

Major Findings of the Status Report on Hunger in RI 2009

- The prevalence of hunger in Rhode Island has reached the highest level in ten years.
- With rising unemployment, more people than ever rely on emergency food pantries and soup kitchens. Between September 2008 and August 2009, emergency food programs in Rhode Island served 13 million meals – a 30 percent increase over the previous year. This demand stretched the capacity of the Rhode Island Community Food Bank and its statewide network of member agencies.
- An effective response to the state’s hunger crisis will involve all levels of government. The federal stimulus bill increased nutrition program benefits, but the state must make it easier for eligible households to receive these benefits. At the local level, boosting participation in school breakfast and summer meals can help protect more children from hunger.
- Rhode Island is improving the quality of school meals and WIC (Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children) food packages based on nutrition science that demonstrates the link between the food we eat and our long-term health. By increasing funding for the child nutrition programs and WIC, Congress can ensure these programs reach even more hungry children and families.
- Having a low-income does not mean individuals or families must compromise their health. Through its program, “Raising the Bar on Nutrition,” the Food Bank provides recipes and cooking instruction to make nutritious meals with affordable ingredients. For example, the program teaches how to feed a family of four healthy meals for a week using ingredients costing just \$175.