

BITTER HARVEST:

**A Status Report on the Need
for Emergency Food Assistance
in America**

**By the
Food Research and
Action Center**

**Issued:
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Bitter Harvest: A Status Report on the Need for Emergency
Food Assistance in America

Prepared by the staff of
The Food Research and Action Center

November 1984

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Executive Summary

Bitter Harvest: A Status Report on the Need for Emergency Food Assistance in America provides an up-to-date look at the demand for emergency food assistance in the United States. Based on the responses of nearly 300 emergency food providers, geographically distributed nationwide, the report finds:

- There was an average increase of 20.4% nationally between 1983 and 1984 in the average monthly number of households served by emergency food providers.
- Nearly two-thirds (65%) of providers responding reported that the average monthly number of households served increased from 1983 to 1984. 9% reported no change in caseload; and 14% reported a decrease. The remaining 12% reported that they did not have adequate information to respond.
- Almost three-quarters (71%) of emergency food providers responded that private charity cannot meet the current need for food assistance in their local communities.
- 61.2% of the respondents stated that over 50% of their caseload is made up of families with children.

Without adequate resources to purchase food, unserved or underserved by public assistance programs, individuals and families are turning in increasing numbers to an overburdened network of emergency food assistance providers.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Food Research and Action Center would like to extend its deep gratitude to all those individuals and agencies who participated in this report (particularly members of the Second Harvest Network). We know that the volunteer and regular staff at food banks, food pantries and soup kitchens work tirelessly to feed the nation's needy. We appreciate the time and energy which so many devoted in distributing our survey and completing this report.

We would also like to thank Mary Goodwin, Chief Nutritionist at the Montgomery County, Maryland, Health Department for assisting us in locating food pantries which agreed to pre-test our questionnaire. We appreciate the assistance of the staff at Damascus Help, Silver Spring Help and Rockville Fish in pretesting our questionnaire. We also appreciate the thoughtful comments of Rick Stack of the Capital Area Food Bank of Washington, D.C. which we shared with food bank directors who distributed the survey.

We are also grateful to Ron Wallace of Bread for the World who worked so diligently in preparing the tables in this report and for the volunteer assistance of Marty Feldman, a student at Georgetown University Law School.

INTRODUCTION

In the past year, the attention of the American public was once again focused on issues of hunger and malnutrition with the appointment of a Presidential Task Force on Food Assistance and a House Select Committee on Hunger. Growing public concern about hunger and malnutrition was reinforced by health professionals, community nutritionists, and public health administrators who confirmed the growing body of evidence that hunger and malnutrition were on the rise again after more than a decade of progress.

In recent months, however, attention has shifted away from the issues of hunger and malnutrition in America. These issues have been preempted in the press by stories of economic recovery and the improved mood of the nation. Many Americans with limited incomes nonetheless, continue to live in the shadowy world of poverty, confronting a daily struggle of how to provide food for themselves and their families. It was out concern for these people that the Food Research Action Center decided to update a survey¹ it had done about a year ago in which households using emergency food assistance were interviewed.

In initiating this survey FRAC sought to reconcile two seemingly contradictory sets of realities. On the one hand, inflation is down and the economy appears to be on the road to recovery. On the other hand, the Department of Commerce's most recent data show that the number of Americans living at or below the poverty line is at an all time high of 35.3 million persons.

¹ Still Hungry: A Survey of People in Need of Emergency Food Assistance, Food Research and Action Center, October, 1983.

PART I. FINDINGS

The findings in this report are based on responses to a questionnaire which FRAC mailed to emergency food assistance providers throughout the United States. Emergency food providers were selected because they are often the first line of defense against hunger, serving households that have not been absorbed into the state/local social services caseload. Moreover, as our first report, Still Hungry, showed, 60% of persons seeking emergency food assistance are already receiving Food Stamp Program benefits but are driven by inadequate benefit levels to seek emergency food assistance on a supplementary basis.

Emergency food providers were asked to supply the following information: the average number of households served monthly in 1983 and 1984, the characteristics of households being served, whether the private sector could meet current needs, and recommendations for improving the effectiveness of emergency food assistance in their community.

Approximately three hundred emergency food assistance providers in 36 states and the District of Columbia responded to the questionnaire. Their responses indicate that hunger remains a growing problem for them:

- * There was an average increase of 20.4% nationally between 1983 and 1984 in the average monthly number of households served among the providers responding to the questionnaire.
- * 65% of providers surveyed reported that the average monthly number of households served had increased between 1983 and 1984.
- * 71% of the emergency food providers responding reported that private charity cannot meet the current need for emergency food assistance.
- * Many households are being referred to emergency food assistance by state and/or local government agencies who cannot help them.

