

Creating a Hunger-Free Worcester County

A Profile of Hunger and Food Security in
Worcester County, Massachusetts

**Byron Stewart
Wick Ruehling**

Bill Emerson Congressional Hunger Fellows

February, 2004

Table of Contents

Section One: Introduction

I. Acknowledgments	1
II. The Worcester County Food Bank	2
III. Statement of Purpose	3
IV. Methodology	5

Section Two: Quadrant Data

V. Quadrant I	11
VI. Quadrant II	21
VII. Quadrant III	31
VIII. Quadrant IV	48

Section Three: Analysis

IX. Analysis of Data/ Hunger Profile for Worcester County	58
--	----

Section Four: Appendix

I. Acknowledgments

Without the help of a number of individuals this report never would have been possible. First and foremost, everyone on the staff of the Worcester County Food Bank, whose knowledge and energy towards the shared goal of creating a hunger-free Worcester County reinvigorated our efforts each day. In particular, Lois Maitland-Paire, our supervisor, who shaped the details of this project and whose oversight kept the ball rolling; and Jean McMurray, whose leadership and vast knowledge of hunger issues and the Worcester anti-hunger community was an invaluable resource. We also thank Mr. Kenneth Crater and the Worcester County Food Bank Board of Directors; Paula Buonomo and the staff of Hon. Jim McGovern, whose hospitality made us feel welcome in Worcester; Dr. Maureen Power at Worcester State College; the staff at Project Bread and Rachel's Table; the Worcester Hunger Network; and all the anti-hunger advocates in Worcester County: your cause is noble and realistic, your help and participation were vital aspects of this report. Last, but not least, we would like to thank the Congressional Hunger Center: Kristin Anderson, our CHC supervisor, for her constant support; Ed Cooney, John Kelly, Aileen Carr, and all of the other Congressional Hunger Fellows.

II. The Worcester County Food Bank

Established in 1982 as a program of Catholic Charities, the Worcester County Food Bank is a community-based non-profit organization whose mission is to engage, educate, and lead Worcester County in creating a hunger-free community. In 1988 the food bank moved from its original location to a larger facility to meet the increased need for food by residents in Worcester County. Between 1989 and 1992 the Food Bank became an independent 501(c)3 organization and a certified affiliate of America's Second Harvest.

In 1997 the Food Bank moved from a 16,000 square foot facility to a new 39,000 square foot facility in Shrewsbury, Massachusetts. This move greatly increased the WCFB's capacity to store and distribute food, recruit volunteers, and expand programming. Between 1998 and 2000, the Food bank purchased two new trucks and launched the Second Serving Program to acquire and deliver perishable food.

In April 2002, construction of the on-premises Community Kitchen and Nutrition Education Center was completed. The kitchen serves as home for "A Fare Start," a food preparation and culinary arts training program. In September 2002 the Food Bank celebrated its first graduation of seven student chefs. The Nutrition Education Center addresses basic food and nutrition issues for individuals and families living at or below the poverty level.

Today, the Food Bank carries out this mission by partnering with 283 agencies, including food pantries, neighborhood and senior centers, and soup kitchens in 72 Central Massachusetts communities. During fiscal year 2003, the WCFB distributed 4,221,886 pounds of food and grocery product. It is estimated that WCFB food is served to over 85,000 children, women, and men living in 72 Central Massachusetts communities.

III. Statement of Purpose

The following mission statement was crafted by the Worcester County Food Bank Board of Directors on March 20, 2003:

This mission of the WCFB is: to engage, educate and lead Worcester County in creating a hunger free community.

As a first step in this process, the Worcester County Food Bank deemed it necessary that an in-depth research project be developed and implemented, serving the purpose of analyzing the food security of various parts of the county. In conjunction with the Congressional Hunger Center, the WCFB developed this project in order to identify all available food resources within different areas (quadrants) of Worcester County. This project provides a profile of food security assets and needs for each quadrant within the county, as well as for the county itself. The project includes Geographic Information Systems previously being utilized by the WCFB in conjunction with Clark University. Finally, the project is expected to lead to the establishment of quadrant hunger networks, and quadrant advisory councils. This project provides a Worcester County profile of food security, community by community.

The research project corresponds with the WCFB's goal and overall mission of engaging, educating, and leading the community to create a hunger-free community using local resources in several ways. The research is expected to help the WCFB to:

Engage the current community partners and identify potential partners;

Educate each community about their assets to address its needs and bring together the information needed to make informed decisions and operationalizing the new WCFB mission; and

Lead by serving as the coordinating body for best practices not only in food distribution but also in legislative and advocacy efforts.

In a very fundamental way the WCFB hopes this research will establish the baseline information and activities the WCFB and Worcester County need to move from a perspective of hunger-relief to community food security to hunger-free and the corresponding strategies to achieve this. This project addresses the need that exists at the local level for a food resources profile to complement hunger studies such as America's Second Harvest's, *Hunger in America 2001*. The WCFB has developed and sustained a network of hunger-relief agencies by serving as a food clearinghouse. This project serves to provide a first step in pursuing ways in which to expand and serve this same network by leading the efforts to share knowledge, information and coordinate advocacy.

The Hunger-Free Worcester Report will provide the kick-off for advancing the WCFB along the continuum from hunger-relief to hunger-free. The establishment of the Quadrant Hunger Networks will serve as the genesis for Quadrant Advisory Councils to the WCFB. By engaging the wider community, the report will be setting the framework for the first Annual County-wide Food Security Conference, which is an integral part of the WCFB's new 4-year strategic plan and its' long-term goal of creating a hunger-free Worcester County.

Once the food security database has been developed, the WCFB will continue to work with each community to maintain an updated resource profile, thereby providing an ongoing Worcester County profile. Based on the input to the WCFB's Board Committee on Advocacy and Community Education, the committee will sustain the report's research recommendations at the board level as well as advocate for board support for implementation. Future hiring of a dedicated staff person to continue, enhance and expand upon the work accomplished by the Hunger Fellows will ensure the WCFB's ability to work towards a hunger-free Worcester County.

IV. Methodology

Overview

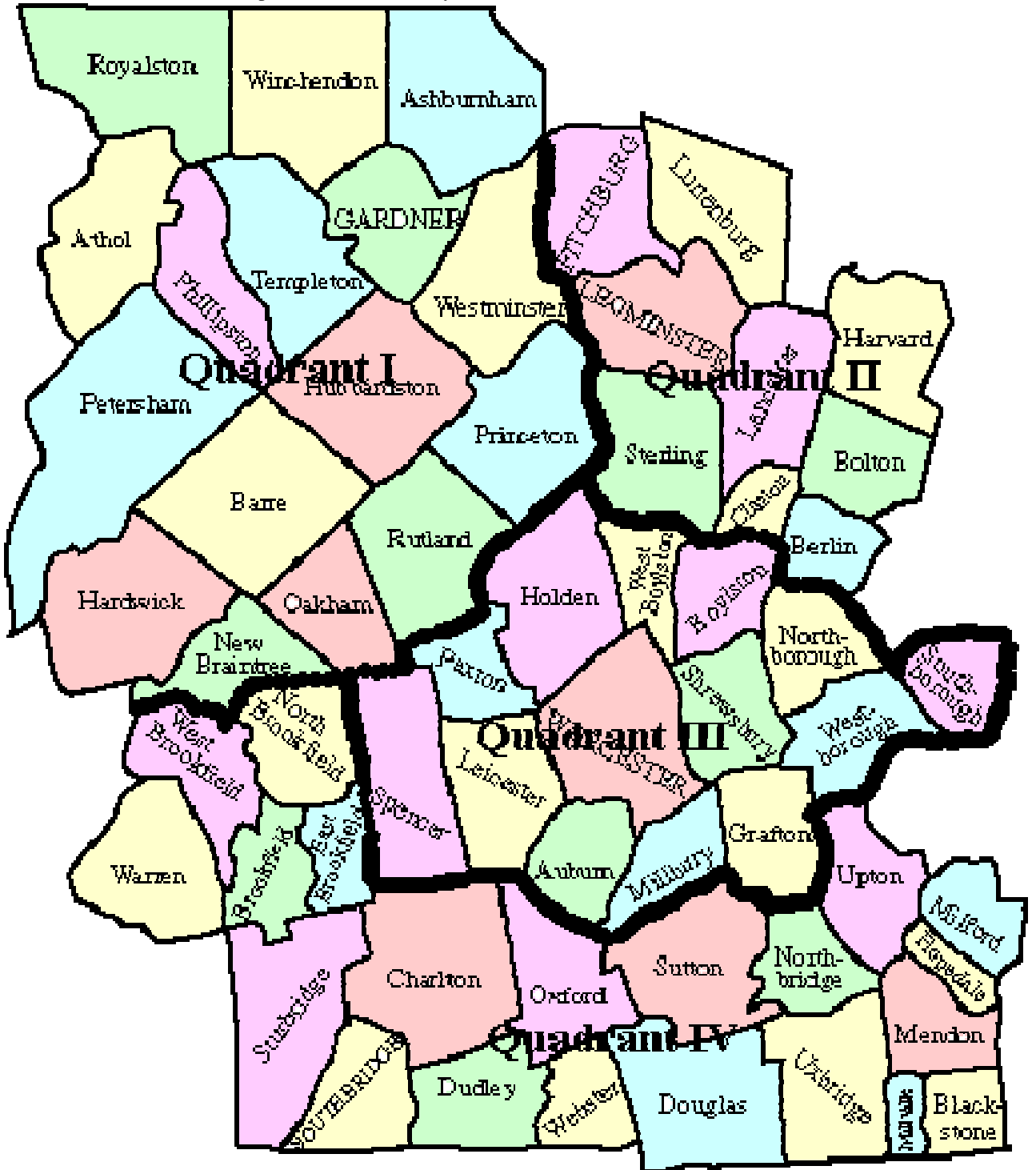
The 2003 Worcester County Food Bank Hunger Free Community Report focuses on what the WCFB refers to as ‘Green Card’ agencies, or agencies which consider the distribution of emergency food to be part of their primary mission. The WCFB has thus far partnered with 121 ‘Green Card’ agencies, 13 of which are located outside the borders of Worcester County itself. As part of this report, 102 of these agencies were surveyed. This represents approximately 84% of all the WCFB’s ‘Green Card’ agencies and 94% of those ‘Green Card’ agencies located within the borders of Worcester County.

The survey consisted of five sections, each designed to elicit a particular type of information from the agency being interviewed (see **appendix**). The first section, entitled *Definition of Need*, elicited information about the severity of hunger problems in the agency’s community and any obstacles the agency might be facing in its attempt to address these problems. The second section, entitled *Identification of Assets*, elicited information about the resources the agency is in possession of and able to bring to bear, either in origin from the WCFB or other entities. The third section, entitled *Community Assets: Federal Programs*, elicited information about which Federal food assistance programs the agency was aware of, which of these programs operated in the agency’s community and which of these programs the agency made a significant effort to direct their clients towards. The fourth section, entitled *Community Assets: Local Programs*, elicited information similar to that garnered from the *Community Assets: Federal Programs* section, but pertaining to locally based programs instead. The final section, entitled *Long Term Questions / Solutions*, elicited information about the agency’s satisfaction with the manner in which the WCFB operates, any suggestions the agency might have for improving the effectiveness and/or potency of hunger relief operations, and whether or not the agency believes the goal of ‘Creating a Hunger Free Community’ is a feasible one.

Each of these agencies has been classified as either a pantry, a kitchen, a shelter or some combination thereof. Agencies that primarily distributed emergency food to their clients in an unprepared form, similar to that one might expect to purchase in a grocery store, were classified as pantries. Agencies that primarily distributed emergency food to their clients in a prepared form, similar to that one might expect to receive in a cafeteria, were classified as pantries. Agencies that distributed emergency food to their clients in addition to offering them a residence were classified as shelters.

The information harvested from the survey as been compiled and analyzed on a ‘Quadrant by Quadrant’ basis. Although the division of Worcester County into quadrants has no political basis, the WCFB does believe the quadrants they’ve devised reflect the reality of certain regional differences pertaining to their county-wide operations.

Map of Worcester County with Quadrant Subdivisions



Estimates of the number and percentage of persons residing in Worcester County living in poverty or near poverty are taken from the U.S. Census 2000, which uses a complicated set of calculations known as the *poverty thresholds* to arrive at these figures. Each year the Census Bureau updates the *poverty thresholds*, which are primarily used for statistical purposes. The *poverty guidelines*, issued every year in the Federal Register by the Department of Health and Human Services, are a simplification of the poverty thresholds more amenable to administrative purposes such as determining financial eligibility for certain federal programs. However, all official statistics on poverty are calculated using the *poverty thresholds*. For the purposes of this report, persons living below 185% of the poverty thresholds are considered to be living in near poverty as this is the cutoff for most federal food assistance programs.

2003 HHS Poverty Guidelines			
Size of Family Unit	48 Contiguous States & D.C.	Alaska	Hawaii
1	\$8,980	\$11,210	\$10,330
2	\$12,120	\$15,140	\$13,940
3	\$15,260	\$19,070	\$17,550
4	\$18,400	\$23,000	\$21,160
5	\$21,540	\$26,930	\$24,770
6	\$24,680	\$30,860	\$28,380
7	\$27,820	\$34,790	\$31,990
8	\$30,960	\$38,720	\$35,600
For each additional person add:	\$3,140	\$3,930	\$3,610

Emergency food providers in Worcester County have not implemented a universal form of record keeping. Therefore, the detail and accuracy of the data that agencies maintain about their operations varies significantly. To ensure the harvesting of analogous data, the survey had to adopt some very broad units of measure.

The number of clients served per month was recorded in terms of either families served or individuals served. Upon witnessing a relatively close correlation between the county-wide fraction of all individuals reported served who received their service in a quadrant and the county-wide fraction of all families reported served who received their service in that same quadrant, the aggregate average of these two fractions was used to create the category of ‘units’ served. Unfortunately, due to the limits imposed upon the survey by the varying quality of available records, ‘units’ is the most accurate measure available to for estimated of clients served per month.

The manner in which agencies quantified the emergency food assistance they dispense on a monthly basis generally varied according to their classification. Most pantries responded in terms of how many brown grocery bags or banana boxes filled with food they give they dispense. Most kitchens and shelters responded in terms of how many meals they prepare and serve. A few agencies, mostly the ones in possession of excellent records, were able to respond in terms of their monthly distribution of food in pounds.

Most of the information and statistics pertaining to the four quadrants of Worcester County presented in this report originate either from the Hunger Free Community Survey itself or the U.S. Census Bureau. Each quadrant has a chapter of this Hunger Free Community Report devoted solely to presenting the information relative to it. Informational chapters follow this organizational paradigm:

- ❖ Quadrant Overview, Including:
 - Geographic & Population Data
 - Classification, Location & Number of Partner Agencies
 - Closest & Farthest Partner Agencies from the WCFB,
 - Average Distance Between Partner Agencies & the WCFB

- ❖ Quadrant Needs, Including:
 - Number & Percentage of Individuals Living Below the Federal Poverty Line
 - Number & Percentage of Individuals Living 185% of the Federal Poverty Line
 - Number of People or Families Reported Served
 - Simplified Responses to *Definition of Need* Questions

- ❖ Quadrant Assets, Including:
 - Quantity of Emergency Food Available to Partner Agencies, Origin WCFB
 - Quantity of Emergency Food Available to Partner Agencies, Origin Not WCFB
 - Number & Unit of Emergency Food Distributions to Clients
 - Days and Hours of Operation
 - Other Services Offered Besides Food Assistance Offered
 - Rate of Referral to Federal Food Assistance Programs
 - Location of Entities Administering or Offering Federal Food Assistance Programs
 - Report on Locally Based Food Assistance Programs

- ❖ Quadrant Viewpoint, Including:
 - Simplified Responses to the *Long-Term Questions / Solutions*

Blueprint for Analysis

1. Does the proportion of the WCFB's emergency food resources entering a quadrant correspond to the proportion of Worcester County's total population potentially in need of such relief residing in the quadrant?

In order to answer this question, the percentage of total WCFB emergency food resources entering a quadrant has been compared to the percentage of Worcester County's total population potentially in need of such relief residing in the quadrant. If these two figures approximate each other, the conclusion drawn is that the proportion of WCFB emergency resources entering the quadrant does indeed correspond to the proportion of Worcester County's total population potentially in need of such relief residing in the quadrant. If these two figures do not approximate each other, the conclusion drawn is that the quadrant is either being over-served or underserved by the WCFB.

If the proportion of WCFB emergency food resources entering the quadrant is greater than the proportion of Worcester County's total population potentially in need of such relief residing in the quadrant, the quadrant has been classified as over-served. If the proportion of WCFB emergency food resources entering the quadrant is less than the proportion of Worcester County's total population potentially in need of such relief residing in the quadrant, the quadrant has been classified as over-served. (It is assumed two classes of people principally compose the population seeking out and receiving emergency food relief: Those who live in absolute poverty, or below the Federal poverty line, and those who live in near poverty, or below 185% of the Federal poverty line.)

2. Are the residents of a quadrant utilizing the emergency food resources provided to them by the WCFB and its partner agencies to their fullest potential?

In order to answer this question, it is first determined what fraction the number of people and/or families reported served by WCFB partner agencies in a quadrant composes of the aggregate number of people and/or families reported served by all of the WCFB's partner agencies throughout the entire county. This fraction is then compared to percentage of Worcester County's total population potentially in need of such relief residing in the quadrant. If these two figures approximate each other, the conclusion drawn is that the residents of the quadrant are utilizing the emergency food resources provided to them by the WCFB and its partner agencies to their fullest potential. If these two figures do not approximate each other, the conclusion drawn is that the quadrant is either being underutilizing these resources or displaying a relative enthusiasm for their use.

If the quadrant's fraction of all people and/or families reported served by WCFB partner agencies is less than the fraction of a Worcester County's total population potentially in need of such relief residing in the quadrant, the quadrant has been classified as suffering from underutilization. If the quadrant's fraction of all people and/or families reported served by WCFB partner agencies surpasses the fraction of a Worcester County's total population potentially in need of such relief residing in the quadrant, the quadrant has been classified as displaying a relative enthusiasm for the use of emergency food relief resources.

3. How large is a quadrant's 'reservoir' of emergency food relief, i.e., how much per capita emergency food relief is available to person living in the quadrant potentially in need of such relief?

In order to answer this question, the amount of emergency food relief entering a quadrant has been divided by the number of persons potentially in need of relief residing in the quadrant. If the size of a quadrant's reservoir of emergency food relief surpasses the mean derived from the size of all four quadrant's reservoirs, it has been classified as possessing a tolerable reservoir of emergency food relief. If the size of a quadrant's reservoir of emergency food relief is less than the mean derived from the size of all four quadrant's reservoirs, it has been classified as possessing an intolerable reservoir of emergency food relief.

V. Quadrant I: Northwestern Worcester County

Overview

Quadrant I refers to the Northwestern portion of Worcester County and consists of 16 primarily rural towns. It is the largest of the four quadrants in terms of geographic area, but ranks last in total population. The largest of these towns, Gardner, is home to 20,770 people, while the smallest, New Braintree, is home to 927 people.¹ 88,937 people live within the quadrant in its entirety², and its borders encompass approximately 560 square miles. The quadrant's most densely populated town, Gardner, has a population density of about 936 persons per square mile. The quadrant's least densely populated town, Petersham, has a population density of about 22 persons per square mile. (For comparison, the city of Worcester has a population density of about 4,592 persons per square mile.)³

The Worcester County Food Bank currently partners with ten emergency food providers in Quadrant I (numbered I-1 through I-10) located in the towns of Athol, Gardner, Rutland, Barre, Westminster, and Winchendon. Eight of these agencies are classified as pantries, one is classified as a kitchen, and one is classified as a combination pantry-kitchen.

Table 1.1: Agency Breakdown by Town: Quadrant I, Northwestern Worcester County

Town	Pantries	Kitchens	Shelters	Kitchen/Shelter	Pantry/ Kitchen	Total
Ashburnham	0	0	0	0	0	0
Athol	2	1	0	0	0	3
Barre	1	0	0	0	0	1
Gardner	3	0	0	0	0	3
Hardwick	0	0	0	0	0	0
Hubbardston	0	0	0	0	0	0
New Braintree	0	0	0	0	0	0
Petersham	0	0	0	0	0	0
Phillipston	0	0	0	0	0	0
Princeton	0	0	0	0	0	0
Oakham	0	0	0	0	0	0
Royalston	0	0	0	0	0	0
Rutland	1	0	0	0	0	1
Templeton	0	0	0	0	0	0
Westminster	1	0	0	0	0	1
Winchendon	0	0	0	0	1	1
Total	8	1	0	0	1	10

¹ United States, U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 (Washington: United States Department of Commerce, 2000)

² Ibid.

³ Street Atlas, Third Edition: Metro Worcester, Central Massachusetts (South Easton, MA: Arrow Map Inc, 2001)

The closest of these agencies to the Worcester County Food Bank is a pantry located in Rutland, its site approximately 18 miles from the Worcester County Food Bank. This corresponds to an estimated travel time of 35 minutes. The farthest of these agencies from the Worcester County Food Bank is a pantry located in Athol, its site approximately 53 miles from the Worcester County Food Bank.⁴ This corresponds to an estimated travel time of 1 hour and 5 minutes.

