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CONTACT: Gina Styer, Communications Manager
(414) 831-6334, direct
(414 460-8549, Cell

Landmark New Study Reveals a 40 Percent Increase in People Seeking Emergency Food Assistance

Milwaukee, WI--- A comprehensive research study released today by Feeding America Eastern Wisconsin and Feeding America, the nation's largest domestic hunger-relief organization, reports that more than 329,000 people, including 105,000 children, receive emergency food from Feeding America Eastern Wisconsin programs. The findings in *Hunger in America 2010* represent a 40 percent increase since the *Hunger in America 2006* report.

Hunger in America 2010 is the first research study to capture the significant connection between the recent economic downturn and an increased need for emergency food assistance. In eastern Wisconsin, 69% of client households are experiencing very low food security—or lack of access to nutritious food. As a result, 69% of food pantries, 57 % of soup kitchens and 64% of shelters are reporting increased food distribution.

“With the unemployment rate nearly double what it was four years ago, it’s no surprise that people are turning to pantries and soup kitchens to supplement their food. The economy has taken quite a toll on families and individuals who now need help with one of life’s most basic needs – food,” said Bonnie Bellehumeur, president of Feeding America Eastern Wisconsin.

Among the key findings in the report for Feeding America Eastern Wisconsin:

- 54% of adults have missed or cut back on meals in the past year because they didn’t have enough money to buy food.
- 10% of clients relying of Feeding America Eastern Wisconsin for food are senior citizens 65 or older.
- 41% of households had to choose between paying for their heat or utilities and buying food
- 37% of households have at least one working adult.
- 65% of households with school-age children participate in the federal school lunch program.
- 41% of households receive Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program benefits.

Mathematica Policy Research, Inc., a leading policy research firm, in partnership with Feeding America, conducted the research and compiled the data for *Hunger in America 2010*. The data is based on individual client interviews and agency surveys.

A summary of the eastern Wisconsin findings is available at www.feedingamericawi.org. The full national report is available on Feeding America's web site at [Hunger in America 2010](http://www.feedingamerica.org).

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329,400 people in eastern Wisconsin rely on food supplied by Feeding America Eastern Wisconsin each year. The food bank is the largest, private, non-profit distributor of food in the state. Feeding America Eastern Wisconsin distributes more than 12 million pounds of food annually to 1,100 food pantries, meal programs and shelters throughout eastern Wisconsin. Feeding America Eastern Wisconsin is a member of Feeding America, formerly named America’s Second Harvest, which is consistently ranked as one of the most efficient charities, out of the country’s 100 largest charities, by Forbes magazine. Since 1982, Feeding America Eastern Wisconsin has distributed more than 250 million pounds of food. To learn more about hunger in Wisconsin, visit www.feedingamericawi.org.