organizations make arrangements with rock music concert promoters to obtain leftover food from rock concerts.
- Municipal officials locate a small food pantry near the back door of a newly constructed suburban municipal building so that food pantry users can leave with their food as inconspicuously as possible, avoiding embarrassment.
- A food rescue organization arranges with airlines at a local airport to obtain prepared meals that are not used on their flights.
- A kitchen in a rural community establishes a procedure whereby meat obtained by hunters can be processed and made available to the kitchen.
- A private food pantry locates itself at a food stamp office so that it can supply emergency food supplies to food stamp applicants to use until their applications are processed.

These kinds of ad hoc arrangements—often made at the local level in response to specific needs and opportunities—help the EFAS supply services to the poor within the constraints of available resources.

## Overall Size of the EFAS

For an overall picture of how the EFAS fits into America's pattern of nutrition assistance for the poor, it is useful to develop size estimates of the main components of both the EFAS and the public food-assistance programs. We provide these estimates in this section.

Various private and public programs provide food assistance in different forms. Emergency kitchens provide meals directly, whereas pantries generally provide unprepared food, which can be measured most directly in pounds. The Food Stamp Program provides food coupons (or comparable computer accounts), which are denominated in dollar amounts; the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program of the USDA provide meals, as does the Child and Adult Care Food Program. The Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children typically distributes vouchers for specific foods that are denominated in amounts of food, but that are often converted to dollars of food for statistical reporting purposes.

To place the different programs on a comparable basis, we have used a series of approximations to estimate "meal equivalents" for the food distributed by each program. These meal equivalents are defined as the approximate number of meals that could be derived from the various forms of assistance. (Details of the assumptions made in deriving the figures are given in appendix C of *The Emergency Food Assistance System—Findings from the Provider Survey, Volume III: Survey Methodology* at <http://www.ers.usda.gov/publications/efan01008>.)

Our analysis focuses on comparisons between the EFAS and the five largest government means-tested programs that provide nutrition assistance to low-income households: the Food Stamp Program, National School Lunch Program, School Breakfast Program, Special Supplemental Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC), and Child and Adult Day Care Program (CACFP). To some degree, this understates the size of the assistance provided by Federal programs. However, the Federal programs included in the comparison together account for more than 95 percent of USDA's budget for assistance to low-income households; thus, the comparisons provide a reasonably accurate indication of the relative sizes of the EFAS and government programs with similar objectives.

It is important to note that our comparisons used 2000 data, which cover a period when participation in the FSP was at its lowest level in 10 years. Similar comparisons done at the peak of FSP participation in 1994 probably would show a larger relative size for the public sector.

### Derivation of Comparable Size Estimates

Table 8.1 shows the approximate relative size of the EFAS and of selected USDA nutrition assistance programs in the United States. Our methods for estimating the table entries are described below.

#### *EFAS Food Distribution*

We derived the estimate of meal equivalents for EFAS pantries from our estimate in chapter 3 that these providers distribute approximately 239 million pounds of food per month. Data from the 1987-88 Nationwide Food Consumption Survey suggest that the average meal for a low-income person in the United States uses about 1.30 pounds of ingredients (U.S. Department of Agriculture, 1994).<sup>66</sup> Given this figure, we estimate that pantries distribute approximately 184 million meal equivalents per month.

Emergency kitchens produce meals directly. Therefore, we have drawn the size estimate for kitchens shown in table 8.1 directly from the calculations of meals served, presented in chapter 2. This estimate is approximately 474,000 meals per day, or 14 million meals per month.

*The Public Sector.* USDA's Food Stamp Program, the Nation's largest public sector nutrition assistance program, serves approximately 17 million people per month. On average, given the program's benefit computation rules and levels of participants' income, program benefits are expected to provide approximately 65 percent of each participant's food costs per month.<sup>67</sup> Therefore, assuming 90 meals per month as an approximation, food stamp benefits are expected to cover about 58 of a participant's 90 meals. These num-

<sup>66</sup>The 1.30 figure is very similar to the factor of 1.28 used in Second Harvest (1998). The derivation of the estimate from tables in the USDA report is detailed in appendix C. The estimate is based on table 4 of that report, with the category "beverages" excluded.

<sup>67</sup>We derived the estimate that FSP benefits cover 65 percent of food from USDA data. These data show that, on average, households' food stamp benefits are approximately 65 percent of their Thrifty Food Plan (Castner and Rosso 2000, table A13). The Thrifty Food Plan is the cost that the food stamp regulations assume is necessary to provide a household with one month of low-cost but nutritious meals.

bers imply that food stamp assistance provides approximately 980 million meals per month.<sup>68</sup>

The National School Lunch Program also provides extensive food assistance. During a typical month when schools are in session, approximately 289 million free or reduced-price lunches are served under this program (most meals are in the “free” category).<sup>69</sup> The comparable figures for the School Breakfast Program and the CACFP are 121 million and 116 million meals, respectively.

