



Missouri Food Bank Association

For Immediate Release

November 23, 2009

Contact: Scott Baker (573) 355-7758 or sbaker@feedingmissouri.org

More Missourians Fighting Hunger

Increase in demand being felt across the state

Columbia, Mo. – As the Thanksgiving holiday approaches, new statistics show that many more Missourians are struggling with hunger. In fact, Missouri ranks among the worst in the nation when it comes to families dealing with hunger.

Local pantries and shelters across Missouri are bearing the brunt of a significant increase in demand for food. These agencies get the bulk of their food supply from the six member food banks of the Missouri Food Bank Association (MFBA).

MFBA food banks report an increase in demand of 20% - 44% in 2009. Much of this demand is the result of “new” families visiting food pantries for the first time because of layoffs and other financial difficulties.

“The increase in demand knows few boundaries,” said MFBA president Karen Haren. “It’s being felt in rural areas and urban centers. It’s being experienced by middle-class and lower-class families. It’s impacting nearly as many children as it is adults. There is no denying that Missouri has a serious hunger problem in our own backyard.”

Between 2006 and 2008, Missouri averaged the sixth highest rate in the nation for households dealing with hunger (Food Research and Action Center, http://frac.org/pdf/foodinsecurity_2008_rank.pdf). What’s worse, nearly six percent of Missouri households fell into the “Very Low Food Security” category, which was the fifth highest percentage in the United States.

High unemployment and other financial difficulties are sure to make those numbers worse in 2009.

These numbers come on the heels of a U.S. Department of Agriculture report that shows hunger reaching the highest level in America since statistics started being tracked in 1995.

“No matter where you live, there’s a good chance that your neighbors need help, even if they have never seemed to before,” said Haren. “The only way we can solve this problem is by Missourians uniting to address this very serious problem together.”

For more information on ways to help, including links to your local food bank, please visit www.feedingmissouri.org.

-30-

The Missouri Food Bank Association is a coalition of the six Missouri Food Banks working to provide hunger relief in every county (and St. Louis City) in the state. Collectively, MFBA member food banks distribute food through a network of over 2,000 community feeding programs.