

# FOOD AND NUTRITION ASSISTANCE

## Scope of the Problem and Indicators of Need

Though it is a high-income state, some New Jersey residents worry about their next meal and even experience periods of hunger. While the budget administers a handful of programs aimed at fighting hunger and increasing family food budgets, many New Jersey families struggle to acquire the food they need for a sufficient diet. In order to understand whether budget allocations for food and nutrition assistance are adequate, it is important to understand the extent of the need for food assistance in the state. To that end, this introduction provides information on both the populations most affected by a lack of adequate food, as well as the health consequences that result from not being able purchase enough food. It also presents the ways in which these health problems are mitigated through effective government programs that provide nutrition services. Lastly, it describes the extent to which New Jersey is able to reach residents in need and provide them with the needed assistance.

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) tracks a condition known as food insecurity—the “limited or uncertain availability of nutritionally adequate and safe foods or limited or uncertain ability to acquire acceptable foods in socially acceptable ways.”<sup>1</sup> Data from the USDA show that, on average, 8.1 percent of New Jersey households, a total of 259,443 persons, experienced food insecurity between 2003 and 2005. In addition, an average of 2.6 percent, a total of 83,278 persons, experienced very low food security.<sup>2</sup> While New Jersey rates are lower than national averages, food insecurity is strikingly incongruent with the relative affluence of the state as a whole.

To make ends meet, many New Jerseyans rely on a patchwork of emergency food assistance program across the state. In 2005, more than 500,000 persons relied on food from emergency food providers in New Jersey. At the main food bank in Philadelphia and South Jersey, they estimate serving over 100,000 persons each week.<sup>3</sup> New Jersey’s largest food bank—Community Food Bank—distributed over 23 million pounds of food in 2005. In fact, the Statewide Emergency Food and Anti-Hunger Network reports that people are using food pantries an average of 14 times in 2005, illustrating a need for food assistance on a regular basis.<sup>4</sup> They also report a 125 percent increase in New Jersey residents served by food pantries between 1999 and 2005.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Bickel, Gary, Mark Nord, Cristofer Prices, William Hamilton, and John Cook. Marcy 2000. “Guide to Measuring Household Food Security, Revised 2000.” U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Services.

<sup>2</sup> Nord, Mark, Margaret Andrews, and Steven Carlson. November 2006. “Housing Food Security in the United States, 2005.” United States Department of Agriculture: Economic Research Report Number 29.

<sup>3</sup> Policy Research Institute for the Region. Summer 2006. “Hunger in the Region.” Princeton University.

<sup>4</sup> Statewide Emergency Food and Anti-Hunger Network. Summer 2006. “7<sup>th</sup> Statewide Hunger Survey.” Statewide Network News.

<sup>5</sup> Policy Research Institute for the Region. Summer 2006. “Hunger in the Region.” Princeton University.

Addressing the need for food and nutrition assistance is imperative because the most vulnerable populations are more susceptible to food insecurity and hunger. Of those U.S. households with children under six, almost one in five (18.5%) suffer from food insecurity, as do a third (33%) of female-headed households. Of poor households, nearly 40 percent (36.8%) are food insecure, while 13.6 percent are also hungry.<sup>6</sup> African-Americans and Hispanics are also more likely to experience food insecurity, with rates of 23.7 percent and 21.7 percent, respectively.<sup>7</sup> The elderly, often living on fixed incomes, are another population vulnerable to food insecurity and hunger. According to the most recent data, more than 5.5 million meals were served to seniors in New Jersey in fiscal year 2001, through Meals on Wheels or other group meal programs with funding from the U.S. Nutrition Services Incentive Program.<sup>8</sup> Working families also face difficulties; in 2003, almost one in three food stamp participants (28.3%) lived in a household in which at least one member was working.<sup>9</sup> Thirty percent of households receiving emergency food assistance through New Jersey's Community Food Bank also include at least one employed adult. Philadelphia's food bank director has identified working families with children as the fastest-growing group needing assistance.<sup>10</sup>

Low-income families that have difficulty obtaining nutritional food may also be more vulnerable to chronic diseases such as obesity, diabetes, cardiovascular disease, hypertension, stroke and cancer. One study found that low-income children in food-insufficient households consumed fewer calories and fewer total carbohydrates but had higher rates of cholesterol intake. Evidence suggests that investment in nutrition and food assistance programs can reduce both food insecurity and the damaging health consequences that accompany it. One study found that girls age 5-12 in food insecure households that participated in the food stamp, national breakfast, and lunch programs were 68 percent less likely to be at risk of being overweight.<sup>11</sup> Another study looked at the impact of the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC). Researchers compared eligible families receiving WIC with eligible

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<sup>6</sup> Nord, Mark, Margaret Andrews, and Steven Carlson. October 2005. "Table 2: Prevalence of food security, food insecurity and food insecurity with hunger by selected household characteristics, 2004. Housing Food Security in the United States, 2004." United States Department of Agriculture: Economic Research Report Number 11, p. 9.

<sup>7</sup> Nord, Mark, Margaret Andrews, and Steven Carlson. October 2005. "Table 2: Prevalence of food security, food insecurity and food insecurity with hunger by selected household characteristics, 2004. Housing Food Security in the United States, 2004." United States Department of Agriculture: Economic Research Report Number 11, p. 9.

<sup>8</sup> U.S. Department of Agriculture. June 22, 2006. "NSIP Annual Meals Service FY2001-FY2005." Food and Nutrition Service.

<sup>9</sup> Castner, Laura and Allen Schirm. April 2006. "State Food Stamp Participation Rates for the Working Poor in 2003." U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Services, prepared by Mathematica Policy Research, Inc.

<sup>10</sup> Policy Research Institute for the Region. Summer 2006. "Hunger in the Region." Princeton University.