TABLE 1
AVERAGE HOUSEHOLDS SERVED PER MONTH

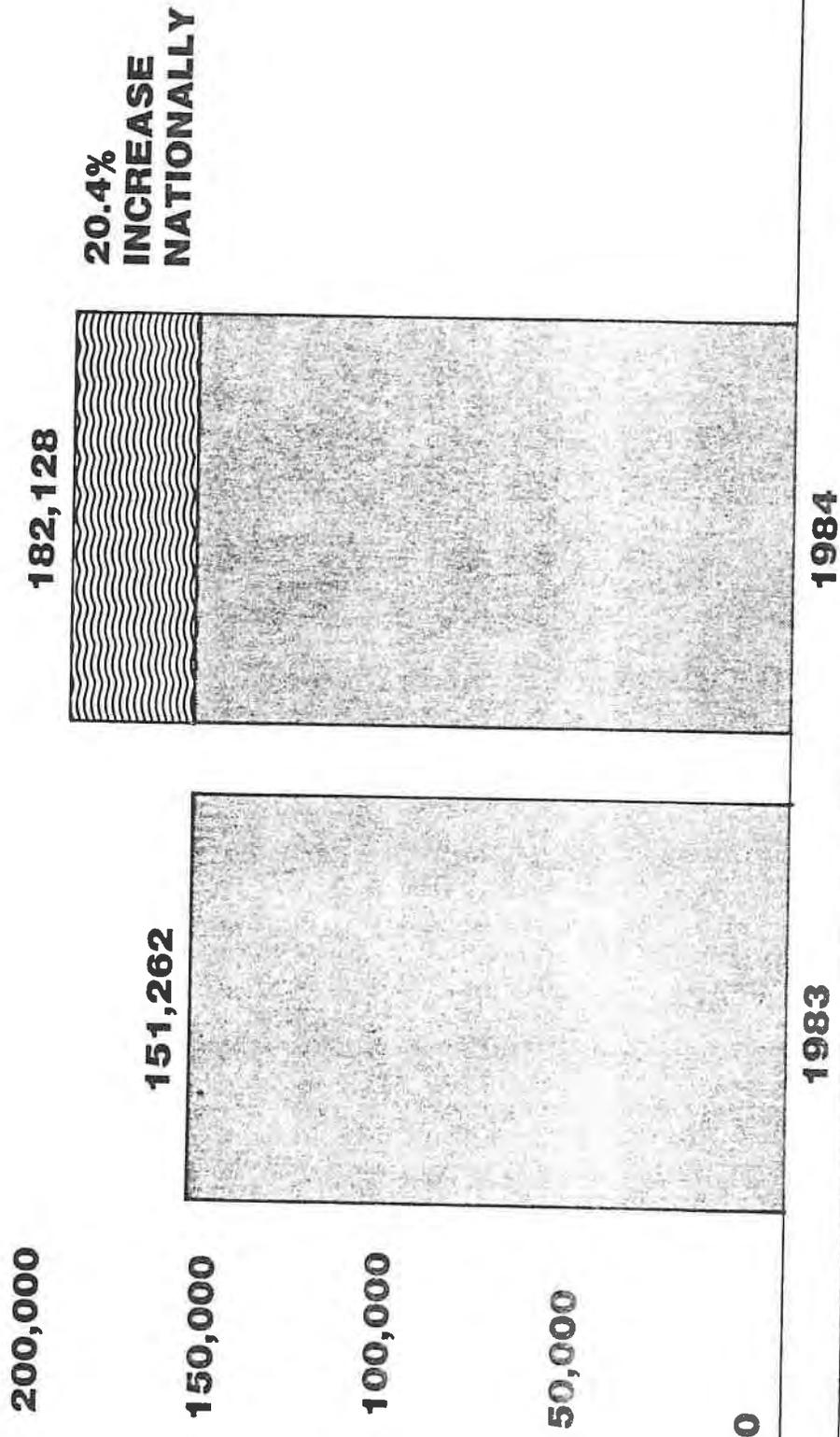
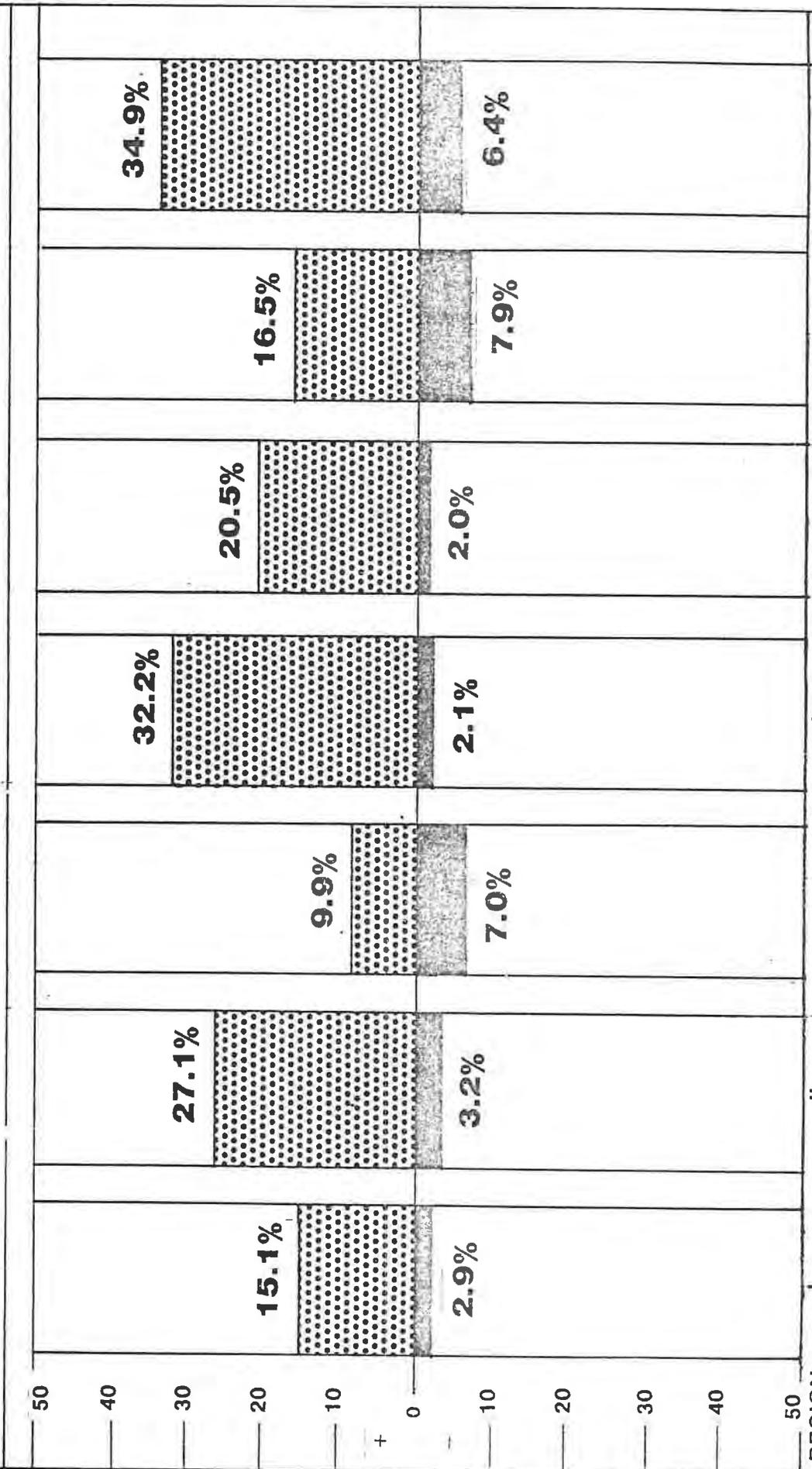


TABLE 2

INCREASE IN DEMAND FROM 1983 TO 1984



DECREASE IN FOOD STAMP PROGRAM PARTICIPATION

REGION

TABLE 3 DATA

Do Private Charities Meet Current Need?

percentage responding no:

