

Food Pantries

Food pantries assist low-income households by providing them with packages of food items that usually require additional preparation. In this chapter, we describe food pantries and their operations and, when appropriate, compare them with emergency kitchens. The chapter begins with an estimate of the total number of pantries currently operating in the United States. The sections that follow describe pantries' basic characteristics and the demographic characteristics of the zip code areas in which they are located; their food distribution practices and the policies used to limit distribution; and the sources and types of food received, along with information on foods for which the pantries expressed an additional need. The final section describes the labor and capital resources of food pantries.

Number of Food Pantries

We estimated the number of emergency food pantries in the United States based on the information developed during our sampling and survey operations. The methods are described below.

Estimated Number

Our approach to estimating the number of food pantries in the United States closely parallels the method described earlier to estimate emergency kitchens. Table 3.1 presents our estimates of the total number of food pantries operating in the United States.²⁴ For the study, we interviewed 1,592 pantries that had been identified in the initial listing of the sampling frame in the PSUs selected for the study.

Interviews were also completed with an additional 25 pantries, which we describe as “secondary sample” because they had not been identified in the initial

listing process but were found in the process of the initial interview.²⁵ Thus, the total interview sample is 1,617.

When appropriate survey weights are applied to the sample interviewed, reflecting both sample selection probabilities and the incidence of survey nonresponse, the weighted sum of interviews provides an estimate of the overall number of food pantries in the country: 32,254 pantries.

We believe, however, that an additional adjustment is warranted. From the outset of the project, we anticipated that the initial sample listings in the PSUs would not be fully comprehensive, and other pantries—the “secondary sample”—were identified during the interviewing. Because the secondary cases were not known at the time of the original listing, they are not fully reflected in the weighting structure based on the initial sampling probabilities, and an adjustment to account for this is in order. To take this into account, we have made an adjustment for the initial undercoverage, as shown in lines 8-10 of the table. Line 8 indicates that, for every 100 completions with *primary* sample cases, we also completed 1.6 with *secondary* sample cases. This suggests that, if we had interviewed all the estimated 30,181 primary sample members that we did not interview, an additional 483 pantries would have been found (that is, 0.016 times 30,181).²⁶ Overall, adding the 32,254 estimate from line 7 and the 483 adjustment from line 10 yields an estimated total of 32,737 pantries in the United States.

²⁵In some cases, the secondary sample was found in the process of making calls to locate the initially listed sample. In other cases, it was identified through questions in the interview itself, which asked respondents for the names of other pantries in their counties.

²⁶This conclusion requires the assumptions that (1) all potential secondary cases would have been identified in this way, and (2) the ratio of secondary to primary completions would remain constant. While it is unlikely that either would hold exactly, we believe that the method yields a reasonable approximation.

²⁴Alaska and Hawaii were excluded from the survey.

Whereas our estimate of emergency kitchens in chapter 2 is somewhat lower than that of Second Harvest (1998), our estimate of pantries is similar. We estimate 32,737 pantries, while Second Harvest estimates about 34,000. As with kitchens, much of the explanation for the variation between our estimate and that of Second Harvest may lie in differing methodologies and response rates.

Pounds of Food

It is also of interest to estimate the total amount of food that pantries distribute. One possible approach would be to base this on a survey question that was asked about total amounts of food distributed.

However, most pantries were not able to provide an estimate of this quantity directly, and those who did probably are not a representative sample.

A second approach draws on a set of factors that enable us to make an estimate of food distributed by each pantry that responded to the survey. During the survey, pantries were asked how often clients could obtain food (for instance, once a week or once a month) and how many different clients the pantry served during that period. These responses were used to estimate the number of visits to the pantry per month. For instance, if clients could pick up food twice a month and the number of clients served in a given half-month was

estimated at 45, then it was assumed that there were 90 household visits per month. In addition, pantries were asked to estimate how many pounds a household typically obtained during a visit. For each pantry, this information allowed us to estimate the amount of food it distributed per month.²⁷

Once an estimate is obtained of the average amount of food per month distributed per pantry, we can draw upon the estimated number of pantries from table 3.1 to develop a national estimate of food distributed. The resulting estimate of food distributed by food pantries, computed in this way, is 239 million pounds per month (table 3.2).

²⁷A weakness of this approach is that we are not confident that pantries consistently have good estimates of the number of different clients served in a given period. We had initially intended to estimate pounds of food distributed using a slightly different set of survey variables, drawing on a variable showing the respondent's estimate of the average number of persons served each day that a pantry was open. However, the data on average visits per day proved to be inconsistent with other available information, including the numbers of different clients served. In particular, it appeared that the daily estimates probably were biased upward, although we have been unable to determine exactly why. Overall, we believe that the method described in the text provides the most accurate estimate from the survey data of poundage distributed.

Table 3.1—Estimated number of food pantries in the United States

Variables	Food pantries
	<i>Number</i>
Base estimate	
Actual number of pantries interviewed	
1. From "locatable" sample	1,592
2. From secondary sample	25
3. Total	1,617
Weighted number of pantries	
4. From "locatable" sample	31,773
5. From secondary sample	481
6. Total	32,254
7. Estimated pantries in universe, based directly on interviewing results	32,254
Adjustment for possible undercoverage	
8. Ratio of potential secondary pantries to "locatable pantries"	0.016
9. Estimated number of "locatable" pantries not directly interviewed	30,181
10. Potential additional "secondary" pantries	483
Adjusted estimate	
11. Total estimated pantries, adjusted for possible undercoverage	32,737

"Locatable pantries" = Pantries found in initial sample frame.

"Secondary sample" = Pantries found through survey interviews.

Lines 1 and 2 are unweighted counts of survey completions.

Lines 4 and 5 are weighted counts of survey completions, with weights based on sampling probabilities and response rates, as described in appendixes A and E.

Line 7 = line 4 + line 5.

Line 8 = line 2 ÷ line 1.

Line 9 = line 4 - line 1.

Line 10 = line 8 x line 9.

Line 11 = line 7 + line 10.

Source: Based on data from the National Emergency Food Assistance System Survey (2000), weighted tabulations.

Table 3.2—Food distributed by pantries each month

Size-related variable	Estimated value
Average number of different households using pantries in a month	106
Average number of visits during a month ¹	1.6
Pounds of food per household per visit	38.2
Total pounds of food distributed per month by average pantry ²	7,295
Number of pantries	32,737
Total pounds of food distributed per month by pantries	239 million

¹Excludes pantries that said they did not restrict the number of visits households could make in a month.

²Estimated from tabulations of the individual pantries. It is not necessarily the exact product of the sample means shown above in the table.

Source: Based on data from the National Emergency Food Assistance System Survey (2000), weighted tabulations.

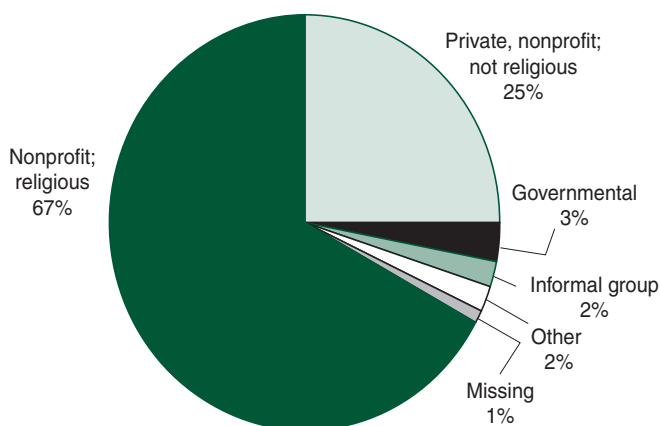
Characteristics of Food Pantries

Compared With Kitchens

Although pantries and kitchens have similar characteristics, they also exhibit some noteworthy distinctions (table 3.3). Kitchens are quite evenly distributed across the different regions of the country, whereas pantries are not. Forty percent of all pantries are located in the South; one-quarter are in the Midwest. As indicated in table 3.4, the greater number of pantries in the South reflects, in large part, the fact that the number of low-income people living in the South is greater. When we correct for this factor by computing the ratio of low-income people per pantry, the number for the South (953 persons in poverty per pantry) is very close to the national average (984). Indeed, when examined this way, the outlier is the West, where a relatively low number of pantries results in a ratio of 1,578 people in poverty per pantry.

As with kitchens, about two-thirds of pantries are faith-based, nonprofit organizations (fig. 3.1). Most of the others are nonreligious, nonprofit, private organizations. However, a few (about 3 percent) report that they are operated by governmental units. An examination of the names of the latter pantries indicates that most are operated by local units of government such as municipalities, townships, and, in some instances, counties.

