



San Diego Food Bank – Press Release

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2008 statistics show startling increase in demand

San Diego, Calif. – August 5, 2008 – La Mesa up 102%. Spring Valley up 69%. Chula Vista up 34%. The San Diego Food Bank releases statistics today showing an alarming increase in its distribution figures to key cities in San Diego County from the first quarter to the second quarter 2008.

SDFB distribution increases in key cities 1st to 2nd quarters 2008	
City	% Increase
Chula Vista	34%
National City	2%
El Cajon	7%
Oceanside	26%
Spring Valley	69%
La Mesa	102%
Calexico	16%

In addition to city distribution data, the San Diego Food Bank also compiled statistics on its annual distribution by County Supervisor Districts and City Council Districts for Financial Year 2007-2008 (July '07 to June '08).

City council districts with the highest distribution rates were Ben Hueso's District 8 with 1,026,083 lbs. or 23% of annual distribution and Tony Young's District 4 at 993,947 lbs., or 22% of annual distribution. County Supervisor District 1 Greg Cox and District 4 Ron Roberts were tied at 33% of annual distribution.

According to U.S. Census data, of the county's 2.9 million residents, the number of people at risk of hunger stands at 480,000. This represents the number of people living below 200% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL). Of this number, 267,000 are children under 18, and 181,000 are children under 12.

The Food Bank cites the lethal combination of rising prices, job layoffs, rising rents, home foreclosures and stagnant wages as the key factors that are forcing thousands of low-income working families and fixed-income seniors to turn to it for help.

And prices continue to rise. A gallon of gas soared past \$4.50 this summer while a gallon of milk and a loaf of bread both hover at \$4.00. According to the San Diego

Apartment Association the average rent for a two bedroom unit increased 15% since 2006. A one bedroom unit increased 21% since 2006, and every .50% interest rate increase adds about \$100 to the average mortgage.

Even San Diego's public transportation system is not immune with San Diego County's two public transit agencies increasing fares for trolley services, buses and rail.

More people than ever are relying on the San Diego Food Bank to put food on the table especially given the low thresholds for Food Stamp eligibility which do not take into account the high cost of living in San Diego County.

To be eligible for Food Stamps, net after-tax income must be no more than roughly 130% of the FPL with very limited assets. Low-income families in need of short-term assistance due to a job lay-off would need to be close to the poverty level and have little or no assets to be eligible, forcing many families to choose between paying the rent or buying food.

For example, a family of four is not eligible for Food Stamps if total household income is more than roughly \$27,560 per year, and the family cannot have more than \$2,000 in a bank or retirement account.

From 2007 to 2008, the Food Bank's program for low-income families and fixed-income seniors called the Emergency Food Assistance Program increased by 28% from 35,000 to 44,000 people. While the SDFB applies income criteria, unlike Food Stamps, the program does not count assets, enabling those making below 200% of the poverty level to receive food assistance.

In a 2006 survey of Food Stamp participation rates in America's 25 largest urban areas, San Diego ranked last at 27% with the lowest participation rate of all the cities surveyed, losing over \$144 million per year in Food Stamp benefits. A follow up survey in 2007 showed a marginal increase in participation at 31%.

SDFB CEO "Scody" Hage said, "The economic crisis hitting San Diego is real and our distribution figures demonstrate how much this need has increased. Thousands of low-income families are turning to us for help. In essence, we have become San Diego County's safety net. Some families may not qualify for Food Stamps but still face the choice of paying the rent or buying food. This is why we need the support of the San Diego community to help us feed these families. Every donation helps us make sure no one has to go to bed hungry."

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Notes for editors:

Distribution in key cities:

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Distribution in Supervisor Districts:

County Supervisor Districts annual food distribution: Financial Year 2007-2008			
District 1, Greg Cox	2,993,617 lbs.	2,338,763 meals	33%
District 2, Dianne Jacob	1,668,243 lbs.	1,318,940 meals	19%
District 3, Pam Slater-Price	226,050 lbs.	176,602 meals	2%
District 4, Ron Roberts	2,991,897 lbs.	2,337,420 meals	33%
District 5, Bill Horn	798,113 lbs.	623,526 meals	9%

Distribution in City Council Districts:

Council Districts annual food distribution: Financial Year 2007-2008			
District 1, Scott Peters	247,387 lbs.	193,271 meals	5%
District 2, Kevin Faulconer	950,122 lbs.	742,283 meals	21%
District 3, Toni Atkins	656,004 lbs.	512,503 meals	14%
District 4, Tony Young	993,947 lbs.	776,521 meals	22%
District 5, Brian Maienschein	13,112 lbs.	10,244 meals	Nil
District 6, Donna Frye	271,517 lbs.	212,123 meals	6%
District 7, Jim Madaffer	416,765 lbs.	325,598 meals	9%
District 8, Ben Hueso	1,026,083 lbs.	801,741 meals	23%

Food Stamp eligibility:

To qualify for food stamps, net after-tax income must be no more than roughly 130% of the FPL with no more than \$2,000 liquid assets including retirement accounts. In a 2006 survey of food stamp participation rates in America's 25 largest urban areas, San Diego ranked last at 27% with the lowest participation rate of all the cities surveyed, losing over \$144 million per year in food stamp benefits. A follow up survey in 2007 showed a marginal increase in participation at 31%. (Source: Food Research and Action Center)

Federal Poverty Level (FPL) Thresholds 2008:			
Family size	100% FPL	130% FPL	200% FPL
1	\$10,400	\$13,520	\$20,800
2	\$14,000	\$18,200	\$28,000
3	\$17,600	\$22,880	\$35,200
4	\$21,200	\$27,560	\$42,400

Rent increases:

(Source: San Diego Apartment Association)

Average 1 bedroom unit: Spring 2006 \$989 - Spring 2008 \$1198 = 21% increase over two years. Average 2 bedroom unit: Spring 2006 \$1245 – Spring 2008 \$1436 = 15% increase over two years.

Fuel increases:

(Source: AAA Southern CA)

Regular unleaded gasoline: 1 year ago: \$3.06 Last month: \$4.58 Current: \$4.24

Food price increases:

(Source: Dept. of Labor)

Nat'l cost of food rose 6.1% from June 2007– June 2008. Some items experienced double-digit increases including: cheese 14.7 %; eggs 23.2%; and bread 15.9%.

SDFB Distribution Fiscal Year 2007-08:

SDFB distributed 9.1 million pounds of food throughout San Diego County totaling 7.1 million meals (592,000 meals monthly and 19,500 meals daily)

Food Bank program for low-income families increase from 2007 to 2008:

Comparing April to June 2007 and April to June 2008, the number of participants on the SDFB's Emergency Food Assistance Program for low-income families increased 28% from 35,000 to 44,000 people this year.

About San Diego Food Bank

Established in 1977, the San Diego Food Bank is a critical component to the welfare of San Diego County, providing food to people in need, advocating for the hungry and educating the public about hunger-related issues. Through a combination of government programs and partnerships with more than 260 San Diego County non-profit charities, SDFB acts as a central repository and distribution point for government and donated food. Funded by foundations, grants, USDA, corporations, sponsors and individual donors, SDFB distributes more than 10 million pounds of food annually to individuals, families and a network of non-profit organizations that work to alleviate hunger throughout the county. For more information, please visit www.sandiegofoodbank.org.

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