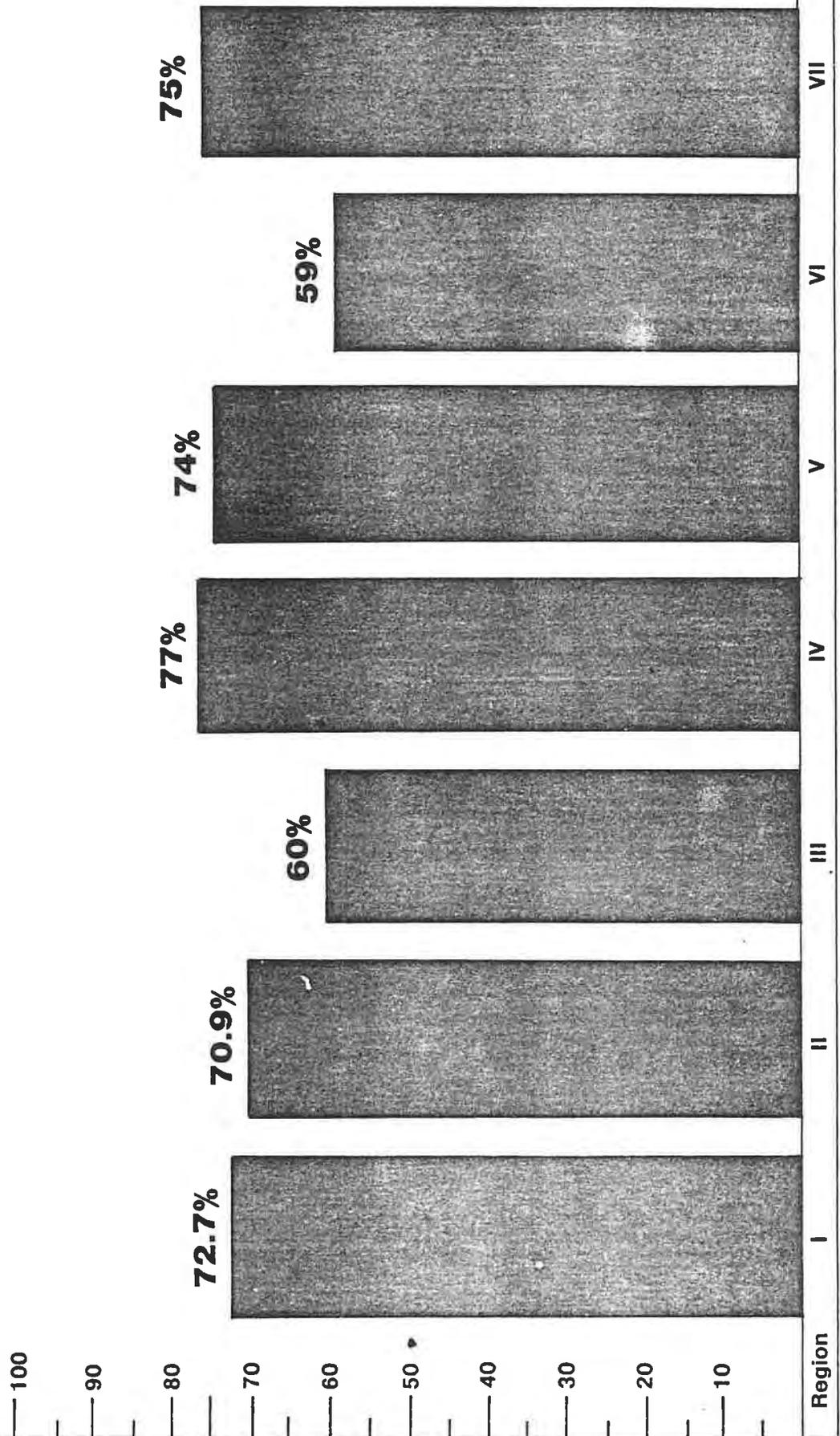
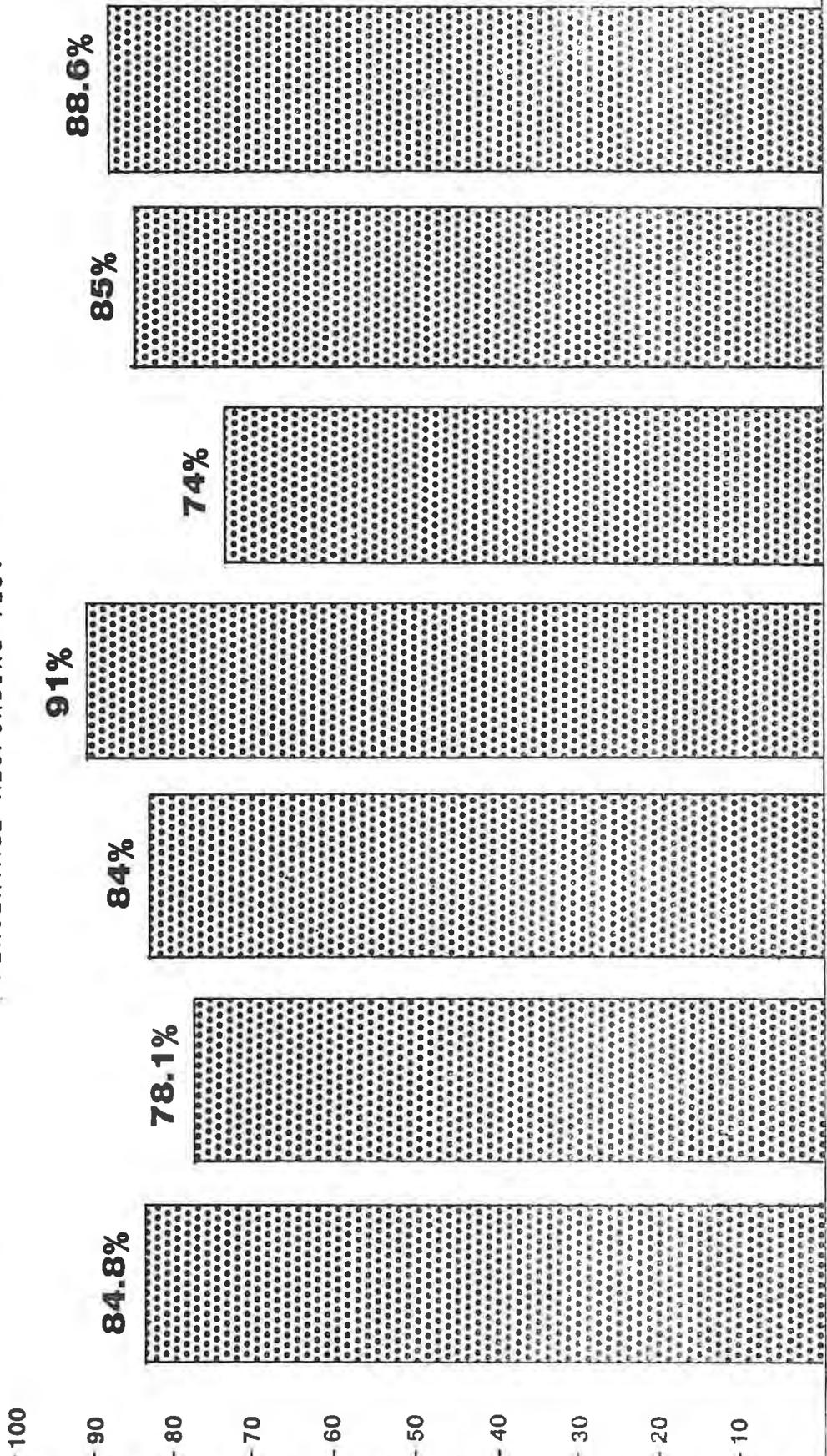


TABLE 4 DATA

Do You receive Referrals From Social Service/Health Agencies?

PERCENTAGE RESPONDING YES:



Region

In short, it is not only older adults, the homeless and disabled who continue to be the victims of hunger. FRAC's study indicates that there is a growing generation of children in this country who must wake up each day asking whether they will eat and wondering who will feed them.

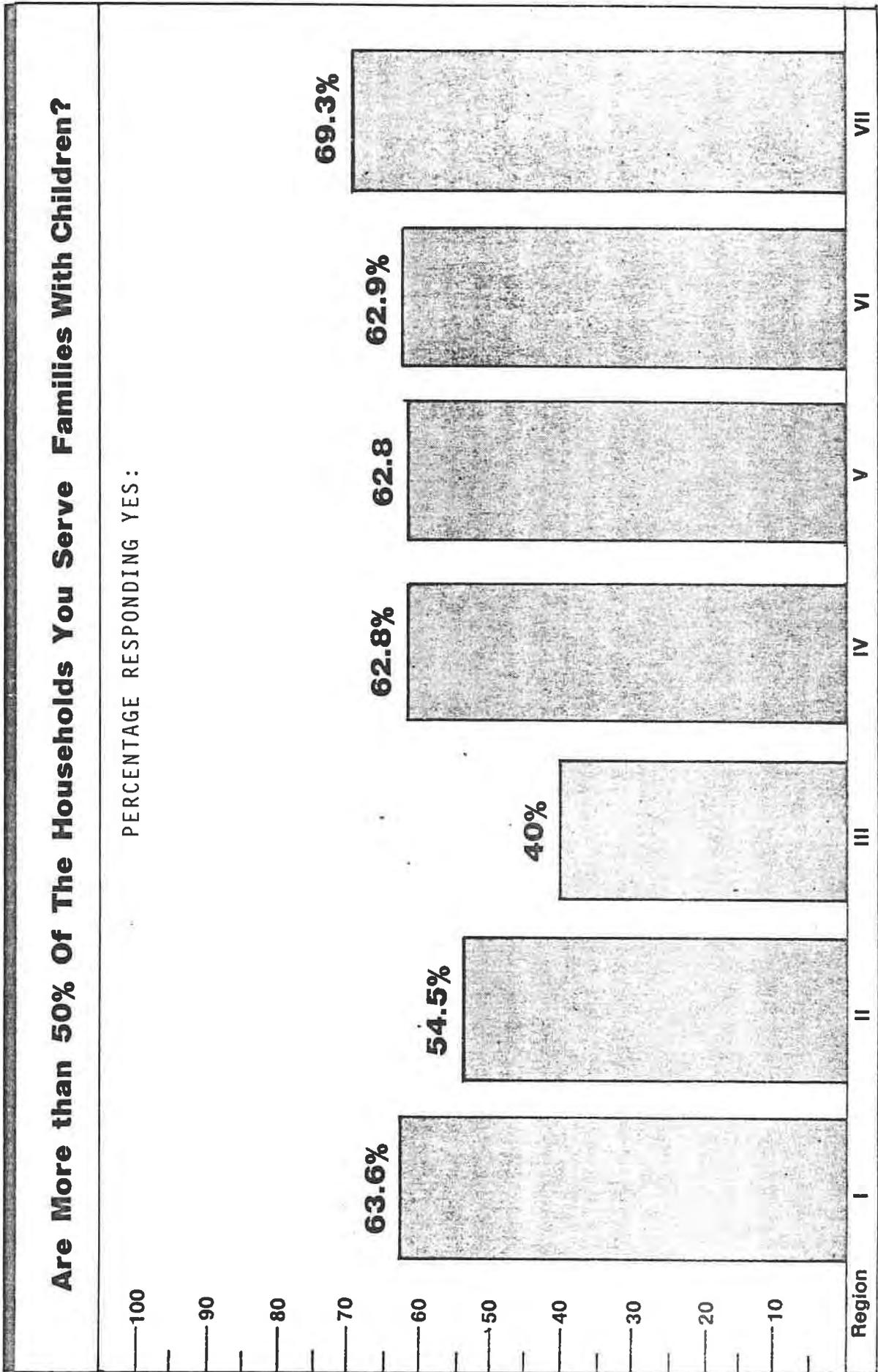
We don't have all the vegetables and protein that we need but we have been able to help senior citizens and single people. Where we fall short is in helping families of 6 or 8 where there are small children and growing youth.

