



breadfortheworld
HAVE FAITH. END HUNGER.

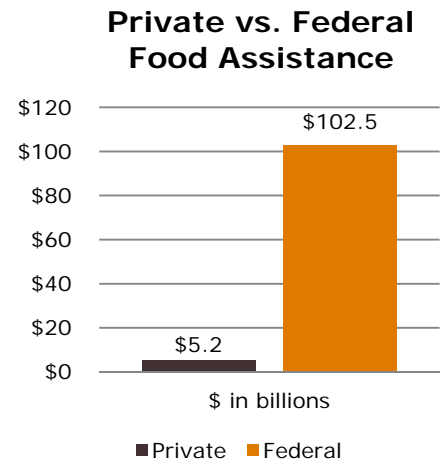
Fact Sheet

Churches and Hunger

Churches and charities are struggling to feed people affected by \$19 billion in cuts to SNAP, our nation's largest food assistance program.

Charity alone can't feed everyone who's hungry. Churches, food banks, and private food charities have all been stretched thin by our economic downturn. Food bank demand has increased nearly 50 percent since 2006.¹ Yet 34 percent of Americans admit that they've cut back on donations to houses of worship², making the role of federal nutrition programs even more crucial.

Food benefits from federal nutrition programs amounted to \$102.5 billion in 2013,³ compared to \$5.2 billion of food distributed by private charity in the same time period.⁴ In other words, **federal nutrition programs delivered nearly 20 times the amount of food assistance as did private charities.**



An **\$11 billion cut** to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, formerly food stamps) went into effect Nov. 1, 2013, and has already impacted **more than 47 million Americans**. The average family of four lost up to \$36 a month in benefits. This is equal to cutting 10 million SNAP meals every day from Nov. 1, 2013 through 2014.

ONE IN 20

One in 20 bags of food assistance comes from a charitable organization. Federal nutrition programs provide the rest.

An additional **\$8.6 billion cut** to SNAP was signed into law in February 2014. This cut will impact 850,000 SNAP households in 15 states⁵ and the District of Columbia. Each household will see its benefits cut by about \$90 a month.

Furthermore, the House of Representatives has passed a Budget Resolution cutting at least \$134 billion from SNAP every year since 2011. Such proposals threaten to push millions of SNAP recipients out of the program. The Harford Institute for Religion and Research estimates that there are 350,000 religious congregations in the United States.⁶ If the proposals by the House of Representatives were enacted, **each congregation—big or small—would have to spend approximately \$40,000 every year for the next ten years** to feed people who would lose benefits or face reduced benefits.

Bread for the World members spoke out in response to deep cuts to SNAP. Since 2012, **Bread members have sent more than 75,000 messages to Congress**, sharing their stories:

“The proposed cost is more than we pay our full-time minister for compensation—the only full-time staff we have. We contribute to multiple charities that distribute food to those who are in need in order to ensure the best stewardship of our resources. Yet, we are still not able to meet all of the needs. **These cuts will overwhelm us.**”

—Sarah from Arlington, Texas

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“**Feeding the hungry is not a choice—it is a moral imperative.** But the food pantries and soup kitchens in this area, funded by the generosity of church members, are already serving those in need at capacity and beyond in these tough economic times. We are doing our part. We expect that our government will do the same.”

—Alexandra from Troy, N.Y.

“**We fed over 32,000 people last year and we are tapped!** We can barely pay our own bills. And if we are pushed any further we won't be able to keep our doors open, thus NOT being able to feed the ones we already are!!” —Kirk of Sparks, Nev.

“Already we get innumerable calls for emergency assistance. To increase the number of people would be overwhelming and **those churches who try to help with their shrinking congregations might totally give up.**”

—Tempe of Jamestown, N.C.

**Enough is enough. Congress must protect SNAP.
Families struggling to put food on the table must be our lawmakers' top priority.**

Endnotes

¹ Rhoda Cohen, J. Mabli, F. Potter, Z. Zhao, *Hunger in America 2010*, Feeding America, February 2010.

² Barna Group. “The Economy Continues to Squeeze Americans’ Charitable Giving.” June 28, 2012. <http://www.barna.org/donorscause-articles/571-the-economy-continues-to-squeeze-americans-charitable-giving>.

³ U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service. Annual Summary of Food and Nutrition Service Programs. Data as of Dec. 6, 2013. Note: this sum excludes administrative costs. <http://www.fns.usda.gov/pd/annual.htm>.

⁴ Estimate based on unpublished Feeding America data for food bank fiscal year 2013.

⁵ California, Connecticut, Delaware, Maine, Massachusetts, Michigan, Montana, New Jersey, New York, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont, Washington, and Wisconsin.

⁶ Hartford Institute for Religion Research. “Fast Facts”. http://hrr.hartsem.edu/research/fastfacts/fast_facts.html#numcong.