<sup>11</sup> Jones, Sonya, Lisa Jahns, Barbara Laraia, and Betsy Haughton. August 2003. "Lower Risk of Overweight in School-aged Food Insecure Girls who Participate in Food Assistance." Archives of Pediatrics and Adolescent Medicine. 157 (8), pp. 780-784.

families not receiving WIC and found that infants without WIC assistance were more likely to be underweight, short, and perceived as having fair or poor health.<sup>12</sup>

In addition to access to food, low-income families must have access to good nutrition such as fresh fruits, vegetables, and lean meats in order to ensure healthy development and prevent physical illness. However, extremely limited food budgets, such as those allowed under food assistance programs, make this difficult. Specifically, the Thrifty Food Plan (TFP) is the market basket of food the USDA uses to determine minimal nutrition costs for setting the Food Stamp benefit levels. The TFP is designed to represent a minimally adequate diet over short periods of time. Imbedded in the market basket pricing is the assumption that, in order to provide nutritional content, families will need adequate food preparation facilities, time to prepare food, and a sophisticated knowledge of nutrition. Not all low-income families have these kinds of facilities and few have additional time. Similarly, research has suggested that food costs might be high enough in some areas that the maximum food stamp allotment isn't enough to allow participants to actually purchase the TFP market basket.<sup>13</sup> One study in low-income neighborhoods in Boston found that the price of the TFP market basket for a family of four at area grocery stores cost an average of \$27 a month more than the maximum food stamp allotment.<sup>14</sup> If the USDA were to switch from the TFP to its Low Cost Food Plan, it would provide a higher level of available money dedicated to food purchases. This change could also impact the ability of a poor family to purchase healthier foods, which tend to be more expensive. One study in California compared the market basket of food in the TFP to a plan that substituted healthier foods such as whole grains, lean ground beef, and skinless poultry. They found that the average healthier food basket for two weeks cost \$230. Compared to what the average low-income family spends on food in a year, this represents up to 35 to 40 percent of a total food budget.<sup>15</sup>

Unfortunately, New Jersey has a poor record of reaching out to those in need of food assistance and a number of residents with incomes low enough to qualify for assistance still go without. In 2004, food stamp assistance reached only 385,234 residents, fewer than half (47%) of the 713,000 residents eligible to receive food stamps. What is more, New Jersey's relatively high rate of food stamp participation among TANF recipients obscures the even lower participation rate for working families, which is 14% lower than the already low rate for all eligible New Jersey households. The statewide participation rate is significantly lower than two-thirds of other states as well as the national average rate, and New Jersey has the second lowest rate in the nation for eligible

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<sup>12</sup> Black, Maureen et al. July 2004. "Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children Participation and Infants' Growth and Health: A Multi-site Surveillance Study." *Pediatrics*. 114 (1), pp. 169-176.

<sup>13</sup> Food Research and Action Center. "Food Stamp Program Frequently Asked Questions." [web:online] accessed at [http://www.frac.org/html/federal\\_food\\_programs/programs/fsp\\_faq.html](http://www.frac.org/html/federal_food_programs/programs/fsp_faq.html) on July 28, 2006.

<sup>14</sup> Food Research and Action Center. September 2005, Revised April 2006. "Food Stamp Access in Urban America: A City-by-City Snapshot."

<sup>15</sup> Jetter, Karen M. and Diana L. Cassady. March 2005. "The Availability and Cost of Healthier Food Items." Agricultural Issues Center. AIC Issue Brief. University of California.

working families.<sup>16</sup> Little is known about the reasons for this low participation rate, but a national survey of consumers at emergency food providers found that 42 percent of users not receiving food stamps identified factors associated with eligibility as the reason they never applied.<sup>17</sup> Insofar as these results are inferable to New Jersey, it suggests that the food stamp enrollment process in our state could be cumbersome enough to dissuade potential participants.

Children in New Jersey are also underfed by the federal and state programs intended to serve them. Participation in the WIC program is notoriously difficult to assess but the USDA suggests that food stamp participation rates provide a proxy for WIC participation rates, which implies that the same dismal participation rate facing the food stamp program in New Jersey plagues the WIC program.<sup>18</sup> Along the same lines, the Food Research and Action Center estimates that over 62,000 low-income students in New Jersey schools went without the breakfast available through the School Breakfast Program in the 2004-2005 school year.<sup>19</sup> Nationwide, there is evidence to suggest that food stamp benefits run out before the end the month. An analysis by the USDA found that, despite making smaller purchases (less than \$25 a visit) at large supermarkets, many food stamp recipients have little benefit remaining at the end of a month. Indeed, 63 percent of recipients used half of their benefits within one week.<sup>20</sup>

The need for food and proper nutrition is so basic that it is easy to forget, particularly in the midst of prosperity, that it is limited for so many. Yet, food insecurity is sadly pervasive within New Jersey. In budgeting funds directed at fighting hunger and providing greater access to food, the State must consider the need for food and nutrition assistance as well as the health benefits that accrue when residents avoid hunger and poor health. Expansion of food stamp benefits, both through higher benefit amounts and less cumbersome application procedures, coupled with increases in funding for targeted programs such as emergency food assistance, school lunch, and programs for seniors, are vital.

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<sup>16</sup> Castner, Laura and Allen Schirm. November 2005. "Reaching Those in Need: State Food Stamp Participation Rates in 2003." Mathematica Policy Research, Inc. for United States Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Services.

<sup>17</sup> Cohen, Rhoda, Myoung Kim, and Jim Ohls. March 2006. "Hunger in America: 2006, National Report Prepared for America's Second Harvest." Prepared by Mathematica Policy Research Inc.

<sup>18</sup> Oliveira, Victor and James Blaylock. July 2003. "Estimating Eligibility and Participation in WIC." Food Assistance Research Brief, United State Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service, Food Assistance and Nutrition Research Report Number 34-3.

<sup>19</sup> Food Research and Action Center. December 2005. "School Breakfast Scorecard: 2005."

<sup>20</sup> United States Department of Agriculture. June 2006. "An Analysis of Food Stamp Benefit Redemption Patterns." Food and Nutrition Service, Office of Analysis, Nutrition and Evaluation.

# **Food and Nutrition Assistance Programs**

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## Detailed Program Information

### **Food Stamps**

#### ***Program Purpose and Description:***

The Food Stamp program is a federally funded entitlement program designed to provide in-kind nutritional assistance to low-income individuals and families. Benefits are provided in the form of an electronic benefits card that can be used to purchase designated food items. Food Stamp benefits are deposited directly into recipient electronic benefit transfer accounts from a third-party vendor. The vendor then receives reimbursement from USDA. Benefits are allocated on a sliding scale, determined by family income, household size, and certain expenses. The basic calculation of benefits is derived by subtracting the amount the household can afford to spend on food from the minimum budget needed to sustain a nutritionally adequate diet. This minimum budget uses the Thrifty Food Plan, which determines the cost of food for a diet that could sustain a person of a given age range and gender for 3 months without negative health consequences.

Participants in the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families and General Assistance programs<sup>21</sup> are eligible to receive Food Stamps, and other low-income households may also receive benefits if they do not exceed income and resource limits. Income eligibility levels consider both gross and net income, as indicated in the chart below, using a number of income disregards in calculating net income.