Figure 3.1
Types of organizations operating food pantries



Source: National Emergency Food Assistance System Survey (2000), weighted tabulations.

In general, both types of emergency food providers exhibit a considerable degree of stability, with more than 45 percent operating for longer than 5 years (fig. 3.2). However, pantries are more likely to be “young” organizations: 39 percent have been operating for 5 years or less, compared with 28 percent of kitchens. This could reflect a higher rate of turnover among pantries than among kitchens, or it could indicate the recent “birth” of many pantries that will remain in operation for an extended period.

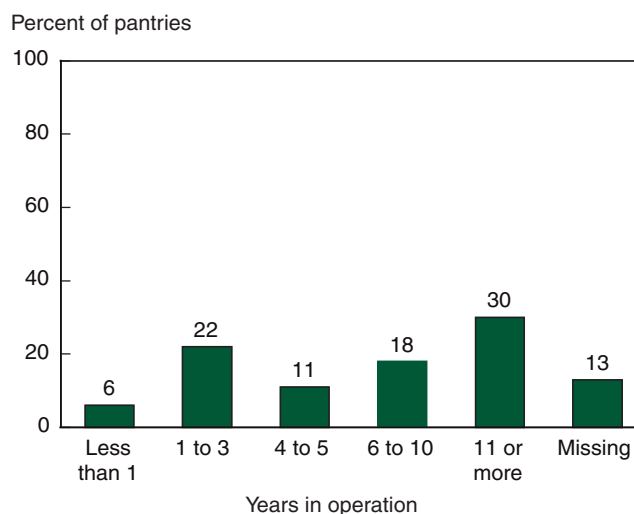
As with emergency kitchens, most food pantries indicated that they first began operating at their current location because of the perceived need for new services. Others mentioned that they had moved from a different location.

Like kitchens, a majority of pantries are located in metropolitan areas. However, pantries are much more likely than kitchens to be located in nonmetropolitan areas (30 percent and 15 percent, respectively).

By Metropolitan Status and Size

Pantries located in metropolitan and nonmetropolitan areas exhibit similar operating characteristics (tables 3.5 and 3.6). Comparing pantries of different sizes, however, reveals some interesting variations, as described in tables 3.7 and 3.8. We constructed a measure of size by creating a new variable to calculate the number of household visits per month, which was based primarily on the num-

Figure 3.2
Length of time operating as a food pantry



Source: National Emergency Food Assistance System Survey (2000), weighted tabulations.

Table 3.3—Comparison of selected characteristics of food pantries and emergency kitchens

Characteristics	Food pantries	Emergency kitchens
	<i>Percent</i>	
Region		
West	15.1	20.6
Midwest	24.6	24.7
South	40.1	27.4
Northeast	20.3	27.4
Metropolitan status		
Metropolitan	70.3	85.6
Nonmetropolitan	29.7	30.1
Type of organization		
Nonprofit, associated with religious group	67.1	65.4
Nonreligious private nonprofit	25.4	30.2
Governmental	3.0	1.1
Informal group of people	2.3	1.6
Other	1.6	1.5
Missing data	0.5	0.1
Selected organizational affiliations¹		
United Way	19.5	26.1
Salvation Army	11.0	14.0
Catholic Charities	8.4	8.9
Red Cross	6.0	4.8
Other nonprofit organization	17.6	18.4
Length of time surveyed location has been operating		
Less than 1 year	5.7	3.3
1 to 3 years	22.2	15.0
4 to 5 years	11.1	9.6
6 years or longer:		
6 to 10 years	17.9	22.3
11 to 15 years	10.1	12.7
16 to 20 years	12.5	16.9
21 to 25 years	2.8	2.7
Longer than 25 years	4.7	6.8
Not specified	12.3	10.2
Missing data	0.8	0.4
Programs with which provider is co-located²		
Food bank	3.7	1.0
Food rescue program	1.4	1.4
Emergency shelter	0.5	6.6
Reasons originally began operating at current location³		
Need for new services	76.7	79.6
Moved to this site from old location	11.4	9.5
Program expanded, opened this site	4.2	3.0
Wanted to be closer to clients	3.7	4.3
Needed larger facility	3.1	2.7
Parent organization determined site	1.7	0.5
More affordable location	0.6	0.4
Forced to move	0.4	0.4
Wanted to be closer to food sources	0.3	0.1
Untapped sources of prepared or perishable food	0.2	0.0
Needed handicapped accessible facility	0.1	0.4
Wanted to be closer to transportation	0.1	0.1
Other	11.8	12.3
Sample size (number)	1,617	1,517

¹Categories do not add to 100 percent because many kitchens do not have any organizational affiliations.

²Categories do not add to 100 percent because many kitchens are not co-located with another provider.

³Categories may sum to more than 100 percent because some pantries provided more than one response.

Source: National Emergency Food Assistance System Survey (2000), weighted tabulations.

ber of different households served per month. Pantries were classified as “small” if they served fewer than 30 households per month, “medium” if they served between 30 and 150 households per month, and “large” if they served more than 150 clients. In cases where we lacked sufficient information to calculate this variable, we used the number of full-time- equivalent staff as an alternative measure of size. (Details are provided in appendix D of *The Emergency Food Assistance System—Findings from the Provider Survey, Volume III: Survey Methodology* at <http://www.ers.usda.gov/publications/efan01008>.)

Small pantries are somewhat more likely than large pantries to be faith-based (table 3.7). Overall, large pantries are more likely to be affiliated with national organizations than are small ones. Furthermore, perhaps because large pantries generally have greater resources at their disposal, they are much more likely to offer various types of nonfood services than are small pantries (table 3.8).²⁸ Three examples are particularly striking: (1) about one-third of large pantries offer nutrition counseling or education, but only 14 percent of small pantries do, (2) 22 percent of large pantries, compared with 13 percent of small pantries, offer eligibility counseling for food stamps and WIC, and (3) 60 percent of large pantries, but only 41 percent of small ones, distribute furniture or clothing.

By Region

When comparing pantries across different regions of the country, several interesting variations become evident (table 3.9). About 75 percent of the pantries located in the South are faith-based, compared with only 55 percent in the West, 63 percent in the Midwest, and 64 percent in the Northeast. Also, compared with those in

²⁸It is also possible that the differences in service provision between large and small pantries reflect either differences in economies of scale in producing the services or differences in their clientele.

other regions, pantries in the West are more likely to be governmental organizations. In the South, 47 percent of pantries have been operating for 5 years or less, compared with about one-third of pantries in other regions. Multiple explanations for the latter finding are possible. One is that the EFAS in the South may be undergoing higher rates of pantry turnover than other regions. Another possible explanation is that during the past 5 years, the rate of growth of pantries in the South may have exceeded that of pantries elsewhere.

Interesting regional differences also are seen with respect to the types of nonfood services offered (table 3.10). Twenty-eight percent of pantries in the Northeast offer their clients eligibility counseling for food stamps or for entry into the Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) program, compared with only 13 to 17 percent of pantries in other regions. As discussed in chapter 2, there are significant policy issues associated with whether all EFAS clients who need government nutrition assistance programs are applying for and receiving this assistance.

Pantries in the West are more likely than their counterparts from other regions to offer employment training and are much more likely to offer language translation. These differences may be attributable to the high proportion of immigrants living in the West.

Demographic Characteristics of ZIP Code Areas Where Pantries Are Located

As is true of kitchens, food pantries are more likely to be located in areas with high concentrations of poverty. Twelve percent of pantries are in five-digit ZIP Code areas where more than 30 percent of the population have incomes below the poverty level (table 3.11).²⁹ In

²⁹Data on poverty concentration by zip code are from the 1990 census. This analysis can be updated when the results of the 2000 census become available.

Table 3.4—Ratio of people living in poverty to food pantries by region

Variables	All	Region			
		West	Midwest	South	Northeast
Pantries in region ¹	32,737	4,943	8,053	13,122	6,646
People below poverty line in region (millions)	32.2	7.8	6.2	12.5	5.7
Low-income people per pantry	984	1,578	770	953	858

¹Regional totals do not sum to overall total because of rounding error.

Source: National Emergency Food Assistance System Survey (2000), weighted calculations; http://ferret.bls.census.gov/macro/032000/pov/new19_007.htm.

