



PRESS RELEASE
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RI Community Food Bank Releases 2008 Status Report on Hunger ”
During Press Conference with Congressman Langevin

As Many as 115,000 Rhode Islanders, 40,000 of Them Children, Do Not Have Enough to Eat

PROVIDENCE, R.I. The Rhode Island Community Food Bank released its 2008 Status Report on Hunger in Rhode Island during a press conference at the agency's Niantic Avenue headquarters in Providence on November 24th.

Joined by Congressman James Langevin, the Food Bank released its report examining the impact of the struggling economy, the rising cost of food and the growing demand for food assistance across the state. In addition, the report documents the extent of food insecurity and hunger in Rhode Island and provides recommendations to improve access to additional food resources for those in need.

“Right now, we are all feeling the effects of the economic downturn,” began Andrew Schiff, Executive Director of the Rhode Island Community Food Bank. “But, the people served by the Food Bank and its network of Member Agencies are hurting the most and the numbers are staggering – almost 11 percent of Rhode Island’s households do not have enough to eat.”

While the Food Bank has grown to distribute more than 8 million pounds of food each year, improving enrollment in government sponsored nutrition programs is vital. “We need to ensure that people in need have access to every nutrition resource available,” added Schiff. “Making full and better use of government nutrition programs including food stamps, WIC and School Meals will not only put food on the table of families who need it most, it would also generate millions of dollars in additional aid from Washington.”

Currently, the Rhode Island Community Food Bank is feeding 40,000 Rhode Islanders each month through a network of 285 certified member agency programs. This reflects a 12% increase over last year. In the last year, emergency food programs of the Food Bank served 10 million meals to Rhode Islanders in need.

Despite the Report’s troubling findings, help is on the way. Through the efforts of Congressman Langevin, and others, the recently enacted Farm Bill will deliver additional resources for struggling Americans in 2009. As part of the Bill, Congress has doubled the amount of USDA food allotted to Rhode Island’s emergency food programs. “This Report is a wake-up call for all of us,” said Congressman Langevin. “The problem of hunger is great and we all need to do what we can to bring attention to this solvable issue. I am proud of our work on the Farm Bill and what it will mean for thousands of families here in the Ocean State, but we need to do more,” concluded Langevin.

The Rhode Island Community Food Bank is a non-profit organization located in Providence, RI. The Food Bank solicits, stores and distributes food products donated by supermarkets, wholesalers, food processors, local farmers and community food drives. The food is then distributed to the Food Bank’s network of 285 member agencies. In the past fiscal year, the Food Bank distributed 8.3 million pounds of food. For more information about the Food Bank, please visit www.rifoodbank.org