<b>Food Stamp Program Income Eligibility Thresholds</b>			
<b>Effective October 1, 2006</b>			
<b>Number of People in Household</b>	<b>Maximum Allowable Gross Monthly Household Income</b>	<b>Maximum Allowable Net Monthly Household Income</b>	<b>Maximum Benefit Allotment</b>
1	\$1,062	<i>\$817</i>	\$155
2	\$1,430	<i>\$1,100</i>	\$284
3	\$1,799	<i>\$1,384</i>	\$408
4	\$2,167	<i>\$1,667</i>	\$518
5	\$2,535	<i>\$1,950</i>	\$615
6	\$2,904	<i>\$2,234</i>	\$738
7	\$3,272	<i>\$2,517</i>	\$8168
8	\$3,640	<i>\$2,800</i>	\$932
Each additional person	+ \$369	+ <i>\$284</i>	+\$117
<b>Source: DFD Instruction No. 06-9-1</b>			

<sup>21</sup> Both Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) and General Assistance (GA) are Work First New Jersey programs that are described in the Income Security chapter of this report.

For non-elderly, non-disabled households, if gross income falls below the gross income limit, then all applicable income disregards are applied to calculate whether net income also falls below the given net income limit. These disregards include a standard deduction (indexed by household size) and possible other deductions, including 20% of earned income and deductions for expenses such as dependent care, medical expenses, child support payments, and excessive shelter costs. Other household resources (such as bank accounts) must also fall below eligibility limits, with some stipulated exceptions. If household gross income, net income, and resources are all below the associated limits, the household is eligible for benefits. Elderly and disabled households have slightly relaxed eligibility criteria, with no gross income test and no cap on shelter cost deductions. The amount of Food Stamp benefits is awarded on a sliding scale. An online screening tool is now available to calculate the estimated benefit for any household.<sup>22</sup> Applications in eight languages can be printed from the Web site and mailed to the welfare office. English and Spanish applications can also be filed on-line.

In New Jersey, the Food Stamp Program is administered through the Division of Family Development in the Department of Human Services. Eligibility is determined by the county welfare agencies that administer public assistance. Once an application is submitted, approved applicants should receive their Food Stamps within 30 days. Applicants may be approved for expedited Food Stamps in situations of extreme need, in which case benefits must be provided within seven days. New Jersey's provision of expedited Food Stamps as a percentage of all Food Stamps is slightly lower than the national average (36.9% *versus* 37.6%).<sup>23</sup> Food Stamps are approved for a limited duration and recipients must go through a re-determination process to establish continued eligibility after the initial authorized period.<sup>24</sup> In addition to financial eligibility requirements, there is also a work requirement for many food stamp recipients. All non-elderly adults who are able to work are required either to be employed or to register for employment and training services, including job search assistance.<sup>25</sup> For able-bodied adults without dependents (ABAWD) between 18 and 50 years of age, benefits are limited to 5 months in any 36 month period, unless employed at least 20 hours a week or participating in an employment and training program.

### ***Budget and Performance Trends:***

The majority of funding for the Food Stamps program is federal revenue, most of which funds benefit payments that go directly to recipients. This portion of the funding is reflected in the benefit totals supplied as evaluation data in the State Budget Book but is not reflected either in line item revenues or appropriations elsewhere in the state budget materials. In addition to benefits payments, federal revenue for program operations is also

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<sup>22</sup> At <http://www.oel.state.nj.us/FoodStampTool/index.html>.

<sup>23</sup> *Characteristics of Food Stamp Households Fiscal Year 2003*, USDA Food Nutrition Service, November 2004.

<sup>24</sup> DHS website: <http://www.state.nj.us/humanservices/dfd/foodstamp.html>.

<sup>25</sup> Employment services are provided through the state's One-Stop Career Center system. See the description of these centers in the Employment and Job Creation chapter of this report.

provided to the New Jersey Department of Human Services. New Jersey also contributes state funding for program administrative costs. Some additional budget detail is also available from the USDA Food and Nutrition Services, although there is a greater lag in reporting and this data does not project FY07 funding or services levels. Due to the difference in state and federal fiscal years, there are small differences in the totals from state and federal sources. Some additional analysis of program participation is also available from the Center on Budget and Policy Perspectives and Mathematica Policy Research, Inc. This data reflects program participation for earlier budget years, but is nevertheless informative of participation trends.

<b>Food Stamps Evaluation Data</b>				
	<b>Actual FY04</b>	<b>Actual FY05</b>	<b>Revised FY06</b>	<b>Estimated FY07</b>
Average monthly households participating	171,897	187,196	196,624	206,557
Average monthly recipients participating	368,440	394,882	414,642	435,660
Total value of bonus coupons	\$376,136,250	\$432,593,835	\$487,978,943	\$550,071,679
Average monthly value of bonus coupons per person participating	\$85.07	\$91.29	\$98.07	\$105.22
<b>Source: State FY07 Budget Book (p. D-237)</b>				

Note - Evaluation data reported in the State Budget Book (preceding table) and data reported by the federal Food & Nutrition Service (following table) cover slightly different time periods owing to the difference between federal and state fiscal years. Also note that the reporting years included in the two tables do not match completely, due to lags in reporting of data available on the federal FNS website.

<b>Food Stamps Program Federal Data as of August 24, 2006</b>			
	<b>FFY04</b>	<b>FFY05</b>	<b>Initial monthly data June 2006</b>
Average monthly households participating	172,641	186,661	194,770
Average monthly recipients participating	368,695	392,416	406,670
Total value of program benefits	\$377,525,993	\$437,423,008	n/a
Average monthly benefit per person participating	\$85.33	\$92.89	n/a
Average monthly benefit per household participating	\$182.23	\$195.28	n/a
<b>Source: Food Stamp Program Data; USDA Food and Nutrition Service, September 2006<sup>26</sup></b>			

<sup>26</sup> For information on all states for FY00 – FY05 see the website: <http://www.fns.usda.gov/pd/fspmain.htm>.

**Food Stamp Program Participants by Type of Participants  
FFY05 Year-to-Date Averages (as of April 2005)**

Estimated # of Children Receiving Food Stamps	Estimated # of Elderly Receiving Food Stamps	Est. # of Persons with Disabilities Receiving Food Stamps	Total Average monthly recipients (including non-disabled, non-senior adults)
194,000	44,000	59,000	388,000

**Source: CBPP Report “Food and Nutrition Programs: Reducing Hunger, Bolstering Nutrition” (p. 9)<sup>27</sup>**

Note – The information on the preceding chart is calculated from Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) preliminary data for October 2004 through April 2005 and quality control data from previous years. The categories are not mutually exclusive and do not sum to the total because non-disabled, non-senior adult recipients were not calculated separately.

