



Fact Sheet: Hunger

When you are asked in the world to come, 'What was your work?' and you answer: 'I fed the hungry,' you will be told: 'This is the gate of the Eternal, enter into it, you who have fed the hungry.' (Midrash to Psalm 118:17)

"And when you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not reap all the way to the edges of your field, or gather the gleanings of your harvest; you shall leave them for the poor and the stranger." (Leviticus 23:22)

One of the most disturbing and extraordinary aspects of life in wealthy countries is the persistence of hunger.

- The U.S. government defines a food **secure** household as one in which all members have "access at all times to enough food for an active, healthy life."
- According to the U.S. Dept. of Agriculture (USDA), of the 49.1 million Americans living in food **insecure** households in 2008 (up from 36.2 million in 2007), 32.4 million are adults (14.4% of all adults) and 16.7 million are children (22.5% of all children).
- A recent Gallup poll of Americans found that 82 of the 100 largest Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSAs) had 15% or more of respondents reporting that they did not have enough money to buy needed food within the last year.
- Black (25.7%) and Hispanic (26.9%) U.S. households experienced food insecurity at far higher rates than the national average.
- Of the 436 Congressional Districts polled by Gallup, 311 had a food hardship rate of 15% or higher. In 139 of them the rate was 20% or higher.
- According to FoodBanks Canada, there was an 18% increase in Canadians using food bank services from March 2008-March 2009.
- Saskatchewan and Manitoba, which were both spared the harshest effects of the recession, reported growing demand for food banks, by 6% and 18% respectively, according to HungerCount 2009.
- 37% of those seeking help at Canadian food banks are children.
- Hunger is not just a problem that affects people without jobs; nearly 20% of Canadian food bank users report income from current or recent employment.

Check out the website of the Religious Action Center to learn more about the Reform Jewish efforts to fight hunger:
<http://rac.org/advocacy/issues/issuehun/>.

Source: Food Research and Action Center (www.frac.org)