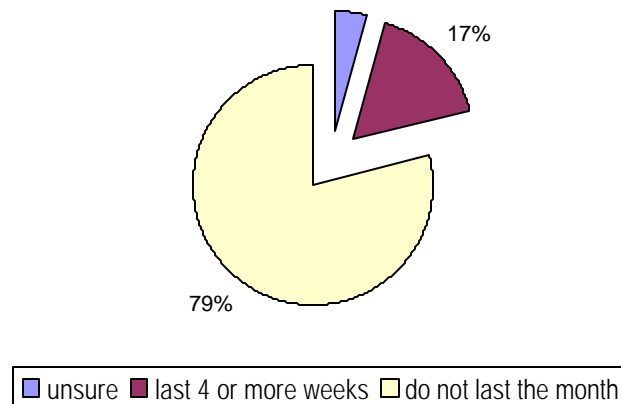


Ensure Benefit Adequacy

- ▶ **While Food Stamps can significantly supplement a household's food budget, the benefit level does not adequately meet household needs.**

Forty-one percent of Americans who access emergency charitable food also receive Food Stamps. They must resort to private assistance when their food stamps run out. The increasing reliance on private emergency food resources like food banks and local government programs is well-documented. While the private non-profit sector and local governments have tried to meet their residents' needs, the federal government has a clear role to ensure that their existing programs meet the needs of participants; especially in economic downturns when the private and local sectors will be unable to meet the need.

Food Bank Clients who also receive Food Stamps report how long their monthly Food Stamp allotment lasts:



47% of these respondents report that the food they purchase with Food Stamps lasts less than 3 weeks

- ▶ **More food resources enable healthier purchases**

Of those households consuming food at or near the food stamp allotment level, only 33% were within 80% of the US RDA. As household food spending increased, the likelihood that household food would provide the RDA increased – at a spending level at or near the low-cost food plan, 64% achieved at least 80% of the RDA. Nutritional and health aims would be served by increasing benefit level

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- ▶ **What Can Be Done To Make Food Stamp Benefits More Adequate?:**

- ▶ Replace excess shelter costs with actual expenses and remove shelter cap
- ▶ Raise the minimum benefit and apply it to all households
- ▶ Increase standard deduction and adjust it for family size
- ▶ Index deductions to inflation to prevent benefit erosion
- ▶ Link benefits to low-cost food plan rather than thrifty plan to enable healthier diets