Needs

6,214 of the people living within the Northwestern Quadrant subsist below the federal poverty level, which amounts to approximately 7% of the region's population. Of those living below the federal poverty level, 1,011 are seniors and 1,960 are children. Furthermore an additional 10,201 of the quadrant's residents subsist on household incomes below 185% of the federal poverty level, or 16,415 persons in total representing nearly 19% of the quadrant's population. This figure is significant, as there are Federal assistance programs which acknowledge the extra support such persons may require in order to meet their needs. Overall Winchendon boasts the quadrant's highest poverty rate, (10%) while Oakham (1.9%) has the lowest.⁵

Table 1.2: Quadrant I Census Data⁶

Town	Total Population	% Below Poverty Level	# of Indiv. Below Pov. Level	# of Children Below Pov. Level	# of Age 65+ Below Poverty Level	# of Indiv. Below 185% Pov. Level	# of Children Below 185% Pov. Level
Ashburnham	5546	6.4	350	106	31	929	314
Athol	11299	9.4	1038	311	147	3090	923
Barre	5113	3.4	176	21	17	803	272
Gardner	20770	9.6	1863	614	354	4338	1301
Hardwick	2662	7.5	195	74	38	513	174
Hubbardston	3909	3.7	143	40	21	345	89
New Braintree	927	4.6	42	12	2	122	46
Oakham	1673	1.9	32	9	3	124	44
Petersham	1180	5.8	66	14	3	144	25
Phillipston	1621	5.8	93	48	5	265	113
Princeton	3353	4.4	148	51	26	328	88
Royalston	1253	8.7	109	46	8	343	158
Rutland	6353	3.3	206	65	35	642	183
Templeton	6799	9.1	588	186	93	1382	431
Westminster	6907	3.1	212	28	39	870	244
Winchendon	9612	10	953	335	189	2127	606
QI Average	5559	6.9	388.4	122.5	59.4	1025.9	313.2
QI Total	88939	N/A	6214	1960	951	16415	5011

⁴ "Map Quest", 28 Jan. 2004 <<http://www.mapquest.com/>>

⁵ United States, U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 (Washington: United States Department of Commerce, 2000)

⁶ Ibid.

➤ **Transportation:** Because of the rural location and small population of most of the towns, there are not any large-scale public transportation systems in any of the Quadrant I towns. Only 30% of agencies reported that transportation is an issue that often prevents their clients and potential clients from traveling to their agency to receive food assistance. All agencies reported that their clients are able to carpool and find rides if some form of public transportation is not available. When public transportation is available, many said that their clients have difficulty leaving the agency and trying to carry boxes of food, often in addition to children, on a bus.

➤ **Food Supply & Distribution:** 60% of Quadrant I agencies surveyed reported that the supply of food is often short and they are unable to keep up with the growing demand. Thus, these agencies stated that while they never turn away a client, the supply of food coming in from the WCFB and other sources often reaches levels so low that they must decrease the amount distributed per person. 30% of agencies surveyed reported consistently not being able to serve 100% of those seeking food assistance. These agencies reported that food supply reaches levels so low that they are forced to turn away clients.

➤ **Infrastructure & Resources:** In terms of infrastructure, few Quadrant I agencies reported any major problems. Only 30% said that storage space is an issue. Those that cited it as a problem said that small storage space only creates troubles because it necessitates increased visits to the WCFB. 30% of agencies reported a shortage of volunteers, while only 20% reported needing more money. 20% also only reported needing a reliable vehicle or having consistent difficulty with the one they have.

➤ **Demographics:** All agencies described their clientele as being typically young, white families. The largest minority mentioned tended to be Hispanic, although most described their Hispanic and Latino population as being “very small.”⁷

➤ **Severity and Type of Hunger:** All Quadrant I agencies surveyed reported a growing need in their towns. One agency described the increase as “over 50% in the last year.”⁸ Many of those surveyed reported growing numbers of working poor facing increasing housing and insurance costs. Agencies in more than one town described the decline of industry as a major factor affecting the growing numbers of people seeking food assistance in their towns.

The severity of the hunger reported varied from agency to agency. 50% of agencies reported that their clients typically only experienced a nutrition deficit. 20% reported that their clients were not getting enough food and often experienced a calorie deficit. 30% reported that both types of hunger characterized their clients.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ WCFB Hunger-Free Community Survey, 2003. Agency # I-9.

➤ **Client Options:** There are ten WCFB emergency food agencies consolidated in six of the sixteen towns in Quadrant I. This is an average of one pantry per every 56 square miles in the quadrant.⁹ Many potential clients that live far away or in a town without an emergency food agency have few options for emergency food. 50% reported having a strict defined service area, although many of these included surrounding towns as part of their defined service area. All towns were mentioned as an aspect of at least one agency's service area except the towns of Hardwick, Templeton, and Princeton.

➤ **Numbers Served:** Quadrant I agencies reported their numbers served per month either by units of people or families served. Agency statistics indicating the number of people served per month varied from 50 to 425. Agencies that used families served as a unit varied from 23 to 175 families a month.

Table 1.3: Clients Served per Month

Agency Number	People	Families
I-1	110	
I-2	237	
I-3	346	
I-4		175
I-5	346	
I-6	425	
I-7	50	
I-8		23
I-9*	240	
I-10		140

*Numbers taken from WCFB Quarterly Report, 2nd Quarter FY 2004

Assets

On average, the WCFB is able to dispatch 25,966 pounds of emergency food into the quadrant per month and the quadrant's native agencies are also able to raise an additional 10,307 pounds of emergency food per month. This means that, through the auspices of the WCFB and its partner agencies, food insecure persons residing in Quadrant I generally have access to approximately 36,274 pounds of emergency food relief per month. The WCFB provides approximately 72% of that total.

⁹ Street Atlas, Third Edition: Metro Worcester, Central Massachusetts (South Easton, MA: Arrow Map Inc, 2001)

Table 1.4: Food Sources, Quadrant I

Agency	% Food that Comes From WCFB	Average Lbs. of Food/Month From WCFB	Average Lbs. of Food/Month From Other	Total Average Lbs. of Food/Month
I-1	68%	1388	653	2040
I-2	63%	5172	3037	8209
I-3	83%	4914	1006	5920
I-4	80%	4431	1108	5539
I-5	83%	899	184	1084
I-6	65%	2343	1261	3604
I-7	90%	549	61	610
I-8	25%	469	1408	1877
I-9	75%	1656	552	2208
I-10	80%	4147	1037	5184
Totals	71.6%	25968	10307	36275

In addition to food bank product, agencies in Quadrant I reported a number of other sources of food donations. The most popular sources were donations of money and food product from individuals, schools and churches. Quadrant I agencies also received donations from grocery stores such as Stop and Shop in Gardner and Hannafords, CVS, PepsiCo., and eggs from a farm in Hubbardston.

When asked what they give to their clients when they come in for assistance, most Quadrant I agencies responded that they give their clients bags of food in brown grocery bags. Three agencies had no response. Among those that responded, the output of bags ranged from 50 bags to 735 bags a month. Three agencies, I-4, I-8, and I-9, were unable to answer this question because they stated that they had no formal system of distribution. Rather, they allow their clients to come in and take different amounts of food every time, which makes it difficult to determine a unit distributed per month.

Table 1.5: Bags of Food Distributed Per Month By Agency

Agency	Bags of Food Per Month
I-1	57
I-2	552
I-3	N/A
I-4	440
I-5	735
I-6	308
I-7	50
I-8	N/A
I-9	N/A
I-10	420

The ten agencies within Quadrant I maintain varying hours of operation and are open on varying days of the week. Seven of the agencies maintain hours of operation that fall solely during the daylight hours of the workweek, anytime between 8 AM and 5 PM. Two of the agencies maintain hours that fall solely during the twilight hours of the workweek, anytime after 5 PM. One of the agencies, however, maintains no set hours, instead responding to their clients calls. This means their clients can asses the resources of this agency at anytime, daytime, nighttime or weekend.

Many agencies offer programs other than food assistance to their clients. These services may range from free clothing to individual case and money management.

Table 1.6: Non-Food Assistance Services Provided by Quadrant I Agencies

Agency	Services
I-1	Referral services, fuel Assistance information, Toys for Tots, clothes w/a
I-2	Medical transport for elderly, “Twice as Nice” clothes closet, family case management.
I-3	Free clothing, 12-step alcohol program, youth programs, nursing home outreach.
I-4	Substance abuse counseling, transportation to hospitals, transitional housing for 15 residents.
I-5	Clothing.
I-6	Utility and renal assistance, transitional assistance.
I-7	Utility assistance, rental assistance, clothing, medical assistance.
I-8	Individual case management.
I-9	None.
I-10	Free clothing, free furniture, emergency assistance, educational programs, parenting classes, budgeting classes, “Experience Works” elderly program.

Federal/ State Program Assets

Some of the WCFB’s partner agencies in Quadrant I make an effort to direct their clients towards some of the federal and state funded programs that offer emergency food as well.

Table 1.7: Federal Program Referral Breakdown

Federal Program	Referral	No Referral
Food Stamps Program	60%	40%
WIC Program	60%	40%
WIC Farmer’s Mkt Nutrition Program	10%	90%
National School Lunch Program	40%	60%
School Breakfast Program	40%	60%
Summer Food Service Program	20%	80%
Child and Adult Care Food Program	10%	90%
Meals on Wheels	60%	40%

➤ **Food Stamps:** There are no Department of Transitional Assistance offices in Quadrant I. The nearest offices are in Greenfield, Fitchburg, or Worcester, depending on the location of the town. In our study, 60% of Quadrant I agencies said that they refer their clients to the food stamps program.

Table 1.8: Quadrant I DTA Office by Town¹⁰

Town	Nearest DTA Office
Ashburnham	Fitchburg
Athol	Greenfield
Barre	Worcester
Gardner	Fitchburg
Hardwick	Worcester
Hubbardston	Fitchburg
New Braintree	Worcester
Oakham	Worcester
Petersham	Greenfield
Phillipston	Greenfield
Princeton	Fitchburg
Royalston	Greenfield
Rutland	Worcester
Templeton	Fitchburg
Westminster	Fitchburg
Winchendon	Fitchburg

➤ **WIC:** Two of the regional WIC programs overlap in Quadrant I; the North-Central Worcester WIC Program with headquarters in Fitchburg and the Franklin/ North Quabbin WIC Program with headquarters in Greenfield. The North-Central Worcester WIC Program has offices in Gardner, Barre, Winchendon, and Rutland, as well as Fitchburg, Leominster, and Clinton, towns located in Quadrant II. The Franklin/ North Quabbin WIC Program has an office in Athol, as well as Greenfield, Shelburne Falls, Orange, and Turners Falls, towns in western Massachusetts. According to the North-Central Worcester WIC office, which serves most of Quadrant I, it had 4,408 participants as of October 3, 2003.

➤ **WIC Farmer's Market Nutrition Program:** There are two WIC Farmers Market Sites in Quadrant I, located in Gardner and Barre. Other nearby Farmers Markets are located in Fitchburg and Holden. Hours vary from site to site, while the Barre Farmers Market is the only FMNP site open on Saturdays.

Table 1.9: Quadrant I WIC Farmers Market Nutrition Services Program Sites¹¹

Town	Name	Location	Season	Hours
Gardner	Gardner Farmers Market	Monument Square		Thursdays
Barre	Barre Farmers	Barre Common	May-October	Saturdays: 9:30

¹⁰ Massachusetts Department of Transitional Assistance. 4 Feb. 2004. <<http://www.state.ma.us/dta/ASSIST/location/index.htm>>

¹¹ United States Department of Agriculture. 4 Feb. 2004 <www.ams.usda.gov/farmersmarkets/states/massachusetts>

	Market			a.m.-12:30 p.m.
--	--------	--	--	--------------------

➤ **Free & Reduced Price School Breakfast & Lunch:** 60% of Quadrant I agencies refer their clients to the Free and Reduced Price School Meals Program. Those that did not offer referral either did not serve clients with children or felt that their clients were made well aware of the program by the schools. Overall, an average of 17.4% of students in Quadrant I public schools participate in the Free and Reduced Price School Meals Program.¹²

Table 1.10: Percentage of Students Receiving Free or Reduced Price Meals in Quadrant I Schools¹³

School District	% Receiving Free Meals	% Receiving Reduced Price Meals	% Total
Athol-Royalston	25%	8%	33%
Town of Winchendon	12%	15%	27%
Ashburnham-Westminster	1%	1%	2%
Gardner School Committee	20%	6%	26%
Petersham School Committee	8%	7%	16%
Quabbin Regional School Dist	9%	4%	13%
Narragansett Reg Sch District	9%	6%	15%
QI Average	12%	6.7%	17.4%

➤ **Summer Food Service Program:** There are three sites within Quadrant I offering the Summer Food Service Program. Two are located in Gardner, one is located in New Braintree¹⁴:

Table 1.11: Quadrant I Summer Food Service Sites

Town	Site Name
Gardner	House of Peace and Education
Gardner	Bonnie Brae Day Camp
New Braintree	Worcester Fresh Air Fund, Inc: Camp Putnam

➤ **Child and Adult Care Food Program:** No shelters exist in Quadrant I, therefore there are no agencies which find themselves consistently preparing meals for homeless children. Nevertheless, the Child and Adult Care Food Program also contains provisions

¹² Massachusetts, Child Nutrition Programs, Summer Food Service Sites 2003 (Boston: Massachusetts Department of Education, 2003)

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid.

which allow it to sometimes function in a manner similar to the Summer Food Service Program.

Local/ Community Program Assets

➤ **Community Gardens:** To our knowledge, there are no community gardens located in Quadrant I. None of the ten agencies surveyed had any knowledge of community gardens in the area. One agency stated that community gardens “don’t exist in this area.”¹⁵

➤ **Food Cooperatives / Serve New England:** There are three Serve New England sites in Quadrant I, located in Ashburnham, New Braintree, and Gardner. Sites in Hubbardston, Barre, and Rutland recently closed due to lack of participation. There are also nearby sites in Fitchburg and Worcester.¹⁶ Despite this, only one agency in Quadrant I said that they refer their clients to the Serve program, while nine agencies either did not refer their clients or had no knowledge of the program. Agencies in Athol mentioned an interest in starting a program in their town.

➤ **Kitchens:** In addition to the two WCFB member agencies that operate soup kitchens, seven agencies stated that they refer their clients to some sort of a kitchen that offers warm meals on a regular basis. Other soup kitchens mentioned include: Bethany Baptist Church in Gardner which serves meals on Monday nights, Holy Rosary Church in Gardner, Beth Lutheran Church in Orange, and the Elder Nutrition Site in Barre. Chestnut Street Methodist Church in Gardner holds The Fellowship Table every Thursday at 5:00 p.m., in which they serve a warm meal to those in need.

➤ **Long-Term Goals & Solutions:** A number of questions about the manner in which the WCFB operates, and what changes in these operation procedures might better contribute to the goal of ‘Creating a Hunger Free Community’, were addressed to the partner agencies. These questions included: **1)** Should the WCFB attempt to distribute more food? **2)** Should the WCFB attempt to establish branches in different areas of Worcester County and/or increase its capacity to deliver? **3)** Should the WCFB attempt to recruit new partner agencies? **4)** Should the WCFB change, modify or upgrade any part of its administration, staff or facilities? **5)** In order to help further collaboration between the WCFB’s partner agencies, would someone from your agency be willing to participate in the conferences if a network was formed from other WCFB partner agencies in the quadrant? **5)** Do you believe a hunger free community is feasible?

¹⁵ WCFB Hunger Free Worcester Survey, 2003. Agency #I-2

¹⁶ Serve New England, 4 Feb. 2004. <www.servenewengland.org>

Table 1.12: Agency Feedback Breakdown

Agency	Distribute More?	Establish Branches?	Recruit Agencies?	Modify WCFB?	Participate Network?	HFC Possible?
I-1	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
I-2	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes
I-3	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes
I-4	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	No
I-5	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes
I-6	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	No
I-7	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
I-8	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
I-9	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes
I-10	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Totals:	70% Yes	70% Yes	20% Yes	20% Yes	90% Yes	60% Yes

VI. Quadrant II: Northeastern Worcester County

Overview

Quadrant II refers to the Northeastern portion of Worcester County and consists of nine towns, which include the urban areas of Leominster and Fitchburg and the rural to suburban towns surrounding them. It is the smallest of the quadrants in terms of geographic area and ranks third in terms of total population. The largest of these towns, Leominster, is home to 41,303 people while the smallest, Berlin, is home to 2,380 people. 130,387 people live within the quadrant in its entirety.¹⁷ Its borders encompass approximately 206 square miles. The quadrant’s most densely populated town, Leominster, has a population density of about 1,429 persons per square mile. The quadrant’s least densely populated town, Berlin, has a population density of about 185 persons per square mile. (For comparison, the city of Worcester has a population density of about 4,592 persons per square mile.)¹⁸

The Worcester County Food Bank currently provides emergency food to twenty-one partner agencies located in Quadrant II (numbered II-1 through II-21) located in the towns of Clinton, Fitchburg, Lancaster and Leominster. Sixteen of these agencies are classified as pantries, two are classified as a kitchens, two are classified as shelters and one is classified as a combination pantry-kitchen.

Table 2.1: Agency Breakdown by Town: Quadrant II, Northeastern Worcester County

Town	Pantries	Kitchens	Shelters	Kitchen/Shelters	Pantry/Kitchens	Total
Berlin	0	0	0	0	0	0
Bolton	0	0	0	0	0	0
Clinton	1	1	0	0	0	2
Fitchburg	7	1	1	0	1	10
Harvard	0	0	0	0	0	0
Lancaster	2	0	0	0	0	2
Leominster	6	0	1	0	0	7
Lunenburg	0	0	0	0	0	0
Sterling	0	0	0	0	0	0
Totals	16	2	2	0	1	21

The closest of these agencies to the Worcester County Food Bank is a kitchen located in Clinton, its site approximately 12 miles from the WCFB. This corresponds to an estimated travel time of 26 minutes. The farthest of these agencies from the WCFB is a pantry located in Fitchburg, its site approximately 32 miles from the WCFB. This corresponds to an estimated travel time of 42 minutes. The average distance between the WCFB and its partner agencies in Quadrant III is approximately 26.5 miles.

¹⁷ United States, U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 (Washington: United States Department of Commerce, 2000)

¹⁸ Street Atlas, Third Edition: Metro Worcester, Central Massachusetts (South Easton, MA: Arrow Map Inc, 2001)

Needs

11,570 people in Quadrant II live below the federal poverty level. This amounts to approximately 8.9% of the total population of Quadrant II. Of those living below the federal poverty level, 3895 are children and 1563 are seniors. 26,184 residents reside near poverty, below 185% of the federal poverty level. This represents an additional 14,614 people. Overall, Fitchburg has the quadrant's highest poverty rate at 15%, while Bolton boasts the lowest at 1.8%.¹⁹

Table 2.2: Quadrant II Census Data²⁰

Town	Total Population	% Below Pov. Level	# of Indiv. Below Pov. Level	# of Children Below Pov. Level	# of Seniors Below Pov. Level	# of Indiv. Below 185% of Pov. Level	# of Children Below 185% of Pov. Level
Berlin	2380	3.9	92	39	8	298	77
Bolton	4148	1.8	75	24	9	182	44
Clinton	13,435	7.1	949	194	270	2558	624
Fitchburg	39,102	15	5627	2113	593	11894	4103
Harvard	5981	2	106	13	32	209	24
Lancaster	7380	4.1	237	23	99	713	123
Leominster	41,303	9.5	3889	1311	498	8777	2819
Lunenburg	9401	4.1	382	88	16	930	210
Sterling	7257	2.9	213	90	38	623	173
QII Total	130,387	N/A	11,570	3895	1563	26,184	8227
QII Avg	26,077	8.9	2314	779	312	5236.8	1645.4

➤ **Transportation:** Quadrant II is characterized by the urban settings of Fitchburg and Leominster, and their surrounding towns. Because of the urban setting, transportation to and from the food agencies was not cited as an issue. Overall, 89% of Quadrant II agencies surveyed said that transportation to and from the pantries was not major problem. Fitchburg and Leominster have an established system of public transportation, the Montachusett Regional Transit Authority. This transportation service offers a bus service for Fitchburg, Leominster, Lunenburg, and Gardner. It also offers a shuttle service for various elderly services such as the Council on Aging.²¹

➤ **Food Supply & Distribution:** Only 65% of Quadrant II agencies reported being able to consistently serve 100% of the clients that came to seek their assistance. Furthermore, 63% reported consistently running short on supply of food, forcing them to limit the amount they give their clients. The similarity of these numbers indicates that the same agencies tend to be consistently having the supply issues.

¹⁹ United States, U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 (Washington: United States Department of Commerce, 2000)

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Montachusett Regional Transit Authority, 5 Feb. 2004. < <http://www.montachusetttrta.org/>>

➤ **Infrastructure & Resources:** In terms of resources and infrastructure, 42% reported that storage space or refrigeration was a consistent problem. Many agencies lacked the space for shelving and storage. 47% reported having a consistent problem with finding adequate volunteers, and 47% reported that having enough money was a consistent issue. However, only 5% reported having no vehicle to ship food from the food bank or having problems with the one they have.

➤ **Severity & Type of Hunger:** The type of hunger and the needs facing the people and the emergency food system vary greatly in Quadrant II. Fitchburg and Leominster are towns that have lost a lot of their industry and jobs, and are faced with a variety of types of hunger, both exposed and hidden. Of the 20 Quadrant II agencies that responded, 45% reported typically seeing a nutrition deficit among their clients, 30% reported seeing solely a more serious calorie deficit, while 25% reported seeing both.

Those that reported seeing more of a calorie deficit or both noted that many of their clients “haven’t eaten for two to three days.”²² Others described the situation as “severe, with many homeless and jobless.”²³ One agency noted that the political entities in their town victimized the clients of these agencies and did not welcome social services in the town, making their job tremendously difficult. Like agencies in other quadrants, Quadrant II agencies noted that the numbers they have been serving have been steadily increasing.

➤ **Client Options:** There are 21 pantries in Quadrant II. The pantries not evenly distributed, though, with 17 being located in the Fitchburg-Leominster area and no agencies in the towns of Berlin, Bolton, Harvard, Lunenburg, or Sterling. However, because of the small geographic area in Quadrant II, most of the Fitchburg-Leominster agencies will serve these neighboring towns. There is one pantry for every 9.8 square miles in Quadrant II, making it the second most highly concentrated quadrant.

²² WCFB Hunger-Free Community Survey, 2003. Agency # II-8.

²³ WCFB Hunger-Free Community Survey, 2003. Agency # II-20.

➤ **Numbers Served:** Quadrant II agencies reported their numbers served per month either by units of people or families served. Agency statistics indicating the number of people served per month varied from 35 (agencies II-1, II-20) to 1200 (agency II-10.) For those that indicated families served, numbers varied from 70 families a month (II-17) to 350 (II-9).