Table 3.5—Selected characteristics of food pantries by metropolitan status

Characteristics	All	Metropolitan status	
		Metropolitan	Nonmetropolitan
		<i>Percent</i>	
Region			
West	15.1	16.5	11.8
Midwest	24.6	22.1	30.4
South	40.1	37.4	46.3
Northeast	20.3	24.0	11.5
Type of organization			
Nonprofit, associated with religious group	67.1	68.8	63.1
Nonreligious private nonprofit	25.4	24.5	27.6
Governmental	3.0	2.8	3.5
Informal group of people	2.3	1.6	4.0
Other	1.6	1.6	1.7
Missing data	0.5	0.7	0.2
Selected organizational affiliations¹			
United Way	19.5	20.9	16.3
Salvation Army	11.0	11.1	10.9
Catholic Charities	8.4	9.4	6.1
Red Cross	6.0	6.7	4.5
Other nonprofit organization	17.6	18.8	14.8
Length of time surveyed location has been operating			
Less than 1 year	5.7	4.9	7.6
1 to 3 years	22.2	21.5	23.9
4 to 5 years	11.1	11.0	11.4
6 years or longer:			
6 to 10 years	17.9	18.6	16.0
1 to 15 years	10.1	9.2	12.0
16 to 20 years	12.5	13.0	11.1
21 to 25 years	2.8	3.3	1.7
Longer than 25 years	4.7	5.2	3.7
Not specified	12.3	12.5	11.6
Missing data	0.8	0.6	1.0
Programs with which food pantry is co-located²			
Emergency kitchen	9.1	10.5	5.8
Food bank	3.7	3.4	4.4
Food rescue program	1.4	1.4	1.6
Emergency shelter	0.5	0.4	0.7
Reasons originally began operating at current location³			
Need for new services	76.7	76.9	76.1
Moved to this site from old location	11.4	12.3	9.2
Program expanded, opened this site	4.2	4.1	4.6
Wanted to be closer to clients	3.7	4.3	2.3
Needed larger facility	3.1	2.9	3.6
Parent organization determined site	1.7	1.8	1.3
More affordable location	0.6	0.3	1.1
Forced to move	0.4	0.3	0.6
Wanted to be closer to food sources	0.3	0.2	0.7
Untapped sources of prepared or perishable food	0.2	0.3	0.0
Wanted to be closer to transportation	0.1	0.1	0.0
Needed handicapped accessible facility	0.1	0.0	0.4
Other	11.8	11.0	13.6
Sample size (number)	1,617	1,145	472

¹Categories do not add to 100 percent because many pantries do not have any organizational affiliations.

²Categories do not add to 100 percent because many pantries are not co-located with another provider.

³Categories may sum to more than 100 percent because some pantries provided more than one response.

Source: National Emergency Food Assistance System Survey (2000), weighted tabulations.

the country as a whole, only 8 percent of ZIP Code areas have this many people living in poverty. Fifty-eight percent of the pantries are located in areas that are more than 80 percent White, but another 27 percent operate in areas where less than 70 percent of the population is White. A considerable number of pantries (roughly 19 percent) can be found in areas where the population is more than 30 percent African American.

Compared With Kitchens

The data in table 3.11, when compared with table 2.5, suggest that the demographic characteristics of the areas served by pantries and kitchens differ in several important ways. Pantries are less likely than kitchens to provide services in severely impoverished areas (12 percent versus 21 percent). Given this finding about relative concentrations of kitchens and pantries in high-poverty areas, and given the strong relationship

between poverty and race,³⁰ it is perhaps not surprising that pantries are less likely than kitchens to be located in neighborhoods that are heavily populated with non-Whites. For example, 19 percent of pantries, but 31 percent of kitchens, serve areas in which more than 30 percent of the population is African American.

By Metropolitan Status

Metropolitan pantries are more likely than nonmetropolitan pantries to be located in extremely poor areas (table 3.11). About 12 percent of metropolitan pantries, but only 8 percent of nonmetropolitan ones, are located in ZIP Code areas where more than 30 percent of the population lives in poverty.

³⁰The poverty rates for 1998 were 28.3 percent for African Americans, 29.4 percent for Hispanics, and 11.2 percent for Whites (*U.S. Statistical Abstract*, 2000).

Table 3.6—Nonfood services offered by food pantries by metropolitan status

Characteristics	All	Metropolitan status	
		Metropolitan	Nonmetropolitan
		<i>Percent</i>	
Nonfood services offered¹			
Eligibility counseling for food stamps or WIC	17.2	17.9	15.6
Employment training for agencies/clients	9.7	10.4	7.8
Employment training for other people	7.9	8.1	7.5
Distribution of furniture or clothing	48.3	49.5	45.3
Transportation services	23.8	24.6	22.0
Nutrition counseling or nutrition education	21.9	23.0	19.2
Language translation, including sign language	16.8	19.4	10.3
Substance abuse counseling	13.3	13.8	12.0
Housing or shelter ²	12.6	11.9	14.3
Consumer counseling and assistance	12.0	12.8	10.3
Basic adult education	11.7	13.2	8.2
Health services	10.8	11.7	8.4
Supported employment	6.9	7.6	5.2
Legal or Accounting Services	3.5	4.1	2.1
Missing data	1.2	1.4	0.6
Nonfood services offered			
0	32.2	30.0	37.5
1-2	35.2	35.5	34.5
3-5	20.4	21.1	18.9
More than 5	11.0	12.0	8.6
Missing	1.2	1.4	0.6
Does any other organization provide nonfood services at the site?			
Yes	15.7	16.1	14.6
No	83.4	82.7	85.0
Missing data	1.0	1.2	0.4
Sample size (number)	1,617	1,145	472

¹Categories sum to more than 100 percent because some parties provided more than one response.

²Refers in general to counseling and referral services—most pantries do not directly provide housing services.

WIC = Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children.

Source: National Emergency Food Assistance System Survey (2000), weighted tabulations.

Table 3.7—Selected characteristics of food pantries by size of pantry

Characteristics	All	Size of pantry		
		Small	Medium	Large
Size of pantry	100.0	37.9	<i>Percent</i> 35.3	24.8
Region				
West	15.1	8.7	15.9	24.5
Midwest	24.6	25.8	27.4	19.6
South	40.1	49.1	33.2	34.0
Northeast	20.3	16.5	23.5	21.9
Metropolitan status				
Metropolitan	70.3	61.6	73.7	79.4
Nonmetropolitan	29.7	38.4	26.3	20.6
Type of organization				
Nonprofit, associated with religious group	67.1	70.3	67.9	60.7
Nonreligious private nonprofit	25.4	22.2	24.7	32.3
Governmental	3.0	3.1	3.1	2.6
Informal group of people	2.3	2.7	2.1	1.9
Other	1.6	1.3	1.8	1.8
Missing data	0.5	0.5	0.4	0.7
Selected organizational affiliations¹				
United Way	19.5	13.7	19.9	28.1
Salvation Army	11.0	10.0	11.1	12.3
Catholic Charities	8.4	5.9	8.9	12.0
Red Cross	6.0	5.5	5.0	8.1
Other nonprofit organization	17.6	13.4	18.8	22.8
Length of time surveyed location has been operating				
Less than 1 year	5.7	5.5	4.8	7.3
1 to 3 years	22.2	21.3	0.5	25.1
4 to 5 years	11.1	11.6	12.6	8.1
6 years or longer:				
6 to 10 years	17.9	17.6	18.6	17.3
11 to 15 years	10.1	8.7	9.9	12.9
16 to 20 years	12.5	12.8	12.2	13.0
21 to 25 years	2.8	1.7	3.7	3.6
Longer than 25 years	4.7	4.8	3.9	5.6
Not specified	12.3	14.8	13.8	6.6
Missing data	0.8	1.3	0.0	0.5
Programs with which food pantry is co-located				
Emergency kitchen	9.1	7.8	7.5	13.2
Food bank	3.7	2.6	2.8	6.8
Food rescue program	1.4	1.5	1.1	1.4
Emergency shelter	0.5	0.3	1.0	0.2
Reasons originally began operating at current location²				
Need for new services	76.7	78.7	79.0	70.0
Moved to this site from old location	11.4	9.4	10.5	16.2
Program expanded, opened this site	4.2	3.5	3.0	7.3
Wanted to be closer to clients	3.7	3.7	3.5	4.2
Needed larger facility	3.1	2.7	1.9	5.3
Parent organization determined site	1.7	1.3	2.0	2.0
More affordable location	0.6	0.6	0.4	0.7
Forced to move	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.5
Wanted to be closer to food sources	0.3	0.5	0.2	0.3
Untapped sources of prepared or perishable food	0.2	0.0	0.5	0.2
Needed handicapped accessible facility	0.1	0.2	0.4	0.0
Wanted to be closer to transportation	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.3
Other	11.8	13.5	10.5	11.0
Sample size (number)	1,617	597	576	410

¹Categories do not add to 100 percent because many pantries do not have any organizational affiliations. ²Categories may sum to more than 100 percent because some pantries provided more than one response. Co-located = Two different programs operating at the same location.