The WIC program provides food assistance to women, infants, and children. As derived in appendix C of *The Emergency Food Assistance System—Findings from the Provider Survey: Survey Methodology* at <http://www.ers.usda.gov/publications/efan01008>, the average monthly WIC benefit package, averaged over different categories of WIC recipients, provides approximately 61 pounds of food.<sup>70</sup> Using the factor of approximately 1.30 pounds of ingredients per meal that was used in the preceding section, we estimate WIC meal equivalents of approximately 46.9 meals per participant per month. The WIC program has approximately 7.3 million participants each month, so this estimate implies that the program produces roughly 343 million meal equivalents per month.<sup>71</sup>

### Overall Size

These calculations yield an estimate that the EFAS and the government programs included in table 8.1 together provide 2.1 billion meal equivalents per month and 24.8 billion per year. To place this figure in perspective, about 57.4 million people in this country live below 150 percent of poverty. If each of these people consumes three meals per day during a 30-day month,

<sup>68</sup>Sixty-five percent of meals being covered times 90 meals per month equals  $0.65 \times 90$ , or 58 meals per month. Multiplying 58 meals per month times 17.2 million participants yields 998 million meals per month.

<sup>69</sup>The figure is from administrative data on the USDA Website, [www.usda.gov](http://www.usda.gov). Free and reduced-price meals are ones that are substantially subsidized by the program. Their receipt is limited to children whose families are below 185 percent of the poverty line. Children from higher-income families also receive meals under the program, but these meals have much lower subsidies and are not included in the data in the table and text.

<sup>70</sup>Benefits vary, depending on whether a woman is pregnant or whether she is nursing, the age of a child, and special needs.

<sup>71</sup>Sixty-one pounds of food per month, divided by 1.3 pounds per meal, yields 46.9 meals per recipient. That, multiplied by 7.3 million participants, equals 343 million meals per month.

they would consume a total of approximately 5.2 billion meals. Thus, approximately 37 percent of the meals eaten by people living below 150 percent of poverty may be provided by the Federal Government or the EFAS. (Of course, some of the food assistance considered here may be provided to people who are above 150 percent of the poverty line.)

### Relative Sizes of the EFAS and Public Sector Programs

As shown in table 8.1, the EFAS provides low-income Americans with approximately 198 million meals per month. The meals that pantries provide constitute by far the largest component of that total, an estimated 93 percent. However, it is likely that emergency kitchens serve specific sectors of the low-income population—many of which pantries probably could not serve effectively—such as the homeless and other people who have difficulty preparing their own meals.

The numbers displayed in table 8.1 also provide an important perspective on the size of the EFAS relative to that of the public sector programs. In particular, it is clear that even though the EFAS provides food assistance to several million Americans each day, the Federal Government remains the primary source of food assistance for low-income people in the United States. Federal programs, the most important of which is the Food Stamp Program, provide about 1,867 million meals or meal equivalents to low-income households each month, approximately 9 times the number provided by the EFAS.

The importance of the public sector in the overall picture of food assistance is further highlighted by the fact that, as noted in previous chapters, the EFAS itself receives significant amounts of food from the Government through the TEFAP program. In particular, as discussed in chapter 6, in 2000 government commodities accounted for about 14 percent of the total food distributed by emergency kitchens and food pantries. Indeed, what appears to have evolved is a system in which the Government provides the bulk of the resources needed for food assistance, while the EFAS supplements government aid for some clients and serves additional low-income people who, for various reasons, are not in the Federal programs.<sup>72</sup> After

<sup>72</sup>Second Harvest (1998) estimates that approximately 40 percent of EFAS recipients also participated in the FSP (p. 185). The client survey will examine this issue with an updated database that has greater national representation.

data from the planned client survey component of this project become available, it will be possible to examine in detail the degree of overlap between those served by the EFAS and those served by government programs.

A closely related issue is the exact role played by the EFAS, given the availability of the government

programs. Does it exist because the government programs do not provide enough assistance to meet the needs of some low-income households? Do some types of households need assistance but lack effective access to government programs? If so, what would promote better access? These important issues are discussed in a later section and will be addressed in the forthcoming client survey component of the research.