Table 2.3: Clients Served Per Month

Agency Number	People	Families
II-1	35	
II-2	17*	
II-3	50	
II-4	541	
II-5		180
II-6	100	
II-7	480	
II-8	600	
II-9		350
II-10	1200	
II-11	300	100
II-12	200	
II-13		197
II-14	27	
II-15	1150*	
II-16	145	100
II-17		70
II-18		170
II-19	75	
II-20	35	100
II-21	611*	

*Numbers Taken from WCFB Quarterly Report, 2nd Quarter FY 2004

Assets

One average, the WCFB is able to dispatch 60,935 pounds of emergency food into the quadrant per month and the quadrant's native partner agencies are also able to raise an addition 22,331 pounds of emergency food per month. This means that, through the auspices of the food banking system and its partner agencies, persons residing in Quadrant III generally have access to approximately 83, 264 pounds of emergency food per month. The WCFB provides approximately 73% of that total.

Table 2.4: Food Sources, Quadrant II

Agency Number	% Food That Comes from WCFB	Average Lbs. of Food / Month From WCFB	Total Average Lbs. of Food / Month
II-1	90%	1014	1126
II-2	60%	958	1597
II-3	77%	2840	3688
II-4	70%	785	1121
II-5	90%	6507	7230
II-6	90%	5953	6614
II-7	35%	3276	9360
II-8	45%	720	1600
II-9	97%	4996	5151
II-10	20%	769	3844
II-11	70%	4828	6897
II-12	100%	2210	2210
II-13	80%	2475	3094
II-14	25%	813	3252
II-15	60%	2080	3467
II-16	75%	4704	6272
II-17	95%	2820	2968
II-18	90%	1850	2055
II-19	100%	2680	2680
II-20	85%	1308	1539
II-21	98%	7349	7499
Total:	73%	60935	83264

In addition to the WCFB, agencies in Quadrant II reported receiving food donations from a number of other sources. Additional sources of aid included the Boy and Girls Scouts of America and the United Way. Agencies also reported receiving contributions from post offices, police departments and schools as well. Corporate entities, mostly the local supermarkets, were also reported to have made contributions. Agencies also received personal donations, as well as donations from churches.

When asked what they give their clients when they come in for assistance, the response of Quadrant II agencies generally varied according to their classification. Most pantries responded in terms of how many brown grocery bags or banana boxes filled with food they give their clients. Most kitchens and shelters responded in terms of how

many meals they prepare and serve for their clients. A few agencies, mostly the larger ones, were able to respond in terms of their monthly distribution of food in pounds.

Table 2.5: Units of Food Distributed per Month, By Agency

Agency	LBS / Month	Bags / Month	Boxes / Month	Meals / Month
II-1		29		
II-2	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
II-3	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
II-4	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
II-5		540		
II-6		300		
II-7	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
II-8	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
II-9		375		
II-10				24
II-11	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
II-12	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
II-13		296		
II-14				2430
II-15	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
II-16		500		
II-17	650			
II-18			43	
II-19	2500			
II-20	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
II-21		500		
Total:	3150	2540	43	2454

The 21 agencies within Quadrant II maintain varying hours of operation and are open on varying days of the week. 17 agencies or 85% of those reporting, operate hours during the daytime (anytime between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m.) Eight agencies, or 40%, operate with hours on the weekend. Only two agencies, or 10%, operate during evening hours.

Agencies in Quadrant II offer a wide range of non-food assistance services that help their clients with a variety of issues.

Table 2.6: Non-Food Assistance Services Provided by Quadrant II Agencies

Agency	Services
II-1	None
II-2	Support groups, counseling, case management, education assistance
II-3	Case management, bilingual services, rent assistance, small loans, counseling, transportation assistance, fuel assistance, utility assistance, medical expenses assistance, legal assistance, HIV testings, substance abuse assistance
II-4	Case management
II-5	Clothing assistance, rent assistance
II-6	Case management, rent assistance, utility assistance, Toys for Tots
II-7	Clothing assistance, rent assistance, fuel assistance
II-8	Rent assistance, clothing assistance, HIV testing and prevention, health care assistance
II-9	None
II-10	Clothing assistance
II-11	None
II-12	Repair of some client's delapidated low income housing
II-13	None
II-14	Case management, rent assistance, mental health referrals, HIV prevention education
II-15	None
II-16	Rent assistance, utility assistance, counseling
II-17	Clothing assistance
II-18	English as a second language, HIV prevention, counseling, bilingual services, applications assistance, advocacy
II-19	Utility assistance, rent assistance, clothing assistance, fuel assistance
II-20	Clothing assistance, english as a second language, blood pressure screening
II-21	Case management, fuel assistance, health assistance, legal assistance, rent assistance, thrift store, transportation assistance

Federal/ State Program Assets

Some of the WCFB's partner agencies in Quadrant II make an effort to direct their clients towards some of the federal and state funded programs that offer emergency food assistance..

Table 2.7: Federal Program Referral Breakdown

Program	Referral	No Referral
Food Stamps	85%	15%
WIC	65%	35%
WIC Farmers Mkt. Nutrition Program	10%	90%
National School Lunch Program	50%	50%
School Breakfast Program	50%	50%
Summer Food Service Program	25%	75%
Child and Adult Care Food Program	15%	85%
Meals on Wheels	30%	70%

➤ **Food Stamps:** 85% of agencies reporting in Quadrant II said that they refer their clients to the Food Stamps program. The only DTA office in Quadrant II is located in Fitchburg:

Fitchburg DTA
473 Main Street
Fitchburg, MA 01420

➤ **WIC:** 65% of Quadrant II agencies referred their clients to the WIC program. Quadrant II is covered by the North-Central Worcester WIC Program, with the main office located in Fitchburg. In addition, there is also another office in Fitchburg, one in Leominster, and a mobile office located out of Fitchburg that serves surrounding towns. The North-Central Worcester WIC, which also serves Quadrant I, reported serving 4,408 total clients in October, 2003.²⁴

➤ **WIC Farmer’s Market Nutrition Program:** Only 10% of Quadrant II agencies referred their clients to the WIC Farmers Market Nutrition Program. The only farmers market located in Quadrant II is the Fitchburg Farmers Market, located at the Wallace Civic Center in Fitchburg. The market operates during the Spring and Summer on Tuesdays and Fridays.

➤ **Free and Reduced Price Breakfast and Lunch:** 50% of Quadrant II agencies provided some referral to the Free and Reduced Price School Breakfast and Lunch Program.

Table 2.8: Free and Reduced Price School Breakfast and Lunch Participation

School District	Enroll	FR-APPS	RD-APPS	PCT/Enroll
Berlin School Committee	209	15	2	8.13%
Clinton School Department	1917	422	144	29.53%
Fitchburg School Department	6008	2332	582	48.50%
Harvard Public Schools	656	7	3	1.52%
Leominster Public Schools	6050	1261	408	27.59%
Lunenburg Public Schools	1663	75	31	6.37%
Total:	16503	4112	1170	32.01%

²⁴ North Central Worcester County WIC Office. “WIC Participant Report.” October, 2003.

➤ **Summer Food Service Program:** 25% of Quadrant II agencies referred their clients to local Summer Food Service Program sites. They are located at the following sites:

Table 2.9: Summer Food Service Program Sites

Sponsor Name	Site Name	Site Address	Site/City	Open / Closed ?
Fitchburg School Department	Caldwell St. Playground	Caldwell Street	Fitchburg	Open
Fitchburg School Department	Coolidge Pool/John Fitch Hwy	Pearl Street	Fitchburg	Open
Fitchburg School Department	Crocker Park Playground	Westminster St.	Fitchburg	Open
Fitchburg School Department	Fitchburg High School	740 Richardson Road	Fitchburg	Open
Fitchburg School Department	Goodrich Street Playground	Goodrich/Boutelle St	Fitchburg	Open
Fitchburg School Department	Greens Corner Playground	Green/North St.	Fitchburg	Open
Fitchburg School Department	Lowe Playground	Elm St.	Fitchburg	Open
Fitchburg School Department	Parkhill Playground	Beech Street	Fitchburg	Open
Fitchburg School Department	Phillips Street Playground	Phillips Street	Fitchburg	Open
Fitchburg School Department	Salem St. Playground	Salem St.	Fitchburg	Open
Spanish American Cntr, Inc.	Riverside Village	State St.	Leominster	Closed

➤ **Child & Adult Food Care Program:**

There are no shelters implementing the CACFP in Quadrant II.

Local/ Community Program Assets

➤ **Community Gardens:** In Bolton, there exists the Growing Gardens Project (GGP). It uses funds to grow gardens for its clients. According to one agency, the GGP served only two clients in 2000 but served 21 families in 2003.

➤ **Food Cooperatives /Serve New England:** 40% of agencies surveyed referred their clients to Serve New England or some other food cooperative program. The only Serve site in Quadrant II is located in Fitchburg, at the MOC Fitchburg site.

➤ **Long-Term Goals & Solutions:** A number of questions about the manner in which the WCFB operates, and what changes in these operation procedures might better contribute to the goal of ‘Creating a Hunger Free Community’, were addressed to the partner agencies. These questions included: **1)** Should the WCFB attempt to distribute more food? **2)** Should the WCFB attempt to establish branches in different areas of Worcester County and/or increase its capacity to deliver? **3)** Should the WCFB attempt to recruit new partner agencies? **4)** Should the WCFB change, modify or upgrade any part of its administration, staff or facilities? **5)** In order to help further collaboration between the WCFB’s partner agencies, would someone from your agency be willing to participate in the conferences if a network was formed from other WCFB partner agencies in the quadrant? **5)** Do you believe a hunger free community is feasible?

Table 2.12: Agency Feedback Breakdown

Agency	HFC Possible?	Distribute More?	Establish Branches?	Recruit Agencies?	Modify WCFB?	Participate Network?
II-1	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	Yes
II-2	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	Yes
II-3	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
II-4		No	Yes	No	No	Yes
II-5	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes
II-6	No	Yes	No	No	No	Yes
II-7	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes
II-8	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
II-9	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes
II-10	Yes	No	No	No	No	Yes
II-11	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes
II-12	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
II-13	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
II-14	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
II-15	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
II-16	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
II-17	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	Yes
II-18	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	Yes
II-19	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	Yes
II-20	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
II-21	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Totals	70% Y	75% Y	50% Y	35% Y	15% Y	95% Y

VII. Quadrant III: Central Worcester County

Overview

Quadrant III refers to Central Worcester County. The city of Worcester itself is part of the quadrant, as well as thirteen surrounding towns which constitute the city's suburbs. It is the third largest of the four quadrants in terms of geographic area, and the largest in terms of total population. Worcester is the quadrant's largest town, with a population of approximately 172,648 people, while West Boylston is the quadrant's smallest town, with a population of approximately 3,804 people.²⁵ 337, 828 people live in the quadrant in its entirety, and its borders encompass approximately 299 square miles. The quadrant's most densely populated town, Worcester, has a population density of about 4,592 persons per square mile. The quadrant's least densely populated town, Boylston, has a population density of about 251 persons per square mile. (For comparison, the city of Boston has a population density of about 13,488 persons per square mile.)²⁶

The Worcester County Food Bank currently partners with fifty emergency food providers in Quadrant III, (numbered III-1 through III-50) located in the towns of Auburn, Holden, Grafton, Leicester, Millbury, Northborough, Shrewsbury, Southborough, Spencer, West Boylston, Westborough and Worcester. Forty-two of these agencies are classified as pantries, four are classified as kitchens, three are classified as shelters, and one is classified as a combination kitchen-shelter.

Table 3.1: Agency Breakdown by Town: Quadrant III

Town	Pantries	Kitchens	Shelters	Kitchen/Shelter	Pantry/ Kitchen	Total
Auburn	1	0	0	0	0	1
Boylston	0	0	0	0	0	0
Holden	1	0	0	0	0	1
Grafton	1	0	0	0	0	1
Leicester	1	0	0	0	0	1
Millbury	1	0	0	0	0	1
Northborough	2	0	0	0	0	2
Paxton	0	0	0	0	0	0
Shrewsbury	2	0	0	0	0	2
Southborough	1	0	0	0	0	1
Spencer	1	0	0	0	0	1
West Boylston	1	0	0	0	0	1
Westborough	1	0	0	0	0	1
Worcester	29	4	3	1	0	37
Totals	42	4	3	1	0	50

²⁵ United States, U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 (Washington: United States Department of Commerce, 2000)

²⁶ Street Atlas, Third Edition: Metro Worcester, Central Massachusetts (South Easton, MA: Arrow Map Inc, 2001)

The closest of these agencies to the WCFB is a pantry located in Shrewsbury, its site approximately 1.6 miles from the WCFB. This corresponds to an estimated travel time of 3 minutes. The farthest of these agencies from the WCFB is a pantry located in Spencer, approximately 18 miles from the WCFB. This corresponds to an estimated travel time of 39 minutes. The average distance between the WCFB and its partner agencies in Quadrant III is approximately 6.1 miles.²⁷

Needs

36,360 people in Quadrant III live at or below the poverty level. This amounts to approximately 10.8% of the total population of the quadrant that live under the government’s definition of poverty. Of those living below the federal poverty level, 3,948 are seniors and 12,028 are children. An additional 36,095 people subsist on incomes below 185% of the federal poverty level, or 72,455 total, accounting for 21.4% of the quadrant’s total population. Overall, the city of Worcester has the quadrant’s highest poverty rate (17.9%) while Southborough boasts the lowest (1.6%).²⁸

Table 3.2: Quadrant III Census Data²⁹

Town	Total Population	% Below Pov. Level	# of Indiv. Below Pov. Level	# of Children Below Pov. Level	# of Seniors Below Pov. Level	# of Indiv. Below 185% Pov.	# of Children Below 185% Pov.
Auburn	15,901	3.3	516	125	112	1775	383
Boylston	4,008	2.8	111	5	48	312	40
Holden	14,894	5.6	828	210	98	2002	525
Grafton	15,621	3.1	479	164	102	1225	362
Leicester	10,471	4.3	433	159	67	1302	351
Millbury	12,784	6.3	779	246	144	1979	571
Northborough	13,202	2.8	386	81	115	933	275
Paxton	4,386	1.8	74	6	28	259	68
Shrewsbury	31,640	4.8	1,498	393	318	3336	697
Southborough	8,781	1.6	139	19	32	363	88
Spencer	11,691	8.6	1,001	317	144	2236	667
West Boylston	3,804	3.2	196	49	70	586	113
Westborough	17,997	4.7	805	192	95	1579	318
Worcester	172,648	17.9	29,115	10,062	2,575	54,568	17,621
QIII Average	24,131	10.8	2,597	859	282	5,175	1,577
QIII Total	337,828	N/A	36,360	12,028	3,948	72,455	22,079

²⁷ “Map Quest”, 4 Feb. 2004 <<http://www.mapquest.com/>>

²⁸ United States, U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 (Washington: United States Department of Commerce, 2000)

²⁹ Ibid.

➤ **Transportation:** Quadrant III includes primarily the city of Worcester, an urban area with an established public transportation system. Thus, it is no surprise that 72% of agencies surveyed noted that a client's ability to travel to and from an agency was not a serious problem. Because of the high concentration of food programs in the city of Worcester, most people do not have far to travel to use the resources of a number of food pantries or kitchens. The Worcester Regional Transit Authority (WRTA) serves the towns of Auburn, Boylston, Brookfield, Clinton, Holden, Leicester, Millbury, Oxford, Shrewsbury, Spencer, Webster, West Boylston, and Worcester. Their stated mission is to "To provide convenient, comfortable, safe, reliable, cost-effective mobility services contributing to the economic vitality of the region."³⁰ Existing transportation issues are generally concentrated on the outskirts of Quadrant III.

➤ **Food Supply and Distribution:** Despite the overwhelming responses describing the serious and increasing need, most agencies reported that they are generally able to feed the clients that seek their assistance. 90% of those agencies that responded (seven did not answer) said that they are consistently able to serve 100% of the clients that come to their agency and seek food assistance. Thus, only 10% report having to sometimes turn away clients because of food supply issues. However, 65% reported that the supply of food that they receive from the WCFB and other sources sometimes runs low, forcing them to distribute smaller amounts to their clients.

➤ **Infrastructure & Resources:** In terms of resources and infrastructure, Quadrant III agencies seem to be doing well. Only 41% of Quadrant III agencies interviewed reported having problems with their storage space or refrigeration systems that prevented them from maintaining a steady supply of food in their agency. 27% said that they were consistently lacking enough volunteers to run their organization, and 39% reported needing more money. 35% said that they did not have a vehicle to transport food to and from the WCFB, or that they had trouble with the one they have.

➤ **Severity of Hunger and Need:** The need in Quadrant III is very great. Because Quadrant III includes a large and diverse urban area, the type and severity of hunger differs depending on who you ask. Unlike in more rural areas, there are a high concentration of emergency food programs in Worcester. These cater to a variety of clientele, often focusing on a locality such as a neighborhood, AIDS or HIV positive patients, homeless, veterans, or abused and battered women. Clients vary from homeless and extremely destitute to working poor who only need a small nutritional supplement. Out of 43 member agencies in Quadrant I responding, 23% reported seeing primarily a calorie deficit among their clients, 58% reported primarily a nutrition deficit, and 19% reported both.

³⁰ "Worcester Regional Transit Authority," 5 Feb. 2004
<<http://www.therta.com/homeabout.htm#funded>>

Many who cited hunger as a nutrition deficit defined it as “the working poor who need to choose between their rent and their health.”³¹ Many linked nutrition deficits to obesity as “people substitute the quantity of food with the quality of food due to economic pressures.”³² Those that mentioned calorie deficit hunger cited homelessness and addiction as severe obstacles to overcoming the need in Worcester. Many people noted that their numbers have escalated since 2001. Quadrant III agencies said that they served a variety of ethnicities and ages. These often varied by neighborhood or by program mission.

➤ **Client Options:** There are 50 WCFB emergency food agencies in Quadrant III, 37 of which are located in the city of Worcester. There is at least one agency in every town except for Boylston and Paxton. However, these towns were included in the service areas or surrounding towns. There is one pantry for every 5.98 square miles in Quadrant III, making it the most highly concentrated quadrant in terms of emergency food agencies.³³

➤ **Numbers Served:** Quadrant III agencies reported their numbers served per month either by units of people served, families served or both. Agency statistics indicating the number of people served per month varied from 12 to 10,775. Agencies that used families served as a unit varied from 13 to 492 families a month. Nine agencies did not answer.

Table 3.3: Clients Served Per Month

Agency Number	People	Families
III-1	125	
III-2	160	
III-3	150	
III-4		13
III-5	1025	
III-6		463
III-7	12	
III-8	70	
III-9	165	
III-10		36
III-11		
III-12	1500	567
III-13		13
III-14		21
III-15		250
III-16	1384	492
III-17	360	
III-18	297	65
III-19	375	89
III-20	2000	

³¹ WCFB Hunger-Free Community Survey, 2003. Agency # III-26.

³² WCFB Hunger-Free Community Survey, 2003. Agency # III-5.

³³ Street Atlas, Third Edition: Metro Worcester, Central Massachusetts (South Easton, MA: Arrow Map Inc, 2001)

III-21	475	
III-22	220*	
III-23	1633*	
III-24	109*	
III-25		160
III-26	400	
III-27	500	
III-28	10,775*	
III-29		94
III-30	195*	
III-31	346*	
III-32	325	
III-33	60	
III-34	240	
III-35	425	
III-36	1000	280
III-37	148*	
III-38	30*	
III-39		33
III-40		85
III-41		169
III-42	650	
III-43		52
III-44	500	
III-45		75
III-46	1100	
III-47	50	
III-48	50	160
III-49	550	
III-50	175	

*Numbers taken from WCFB Quarterly Report, 2nd Quarter FY 2004

Assets

On average, the WCFB is able to dispatch 182,876 pounds of emergency food into the quadrant per month and the quadrant's native partner agencies are also able to raise an additional 75,838 pounds of emergency food per month. This means that, through the auspices of the food banking system and its partner agencies, food persons residing in Quadrant III generally have access to approximately 36,274 pounds of emergency food relief per month. The WCFB provides approximately 72% of that total.

Table 3.4: Food Sources, Quadrant III

Agency Number	% Food That Comes from WCFB	Average Lbs. of Food/ Month From WCFB	Average Lbs. of Food/ Month From Other	Total Average Lbs. of Food/ Month
III-1	90%	5083	565	5647
III-2	78%	608	171	779
III-3	80%	1138	284	1422
III-4	20%	852	3406	4258
III-5	98%	7575	155	7730
III-6	70%	8767	3757	12524
III-7	23%	1261	4223	5484
III-8	100%	4392	0	4392
III-9	80%	207	52	259
III-10	95%	1430	75	1505
III-11	99%	284	3	287
III-12	80%	13063	3266	16329
III-13	40%	1105	1658	2764
III-14	50%	79	79	157
III-15	95%	10009	527	10535
III-16	80%	8562	2141	10703
III-17	95%	1938	102	2040
III-18	50%	1407	1407	2813
III-19	70%	9086	3894	12980
III-20	65%	6531	3517	10048
III-21	98%	2250	46	2296
III-22	80%	2319	580	2899
III-23	25%	994	2981	3975
III-24	N/A	1192	N/A	N/A
III-25	50%	2024	2024	4048
III-26	99%	2042	21	2063
III-27	90%	2380	264	2644
III-28	80%	5425	1356	6782
III-29	50%	1484	1484	2968
III-30	N/A	1394	N/A	N/A
III-31	75%	9879	3293	13172
III-32	50%	10307	10307	20615
III-33	75%	721	240	962
III-34	88%	6324	862	7186
III-35	95%	10583	557	11140

III-36	90%	6488	721	7209
III-37	N/A	784	N/A	N/A
III-38	60%	708	472	1179
III-39	75%	1380	460	1840
III-40	75%	1374	458	1832
III-41	90%	3949	439	4387
III-42	80%	4104	1026	5130
III-43	90%	1468	163	1631
III-44	98%	3978	81	4059
III-45	15%	834	4724	5558
III-46	60%	4930	3287	8217
III-47	75%	222	74	296
III-48	20%	1199	4794	5993
III-49	60%	3516	2344	5860
III-50	60%	5247	3498	8744
Totals	72%	182,876	75,838	255,341

In addition to the WCFB, agencies in Quadrant III reported receiving food donations from a number of other sources. Most significant of these were Rachel's Table and Project Bread respectively. Rachel's Table reported distributing 691,914 pounds of emergency food in the fiscal year 2002-2003, all to organizations located in Quadrant III, many of which were partner agencies of the WCFB.³⁴ Project Bread offers thousands of dollars worth of grants to emergency food providers statewide.

