



Hunger in America

WESTERN NORTH CAROLINA 2014 REPORT



MANNA
FOODBANK

A member of **FEEDING**
AMERICA

"An estimated 13,000 people a week seek food assistance in Western North Carolina; just over 42 percent of these people are children or seniors. These families report making wrenching decisions such as choosing between paying for food and paying for utilities, housing or transportation. The Foundation was pleased to support this study as the data provides a context for MANNA's work and a snapshot of the struggles many in our region are facing."

- Elizabeth Brazas, President
The Community Foundation of Western North Carolina



You hold in your hands the local results of a study that involved thousands of hours of training, research, interviews, recording, and good old-fashioned number crunching. Please take a few minutes to look through these pages regarding the Western North Carolina charitable response to hunger. It will tell you quite a bit about the people who are coming to our partner agencies seeking food assistance.

So why does Hunger in America 2014 matter? Why do we need to know about the income, education, race, or health of the people who are facing hunger in our 16 counties? As you might guess, there are many reasons. Most importantly, it helps us understand where we are succeeding and where we need to focus our limited resources both now and in the future.

As you look at these words, numbers and charts, I hope you will remember many of the key findings, and be willing to share these figures and concepts with the greater community. What's more important, but often harder, is to look at this report and all the data within, and think of the people. Each one of the 107,600 individuals who sought food assistance last year has a story, just as you and I do. There are grandparents caring for grandchildren and children caring for ailing parents. There are people who have never stepped foot outside their county, and people who have fought for our country thousands of miles from home. There are childhood sweethearts who married right after high school, and single parents who are mother, father, and sole provider. Everyone has a place at the table, and the work of MANNA is to set a place for each one.

Thank you for your continued support in this very important work.