**Food Stamps  
State Aid (distribution by fund & object)**

	Orig. & --Supple. FY05	Total FY05 Available	Expended FY05	FY06 Adjusted Approp.	Request/Recomm. FY07	Actual Approp. FY07
Food Stamp administration –state	\$8,600,000	\$8,600,000	\$8,600,000	\$8,600,000	\$8,600,000	\$8,600,000

**Source: State FY07 Budget Book (p. D-240) & FY07 Appropriations Bill S2007 (p. 128)**

Note: The state aid appropriations for the Food Stamps program reflect only the state funding appropriated for specific state program expenses.

**Food Stamps  
Schedule 2 (denotes federal revenue)**

Actual FY05	Estimated FY06	Estimated FY07	Appropriations FY07
\$78,782,000	\$99,022,000	\$102,842,000	\$102,783,000

**Source: State FY07 Budget Book (p. C-28) & FY07 Appropriations Bill S2007 (p. 15)**

Note: This federal revenue reflects only the portion of federal funding that passes through the state for expenses such as administration and training-related expenses. The majority of federal funding is distributed directly to recipients in the form of Food Stamp benefits.

***Additional Analysis:***

Between 1998 and 2002, overall Food Stamp participation in New Jersey declined by 38.4%, the second largest decline in the country.<sup>28</sup> The decline in New Jersey

<sup>27</sup> Rosenbaum, Dorothy & Zoë Neuberger (July 19, 2005). “Food and Nutrition Programs: Reducing Hunger, Bolstering Nutrition.” Washington: Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, p. 9.

continued after 2002 at a rate surpassed by only two other states, even as most other states saw increases, some very substantial. This trend has begun to reverse, with Food Stamp participation increasing by approximately 29,000 people between May 2003 and May 2004, an 8.5% increase.<sup>29</sup> Still, approximately 4 out of 10 people who are eligible for Food Stamps do not receive them. Even worse is New Jersey's participation rate among the working poor. While the participation in the food stamps program among eligible working families increased from 27% in 2002 to 33% in 2003, New Jersey still ranks 49<sup>th</sup> among the fifty states and the District of Columbia.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Preliminary Summary of Food Assistance Program Results for October 2001, FNS Data Base Monitoring Branch, December 21, 2001, Summary of Food Assistance Program Results for October 2001.

<sup>29</sup> Food Stamp Program Data, Number of Persons Participating; USDA Food and Nutrition Service, August 2004.

<sup>30</sup> Laura A. Castner and Allen L. Schirm, *State Food Stamp Participation Rates for the Working Poor in 2003*, Mathematica Policy Research Institute, April 2006.

## **Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC)**

### ***Program Purpose and Description:***

WIC is a federally funded block grant program that provides food and nutrition supplements for pregnant women, infants and young children. The program is means-tested, with a maximum income level for eligible households of 185% fpl. Eligible recipients must also be infants, children under the age of 5 or women who are pregnant, postpartum, or breastfeeding.<sup>31</sup> Applications for WIC are also accepted from individuals participating in the Medicaid, Food Stamps, and Temporary Assistance to Needy Families programs.

The WIC Program is designed to provide five health and nutrition-related services:

1. Nutrition assessment and counseling;
2. Nutritious and healthy foods to supplement the diet;
3. Breastfeeding promotion and support;
4. Immunization screening;
5. Referrals for health care.

WIC supplements are not meant to ensure adequate nutrition without additional food sources. According to WIC program information, nurses, lactation professionals, peer counselors, and other trained personnel provide nutritional assessment and counseling. Mothers are taught about feeding practices and food choices to enable proper nutritional intake for their children. WIC staff members are required to encourage breastfeeding, unless specific medical conditions such as HIV/AIDS discourage this practice. In cases where infants are not breastfed, iron-fortified formula is provided.<sup>32</sup>

### ***Budget and Performance Trends:***

The state budget materials include some information on WIC, although more detailed information is available from the USDA and the state WIC office. The Budget Book includes federal revenue figures and evaluation data, but does not provide line-item detail in the departmental budget. The Appropriations Bill, however, does include a \$100 million line item for Supplemental Food Program – Women, Infants, and Children in the detailed information provided regarding federal funds coming into DHSS.<sup>33</sup> A breakdown for how federal funding is split between assistance and administrative funding is available from USDA data for previous fiscal years, and provides an estimate of the division of funding.

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<sup>31</sup> Women who do not breastfeed are considered postpartum up to 6 months after childbirth, while women who breastfeed retain WIC eligibility up to the infant's first birthday.  
<http://www.fns.usda.gov/wic/aboutwic/default.htm>.

<sup>32</sup> Program description adapted from DHSS website; <http://www.state.nj.us/health/fhs/suppnutr.htm>.

<sup>33</sup> FY06 Appropriations Bill S3000 (p. 239).

<b>Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) Receiving Services Evaluation Data</b>			
<b>Actual FY04</b>	<b>Actual FY05</b>	<b>Revised FY06</b>	<b>Estimated FY07</b>
248,149	265,944	270,000	270,000
<b>Source: State FY07 Budget Book (p. D-155)</b>			

Note – The evaluation data provided in the State Budget Book covers the state fiscal year and provides estimated values for FY06 and FY07. The unduplicated count provided by the state’s WIC office (see the following table) is provided for the federal fiscal year and represents actual participation.

<b>WIC Evaluation Data</b>				
	<b>FFY03</b>	<b>FFY04</b>	<b>FFY05</b>	<b>FFY06 (through 11/6/06)</b>
Unduplicated number of people served in New Jersey per federal fiscal year	240,837	248,235	256,422	259,414
<b>Source: DHSS WIC Office Statistics<sup>34</sup></b>				

<b>WIC Program Data Federal Data as of August 24, 2006</b>					
	<b>FFY02</b>	<b>FFY03</b>	<b>FFY04</b>	<b>FFY05</b>	<b>Initial monthly data June 2006</b>
Monthly average program participation	133,946	136,272	143,341	146,888	150,299
Food cost	\$53,426,787	\$56,075,323	\$66,163,320	\$66,563,774	n/a
Average monthly benefit per person	\$33.24	\$34.29	\$38.47	\$37.76	n/a
Nutrition service and administrative costs	\$20,541,387	\$22,679,962	\$22,410,900	\$23,764,328	n/a
<b>Source: WIC Program Data, USDA Food and Nutrition Services, September, 2006<sup>35</sup></b>					

Note – Participation figures supplied by USDA are monthly averages, whereas the preceding table of DHSS statistics provides totals for the fiscal year, including recipients who received assistance for less than 12 months. The sum of all yearly participants is thus much larger than the average monthly participation.