Additional sources of aid included the Boy and Girls Scouts of America, the Catholic Campaign for Human Development, the Civic Club, the College of the Holy Cross, Worcester State College, the CROP walk, the Massachusetts Department of Transitional Assistance (for shelters), the Feinstein Foundation, the Knights of Columbus, the Rotary Club, and the United Way. Agencies reported receiving contributions from post offices, police departments and schools. There have been complaints that the effectiveness of post office food drives has declined recently as the postmen are no longer willing to deliver the food they collect to the agencies themselves.³⁵ Money received as part of a large settlement involving drug companies was also mentioned, as well as the policy of certain libraries to forgive fines in exchange for the donation of food. Corporate entities, including supermarkets and banks, were also reported to have made contributions. One agency, located in Northborough, mentioned that it receives donations on the last day of the town's annual 'Applefest'. Agencies also received personal donations, as well as donations from churches.

When asked what they give their clients when they come in for assistance, the response of Quadrant III agencies generally varied according to their classification. Most pantries responded in terms of how many brown grocery bags or banana boxes filled with food they give their clients. Most kitchens and shelters responded in terms of how many meals they prepare and serve for their clients. A few agencies, mostly the larger ones

³⁴ Quick Facts on Rachel's Table (Worcester, MA: Rachel's Table, 2003).

³⁵ WCFB Hunger Free Community Survey, 2003. Agency # III-45.

with more organized record keeping procedures, were able to respond in terms of their monthly distribution of food in pounds. Among those agencies that responded, the monthly distribution of brown grocery bags ranged from 66 to 1650, the monthly distribution of banana boxes ranged from 33 to 475, the monthly distribution of poundage ranged from 600 to 21,000, and the monthly distribution of meals ranged from 160 to 12,500.

Twelve agencies (III-4, III-11, III-15, III-22, III-23, III-24, III-26, III-30, III-31, III-37, III-45 and III-48) were unable to answer this question for various reasons. Agencies III-4 and III-11 operate under unique circumstances which allow for extreme variance in their distribution habits, while agencies III-15, III-26, III-45 and III-48 do not retain records detailed enough to determine the quantity of their average distribution to clients. Agencies III-22 and III-42 operate in such close cooperation that their combined monthly distribution has been reported under III-42, while no contact on the issue was made with agencies III-22, III-23, III-24, III-30, III-31 and III-37.

Table 3.5: Units of Food Distributed Per Month By Agency

Agency	Lbs.	Bags	Boxes	Meals
III-1			125	
III-2				160
III-3	600			
III-4	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
III-5				10,125
III-6	15,000			
III-7				3240
III-8			70	
III-9				165
III-10		72		
III-11	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
III-12	21,000			
III-13				3100
III-14	250			
III-15	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
III-16	10866			
III-17		200		
III-18		292		
III-19	8000			
III-20				5677
III-21			475	
III-22	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
III-23	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
III-24	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
III-25		320		
III-26	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
III-27				3332
III-28				12500
III-29		381		

III-30	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
III-31	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
III-32	8000			
III-33		210		
III-34		250		
III-35	8000			
III-36		870		
III-37	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
III-38		23		
III-39		66	33	
III-40		85		
III-41	2000		52	
III-42	3115			
III-43	1000			
III-44	2600			
III-45	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
III-46	5200			
III-47		92		
III-48	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
III-49		1650		
III-50		525		

The 50 Quadrant III agencies maintain a wide range of days and hours of operation. Of the agencies surveyed, 32 agencies maintained operation during the day (anytime between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. during the weekday) This accounted for 74% of the Quadrant III agencies surveyed. 10 agencies reported maintained evening hours (after 5 p.m. during the weekday) accounting for 23% of the Quadrant III agencies surveyed. 10 agencies also offered weekend hours, accounting for 23% of the Quadrant III agencies surveyed.

Pantries in Quadrant III offer a wide range of non-food assistance services that help their clients with a variety of issues.

Table 3.6: Non-Food Assistance Services Provided by Quadrant I Agencies

Agency	Services
III-1	Case management, counseling, foster care, HIV screening, mental health assistance
III-2	Clothing assistance
III-3	After-school child care, summer programs for children
III-4	N/A
III-5	N/A
III-6	Clothing assistance, HIV screening, Worcester Community Action Council programs
III-7	Counseling, DTA assistance, rental assistance, legal assistance
III-8	Referrals to First Call and United Way
III-9	Clothing assistance, Interfaith Hospitality Network
III-10	None
III-11	N/A

III-12	Elder services, Head Start program, recreational programs, assistance with social services
III-13	None
III-14	Crisis intervention, free clinic, fuel assistance
III-15	Clothing assistance
III-16	Case management, counseling, legal assistance, medical assistance, dental assistance, vocational referrals, educational referrals, housing referrals
III-17	None
III-18	None
III-19	Clothing assistance, counseling, free clinic
III-20	Case management, clothing assistance, counseling, rental assistance, legal assistance, medical assistance, job search assistance , vocational training
III-21	Case management, clothing assistance, counseling, legal assistance, medical assistance
III-22	Clothing assistance, rental assistance, rental assistance (development of quality low income housing), job search assistance
III-23	N/A
III-24	N/A
III-25	None
III-26	None
III-27	Health education, parenting education, support groups, programs for children with developmental delay
III-28	Advocacy programs, rental assistance, medical assistance
III-29	Clothing assistance, nutritional education, social events, Toys for Tots
III-30	N/A
III-31	N/A
III-32	Clothing assistance, fuel assistance, referrals for mental health and people with mental deficiencies
III-33	Clothing assistance
III-34	None
III-35	None
III-36	Assist with the cost of medicine, clothing assistance
III-37	N/A
III-38	None
III-39	Clothing assistance, small loans
III-40	Bus fare, clothing assistance, English as a second language
III-41	Clothing assistance, rental assistance, job search assistance
III-42	Clothing assistance, free health clinic
III-43	Rental assistance, housing assistance (development of quality low income housing), job search assistance.
III-44	Fuel assistance, rent assistance, utility assistance
III-45	Clothing assistance, school supplies, Toys for Tots
III-46	Clothing assistance, financial assistance, free clinic, medicine assistance
III-47	Interfaith Hospitality Network
III-48	None
III-49	Case management, clothing assistance, furniture assistance, tax

	assistance, Toys for Tots, voter registration
III-50	Case management, furniture assistance, notary, rental assistance, voter registration

Federal/ State Program Assets

Referrals for Federal Food Programs in Quadrant III tended to be relatively high:

Table 3.7: Federal Program Referral Breakdown

Federal Program	Referral	No Referral
Food Stamps Program	84%	16%
WIC Program	77%	23%
WIC Farmer's Mkt. Nutrition Program	42%	58%
National School Lunch Program	30%	70%
School Breakfast Program	28%	72%
Summer Food Service Program	47%	53%
Child and Adult Care Food Program	9%	91%
Meals on Wheels	30%	70%

➤ **Food Stamps:** 84% of agencies interviewed in Quadrant III said that they refer their clients to the food stamp program. There are a number of DTA offices in the city of Worcester, the main office being located on Walnut St:

Worcester
9 Walnut Street
Worcester, MA 01608
(508) 767-3100

Other nearby offices include Framingham, which serves Southborough; Milford, which serves Westborough and Grafton; and Southbridge, which serves Spencer.³⁶

➤ **WIC:** WIC has four offices in Quadrant III, all located in the city of Worcester. It is a program that is fairly well utilized, as 77% of agencies surveyed stated that they refer their clients to the program.

³⁶ Massachusetts Department of Transitional Assistance, DTA Locator, 5 Feb. 04.
<<http://www.state.ma.us/dta/ASSIST/location/index.htm>>

➤ **WIC Farmers Market Nutrition Program:** 42% of agencies surveyed noted that they refer their clients to the WIC Farmers Market Program. There are six WIC Farmers Market sites in Quadrant III, located in Auburn, Holden, Shrewsbury, and Worcester. Hours vary from site to site. The Auburn Farmers Market is the only market open on weekends.

Table 3.8: Quadrant III WIC Farmers Market Nutrition Program Sites

Town	Name	Location	Season	Hours
Auburn	Auburn Farmers Market	Auburn Public Library	June-October	Saturdays: 9-2
Holden	Holden Grange Farmers Market	Town Hall	May-October	Thursdays: 11-3
Holden	Holden Tuesday Evening Market	Damon House, Holden Center	May-October	Tuesdays: 3-7
Shrewsbury	Shrewsbury Farmers Market	Wiliker's Restaurant	June-October	Tuesdays: 11-3:30
Worcester	Worcester Common Farmers Market	The Common at City Hall	June-October	Fridays: 9-2
Worcester	Worcester West Side Market	Foley Stadium	June-October	Mon. and Wed.: 9-2

➤ **Free and Reduced Price Breakfast and Lunch:** 30% of Quadrant III agencies noted that they refer their clients to the National Free and Reduced Price Lunch program. 28% said they referred their clients to the corresponding School Breakfast program. Many sites noted that their clients already knew about the Free and Reduced Price Meals program.

Table 3.9: Quadrant III % of Students Receiving Free or Reduced Price Meals

School District	Enrollment	% Receiving Free Meals	% Receiving Reduce Price Meals	% of Total Enrollment
Auburn Public Schools	2236	143	75	9.75%
Berlin – Boylston Regional School District	445	10	10	4.49%
Boylston School Committee	326	6	5	3.37%
Grafton Public Schools	2061	108	58	8.05%
Leicester Public Schools	1851	192	118	16.75%
Millbury School Department	2006	149	70	10.92%
Northborough School Committee	2959	67	23	3.04%
Shrewsbury School District	4609	254	89	7.44%
Southborough School Committee	1339	36	5	3.06%
Spencer - East Brookfield Regional School District	2152	228	152	17.66%
Wachusett Regional School District	6112	162	94	4.19%
West Boylston Public Schools	1091	42	21	5.77%
Westborough School Department	3044	108	33	4.63%
Worcester Public Schools	26266	12264	2051	54.50%
QI Average	56497	13769	2804	29.33%

➤ **Summer Food Service Program:** 47% of Quadrant III agencies refer their clients to the Summer Food Service Program in their area. There are fifteen sites within Quadrant III sponsoring the Summer Food Service Program. Fourteen are located in Worcester, one in located in Paxton.³⁷ No one sponsors a Summer Food Service site in Westborough, a town in which approximately 49% of the school aged children are eligible for either free or reduced prices lunch.

³⁷ Massachusetts, Child Nutrition Programs, Summer Food Service Sites 2003 (Boston: Massachusetts Department of Education, 2003)

Table 3.10: Quadrant III Summer Food Sites

Sponsor Name	Site Name	Site Address	Site/City	Open / Closed ?
Friendly House, Inc.	Autumn Woods Housing	15 Upland Garden Dr.	Worcester	Open
Friendly House, Inc.	Emmanuel Baptist Church	717 Main St.	Worcester	Open
Friendly House, Inc.	Gbv Gymnasium Extension	33 Freedom Way	Worcester	Open
Friendly House, Inc.	Great Brook Valley	180 Constitution Ave.	Worcester	Open
Friendly House, Inc.	Green Island/Crampton Park	50 Canton St	Worcester	Open
Friendly House, Inc.	Lakeside Neighborhood Center	19 Garland St.	Worcester	Open
Friendly House, Inc.	Performing Arts School	29 High Street	Worcester	Open
Friendly House, Inc.	Plumley Village	16 Laurel Street	Worcester	Open
Friendly House, Inc.	Quinsigamond Comm. Ctr	16 Greenwood St.	Worcester	Open
Friendly House, Inc.	South Worcester Neigh. Center	47 Camp St.	Worcester	Open
Friendly House, Inc.	Stratton Hill Park Apartments	161 West Mountain Street	Worcester	Open
Friendly House, Inc.	Worcester Youth Center	27 Chandler Street	Worester	Open
Worcester Public Schools	Lincoln Village	134 Country Club Blvd.	Worcester	Open
Worcester Public Schools	Mt. Carmel	28 Mulberry Street	Worcester	Open
Youth Opportunities Upheld	Clark University	950 Main St.	Worcester	Open
Rainbow Child Development	Rainbow Child Dev. Camp	Treas.Valley Reservation	Paxton	Closed

➤ **Child and Adult Care Food Program:** There are four shelters in Quadrant III, but only two of them (III-7 & III-13) serve population likely to include minor children. Unfortunately, neither of these agencies reported utilizing the CACFP.

Local/ Community Program Assets

Being a more urbanized area, Quadrant III seems to take advantage of local and community programs more than other quadrants.

➤ **Community Gardens:** 23% of all agencies surveyed cited a referral or some knowledge about a local community garden program. Some said that while most gardens exist only on a “small-scale,” that people enjoy participating in them. One garden frequently cited is the UGROW (Urban Garden Resources Of Worcester.) This program is run by the Regional Environmental Council of Worcester, which can be reached at 508-799-9139. UGROW supports 20 existing gardens composed of over 300 volunteer gardeners.³⁸

➤ **Food Cooperatives/ Serve New England:** 40% of agencies mentioned that they refer their clients to the Serve New England Program, which has nine locations in Quadrant III, in the towns of Milbury, Shrewsbury, Spencer, Westborough, and Worcester.

Table 3.11: Quadrant III Serve New England Sites

Town	Name
Milbury	Milbury Lions Serve
Shrewsbury	Mt. Olivet Shrewsbury Serve
Spencer	Knights of Columbus Spencer
Westborough	First Methodist Westborough
Worcester	Coes Pond Serve
Worcester	St. Andrew the Apostle Worcester
Worcester	Greendale People’s Serve
Worcester	Elm Park Tower Serve
Worcester	St. Catherine of Sweden

➤ **Long-Term Questions & Solutions:** A number of questions about the manner in which the WCFB operates, and what changes in these operation procedures might better contribute to the goal of ‘Creating a Hunger Free Community’, were addressed to the partner agencies. These questions included: **1)** Should the WCFB attempt to distribute more food? **2)** Should the WCFB attempt to establish branches in different areas of Worcester County and/or increase its capacity to deliver? **3)** Should the WCFB attempt to recruit new partner agencies? **4)** Should the WCFB change, modify or upgrade any part of its administration, staff or facilities? **5)** In order to help further collaboration between the WCFB’s partner agencies, would someone from your agency be willing to participate in the conferences if a network was formed from other WCFB partner agencies in the quadrant? **5)** Do you believe a hunger free community is feasible?

³⁸ Urban Garden Resources of Worcester (UGROW). 4 Feb. 2004. <www.recworchester.org/ugrow>

Table 3.12: Agency Feedback Breakdown

Agency	HFC Possible?	Distribute More?	Establish Branches?	Recruit Agencies?	Modify WCFB?	Participate Network?
III-1	No	No	No	No	No	Yes
III-2	Yes	No	No	No	No	Yes
III-3	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	Yes
III-4	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No
III-5	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
III-6	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
III-7	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
III-8	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
III-9	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
III-10	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
III-11						
III-12	No	Yes	No	No	No	Yes
III-13	Yes	No	No	No	No	Yes
III-14	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
III-15		Yes				
III-16	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes
III-17	No	No	No	No	No	Yes
III-18	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes
III-19	No	Yes	No	No	No	Yes
III-20	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes
III-21	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	Yes
III-22						
III-23						
III-24						
III-25	Yes	No	No	No	No	Yes
III-26	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes
III-27	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	Yes
III-28	No	Yes	No	No	No	Yes
III-29	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	Yes
III-30						
III-31						
III-32	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	No
III-33	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	Yes
III-34	Yes	No	No	No	No	Yes
III-35	No	Yes	No	No	No	Yes
III-36	No	Yes	No	No	No	Yes
III-37						
III-38						
III-39	Yes	No	No	No	No	Yes
III-40	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
III-41	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	Yes
III-42	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	No
III-43	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	Yes
III-44	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
III-45	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes

III-46	No	No	No	No	No	Yes
III-47	No	Yes	No	No	No	Yes
III-48	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No
III-49	No	No	No	No	No	Yes
III-50	No	No	No	No	No	Yes
Totals	63% Yes	67% Yes	34% Yes	22% Yes	10% Yes	88% Yes

VIII. Quadrant IV: Southern Worcester County

Overview

Quadrant IV refers to the Southern portion of Worcester County and consist of 21 primarily mid-sized suburban to rural towns. It is both the second largest of the four quadrants in terms of geographic area and in terms of total population. The largest of these towns, Milford, is home to 26,799 people while the smallest, East Brookfield, is home to 2,097 people. 193,811 people live within the quadrant in its entirety, and its boarders encompass approximately 446 square miles. The quadrant’s most densely populated town, Milford, has a population density of about 1,836 persons per square mile. The quadrant’s least densely populated town, Warren, has a population density of about 174 persons per square mile. (For comparison, the city of Worcester has a population density of about 4,592 persons per square mile.)

The Worcester County Food Bank has thus far partnered with eighteen emergency food providers in Quadrant IV (numbered IV-1 through IV-18) located in the towns of Blackstone, Charlton, Douglas, Mendon, Milford, North Brookfield, Oxford, Southbridge, Sturbridge, Uxbridge, Warren, Webster and West Brookfield. Seventeen oof these agencies are classified as pantries while on is classified as a combination pantry-kitchen.

Table 4.1: Agency Breakdown by Town: Quadrant IV

Town	Pantries	Kitchens	Shelters	Kitchen/Shelters	Pantry/Kitchens	Total
Blackstone	1	0	0	0	0	1
Brookfield	0	0	0	0	0	0
Charlton	1	0	0	0	0	1
Douglas	1	0	0	0	0	1
Dudley	0	0	0	0	0	0
East Brookfield	0	0	0	0	0	0
Hopedale	0	0	0	0	0	0
Millville	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mendon	1	0	0	0	0	1
Milford	3	0	0	0	0	3
North Brookfield	1	0	0	0	0	1
Northbridge	0	0	0	0	0	0
Oxford	1	0	0	0	0	1
Southbridge	2	0	0	0	0	2
Sturbridge	1	0	0	0	0	1
Upton	0	0	0	0	0	0
Uxbridge	1	0	0	0	0	1
Warren	2	0	0	0	0	2
Webster	1	0	0	0	1	2
West Brookfield	1	0	0	0	0	1
Totals	17	0	0	0	1	18

The closest of these agencies to the WCFB is a pantry located in Oxford, its site approximately 15 miles from the WCFB. This corresponds to an estimated travel time of 23 minutes. The farthest of these agencies from the WCFB is a pantry located in Warren, its site approximately 35 miles from the WCFB. This corresponds to an estimated travel time of 54 minutes. The average distance between the WCFB and its partner agencies in Quadrant IV is approximately 23.3 miles.

Needs

12,992 people in Quadrant IV live below the poverty level. This accounts for approximately 6.7% of the total population of Quadrant IV. Of those living below the federal poverty level, 4497 are children and 2086 are seniors. 31,726 residents reside near poverty, below 185% of the federal poverty level. This represents an additional 18,734 people. Overall, Southbridge has the highest poverty level at 15.4%, while Blackstone boasts the lowest, at 3.7%.³⁹

Table 4.2: Quadrant IV Census Data

Town	Total Population	% Below Pov Level	# of Indiv Below Pov Level	# of Children Below Pov Level	# of Seniors Below Pov Level	# of Indiv Below 185% Pov	# of Children Below 185% Pov
Blackstone	8804	3.7	327	60	102	1017	281
Brookfield	3051	6.1	187	46	56	544	140
Charlton	11263	5.6	620	155	74	1272	355
Douglas	7045	4.6	325	122	70	793	318
Dudley	10036	5.6	537	148	128	1708	518
East Brookfield	2097	3.9	82	21	26	276	85
Hopedale	5907	4	232	46	53	508	74
Mendon	5286	4	212	69	48	468	153
Milford	26799	7.2	1908	617	329	4581	1285
Millville	2724	5.8	156	54	20	396	117
North Brookfield	4683	5.5	250	103	31	741	205
Northbridge	14013	5.3	676	195	93	2120	724
Oxford	13352	7.8	1026	431	107	2247	777
Southbridge	17214	15.4	2616	1133	250	5341	1985
Sturbridge	7837	6.1	474	224	88	1082	328
Sutton	8250	4.4	360	143	46	747	218
Upton	5642	3.5	197	77	23	417	94

³⁹ United States, U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 (Washington: United States Department of Commerce, 2000)

Uxbridge	11136	4.7	520	165	120	1438	452
Warren	4776	6.1	287	90	43	1367	500
Webster	16415	11	1767	514	357	4209	1179
West Brookfield	7481	6.8	233	84	22	454	125
Totals	193,811	N/A	12,992	4497	2086	31,726	9913
Average	17,619	6.7	1181	409	190	2884	901

➤ **Transportation:** Despite the lack of an urban center with an established transportation system in Quadrant IV, most agencies in Quadrant IV reported that their clients had little difficulty getting to and from emergency food agencies. 71% of reporting agencies said that transportation was not an issue for their clients and that some form of transportation (bus, carpool, etc) was generally available for their clients.

➤ **Food Supply and Distribution:** 90% of reporting agencies said that they are consistently able to serve everyone that comes to seek their assistance. However, 52% said that decreasing supply of food from the WCFB and elsewhere can sometimes limit what they are able to give each client.

➤ **Infrastructure & Resources:** In terms of resources and infrastructure, the majority of Quadrant IV agencies seem not to be having major issues. 38% reported that storage issues, such as shelving and refrigeration, were a problem. When issues were noted, refrigeration and freezer space was the main culprit. 38% reported not having enough volunteers and 19% reported needing more money. 33% reported that they did not have an adequate vehicle to get them to and from the food bank.

