



Two Decades of Spokane's Hunger Stories

Second Harvest has served thousands of families in its 35 years of service to the community. For 20 of those years, we've been building a deep and relevant body of work known as the Client Survey.

Hundreds of volunteers have helped us collect the thoughts, wisdom, worries and hopes of the families we serve. It's amazing how clients let us into their lives, just a bit, and share some often painful and personal stories about what's affecting their family.

It's through this sharing of personal stories that we gain an insight into the lives of our neighbors that spend most days on the margins of the economy. We learn how folks put together full-time jobs, part-time jobs or meager pension checks with utility bills, tanks of gas and the cost of living to come out on the other side with food in the fridge and a meal on the table. By the way, this is usually the place where we discover how we fit into the picture.

Thank you for taking the time to review the findings of this 20th survey. Much has stayed the same and much has changed. In any case, the people remain real, relevant and part of our lives. Your contribution to fighting hunger is sincerely appreciated.

Warm regards,

Jason Luke Clark
Executive Director

Second Harvest Inland Northwest brings community resources together to feed people in need through empowerment, education and partnerships. Last year, Second Harvest distributed 4.1 million pounds of food to its network of 21 emergency food pantries in Spokane County. These neighborhood food banks are serving 15,000 people each month. Second Harvest also provided 3 million pounds of food to 130 other charities in Spokane, the core of its service area, to help people in need. All told, Second Harvest distributed 14.3 million pounds of food last year to more than 300 partner charities that feed 48,000 people per week throughout the Inland Northwest.

20th Annual Client Survey 2006

Children Served

47% in 1995
43% in 2006

Parents Go Without Food so Children Can Eat

48% in 1996
59% in 2006

Rent Their Home

82% in 1991
73% in 2006

Receive Food Stamps

30% in 1991
61% in 2006

Emergency Food Box Lasted at Least Five Days

34% in 1997
78% in 2006

Completed at Least High School or Equivalent

64% in 1996
79% in 2006

Single-Parent Households

42% in 1991
24% in 2006

Heads of Households Working in Past Year

45% in 1997
66% in 2006

Spokane Residency More than 10 Years

45% in 1993
59% in 2006

“Gasoline will come above cleaning products and even above food because I have to get to work.”

“I’m happy with what I get here. We use it all—nothing goes to waste.”

“I just got laid off, so we’re running short on food.”



“It’s really hard to get a decent job in Spokane. The hours don’t work with child care. You can’t get ahead on minimum wage.”

“I’m low on everything—all the basics. I’ve learned not to be picky.”

“I really appreciate this food bank. I am treated with respect and dignity.”

“I’m in the process of getting help from the state. I’m waiting for child support. Trying to budget with rising gas costs, rent and electricity I’m having a hard time making ends meet.”

A SNAPSHOT

Food Security

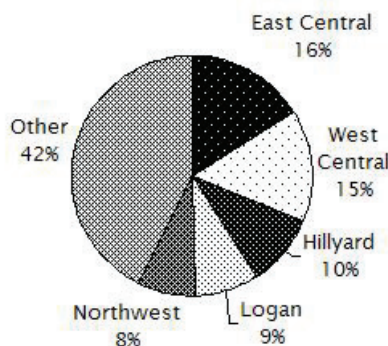
- Nearly 60% of parents with children skip meals so their children can eat. Of those, 25% skip meals weekly and 28% skip meals monthly.
- 53% of adults without children skip meals when they run low on food. Of those, 33% skip meals weekly and 28% skip meals daily.
- 91% of households were able to get food within 24 hours of their request.
- Nearly two-thirds of respondents said their emergency food box lasted one week or longer.
- 61% of households receive food stamps.
- Of the households with food stamps, 37% receive less than \$100 each month and 32% receive \$100 to \$199.

People, Households & Residence

- 41% of emergency food pantry clients are children, 53% are adults and 11% are seniors (55 and older).
- Nearly one-fourth of all households are headed by single parents. Single mothers make up 22% of all households.
- 53% of clients are female and 47% are male.

Age	Percent
0-2 Years	5%
3-6 Years	8%
7-12 Years	13%
13-18 Years	15%
19-54 Years	48%
55-61 Years	5%
62+ Years	6%

Top 5 City Neighborhoods Served



Based on clients who reported living in the City of Spokane.

- 64% of households live within the Spokane city limits.
- 59% of households have lived in Spokane County for more than 10 years.

OF HUNGER

Income, Employment & Education

- 80% of client households report income below the federal poverty level. 97% earn less than half of Spokane County’s median family income.
- 44% of households have at least one member working full or part time.
- Two-thirds of households have primary wage earners who worked some time in the last 12 months.
- Nearly one-third of adults cannot work because of their disability.
- 79% of surveyed adults completed high school or equivalent. 32% completed some college.