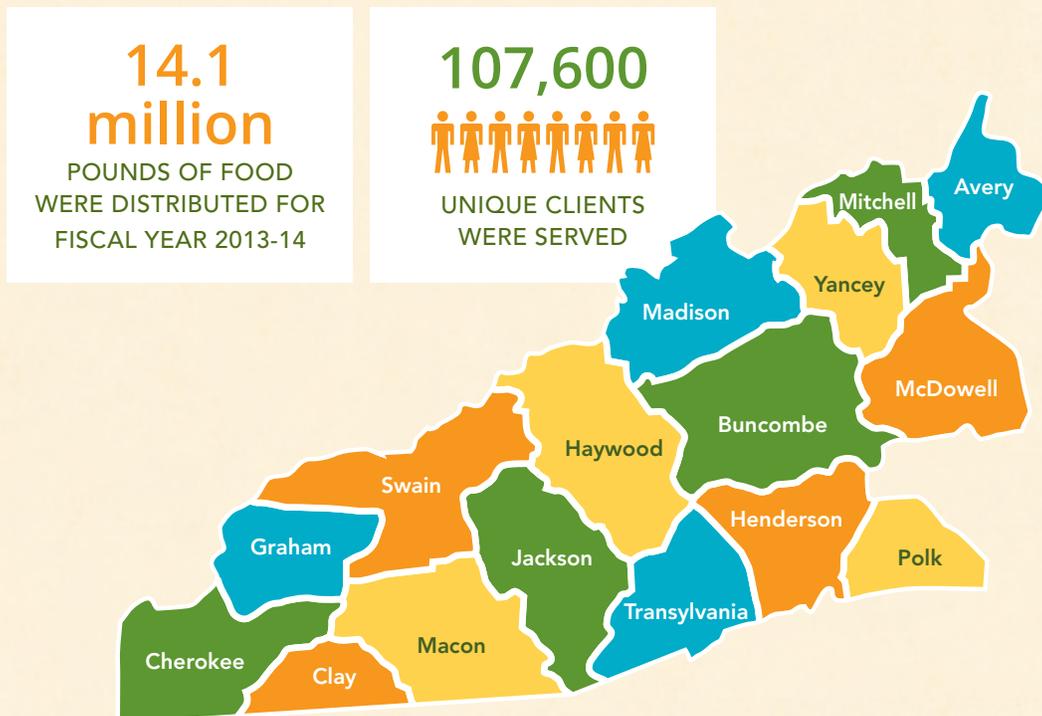
Cindy Threlkeld
Executive Director



Hunger in America (HIA), also known as the Hunger Study, is the largest study of charitable food assistance in America. Feeding America, the nation's leading domestic hunger-relief charity, sponsored this research as the sixth in a quadrennial series of hunger studies. Feeding America contracted with the social research firm, Westat, as well as the Urban Institute, to analyze the information gathered through this study.

This study is designed to provide a snapshot of the operations and challenges of our partner agencies, as well as the day to day struggles of our clients facing hunger.

IN MANNA'S 16 COUNTY SERVICE AREA



DISTRIBUTION

MANNA distributes food through its more than 200 partner agencies. These include emergency food suppliers, pantries, soup kitchens, and food programs. Our agencies tell us that they see more and more working families who need extra help putting food on the table.

Partners

SERVE AN ESTIMATED
13,239
UNIQUE INDIVIDUALS
EVERY WEEK.

41%
OF AGENCIES RUN ON
VOLUNTEERS ONLY

54%
OF MANNA
PARTNERS PROVIDE
SNAP
RELATED SERVICES.

↑
54%
OF AGENCIES
REPORT AN
INCREASE
IN CLIENTS.


1 in 3
AGENCIES REPORT
CUTTING BACK
ON SERVICES DUE TO
limited
resources.

1 in 4
AGENCIES REPORT
NOT HAVING ENOUGH
Food
TO MEET DEMAND.



The Results provide a unique and comprehensive description of the food assistance programs and clients in the area served by MANNA FoodBank and will help guide future policy decisions about meeting the food needs of residents within this food bank's service area. The study tells the story of programs determined to help clients and their households meet their food needs, and of a population that critically needs this assistance.

Across the nation, the weak economy with its historically low employment rate and high poverty rate has challenged this system. Many agencies face a growing demand for help, and many struggle to meet these needs in the face of declining donations. The clients seeking this assistance have varying levels of education, training, and language skills. Many have health conditions that prevent work, and many of those working have found only part-time or part-year jobs. Among food assistance clients, the rates of household poverty and food insecurity are typically very high.

Recent declines in the national unemployment rate suggest that demand for food assistance may slow down, but it is still too soon to know. In certain areas of the country, unemployment rates are down in part because many who have been looking for work for a long time have simply dropped out of the labor market. Many workers at the bottom of the labor market have not seen a real increase in wages for many years.

As this report indicates, MANNA FoodBank, along with the partner agencies we serve, continues to play a crucial role in addressing hunger in Western North Carolina. For a full copy of the WNC report, visit mannafoodbank.org

STRUGGLING TO GET BY

With over 60% of the households reporting a yearly income of 10,000 or less, each day can mean a series of trade-offs and survival strategies that can have both short and long-term consequences on health and well-being.

4 out of 5

HOUSEHOLDS LIVE ON LESS THAN \$20,000 A YEAR.

10%
OF HOUSEHOLDS
HAVE A
FULL OR PART-TIME
student

1 in 5
HOUSEHOLDS WHO
HAVE A MEMBER OR
HAS SERVED IN THE
**U.S. Armed
Forces**
OR NATIONAL GUARD

56%
OF CLIENT
HOUSEHOLDS
REPORT
PARTICIPATION IN
SNAP
(FOOD STAMPS)

KEY CONSIDERATIONS

- Nearly 9 out of 10 households report buying the cheapest food available regardless of health as a strategy for getting enough to eat.
- When asked what products they desire that are not currently available at pantry, the top 3 responses are:

61%
FRUIT & VEGETABLES

52%
MEAT & PROTEIN

42%
DAIRY & MILK



SPENDING TRADE-OFFS

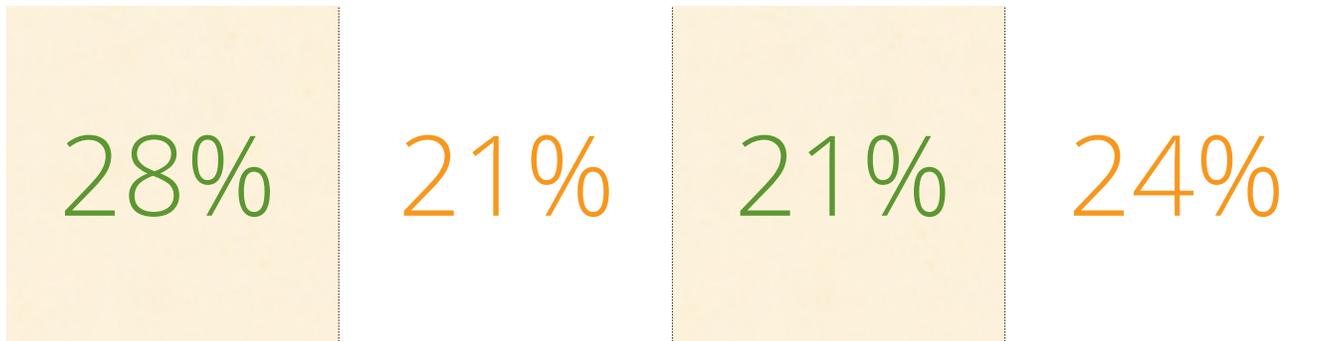
Client households made trade-offs between paying for food and paying for other necessities.



AT LEAST ONCE IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS

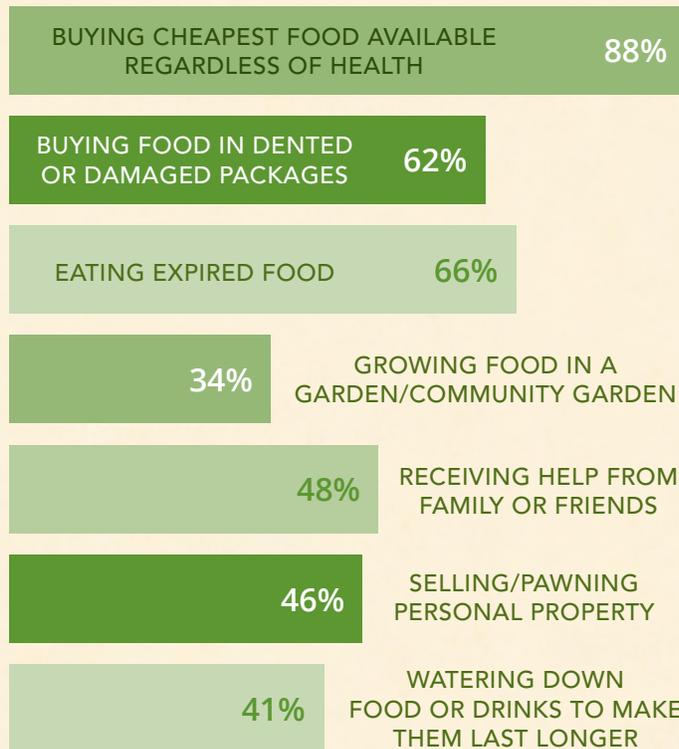


EVERY MONTH



COPING STRATEGIES

With 73% of households living at or below poverty level, clients must employ trade-off strategies in order to put food on the table.