➤ **Severity of Hunger and Need:** Most Quadrant IV agencies reported the types of hunger their clients faced as being nutritional deficits. 79% of reporting agencies noted a nutritional deficit in their clients, while 19% said that they saw both a nutritional deficit and a calorie deficit. Many said that the need waxed and waned depending on the time of the year. One agency said that their clients “can’t buy the foods that they used to be able to buy.”⁴⁰ Joblessness and unemployment are typical problems that seem to be driving up the need.

➤ **Client Options:** There are 23 pantries in Quadrant IV, spread relatively evenly through 13 of the 20 towns in Quadrant IV. There is not an urban center in Quadrant IV, so most pantries operate at a local level and serve only their own town. There are no pantries in Brookfield, Dudley, East Brookfield, Hopedale, Millville, Northbridge, and Upton. There is one pantry for every 24.78 miles, making it the third most highly concentrated quadrant.

⁴⁰ WCFB Hunger-Free Community Survey, 2003. Agency # IV-6.

➤ **Numbers Served:** Quadrant IV agencies reported their numbers served per month either by units of people per month, families per month, or both. Agency statistics indicating the number people served per month varied from 18 people a month (I-18) to 700 people a month (I-7). Agency statistics indicating the number of families served per month varied from eight families a month (I-1) to 230 families a month (I-7).

Table 4.3: Clients Served per Month

Agency Number	People	Families
I-1	36	8
I-2	400	170
I-3	200	
I-4	N/A	N/A
I-5	625	
I-6	165	
I-7	700	230
I-8		120
I-9		50
I-10	432	
I-11		65
I-12		25
I-13		25
I-14	65	
I-15	65	23
I-16	208*	
I-17	230	
I-18	18	
I-19	65	15
I-20	126	
I-21		65
I-22	250	
I-23	37	

*WCFB Quarterly Report, 2nd Quarter FY 2004

Assets

On average, the WCFB is able to dispatch 18,915 pounds of emergency food into Quadrant IV per month. The quadrant's native partner agencies are also able to raise an additional 29,651 pounds of emergency food per month. This means that, through the auspices of the WCFB and its partner agencies, persons residing in Quadrant IV generally have access too approximately 48,566 pounds of emergency food relief per month. The WCFB provides approximately 39% of that total.

Table 4.4: Food Sources, Quadrant IV

Agency Number	% Food That Comes From WCFB	Average Lbs of Food / Month From WCFB	Average Lbs of Food / Month From Other Sources	Total Average Lbs of Food / Month
IV-1	85%	252	44	296
IV-2	60%	402	268	670
IV-3	99%	1,124	11	1,136
IV-4	99%	184	2	186
IV-5	51%	4,791	4,603	9,394
IV-6	60%	1,209	806	2,015
IV-7	66%	1,798	926	2,725
IV-8	60%	733	489	1,222
IV-9	65%	768	414	1,181
IV-10	90%	644	72	715
IV-11	60%	592	395	986
IV-12	99%	95	1	96
IV-13	40%	2,393	3,590	5,983
IV-14	50%	224	224	449
IV-15	35%	96	178	273
IV-16	75%	1,036	345	1,382
IV-17	2%	257	12,580	12,836
IV-18	33%	2,317	4,704	7,020
Totals:	39%	18,915	29,650	48,565

In addition to food bank product, agencies in Quadrant I reported a number of other sources of food donations. These included donations from post offices, UPS, local schools, and corporate entities such as supermarkets.

When asked what they give their clients when they come in for assistance, the response of agencies generally varied according to their classification. Most pantries responded in terms of how many brown grocery bags or banana boxes filled with food they give their clients. Most kitchens and shelters responded in terms of how many meals they prepare and serve for their clients. A few agencies, mostly those with more organized record keeping, were able to respond in terms of their monthly distribution of food in pounds.

Table 4.5: Units of Food Distributed Per Month By Agency

Agency	Lbs.	Bags	Boxes	Meals
IV-1			30	
IV-2	6500			
IV-3			200	
IV-4	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
IV-5		2040		
IV-6	2623			
IV-7	2000			
IV-8		115		

IV-9	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
IV-10	380			
IV-11		40		200
IV-12	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
IV-13		690		4830
IV-14		45		
IV-15		30		
IV-16	1800			
IV-17			15	6000
IV-18	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Totals:	13303	2960	245	11030

The eighteen agencies within Quadrant IV maintain varying hours of operation and are open different days of the week. 12 of the agencies maintain hours of operation that fall solely during the daylight hours of the work week, anytime between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. Five of the agencies maintain hours that fall solely during the twilight hours of the work week, anytime after 5 p.m. Four agencies maintain weekend hours.

Pantries in Quadrant IV offer a wide range of non-food assistance services that help their clients with a variety of issues.

Agency	Other Sevices Offered
IV-1	Clothing Assistance, Transportation Assistance
IV-2	None
IV-3	None
IV-4	None
IV-5	Clothing Assistance
IV-6	None
IV-7	Clothing Assistance, Aid to Refugees from Abroad
IV-8	None
IV-9	Clothing Assistance, Rent Assistance, Utility Assistance
IV-10	Small Loans, Transportation Assistance for the Elderly or Infirm
IV-11	None
IV-12	None
IV-13	None
IV-14	None
IV-15	None
IV-16	Clothing Assistance, Rent Assistance, Utility Assistance
IV-17	Transportation Assistance for the Elderly or Infirm, Health Care Assistance
IV-18	None

Federal/ State Program Assets

Some of the WCFB's partner agencies in Quadrant I make an effort to direct their clients towards some of the federal and state funded programs that offer emergency food as well.

Table 4.7: Federal Program Referral Breakdown

Program	% Referral
Food Stamps	69%
WIC	75%
WIC Farmers Market	6%
Free and Reduced Price School Lunch and Breakfast	31%
Summer Food Service	25%
Child and Adult Care Food Program	19%
Meals on Wheels	75%

➤ **Food Stamps:** 69% of agencies reporting in Quadrant IV said that they refer their clients to the food stamps program. There are two Department of Transitional Assistance offices in Quadrant IV, located in Milford and Southbridge.

➤ **WIC:** 75% of Quadrant IV agencies said that they refer their eligible clients to the WIC program. Quadrant IV is covered primarily by the South Central Area WIC. The main site is located in Southbridge. Other satellite sites are located in Milford, East Brookfield, Webster, and a mobile site located out of Southbridge.

➤ **WIC Farmer's Market Nutrition Program:** Only 6% of agencies (one agency) reported that they recommend eligible clients to a local Farmers Market accepting WIC coupons. There is only one farmers market in Quadrant IV, located in Sturbridge. The Sturbridge Farmers Market operates June through October on Thursdays from 11 a.m to 3:30 p.m. It is located in the Basketville Parking Lot off of Route 20.

➤ **Free and Reduced Price School Lunch and Breakfast:** 31% of agencies surveyed said that they refer their clients to the free and reduced price school lunch and breakfast program.

Table 4.8: Free and Reduced Price Meals Enrollment Rates

School District	Enroll	FR-APPS	RD-APPS	PCT/Enroll
North Brookfield Sch Committee	825	105	63	20.36%
Spencer-East Brookfield Regional Schol District	2152	228	152	17.66%

Brookfield School Committee	270	38	16	20.00%
Quaboag Reg School District	1483	230	72	20.36%
Sturbridge School Department	712	46	23	9.69%
Dudley-Charlton Sch Dist	4106	280	88	8.96%
Oxford School Department	2065	225	124	16.90%
Webster School Committee	2132	487	150	29.88%
Sutton Public Schools	1672	61	12	4.37%
Douglas School Department	1098	60	23	7.56%
Northbridge School Department	2340	369	158	22.52%
Uxbridge School Committee	2744	141	112	9.22%
Blackstone Valley Voc Reg Dist	3087	182	82	8.55%
Mendon-Upton Reg Sch District	2347	46	18	2.73%
Hopedale Public Schools	927	37	14	5.50%
Milford School Committee	4366	454	96	12.60%
Total:	32326	2989	1203	12.97%

➤ **Summer Food Service Program:** 25% of agencies surveyed said that they refer eligible clients to the Summer Food Services Program.

Table 4.9: Summer Food Service Sites

Sponsor Name	Site Name	Site Address	Site/City	Open / Closed ?
Friendly House, Inc.	Webster-Dudley Boys/Girls Club	3 Boys & Girls Club St.	Dudley	Closed
Southbridge Public Schools	Charlton Street School	220 Charlton St.	Southbridge	Open
Southbridge Public Schools	Southbridge Youth Services Ctr	61 Chestnut St	Southbridge	Open
Southbridge Public Schools	Wells Jr High School	82 Marcy St	Southbridge	Open
Southbridge Public Schools	West Street School	156 West St.	Southbridge	Open

Local/ Community Program Assets

➤ **Community Gardens:** No agencies said that they referred their clients to a community gardens, nor did any have any knowledge of the existence of community gardens in the area

➤ **Food Cooperatives / Serve New England:** 6% of agencies (one agency) reported that they refer their clients to the Serve New England program or some other food cooperative. There are presently five Serve New England Locations in Quadrant IV:

Table 4.11: Serve Locations, Quadrant IV

Town	Name of Program
East Brookfield	East Brookfield Serve
Charlton	Charlton Serve
Milford	Milford Serve
Uxbridge	SVDP-St. Mary's
Webster	Webster Serve

➤ **Kitchens:** 44% of agencies surveyed reported referring their clients to some location that serves warm meals on a regular basis. In addition to an agency in Webster that operates a pantry/ kitchen, other kitchens noted in the survey included numerous local churches that serve a meal on a weekly, bi-weekly, or monthly basis.

➤ **Long-Term Goals & Solutions:** A number of questions about the manner in which the WCFB operates, and what changes in these operation procedures might better contribute to the goal of ‘Creating a Hunger Free Community’, were addressed to the partner agencies. These questions included: **1)** Should the WCFB attempt to distribute more food? **2)** Should the WCFB attempt to establish branches in different areas of Worcester County and/or increase its capacity to deliver? **3)** Should the WCFB attempt to recruit new partner agencies? **4)** Should the WCFB change, modify or upgrade any part of its administration, staff or facilities? **5)** In order to help further collaboration between the WCFB’s partner agencies, would someone from your agency be willing to participate in the conferences if a network was formed from other WCFB partner agencies in the quadrant? **5)** Do you believe a hunger free community is feasible?

Table 4.12: Quadrant IV Long-Term Goals and Solutions

Agency	Establish Branches?	Distribute More Food?	Recruit More Agencies?	Modify WCFB?	Participate in Hunger Network?	Hunger Free Community a Possibility?
IV-1	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
IV-2	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
IV-3	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes
IV-4						
IV-5	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
IV-6	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes
IV-7	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes
IV-8	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
IV-9	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
IV-10	Yes	No	No	No	No	Yes
IV-11	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
IV-12						
IV-13	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
IV-14	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
IV-15	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	
IV-16	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
IV-17	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes
IV-18	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	No
Totals	63% Yes	50% Yes	38% Yes	6 % Yes	81% Yes	80% Yes

XI. Quadrant Analysis

Quadrant I

1. Does the proportion of the WCFB's emergency food resources entering the quadrant correspond to the proportion of Worcester County's total population potentially in need of such relief residing in the quadrant?

Quadrant I is home to 9.26% of all the individuals in Worcester County living below the federal poverty line and 11.18% of all the individuals in Worcester County living below 185% of the federal poverty line. Quadrant I is therefore estimated to contain 10.22% of all the individuals in Worcester County potentially in need of emergency food relief. Each month, WCFB partner agencies located in Quadrant I receive 9% of all the emergency food resources distributed by the WCFB throughout Worcester County. As these two figures approximate each other, the conclusion drawn is that the proportion of the WCFB's emergency food resources entering the quadrant corresponds to the proportion of Worcester County's total population potentially in need of such relief.

Conclusion: Quadrant I is neither significantly over or underserved by the WCFB.

2. Are the residents of the quadrant utilizing the emergency food resources provided to them by the WCFB and its partner agencies to their fullest potential?

Quadrant I is estimated to contain 10.22% of all the individuals in Worcester County potentially in need of emergency food relief. Each month, WCFB partner agencies in Quadrant I service 4% of all the individuals and 6% of all the families that visit anyone of the many WCFB affiliated emergency food providers throughout Worcester County. WCFB partner agencies in Quadrant I are therefore estimated to service 5% of all persons visiting WCFB affiliated emergency food providers monthly. Were all persons potentially in need of emergency food relief residing in the quadrant accessing the resources available to them through the auspices of the WCFB and its partner agencies, WCFB partner agencies in Quadrant I would be expected to account for somewhere between 9.26% and 11.18% of all persons served. Therefore, the conclusion drawn is drawn is that persons potentially in need of emergency food relief residing in the Quadrant I are underutilizing the resources available to them.

Conclusion: Quadrant I underutilizes available emergency food relief resources.

3. How large is the quadrant's 'reservoir' of emergency food relief, i.e., how much per capita emergency food relief is available to a person living in the quadrant potentially in need of such relief?

Limiting those classified as potentially in need of emergency food relief solely to persons living below the federal poverty level, and only considering resources in origin from the WCFB or its partner agencies, Quadrant I is found to possess an emergency food reservoir totaling 4.18 pounds of food per person, per month. According to this same criteria, the mean derived from the size of all four quadrant's emergency food reservoirs is 4.01 pounds of food per person, per month. Quadrant I might therefore be classified as possessing a tolerable emergency food reservoir.

Everything is relative, however, and while entities other than the WCFB and its partner agencies seem to contribute only small amounts of emergency food resources to most of the quadrants, Rachel's table pours a significant amount of emergency food relief into Quadrant III each month. Upon factoring in this contribution, the mean derived from the size of all four quadrant's reservoirs increases to 4.4 pounds of food per person, per month. As Quadrant I's emergency food reservoir of 4.18 pounds of food per person per month is less than the mean reservoir of 4.4 pounds of food per person per month, it must be classified as possessing an intolerable emergency food reservoir.

Conclusion: Quadrant I possesses an intolerable emergency food reservoir.

Analysis

The most likely reason for Quadrant I's apparent under-utilization of available emergency food resources is its rural nature. Although the least populated of the quadrants, it is the largest geographically, with an average of only one agency per 56 square miles of its territory. This figure can be deceiving, however, for it suggests a relatively even dispersion of agencies. In fact only six of the quadrant's sixteen towns possess an agency at all, and while some of these agencies included a neighboring town or two in their defined service area, three towns – Princeton, Hardwick, Templeton – do not fall in any agency's defined service area at all. (Poverty Rates: Princeton 4.4%, Hardwick 7.5%, Templeton 9.1%) This means a significant portion of the quadrant's population has no easy access to the emergency food relief the WCFB and its partner agencies are able to provide. Without access to these resources, they can not utilize them.

It is also possible that a number of persons, who might otherwise utilize the resources available at WCFB partner agencies within the quadrant, do not do so because of the lack of anonymity inherent in small town settings. At several agencies, persons reported interacting with some of their clients in social settings outside of the 'pantry', for example having children who went to the same school and all the interactions this might entail. One agency reported priding itself on being "involved with families outside of just giving food. Sitting down and finding out a little about them."⁴¹ While there is nothing wrong with this intimate atmosphere, and it may perhaps even be the ideal, individuals with a lot of pride might shy away from the help they need for fear of being labeled something unpleasant.

⁴¹ WCFB Hunger Free Community Survey, 2003. Agency #I-60

Another factor in the quadrant's apparent under-utilization of available emergency food resources might well be the lower cost of living generally associated with rural areas. Perhaps persons of limited means residing in the quadrant find it somewhat easier to subsist than their counterparts of comparable means residing in more urban quadrants. If so, this might help to account for the apparent under-utilization.

In truth, the apparent under-utilization of the emergency food resources in Quadrant I are probably the result of a combination of all three aforementioned factors. Nevertheless, the preponderance of the blame likely rests with the distance between agencies and several towns lacking any easy access to an agency.

➤ **Special Note:** Only three Summer Food Service sites exist in Quadrant I, and two of them are located in the same town – Gardner. While it is understandable that two of these sites would be located in Gardner, the quadrant's largest town, their geographical concentration leaves children residing in several of the quadrant's outlying towns with no access to a Summer Food Service site or having to travel considerable distances to reach one. Finding an organization in one of the quadrant's other towns which would be willing to sponsor a Summer Food Service site would help to alleviate this problem.

➤ **Food Cooperatives / Serve New England:** Serve New England participation rates are said to have been dropping in Quadrant I over the past few years. Sites in Hubbardston, Barre, and Rutland recently closed due to lack of participation. Only one agency in Quadrant I knew of, and referred their clients to this program. Thus, it is necessary that the WCFB work to spread knowledge of the benefits of this program to Quadrant I agencies, who can get the word to their clients and increase participation. Agencies could potentially offer their clients the opportunity to volunteer at their own food pantry in order to complete the service hours required for the Serve program.

Quadrant II

1. Does the proportion of the WCFB's emergency food resources entering the quadrant correspond to the proportion of Worcester County's total population potentially in need of such relief residing in the quadrant?

Quadrant II is home to 17.23% of all the individuals in Worcester County living below the federal poverty line and 17.84% of all the individuals in Worcester County living below 185% of the federal poverty line. Quadrant II is therefore estimated to contain 17.54% of all the individuals in Worcester County potentially in need of emergency food relief. Each month, WCFB partner agencies located in Quadrant II receive 21% of all the emergency food resources distributed by the WCFB throughout Worcester County. As the figures do not approximate each other, the conclusion drawn is that the proportion of the WCFB's emergency food resources entering the quadrant does not correspond to the proportion of Worcester County's total population potentially in need of such relief. Indeed, it seems as if Quadrant II is being somewhat over served by the WCFB.

Conclusion: Quadrant II is being somewhat over served by the WCFB.

2. Are the residents of the quadrant utilizing the emergency food resources provided to them by the WCFB and its partner agencies to their fullest potential?

Quadrant II is estimated to contain 17.54% of all the individuals in Worcester County potentially in need of emergency food relief. Each month, WCFB partner agencies in Quadrant II service 18% of all the individuals and 26% of all the families that visit anyone of the many WCFB affiliated emergency food providers throughout Worcester County. WCFB partner agencies in Quadrant I are therefore estimated to service 22% of all persons visiting WCFB affiliated emergency food providers monthly. Were all persons potentially in need of emergency food relief residing in the quadrant accessing the resources available to them through the auspices of the WCFB and its partner agencies, WCFB partner agencies in Quadrant I would be expected to account for somewhere between 17.23% and 17.84% of all persons served. Thus, people residing in Quadrant II are able and willing to utilize available emergency food resources.

Conclusion: Quadrant II eligible citizens are able and willing to utilize available emergency food resources.

3. How large is the quadrant's 'reservoir' of emergency food relief, i.e., how much per capita emergency food relief is available to a person living in the quadrant potentially in need of such relief?

Limiting those classified as potentially in need of emergency food relief solely to persons living below the federal poverty level, and only considering resources in origin from the WCFB or its partner agencies, Quadrant II is found to possess an emergency food reservoir totaling 5.34 pounds of food per person, per month. According to this same criteria, the mean derived from the size of all four quadrant's emergency food reservoirs is 4.01 pounds of food per person, per month. Quadrant I might therefore be classified as possessing a tolerable emergency food reservoir.

Again, however, the emergency food relief Rachel's Table pours into Quadrant III each month must be taken into account. Upon factoring in this contribution, the mean derived from the size of all four quadrant's reservoirs increases to 4.4 pounds of food per person, per month. As Quadrant II's emergency food reservoir of 5.34 pounds of food per person per month is greater than the mean reservoir of 4.4 pounds of food per person per month, it remains classified as possessing an tolerable emergency food reservoir.

Conclusion: Quadrant II possesses a tolerable reservoir of emergency food resources.

Quadrant III

1. Does the proportion of the WCFB’s emergency food resources entering the quadrant correspond to the proportion of Worcester County’s total population potentially in need of such relief residing in the quadrant?

Quadrant III is home to 54.16% of all the individuals in Worcester County living below the federal poverty line and 49.36% of all the individuals in Worcester County living below 185% of the federal poverty line. Quadrant III is therefore estimated to contain 51.76% of all the individuals in Worcester County potentially in need of emergency food relief. Each month, WCFB partner agencies located in Quadrant III receive 63% of all the emergency food resources distributed by the WCFB throughout Worcester County. There is a large difference between the percentage of the WCFB’s total resources entering Quadrant III and the percentage of the county’s impoverished population living in Quadrant III. This indicates that Quadrant III is potentially being over-served in relation to the other quadrants.

Conclusion: Statistics indicate that Quadrant III is overserved in relation to other quadrants.

2. Are the residents of the quadrant utilizing the emergency food resources provided to them by the WCFB and its partner agencies to their fullest potential?

Quadrant III is estimated to contain 51.76% of all the individuals in Worcester County potentially in need of emergency food relief. Each month, WCFB partner agencies in Quadrant III service 71% of all the individuals and 60% of all the families that visit anyone of the many WCFB affiliated emergency food providers throughout Worcester County. WCFB partner agencies in Quadrant III are therefore estimated to service 65.5% of all persons visiting WCFB affiliated emergency food providers monthly. Were all persons potentially in need of emergency food relief residing in the quadrant accessing the resources available to them through the auspices of the WCFB and its partner agencies, WCFB partner agencies in Quadrant I would be expected to account for somewhere between 49.36% and 54.16% of all persons served. This being the case, the conclusion drawn is that persons potentially in need of emergency food relief residing in the quadrant have the ability and willingness to use available emergency food resources.

Conclusion: Quadrant III clients are extremely able and willing to utilize available emergency food resources relative to other quadrants.

3. How large is the quadrant’s ‘reservoir’ of emergency food relief, i.e., how much per capita emergency food relief is available to a person living in the quadrant potentially in need of such relief?