Notes: Size variable is defined based on number of households served, frequency of food distribution, and staffing. In general, "small" pantries have fewer than 30 household visits per month; "medium" pantries have 30 to 150 household visits per month; and "large" pantries have more than 150 household visits per month.

The sample numbers for food pantry sizes do not sum to the total sample because some food pantries did not provide answers and are not included.

Source: National Emergency Food Assistance System Survey (2000), weighted tabulations.

Pantries located in nonmetropolitan areas are much more likely to operate in predominantly White areas. Three-fourths of nonmetropolitan pantries, but roughly one-half of metropolitan pantries, are located in areas where more than 80 percent of the population is White. Similarly, almost one-fourth of metropolitan pantries, but only 10 percent of their nonmetropolitan counterparts, operate in areas whose population is more than 30 percent African American.

In part, these and the other differences between the metropolitan and nonmetropolitan data shown in table 3.11 may reflect the fact that ZIP Code areas in the relatively sparsely populated rural areas may tend to be larger and more heterogeneous than in urban areas. They could also reflect differences in racial composition,

since the percentage of the population that is Black varies between 14 percent for metropolitan areas and 9 percent for nonmetropolitan areas.³¹

Demographic differences between clients of pantries in metropolitan and nonmetropolitan areas are particularly dramatic when we examine the percentage of the population consisting of other races. Only 3 percent of nonmetropolitan pantries, but 15 percent of metropolitan pantries, are located in areas where people of “other” races comprise more than 15 percent of the population.

³¹Tabulations of U.S. Census Bureau Current Population Survey data, March 1998 survey.

Table 3.8—Nonfood services offered by food pantries by size of pantry

Characteristics	All	Size of pantry		
		Small	Medium	Large
		<i>Percent</i>		
Nonfood services offered¹				
Eligibility counseling for food stamps or WIC	17.2	12.6	19.3	21.8
Employment training for agencies/clients	9.7	5.7	10.7	14.6
Employment training for other people	7.9	5.4	8.4	11.1
Distribution of furniture or clothing	48.3	41.0	47.9	60.0
Transportation services	23.8	20.2	24.8	27.8
Nutrition counseling or nutrition education	21.9	14.4	23.0	32.2
Language translation, including sign language	16.8	9.6	16.4	28.9
Substance abuse counseling	13.3	10.1	12.3	19.1
Housing or shelter ²	12.6	11.9	10.8	15.8
Consumer counseling and assistance	12.0	8.7	12.2	16.6
Basic adult education	11.7	7.0	12.9	16.7
Health services	10.8	7.4	10.9	16.0
Supported employment	6.9	4.6	7.0	10.6
Legal or accounting services	3.5	2.0	4.0	5.2
Missing data	1.2	0.6	1.6	1.6
Number of nonfood services offered				
0	32.2	42.7	31.2	17.9
1-2	35.2	34.0	35.1	37.0
3-5	20.4	16.4	21.3	25.6
More than 5	11.0	6.3	10.9	18.0
Missing	1.2	0.6	1.6	1.6
Does any other organization provide nonfood services at the site?				
Yes	15.7	12.7	18.2	16.8
No	83.4	86.7	80.8	81.7
Missing data	1.0	0.7	1.0	1.5
Sample size (number)	1,617	597	576	410

¹Categories may sum to more than 100 percent because some pantries provided more than one response.

²Refers in general to counseling and referral services—most pantries do not directly provide housing services.

WIC = Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children.

Notes: Size variable is based on number of households served, frequency of food distribution, and staffing. In general, “small” pantries have fewer than 30 household visits per month; “medium” pantries have 30 to 150 household visits per month; and “large” pantries have more than 150 household visits per month.

The sample numbers for food pantry sizes do not sum to the total sample because some food pantries did not provide answers and are not included.

Source: National Emergency Food Assistance System Survey (2000), weighted tabulations.

Table 3.9—Selected characteristics of food pantries by region

Characteristics	All	Region			
		West	Midwest	South	Northeast
			<i>Percent</i>		
Region	100.0	15.1	24.6	40.1	20.3
Size of pantry					
Small	37.9	21.7	39.7	46.4	30.8
Medium	35.3	37.1	39.3	29.3	40.9
Large	24.8	40.2	19.7	21.0	26.8
Missing data	2.1	0.9	1.3	3.3	1.5
Metropolitan status					
Metropolitan	70.3	76.7	63.3	65.7	83.2
Nonmetropolitan	29.7	23.3	36.7	34.3	16.8
Type of organization					
Nonprofit, associated with religious group	67.1	55.4	63.4	75.3	64.1
Nonreligious private nonprofit	25.4	31.1	30.6	18.3	28.9
Governmental	3.0	7.4	1.9	2.2	2.7
Informal group of people	2.3	2.0	2.4	2.3	2.4
Other	1.6	3.6	1.0	1.6	0.9
Missing data	0.5	0.4	0.8	0.3	0.9
Organizational affiliations¹					
United Way	19.5	21.1	18.3	16.5	25.9
Salvation Army	11.0	15.2	13.6	8.1	10.5
Catholic Charities	8.4	8.2	7.9	8.0	10.0
Red Cross	6.0	5.2	9.4	4.7	5.0
Other nonprofit organization	17.6	24.1	19.1	14.1	17.8
Length of time surveyed location has been operating					
Less than 1 year	5.7	6.0	3.9	7.5	4.3
1 to 3 years	22.2	21.5	18.6	27.2	17.4
4 to 5 years	11.1	10.0	10.3	12.6	10.0
6 years or longer:					
6 to 10 years	17.9	19.3	15.3	17.8	20.0
11 to 15 years	10.1	9.6	12.5	8.9	9.8
16 to 20 years	12.5	13.2	15.4	8.6	16.1
21 to 25 years	2.8	4.0	4.4	1.3	3.1
Longer than 25 years	4.7	6.6	4.4	4.7	3.8
Not specified	12.3	9.7	15.1	10.4	14.5
Missing data	0.8	0.0	0.2	1.2	1.2
Programs with which food pantry is co-located²					
Emergency kitchen	9.1	13.0	8.2	8.5	8.5
Food bank	3.7	6.0	3.6	3.1	3.3
Food rescue program	1.4	0.4	1.0	2.2	1.2
Emergency shelter	0.5	1.0	1.0	0.1	0.3
Reasons originally began operating at current location³					
Need for new services	76.7	70.1	73.6	79.4	80.0
Moved to this site from old location	11.4	17.2	12.3	8.8	11.0
Program expanded, opened this site	4.2	3.8	6.2	3.6	3.6
Wanted to be closer to clients	3.7	6.4	3.3	3.0	3.4
Needed larger facility	3.1	3.5	3.0	2.6	3.9
Parent organization determined site	1.7	3.0	0.7	1.3	2.6
More affordable location	0.6	0.2	1.2	0.6	0.0
Forced to move	0.4	1.3	0.3	0.3	0.0
Wanted to be closer to food sources	0.3	0.3	0.2	0.4	0.3
Untapped sources of prepared or perishable food	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.6	0.0
Needed handicapped accessible facility	0.1	0.7	0.0	0.0	0.0
Wanted to be closer to transportation	0.1	0.4	0.0	0.0	0.0
Other	11.8	14.4	15.6	10.8	7.1
Sample size (number)	1,617	252	402	648	315

¹Categories do not add to 100 percent because many pantries do not have any organizational affiliations. ²Categories do not add to 100 percent because many pantries are not co-located with another provider. ³Categories may sum to more than 100 percent because some pantries provided more than one service.

Co-located = Two different programs operating at the same locations.

Note: Size variable is defined based on number of households served, frequency of food distribution, and staffing. In general, "small" pantries have fewer than 30 household visits per month; "medium" pantries have 30 to 150 household visits per month; and "large" pantries have more than 150 household visits per month. Source National Emergency Food Assistance System Survey (2000), weighted tabulations.