**Table 8.1—Relative sizes of the EFAS and selected public sector programs, in “meal equivalents” per month**

Program	Meal equivalents distributed per month	Annualized meal equivalents
	<i>Million</i>	<i>Billion</i>
<b>EFAS<sup>1</sup></b>		
Pantries <sup>2</sup>	184	2.2
Emergency kitchens <sup>3</sup>	14	0.2
Total EFAS	198	2.4
<b>Public sector</b>		
Food Stamp Program <sup>4</sup>	998	12.0
National School Lunch Program <sup>5,6</sup>	289	3.5
School Breakfast Program <sup>5,7</sup>	121	1.5
Child and Adult Care Food Program <sup>8</sup>	116	1.4
WIC <sup>9</sup>	343	4.1
Total public sector	1,867	22.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,065</b>	<b>24.8</b>

<sup>1</sup>Includes some public sector support through USDA commodities.

<sup>2</sup>239 million pounds of food per month ÷ 1.3 pounds per meal.

<sup>3</sup>474,000 million meals per day × 30 days per month.

<sup>4</sup>Participants from the FNS Website × 30 days per month × 3 meals per day × percentage of Thrifty Food Plan included in the average benefit level.

<sup>5</sup>Assumes a month during which schools are operating.

<sup>6</sup>Annual meals from the FNS Website ÷ 9 months × 0.571. (The 0.571 factor is the proportion of meals that are free or reduced price.)

<sup>7</sup>Annual meals from the FNS Website ÷ 12 months × 0.837. (The 0.837 factor is the proportion that are free or reduced price.)

<sup>8</sup>Annual meals from the FNS Website ÷ 12 months × 0.837. (The 0.837 factor is the proportion that are free or reduced price.)

<sup>9</sup>Monthly participants from the FNS website × 61 pounds per monthly benefit issuance ÷ 1.3 pounds per meal. The 61 pounds factor is based on different types of WIC packages received by different categories of recipients and is derived in appendix C of *The Emergency Food Assistance System—Findings from the Provider Survey: Survey Methodology* at <http://www.ers.usda.gov/publications/efan01008>.

EFAS = Emergency Food Assistance System.

USDA = U.S. Department of Agriculture.

WIC = Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children.

Source: National Emergency Food Assistance System Survey (2000) data, weighted tabulations, and USDA statistics, as derived in appendix C. Data for the National School Lunch Program, the School Breakfast Program, and the Child and Adult Care Food Program are taken from the FNS Website [[www.fns.usda.gov/pd](http://www.fns.usda.gov/pd)]. Only free or reduced-price meals are included.

## Changes During the Past 3 Years in Emergency Food Needs

Considerable attention has been focused in recent years on whether the need for emergency food assistance has changed, and if so, how. This issue has direct significance for assessing the capacity of the EFAS to serve clients who rely on it. In addition, some observers view changes in the EFAS as a barometer of the impacts of the major welfare reform legislation enacted in 1996. To the extent that welfare reform measures have achieved their objective of helping households reach self-sufficiency, they presumably have reduced the need for EFAS services. If, however, the reforms have had the effect of moving people off welfare without giving them the means (through counseling and training, for instance) to provide for themselves, then they may have an increased need for the EFAS.

The data reported in chapter 7 provide evidence of increased use of the EFAS in the 1997-2000 period.

A majority of the providers in our survey reported increases in their levels of service, with an average net increase across *all* providers of 5 to 6 percent per year. Data from three other sources reviewed in that chapter also suggest that increases in EFAS use occurred during the 1997-2000 period, although there is considerable variation in the estimated magnitude of the change. We do not have enough information to estimate what proportion of the increase was due to welfare reform and what was due to other factors.

More generally, the available data do not allow us to determine what proportion of the increase in EFAS service was driven by increases in need and what proportion was driven by the increased availability of resources to serve *existing* needs. Table 7.7 shows that about two-fifths of emergency kitchens, one-half of food pantries and emergency food organizations, and three-fourths of food banks and food rescue organizations received more food in 2000 than in 1997. This increased supply of resources could have been largely caused by increased need or could, in part, have occurred due to other factors.

## Program Coverage Issues

The data we have presented on kitchens and pantries raise at least two sets of overlapping concerns about the availability of emergency kitchen services to households who need them. These are the adequacy of access to the EFAS for low-income rural residents and to services at different times of the day and week.

### Access in Nonmetropolitan Areas

As noted, only about 15 percent of emergency kitchens are located in nonmetropolitan areas, even though these areas account for 21 percent of the overall population living in households with incomes below the poverty line. As a result, while there is one kitchen for every 5,518 people below poverty in metropolitan areas, the comparable number for nonmetropolitan areas is one kitchen for every 9,635 people (table 8.2).

Furthermore, the typical kitchen in a nonmetropolitan area is considerably smaller than its metropolitan counterpart. For example, the median nonmetropolitan kitchen offering lunch serves 45 meals on a typical day, whereas the median kitchen in a metropolitan area serves about 75 meals. Taken with the urban-rural disparity in the ratio of kitchens to people, this implies the number of emergency kitchen meals consumed by nonmetropolitan households is much lower, in proportion to their numbers, than for low-income residents of metropolitan areas.