Limiting those classified as potentially in need of emergency food relief solely to persons living below the federal poverty level, and only considering resources in origin from the WCFB or its partner agencies, Quadrant III is found to possess an emergency food reservoir totaling 5.0 pounds of food per person, per month. According to this same

criteria, the mean derived from the size of all four quadrant's emergency food reservoirs is 4.01 pounds of food per person, per month. Quadrant III might therefore be classified as possessing a superior emergency food reservoir.

Everything is relative, however, and while entities other than the WCFB and its partner agencies seem to contribute only small amounts of emergency food resources to most of the quadrants, Rachel's table pours a significant amount of emergency food relief into Quadrant III each month. Upon factoring in this contribution, the pounds per person figure for Quadrant III increases to 6.62 pounds per person, and the mean derived from the size of all four quadrant's reservoirs increases to 4.4 pounds of food per person, per month. Thus, Rachel's Table's influence only makes the Quadrant III food reservoir increasingly superior relative to other Quadrants.

Conclusion: Quadrant I possesses a relatively superior emergency food reservoir.

Analysis

Quadrant III, home to the city of Worcester itself, is also the site of the greatest concentration of poverty and near poverty in Worcester County. Indeed, 54% of all persons living below the federal poverty line and 49% of all persons living below 185% of the federal poverty line in Worcester County reside in Quadrant III, although only 45% of the county's total population resides there. No doubt this concentration of poverty and near poverty in a geographic area corresponding to the second smallest of the county's quadrants affords the region's economic and social problems high visibility.

The high visibility of Quadrant III's troubles, however, has transformed it into the favorite son of all those attempting to mitigate any manner of human suffering in the region, including hunger. Indeed, it is the locus point for humanitarian aid in the region, including the emergency food resources of the WCFB, 63% of which are allocated to partner agencies situated there. While Quadrant III is the most urban of Worcester County's quadrants, and the cost of living in urban areas is higher than it is in more rural areas, it is doubtful that this difference warrants the region's consumption of about 11% more of the WCFB's total emergency food relief resources than approximations of the region's comparative need would suggest. The anomaly of Quadrant III's increased consumption is compounded by the fact that it is the sole beneficiary of the 57,660 pounds of emergency food relief that enters the quadrant each month from Rachel's Table.

Therefore, while Quadrant III possesses the highest concentration of need in Worcester County, it is receiving more than it's share of all the resources devoted to mitigating hunger county-wide. Persons residing in the quadrant enjoy the largest reservoir of emergency food relief per capita in the quadrant and, as evidenced by their high usage rates, they are quite willing and able to access these resources in comparison to the other quadrants. While it is not within the scope of this report to declare a quadrant food secure, and it probably isn't by the USDA definition as many of its residents continue to find need for the services of emergency food providers, Quadrant III is

receiving more than its share of available emergency food resources and it would be prudent to devote more attention to the needs of other quadrants.

Quadrant IV

1. Does the proportion of the WCFB's emergency food resources entering the quadrant correspond to the proportion of Worcester County's total population potentially in need of such relief residing in the quadrant?

Quadrant IV is home to 19.35% of all the individuals in Worcester County living below the federal poverty line and 21.61% of all the individuals in Worcester County living below 185% of the federal poverty line. Quadrant III is therefore estimated to contain 20.48% of all the individuals in Worcester County potentially in need of emergency food relief. Each month, WCFB partner agencies located in Quadrant IV receive 7% of all the emergency food resources distributed by the WCFB throughout Worcester County. There is a large difference between the percentage of the WCFB's total resources entering Quadrant IV and the percentage of the county's impoverished population living in Quadrant IV. These statistics indicate that Quadrant IV is potentially being severely under-served in relation to the other quadrants.

Conclusion: Statistics indicate that Quadrant IV is under-served in relation to other quadrants.

2. Are the residents of the quadrant utilizing the emergency food resources provided to them by the WCFB and its partner agencies to their fullest potential?

Quadrant IV is estimated to contain 20.48% of all the individuals in Worcester County potentially in need of emergency food relief. Each month, WCFB partner agencies in Quadrant II service 6% of all the individuals and 8% of all the families that visit any one of the many WCFB affiliated emergency food providers throughout Worcester County. WCFB partner agencies in Quadrant IV are therefore estimated to service 7% of all persons visiting WCFB affiliated emergency food providers monthly. Were all persons potentially in need of emergency food relief residing in the quadrant accessing the resources available to them through the auspices of the WCFB and its partner agencies, WCFB partner agencies in Quadrant IV would be expected to account for somewhere between 19.35% and 21.61% of all persons served. This being the case, the conclusion drawn is that persons potentially in need of emergency food relief residing in the quadrant face significant barriers to accessing the potential emergency food resources in Quadrant IV.

Conclusion: Quadrant IV clients face potentially significant barriers to access emergency resources, relative to other quadrants.

3. How large is the quadrant's 'reservoir' of emergency food relief, i.e., how much per capita emergency food relief is available to a person living in the quadrant potentially in need of such relief?

Limiting those classified as potentially in need of emergency food relief solely to persons living below the federal poverty level, and only considering resources in origin from the WCFB or its partner agencies, Quadrant IV is found to possess an emergency food reservoir totaling 1.5 pounds of food per person, per month. According to the same criteria, the mean derived from the size of all four quadrants' emergency food reservoirs is 4.01 pounds of food per person, per month. Quadrant IV might therefore be classified as possessing an inferior emergency food reservoir.

Again, Rachel's Table pours a significant amount of emergency food relief into Quadrant III each month, increasing the mean derived from the size of all four quadrants' reservoirs to 4.4 pounds of food per person, per month. This further reinforces the shortage of food per person in Quadrant IV relative to other quadrants.

Conclusion: Quadrant IV possesses a relatively inferior emergency food reservoir.

Analysis

Quadrant IV, the second largest and second most populous of the four quadrants in Worcester County, displays the least concentration of poverty. Indeed, 19% of all persons living below the federal poverty line and 22% of all those living below 185% of the federal poverty line in Worcester County reside in Quadrant IV, although it is home to about 26% of the county's total population. Nevertheless the regional poverty rate of a little less than 7% corresponds to the impoverished existence of almost 13,000 souls, or little more than twice the number of people living below the federal poverty line in Quadrant II and a little more than a third of the number of people living in poverty in Quadrant III. These persons, and the nearly 19,000 others who subsist on incomes below 185% of the federal poverty line in Quadrant IV, have access to surprising few emergency food resources. It is as if, due to their situation in relatively prosperous towns, they have been forgotten – or perhaps forsaken.

Each month, Quadrant IV is allocated only 7% of the WCFB's available emergency food resources even though it is calculated to possess a little more than 20% of the potential need for those resources. While the emergency food reservoir of Quadrant III equates to 6.62 lbs of food a month per capita (in poverty), the emergency food reservoir of Quadrant IV equates to a scant 1.47 lbs of food a month per capita (in poverty). It is smaller than Quadrant III's emergency food reservoir by more than a factor of four, and smaller than Quadrant I's emergency food reservoir – itself the second smallest of reservoirs - by nearly a factor of three. Moreover, partner agencies in Quadrant IV account for merely 8% of all clients served by the county-wide of WCFB partner agencies. This indicates persons residing in Quadrant IV are either unwilling or unable to access the resources available to them in proportion to their need.

Unwillingness to use available emergency food resources might arise from their relative scarcity in the region, resulting a devaluation in the costs-benefits analysis of what a trip to a local pantry is worth in relation to the amount of food likely to be received and the time consumed by procuring it. After all, if there is little food available at the local partner agencies, a rational actor might decide traveling to another quadrant’s partner agencies or even working extra hours is a more productive expenditure of their time. Inability to use available emergency food resources might arise from an obliviousness to the issue that the relatively small concentration of poverty in the quadrant might well inspire, and thus an ignorance of what emergency food relief resources exist in the community. After all, if few people suspect the existence of persons potentially in need of emergency food relief in their community, then few people bother to make themselves aware of what emergency food relief resources exist in their community and share/spread knowledge of their existence. Of course, outside of urban areas, the relative stigma of receiving emergency relief must always been considered a possible factor in the underutilization of available resources.

Table 9.1: Emergency Food Reservoir by Quadrant

Quadrant	Emergency Food Reservoir (Solely For Persons Living In Poverty)	Addendum Due To Contributions of Rachel's Table	Emergency Food Reservoir (For All Persons Living Below 185% of POV)	Addendum Due To Contributions of Rachel's Table
I	4.18 Lbs/Person		1.58 Lbs/Person	
II	5.34 Lbs/Person		2.36 Lbs/Person	
III	5.03 Lbs/Person	6.62 Lbs/Person	2.52 Lbs/Person	3.32 Lbs/Person
IV	1.47 Lbs/Person		0.60 Lbs/Person	
County Average:	4.01 Lbs/Person	4.40 Lbs/Person	1.77 Lbs/Person	1.96

Table 9.2: Food Entering Quadrant vs. Eligible Residents

Quadrant	% of All Food From WCFB Entering Quadrant	Estimated % of W.C. Residents Eligible for Emergency Relief	+/- Difference
I	9%	10.2%	-1.2
II	21%	17.5%	+3.5
III	63%	51.8%	+11.2
IV	7%	20.5%	-13.5

Needs Analysis

Table 9.3: Hunger Severity by Quadrant

Quadrant	% Citing Calorie Deficit	% Citing Nutrition Deficit	% Citing Both
I	20%	50%	30%
II	30%	45%	25%
III	23%	58%	19%
IV	0%	79%	19%
Worcester County	21%	55%	24%

Table 9.4: Quadrants Citing Food Supply Issues

Quadrant	% Not Able to Consistently Serve 100% of Clients	% With Consistent Shortage Limiting Amount Distributed Per Client
I	30%	60%
II	35%	63%
III	10%	65%
IV	10%	52%
Worcester County	17%	61%

Table 9.5: % Quadrants Citing Infrastructure and Resource Needs

Quadrant	Cited Storage Space as an Need	Cited Volunteers as a Need	Cited Money as a Need	Cited Vehicle as a Need
I	30%	30%	20%	20%
II	42%	47%	47%	5%
III	41%	27%	39%	35%
IV	38%	38%	19%	33%
Worcester County	40%	34%	34%	26%

Program Analysis

Table 9.6: Federal Program Referral Rates by Quadrant and County

Quadrant	Food Stamp Referral	WIC Referral	WIC FMNP Referral	Free and Reduced Price School Meals Referral	Summer Food Service Referral	CACFP Referral	Meals on Wheels Referral
I	60%	60%	10%	40%	20%	10%	60%
II	85%	65%	10%	50%	25%	15%	30%
III	84%	77%	42%	29%	47%	9%	30%
IV	69%	75%	6%	31%	25%	19%	75%
Worcester County	80%	72%	24%	35%	36%	13%	40%

Food Stamps

While there are no accurate statistics for food stamp participation rates at any level other than the state level, food stamp participation is a problem on both the national and Massachusetts state level. The food stamp application process traditionally involves traveling to the nearest DTA office and meeting with a caseworker. Because of this, food

stamp applicants must take time out of their day and travel out of town to visit the DTA office. Finding a means of travel is often an issue, as is taking time off of work to travel.

80% of the Worcester County agencies interviewed said that they refer their clients to the food stamp program. While this is a majority, there is no reason why this number should not be 100%. Food stamps are one of the most widely known programs and have a high potential for success. Because food stamps are an entitlement program, every eligible person should be participating. This would help tremendously to combat hunger and ease the stress off the emergency food system.

Referral numbers appear to be lower in Quadrants I and IV. This is not surprising because these are both rural areas with few DTA offices. Quadrant I has no DTA offices in its premises, while Quadrant IV has two. This can create problems for potential applicants, especially in rural areas with no means of public transportation.

There are a number of vague conditions that Massachusetts has recently determined can allow caseworkers to “waive the face to face interview” and thus not force applicants to travel to the DTA. These include “elderly, disabled, illness, transportation difficulties (eg: not enough money for bus/ train fare, no transportation, long distance to DTA office), work hours that make it difficult to get to the DTA office, care of household member, rural area, or severe weather that lasts a long time.” In these instances, applicants must fill out a face-to-face interview waiver, and conduct a phone interview.

Many organizations have also established food stamp pre-screening tools which determine how much benefit a potential applicant can receive from food stamps. This allows he or she to calculate their total food stamp allowance before they decide whether or not to go through the trouble of the full application and the interview process.

While there are a number of provisions to overcome the hindrances of traveling to DTA offices in other towns, these do not completely replace the convenience of having a DTA office and a individualized caseworker in one’s own neighborhood. Local DTA offices have the potential to spread food stamp outreach. Caseworkers have the potential to develop one-on-one relationships with food stamp participants and to ease the difficulty of the application process, which promotes full utilization of the food stamp program.

Thus, it would be helpful for the state of Massachusetts to establish more DTA offices in Worcester County, particularly in Quadrants I and IV. In Quadrant I, it would help to establish offices in towns such as Gardner, Winchendon, or Athol. While this would cost the state some money, it would lead to more personal relationships between food stamp participants and caseworkers and increase participation by facilitating ease of use and increased outreach to the local area.

Supplemental Program for Women, Infants, and Children

Like the Food Stamps program, there is no reason why the referral rate for WIC should not be 100%. There are 15 WIC offices around the county offering a number of health and nutrition related services to eligible clients. WIC offices should spread outreach for this program to areas with low participation.

WIC Farmers Market Nutrition Program

The Special Supplemental Food Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) Farmer's Market Nutrition Program (FMNP), a promising and widely praised component of the USDA's nutritional services program, has shown consistently low participation in Central Massachusetts. Stacks of returned FMNP checks continue to grow in WIC offices around Worcester County as taxpayer money is squandered, additional sales opportunities to local farmers are lost, and potential nutritional benefits to low income women and children remain unfulfilled. While the low levels of participation do not necessarily imply that the program has failed, these figures are indicative of various flaws in the state's implementation of the FMNP that need to be addressed.

The Farmer's Market Coupon Program began in Massachusetts in 1986. After a successful three year trial run among ten states, Congress enacted the WIC Farmer's Market Nutrition Act in 1992. The USDA provides current funding for the program with a 30% match by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. The WIC FMNP is administered by the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources (MDAR) in the Bureau of Markets. WIC recipients automatically receive a coupon of \$10-\$20 for fresh produce at participating farmer's markets. These coupons are not optional to WIC recipients and cannot be redeemed anywhere other than participating farm stands.

While there are fifteen WIC offices throughout the county, there are seven farmer's market sites, five of which are consolidated in the urban areas of Worcester and Fitchburg. In Fitchburg, for example, there is one farmer's market that serves 29 surrounding towns. These markets only operate on Tuesday and Friday mornings. The potential pitfalls of this scenario are evident: WIC participants in the more distant rural towns must travel long distances in order to use their FMNP coupons. Working women must somehow take time off from their jobs in order to attend the markets during their limited hours of operation.. In addition to the inconvenience, rural coupon holders must have access to some form of transportation, which is often not available.

Lack of both quality and diversity of produce, while more anecdotal problems compared to the consolidation of farmer's markets in specific areas, remains an equally important cause of low FMNP participation rates. Numerous WIC directors from around the county have reported that clients are complaining about both the lack of selection at WIC farm stands and the low quality of the produce. It seems that many of those WIC recipients who make the trek to use their FMNP coupons are not finding anything suitable to their needs.

Massachusetts officials must address the inefficiencies in the WIC FMNP in Central Massachusetts. Expansion of participating farmer's markets into the county's rural towns is a crucial first step. This could be achieved by recruiting new farmer's markets or creating incentives for existing farmer's markets to participate in the WIC program. Coupon redemption must be made easier for farmers as an incentive for participation. One practice that could be adopted is for the state to certify individual farmers rather than entire markets. This would enable farmers to accept coupons in any established farmer's market (including non-WIC certified markets), thus expanding the number of markets accepting coupons, as well as diversifying the selection of produce by allowing farmers to participate in more than one market. A system of public transportation could be established to transport rural residents to WIC markets and back home. Finally, if limited funding prevents any of these options, the WIC FMNP coupons should be made optional to WIC participants and the unclaimed \$10-\$20 coupons should go toward resources that could provide more benefit to the recipient. Similarly, the state could also limit coupon distribution to those areas with participating markets, although this practice could leave out those willing to drive the distance for fresh produce.

Hopefully, with insight among local WIC directors and additional political support, these problems can be resolved and access increased to those eligible for the WIC FMNP, a program with high potential benefits to all those involved.

Free & Reduced Price School Breakfast & Lunch

Although only some of the WCFB's partner agencies make an effort to educate their clients about these two programs, the county's school send information about these programs to every parent with school aged kids regardless of whether or not their family income would warrant participation in these programs. They are among the most well known federal food assistance programs in the county.

Child & Adult Food Care Program:

One of Worcester County's most underutilized and least understood federal food assistance programs, a number of agencies which might qualify for meal reimbursements under its provisions have no knowledge of it's existence or have failed to apply. Knowledge of this program, and of how to complete its application process, should be disseminated to the WCFB's partner agencies.

Community Programs

Community programs such as food cooperatives (Serve New England) and community gardens have the potential to provide a number of other food resources to help take the strain off of the emergency food system. These programs are not being utilized to their full potential in Worcester County. Only 26% of agencies referred their clients to the Serve New England food cooperative, and 15% of agencies in Worcester County referred their clients to a local community garden. At present, there are 18 Serve

sites in Worcester County, consolidated primarily in Quadrant III. The only significant community garden mentioned throughout our survey was the UGROW (Urban Garden Resources of Worcester) located in the city of Worcester.

One local project that has exhibited a tremendous degree of success in growing fresh produce for the hungry citizens of Worcester County is the Community Harvest Project, formerly known as Food For The Needy, Inc. The Community Harvest Project purchases farm land to plant, cultivate, and harvest fresh vegetables to feed the community. All of this is done through volunteer service by members of the local region. The program operates on three farm locations in Hopkinton, Holliston, and Grafton. The Brigham Hill Community Farm in Grafton is run by Mr. Kenneth Crater, ex-President of the WCFB Board of Directors, and his wife Peg Ferraro. This organization directly serves the Worcester County Food Bank and delivered over 35,000 pounds of fresh vegetables to the Food Bank in 2002. This produce is given to the Worcester County Food Bank, and is then distributed to agencies all over the county.

Suggestions

During the course of the survey, a number of the WCFB's partner agencies offered suggestion as to programs and initiatives that the food bank should pursue. Some of the more intriguing ones are listed below:

- ❖ Those who are poor and in need are often stigmatized, so people are reluctant to seek out the help that is available. Fund commercials and/or support initiatives that will help convince people seeking out help is alright.
- ❖ Support programs/initiatives that help to make the job of the WCFB and it's partner agencies easier. For example, job training programs. Help agencies comprehend and complete the application process for enrollment in some of the federal/state programs for which they are eligible. For example the Summer Food Service Program application is quite complicated, which deters agencies from applying.
- ❖ Tape a weekly or monthly cooking show that agencies can play on a television during their hours of distribution. The tape could highlight recipes for and the nutritional value of whatever foods the WCFB has been able to gain significant stores of.
- ❖ Partner with – or at least refer people to – the Worcester Area Mission Society, which works to improve housing opportunities and quality for low income people.
- ❖ Expand the Community Kitchen project to the point where partner agencies can host similar programs themselves.
- ❖ Form closer relationships with business people and learn from them how to turn the Community Kitchen or some other program into something profitable, something that will help raise money.
- ❖ Few pantries are open after 5 P.M. People who work are often unable to leave their jobs during the middle of the day. Promote the idea that pantries must be open at least sometimes during the evening.

- ❖ WCFB should be open more Saturdays and/or stay open into the evening. It's difficult for all volunteer organizations to get people to shop at the WCFB during work hours.
- ❖ Many people in need are unaware of the resources available to them. Do more to educate the populace about what's out there.
- ❖ It is difficult to find exactly what's needed when shopping at the WCFB. Sort the food into narrower categories so agencies can pick up what they want with ease.
- ❖ Establish and/or improve delivery services.
- ❖ Promote more cooperation between the WCFB's partner agencies.
- ❖ Ensure that there's more client input in the decision making process, thus empowering the needy to help themselves.
- ❖ Establish instruments for accurate Data collection and promote the standardization of food distribution practice across the partner agencies.
- ❖ Establish and keep up to date listings of all the WCFB's partner agencies and their locations for the purpose of referrals.
- ❖ Computerize the process of acquiring food at the WCFB. Integrate on-line ordering and offer a delivery service for these orders.
- ❖ Ensure that the website is up to date.
- ❖ Get the second conveyor belt in the warehouse operational so purchasing doesn't take as long.
- ❖ Canned foods also come in a size known as #2, which is a very large can as opposed to the small cans canned food usually comes in. Try to acquire some canned food in the #2 size. Opening a lot of little cans of something in order to prepare a large meal is quite tedious
- ❖ Help partner agencies spend their money by pointing them towards retailers who'd be willing to sell at cost, or establish a section in the WCFB where food is sold at cost. Establish a grant program for the purchase of refrigeration units.
- ❖ Encourage an increase in the number of community service hours students must complete in order to graduate.
- ❖ Get shoppers in supermarkets to purchase food there specifically for the WCFB while their shopping for their own groceries.
- ❖ Help agencies recruit volunteers, and have a campaign to promote knowledge about the need for volunteers.
- ❖ Establish a Fair Start program for Spanish speakers.

Appendix

Profile of Food Security Survey.....ii

Index of Federal Food Assistance Programs.....xii

**Profile of Food Security
Assets and Needs for Worcester County**

Food Security Survey

**Prepared by
Hunger Fellows, Congressional Hunger Center**

**Wick Ruehling
Byron Stewart**

**Worcester County Food Bank
Fall 2003**

WCFB 2003 Food Security Survey

Agency Name:

Agency Address:

Date of Visit:

Contact Name:

Phone Number:

Interviewer:

WCFB 2003 Food Security Survey

1. Definition of Need

1.1. What is your program's mission in terms of food distribution in your community?
What do you consider your program's role to be in terms of food distribution and alleviating hunger in your community?

1.2. How would you define hunger and need in your community?

1.2.1. Based on your definitions, what is the severity of hunger and level of need in your community? Is there a calorie deficit and/or a nutrition deficit?