Elsa Young
Mount Saint Helping Hand
Snoqualmie, WA

CONCLUSION:

The data provided by emergency food assistance providers in response to FRAC's questionnaire underscore two distinct realities operating within our nation. On one hand, there is economic recovery that holds out prospects to many households of returning to work and/or increasing their earnings. On the other hand, there is an increasing number of households left to reap the bitter harvest of poverty, hunger and malnutrition. Bereft of adequate resources to buy food, unserved by government social services agencies, it is these households that are turning to an overburdened network of voluntary emergency food assistance providers in increasing numbers in order to have food to eat each day.

TABLE 5 DATA



Part II: Summary of Emergency Food Provider Studies
from State and Local Groups

Introduction

In this section, we have summarized a number of recent studies on the status of the need for emergency food assistance from all regions, of the country. Most of these reports update data from previous surveys in 1982 and 1983.

Of particular importance is the general finding in every study, in every region, that requests for emergency food assistance are increasing. (This finding corroborates FRAC's data presented in Part I.) While many observers were not surprised to see a surge in requests for emergency food assistance during the recent recession, what is remarkable is that a continued, sustained increase for such assistance persists in a time of economic recovery.

REGION I: NEW ENGLAND AND NEW YORK

Nassau County, New York

Study conducted by: The Health and Welfare Council of Nassau County, a private, not-for-profit human services planning agency composed of more than 300 public and voluntary agencies.

Date of Publication: August 1984

Purpose and Scope of Study: Member agencies of the Council and anecdotal case reports suggested that federal, state and local budget cuts were having a negative impact on the 90,000 poor and near poor individuals living

- (3) There is significant under-utilization of the Food Stamp Program in Nassau County. From September 1981 - September 1983, Food Stamp program enrollment in Nassau County fell from 34,000 participants to 25,000 participants, a drop of nearly 30%.
- (4) There has been a significant decrease in the number of Nassau County residents receiving benefits from the government assistance programs since federal laws were changed in 1981.
- (5) The dramatic increase in the demand for emergency food from the private sector suggests that the families denied assistance because of federal changes are under economic and nutritional stress.
- (6) Evidence presented seems to suggest that food stamp allocations are not sufficient to assist families at risk. Site directors at pantries and soup kitchens unanimously reported that attendance was up significantly during the last two weeks of each month because clients' food stamps had run low.
- (7) The group most negatively impacted upon is single parent women age 20-39 years and their children.

Contact Person: John T. O'Connell, Deputy Director
Health and Welfare Council of
Nassau County, Inc.
773 Fulton Avenue
Uniondale, New York 11553
(516) 483-1110

food baskets increased by 133%, while soup kitchen meals went up by 94%.

- (2) 91% of responding agencies indicated that a significant portion of people they served in June 1983 were unemployed workers; 72% of the agencies reported that more of the people they served were unemployed than had been unemployed a year earlier.
- (3) 91% of the responding agencies said that a significant portion of the people they served had come to the agency because their food stamps did not provide enough food to last through the month; 82% reported that more people were coming because their food stamps had run out than had been the case a year earlier.
- (4) 70% of responding agencies reported that they were seeing more families with children.

Contact Person: Jean Olsen
Rhode Island Community Food Bank
P.O. Box 2070
Providence, Rhode Island 02905
(401) 461-9326

REGION II MID-ATLANTIC

Montgomery County, Maryland

Survey Conducted by: The Montgomery County Food Network, a community-based group which acts as an advocate for fellow citizens in need in Montgomery County. The network provides information and advice in obtaining food assistance from local, state and federal agencies.

Date of Publication: October 1984

REGION III: SOUTHEAST

Atlanta, Georgia

Survey Conducted by: The Atlanta Community Food Bank, Inc., the largest distributor of privately donated food in Atlanta.

Date of Publication: February 1984

Purpose and Scope of the Survey:

The agency wished to determine the number of persons and meals served by food pantries and other member agencies which received their food from the Atlanta Food Bank. A survey of 265 agencies in Atlanta was conducted in January and February of 1984.

Findings include:

- (1) The monthly number of food boxes distributed is 10,144, the monthly number of persons served through food box distribution is 22,576, the number of meals served weekly on premises by member agencies is 81,906, and the number of meals served monthly on premises by member agencies is 327,624.

Kalamazoo, Mt. Clemens, Grand Rapids, Detroit and Midland. A written survey was conducted in the Upper Peninsula region of the state.

Findings include:

- (1) Hungry people found in Michigan do not have adequate resources for basic needs as a result of complex economic and social factors and are not adequately protected by federal food policies from the threat of hunger.
- (2) The ultimate solution for ending hunger in Michigan is full employment.
- (3) Failing the achievement of full employment, the Commission recommends that \$4 billion be shifted from defense to food stamp and other nutrition programs since these programs are the principal mechanism to ensure that low-income people have access to food.
- (4) The resources at the disposal of the private sector are wholly inadequate to redress the state of chronic need that now exists. The number of people receiving emergency food assistance has increased dramatically since 1981 and this increase for emergency food assistance has not subsided in the first quarter of 1984.

Contact Person: Molly Graber
Office of Nutrition Services
Michigan Department of Public Health
3500 North Logan
P.O. Box 30035
Lansing, Michigan 48909
(517) 373-7574

Chicago, Illinois

Survey conducted by: Mayor's Task Force on Hunger, a group of public and private citizens - conducted a year long study.

Date of Publication: October 1984

Purpose and Scope of Survey: To examine the extent of the problem of hunger in Chicago; determine whether local, state and federal programs are meeting the need; and make recommendations to the Mayor's office for appropriate action.

Findings include:

- (1) Hunger is at epidemic levels in Chicago.
- (2) Local, State, Federal and private sector programs are unable to meet the need.
- (3) Department of Human Services reports a 945.7% increase city-wide in requests for food assistance between 1981 and 1984.
- (4) Close to 900,000 people are at-risk of hunger in Chicago.
- (5) Private charitable agencies in Chicago turn away 1759 people each month due to inadequate food supplies.

Contact Person: Tonya Ford
Mayor's Office
City Hall - Room 507
Chicago, IL 60602
(312) 744-6116

REGION V SOUTHWEST

State of Texas

Survey Conducted by: Texas Senate Interim Committee on Hunger and Nutrition.

Date of Publication: October 1984

Purpose and Scope
of Survey:

A committee of the Texas Senate sought to determine the extent of hunger in Texas and identify appropriate State responses to the problem. The Committee surveyed over 200 counties in Texas and received 1,893 responses to their questionnaire.

Findings Include:

- (1) Hunger is a growing problem since the early 1980's due in large part to the recession, unemployment and the increasing number of people living in poverty.
- (2) The need for emergency food assistance has doubled from 967,688 people in 1982 to 1,874,672 people in 1983. Preliminary estimates for 1984 indicated that the need is still growing in 1984.