Table 3.10—Nonfood services offered by food pantries by region

Services	All	Region				
		West	Midwest	South	Northeast	
			<i>Percent</i>			
Nonfood services offered¹						
Eligibility counseling for food stamps or WIC	17.2	16.6	16.6	12.5	27.9	
Employment training for agencies/clients	9.7	14.3	9.7	7.9	9.7	
Employment training for other people	7.9	13.7	5.8	6.4	9.4	
Distribution of furniture or clothing	48.3	51.9	44.3	50.6	45.7	
Transportation services	23.8	23.6	24.8	22.9	24.6	
Nutrition counseling or nutrition education	21.9	23.6	24.0	16.6	28.6	
Language translation, including sign language	16.8	33.9	13.7	13.0	15.4	
Substance abuse counseling	13.3	13.5	13.8	13.4	12.2	
Housing or shelter ²	12.6	17.2	13.8	11.4	9.9	
Consumer counseling and assistance	12.0	12.4	12.7	10.7	13.6	
Basic adult education	11.7	14.0	10.8	11.0	12.7	
Health services	10.8	13.9	9.2	10.2	11.5	
Supported employment	6.9	11.1	4.9	7.1	6.0	
Legal or accounting services	3.5	4.0	2.9	2.7	5.6	
Missing data	1.2	2.2	1.0	0.5	1.8	
Number of nonfood services offered						
0	32.2	23.9	34.0	33.1	34.6	
1-2	35.2	36.0	33.3	37.9	31.5	
3-5	20.4	21.9	23.3	18.9	18.9	
More than 5	11.0	16.0	8.5	9.6	13.2	
Missing data	1.2	2.2	1.0	0.5	1.8	
Sample size (number)	1,617	252	402	648	315	

¹Categories sum to more than 100 percent because some pantries provided more than one response.

²Refers in general to counseling and referral services—most pantries do not directly provide housing services.

WIC = Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children.

Source: National Emergency Food Assistance System Survey (2000), weighted tabulations.

Table 3.11—Characteristics of ZIP Code areas where food pantries are located

Characteristics of ZIP Code area	All U.S. ZIP Codes	All food pantries	Metropolitan status	
			Metropolitan	Nonmetropolitan
			<i>Percent</i>	
Percent of people below poverty				
Less than 20	77.5	66.1	65.2	68.1
20 to 30	14.4	15.7	14.7	18.1
More than 30	8.1	12.1	13.9	7.8
Missing data	0.0	6.2	6.2	6.1
Percent White				
Less than 70	12.9	26.7	32.9	12.0
70 to 80	6.2	9.2	9.9	7.5
More than 80	80.9	57.9	51.0	74.4
Missing data	0.0	6.2	6.2	6.1
Percent African American				
Less than 10	81.8	57.2	50.3	73.6
10 to 30	10.0	17.1	20.0	10.2
More than 30	8.2	19.5	23.4	10.1
Missing data	0.0	6.2	6.2	6.1
Percent other races				
Less than 5	80.4	64.1	57.5	79.9
5 to 15	12.2	17.8	20.8	10.8
More than 15	7.5	11.9	15.5	3.3
Missing data	0.0	6.2	6.2	6.1
Sample size (number)	NA	1,617	1,145	472

NA = Not applicable.

Source: National Emergency Food Assistance System Survey (2000), weighted tabulations, and 1990 Decennial Census data.

Food Distribution Characteristics and Policies

To gain perspective about the operations of pantries, we asked respondents a series of questions about their food distribution practices and policies. The data were then cross-tabulated to determine whether pantry operations differed by metropolitan status, size, or region.

Food Distribution Characteristics

About 30 percent of pantries distribute food 5 or more days per week (table 3.12). About half are open fewer than 3 days per week. In general, pantries do not have long hours of operation. Only about 32 percent are open for 5 or more hours on the days they are open (fig. 3.3).

Eighty-three percent of pantries reported that in an emergency they make food available to clients even when the pantries normally are closed. Forty-six percent sometimes make home deliveries to people who are unable to come to the pantries.

The client base for most pantries is small. Sixty percent of pantries serve 25 or fewer households per day. Only about 8 percent serve more than 100 households per day.³²

We originally intended to estimate the total number of household visits per month at each pantry by multiplying the respondent's estimate of the number of clients who came on a typical day by the reported number of days per month the pantry was open. However, this led to an implausibly high estimate of monthly visits.³³ We therefore have used a different set of questions to estimate the

³²The data on average visits per day should be used with some caution, since our editing checks found inconsistencies with other data items for some cases. In particular, we believe that in some instances the estimates are too high. However, the distribution gives a reasonably accurate sense of the range of scales of operations found within the pantry network.

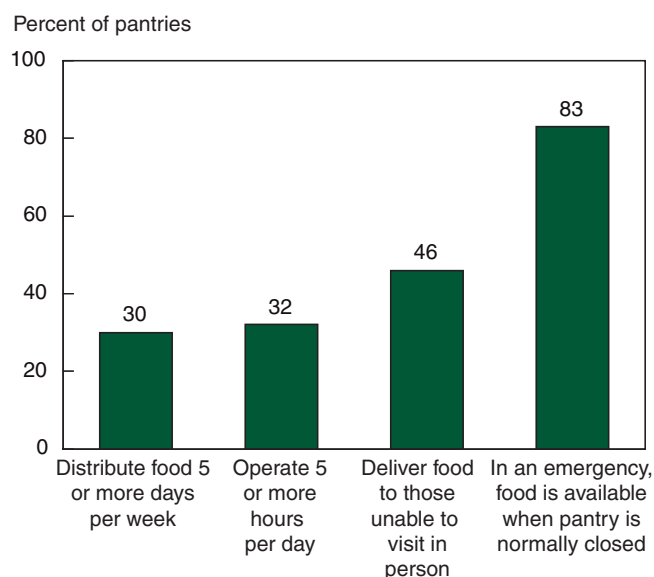
³³When the number of visits estimated this way was multiplied by our estimate of the average pounds of food taken per visit, the result was an estimate of food distributed per month that seemed unreasonably high. The relevant data item (Question C11) about daily attendance was frequently inconsistent with responses to the question on the number of different people using the pantry over a longer period (Question C17-4). Also a series of "call-backs" to respondents indicated that the data recorded under C11 were often too high. While we are unsure of the exact reason for these discrepancies, we have relied on variables other than C11 for most of the analysis. We believe that there may have been a tendency for respondents to give us estimates of the visits per day that were closer to the maximum rather than the average on Question C11. (The data collection instrument is available in the file documentation for the project and can be obtained from ERS or MPR.)

number of visits to a pantry in a month. Respondents were asked how often (that is, how many times per period, such as a month) clients could obtain food from their pantry, with the respondent being allowed to choose the time period for which he or she responded. This information was converted to a frequency-per-month figure during the analysis. The respondents were also asked how many *different* clients were served by the pantry during the interval over which food pickups were allowed. The estimated number of different clients served in the stated interval times and the frequency per month with which they could pick up food was then used to calculate the estimate of household visits to the pantry in a given month.

The resulting data, displayed in the next panel of table 3.12, further highlight the wide variation in the scale at which various pantries operate. About 14 percent reported having 10 or fewer clients *per month*. Thirteen percent had client visits in the range of 50 to 100 a month. Approximately 12 percent reported in excess of 300 client visits in a month.

There is somewhat less variation in the amount of food the clients typically receive on a visit. Thirty-seven percent of respondents indicated that clients receive between 30 and 40 pounds, which is typically two to three large grocery bags. About 10 percent of pantries reported distributing more than 60 pounds per visit.

Figure 3.3
Selected food distribution characteristics of food pantries



Source: National Emergency Food Assistance System Survey (2000), weighted tabulations.

By Metropolitan Status

In general, metropolitan and nonmetropolitan pantries appear to have similar food distribution characteristics (table 3.12). However, the groups differ in at least two respects. First, nonmetropolitan pantries serve fewer households per day: 49 percent of nonmetropolitan pantries, compared with 38 percent of metropolitan pantries, serve fewer than 10 households per day. In addition, pantries located in metropolitan areas are more likely than pantries in nonmetropolitan areas to distribute food 5 or more days per week (32 versus 25 percent).

It is likely that many of the smallest pantries represented in the table principally serve a small, specific clientele, such as the members of a single church or the residents of a small municipality or neighborhood. Further, in rural areas with low population densities, even a pantry targeted at all nearby residents may serve a limited number of people per day.

By Size

Not surprisingly, our constructed size variable is strongly related to the number of households served on an average day (table 3.13). In addition, small pantries operate for fewer hours than do large ones: 33 percent of small pantries operate for 2 or fewer hours per day, compared with 24 percent of large pantries.

By Region

A number of differences are seen when we compare pantries in different regions of the country (table 3.14). Pantries in the Northeast have shorter operating hours than those in other regions. For example, 36 percent of pantries in the Northeast operate for 2 or fewer hours per day, compared with 26 percent of pantries in the South. In contrast, those in the Midwest and South are more likely than those in the Northeast to operate for 7 or more hours per day.

In general, compared with those in the Northeast, pantries in the Midwest and South serve fewer households. This observation is consistent with the earlier finding that many large pantries are located in the Northeast, whereas many smaller pantries are found in

the South. Pantries in the Northeast are more likely to allow households to make their own food selections than are those in other regions.

