

# NEW STUDY: MORE THAN 25 MILLION AMERICANS SEEK FOOD ASSISTANCE EACH YEAR



[View Hunger Study, 2006](#)

*Largest, Most Comprehensive Report Ever Conducted On  
Emergency Food Distribution  
Reports Nearly 9 Million Children and Nearly 3 Million  
Seniors In Need*

CHICAGO --- February 23, 2006 --- More than 25 million Americans—including nearly 9 million children and 3 million seniors—receive emergency food assistance each year from America's Second Harvest—The Nation's Food Bank Network of charitable agencies, representing an 8 percent increase since 2001, according to a report released today. *Hunger in America 2006*, based on 52,000 face-to-face interviews with people seeking emergency food assistance and more than 30,000 agency surveys, is the largest, most-comprehensive study ever conducted on domestic hunger. The study was commissioned by the America's Second Harvest Network and sponsored by Altria.

“It is tragic and alarming that more and more people are relying on emergency food assistance in the United States, where we produce enough food to feed every hungry person in the world,” said Robert Forney, President and CEO of the America's Second Harvest Network.

About 70 percent of the clients seeking emergency food assistance are living below the federal poverty line, and nearly 40 percent have at least one adult working in their household. Seventy percent of clients are living in food insecure households—not knowing where they will find their next

meal—and 33 percent of those clients reported experiencing hunger—that is, being completely without a source of food.

“Millions of Americans rely every month on the agencies we serve. Millions of others are living less than one paycheck away from hunger,” said Forney. “When people hit sudden hard times including illness, loss of a job, or disruption in health insurance, they are forced to turn to the America's Second Harvest Network for help.”

Many of the 52,000 clients who participated in face-to-face interviews for *Hunger in America 2006* reported having to make difficult choices between food and everyday necessities. More than 40 percent of the clients served report having to choose between paying for utilities or heating fuel and food; 35 percent had to choose between paying for rent or a mortgage and food; 32 percent report having to choose between paying for medical bills and food.

“Food is a basic human need and right,” said Jennifer Goodale, Vice President of Contributions, [Altria Group](#), Inc., (parent company of Kraft Foods – the nation’s largest food and beverage company). “As the sponsor of *Hunger in America 2006*, we hope the study will inform public policy, energize the response among the public and private sectors, and ultimately provide a better understanding of the complex issue of hunger and the millions of people it affects”.

Of the 25 million people the America's Second Harvest Network serves, 39 percent are white; 38 percent are black; and 17 percent are Hispanic.

Volunteers and faith-based organizations are the lifeline of America’s emergency food distribution system. More than 65 percent of food pantries and 40 percent of soup kitchens rely entirely on volunteers and have no paid staff. As many as 90 percent of food pantries, 86 percent of soup kitchens and 71 percent of shelters in the America's Second Harvest Network use volunteers. Additionally, nearly 75 percent of pantries, 65 percent of soup kitchens, and 45 percent of emergency shelters are run by faith-based agencies affiliated with churches, mosques, synagogues and other religious organizations.

“The more than 1 million volunteers who support the America's Second Harvest Network each year are critical to the

work we do, and ultimately to the improving the lives of the 25 million Americans we serve each year,” said Forney.

The America's Second Harvest Network is the largest charitable hunger-relief organization in the country with more than 200 food banks and food-rescue organizations serving all fifty states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico. America's Second Harvest Network Members distribute more than 2 billion pounds of food to 45,000 emergency agencies each year including 29,600 soup kitchens, 5,600 food pantries; and 4,100 emergency shelters.

An America's Second Harvest Network Member food bank or food-rescue organization provides 74 percent of the food distributed by food pantries, 49 percent of the food distributed by soup kitchens and 42 percent of the food distributed by emergency shelters. 90 percent of the clients interviewed for *Hunger in America 2006* reported that they are satisfied with the quality and quantity of food they receive from the America's Second Harvest Network agency they visit.

For more information on *Hunger in America 2006*, please visit [www.hungerinamerica.org](http://www.hungerinamerica.org).

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**America's Second Harvest—The Nation's Food Bank Network** is the largest charitable domestic hunger-relief organization in the country with a Network of more than 200 Member food banks and food - rescue programs serving all 50 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico. The America's Second Harvest Network secures and distributes more than 2 billion pounds of donated food and grocery products annually; and supports approximately 50,000 local charitable agencies operating more than 94,000 programs including food pantries, soup kitchens, emergency shelters, after-school programs, and Kids Cafes. Last year, the America's Second Harvest Network provided food assistance to more than 25 million low-income hungry people in the United States, including nearly 9 million children and 3 million seniors. For more on America's Second Harvest, please visit [www.secondharvest.org](http://www.secondharvest.org).

**Altria Group, Inc.**(NYSE:MO)is the parent company of Kraft Foods, Philip Morris International and Philip Morris USA. For 50 years, the Altria family of companies has been supporting

not-for-profit organizations that strengthen, enrich and improve communities across the nation and around the globe. Since 1990, the Altria family of companies has contributed more than \$450 million in cash and food to hunger-relief organizations across the United States and around the world.

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