REGION VI MOUNTAIN PLAINS

Salt Lake County, Utah

Survey Conducted by: Utahns Against Hunger, a nutrition advocacy group concerned with emergency food needs in their community and children's issues generally.

Date of Publication: February 1984

Purpose and Scope of Survey: This group did a survey of private, non-profit agencies that operate emergency food programs such as soup kitchens and food pantries within Salt Lake County. Agencies responded to the survey with information for the month of January for the years 1982, 1983, and 1984.

Findings include:

- (1) Within Salt Lake County, six agencies reported an increase from January 1983 to January 1984 ranging from 1% to 197%; four agencies reported a decreased use ranging from 14% to 35%. One agency reported no change.
- (2) Six agencies reported an increase in use from January, 1982 to January, 1984 ranging from 72% to 420%. Three agencies reported decreased use in January 1984 from January 1982, ranging from 1% to 27%. Three agencies did not have 1984 data available.

Contact Person: Stephen Johnson
Utahns Against Hunger
21 G Street
Salt Lake City, Utah 84103
(801) 328-2561

TOPEKA, KANSAS

Survey Conducted by: Let's Help, Inc., a private agency
in Topeka concerned with hunger.

Date of Publication: September 1984

Purpose and Scope: Assess the need for emergency food
assistance in Topeka, Kansas.

Findings include:

The number of people served and meals provided have increased
dramatically. (See attached chart.)

Contact Persons: Marge Robberts
Let's Help, Inc.
302 Van Buren Street
Topeka, Kansas 66603
(913) 232-4357

Paul Johnson
Public Assistance
Coalition of Kansas
Box 2815
Topeka, Kansas
(913) 354-4635

REGION VII WEST

Santa Clara, California

Survey Conducted by: The Food Bank of Santa Clara County, serving the communities of Sunnyvale, San Jose and Santa Clara.

Date of Publication: June 1984

Purpose and Scope of Survey: The Food Bank conducted this survey as a method of determining the agency's needs for the coming year, and to also help identify areas where improvements in serving hungry people need to be made.

Findings include:

- (1) Of the 30 agencies that participated in the Emergency Box Program, 22 (or 75% of respondents) reported an increase in need between 1983 and 1984; 3 agencies reported a decrease and 5 agencies reported that the need remained the same.
- (2) Some of the reasons given for rise in requests for emergency food assistance included:
 - o continuing poor economic conditions
 - o food stamps cut or denied
 - o strike at a local food processing plant

Contact Person: Mary Ellen Heising
The Food Bank of Santa Clara
297 Commercial St.
San Jose, California 95112
(408) 286-9170

APPENDIX A: QUESTIONNAIRE

EMERGENCY FOOD PROVIDER SURVEY

1. Name of Provider: _____
 Contact Person: _____
 Mailing Address: _____
 Telephone Number: _____

2. Average Number of Households Served Per Month:*

a. 1983 _____

b. 1984 _____

Average size of household: a. 1983 _____

b. 1984 _____

3. a. Has the number of food pantries increased in your area since a year ago?

Yes

No

b. If yes, estimate the increase: _____%

4. How often can a household receive food?

1983	1984	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	More than once a month
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Once a month
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Once every two months
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Less often than every two months
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other (please indicate how often) _____

*Note: All 1984 numbers should be for January 1 - September 30.

(over)

9. About what percentage of households served are:

	1983	1984
a. elderly households*	_____ %	_____ %
b. households with children	_____ %	_____ %
c. single, non-elderly adults	_____ %	_____ %
TOTAL.....	_____ 100 %	_____ 100 %

*Exclude elderly households with children. Include them in b.

10. How many staff did or do you have?

1983

Full Time

a. Paid _____

b. Volunteer _____

Part Time

a. Paid _____

b. Volunteer _____

1984

a. Paid _____

b. Volunteer _____

a. Paid _____

b. Volunteer _____

(over)

APPENDIX B. LISTING OF FOOD BANKS WHICH RECEIVED QUESTIONNAIRE

REGION I NEW ENGLAND (including New York)

Western Massachusetts Food Bank, East Longmeadow, Massachusetts

Southern Tier Community Food Bank, Elmira, New York**

Connecticut Food Bank, New Haven, Connecticut*

Rhode Island Food Bank, Providence, Rhode Island **

Genesee Valley Regional Bank, Rochester, New York*

Boston Food Bank, Roxbury Massachusetts**

REGION II MID-ATLANTIC

Maryland Food Bank, Baltimore, Maryland*

Erie Community Food Bank, Inc., Erie, Pennsylvania*

Mountaineer Food Bank, Gassaway, West Virginia*

Community Food Bank, Newark, New Jersey*

The Greater Philadelphia Food Bank, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania**

Pittsburgh Community Food Bank, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania*

Central Virginia Food Bank, Richmond, Virginia *

Southwest Virginia Community Food Bank, Roanoke, Virginia*

Blue Ridge Area Food Bank, Stanton, Virginia*

Capital Area Community Food Bank, Washington, D.C.**

San Antonio Food Bank, San Antonio, Texas*

Neighbor for Neighbor Food Bank, Tulsa, Oklahoma*

REGION VI MOUNTAIN PLAINS

Colorado Food Clearinghouse, Denver, Colorado**

Harvesters, Kansas City, Missouri**

Food Crisis Network, St. Louis, Missouri**

REGION VII WEST

Food Bank of Alaska, Anchorage, Alaska*

Community Food Coalition of Contra Costa County, Inc., Concord, California*

Fresno Community Food Resources, Inc., Fresno, California**

Westside Food Bank, Glendale, Arizona

Las Vegas Community Food Bank, Las Vegas, Nevada*

Interagency Food Bank, Portland, Oregon**

Survive Food Bank, Riverside, California*

The Food Bank, San Jose, California*

Food Oversight Operation Distribution, Seattle, Washington*

Freemont Food Bank, Seattle, Washington

Tucson Community Food Bank, Tucson, Arizona**

*Member, Second Harvest Food Bank Network

**One of 3 food banks in each USDA/FNS Region to receive 50 survey instruments for distribution.

APPENDIX C: NOTES ON METHODOLOGY

The primary purpose of this report was to assess the need for emergency food assistance in the United States between 1983 and 1984 and to determine whether the private sector, as represented by food pantries and other charitable institutions, felt that it could adequately meet the need for emergency food assistance in the communities surveyed.

Because the universe of the total number of food pantries is unknown, FRAC distributed its questionnaires through food banks. Food banks are the most direct link to food pantries since food pantries go to their respective food banks to obtain donated foods provided by the private sector and/or government programs.

In order to assure geographical representation, FRAC selected three food banks within each of 7 U.S. Department of Agriculture Food and Nutrition Service Regions and, after confirming their willingness to distribute the questionnaire, sent them 50 survey instruments for distribution to their pantries. FRAC sent an additional 31 food banks 10 survey instruments each for distribution.

Forty-five of the fifty-two food banks which were sent our survey are members of Second Harvest. Second Harvest is the only national network of food banks and is currently serving approximately 12,600 food pantries and charitable institutions.