A family of four living at 100% of the federal poverty level lives on \$20,000 annually. A family of four living at 50% or less of the median family income lives on less than \$27,300 annually.

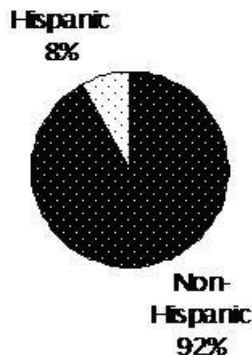
Monthly rent or mortgage of \$800 represents 48% of the annual income of a four-person family living at 100% of the federal poverty level.

Housing & Health Insurance

- 24% of households receive financial assistance with their rent or mortgage.
- 21% of households have at least one member who is uninsured.
- 44% of households have unpaid medical or hospital bills.

Monthly Rent or Mortgage Payment	% of Households
\$300 to \$749	60%
Less than \$300	29%
More than \$750	11%

Race & Ethnicity



Race	Percent
White	82.5%
American Indian/Alaska Native	4.1%
Black/African American	3.9%
American Indian/Alaska Native & White	2.4%
Other Multi-Racial	2.4%
Black/African American & White	2.3%
Asian	0.7%
Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander	0.7%
Asian & White	0.6%
American Indian/Alaska Native & Black/African American	0.4%



“Diapers, food, kids’ clothes, cleaning products— we’re on a tight budget. Gas prices are high.”

“I’m low this month on food stamps and this helps. I have a brain injury from birth that makes it difficult for me to hold a job, so it’s frustrating.”

“We use food stamps for meat and the food supplies we get at our neighborhood food bank helps us make meals. It’s tough to get by with both me and my husband in school.”



“Thanks to you, we’ve been able to make it!”

“I have two jobs and it’s still not enough. On Basic Health, I have to pay for my own prescriptions and I can’t afford them, so I don’t get them.”

DIFFICULT CHOICES

In this year's survey, individuals and families explain the choices they must make, sometimes on a daily basis, between eating and other necessities.

School, Gas, and Food are competing needs for one family of five. The mother, a 27-year-old college student, skips meals monthly so her three children can eat. She talks about their struggles:

"I ride the bus to school because I can't afford gas. Around the house, it's either groceries or gas. Lots of tough choices. My husband just started a new full-time job. He's not making that much money, but all of our assistance was cut. When I graduate, I'm going to be a social worker. Our family will put back into the system. We will give back."

Maternity Leave, Unpaid Medical Bills and Two New Mouths to Feed brought one family to the food bank for the third time in the last year. The mother works full time and disability prevents the father from working. This family of five lives on less than \$15,000 annually. The mother explains what brought them in on this particular day:

"We just had twins, our food stamps were cut down to \$37 a month and I don't go back to work for another week. It will be a few weeks before I get a paycheck. I've been on maternity leave. I hate to take from agencies like this because I know there are people who need it more than me."

A Recent Car Accident makes it tough for one family to keep their heads above water. The client, a college educated man in his 50s, goes without food daily so his children can eat. He and his wife balance medical expenses for one child who has a disability and other household basics:

"We choose between gas, food, clothing and medical supplies. I've been out of work six weeks because of a car accident. We have no money, no groceries. I have a heart condition and can't work until it gets better."

Spokane County Emergency Food Pantry Network

Airway Heights Baptist Church Food Bank
American Indian Center
Better Living Center
Caritas Food Bank
Cheney Food Bank
The City Gate
East SNAP

Greenhouse Food Bank
Mead Food Bank
Medical Lake Food Bank
North County Food Bank
Northeast Pantry
Northwest Ecumenical Food Bank
Otis Orchards Food Bank

Our Place
The Salvation Army
St. Vincent de Paul
Southside Food Pantry
Spangle Food Bank
Valley Food Bank
Westminster Presbyterian Food Bank

Survey Methodology

This report documents Second Harvest's 20th Annual Client Survey—the longest running food bank survey of its kind in the nation. The 2006 survey, modeled after prior surveys, was conducted the third and fourth weeks of August. During that time, Second Harvest staff and volunteers interviewed 814 clients at 21 emergency food pantries in Spokane County. The survey was voluntary and confidential, and clients were not required to answer all of the questions. The survey is used as a tool to measure Second Harvest's effectiveness in delivering its hunger-relief mission, and gives clients a voice regarding their struggles and needs.

THANK YOU to the 814 clients who kindly agreed to participate, the generous volunteers who helped conduct the interviews and the 21 food pantries.

For more information or to donate, contact:

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View the complete results of the survey at www.2-harvest.org.