Interestingly, the disparity in number of providers goes in the other direction for food pantries. An estimated 30 percent are located in nonmetropolitan areas—greater

than the proportion of overall low-income households in nonmetropolitan areas, which, as noted above, is 21 percent.

It is likely that problems of access and transportation costs explain much of the tendency of emergency kitchen operations to locate predominantly in metropolitan areas. It is harder to get a substantial number of clients together at an EFAS facility in a rural setting, with its low population density and limited or nonexistent public transportation. In addition, it is likely to be inefficient and relatively expensive to operate an emergency kitchen with very low volumes. In light of these factors, it probably makes sense to rely more heavily on pantries in nonmetropolitan settings—precisely the pattern that has emerged. Unlike kitchens, pantries usually require only that clients visit the EFAS facility once or twice a month. Nevertheless, the data raise concern that there may be a disproportionate number of rural people who need emergency kitchen services but do not have access to them. It is possible that, to some extent, residents of nonmetropolitan areas rely more heavily on informal assistance from such sources as families, neighbors, and religious groups.

Another possible explanation of the disproportionately low number of kitchens in nonmetropolitan areas is that more of the poor in rural areas are elderly, who may consume less food than their younger counterparts. The elderly also may be less likely to need kitchens than pantries. Conversely, the homeless are apparently more concentrated in metropolitan areas. Burt et al. (1999) estimate that just 9 percent of the homeless are in rural areas.

**Table 8.2—Emergency kitchens and pantries relative to number of people below poverty**

Location	People below poverty line <i>Millions</i>	Emergency kitchens		Food pantries	
		Kitchens	People below poverty per kitchen <i>Number</i>	Pantries	People below poverty per pantry
<b>All</b>	32.2	5,262	6,081	32,737	984
Metropolitan	24.8	4,494	5,518	23,003	1,078
Nonmetropolitan	7.4	768	9,635	9,734	760
<b>Region</b>					
West	7.8	1,079	7,229	4,943	1,578
Midwest	6.2	1,294	4,791	8,053	770
South	12.5	1,447	8,639	13,122	953
Northeast	5.7	1,442	3,953	6,646	858

Source: National Emergency Food Assistance System (2000) data, weighted tabulations, and Bureau of the Census, Detailed Poverty (P60 Package) for 1999, table 15. At <http://www.census.gov/prod/2000pubs/p60-210.pdf>.



### **Coverage Differentials Across Regions**

Significant disparities in coverage are also observed across regions of the country. As shown in table 8.2, the South appears to have the lowest coverage rates by emergency kitchen providers, with one kitchen for every 8,639 people below poverty. Pantry coverage is lowest in the West, with one pantry for every 1,578 people below poverty. The highest coverage rates are observed for the Northeast for kitchens (3,953 low-income people per facility) and the Midwest for pantries (770 low-income people per facility).

### **Coverage at Different Times of the Day and Week**

Many EFAS providers operate for limited hours. For example, most emergency kitchens are closed on some days of the week and are particularly likely to be closed on weekends. Furthermore, most kitchens do not serve three—or even two—meals per day. Pantries operate in similar ways. The median pantry is open only 2 or 3 days each week and for fewer than 4 hours on these days. These limited pantry hours may create difficulties for some clients, particularly for such

groups as the working poor, who have relatively less flexibility in timing their visits.

These data, particularly for kitchens, raise questions about whether potential clients of the EFAS, including people who live near appropriate EFAS providers, have access to the system *when* they need it. However, the data on hours of operation reviewed here may not tell the full story. We know anecdotally that, at least in some areas, EFAS providers with limited resources attempt to coordinate their service availability; at least one kitchen in a section of a city will thus be open at a given time even if others are closed. Indeed, it is not uncommon at an EFAS facility to see postings of the schedules of other nearby providers. Sharing arrangements may work best in urban areas, with their higher densities of providers. While we lack systematic data on this, the instances we are aware of are in metropolitan areas.

This issue of whether EFAS providers' hours of operation meet the needs of the clients of the system can be addressed more fully in the next phase of the study, when interviews will be conducted with the clients themselves.

## Adequacy of EFAS for Meeting the Current Demand

A closely related issue is whether the EFAS has adequate resources to meet the current need for its services. Table 8.3 summarizes information from previous chapters of this report that can be used to address this issue.

The evidence from the previous chapters suggests that the answer to this question of the adequacy of resources for meeting needs is mixed. In particular, many—perhaps a majority—of EFAS agencies report that they currently are able to meet the needs for their services. However, the data also suggest that substantial numbers of EFAS agencies do not at the present time have the staff and supplies necessary to keep up with demand.