On September 21, 1984, FRAC sent the questionnaire to the 52 food banks (listed in Appendix B) and to 150 community groups and food pantries that had responded to a previous FRAC study in 1983 concerning the needs of emergency food providers. (The questionnaire was pretested on three emergency food providers prior to its dissemination to the field.) We requested that all responses be returned by October 15, 1984, although we actually coded

APPENDIX D. DISTRIBUTION OF SURVEY RESPONSES BY REGION AND STATE

Region I. New England (including New York)

<u>State</u>	<u>Responses in Parentheses</u>
Connecticut	(1)
Maine	
Massachusetts	(12)
New Hampshire	
New York	(16)
Rhode Island	(3)
Vermont	(1)
TOTAL	(33)

REGION II MID-ATLANTIC

Delaware	
District of Columbia	(8)
Maryland	(5)
New Jersey	(18)
Pennsylvania	(14)
Puerto Rico	
Virginia	(6)
Virgin Islands	
West Virginia	(4)
TOTAL	(55)

REGION V SOUTHWEST

Arkansas	
Louisiana	(1)
New Mexico	
Oklahoma	(13)
Texas	(21)
TOTAL	(35)

REGION VI MOUNTAIN PLAINS

Colorado	
Iowa	(1)
Kansas	(1)
Missouri	(22)
Montana	(1)
Nebraska	
North Dakota	
South Dakota	(1)
Utah	(1)
TOTAL	(27)

REGION VII WEST

Alaska	(2)
American Samoa	
Arizona	(23)
California	(32)
Guam	

APPENDIX E. VOICES FROM THE FIELD

Introduction

The questionnaires distributed to the emergency food providers asked the following, open-ended question:

Please provide us with any general comments regarding your current ability to meet the need for food assistance in your community and any recommendations you may have.

In selecting comments to reproduce in this report, we chose those which were generally representative of the concerns expressed by the emergency food providers.¹ These concerns fell into three general categories:

- 1) the increasing demand for food assistance and the providers' inability to meet the need;
- 2) the availability of food donations, volunteers and other resources;
- 3) the pressures caused by the inadequacies of the Food Stamp and other public assistance programs.

A second criterion for choosing remarks was their policy relevance. For example, a number of the comments in category two speak to the problems encountered with the distribution of USDA Surplus Commodities. This program will be reauthorized in next year's farm bill and these comments should prove useful in the debate on the program's possible extension and redesign. Category three comments emphasized repeatedly the inadequacies of the Food Stamp Program benefits as an immediate cause of the hunger problem the providers face. The Food Stamp Program is also slated for reauthorization

1. A very small number of providers, less than 10%, indicated satisfaction with existing public and private resources and facilities.

REGION I: NEW ENGLAND (Including New York)

ON THE INCREASING DEMAND FOR FOOD ASSISTANCE AND THE PROVIDERS' INABILITY TO MEET THE NEED:

This program has snowballed since we began in 1982 ... At present, we are at our limit...

Rev. Wayne Hoffman
Highway Tabernacle
Assembly of God
Van Etten, N.Y.

Currently, because of the large volume of people in need ... we are able to assist only once every four months. We turn away an average of 23 requests each month -- tragic in our minds, but necessary if we are to help all those we can.

Collete Riehl, Director
Open Pantry of Springfield
Springfield, MA 01103

We've had problems supplying demand about 50% of the time. Families come on a weekly basis but, at times, we don't have much to offer them.

Jean Owens
Enfield Food Distribution
Newfield, NJ

We have seen dramatic, steady increase in need from September 1982 to September 1984 -- from 10 families a month to 156 families a month. We have, to date, been able to keep up with increased demand reasonably well because of USDA commodities and FEMA funds to supplement. Either more FEMA money or additional USDA foods such as canned meat, poultry or peanut butter - or both - should be made available for the foreseeable future. Our people are hungry and malnourished!

Mary Thomson
Jamica Plain APAC
Jamica Plain, Mass.

You cannot see an empty stomach! The problem of hunger continues to be a hidden one since we only see a small number of the real hungry people in this community. The population has also changed dramatically from street people looking for a sandwich to family groups needing meals or food for days.

A church sponsored food pantry
in East Boston, Mass.

Many of our clients come because of difficulties they have had with the Welfare Office's red tape on forms or organizational abilities. The Welfare system needs an organizational overhaul to help clients to receive their allotments on time and fairly.

A private, volunteer agency
in Quincy, MA

2. ON THE AVAILABILITY OF FOOD DONATIONS, VOLUNTEERS AND OTHER RESOURCES:

We are a small church with a membership of 55. Our funding is mostly weekly collections from members. FEMA money ... was the only reason we could continue our food pantry. Free commodities have been a great blessing. I think a bigger variety of government foods would be helpful ... especially canned meats and dry beans.

A church sponsored provider
in rural West Virginia

West Virginia does not receive sufficient USDA commodities to meet its needs. It appears that the feds have a problem on processing and distribution to states in a timely and adequate manner.

Ervin Queen, Executive Director
P.R.I.D.E. - In Logan County
Logan, WV

Our biggest problem is acquiring a volunteer with a camper or truck to pick up the food and return to the distribution point.

Muriel Miller
United Methodist Church
Van Etten, NJ

Our food supply is only as large as the people who help us. We feed an average of 70 families a month. Many of the organizations that help us have not since June.

A church sponsored food pantry
in East Orange, NJ

We have found the number of families needing food growing larger all the time and have depended heavily on the government commodities to help us meet that need. Without them, many families would have been hungry.

A church-sponsored provider
in North Jersey, NJ

With the combination of private donations and federal programs, we are able to keep up with the demands on our food bank. My only hope is that we will be able to continue to receive federal assistance because there is no way we would be able to keep up with those demands on private donations.

Sally Young, Director
Northeast Ministry
Bethlehem, PA

People need supplemental food assistance on an on-going basis. Pantries are structured to provide emergency food assistance occasionally -- not on-going.

Marlene Funderwhite
Hunger Action Coalition
Pittsburgh, PA

More and more families are finding it difficult to make their stamps and money stretch for a full month. The need for food assistance is a chronic one, as indicated by our number of returnees. We must push for increased support to entitlement programs -- and for staff to administer them as fairly as possible.

Rev. Linda Powell
Trinity Reformed Church
Food Pantry
Newark, NJ

Feed my sheep ... We share our goods with the poor and needy but that doesn't take away the responsibility for the government to do their share.

Rev. Lenora Mosca
St. Anne's Church
Fair Lawn, NJ

... the need exceeds our ability to feed those in need. An increase in food stamp allotments would help the clients greatly.

Rebecca Hawkins
Bethel Outreach Center
Baltimore, MD

The majority of our clients come for food because either their food stamps haven't come in yet or somehow they are delayed in receiving food stamps. Food stamp workers call us often to receive help ... A tough system to work with.

Elizabeth Downs
Samaritan Ministry
Washington, DC

Until April of 1984 we were receiving butter and cheese through the government distribution program. They no longer allow us to get it although we give out food without a fee or charge.

A Community Center
in Madison, TN

... We are always in some financial problem. Having enough food in our shelves requires constant reminders to churches and organizations for our needs.

Jo Call, Executive Director
Rutherford Emergency Food Bank
Murfreesboro, TN

3. ON THE PRESSURES CAUSED BY THE INADEQUACIES OF THE FOOD STAMP AND OTHER PUBLIC ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS:

In general, the federal Food Stamp Program is inadequate for meeting the food needs of the population served. Also, the program does not serve many people who are in need of food subsidy assistance because of stringent eligibility requirements. The private sector cannot adequately meet the needs of those not fully served by federal programs.

Sister Helen Wright
Urban Ministry Center
Raleigh, NC

Many people we see are involved in the Food Stamp program. This is the biggest deterrent to hunger. We are usually put in the position of filling in the "gaps" or helping those not eligible at all.

Tammy Weidinger
Brighton Center
Newport, KY

The Heights Emergency Center provides a 3-4 day supply of food once per month to families in need. The Center has never had to turn families away due to resources. However, we are well aware that a 3-4 day supply of food doesn't fully meet the needs of our clients. In the last year a large number of our clients (up to 60%) have run out of unemployment and are now on welfare. They are unable to find work and are very discouraged. Most have never been on welfare in their lives.

Betty Stouffer
Heights Emergency Food Center
Cleveland, OH

2. ON AVAILABILITY OF FOOD DONATIONS, VOLUNTEERS AND OTHER RESOURCES:

We can only serve once a month because we cannot afford to purchase a van to pick up food. The government should provide money for nonprofit agencies to cover these costs. The government wants nonprofit agencies to take responsibility for feeding the poor and the government does not want to take financial responsibility for the agency that does the government's job.

