

CONTRA COSTA COUNTY

Total Population: 999,930

HUNGER



Estimated Number of Low Income Adults Reporting Hunger or Food Insecurity: 47,000

Estimated Number of Other Persons* Living in These Households: 132,775

Total Number “Touched” by Hunger and Food Insecurity: 179,775

CONSEQUENCES OF HUNGER¹

- **Poor Health:** Food insecurity leads to poor quality diets, resulting in substandard nutritional status. Food-insecure adults with diabetes have greater risk of complications of their disease and greater utilization of expensive medical care.
- **Poor School Performance:** Children in food-insecure households tend to do less well in school. They have higher rates of absences, tardiness and poorer cognitive functioning.
- **Increased Risk of Emotional Problems:** Children and adolescents in food insecure households are more likely to be depressed and to engage in anti-social behavior.

WHAT YOU CAN DO ABOUT HUNGER: ACTION STEPS

Federal Nutrition Programs: Reduce barriers and encourage participation in the underutilized federally-funded nutrition assistance programs. For example, Contra Costa County lost \$25,466,460.00 in food stamp benefits and \$11,827,055.49 in school nutrition reimbursement due to underutilization of these programs. Hunger can be alleviated by families’ using the Food Stamp Program, National School Lunch Program, School Breakfast Program, Child and Adult Care Food Program, and Summer Food Service Programs. With tight budgets facing the State, drawing down federal resources to reduce food insecurity should be a top priority.

Reduce household economic pressures: The rising cost of gasoline, health care/insurance, housing and other household needs all compete for low wage workers’ limited household dollars, resulting in inadequate nutrition. State and local policies in these areas impact food resources, such as minimum wage, energy prices, and high housing prices, which would affect 66,852 people living in poverty in Contra Costa County. For example, the state minimum wage has not increased since 2002, while the cost of household needs has skyrocketed. The state minimum wage should be increased and indexed to inflation to ensure that families are not falling behind and being forced to choose between food and other basic needs.

Contact your policymakers: They vote frequently on polices impacting low-income Californians. They need to hear from you that hunger and adequate nutrition are priorities.

Full report and methodology can be found at www.cfpa.net

* California Health Interview Survey collected data on food insecurity from adults only. This CFPA report *estimates* the number of other persons (adults and children, grandparents and other relatives) in a household. Please see methodology for more details.