### Evidence that Many EFAS Agencies Perceive Themselves as Having Sufficient Capacity

The following findings, discussed in greater detail in earlier chapters and summarized in table 8.3, provide evidence that many EFAS providers perceive themselves as having sufficient capacity to meet the current need for their services.

- Substantial numbers of direct EFAS service providers—about three-quarters of kitchens and two-thirds of pantries—indicated that they had not had to turn away clients in need in the previous year. Further, many of the agencies—particularly the kitchens—that had turned away clients cited drug or behavioral problems as the reason, rather than lack of capacity. Pantries frequently mentioned that potential clients had not met income or residence guidelines.
- Similarly, fewer than half of food banks and food rescue organizations reported turning away agencies that requested food. The corresponding number of emergency food organizations was under 20 percent.
- Fewer than 22 percent of kitchens and 40 percent of pantries indicated that they had needed to limit distribution because of lack of food during the previous 12 months. (Slightly more than half of these agencies felt that the limited distribution was a problem in meeting client needs.)
- More than 60 percent of both pantries and kitchens indicated they believed that they would be able to deal adequately with at least a 10-percent increase in demand for their services (and, in many instances, more than 10 percent). This suggests that they

believe they have the resources they need to cope adequately with their current level of demand.

### Evidence That Some Agencies May Lack Capacity To Meet Current Demand

The statistics cited above also show that a significant number of providers believe they lack the resources to fully satisfy current demand. For each variable discussed, there were substantial numbers of respondents—usually 10 to 40 percent—who indicated problems in meeting the needs of everyone requesting services.

Furthermore, as shown in table 8.3, approximately 25 percent each of kitchens and pantries, together with more than half of food banks and food rescue organizations, indicated directly that they perceived additional needs for their services that they could not fulfill. Most agencies giving this response said, in reply to a follow-up question, that they would like to be able *both* to provide increased services to existing clients *and* to extend existing services to new groups of clients.

Another factor determining whether client needs are being met is the quality and wholesomeness of the foods served. For instance, even if an emergency kitchen provides food with sufficient bulk to alleviate hunger for the people who come there, the food could still be of limited nutritional quality. Some evidence of this is provided in earlier chapters assessing whether EFAS agencies had to limit the distribution of certain foods during the previous 12 months. Additional information on this issue will be available from questions on the client survey as to how clients perceive the adequacy of the meals they are given.

### Conclusions

The evidence suggests that a majority of EFAS agencies perceive themselves as having reasonably adequate capacity to meet the service needs that they see in their communities. However, a substantial number of other providers perceive their resources as inadequate for meeting the needs they face.

These findings are subject to some important qualifications. First, the results summarized here pertain only to service areas in which the EFAS providers currently are operating. They tell us nothing about whether underserved areas exist that have no providers at all. Second, the opinions of the providers represent only *indirect* evidence about whether services meet clients' needs. The client survey will examine this issue more directly.

**Table 8.3—Possible indications of unmet need**

Variables surveyed	Kitchens	Pantries	Food banks	Food rescue organizations	Emergency food organizations
	<i>Percent</i>				
<b>During past 12 months, have turned away people or agencies that requested food</b>	25.2	33.1	42.8	42.0	16.2
<b>Selected reasons for turning people away<sup>1</sup></b>					
Lacked food to serve clients	16.5	16.0	8.3	29.7	21.1
Drug or alcohol problem or behavior problem	70.5	9.4	NA	NA	NA
Came at wrong time or came too often	5.2	27.1	NA	NA	NA
Client/agency ineligible or could not prove eligibility	2.4	41.4	69.2	35.1	68.4
<b>Compared with 3 years ago, how often are EFAS agencies turning away clients due to lack of food?<sup>2</sup></b>					
More often	2.2	4.3	8.4	7.7	2.9
Less often	5.1	9.4	5.9	4.6	4.9
About the same	21.0	29.4	32.3	35.4	35.9
Never turn away clients for lack of food	69.5	54.7	51.6	50.8	52.4
Missing data	2.3	2.2	1.8	1.5	3.9
<b>Did agency limit distribution of certain kinds of foods in past 12 months?</b>					
Yes	21.1	38.5	53.9	31.8	32.5
No	77.1	60.2	45.1	67.0	66.7
Missing data	1.7	1.3	1.0	1.1	0.9
<b>Was that a problem in meeting client needs?</b>					
Yes	56.9	59.4	81.2	46.4	60.5
No	42.2	39.5	18.8	50.0	39.5
Missing data	0.9	1.1	0.0	3.6	0.0
<b>Could agency handle a 10-percent increase in demand for their services?</b>					
Yes	68.7	61.3	63.3	62.5	66.7
No	27.1	33.1	33.9	35.2	29.0
Missing data	5.0	5.6	2.8	2.3	4.3
<b>Are there current additional needs for food-related services EFAS agencies are not able to fill?</b>					
Yes	25.1	25.4	52.4	58.0	32.5
No	70.5	71.6	45.1	40.9	66.7
Missing data	4.4	3.0	2.5	1.1	0.9
<b>Perceived additional needs<sup>3</sup></b>					
More services to current clients	90.6	86.1	91.8	80.4	81.6
Services to new clients	82.0	80.1	87.4	84.3	92.1
<b>Sample size (number)</b>	<b>1,517</b>	<b>1,617</b>	<b>395</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>117</b>

