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**LANDMARK NEW STUDY REVEALS AN UNPRECEDENTED NUMBER OF
NORTHERN NEVADA RESIDENTS SEEKING EMERGENCY FOOD ASSISTANCE**

***Largest, Most Comprehensive Report Ever Conducted on Emergency Food
Distribution Reports 298% increase in Clients Served Annually in
Northern Nevada; Including 49,556 children in need***

Reno, NV, February 2, 2010—A landmark study released today by the Food Bank of Northern Nevada and Feeding America, the nation's largest domestic hunger-relief organization reports that more than 124,200 people, including 49,556 children, receive emergency food service each year through the Food Bank of Northern Nevada. The findings represent a 298% increase since the findings reported in *Hunger in America, 2006*.

This is the first research study to capture the significant connection between the recent economic downturn and an increased need for emergency food assistance. The number of children and adults in need of food as a result of experiencing food insecurity has significantly increased.

In northern Nevada, more than one in four client households are experiencing very low food insecurity/hunger. An estimated 14,400 people receive emergency food assistance each week from a food pantry, soup kitchen, or other program served by the Food Bank of Northern Nevada.

Nationally, more than one in three client households are experiencing very low food security (regularly experience hunger/miss meals), a 54% increase in the number of households compared to four years ago.

An estimated 5.7 million people receive emergency food assistance each week from a food pantry, soup kitchen, or other agency served by one of Feeding America's more than 200 food banks, including the Food Bank of Northern Nevada. This is a 27% increase over numbers



reported in *Hunger in America 2006*, which reported that 4.5 million people were served each week.

“This report highlights something that we’ve known was happening in our communities for a while,” explained Cherie Jamason, president and CEO of the Food Bank of Northern Nevada. “The extremely high unemployment rate in Nevada, topping at over 13%, has forced clients to choose between paying for rent, utilities, healthcare and other basic essentials. This report shows that 44% of people served in northern Nevada had to choose between paying for food or paying for rent/mortgage or utilities.”

The methodology incorporated into the 2010 study includes data collected from February through June in 2009. The Food Bank of Northern Nevada conducted face-to-face interviews with 267 people seeking emergency food at food pantries, soup kitchens and other emergency feeding programs as well as interviews with more than 82 agencies that provide food assistance.

Nationally, Feeding America collected quantitative and qualitative feedback from 61,000 face-to-face in-depth interviews with people seeking emergency food assistance and more than 37,000 agency surveys, making this study, the largest, most comprehensive ever conducted on domestic hunger.

The USDA reported in November, 2009 that an estimated 49 million people, including 17 million children are at risk of hunger in this country. *Hunger in America 2010* reinforces the dramatically increasing need for food assistance in the United States.

Among the key findings in the Food Bank of Northern Nevada report:

- 124,200 people including 49,665 children have needed to seek emergency food during the last year in northern Nevada. This is 93,000 more people than 4 years ago.
- The number of children needing emergency food has increased 38,105 (333%) since 2006.
- One in four northern Nevada children experience hunger/facing very low food security (34.5%).
- The rate of household food security among clients climbed 13% - from 66% in 2006 to 79% in 2010.
- 68.7% of client households had income below 100% of the poverty the month previous to the interview. 90.5% had income below 185% of poverty. 8.5% had no income at all. In 2009, the Federal Poverty level for a family of three was \$1,526 per month, or \$18,312 per year.) 50% had a monthly income of less than \$1,000 the previous month.

- 53.9% of those needing emergency food assistance have at least one person in the household who is currently working.
- 44% of households reported need to choose between food and other essentials.
- The percentage of clients that report that they or someone in their household do not have health insurance is 32.5%
- 40.8 % of those needing emergency food service have unpaid medical or hospital bills.
- 14.2% of clients were homeless, living in a shelter, on the street or in a vehicle. 39% were late paying the last month's rent or mortgage.
- 30.7% of client households served are receiving SNAP (formerly food stamps) benefits.

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The Food Bank of Northern Nevada is a regional food distribution and support system serving over 100 partner agencies in Northern Nevada and the Eastern Sierra. The Food Bank of Northern Nevada provides and supports programs including food pantries, soup kitchens, emergency shelters, after-school programs and Kids Cafe (dinner program), Kids Cafe Summer Meals program, Food Stamp Outreach and much more. The Food Bank of Northern Nevada is a member of Feeding America ~ The Nation's Food Bank Network (formerly America's Second Harvest).