<sup>34</sup> Information provided by New Jersey WIC staff via e-mail.

<sup>35</sup> For information on all states for FY00 – FY05 see the FNS website.

<b>Supplemental Food Program – Women, Infants, and Children Schedule 2 (denotes federal revenue)</b>			
<b>Actual FY05</b>	<b>Estimated FY06</b>	<b>Estimated FY07</b>	<b>Appropriated FY07</b>
\$89,576,000	\$94,000,000	\$100,000,000	\$100,000,000
<b>Source: State FY07 Budget Book (p. C-27) &amp; FY07 Appropriations Bill S2007 (p. 14)</b>			

<b>WIC Rebates<sup>36</sup> Schedule 2 (denotes dedicated revenue)</b>			
<b>Actual FY05</b>	<b>Estimated FY06</b>	<b>Estimated FY07</b>	<b>Actual FY07</b>
\$27,093,000	\$24,000,000	\$30,000,000	---
<b>Source: State FY07 Budget Book (p. C-20)</b>			

Note: Actual rebate amount for 2007 not yet available.

<b>Federal WIC Grants As of July 13, 2006</b>				
	<b>FFY03</b>	<b>FFY04</b>	<b>FFY05</b>	<b>FFY06</b>
Food Grant	\$57,886,564	\$67,735,146	\$69,183,736	\$71,990,105
Nutrition Services and Admin. Grant	\$22,811,802	\$23,808,363	\$25,419,067	\$26,619,695
<b>Total Grant</b>	<b>\$80,698,366</b>	<b>\$91,543,509</b>	<b>\$94,602,803</b>	<b>\$98,609,800</b>
<b>Source: WIC Program Data, USDA Food &amp; Nutrition Services, September, 2006</b>				

<sup>36</sup> Due to the large quantity of infant formula purchased from formula manufacturers through the WIC program, WIC has been able to contract with the manufacturers to provide a rebate on purchased formula as a form of volume discount.

**Additional Analysis:**

Some additional information is available regarding program participation from state and federal sources that provides a more nuanced picture of who is benefiting from the WIC program. A recent report on FFY06 data divides average monthly participant data into the three eligible sub-groups of recipients, showing that approximately half of the monthly participants are children (up to 5 years), with the remaining half almost equally divided between infants and women (pregnant, postpartum and breastfeeding). These data are preliminary figures for FFY06.

<b>WIC Average Monthly Participation by Type of Participant FFY06 (preliminary data, as of August 24, 2006)</b>			
<b>Pregnant, Postpartum, and Breastfeeding Women</b>	<b>Infants</b>	<b>Children</b>	<b>Total</b>
37,006	39,162	72,562	148,731

**Source: WIC Agency Level Monthly Program Data, USDA Food & Nutrition Services, September, 2006**

Information is also available regarding the estimated participation rate of all persons eligible for WIC assistance. The following table presents statewide averages of the estimated rates for the past four fiscal years, showing a slight improvement in participation rates since FFY03.

<b>Percentage of Estimated Eligibles Served Statewide Average</b>			
<b>FFY03</b>	<b>FFY04</b>	<b>FFY05</b>	<b>FFY06</b>
63.2%	65.3%	67.0%	67.4%

**Source: DHSS WIC Office Statistics<sup>37</sup>**

New Jersey anti-hunger advocates have expressed concern about, not only the number of eligible mothers and children not receiving benefits, but also about the significant disparity in participation among the 18 different providers who administer the WIC program on the local level.<sup>38</sup> In FFY06, participation rates among eligible populations ranged from 52.3% to 90.7% (up slightly from the FFY04 range of 43.6% to 84.05), based on estimates of the number of persons eligible for assistance.<sup>39</sup> For the first time in recent history, all of the state's 18 providers have estimated participation rates of over 50% in FFY06, but only five have over 75% of estimated eligible persons participating.

<sup>37</sup> Information provided by WIC staff via e-mail on August 16, 2005.

<sup>38</sup> *Blueprint to End Hunger in NJ*, Anti-Poverty Leaders; October 2003.

<sup>39</sup> Program data provided by WIC office staff via e-mail on August 17, 2005.

## **School Nutrition /Child Care / Summer Food Service Programs**

### ***Program Purpose and Description:***

New Jersey's Department of Agriculture administers child nutrition programs that assist schools, child care programs and organizations serving children and families to provide meals to low-income children. School-based nutrition programs in New Jersey include funds from the National School Lunch Entitlement Program, the School Breakfast Program, and the Special Milk Program for Children. These programs' stated intent is to provide nutritious meals to children to promote good health and academic achievement. Where available, programs provide financial assistance and, in some cases, USDA commodities to eligible public and nonprofit private schools and child care institutions that serve food or milk in compliance with program requirements. Low-income children may be eligible for either free or reduced-price lunches or breakfasts. In schools not providing lunch and breakfast programs, low-income children may be provided free milk. Children from households at or below 185% fpl are eligible for the nutrition programs available in their localities.

During summer months, the New Jersey Department of Agriculture also disburses funds through the federal Summer Food Service Program (SFSP). Funds are distributed to organizations that serve two meals a day to low-income children, either through activities related to other programs or through open sites. Children of age 18 and under are eligible for SFSP meals.

The Department of Agriculture also administers several feeding programs under the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), including the Child Care Food Program, the Family Day Care Food Program, the After School Care Snack Program, and homeless shelter food programs. Eligibility under the CACFP includes children 12 years of age and below, although children up to 15 years of age from migrant worker families and individuals with certain disabilities older than 12 years may be eligible. Eligible programs can receive financial assistance for up to three meals a day, at least one of which must be a snack. Eligible centers must either provide day care services for disabled children, or receive compensation under Title XX of the Social Security Act for at least 25% of enrolled children.

### ***Budget and Performance Trends:***

All federal and state funds for school, summer, and child care nutrition programs are administered by Food and Nutrition Services (FNS) in the New Jersey Department of Agriculture.<sup>40</sup> Since the majority of funding comes from federal sources, the most detailed line-item information is provided in the revenue section of both the State Budget Book and the Appropriations Bill. The departmental budget section only provides line-item appropriations for the state aid grants to local schools, public and private. USDA food commodities are also distributed by FNS, including commodities provided for school meals, but are not separately identified in any line-item detail. The majority of

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<sup>40</sup> Note - This division also administers the TEFAP program discussed later in this chapter.

funding information for FNS combines all program elements into line items for the entire division. The evaluation data provided in the Budget Book does not reflect the primary source of assistance<sup>41</sup> and is thus not included, since the information is misleading.