A church-sponsored provider in
Chicago, IL

Most of the need is met with "food bank" food. It seems churches have gotten tired of the continual plea.

Merianne Haebnel
Emergency Fund Service
St. Paul, MN

The FEMA funds were invaluable and we would like to see such programs increased, not cut.

Virginia Weatherbie, Director
Valley Interfaith Food and
Clothing Center
Cincinnati, OH

We are desperate for canned goods and basic good foods . . . We are getting all sorts of salad dressing, pickles and powdered juice . . . no items to make some sort of a meal. The demand on volunteers is creating a problem of burn out especially because of added requests of the government to fill out form after form in regards to giving away commodities.

Ellen Vecchio
St. Judes Food Pantry
Dolton, IL

REGION V: SOUTHWEST

1. ON THE DEMAND FOR FOOD ASSISTANCE AND THE PROVIDER'S ABILITY TO MEET THE NEED:

We see hundreds of hungry people a day that we can't help because we don't have the food.

Willie Drisdale, Director
Rosewood-Zaragosa
Neighborhood Center
Austin, TX

In May, 1984, [we] experienced a 95% increase over the same period of last year. In June, it was an 84% increase and, in July, an 89% increase.

A food bank in New Orleans, LA

98% of the people we see in our Family Assistance Program are in need of food -- we saw 13,000 people in 1984.

Diane Garvin
Neighbor for Neighbor
Tulsa, OK

We see about 70 clients daily on an average and turn away about 10-20 clients daily.

Sister Grace Wilgenbusch
Catholic Charities
Tulsa, OK

In spite of glowing reports of an economic recovery, we find ourselves struggling to find food for thousands of people who cannot put food on their tables. These are people without jobs who have little hope of finding them.

Rina Rosenberg
Houston Interfaith Hunger Coalition
Houston, TX

This year we are finding many families who have exhausted their unemployment compensation and have taken low-paying jobs that do not pay enough to meet minimum family needs ... We are only a band-aid on a major injury.

Virginia Shrode
St. Vincent de Paul Food Pantry
Galveston, TX

We usually run out of staples early and have to substitute a lot of items that are not nutritious. It really bothers me to give out a lot of potato chips, macaroni, etc.

Steve Kurtright
Church of God (7th Day)
Galena Park, TX

Our pantry distributed USDA food to our families in 1983. Due to the regulations that were imposed in 1984, we chose to quit handling same. We do not have the space nor the staff to deal with the increased paper work on stock that we would be required to handle.

Vera Miller
St. Jerome's Food Pantry
Houston, TX

... Travis County was without surplus commodities for months [in 1983 and 1984] when new qualifying guidelines went into effect. Our pantries can no longer handle any surplus commodities, since we don't investigate income.

Martha Loer
Faith Food Pantries
Austin, TX

Summer produce is a major fill-in for nutrition. Winter nutrition is a problem.

John Camara
Gospel/Messenger
Outreach Ministry
Del City, Ok

3. ON THE PRESSURES CAUSED BY THE INADEQUACY OF FOOD STAMP AND OTHER PUBLIC ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS:

Many of our clients have been denied food stamp assistance. Some have been cut from assistance programs ... A revision of food stamp requirement laws would be helpful.

Ruth Wynne
Jesus House
Oklahoma City, OK

The food stamp offices are very slow in processing applications; it is not unusual for them to be lost entirely.

Virginia Shrode
St. Vincent de Paul Food Pantry
Galveston, TX

REGION VI: MOUNTAIN PLAINS

1. ON THE INCREASING DEMAND FOR EMERGENCY FOOD ASSISTANCE AND THE PROVIDER'S INABILITY TO MEET THE NEED:

The need for food assistance reached its peak and stayed there in August/September 1983, where it remains. We could serve many more people if we had the food or money to buy food -- so our increase in people served no where nearly includes all in need. The need we are seeing now is deeper and more complex (for longer periods and with many other needs) than in the past. Now we get letters from doctors, employers, and social workers telling us that this food aid has literally saved lives!

Sally Fahrenthold
Metropolitan Lutheran Ministry
Kansas City, MO

Our agency has seen a substantial increase in new families (with minor children) coming to the Center for services, many of which have never been to our Center or any other helping agency in the past.

Jill Kennedy
Friendship Center
Helena, MT

In 1983, we served 43% more people than in 1982 and in 1984 we will see a 23% increase in participants. Our donations have stayed the same. . .

Nancy Nauman
Muscatine Community
Food Pantry
Muscatine, Iowa

Our caseload has increased 100%. The dollars allocated from our central office hasn't been enough to keep pace.

A church sponsored provider
in St. Louis, MO

We can't meet the need of all the hungry in our area. . . we have a steady flow of repeaters. . .

A food pantry
in St. Louis, MO

3. ON THE PRESSURES CAUSED BY THE INADEQUACY OF THE FOOD STAMP AND OTHER PUBLIC ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS:

I think it is unconscionable -- at the bottom line -- that people should have to depend on the charity or whim of companies and churches/individuals for the fulfillment of their basic food needs. Food stamps are glaringly inadequate. Higher benefit levels and less stringent eligibility standards are needed.

Ruth Ehresman, Dir.
Shared Ministry Family Center
St. Louis, MO

The inability of families to live solely on food stamps is putting much greater pressure on this program. The emergency nature of the program is changing to more of a program filling in gaps in entitlement programs.

Loretta Martin
Let's Help
Topeka, KN

There are clients who have no income. They are waiting for AFDC and food stamp approval -- [their] unemployment benefits are exhausted. . .

Dee Hargrove
United Methodist Ministry
St. Louis, MO

Our emergency boxes are not meant to be a supplement to income and with food stamps cut, this would seem to be a need. The delay in certification also creates problems.

Madeline Boos
Food Service Center
Sioux Falls, SD

Many of our clients are victims of retrospective budgeting and have no incomes. Many live primarily by donating blood. Because our state eliminated AFDC-U, we have larger two parent use of the food pantry.

Kay Kosow
Crossroads Urban Center
Salt Lake City, UT

twice a month. -- The need is here not only for food but in shelter, medical care, clothing -- I could go on and on. Now, I hope you understand.

Mickey Villarrael
Southeast Churches Service Center
Huntington Park, CA

The food needs in our community are great and growing. We have had to give up other areas of outreach (such as assistance with rent and utility payments and temporary shelter for transients) because of the expense of maintaining our pantry.

Ruth Lohrer, Coordinator
Peninsula-Habor FISH
San Pedro, CA

We only provide assistance once in a 6 month period to people who have no food. There is a tremendous need. . .

Pattie Hamie, Director
Friend in Deed
Pasadena, CA

We had such an influx of people in June of this year. . . 'til we had to make some new rules -- they can come in once in six months now and have to use the referral the day they get it.

Betty Morgan
San Pablo Food Pantry
San Pablo, CA

During the summer of 1984, our ability to meet the need for food assistance was very poor and resulted in our cutting down on what was considered an adequate three day food supply.

Nelson Wing, Secretary
Apache Junction Reach Out
Apache Junction, AZ

Our city of Douglas is located on the Mexican border. Many of our business establishments have declared bankruptcy due to the Peso devaluation. Our ability to feed our needy is very difficult. [We need] public awareness, extensive media coverage, lobbying for assistance and more concern for some really hungry men, women and, very especially, children.

Luciano Gonzalez, Coordinator
Douglas Area Food Bank
Douglas, AZ

When people are re-certified for food stamps, their stamps are almost always late, therefore making for more food referrals for our agency. Hire more (and more efficient) staff for the Food Stamp program.

Doug Clifford
Avondale CAP
Avondale, AZ

Since the emergency situation for our clients is primarily caused by delay in processing food stamp applications, we feel the federal grant [FEMA] should be increased.