HEALTH

31%
OF CLIENT
HOUSEHOLDS HAVE
A MEMBER WITH
Diabetes

55%
OF CLIENT
HOUSEHOLDS HAVE
A MEMBER WITH
**High Blood
Pressure**

62%
OF CLIENT
HOUSEHOLDS HAVE
**Medical
Bills**
TO PAY

Among households where the most employed person is not working or actively looking for work:

NEARLY
1 in 4
HOUSEHOLDS
HAVE AT LEAST
ONE MEMBER IN
**Poor
Health**

21% OTHER

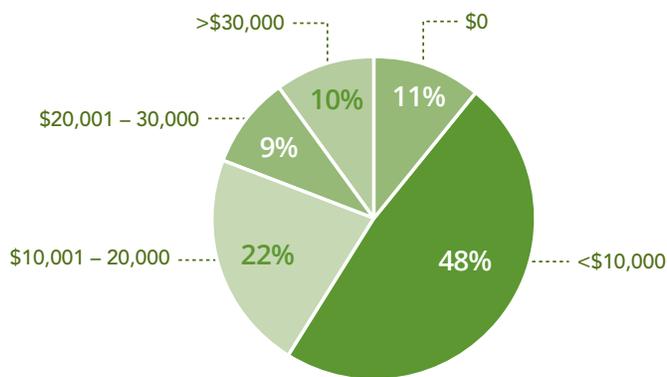
21% RETIRED

59%
DISABLED,
POOR HEALTH OR
CAREGIVER

There is no “typical” household seeking food assistance. The study shows us that among the people we serve there is a variety of different races, ages, and employment status.

INCOME

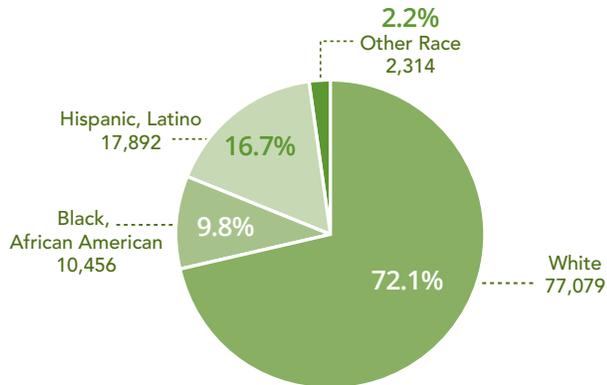
56%
HAVE A HOUSEHOLD MEMBER
WHO HAS WORKED FOR PAY
IN THE PAST
12 months



73% of client households live at or below the poverty level as defined by the US Health and Human Services Department.

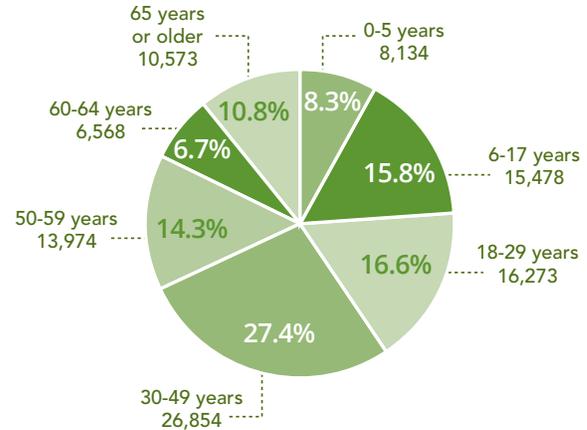


RACE/ETHNICITY



Weighted non-reporting clients: 874
Total weighted N: 107,600

AGE



Weighted non-reporting clients: 9,941
Total weighted N: 107,600

In the two counties with the largest population, client demographics are markedly different:

In Buncombe County, 77 percent of clients identify themselves as white, 21 percent as black or African American, and 2 percent as Hispanic or Latino.

In Henderson County, 65 percent of clients identify themselves as white, 8 percent as black, and 27% as Hispanic or Latino.

18%
AGED
60 or older

11%
OF CLIENT HOUSEHOLDS
INCLUDE
Grandparents
WHO ARE PRIMARY
CAREGIVERS
FOR GRANDCHILDREN.