<sup>1</sup>Includes only EFAS agencies that turned away people seeking food during the past 12 months.

<sup>2</sup>Includes only EFAS agencies operating since 1997 or earlier, based on responses to the question, "When did this agency begin operating at this location?"

<sup>3</sup>Among those indicating additional need.

NA = Not applicable.

Source: National Emergency Food Assistance System Survey (2000), weighted tabulations.

## Providers' Ability To Meet Future Changes in Demand

We also addressed the capacity of the EFAS to respond to changes in need. As shown in table 8.4, most kitchens and pantries believe they could respond successfully to a 5-percent increase in demand, and a majority of them believe that they could also handle a 10-percent increase. When respondents were asked about a 20-percent increase, the number responding positively decreased substantially. Overall, these data seem to suggest that this is at least some measure of capacity in the system to handle increased need, should it arise, but that the capacity is limited.

## Reflections on the Role of the EFAS in Relation to the Public Sector

In addition to providing extensive detail on the workings of the EFAS, the analysis in this report has led to a number of important generalizations:

- The EFAS is very extensive. Emergency kitchens serve nearly one-half million meals per day; food pantries distribute the equivalent of roughly 6 million meals per day.
- Despite its large size, the EFAS is dwarfed by Federal Government programs in providing nutrition assistance to low-income people and households. These programs distribute food and provide food assistance that translates into approximately 63 million meals per day.
- Despite a healthy economy and a decline in both the number of people in poverty and in low-income assistance rolls, EFAS providers report that use of EFAS services has grown over the past 3 years.<sup>73</sup>

The relative sizes of public and private nutrition assistance programs raise three important sets of questions, crucial to understanding overall patterns of food assistance in America:

1. Given the high level of nutrition assistance provided by the Federal Government, why does the EFAS

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<sup>73</sup>Growth is defined differently for different EFAS providers. For pantries, it is an increase in the number of households served; for kitchens, it is an increase in the number of meals served; and for food banks and food rescue organizations, it is an increase in the number of client agencies served.

exist? What needs, if any, does it fill that are not already filled by the public sector?

2. Given the effectiveness of the EFAS, why are public sector nutrition assistance programs needed?
3. Why is the EFAS apparently growing at a time when the poverty rate is going down?

We address these issues in the following sections.

### **Why Is the EFAS Needed, Given the Extensive Involvement of the Government in Nutrition Assistance?**

There are several possible reasons why there is a need for the EFAS despite the available government nutrition assistance programs. They are discussed here.

#### *Because Government Benefits Are Not Large Enough To Meet Needs*

One reason that the EFAS is used so extensively is that government assistance program benefits may be too low to fully meet the needs of some of their recipients. In that case, recipients may be looking to the EFAS to supplement the assistance they receive from government programs. Some evidence for this is provided by the fact that substantial numbers of EFAS participants also report receiving food stamp benefits (Second Harvest, 1998). However, there are also people who use the EFAS but do not receive government assistance. Thus, government benefits being insufficient to meet the food needs of low-income people cannot be the only reason the EFAS is needed.

#### *Because Government Programs Are Not Accessible Enough*

Another possibility is that the Food Stamp Program and other government programs may not be accessible to everyone who needs food assistance. In order to target benefits specifically to households who need them and to maintain program integrity, the Food Stamp Program and other government assistance programs have established income and assets criteria for participation, along with administrative procedures designed to ensure that these criteria are met. Some potential clients, however, may not be able to meet these administrative or substantive requirements but may still need food assistance.

In addition, the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Act of 1996 placed a number of restrictions on the receipt of food stamps by legal immigrants and able-bodied adults without dependents (ABAWDs),

significantly changing prior Food Stamp Program (FSP) rules. As a result, most legal immigrants have been barred from the FSP, and ABAWDs who are not working or participating in an approved work or training program have been restricted to receiving food stamps for 3 months in any 36-month period.