<b>USDA Food and Nutrition Services Child Nutrition Tables</b>				
<b>Evaluation Data (data as of August 24, 2006)</b>				
	<b>FY03</b>	<b>FY04</b>	<b>FY05</b>	<b>Preliminary Data (as of May, 2006)</b>
<b>Child and Adult Care</b>				
Average daily attendance	61,711	64,809	68,654	73,319 (June 2006)
Total meals served	35,410,362	37,155,842	39,687,544	n/a
Cash payments	\$37,629,520	\$40,535,753	\$45,233,700	n/a
<b>School Lunch</b>				
Total participation	604,595	616,759	629,815	639,928
Total lunches served	104,551,102	105,355,466	109,604	n/a
Cash payments	\$127,624,196	\$130,755,831	\$139,255,322	n/a
Commodity costs	\$19,537,647	\$22,198,257	\$24,420,934	n/a
<b>Special Milk</b>				
Total half-pints served	6,263,173	5,922,173	6,419,456	n/a
<b>Summer Food</b>				
Average daily attendance	54,020	63,242	51,906	n/a
Total meals served	2,963,703	3,447,860	2,916,106	n/a
Cash payments	\$5,636,792	\$6,770,446	\$5,873,547	n/a
<b>School Breakfast</b>				
Total participation	91,843	100,849	141,717	148,436
Total breakfasts served	17,862,638	19,573,565	26,933,567	n/a
Cash payments	\$20,227,728	\$22,381,976	\$32,767,637	n/a
<b>Source: USDA Food and Nutrition Service Child Nutrition State Level Tables &amp; Current Activity Tables</b>				

<sup>41</sup> The evaluation data reports “lbs. delivered” in commodities to the school lunch program, but the primary assistance is provided through funding grants.

**Child Nutrition  
Schedule 2 (denotes federal revenue)**

	<b>Actual FY05</b>	<b>Estimated FY06</b>	<b>Estimated FY07</b>	<b>Appropriated FY07</b>
Administration	\$2,716,000	\$3,677,000	\$4,085,000	\$4,100,000
Child Care	\$46,814,000	\$56,865,000	\$62,073,000	\$68,076,000
School Lunch	\$128,907,000	\$158,050,000	\$174,300,000	\$174,300,000
Special Milk	\$1,044,000	\$1,500,000	\$1,600,000	\$1,600,000
Summer Programs	\$6,775,000	\$10,017,000	\$10,347,000	\$10,347,000
School Breakfast	\$28,902,000	\$40,000,000	\$46,200,000	\$46,200,000

**Source: State FY07 Budget Book (p. C-24) & FY07 Appropriations Bill S2007 (p. 9)**

Note – Federal revenue figures for FY05 in the State FY07 Budget Book vary from the cash payment totals reflected in USDA data, but differences are relatively small and are likely accounted for by differences in state and federal fiscal year reporting.

<b>Food and Nutrition Services</b>						
	<b>Orig. &amp; --Supple.<sup>S</sup> FY05</b>	<b>Total FY05 Available</b>	<b>Expended FY05</b>	<b>FY06 Adjusted Appropriation</b>	<b>Request/Recommend FY07</b>	<b>Actual Approp. FY07</b>
State aid	\$11,035,000	\$11,366,000	\$10,343,000	\$11,677,000	\$11,677,000	\$11,677,000
<i>School breakfast – state aid grants</i>	\$3,212,000	\$3,266,000	\$2,644,000	\$3,854,000	\$3,854,000	\$3,854,000
<i>Non-public nutrition aid – state aid grants</i>	\$439,000	\$439,000	\$439,000	\$439,000	\$439,000	\$439,000
<i>School lunch aid – state aid grants</i>	\$7,384,000	\$7,661,000	\$7,260,000	\$7,384,000	\$7,384,000	\$7,384,000
Federal funds	\$248,329,000 \$112,000 <sup>S</sup>	\$248,441,000	\$219,036,000	\$271,534,000	\$300,177,000	\$306,390,000
All other funds	---	\$2,876,000	\$1,596,000	\$1,516,000	\$1,516,000	---
<b>Source: State FY07 Budget Book (pp. D-20) &amp; FY07 Appropriation Bill S2007 (pp. 26, 285)</b>						

Note – The state aid appropriation for FNS entirely funds child nutrition programs, as delineated in the three component line-item appropriations. The federal funds line item includes federal funding for the TEFAP<sup>42</sup> and Team Nutrition Training<sup>43</sup> programs as well as the nutrition programs discussed above.

**The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP)**<sup>44</sup>

***Program Purpose and Description:***

The USDA provides The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) with commodities and financial assistance for programs that feed low-income individuals and families. Currently, seven regional Emergency Feeding Organizations (EFOs) coordinate TEFAP distributions to a variety of established soup kitchens, congregate feeding sites and pantries in all 21 counties of the state. EFOs distribute food to soup kitchens, food

<sup>42</sup> See the program description later in this chapter.

<sup>43</sup> Team Nutrition is a USDA FNS initiative that provides training and technical assistance for food service, nutrition education for children and their caregivers, and school and community support for healthy eating and physical activity. For more information see <http://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/>.

<sup>44</sup> Note – While the federal name for the program is The Emergency Food Assistance Program, it is also often referred to as the Temporary Emergency Food Assistance Program.

pantries and public feeding sites for individuals and families participating in Temporary Assistance to Needy Families, Food Stamps, Supplemental Security Income, Women Infants and Children or Medicaid programs and for those with incomes at or below 185% fpl. <sup>45</sup> The commodities are distributed to the eligible clientele by local agencies in the form of either prepared meals or food commodities. Three quarters of the administrative funding from USDA is also disbursed to the EFOs.

***Budget and Performance Trends:***

While the state budget materials contain estimates of commodities and administrative funding provided by the USDA to New Jersey for FY06 and FY07, as well as an appropriation for the state’s share of the administrative costs, more detailed and accurate information is provided by the Division of Food and Nutrition in the state Department of Agriculture. This data provides a break-down by funding category for funding from FFY03 through FFY06, and indicates a significant drop in the commodities provided by the federal government in FFY06, which is not reflected in the state budget materials.