Although the Feeding America network feeds more children, than any other charitable organization, Hunger in America 2014 does not include data collected at child feeding sites or programs, such as MANNA Packs for Kids.

A primary goal for **Hunger in America 2014** was to design a study that allowed for selection of a probability sample of clients and for collection of data to support national- and food bank-level estimates of the total number of clients served.

METHODS:

HIA 2014 follows the pattern of past Hunger in America studies by implementing two surveys – an Agency Survey and a Client Survey – through the collaborative effort of an extended research team. The first step of the study design was conducting the Agency Survey, which included all partner agencies identified by MANNA FoodBank on the agency list it compiled and provided to Feeding America. The Agency Survey, conducted from October 2012 to January 2013, was used to enumerate eligible food programs and obtain basic information about those programs. Following the Agency Survey, a client sample was obtained using a multistage design. Food bank staff and volunteers carried out the Client Survey from April through August 2013.

The information in this report is based solely on the agencies and programs that participated in this study, adjusted by weighting to account for sampling and nonresponse. When findings cannot be presented due to small sample size (fewer than five unweighted observations), the symbol “++” is shown. The Agency Survey yielded responses from 204 eligible agencies (91 percent). Of the 684 eligible clients sampled, 451 (66 percent) responded to the Client Survey. Because children were not eligible respondents for the Client Survey, HIA 2014 focuses on the services provided to adult clients and their household members. Consequently, the study will generally underestimate the services provided to children by the Feeding America network.



DEFINING TERMS USED IN THIS REPORT

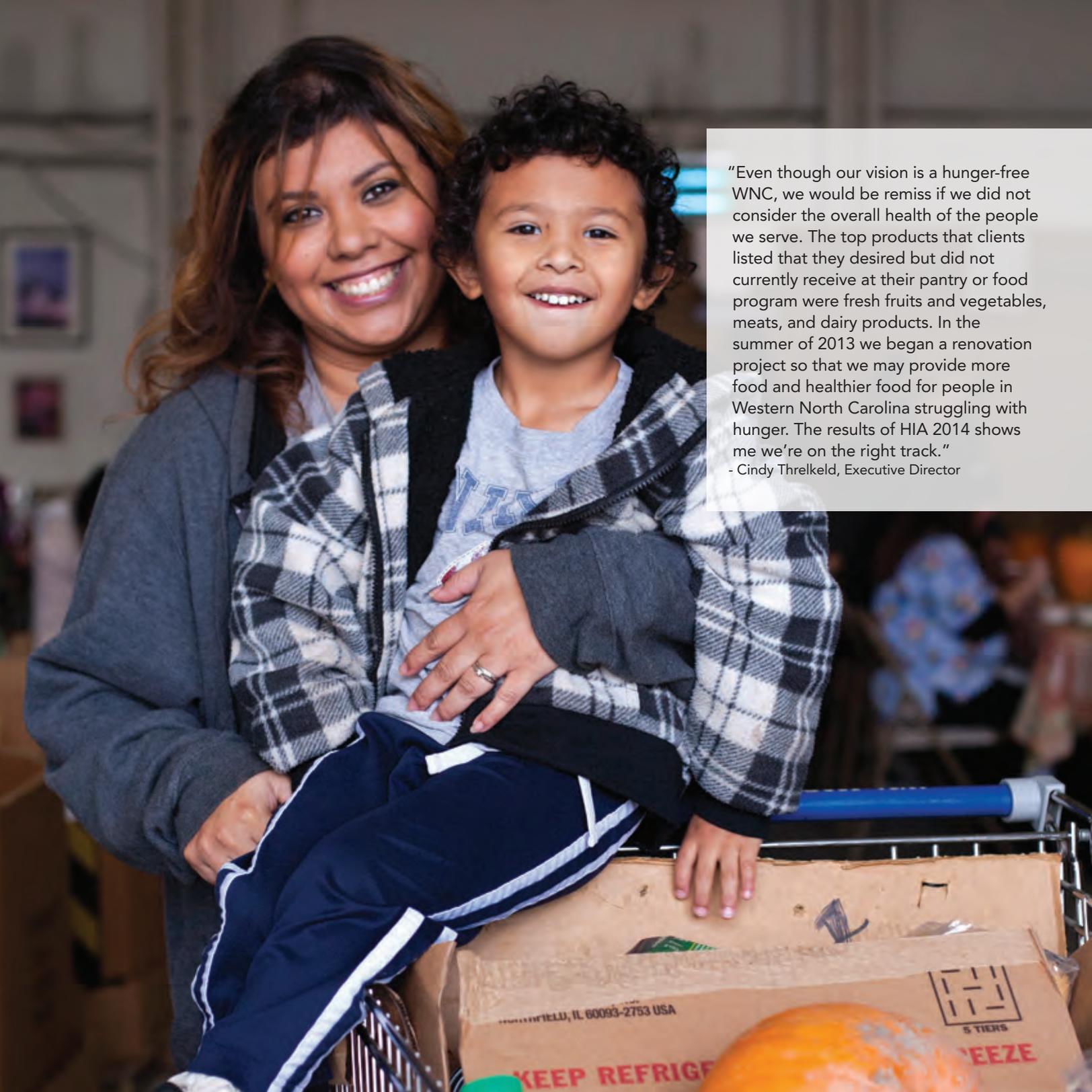
Food Security and Food Insecurity: Food security means all people at all times can access enough food for an active, healthy life. The US Department of Agriculture (usda.gov) defines four levels of food security. High food security indicates no reported food-access problems. Marginal food security indicates one or two reported problems that are typically anxiety over food sufficiency or shortage of food in the house, but with little or no indication of changes in diets or food intake. Low food security indicates reports of reduced quality, variety, or desirability of diet and little or no reduced food intake. Very low food security indicates reports of multiple disrupted eating patterns and reduced food intake. The food security measure used in HIA 2014 combines high and marginal food security into a single category.