Policies Used To Limit Food Distribution

Many pantries have implemented policies that control who can receive food and how often (table 3.15). Two-thirds of pantries reported that they limit the frequency with which households can obtain food.³⁴ About half of those that do so allow households to receive food packages 12 times per year, or about once a month, whereas only 13 percent allow them to do so more than once per week.

About 40 percent of pantries limit *who* can receive food packages. The criteria used most frequently by pantries with clientele restrictions are income (50 percent) and residence in the service area (40 percent). In many cases these restrictions reflect, in part, TEFAP and/or State regulations, which set constraints on who can get USDA food and on how often they may receive it.

By Size

In general, large pantries are more likely than small ones to control their distribution of food (table 3.15). About half of large pantries limit who can receive food, but only about one-third of small ones do.

Compared With Kitchens

Pantries are much more likely than kitchens to limit who can receive food from them (43 percent versus 15 percent) (table 3.16). Although many pantries use income or residency criteria, kitchens are much less likely to impose these restrictions, perhaps because they have a higher proportion of homeless clients. (See *Second Harvest* (1998) for a discussion of the incidence of homelessness among pantry and kitchen users.) Not surprisingly, a larger percentage of kitchens report having policies against serving people exhibiting unruly behavior or drug and alcohol problems.

³⁴The percentage reporting policies to limit food is lower than we expected. It is possible that some pantries, particularly small ones, do in fact have implicit policies but do not think of them as policies because they are not formalized.

Table 3.12—Selected food distribution characteristics of food pantries by metropolitan status

Distribution characteristics	All	Metropolitan status	
		Metropolitan	Nonmetropolitan
		<i>Percent</i>	
Metropolitan status	100.0	70.3	29.7
Frequency of food distribution			
7 days per week	5.3	5.2	5.3
5 or 6 days per week	24.8	26.9	20.0
3 or 4 days per week	14.7	13.8	16.9
1 or 2 days per week	34.9	35.9	32.3
2 or 3 days per month	7.1	6.5	8.6
Once per month	9.0	8.4	10.3
Missing data	4.3	3.2	6.6
Operating hours per day			
2 or less	30.5	30.7	30.1
3 or 4	30.1	30.3	29.4
5 or 6	13.9	14.5	12.5
7 or 8	13.9	14.6	12.5
More than 8	5.0	4.6	5.8
Missing data	6.6	5.4	9.7
In an emergency, food is available from pantry when it is normally closed	83.0	81.2	87.3
Pantry delivers food to those unable to visit in person	45.5	44.9	47.0
Party responsible for determining selection of food item included in bag/box			
Pantry staff	73.8	74.4	72.5
Households	15.4	14.9	16.5
Households and pantry staff	10.7	10.7	10.9
Households served on an average day			
Fewer than 10	41.1	37.8	49.0
10 to 25	18.5	19.1	17.1
26 to 50	14.2	16.2	9.5
51 to 75	5.9	6.8	3.9
76 to 100	3.8	3.6	4.5
101 to 200	4.6	5.1	3.4
201 to 300	1.5	1.8	0.8
301 to 500	0.9	0.9	0.9
501 to 800	0.3	0.3	0.1
More than 800	0.2	0.2	0.2
Missing data	8.8	8.1	10.6
(Mean)	(39.2)	(42.6)	(30.9)
(Median)	(15.0)	(15.0)	(10.0)
Household visits in a month			
Fewer than 10	13.9	10.9	21.2
10 to 25	13.8	13.6	14.4
26 to 50	12.8	12.5	13.5
51 to 100	13.4	13.3	13.5
101 to 300	16.1	17.9	11.9
More than 300	11.8	17.1	6.5
Missing data	18.1	17.8	18.9
Average pounds of food received in a visit			
Less than 10	3.9	3.7	4.2
10 to 20	19.2	19.4	18.6
21 to 30	15.3	14.7	16.7
31 to 40	37.4	39.0	33.6
41 to 50	10.1	9.3	12.0
51 to 60	4.1	4.0	4.4
More than 60	10.0	9.8	10.6
Sample size (number)	1,617	1,145	472

Source: National Emergency Food Assistance System Survey (2000), weighted tabulations.

Table 3.13—Selected food distribution characteristics of food pantries by size of pantry

Distribution characteristics	All	Size of pantry		
		Small	Medium	Large
		<i>Percent</i>		
Frequency of food distribution				
7 days per week	5.3	5.6	4.2	5.4
5 or 6 days per week	24.8	23.0	26.0	26.6
3 or 4 days per week	14.7	12.4	15.6	18.1
1 or 2 days per week	34.9	33.5	35.2	37.5
2 or 3 days per month	7.1	7.8	8.2	5.2
Once a month	9.0	10.9	8.8	5.3
Missing data	4.3	6.9	2.0	1.7
Operating hours per day				
2 or less	30.5	33.5	32.5	23.7
3 or 4	30.1	24.7	31.7	36.9
5 or 6	13.9	10.4	12.2	21.1
7 or 8	13.9	14.6	13.8	13.1
More than 8	5.0	4.6	5.9	4.2
Missing data	6.6	12.2	3.9	0.9
In an emergency, food is available to households from pantry when it is normally closed	83.0	83.3	82.2	84.0
Pantry delivers food to those unable to visit in person	45.5	45.5	44.7	47.3
Party responsible for determining selection of food items included in bag/box				
Pantry staff	73.8	73.3	71.2	77.9
Households	15.4	16.1	16.3	13.5
Households and pantry staff	10.7	10.5	12.4	8.6
Households served on a typical day				
Fewer than 10	41.1	67.3	35.0	11.1
10 to 25	18.5	10.2	28.8	17.4
26 to 50	14.2	4.7	17.3	25.4
51 to 75	5.9	1.9	6.2	12.1
76 to 100	3.8	0.9	4.0	8.4
101 to 200	4.6	1.4	3.4	11.1
201 to 300	1.5	0.0	0.5	5.4
301 to 500	0.9	0.2	0.2	3.1
501 to 800	0.3	0.0	0.1	0.9
More than 800	0.2	0.0	0.2	0.3
Missing data	8.8	13.5	4.4	4.9
(Mean)	(39.2)	(12.3)	(31.5)	(86.2)
(Median)	(15.0)	(4.0)	(15.0)	(45.0)
Household visits in a month¹				
Fewer than 10	13.9	36.8	0.0	0.0
10 to 25	13.8	36.5	0.0	0.0
26 to 50	12.8	5.3	30.6	0.0
51 to 100	13.4	0.0	38.0	0.0
101 to 300	16.1	0.0	17.6	39.9
More than 300	11.8	0.0	0.0	47.9
Missing data	18.1	21.4	13.8	12.3
Average pounds of food received in a visit				
Less than 10	3.9	3.7	3.0	5.4
10 to 20	19.2	19.9	21.0	16.9
21 to 30	15.3	13.1	17.8	16.3
31 to 40	37.4	43.8	29.8	35.1
41 to 50	10.1	6.9	12.9	11.3
51 to 60	4.1	3.5	4.8	4.1
More than 60	10.0	9.1	10.6	10.8
Sample size (number)	1,617	597	576	410

¹Equal to the number of households visiting the pantry in a month times the average number of visits made by each household in the month.

Note: Size variable is based on number of households served, frequency of food distribution, and staffing. In general, "small" pantries have fewer than 30 household visits per month; "medium" pantries have 30 to 150 household visits per month; and "large" pantries have more than 150 household visits per month.

Source: National Emergency Food Assistance System Survey (2000), weighted tabulations.