<b>Temporary Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) Evaluation Data (lbs. of commodities)</b>			
<b>Actual FY04</b>	<b>Revised FY05</b>	<b>Revised FY06</b>	<b>Estimated FY07</b>
9,900,000	9,750,000	10,500,000	10,500,000
<b>Source: State FY07 Budget Book (p. D-17)</b>			

<b>Temporary Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) Direct State Services</b>					
<b>Orig. &amp; --Supple. FY05</b>	<b>Total FY05 Available</b>	<b>Expended FY05</b>	<b>FY06 Adjusted Appropriation</b>	<b>Request/ Recommend FY07</b>	<b>Actual Approp. FY07</b>
\$338,000	\$338,000	\$338,000	\$338,000	\$338,000	\$338,000
<b>Source: State FY07 Budget Book (p. D-19) &amp; FY07 Appropriations Bill S2007 (p. 24)</b>					

Note: The above appropriation reflects only the state contribution to the administrative funding for TEFAP and is duplicative of the row labeled “Total state TEFAP admin. Grant” in the following NJDA chart. The balance of the administrative funding and the entirety of the financial assistance and commodities distribution from the USDA are distributed directly to the EFOs.

<sup>45</sup> Statistics and program descriptions adapted from NJ Department of Agriculture website: <http://www.state.nj.us/agriculture/markets/tefap.htm>.

<b>Jobs Bill – TEFAP Schedule 2 (denotes federal revenue)</b>			
<b>Actual FY05</b>	<b>Estimated FY06</b>	<b>Estimated FY07</b>	<b>Appropriated FY07</b>
\$1,221,000	\$1,278,000	\$1,425,000	\$1,550,000
<b>Source: State FY07 Budget Book (p. C-22) &amp; FY07 Appropriations Bill S2007 (p. 9)</b>			

Note – This line item represents an estimate of the administrative grant portion of the federal TEFAP funding. As these estimates are developed well before federal funding levels are decided, these figures are less reliable than the figures provided by the division in the following chart.

<b>Federal TEFAP Commodities Distributed/Administrative Funding Received</b>				
	<b>Actual FFY03</b>	<b>Actual FFY04</b>	<b>Actual FFY05</b>	<b>Estimated FFY06</b>
Total federal commodities distributed (lbs.)	9,980,611 (lbs.)	9,890,403 (lbs.)	9,710,485 (lbs.)	7,190,673 (lbs.)
Total federal market value	\$6,910,983	\$7,674,795	\$7,291,595	\$4,606,404
Total annual operating revenue	\$1,716,757	\$1,856,453	\$1,693,604	\$1,576,357
<i>Total federal TEFAP admin. grant</i>	<i>\$1,148,848</i>	<i>\$1,163,226</i>	<i>\$1,118,904</i>	<i>\$1,011,515</i>
<i>Total state TEFAP admin. grant<sup>46</sup></i>	<i>\$338,000</i>	<i>\$337,998</i>	<i>\$338,000</i>	<i>\$338,000</i>
<i>Total federal Supplemental TEFAP/ Food Stamp grant</i>	<i>\$229,909</i>	<i>\$230,229</i>	<i>\$111,700</i>	<i>\$101,842</i>
<i>Total NJDA TANF grant</i>	<i>---</i>	<i>\$125,000</i>	<i>\$125,000</i>	<i>\$125,000</i>
Total EFO commodity reimbursement	\$797,037	\$1,136,634	\$1,157,697	\$988,553
<b>Source: NJDA Division of Food and Nutrition, Food Distribution Bureau/ TEFAP Program</b>				

Note – The “total annual operating revenue” is made up of the administrative funding grants from federal and state sources, which have line-item estimates in the state budget materials, as well as two other small federal grants, as indicated in the table above. The NJDA also reimburses EFOs for some of the costs of storing and distributing the commodities based on a per-pound reimbursement fee, which is reflected in the budget item “Total EFO Commodity Reimbursement.”

<sup>46</sup> The state share of the administrative funding is also reported in the preceding state budget materials.

## **Senior Food Programs**

### ***Program Purpose and Description:***

Senior food programs in New Jersey are run by community programs that use a variety of funding sources, including federal funding, private sector donations, volunteer service, and at-cost fees-for-service. Applicable federal funding for these programs is administered by New Jersey's Department of Health and Senior Services (DHSS) through the Division of Aging and Community Services. Each county's Area Agency on Aging administers congregate or group meal programs that provide at least one hot meal a day, 5 days a week. Participants are required to reserve their meals ahead of time and are encouraged to contribute voluntarily toward the costs of their meals.

Area Agencies on Aging also contract to deliver meal services to older homebound persons who are ill, incapacitated, disabled, or isolated. This program is federally funded and provides at least one hot meal a day to homebound individuals 60 years of age or older, in some cases including spouses. There is no income requirement for this program, but the applicant must receive a formal needs assessment before services are provided. These Senior Food Programs are federally funded through Title III of the Older Americans Act.

The Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program, an additional federal program, is funded by the USDA's Food and Nutrition Service, and is administered in New Jersey by the DHSS WIC Program and the County Offices on Aging. The program provides financial assistance in the form of vouchers to low-income seniors to help them purchase fresh, locally-grown produce. Seniors receive packets of four vouchers worth \$5 each, but in households with more than one eligible senior, only one person may receive vouchers, due to limited funding. In FY02, the federal funding provided to New Jersey covered 23,000 seniors, less than 5% of the estimated 500,000 eligible individuals. The program operates from July through November and farmers must receive pre-approval from New Jersey's Department of Agriculture to accept the vouchers.<sup>47</sup>

### ***Budget and Performance Trends:***

<b>USDA Older Americans Act – Title III Schedule 2 (denotes federal revenue)</b>			
<b>Actual FY05</b>	<b>Estimated FY06</b>	<b>Estimated FY07</b>	<b>Appropriation FY07</b>
\$3,364,000	\$3,900,000	\$3,900,000	\$3,900,000
<b>Source: State FY07 Budget Book (p. C-27) &amp; FY07 Appropriations Bill S2007 (p. 14)</b>			

<sup>47</sup> *Blueprint to End Hunger in New Jersey*, 2002.

**Senior Farmer's Market Nutrition Program  
Schedule 2 (denotes federal revenue)**

<b>Actual FY05</b>	<b>Estimated FY06</b>	<b>Estimated FY07</b>	<b>Appropriated FY07</b>
\$596,000	\$1,000,000	\$1,000,000	\$1,000,000

**Source: State FY07 Budget Book (p. C-27) & FY07 Appropriations Bill S2007 (p. 14)**

## Recommendations

### Food Stamps

- New Jersey must maximize federal Food Stamp assistance and increase utilization, especially for the working poor.