With regard to administrative requirements, some people, such as the poorly educated and the mentally ill, may have trouble understanding and fulfilling the bureaucratic requirements imposed by programs such as the FSP. Similarly, a person without any money or food may not be in a position to wait for assistance until all the FSP administrative requirements are met. (This process often requires 2 or 3 business days, even in cases eligible for expedited service.)

Substantive requirements may also make Federal nutrition programs inaccessible to people needing food assistance. There are a number of ways in which people can be in immediate need of food but not qualify for public food assistance. For instance, someone with a job may have spent the most recent paycheck and need emergency help, but the job may make him or her ineligible for food stamps. Or a recently laid-off person who owns an investment property may not be eligible for stamps because of this asset. However, the person may not be able to immediately liquidate the investment to obtain cash with which to buy food.

***Because Some People Prefer Receiving Help From Private Programs***

A third possible reason the EFAS is needed is that some people may prefer to get assistance from private sources rather than public programs. Issues of stigma are particularly important in this scenario. For example, some people may be averse to going to a large

public welfare office to apply for food stamp benefits and to being required to provide extensive personal information. They may prefer to obtain food discreetly from a small faith-based pantry where they are asked few questions. Similarly, private sources such as the EFAS may have fewer and less burdensome administrative requirements for obtaining assistance.

***Because It's There***

To some degree, people may use the EFAS simply because it's there. Given that EFAS providers often offer nutritious food at essentially no price, it is perhaps not surprising that people may use this food as a substitute for, or in addition to, government programs. This is related to the views expressed by Poppendieck (1998), who argues that while the EFAS has done much good, it also has had the unintended (and for Poppendieck, adverse) effect of reducing the pressure on the public sector to provide more adequate assistance. Critics of this explanation argue that it seems unlikely that middle-class people who were not experiencing need would accept the inconvenience, limited choices, and embarrassment often associated with using the EFAS if they didn't need its assistance. This may be particularly true for emergency kitchens, which, by their nature, are seldom inviting places.

***Summary***

None of these explanations by itself fully explains the existence of the EFAS; it is likely that all are relevant to some degree. Further, the explanations may differ for different types of EFAS providers. The data to be obtained from the client survey component of the current study will shed additional light on the relative importance of these factors, by providing information about multiple program participation and the economic circumstances of kitchen and pantry users.

**Table 8.4—EFAS providers' perceived ability to respond to change in need**

Amount of Increase	Kitchens	Pantries
	<i>Percent</i>	
Could respond to a 5-percent increase in need	89.5	87.5
Could respond to a 10-percent increase in need	68.7 <sup>1</sup>	61.3 <sup>1</sup>
Could respond to a 20-percent increase in need	41.4 <sup>2</sup>	33.6 <sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Computed from table 7.13 as the sum of the entries for "10 to 19 percent," "20 to 29 percent," and "30 or more percent" times the percent that could handle at least a 5-percent increase.

<sup>2</sup>Computed from table 7.13 as the sum of the entries for "20 to 29 percent" and "30 or more percent" times the percent that could handle at least a 5-percent increase.

Note: Respondents providing affirmative answers in higher rows are included in subsequent rows. For example, respondents who believed they could accommodate a 30-percent increase in need are included in all three rows.

Source: National Emergency Food Assistance System Survey (2000) data, weighted tabulations.

## **Why Is Government Nutrition Assistance Needed, Given the Apparent Effectiveness of the EFAS?**

It may be useful to approach the same set of issues from the opposite perspective. In particular, we pose the question of why government nutrition assistance is needed at all, given the apparent effectiveness of the EFAS in serving relatively large numbers of low-income households. We suggest several answers below.

### ***Because the EFAS Probably Could Not Obtain the Resources To Respond To All the Need***

As discussed earlier in this chapter, while the operations of the EFAS are very extensive, they are small in relation to the total amount of nutrition assistance provided by the Government to low-income households. Despite its considerable success in fundraising and obtaining food, there is no evidence that the EFAS could obtain the resources needed to assume all or even most of what is currently the Government's role in providing assistance.

### ***Because the Private Sector Cannot Guarantee Entitlement***

An additional reason that many observers would cite for relying at least partially on the public sector for food assistance revolves around the issue of entitlement. To the degree that it is a public objective to ensure that every person has access to adequate food, using the Government to provide assistance may be necessary because the governmental approach, unlike private programs, can create legal entitlement to benefits for all who need them. To illustrate, every person meeting certain eligibility requirements in the United States is entitled to receive food stamps—by law, the Government has the obligation to make this assistance available. It is not clear that any comparable situation can exist with a private program. There is nothing in the context of the EFAS—even an expanded EFAS—to guarantee that services will effectively be provided to everybody who needs them. Rather, availability depends on the initiatives of decentralized private sector organizations.