Elva Thomsen, Director
Community Food Bank
Cottonwood, AZ

Residence requirements for AFDC, Food Stamps and general relief food programs limit the assistance of people who are homeless. These people are often not transients. . . We are usually able to provide only 3 to 4 days of food per family, thus we are not able to meet the food needs of the homeless or those pending [approval for] public assistance. More emergency assistance should be available through public agencies.

Michele Magnus
Lutheran Social Services
Riverside, CA

[We are] unable to meet the demand. [We] recommend that Food Stamp recipients receive stamps on time and in proper amounts.

Harold McNees
St. Vincent de Paul Society
Gladstone, OR

ADDENDUM

Bitter Harvest: A Status Report on the Need for Emergency Food Assistance in America

Subsequent to the issuance of its report entitled "Bitter Harvest: A Status Report on the Need for Emergency Food Assistance in America", (November 2, 1984) the Food Research and Action Center received an additional 81 responses to its emergency food assistance questionnaire bringing the total to 379. The respondents represented emergency food assistance providers from twenty different states and the District of Columbia.

These responses have been tabulated as an addendum to FRAC's original report. They corroborate the findings in the original report that hunger remains a growing problem for the emergency food providers responding to the questionnaire. More specifically,

- * Among the eighty-one providers responding between 1983 and 1984 there was a 31.5% increase in the average monthly number of households served. The original report documented a 20.4% increase.
- * Of the providers included in this addendum, 62.9% reported that the average monthly number of households had increased; 11.1% reported their service level had remained the same. Only 9.8% reported a decreased demand for service. (The remainder either did not respond to this item or lacked sufficient data to respond). This compares with 65% of the providers who reported an increased demand in the original report.

Chart I
A Comparison of Tabulations from the
Study Respondants and Addendum Respondants

QUESTION ITEM:	Study Respondants(a)	Addendum Respondants(b)	Final Total(c)
(i) Increase in households served in 1984 over those served in 1983: total for U.S.	20.4%	31.5%	21.9%
(ii) Assessment of whether private charities meet the need.	71.7%	66.6%	70.5%
(iii) Providers who said they receive referrals from state/local government agencies	83.9%	82.7%	83.6%
(iv) Percentage of providers for whom more than 50% of the caseload was families with children	61.2%	69%	62.8%

(a) Based on 298 responses

(b) Based on 81 responses

(c) Based on tabulation of 379 responses in study and addendum

REGION IV MIDWEST

STATE	RESPONSES IN PARENTHESES
Illinois	(1)
Ohio	(1)
Wisconsin	(31)
Total	(33)

REGION V SOUTHWEST

Oklahoma	(1)
Texas	(7)
Total	(8)

REGION VI MOUNTAIN PLANS

Colorado	(1)
Missouri	(2)
Total	(3)

REGION VII WEST

California	(5)
Nevada	(2)
Oregon	(2)
Washington	(9)
Total	(18)

Total Addendum Responses	81
Total Original Responses	<u>298</u>

Grand Total 379

San Antonio Food Bank, San Antonio, Texas*

Neighbor for Neighbor Food Bank, Tulsa, Oklahoma*

REGION VI MOUNTAIN PLAINS

Colorado Food Clearinghouse, Denver, Colorado**

Harvesters, Kansas City, Missouri**

Food Crisis Network, St. Louis, Missouri**

REGION VII WEST

Food Bank of Alaska, Anchorage, Alaska*

Community Food Coalition of Contra Costa County, Inc., Concord, California*

Fresno Community Food Resources, Inc., Fresno, California**

Westside Food Bank, Glendale, Arizona

Las Vegas Community Food Bank, Las Vegas, Nevada*

Interagency Food Bank, Portland, Oregon**

Survive Food Bank, Riverside, California*

The Food Bank, San Jose, California*

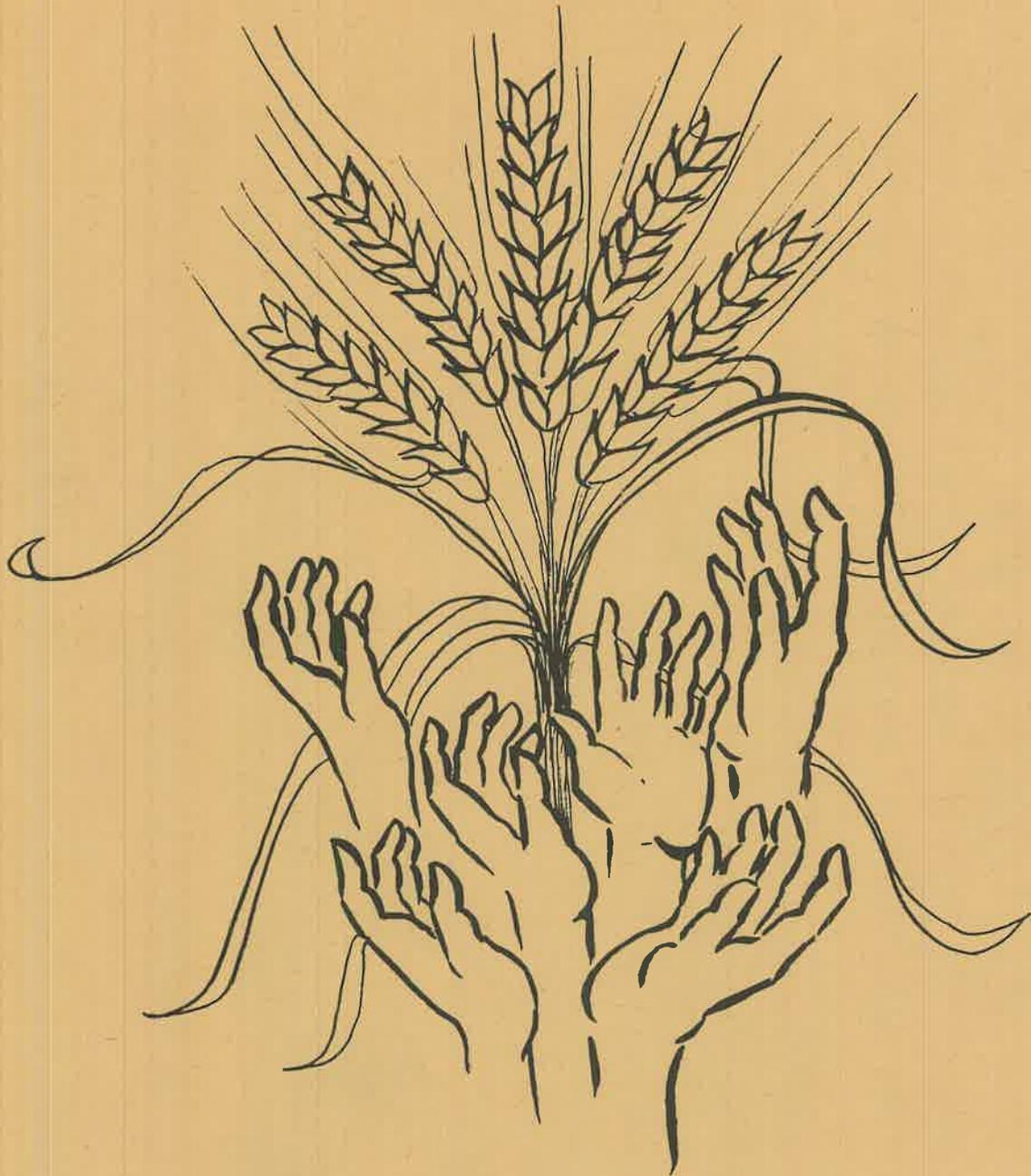
Food Oversight Operation Distribution, Seattle, Washington*

Freemont Food Bank, Seattle, Washington

Tucson Community Food Bank, Tucson, Arizona**

*Member, Second Harvest Food Bank Network

**One of 3 food banks in each USDA/FNS Region to receive 50 survey instruments for distribution.



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