New Jersey has consistently ranked among the worst states in the nation in Food Stamp participation rates among eligible households. Between 2000 and 2002, New Jersey dropped from 41<sup>st</sup> to 49<sup>th</sup> among the fifty states and D.C. in terms of participation rates for all eligible people, with a 2002 participation rate of just 43% compared to the 54% national average. The participation rate among eligible working poor households<sup>48</sup> was just 24% in 2002, ranking New Jersey 50<sup>th</sup> among the fifty states and D.C.<sup>49</sup>

New Jersey has taken significant steps to improve program participation by simplifying the Food Stamp application, partnering with community providers to expand outreach and education, and developing computer-based information tools, including development of on-line application and benefits screening through NJHelps.org. These efforts must continue and expand in light of the substantial number of eligible low-income households who are not in the program.

- New Jersey must implement a state nutrition assistance program, to supplement the federal food stamp benefit. Because the federal Food Stamp benefit is inadequate to provide for long-term nutritional needs, and because the high cost of living in New Jersey makes it necessary to spend more and more resources on expenses other than food, a state supplement is essential. Such a program would serve to encourage greater participation in the federal Food Stamp program and would go a long way towards reducing food insecurity and hunger.
- New Jersey must continue efforts to expand Food Stamp outreach, particularly to immigrants, the elderly and the working poor.
- New Jersey must improve the processing of applications, by keeping offices open during nontraditional hours and shortening the time frame for the issuance of expedited Food Stamps.

In light of New Jersey's poor performance in expediting Food Stamp applications, New Jersey must take steps to improve the processing of applications, and should shorten the time frame for the issuance of expedited Food Stamps from 7 days to 4, as other states have done. Food Stamps must be available to individuals who cannot get to the Food Stamp office during traditional business hours. Offices must be open

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<sup>48</sup> "Working poor" is defined as households in which a member earns income from a job.

<sup>49</sup> Castner, Laura A. & Allen L. Schirm, *State Food Stamp Participation Rates for the Working Poor in 2002*, Mathematica Policy Research, Inc, submitted to U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service, August 2005.

evenings and Saturdays to meet the needs of working families that cannot take time away from work.

- New Jersey must expand the state Food Stamp program to cover a broader range of needy immigrants.

Federal changes to the Food Stamp program have restored Food Stamp eligibility to some immigrants who lost eligibility in 1996. While the federal restoration covers most of the individuals currently covered by New Jersey's supplementary program, it does not cover all, nor does it extend coverage to many needy immigrants. Often, if one member of an immigrant family is ineligible for benefits, the entire family goes hungry. New Jersey must expand the state Food Stamp program to cover needy immigrant groups not otherwise covered.

- New Jersey regulations must be amended to allow the provision of Food Stamp benefits to certain ex-offenders who are currently barred from participation, in order to facilitate their transition from incarceration to self-supporting employment.

### **Emergency Food Assistance Network**

- Additional funding for emergency food is critically needed and should be established as a \$10 million line item in the New Jersey State Budget.

The demand for food assistance has increased dramatically in recent years. The USDA's latest report estimates that in 2003 there were more than 270,000 households in New Jersey (8.6% of all households in the state, including approximately 750,000 individuals) who were hungry or threatened by hunger. According to a 2004 statewide survey of emergency food providers, over the five-year period from 1999-2003 the number of people served by emergency food pantries increased an average of 125%, including an average increase of 148% in the number of children served. During this time, the number of meals served by soup kitchens and shelters increased an average of 92%.<sup>50</sup> Nearby states provide a precedent for contributing significant amounts of state funding toward the purchase of nutritious foods for distribution by emergency food providers.<sup>51</sup> The state must allocate additional, renewable funding of \$10 million per year to meet this increased need.

- The remaining \$1.65 million in funding from the New Jersey Hunger Prevention Act should be released for the purchase of emergency food.

The Hunger Prevention Act allocated \$5 million for emergency food providers, but only \$3.35 million has been obligated to date. The Act must be fully implemented, and the remaining \$1.65 million in funds must be released in order to purchase emergency food supplies.

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<sup>50</sup> Survey results cited in "Statewide Network News," Spring 2005, Statewide Emergency Food and Anti-Hunger Network.

<sup>51</sup> New York provides \$24 million each year and Pennsylvania provides \$15.4 million.

- Fully fund the Governor’s Initiative to Fight Hunger. The initiative allocated \$4 million for emergency food providers. While \$750,000 was allocated in October, 2006, the state must ensure that the remaining committed funds are distributed.
- New Jersey should pass the New Jersey State Tax Check-Off Bill (A1723/S1354). Funds raised by a voluntary tax check-off for the Community Food Pantry fund would be distributed to food pantries in need by the Department of Human Services.

Such a program, while of little or no cost to the state, would establish an important source of revenue to provide assistance for emergency food providers.

### **The Special Supplemental Program for Women Infants and Children (WIC)**

- New Jersey’s administration and congressional delegation should support increases in the President’s budget proposal for WIC (\$4.87 billion nationally) to reflect rising costs for food and infant formula and to fund a growing caseload of approximately 7.86 million participants per month.
- Enact the proposed legislation (A1086/S704) to create a check-off for contributions for emergency food on the New Jersey State Income Tax Form.

### **Universal School Breakfast**

- Encourage schools to provide breakfast in the classroom after the bell to maximize participation.
- Increase state funding in order to support expansion of the Universal School Breakfast pilot.

### **School Lunch Program**

- Increase state aid to the School Lunch program by at least 20% (\$1.5 million) to account for 10 years of flat funding and increases in the number of children being served.

### **The Child and Adult Care Feeding Program (CACFP)**

- New Jersey must do more to promote the CACFP through extensive outreach to increase the number of participating day care providers, adult day programs, after school programs and homeless shelters.
- Administrative constraints on the program must be reduced and eligibility thresholds elevated, in order to improve participation rates.

### **The Summer Food Service Program (SFSP)**

- New Jersey should increase the SFSP participation rate in all New Jersey counties to at least 25% of students eligible for free and reduced price school meals in the next 12 months and to 40% in succeeding years.
- New Jersey must appropriate funds to provide a state match to school sponsors to encourage the use of the seamless summer waiver. This would reduce paperwork and increase participation.

### **The Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program**

- New Jersey should supplement federal funding allocations to enable more seniors to access the program.
- New Jersey should develop an administrative procedure that enables vouchers to be reallocated from counties with unused vouchers to counties with shortages.