1.2.2. What are the demographics/characteristics of your clients/food recipients? Does any group seem to be facing particular difficulty?

1.2.3. Are there any types of food your clients/food recipients particularly appreciate or dislike?

1.2.4. Are you able to serve 100% of the people who are in need and seek food assistance at your program? If not, what factors contribute to your not being able to serve them?

1.2.4.1. Shortage of food supply or types of food?

1.2.4.2. Internal factors, such as lack of refrigeration or storage space?

1.2.4.3. External factors, such as poor public transportation?

1.2.4.4. Lack of resources, such as volunteers, money, vehicle, etc.?

1.3. How aware is your community of your existence and the services you provide?

1.4. Does your program have a defined service area?

2. Identification of Assets

(Total WCFB pounds: _____)

2.1. Does all the food you distribute come from the WCFB?

2.1.1 *If not*, how else or from where do you acquire food? (e.g.: food drives, private donations, Rachel's Table, church fund drives, etc.)

2.1.2 *If not*, what fraction of the food you distribute comes from the WCFB?

2.1.3. Do you collaborate with other food pantries or feeding programs to receive or distribute food?

2.2. How much food do you distribute per month? How many meals do you think that is? Approximate pounds?

2.3. Do you distribute household products?

2.4. What do you give someone when they come in for assistance? (Ask to identify unit, e.g.: bag, box, etc. Examine and describe unit here.)

2.5. How many people do you serve per month?

2.6. What qualifies a client to receive assistance? What sort of screening tool/intake do you use to determine eligibility? (Request copy of intake/sign-in sheet.)

2.7. How often can someone come in for assistance?

2.7.1. Why do you have this specific policy?

2.8. What are your hours of distribution?

2.9. What other services besides food assistance do you provide?

3. Community Assets: Federal Programs

<u>Name of the Federal Program</u>	1 Referral Yes/No?	2 On Site Materials Yes/No?	3 Client Use Yes/No?	Comments
Food Stamps Program				
WIC Program				
WIC Farmer's Mkt Nutrition Program				
National School Lunch Program				
School Breakfast Program				
Summer Food Service Program				
Child and Adult Care Program				
Nutrition Services Program				
Other (TANF, etc.)				

4. Community Assets: Local Programs

<u>Name of the Local Program</u>	1 Referral Yes/No?	2 On Site Materials Yes/No?	3 Client Use Yes/No?	Comments
Farmer's Market				
Community Gardens				
Assets Development Program				
Food Buying Cooperatives				
Community Supported Agriculture Programs				
Farm to School Initiatives				
Soup Kitchens				
Other				

5. Long-Term Questions/ Solutions

5.1. (WCFB is working toward a hunger free community. Explain.)

How would you define hunger free community?

5.2. What changes would you suggest the Food Bank make in order to be more supportive of your goals as a partner agency?

5.2.1. Should the WCFB distribute more food? Please explain.

5.2.2. Should the WCFB have branch/subsidiary food banks in other areas of Worcester County?

5.2.3. Should the WCFB recruit new partner agencies?

5.2.4. Should the WCFB expand its own in-house resources? (warehouse, staff, administration, etc.) For what purposes?

5.2.5 What demographic specific programs should the WCFB consider adding?
(Define demographic and give examples.)

5.2.6. Are there any additional support services you would request of the WCFB?

5.3. What other suggestions do you have for working towards a hunger-free community?

6.0. Is there anything else you'd like to add? Questions, comments, suggestions?

7.0. Would you be interested in participating in a local or regional network of hunger relief providers?

Index of Federal Food Assistance Programs

Food Stamp Program¹

1. What is the Food Stamp Program for?

The Food Stamp Program helped put food on the table for some 8.2 million households and 19.1 million individuals each day in Fiscal Year 2002. It provides low-income households with coupons or electronic benefits they can use like cash at most grocery stores to ensure that they have access to a healthy diet. The Food Stamp Program is the cornerstone of the Federal food assistance programs, and provides crucial support to needy households and to those making the transition from welfare to work. It provided an average of \$1.52 billion a month in benefits in Fiscal Year 2002.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture administers the Food Stamp Program at the Federal level through its Food and Nutrition Service (FNS). State agencies administer the program at State and local levels, including determination of eligibility and allotments, and distribution of benefits.

2. Who is the Food Stamp Program for?

Households must meet eligibility requirements and provide information – and verification -- about their household circumstances. U.S. citizens and some aliens who are admitted for permanent residency may qualify. The welfare reform act of 1996 ended eligibility for many legal immigrants, though Congress later restored benefits to many children and elderly immigrants, as well as some specific groups. The welfare reform act also placed time limits on benefits for unemployed, able-bodied, childless adults.

Local food stamp offices can provide information about eligibility, and USDA operates a toll-free number (800-221-5689) for people to receive information about the Food Stamp Program.

To participate in the Food Stamp Program:

Households may have no more than \$2,000 in countable resources, such as a bank account (\$3,000 if at least one person in the household is age 60 or older, or is disabled). Certain resources are not counted, such as a home and lot. Special rules are used to determine the resource value of vehicles owned by household members.

The gross monthly income of most households must be 130 percent or less of the Federal poverty guidelines (\$1,654 per month for a family of three in most places, effective Oct. 1, 2003 through Sept. 30, 2004). Gross income includes all cash payments to the household, with a few exceptions specified in the law or the program regulations.

Net monthly income must be 100 percent or less of Federal poverty guidelines (\$1,272 per month for a household of three in most places, effective Oct. 1, 2003 through Sept. 30, 2004). Net income is figured by adding all of a household's gross income, and then taking a number of approved deductions for child care, some shelter costs and other expenses. Households with an elderly or disabled member are subject only to the net income test.

Most able-bodied adult applicants must meet certain work requirements.

All household members must provide a Social Security number or apply for one.

¹ United States, Food & Nutrition Service, Frequent Asked Questions: Food Stamp Program (Washington: U.S. Department of Agriculture, 2004) <<http://www.fns.usda.gov/fsp>>

Federal poverty guidelines are established by the Office of Management and Budget, and are updated annually by the Department of Health and Human Services.

3. How is each household's food stamp allotment determined?

Eligible households are issued a monthly allotment of food stamps based on the Thrifty Food Plan, a low-cost model diet plan. The TFP is based on National Academy of Sciences' Recommended Dietary Allowances, and on food choices of low-income households.

An individual household's food stamp allotment is equal to the maximum allotment for that household's size, less 30 percent of the household's net income. Households with no countable income receive the maximum allotment (\$371 per month in Fiscal Year 2004 for a household of three people). Allotment levels are higher for Alaska, Hawaii, Guam, and the Virgin Islands, reflecting higher food prices in those areas.

4. What is the average benefit from the Food Stamp Program?

The average monthly benefit was about \$80 per person and almost \$186 per household in FY 2002. See the chart below for a listing of maximum benefits available to households of various sizes.

5. What foods are eligible for purchase with food stamps?

Households **CAN** use food stamp benefits to buy:

- Foods for the household to eat, such as:
 - breads and cereals
 - fruits and vegetables
 - meats, fish and poultry
 - dairy products
 - seeds and plants which produce food for the household to eat.

Households **CANNOT** use food stamp benefits to buy:

- Beer, wine, liquor, cigarettes or tobacco
- Any nonfood items, such as:
 - pet foods
 - soaps, paper products
 - household supplies
 - vitamins and medicines
 - food that will be eaten in the store
 - hot foods

In some areas, restaurants can be authorized to accept food stamp benefits from qualified homeless, elderly, or disabled people in exchange for low-cost meals. Food stamp benefits cannot be exchanged for cash.

6. What measures are taken to prevent food stamp fraud?

USDA is committed to integrity in all of its nutrition assistance programs, and has put special emphasis on the Food Stamp Program because of its size and importance. However, in a program as large as the Food Stamp Program, it may be inevitable that some people will try to cheat the system.

The Department has already taken a number of steps to make it easier to catch and punish people who misuse food stamp benefits. The welfare reform act of 1996 included several provisions, originally proposed by USDA, to more closely scrutinize food retailers who apply for food stamp authorization, and to more closely monitor retailers once they are participating in the program. Retailers who violate program rules can face heavy fines, removal from the program, or jail. Individual food stamp recipients who sell their benefits can also be removed from the program.

One of the most promising developments in the fight against food stamp fraud has been the increasing use of electronic benefit transfer--EBT--to issue food stamp benefits. EBT uses a plastic card similar to a bank debit card to transfer funds from a food stamp benefits account to a retailer's account. With an EBT card, food stamp customers pay for groceries without any paper coupons changing hands. EBT eliminates paper food stamps and creates an electronic record for each transaction that makes fraud easier to detect.

Most States have now adopted EBT for food stamp issuance, and in some cases for other programs such as USDA's Special Supplemental Food Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC), and the Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) program, the Federal block-grant program operated by the Department of Health and Human Services to provide cash assistance to needy families.

As of October 2003, 48 States, the District of Columbia, Guam and Puerto Rico have on-line food stamp EBT systems. Ohio and Wyoming have off-line EBT systems that use microprocessor chip cards. Forty-nine States, the District, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands have completed state, city, and island-wide rollout. California is working to extend its EBT system state-wide. Several states have formed consortiums for joint EBT projects. (The welfare reform act of 1996 required all States to convert to EBT issuance for their food stamp programs by October 2002.)

7. What keeps unqualified people from getting food stamps?

As part of the commitment to program integrity, USDA works closely with the States to ensure that they issue their benefits correctly. State workers carefully evaluate each application to determine eligibility and the appropriate level of benefits. USDA monitors the accuracy of eligibility and benefit determinations. States that fail to meet standards for issuing their food stamp benefits correctly can be sanctioned by USDA, and those that exceed the standard for payment accuracy can be eligible for additional funding support. People who receive food stamp benefits in error must repay any benefits for which they did not qualify.

8. When did the program begin?

The Food Stamp Program traces its earliest origins back to the Food Stamp Plan, which began in 1939 to help needy families in the Depression era. The modern program began as a pilot project in 1961 and was authorized as a permanent program in 1964. Expansion of the program occurred most dramatically after 1974, when Congress required all States to offer food stamps to low-income households. The Food Stamp Act of 1977 made significant changes in program

regulations, tightening eligibility requirements and administration, and removing the requirement that food stamps be purchased by participants.

Program growth has continued since then, reaching an all-time high of almost 28 million in March of 1994 before declining to about 17.2 million in the latter half of 2000. Participation has since grown to an average of 19.1 million persons in 2002. Participation generally peaks in periods of high unemployment, inflation and recession.

9. What are some characteristics of food stamp households?

Based on a study of data gathered in Fiscal Year 2001:

- 51.1 percent of all participants are children (18 or younger), and 67 percent of them live in single-parent households
- 53.6 percent of food stamp households include children
- 9.6 percent of all participants are elderly (age 60 or over)
- 79.6 percent of all benefits go to households with children, 17.2 percent go to households with disabled persons and 7.2 percent go to households with elderly persons
- 36 percent of households with children were headed by a single parent, the overwhelming majority of whom were women. The average household size is 2.3 persons
- The average gross monthly income per food stamp household is \$624
- 60 percent of participants are female
- 41 percent of participants are white; 35.2 percent are African-American, non-Hispanic; 18.3 percent are Hispanic; the rest are Asian, Native American, or another race or ethnicity.

10. Don't some territories, such as Puerto Rico, use a different version of the Food Stamp Program?

In Puerto Rico, the Food Stamp Program was replaced in 1982 by a block grant program. The Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas Islands and American Samoa in the Pacific also operate under block grants. The territories now provide cash or coupons to participants, rather than food stamps or food distribution. The grant can also be used for administrative expenses related to food production and distribution.

For FY 2002, Congress appropriated \$1.351 billion for Puerto Rico and \$12.4 million to the Pacific Islands. In FY 2003, Congress appropriated \$1.395 billion for Puerto Rico and \$12.7 million for the Pacific Islands. (These amounts are included in the total food stamp budget numbers given here.)

11. How many people get food stamps, and at what cost?

The Food Stamp Program served an average of 17.2 million people each month during Fiscal Year 2002, and cost \$20.7 billion.

By comparison:

- **In 2000**, it served 17.2 million people a month and cost \$17.1 billion.
- **In 1995**, it served 26.6 million people a month, and cost \$24.6 billion.
- **In 1990**, it served 20.1 million people and cost \$15.5 billion.
- **In 1985**, it served 19.9 million people and cost \$11.7 billion.
- **In 1980**, it served 21.1 million people and cost \$9.2 billion.
- **In 1975**, it served 17.1 million people and cost \$4.6 billion.
- **In 1970**, it served 4.3 million people and cost \$577 million.

The program's all-time high participation was 27.97 million people in March of 1994.

The following chart lists the current gross and net income eligibility standards for the continental United States, Guam and the Virgin Islands, effective Oct. 1, 2003 to Sept. 30, 2004. Eligibility levels are slightly higher for Alaska and Hawaii.

Household size	Gross monthly income (130 percent of poverty)	Net monthly income (100 percent of poverty)
1	973	749
2	1,313	1,010
3	1,654	1,272
4	1,994	1,534
5	2,334	1,795
6	2,674	2,057
7	3,014	2,319
8	3,354	2,580
Each additional member	+341	+262

The current maximum allotment levels for the continental United States, in effect from Oct. 1, 2003 to Sept. 30, 2004 are:

Household size	Maximum allotment level
1	\$141
2	259
3	371
4	471
5	560
6	672
7	743
8	849
Each additional member	+106

National School Lunch Program²

1. What is the National School Lunch Program?

The National School Lunch Program is a federally assisted meal program operating in more than 99,800 public and non-profit private schools and residential child care institutions. It

² United States, Food & Nutrition Service, Frequent Asked Questions: National School Lunch Program (Washington: U.S. Department of Agriculture, 2004) <<http://www.fns.usda.gov/end/lunch>>

provides nutritionally balanced, low-cost or free lunches to more than 26 million children each school day. In 1998, Congress expanded the National School Lunch Program to include reimbursement for snacks served to children in after-school educational and enrichment programs to include children through 18 years of age.

The Food and Nutrition Service administers the program at the Federal level. At the State level, the National School Lunch Program is usually administered by State education agencies, which operate the program through agreements with school food authorities.

2. How Does the National School Lunch Program Work?

Generally, public or nonprofit private schools of high school grade or under and public or nonprofit private residential child care institutions may participate in the school lunch program. School districts and independent schools that choose to take part in the lunch program get cash subsidies and donated commodities from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) for each meal they serve. In return, they must serve lunches that meet Federal requirements, and they must offer free or reduced price lunches to eligible children. School food authorities can also be reimbursed for snacks served to children through age 18 in after-school educational or enrichment programs.

3. What are the nutritional requirements for school lunches?

School lunches must meet the applicable recommendations of the Dietary Guidelines for Americans, which recommend that no more than 30 percent of an individual's calories come from fat, and less than 10 percent from saturated fat. Regulations also establish a standard for school lunches to provide one-third of the Recommended Dietary Allowances of protein, Vitamin A, Vitamin C, iron, calcium, and calories.

School lunches must meet Federal nutrition requirements, but decisions about what specific foods to serve and how they are prepared are made by local school food authorities.

4. How do children qualify for free and reduced-price lunches?

Any child at a participating school may purchase a meal through the National School Lunch Program. Children from families with incomes at or below 130 percent of the poverty level are eligible for free meals. Those with incomes between 130 percent and 185 percent of the poverty level are eligible for reduced-price meals, for which students can be charged no more than 40 cents. (For the period July 1, 2003, through June 30, 2004, 130 percent of the poverty level is \$23,920 for a family of four; 185 percent is \$34,040.)

Children from families with incomes over 185 percent of poverty pay full price, though their meals are still subsidized to some extent. Local school food authorities set their own prices for full-price (paid) meals, but must operate their meal services as non-profit programs.

After-school snacks are provided to children on the same income eligibility basis as school meals. However, programs that operate in areas where at least 50 percent of students are eligible for free or reduced-price meals serve all snacks free.

5. How much reimbursement do schools get?

Most of the support USDA provides to schools in the National School Lunch Program comes in the form of a cash reimbursement for each meal served. The current (July 1, 2003 through June 30, 2004) basic cash reimbursement rates are:

Free lunches:	\$2.19	Free snacks:	\$0.60
Reduced-price lunches:	\$1.79	Reduced-price snacks:	\$0.30
Paid lunches:	\$0.21	Paid snacks:	\$0.05

Higher reimbursement rates are in effect for Alaska and Hawaii, and for some schools with high percentages of low-income children.

6. What other support do schools get from USDA?

In addition to cash reimbursements, schools are entitled by law to receive commodity foods, called "entitlement" foods, at a value of 15.75 cents for each meal served. Schools can also get "bonus" commodities as they are available from surplus agricultural stocks.

Through Team Nutrition USDA provides schools with technical training and assistance to help school food service staffs prepare healthful meals, and with nutrition education to help children understand the link between diet and health.

7. What types of foods do schools get from USDA?

States select entitlement foods for their schools from a list of various foods purchased by USDA and offered through the school lunch program. Bonus foods are offered only as they become available through agricultural surplus. The variety of both entitlement and bonus commodities schools can get from USDA depends on quantities available and market prices.

A very successful project between USDA and the Department of Defense (DoD) has helped provide schools with fresh produce purchased through DoD. USDA has also worked with schools to help promote connections with local small farmers who may be able to provide fresh produce.

8. How many children have been served over the years?

The National School Lunch Act in 1946 created the modern school lunch program, though USDA had provided funds and food to schools for many years prior to that. About 7.1 million children were participating in the National School Lunch Program by the end of its first year, 1946-47. By 1970, 22 million children were participating, and by 1980 the figure was nearly 27 million. In 1990, an average of 24 million children ate school lunch every day. In Fiscal Year 2001, more than 25.4 million children each day got their lunch through the National School Lunch Program. Since the modern program began, more than 187 billion lunches have been served.

9. How much does the program cost?

The National School Lunch Program cost 6.4 billion in FY 2001. By comparison, the lunch program's total cost in 1947 was \$70 million; in 1950, \$119.7 million; 1960, \$225.8 million; 1970, \$565.5 million; 1975, \$1.7 billion; 1980, \$3.2 billion; 1985, \$3.4 billion; and 1990, \$3.7 billion.

School Breakfast Program³

1. What is the School Breakfast Program?

The School Breakfast Program (SBP) is a federally assisted meal program operating in public and nonprofit private schools and residential child care institutions. It began as a pilot project in 1966, and was made permanent in 1975.

The School Breakfast Program is administered at the Federal level by the Food and Nutrition Service. At the State level, the program is usually administered by State education agencies, which operate the program through agreements with local school food authorities in more than 78,000 schools and institutions.

2. How does the School Breakfast Program work?

The School Breakfast Program operates in the same manner as the National School Lunch Program. Generally, public or nonprofit private schools of high school grade or under and public or nonprofit private residential child care institutions may participate in the School Breakfast Program. School districts and independent schools that choose to take part in the breakfast program receive cash subsidies from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) for each meal they serve. In return, they must serve breakfasts that meet Federal requirements, and they must offer free or reduced price breakfasts to eligible children.

3. What are the nutritional requirements for school breakfasts?

School breakfasts must meet the applicable recommendations of the Dietary Guidelines for Americans which recommend that no more than 30 percent of an individual's calories come from fat, and less than 10 percent from saturated fat. In addition, breakfasts must provide one-fourth of the Recommended Dietary Allowance for protein, calcium, iron, Vitamin A, Vitamin C and calories. The decisions about what specific food to serve and how they are prepared are made by local school food authorities.

4. How do children qualify for free and reduced price breakfasts?

Any child at a participating school may purchase a meal through the School Breakfast Program. Children from families with incomes at or below 130 percent of the Federal poverty level are eligible for free meals. Those with incomes between 130 percent and 185 percent of the poverty level are eligible for reduced-price meals. (For the period July 1, 2003, through June 30, 2004, 130 percent of the poverty level is \$23,920 for a family of four; 185 percent is \$34,040.) Children from families over 185 percent of poverty pay full price, though their meals are still subsidized to some extent.

5. How much reimbursement do schools get?

Most of the support USDA provides to schools in the School Breakfast Program comes in the form of a cash reimbursement for each breakfast served. The current (July 1, 2003 through June 30, 2004) basic cash reimbursement rates are:

³ United States, Food & Nutrition Service, Frequent Asked Questions: School Breakfast Program (Washington: U.S. Department of Agriculture, 2004) <<http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/breakfast>>

Free breakfasts	\$1.20
Reduced-price breakfasts	\$0.90
Paid breakfasts	\$0.22

Schools may qualify for higher "severe need" reimbursements if a specified percentage of their lunches are served free or at a reduced price. Severe need payments are up to 23 cents higher than the normal reimbursements for free and reduced-price breakfasts. About 65 percent of the breakfasts served in the School Breakfast Program receive severe need payments.

Higher reimbursement rates are in effect for Alaska and Hawaii.

Schools may charge no more than 30 cents for a reduced-price breakfast. Schools set their own prices for breakfasts served to students who pay the full meal price (paid), though they must operate their meal services as non-profit programs.

6. What other support do schools get from USDA?

Through Team Nutrition, USDA provides schools with technical training and assistance to help school food service staffs prepare healthy meals, and with nutrition education to help children understand the link between diet and health.

7. How many children have been served over the years?

In Fiscal Year 2001, an average of 7.8 million children participated every day. That number grew to 8.2 million in Fiscal Year 2002. Of those, 6.7 million received their meals free or at a reduced-price.

Participation has slowly but steadily grown over the years: 1970: 0.5 million children; 1975: 1.8 million children; 1980: 3.6 million children; 1985: 3.4 million children; 1990: 4.1 million children; 1995: 6.3 million children.

Unlike the NSLP, the great majority (84% FY 2000) of children enrolled in the program receive free or reduced priced meals. More than half of the children in the United States attend schools that offer the SBP.

8. How much does the program cost?

For Fiscal Year 2003, Congress appropriated \$1.68 billion for the School Breakfast Program, up from \$1.54 billion in Fiscal Year 2002.