Table 3.14—Selected food distribution characteristics of food pantries by region

Distribution characteristics	All	Region				
		West	Midwest	South	Northeast	
			<i>Percent</i>			
Frequency of food distribution						
7 days per week	5.3	5.0	4.2	6.5	4.2	
5 or 6 days per week	24.8	26.9	23.9	25.2	23.6	
3 or 4 days per week	14.7	15.7	17.7	13.8	12.3	
1 or 2 days per week	34.9	37.1	36.4	32.5	36.0	
2 or 3 days per month	7.1	5.3	5.4	7.2	10.5	
Once per month	9.0	8.8	9.9	8.4	9.1	
Missing data	4.3	1.2	2.5	6.4	4.3	
Operating hours per day						
2 or less	30.5	29.5	33.0	26.4	36.2	
3 or 4	30.1	33.0	28.2	31.0	28.3	
5 or 6	13.9	15.9	13.6	12.5	15.4	
7 or 8	13.9	11.8	14.4	15.7	11.5	
More than 8	5.0	5.8	5.1	5.1	3.9	
Missing data	6.6	3.9	5.7	9.2	4.7	
In an emergency, food is available from pantry when it is normally closed	83.0	80.2	80.9	82.9	87.9	
Pantry delivers food to those unable to visit in person	45.5	41.9	44.4	47.4	46.1	
Party responsible for selection of food items included in bag/box						
Pantry staff	73.8	75.2	71.4	78.9	65.6	
Households and pantry staff	10.7	12.1	11.5	8.0	14.2	
Households	15.4	12.7	16.9	13.0	20.1	
Households served on an average day						
Fewer than 10	41.1	27.7	46.0	46.9	33.9	
10 to 25	18.5	20.7	19.3	18.1	16.8	
26 to 50	14.2	19.3	13.1	11.3	17.6	
51 to 75	5.9	7.5	5.4	4.8	7.8	
76 to 100	3.8	5.4	2.9	2.5	6.5	
101 to 200	4.6	6.9	3.7	3.5	6.2	
201 to 300	1.5	4.8	0.7	1.2	0.8	
301 to 500	0.9	1.4	0.5	0.7	1.4	
501 to 800	0.3	0.9	0.0	0.3	0.0	
More than 800	0.2	0.4	0.0	0.3	0.0	
Missing data	8.8	4.9	8.5	10.5	8.9	
(Mean)	(39.2)	(62.4)	(28.1)	(34.4)	(43.8)	
(Median)	(15.0)	(25.0)	(10.0)	(10.0)	(20.0)	
Household pantry visits in a month¹						
Fewer than 10	13.9	6.7	16.1	18.3	8.1	
10 to 25	13.8	7.5	14.4	16.6	12.3	
26 to 50	12.8	10.5	13.6	13.1	12.9	
51 to 100	13.4	14.6	15.3	10.7	15.4	
101 to 300	16.1	21.5	16.9	12.4	18.2	
More than 300	11.8	21.4	6.5	9.9	14.9	
Missing data	18.1	17.7	17.0	18.8	18.2	
Average pounds of food received in a visit						
Less than 10	3.9	5.1	3.3	4.6	2.2	
10 to 20	19.2	23.1	14.7	18.6	22.8	
21 to 30	15.3	17.8	14.8	15.0	14.5	
31 to 40	37.4	30.2	37.1	37.5	43.0	
41 to 50	10.1	12.1	11.7	9.7	43.0	
51 to 60	4.1	3.7	4.4	4.7	2.7	
More than 60	10.0	7.9	13.8	10.0	7.2	
Sample size (number)	1,617	252	402	648	315	

¹Equal to the number of households visiting the pantry in a month times the average number of visits made by each household in the month.

Source: National Emergency Food Assistance System Survey (2000), weighted tabulations.

Table 3.15—Policies used by food pantries to limit how often and which households can receive food by size of pantry

Frequency and eligibility policies	All	Size of pantry		
		Small	Medium	Large
		<i>Percent</i>		
Have set limits on how often each household can obtain food	66.5	62.6	71.4	66.6
Frequency with which households are permitted to obtain food distributed by food pantry¹				
52 times per year or more	12.9	8.3	10.1	24.3
13 to 51 times per year	13.8	11.0	14.6	15.7
12 times per year	49.5	34.2	62.4	52.7
5 to 11 times per year	4.2	7.0	3.1	2.2
4 times per year	9.8	19.9	5.9	1.7
Less than 4 times per year	1.8	4.5	0.3	0.0
Other	6.8	14.0	2.5	2.3
Missing data	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.1
(Median)	(12.0)	(12.0)	(12.0)	(12.0)
Have policies limiting who can receive food	42.7	32.1	46.9	52.1
Policies used by food pantries to restrict who can receive food^{2,3}				
Must meet certain income guidelines	49.7	39.5	55.8	51.6
Must reside in service area	39.3	37.9	42.1	38.4
Must fall into a specific target group not dictated by age or presence of children	14.2	17.8	11.6	12.8
Must fall into a certain age group	2.8	3.5	1.7	3.8
Must be referred by church or other agency	8.1	10.0	9.0	4.9
Must not abuse program or come too often	2.7	3.8	2.8	1.2
Must have proper identification	2.6	1.6	2.0	4.5
Must not exhibit a drug, alcohol, or behavior problem	1.3	0.0	1.3	2.6
Must have children in the household	0.7	2.1	0.3	0.0
Must have U.S. citizenship	0.5	0.0	0.6	0.7
Must provide services to agency and/or make donations	0.5	0.9	0.4	0.4
Must pay a small fee	0.1	0.5	0.0	0.0
Other	6.7	5.4	4.9	9.5
Sample size (number)	1,617	597	576	410

¹Includes food pantries that have policies restricting how often each household can obtain food. ²Categories may sum to more than 100 percent because some pantries provided more than one response. ³Includes food pantries that have policies restricting who can receive food.

Note: Size variable is defined based on number of households served, frequency of food distribution, and staffing. In general, "small" pantries have fewer than 30 household visits per month; "medium" pantries have 30 to 150 household visits per month; and "large" pantries have more than 150 household visits per month. Source: National Emergency Food Assistance System Survey (2000), weighted tabulations.

Table 3.16—Comparison of policies used by food pantries and emergency kitchens to limit who can receive food

Policies	Food pantries	Emergency kitchens	
		<i>Percent</i>	
Have policies limiting who can receive food	42.7	15.0	
Policies used to restrict who can receive food^{1,2}			
Must meet certain income guidelines	49.7	6.1	
Must reside in service area	39.3	5.2	
Must fall into a specific target group not dictated by age or presence of children	14.2	11.1	
Must be referred by church or other agency	8.1	3.4	
Must fall into a certain age group	2.8	13.6	
Must not exhibit a drug, alcohol, or behavior problem	1.3	38.5	
Must have children in the household	0.7	3.0	
Must provide services to agency and/or make donations	0.5	0.5	
Must pay a small fee	0.1	0.5	
Other	12.0	18.0	
Sample size (number)	1,617	1,517	

¹Includes respondents that have policies restricting who can receive food.

²Categories may sum to more than 100 percent because some pantries provided more than one response.

Source: National Emergency Food Assistance System Survey (2000), weighted tabulations.

Sources and Types of Foods Used by Food Pantries

Sources of Food Supplies

Food pantries obtain the food they distribute from a number of sources (table 3.17). The sources reported most frequently were food banks or similar nonprofit organizations (80 percent), community donations (76 percent), and wholesalers or retailers (52 percent) (fig. 3.4).

These are the three sources that are also most frequently cited by kitchens. Kitchens, however, are much more likely than pantries to use commercial sources (76 percent versus 52 percent).

Although pantries use a variety of food sources, they draw on fewer sources, in general, than kitchens (table 3.18). Almost 60 percent of pantries reported using from one to three food sources, whereas only 39 percent of kitchens reported using this few.

Large pantries were more likely than small ones to use food banks and were more likely to use commercial sources (table 3.19). In general, large pantries have a higher number of food suppliers than small pantries. More than half the large pantries have four or more suppliers, whereas roughly only 26 percent of small pantries have this many (table 3.20). Significantly, 29 percent of small pantries rely on a single type of source for food supplies.

Table 3.17—Comparison of sources of food supplies for food pantries and emergency kitchens

Sources	Food pantries	Emergency kitchens
	<i>Percent</i>	
Allocations from food banks and/or similar nonprofit organizations, such as Second Harvest	79.9	81.3
Community donations	75.6	76.6
Farmers and growers	24.0	38.9
Received a direct donation ¹	22.7	37.1
Received leftovers from farmers' markets ¹	7.0	15.8
Received food from field-gleaning ¹	6.6	13.6
Purchased food at market price ¹	1.9	2.9
Wholesalers or retailers	52.0	76.5
Purchased food at market price ²	35.8	59.0
Received donation of a salable product ²	26.0	38.6
Salvaged food ²	19.1	30.1
Food rescue programs	7.7	17.4
State or Federal programs	28.2	33.8
Direct donations from manufacturers	18.1	30.9
Leftovers from places that serve food	13.7	45.1
Other sources	8.9	8.1
Service area sources³		
Manufacturers in service area	10.4	20.8
Farms in service area	15.9	28.4
Sample size (number)	1,617	1,517

¹Subgroup percentages are based on all pantries or kitchens, not just those obtaining food from farmers and growers.

²Subgroup percentages are based on all pantries or kitchens, not just those obtaining food from wholesalers and retailers.

³Entries in this category may overlap with previous entries. The focus of this panel is receipt of food specifically from sources within the service areas of pantries and kitchens.

Notes: Total exceeds 100 percent because respondent pantries reported using multiple sources of food supplies.

