

For Immediate Release

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Northern Illinois Food Bank

delivering food assistance to your community

Hunger Explodes with the Suburbanization of Poverty

(St. Charles IL) The *Hunger in America 2010* study conducted nationally by Feeding America, the nation's Food Bank network, and supported locally by member Northern Illinois Food Bank (NIFB) reports that more than 61,500 different people in any given week are receiving food assistance in NIFB's 13 county service area. This is an increase of 65 percent over the last Hunger Study published in 2006, which reported that NIFB was helping 37,000-plus different people in any given week.

Hunger has exploded in NIFB's service area and shows no immediate signs of declining. The *Hunger in America 2010* study statistically validates the 35% increase in people needing food assistance from NIFB this past year, which occurred due to rising poverty and extremely high unemployment. "The study is reflective of what our agencies are experiencing at emergency feeding sites," said Elizabeth Donovan, NIFB Director of Agencies and Programs. "The agencies are on the front lines of the hunger battle and they are working to get food to more people everyday. Many of these people have never asked for help before."

The increased number of families needing food assistance mirrors the growth in poverty. Over the previous decade, the counties served by NIFB have seen its population increase nearly 14 percent, but the same population's poverty has soared 48 percent. There are now 269,280 people who live in poverty (family of four living on \$22,050 a year) in NIFB's service area including nearly 96,000 children.

"The root cause of hunger is often poverty or lack of sufficient income, and the suburbs are not immune to this phenomenon," said H. Dennis Smith, President of NIFB. "When budgets are tight, people have to make choices between living essentials like medicine, housing, clothing, heat or food. More people are coming to us for food than ever before and this Hunger Study helps illustrate that fact. We distribute 25% more food each week than we did last year and that is not enough. I hope we can continue since I don't see an end to our challenge. It is very clear that the work of Northern Illinois Food Bank is more important than ever."

The Hunger 2010 study highlighted some specific points:

- NIFB provides food for an estimated 502,400 different people annually.
- 43% of households include at least one employed adult.

- About 52% are non-Hispanic White, 27% are non-Hispanic black, 15% are Hispanic, and the rest are from other racial or ethnic groups.
- 48% of the members of households served by NIFB are children under 18 years of age.
- 8% of the members of households are children age 0 to 5 years.
- 53% and 35% respectively of households with school-age children participate in federal school lunch and school breakfast programs
- 1% of households with school-age children participate in the summer food service program

About Northern Illinois Food Bank

Northern Illinois Food Bank (NIFB) is an Illinois non-for-profit Corporation that provides food to all those in need through its 520 partner agencies in the following thirteen counties: Boone, DuPage, DeKalb, Grundy, Kane, Kankakee, Kendall, Lake, McHenry, Ogle, Stephenson, Will and Winnebago. NIFB acquires, gathers, handles, and distributes donated, government, and purchased food to more than 61,600 different people each week through local food pantries, soup kitchens, shelters, youth activity centers and other food assistance sites. In Fiscal Year 2009 NIFB distributed over 27 million pounds of food and is on pace to distribute 35-plus million pounds this year. The Food Bank has recently launched a Capital Campaign to build a new Food Distribution and Community Nutrition Center to enable them to handle more food more efficiently to meet the increasing demand.