The cost in previous years: 1970: cost of \$ 10.8 million; 1975: cost of \$ 86.1 million; 1980: cost of \$287.8 million; 1985: cost of \$379.3 million; 1990: cost of \$ 596.2 million; 1995: cost of \$1.05 billion.

Child and Adult Care Food Program⁴

⁴ United States, Food & Nutrition Service, Frequent Asked Questions: Child & Adult Care Food Program (Washington: U.S. Department of Agriculture, 2004) <<http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/care>>

The Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), a Federal program that provides healthy meals and snacks to children and adults receiving day care. It plays a vital role in improving the quality of day care and making it more affordable for many low-income families.

CACFP reimburses participating centers and day care homes for their meal costs. It is administered at the Federal level by the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS), an agency of the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The State education or health department administers CACFP, in most States. Independent centers and sponsoring organizations enter into agreements with their State agencies to operate the program.

2. What types of facilities provide CACFP benefits?

Child Care Centers: Public or private nonprofit child care centers, Head Start programs, and some for-profit centers which are licensed or approved to provide day care may serve meals and snacks to infants and children through CACFP.

Family Day Care Homes: CACFP provides reimbursement for meals and snacks served to small groups of children receiving nonresidential day care in licensed or approved private homes. A family or group day care home must sign an agreement with a sponsoring organization to participate in CACFP. The sponsoring organization organizes training, conducts monitoring, and helps with planning menus and filling out reimbursement forms.

After-school Care Programs: Community-based programs that offer enrichment activities for at-risk children and teenagers, after the regular school day ends, can provide free snacks through CACFP. Reimbursable suppers are also available to children in eligible after-school care programs in seven States--Delaware, Illinois, Michigan, Missouri, New York, Oregon, and Pennsylvania.

Homeless Shelters: Emergency shelters which provide residential and food services to homeless families may participate in CACFP. Unlike most other CACFP facilities, a shelter does not have to be licensed to provide day care.

Adult Day Care Centers: Public, private nonprofit, and some for-profit adult day care facilities which provide structured, comprehensive services to functionally impaired, nonresident adults may participate in CACFP.

3. Who gets CACFP meals and snacks?

Children age 12 and younger are eligible to receive up to two meals and one snack, each day, at a day care home or center, through CACFP. Children who reside in homeless shelters may receive up to three reimbursable meals each day. Migrant children age 15 and younger, and persons with disabilities, regardless of their age, are also eligible for CACFP. Afterschool care snacks are available to children through age 18. Adult participants must be functionally impaired or age 60 or older, and enrolled in an adult care center where they may receive up to two meals and one snack, each day, through CACFP.

4. How much reimbursement does the Federal government provide?

Most centers include meals as part of their fees. Centers receive payments based on the type of meal served and the child or adult's eligibility for free, reduced-price, or paid meals, while shelters and after-school care programs are reimbursed at the free rate. As of July 1, 2003, centers in most States (payments are higher in Alaska and Hawaii) receive an average of 15.75 cents in commodities (or cash in lieu of commodities) for each lunch or supper they serve, in addition to these rates (in U.S. dollars):

Meal Type	Free	Reduced-price	Paid
Breakfast	1.20	0.90	0.22
Lunch or Supper	2.19	1.79	0.21
Snack	0.60	0.30	0.05

Day care homes cannot charge separate fees for meals. Higher payments (tier I) are paid to homes in low-income areas and to low-income providers. Meals and snacks served to children who are eligible for free and reduced-price school meals also receive higher rates of reimbursement. As of July 1, 2003, tier I and tier II rates (in U.S. dollars) in most States are:

Meal Type	Tier I	Tier II
Breakfast	0.99	0.37
Lunch or Supper	1.83	1.10
Snack	0.54	0.15

Sponsoring organizations also receive payments for the cost of administering day care homes. In most States, the monthly administrative payment rate (in U.S. dollars) for each day care home, as of July 1, 2003, is:

Number of Homes	Rate
1 - 50	86
51 - 200	65
201 - 1,000	51
Each One Over 1,000	45

5. How much does CACFP cost, and how many people does it serve?

In Fiscal Year 2002, USDA reimbursed \$1.85 billion to institutions participating in CACFP. In September 2002, CACFP provided meals to 2.9 million children and 86,000 adults. Compare CACFP today with the program in:

- 1995:** 2.3 million children and 44,000 adults participated at a cost of \$1.5 billion.
- 1990:** 1.5 million children and 18,000 adults participated at a cost of \$812.9 million
- 1985:** 1 million children participated at a cost of \$452.1 million.
- 1980:** 663,000 children participated at a cost of \$236.4 million.
- 1975:** 375,000 children participated at a cost of \$51 million.

Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children⁵

1. Who is eligible?

Pregnant or postpartum women, infants, and children up to age 5 are eligible. They must meet income guidelines, a State residency requirement, and be individually determined to be at "nutritional risk" by a health professional.

To be eligible on the basis of income, applicants' gross income (i.e. before taxes are withheld) must fall at or below 185 percent of the U.S. Poverty Income Guidelines:

	Income Eligibility Guidelines (effective 7/1/03 - 6/30/04)		
	Annually	Monthly	Weekly
Family of 1	\$16,613	\$1,385	\$320
Family of 2	\$22,422	\$1,869	\$432
Family of 3	\$28,231	\$2,353	\$543
Family of 4	\$34,040	\$2,837	\$655
Family of 5	\$39,849	\$3,321	\$767
Family of 6	\$45,658	\$3,805	\$879
Family of 7	\$51,467	\$4,289	\$990
Family of 8	\$57,276	\$4,773	\$1,102
For each additional family member add	+5,809	+485	+112

While most States use the maximum guidelines, States may set lower income limit standards. A person or certain family members who participate in other benefits programs such as the Food Stamp Program, Medicaid, or Temporary Assistance for Needy Families automatically meet the income eligibility requirement.

2. What is "nutritional risk"?

Two major types of nutritional risk are recognized for WIC eligibility:

Medically-based risks (designated as "high priority") such as anemia, underweight, maternal age, history of pregnancy complications, or poor pregnancy outcomes.

Diet-based risks such as inadequate dietary pattern.

Nutritional risk is determined by a health professional such as a physician, nutritionist, or nurse, and is based on Federal guidelines. This health screening is free to program applicants.

Beginning April 1, 1999, State agencies use WIC nutrition risk criteria from a list established for use in the WIC Program. WIC nutrition risk criteria were developed by FNS in conjunction with State and local WIC agency experts. WIC State agencies are not required to use all of the nutritional risk criteria on the new list. FNS will update the list of criteria, as necessary,

⁵ United States, Food & Nutrition Service, Frequent Asked Questions: WIC Program (Washington: U.S. Department of Agriculture, 2004) <<http://www.fns.usda.gov/wicr>>

when new scientific evidence shows, after review by FNS and other health and nutrition experts, that the condition can be improved by providing WIC program benefits and services.

3. How many people does WIC serve?

More than 7 million people get WIC benefits each month. Participation has risen steadily since the program began. In 1974, the first year WIC was permanently authorized, 88,000 people participated. By 1980, participation was at 1.9 million; by 1990 it was 4.5 million; and by 2000 it was 7.2 million. Average monthly participation for Fiscal Year 2002 was approximately 7.5 million.

Children have always been the largest category of WIC participants. The average monthly WIC participation for FY 2002 was approximately 7.5 million people - of that number, nearly 3.8 million were children, over 1.9 million were infants, and over 1.8 million were women.

4. What percent of eligible people does WIC reach?

About 47 percent of all babies born in the United States, and it is currently estimated that we have achieved full coverage of eligible infants. Of all eligible women, infants, and children, the program is estimated to serve about 93 percent.

5. Where is WIC available?

The WIC program is available in each State, the District of Columbia, 33 Indian Tribal Organizations, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, American Samoa, and Guam.

6. What food benefits do WIC participants receive?

In most WIC State agencies, WIC participants receive checks or food instruments to purchase specific foods each month which are designed to supplement their diets. WIC food is high in one or more of the following nutrients: protein, calcium, iron, and vitamins A and C. These are the nutrients frequently lacking in the diets of the program's low-income target population. Different food packages are provided for different categories of participants. A few WIC State agencies distribute WIC foods through warehouses or deliver WIC foods to participants.

WIC foods include iron-fortified infant formula and infant cereal, iron-fortified adult cereal, vitamin C-rich fruit and/or vegetable juice, eggs, milk, cheese, peanut butter, dried beans or peas, tuna fish and carrots. Special infant formulas and certain medical foods may be provided when prescribed by a physician or health professional for a specified medical condition.

7. Who gets first priority for participation?

WIC cannot serve all eligible people, so a system of priorities has been established for filling program openings. Once a local WIC agency has reached its maximum caseload, vacancies are generally filled in the order of the following priority levels:

Pregnant women, breastfeeding women, and infants determined to be at nutritional risk because of serious medical problems.

Infants up to 6 months of age whose mothers participated in WIC or could have participated and had serious medical problems.

Children (up to age 5) at nutritional risk because of serious medical problems.

Pregnant or breastfeeding women and infants at nutritional risk because of dietary problems (like poor diet).

Children (up to age 5) at nutritional risk because of dietary problems.

Non-breastfeeding, postpartum women with any nutritional risk.

Individuals at nutritional risk only because they are homeless or migrants, and current participants who without WIC foods could continue to have medical and/or dietary problems.

8. What is the WIC infant formula rebate system?

Mothers participating in WIC are encouraged to breastfeed their infants if possible, but State WIC agencies will provide formula to mothers who choose to use it. WIC State agencies are required by law to have competitively-bid infant formula rebate contracts with infant formula manufacturers. This means a WIC State agency agrees to provide one brand of infant formula to its participants and in return receives money back, called a rebate, from the manufacturer for each can of infant formula that is purchased by WIC participants. As a result, WIC pays the lowest possible price for infant formula. The brand of infant formula provided by WIC varies from State agency to State agency, depending on which company has the rebate contract in a particular State.

The WIC Program gets back over a billion dollars each year from infant formula manufacturers. This is a big savings to the WIC Program which allows many more eligible women, infants, and children to be served. From October 2001 to September 2002, nearly \$1.5 billion was given back to WIC State agencies by infant formula manufacturers and this money was used to serve about 2.1 million additional eligible women, infants and children. In general, approximately 1 out of every 4 participants is served with rebate money.

9. How much does WIC cost?

Congress appropriated \$4.696 billion for WIC in FY 2003. The appropriation includes \$25 million for the WIC Farmers' Market Nutrition Program.

By comparison, the WIC program cost \$10.4 million in 1974; \$727.7 million in 1980; \$1.5 billion in 1985; and \$2.1 billion in 1990.

WIC Farmer's Market Nutrition Program⁶

1. What is the WIC Farmers' Market Nutrition Program?

The WIC Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (FMNP) is associated with the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children, popularly known as WIC, provides supplemental foods, health care referrals and nutrition education at no cost to low-income pregnant, breastfeeding and non-breastfeeding post-partum women, and to infants and children up to 5 years of age, who are found to be at nutritional risk.

The FMNP was established by Congress in 1992, to provide fresh, unprepared, locally grown fruits and vegetables to WIC recipients, and to expand the awareness, use of and sales at farmers' markets.

⁶ United States, Food & Nutrition Service, Frequent Asked Questions: WIC Farmer's Market Nutrition Program (Washington: U.S. Department of Agriculture, 2004) <<http://www.fns.usda.gov/wicr>>

2. Where does the FMNP operate?

Currently, 44 State agencies operate the FMNP. They include the District of Columbia, Guam, Puerto Rico, and 36 States: Alabama, Alaska, Arizona, Arkansas, California, Connecticut, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kentucky, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Vermont, Washington, West Virginia, and Wisconsin. In addition, 5 Indian Tribal Organizations administer the Program: Chickasaw, Oklahoma; Osage Tribe, Oklahoma; the Mississippi Band of Choctaws; the Five Sandoval Indian Pueblos, New Mexico, and the Pueblos of San Felipe, New Mexico.

3. Who can participate?

Women, infants (over 4 months old) and children that have been certified to receive WIC program benefits or who are on a waiting list for WIC certification are eligible to participate in the FMNP. State agencies may serve some or all of these categories.

4. How many recipients are served?

In fiscal year 2001, over 2 million WIC recipients received farmers' market benefits. In fiscal year 2002, over 2.1 million WIC recipients received farmers' market benefits.

5. What foods are available through the FMNP?

A variety of fresh, nutritious, unprepared, locally grown fruits, vegetables and herbs may be purchased with FMNP coupons. Each State agency develops a list of fresh fruits, vegetables and herbs that can be purchased with FMNP coupons.

6. How does the program operate?

The FMNP is administered through a Federal/State partnership in which the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) provides cash grants to State agencies. The FMNP is administered by State agencies such as State agriculture departments or health departments or Indian Tribal Organizations. State agencies develop plans to operate the program that are approved by FNS.

Eligible WIC recipients are issued FMNP coupons in addition to their regular WIC food instruments. These coupons can be used to buy fresh, unprepared fruits, vegetables and herbs from farmers or farmers' markets that have been approved by the State agency to accept FMNP coupons. The Federal food benefit level for FMNP recipients may not be less than \$10 and no more than \$20 per year, per recipient. However, State agencies may supplement the benefit level with its matching funds. The farmers or farmers' markets then submit the coupons for reimbursement.

Nutrition education is provided to FMNP recipients by the State agency, often through an arrangement with the local WIC agency. Other professional educators and program partners may provide nutrition education and/or educational information to FMNP recipients. For example, Cooperative Extension Programs, local chefs, farmers or farmers' markets associations, and various other non-profit or for-profit organizations may provide nutrition education to FMNP recipients. These educational arrangements help to encourage FMNP recipients to improve and expand their diets by adding fresh fruits and vegetables, as well as educate them on how to select, store and prepare the fresh fruits and vegetables they buy with their FMNP coupons.

7. How does a farmer or farmers' market become authorized to accept FMNP coupons?

Each State agency is responsible for authorizing individual farmers, farmers' markets, or both. Only farmers and/or farmers' markets authorized by the State agency may accept and redeem FMNP coupons. Individuals, who exclusively sell produce grown by someone else, such as wholesale distributors, cannot be authorized to participate in the FMNP. The FMNP contact person for each State agency can be found at <http://www.fns.usda.gov/wic/Contacts/farm.htm>

8. How many farmers and farmers' markets participate in the FMNP?

During fiscal year 2002, 13,176 farmers and 1,911 farmers' markets were authorized to accept FMNP coupons. Coupons redeemed through the FMNP resulted in over \$20.8 million in revenue to farmers for fiscal year 2002.

During fiscal year 2001, 13,741 farmers and 1,824 farmers' markets were authorized to accept FMNP coupons. Coupons redeemed through the FMNP resulted in over \$20.6 million in revenue to farmers for fiscal year 2001. Coupons redeemed through the FMNP resulted in about \$17.5 million in revenue to farmers for fiscal year 2000.

9. How is the FMNP funded?

Congress provides funds for the FMNP through a legislatively mandated set-aside in the WIC Program appropriation. Federal funds support 70 percent of the total cost of the program. States operating the FMNP must match the Federal funds allocated to them by contributing at least 30 percent of the total cost of the program. Indian State agencies may receive a lower match, but not less than 10 percent of the total cost of the program. The matching funds can come from a variety of sources, such as State and local funds, private funds, in-kind contributions, similar programs, and program income.

10. What is the current funding level?

For fiscal year 2002 and 2003, Congress provided \$25 million for the FMNP. For fiscal year 2001, \$20 million was appropriated.

Summer Food Service Program⁷

1. What is the Summer Food Service Program?

Just as learning does not end when school lets out, neither does a child's need for good nutrition. The Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) provides free, nutritious meals and snacks to help children in low-income areas get the nutrition they need to learn, play, and grow, throughout the summer months when they are out of school.

2. How does the program operate?

The Food and Nutrition Service, an agency of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, administers SFSP at the Federal level. State education agencies administer the program in most States. In some areas, the State health or social service department or an FNS regional office may be designated. Locally, SFSP is run by approved sponsors, including school districts, local government agencies, camps, or private nonprofit organizations. Sponsors provide free meals to

⁷ United States, Food & Nutrition Service, [Frequent Asked Questions: Summer Food Service Program](http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/summer) (Washington: U.S. Department of Agriculture, 2004) <<http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/summer>>

a group of children at a central site, such as a school or a community center. They receive payments from USDA, through their State agencies, for the meals they serve and for their documented operating costs.

3. Where does the program operate?

States approve SFSP meal sites as open, enrolled, or camp sites. Open sites operate in low-income areas where at least half of the children come from families with incomes at or below 185 percent of the Federal poverty level, making them eligible for free and reduced-price school meals. Meals are served free to any child at the open site. Enrolled sites provide free meals to children enrolled in an activity program at the site where at least half of them are eligible for free and reduced-price meals. Camps may also participate in SFSP. They receive payments only for the meals served to children who are eligible for free and reduced-price meals.

4. Who is eligible to get meals?

Children 18 and younger may receive free meals and snacks through SFSP. Meals and snacks are also available to persons with disabilities, over age 18, who participate in school programs for people who are mentally or physically disabled.

5. How many meals do participants receive each day?

At most sites, children receive either one or two reimbursable meals each day. Camps and sites that primarily serve migrant children may be approved to serve up to three meals to each child, each day.

6. How much reimbursement does the government provide?

For summer 2004, the maximum reimbursement rate per meal in most States is:

Breakfast: \$1.38
Lunch/Supper: \$2.41
Snack: 56 cents

Sponsors also receive Federal funds for administrative costs. Depending on the type of site, sponsors can receive up to:

Breakfast: 13.75 cents
Lunch/Supper: 25.25 cents
Snack: 6.75 cents

Payment rates are higher in Alaska and Hawaii to reflect the higher cost of providing meals in those States.

7. How long has the SFSP been in existence?

SFSP was first created as part of a larger pilot program in 1968. It became a separate program in 1975. By 1980, 1.9 million children were participating. Participation dropped to 1.5 million in 1985, and grew to 1.7 million again by 1990. Over 2 million children participated at almost 30,000 sites in the summer of 2003.

8. How much does the program cost?

Congress appropriated \$288.2 million for SFSP in Fiscal Year 2003, down from \$307.2 million for the program in FY 2002. By comparison, the program cost \$110.1 million in 1980; \$111.5 million in 1985; \$163.6 million in 1990; and \$237 million in 1995.

Elderly Nutrition Program (Nutrition Services Incentives Program)⁸

1) What is the Elderly Nutrition Program?

The Administration on Aging's (AoA) Elderly Nutrition Program provides grants to support nutrition services to older people throughout the country. The Elderly Nutrition Program, authorized under Title III, Grants for State and Community Programs on Aging, and Title VI, Grants for Native Americans, under the Older Americans Act, is intended to improve the dietary intakes of participants and to offer participants opportunities to form new friendships and to create informal support networks.

The Elderly Nutrition Program provides for congregate and home-delivered meals. These meals and other nutrition services are provided in a variety of settings, such as senior centers, schools, and in individual homes.

Meals served under the program must provide at least one-third of the daily-recommended dietary allowances established by the Food and Nutrition Board of the National Academy of Sciences-National Research Council. In practice, the Elderly Nutrition Program's 3.1 million elderly participants are receiving an estimated 40 to 50 percent of most required nutrients.

The Elderly Nutrition Program also provides a range of related services, by some of the aging network's estimated 4,000 nutrition service providers, including nutrition screening, assessment, education and counseling. These services help older participants to identify their general and special nutrition needs, as they may relate to health concerns such as hypertension and diabetes.

The services help older participants to learn to shop for, and/or to plan and prepare, meals that are economical and which help to manage or ameliorate specific health problems as well as enhancing their health and well-being. The congregate meal programs also provide older people with positive social contacts with other seniors at the group meal sites.

Volunteers who deliver meals to older persons who are homebound are encouraged to spend some time with the elderly. The volunteers also offer an important opportunity to check on the welfare of the homebound elderly and are encouraged to report any health or other problems that they may note during their visits.

In addition to providing nutrition and nutrition-related services, the Elderly Nutrition Program provides an important link to other needed supportive in-home and community-based services such as homemaker-home health aide services, transportation, fitness programs, and even home repair and home modification programs.

2. Who is eligible?

⁸ United States, Administration of Aging, Fact Sheets: Elderly Nutrition Program, (Washington: Department of Health & Human Services, 2004) <<http://www.aoa.gov>>

While there is no means test for participation in the Elderly Nutrition Program, services are targeted to older people with the greatest economic or social need, with special attention given to low-income minorities.

In addition to focusing on low-income and other older persons at risk of losing their independence, the following individuals may receive service including:

- A spouse of any age
- Disabled persons under age 60 who reside in housing facilities occupied primarily by the elderly where congregate meals are served
- Disabled persons who reside at home and accompany older persons to meals
- Nutrition service volunteers

Since American Indians, Alaskan Natives, and Native Hawaiians tend to have lower life expectancies and higher rates of illness at younger ages, Tribal Organizations are given the option of setting the age at which older people can participate in the program.

3. More Information

A congressionally-mandated evaluation of the Elderly Nutrition Program, released in fiscal year (FY) 1996, found that its participants have higher daily intakes of key nutrients than similar non-participants and that they have more social contacts as a result of the program.

Among Elderly Nutrition Program participants, 80 to 90 percent have incomes below 200 percent of the Department of Health and Human Services' poverty level index, which is twice the rate for the overall elderly population. More than twice as many Title III participants live alone; and two-thirds of participants are either over or under their desired weight, placing them at risk for nutrition and health problems. Title III home-delivered meals participants have twice as many physical impairments compared with the overall elderly population.

For every \$1 of federal congregate funds, \$1.70 additional funding is leveraged; for every \$1 of federal home-delivered funds, \$3.35 additional funding is leveraged. The leveraged funds come from other sources including state, tribal, local, and other federal moneys and services, as well as through donations from participants. Nationally, total contributions amounted to \$170 million.

The average cost of a meal, including the value of donated labor and supplies, was \$5.17 for a group meal and \$5.31 for a home-delivered meal under Title III. Comparable costs for a meal under Title VI were \$6.19 and \$7.18, respectively.