This issue is related to (but not the same as) issues of coverage under the EFAS. We have seen evidence in earlier chapters that there may be disparities in EFAS coverage in different areas, such as those that exist between urban and rural areas. There is no mechanism inherent in the EFAS to guarantee that such disparities will be avoided to provide uniform and universal access to assistance. To be sure, if more resources were channeled to the EFAS under a more privatized

approach to food assistance, presumably at least some coverage disparities would be eliminated. However, the elimination of such discrepancies is not guaranteed in the private context.

### ***Because Some People May Prefer Receiving Assistance From the Public Sector***

Just as personal preferences are a potential reason to have some *private* options for assistance, they may also justify having *public* options. In particular, some people may feel more comfortable taking advantage of assistance that they think of as an entitlement, as compared with asking for discretionary private assistance, where they feel that they are at the mercy of assistance providers who have no obligation to help them.

### ***Because the Federal Government May Be Better Able To Transfer Resources Across Areas***

Another potential reason for Federal involvement in nutrition assistance is that the availability of resources for providing food assistance and the need for such assistance may not necessarily occur in the same location. For instance, within a metropolitan area, the need for nutrition assistance is likely to be greater in low-income center-city areas, while resource availability may be greater in more-affluent suburban areas. To be sure, there are many elements of the EFAS which serve to mitigate these disparities, including the regional food bank system and the willingness of people to cross municipal boundaries to volunteer their services. But it nevertheless remains the case that the Federal Government, with its national purview, may represent an important mechanism for efficiently linking resources and needs.

## **Why Has Use of the EFAS Apparently Kept Growing in Recent Years?**

A significant puzzle raised by our findings is why the EFAS appears to be growing, despite declining welfare rolls and the strong economy. As we note in chapter 7, there are significant limitations on the available data in this area; it is possible that, overall, the system has not grown. However, the balance of the evidence seems to suggest that it has. What explanations are possible?

### ***The Reasons for the Existence of the EFAS, as Reviewed Above, Are Also Salient to Issues of Change***

All the explanations for the EFAS reviewed in previous subsections are germane to understanding why it might be growing over time. By themselves, however, they are only partial explanations, unless we identify changes in

underlying explanatory factors over time. For instance, government benefits being too low to meet the needs of some people may be one reason why the EFAS exists. By itself, however, this does not explain *growth* in the EFAS, unless there has been some *change* in government benefit levels. As it happens, there has, in fact, been a substantial reduction in government benefits, both with the reductions in the TANF caseload and with the reduced food stamp eligibility for legal aliens and able-bodied adults without children. These changes undoubtedly have contributed to growth in the EFAS.

***Growth in Incomes of the Very Poor may not have Kept Pace with Overall Income Growth***

It is possible that the incomes of people in the lowest part of the income distribution have not risen proportionately to incomes in general, and these people may be heavy users of the EFAS. However, the data cited in chapter 7 on changing poverty rates do not support this as an explanation of increased EFAS usage. Using 50 percent of the poverty level as an indicator associated with the “poorest of the poor,” we noted that the number of people with incomes below that level has *decreased* in recent years (albeit not as rapidly as the number of people below 100 percent of poverty).

***The Availability of Food and Other Resources to the EFAS May Have Increased***

With the strong economy, it is possible that contributions of food and other resources have become more available over time. Because most food is at least somewhat perishable, if the EFAS is indeed receiving more, it may be distributing it in larger quantities because it cannot easily stockpile current surplus for later use. Thus, increased availability may have

allowed the EFAS to begin to supply a large, but perhaps not visible, reservoir of unmet needs.

**Conclusions**

The foregoing discussion suggests that, to a substantial degree, public and private food assistance play complementary roles in providing for the needs of low-income people. The bulk of the assistance comes from the public sector, which has the ability to obtain resources by raising public monies to accomplish public objectives. Also, since some of the public programs are entitlements, they serve (at least in principle) the objective of ensuring assistance to all low-income people, regardless of where they live or what organizations they are affiliated with.

However, public programs must impose a measure of rigidity and bureaucratic structure on their operations to ensure accountability and program integrity. The need of Federal programs to serve all eligible persons in all parts of the country equally may also interfere with their ability to be flexible in responding to local needs and to local opportunities for service provision.

EFAS providers are able to be more flexible in providing services and in meeting special circumstances, and in so doing, they appear to fill an important place in the overall food assistance landscape. Further, EFAS services supplement the assistance available publicly for some clients, and the EFAS provides food relief to people who are uncomfortable receiving public assistance.

The planned client survey for the current project will provide additional information on how low-income households use both public and private assistance to meet their food needs.

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