Poverty guidelines vary by household size. In 2013, a single person falls under 100 percent of the poverty level with annual cash income of \$11,400 or less; two people are poor with income of \$15,500 and below; and families with three people are poor if income is \$19,530 or below. For all guidelines, see US Health and Human Services Department “Annual Update of the HHS Poverty Guidelines,” Federal Register, January 24, 2013.

SNAP: Supplemental State Nutrition Program. In this report, what is called “SNAP” is called FNS (Food and Nutrition Services) in North Carolina. This program offers nutrition assistance to eligible, low-income individuals and families and provides economic benefits to communities. SNAP is the largest program in the domestic hunger safety net.

Partner Agencies refers to the network that provides direct food assistance in our region. MANNA works with over 200 such partners, and they include pantries, meal programs, emergency food suppliers, and other nonprofits to distribute enough food to provide 29,000 meals every single day, year round.

Feeding America is the nation’s leading domestic hunger-relief charity. Their mission is to feed America’s hungry through a nationwide network of 200 member food banks and engage our country in the fight to end hunger.



“Even though our vision is a hunger-free WNC, we would be remiss if we did not consider the overall health of the people we serve. The top products that clients listed that they desired but did not currently receive at their pantry or food program were fresh fruits and vegetables, meats, and dairy products. In the summer of 2013 we began a renovation project so that we may provide more food and healthier food for people in Western North Carolina struggling with hunger. The results of HIA 2014 shows me we’re on the right track.”

- Cindy Threlkeld, Executive Director



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Involving, educating and uniting people in the work of ending hunger
in Western North Carolina since 1983.

MANNAFoodBank.org | 828-299-3663

HUNGER STUDY WESTERN NORTH CAROLINA

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