Size variable is based on number of households served, frequency of food distribution, and staffing. In general, "small" pantries have fewer than 30 household visits per month; "medium" pantries have 30 to 150 household visits; and "large" pantries have more than 150 household visits per month.

Source: National Emergency Food Assistance System Survey (2000), weighted tabulations.

Most pantries do not draw heavily on local sources for their food supplies. Only 10 percent reported receiving foods from manufacturers in their service areas, and only 16 percent reported getting food from local growers (table 3.19).

As with kitchens, we investigated why some pantries use food banks and others do not by cross-tabulating pantry characteristics by whether they used food banks (table 3.21). No strong patterns are evident. There is, however, some tendency for pantries in the West to use food banks and for those in the South not to. Among food bank users, 16 percent are found in the West, whereas only 11 percent of nonusers are in the West. The corresponding numbers for the South are 39 percent and 44 percent, respectively.

When asked to report their primary food source, 57 percent of the pantries mentioned food banks and similar nonprofit organizations (table 3.22). About one-third reported receiving their food primarily from community donations (for example, through food drives). Roughly 40 percent of small pantries relied primarily on community donations for food, whereas only about one-quarter of large pantries did so.

Some of the food that pantries receive may not be usable or may spoil before it is distributed. In order to determine how much of the food received reaches pantry clients, we asked respondents what proportion

of the food they received was not used due to spoilage. Sixty percent of pantries reported distributing more than 95 percent of the food they received (table 3.23). Fifteen percent, however, reported distributing less than 85 percent of the food they received. This may reflect the limited ability of these pantries to store perishables and, possibly, a mismatch between the food that pantries receive and the food they need.

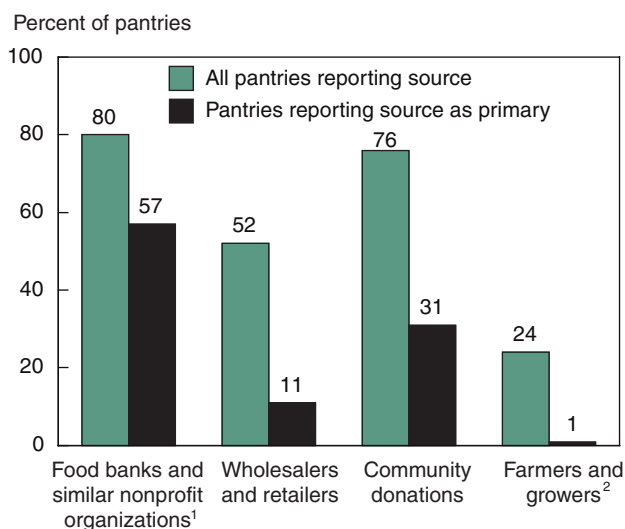
About two-thirds of pantries indicated some degree of seasonality in food availability. However, most of those thought it posed no significant problem in meeting client needs (table 3.24).

Table 3.25 breaks out the percentages of food pantries that receive foods of various types. In general, pantries appear to use fewer types of food than kitchens. In fact, only three food categories (cereal and pasta; dry or canned beans, eggs, and nuts; and frozen, canned, or dried fruits and vegetables) were used by more than 90 percent of pantries. Much smaller percentages of pantries distribute food prone to spoilage, such as fresh fruit and vegetables and dairy products. This finding is consistent with pantries being generally less likely to use perishable foods than kitchens, since pantries prepare food packages rather than meals.

The pattern of foods most commonly distributed did not vary substantially by pantry size (table 3.26). However, there is a clear tendency for the larger pantries to distribute more types of food, including foods that are somewhat less common. For instance, only 42 percent of small pantries reported distributing fresh fruits and vegetables, while the comparable percentages are 63 and 77 for the medium and larger pantries.

Figure 3.4

Sources of food for food pantries



¹Includes those mentioning America's Second Harvest.

²Includes food purchased at retail prices, gleaned, left over, and salvaged. Source: National Emergency Food Assistance System Survey (2000), weighted tabulations.

Table 3.18—Comparison of number of food sources used by food pantries and emergency kitchens

Number of known food sources	Food pantries	Emergency kitchens
	<i>Percent</i>	
1	19.9	10.0
2 or 3	40.0	29.0
4 or 5	25.1	29.2
6 or 7	10.5	20.8
8 to 10	3.7	10.0
Missing data	0.8	1.0
Sample size (number)	1,617	1,517

Source: National Emergency Food Assistance System Survey (2000), weighted tabulations.

About 82 percent of pantries indicated that they could use additional quantities of some types of foods (table 3.27). By a substantial margin, the most common class of food they wanted more of was meat, poultry, and fish, selected

by about 55 percent of the pantries who needed additional of food. Other food types frequently mentioned include frozen, canned, and dried fruits and vegetables and fruit juices; dairy products; and cereals, pasta, and rice

Table 3.19—Sources of food supplies for food pantries by size of pantry

Sources	All	Size of pantry		
		Small	Medium	Large
		<i>Percent</i>		
Allocation from food banks and/or similar nonprofit organizations, such as Second Harvest	79.9	67.4	87.0	90.0
Community donations	75.6	77.2	73.8	76.8
Wholesalers or retailers	52.0	41.4	55.0	64.5
Purchased food at market	35.8	30.1	38.7	40.9
Received donation of a salable product ¹	26.0	17.0	27.2	38.3
Salvaged food	19.1	10.4	20.9	30.5
State or Federal programs	28.2	15.1	30.8	45.2
Farmers and growers	24.0	17.3	24.6	33.9
Received a direct donation ²	22.7	16.4	22.6	33.3
Received leftovers from farmers' markets ²	7.0	4.3	7.6	11.1
Received food from field-gleaning ²	6.6	3.3	6.1	12.4
Purchased food at market price ²	1.9	1.7	1.6	2.8
Direct donations from manufacturers	18.1	10.6	16.4	32.1
Food rescue programs	7.7	3.2	7.6	15.1
Leftovers from places that serve food	13.7	7.8	14.3	21.8
Service area sources^{3,4}				
Manufacturers in service area	10.4	4.9	9.8	20.2
Farms in service area	15.9	13.0	15.3	21.2
Other sources	8.9	8.5	8.3	10.7
Sample size (number)	1,617	597	576	410

¹Subgroup percentages are based on all pantries, not just those obtaining food from wholesalers and retailers.

²Subgroup percentages are based on all pantries, not just those obtaining food from farmers and growers.

³Includes respondents that turned away clients seeking food during the past 12 months.

⁴Entries in this panel of the table may overlap with previous entries. The focus of this panel is receipt of food specifically from sources within the pantry service area. Notes: Total exceeds 100 percent because respondent pantries reported using multiple sources of food supplies. Size variable is defined based on number of households served, frequency of food distribution, and staffing. In general, "small" pantries have fewer than 30 household visits per month; "medium" pantries have 30 to 150 household visits per month; and "large" pantries have more than 150 household visits per month.

The sample numbers for food pantry sizes do not sum to the total sample because some food pantries did not provide answers and are not included.

Source: National Emergency Food Assistance System Survey (2000), weighted tabulations.

Table 3.20—Number of known food sources used by food pantries by size of pantry

Number of known food sources	All	Size of pantry		
		Small	Medium	Large
		<i>Percent</i>		
1	19.9	28.5	16.0	11.0
2 or 3	40.0	44.0	42.2	30.8
4 or 5	25.1	20.1	28.3	29.0
6 to 7	10.5	4.7	9.8	20.5
8 to 10	3.7	1.1	3.1	8.7
Missing data	0.8	1.6	0.6	0.0
Sample size (number)	1,617	597	576	410

Notes: Size variable is based on number of households served, frequency of food distribution, and staffing. In general, "small" pantries have fewer than 30 household visits per month; "medium" pantries have 30 to 150 household visits per month; and "large" pantries have more than 150 household visits per month.

The sample numbers for food pantry sizes do not sum to the total sample because some food pantries did not provide answers and are not included.

Source: National Emergency Food Assistance System Survey (2000), weighted tabulations.

Table 3.21—Selected characteristics of food pantries by whether they obtain food from food banks

Characteristics	All	Obtain food from food bank?	
		Yes	No
		<i>Percent</i>	
Size of pantry			
Small	37.9	32.0	60.9
Medium	35.3	38.7	22.5
Large	24.8	27.9	12.8
Missing data	2.1	1.7	3.8
Region			
West	15.1	16.1	11.0
Midwest	24.6	24.4	25.6
South	40.1	39.0	43.8
Northeast	20.3	20.5	19.6
Metropolitan status			
Metropolitan	70.3	73.2	59.1
Nonmetropolitan	29.7	26.8	40.9
Type of organization			
Nonprofit, associated with religious group	67.1	66.7	68.7
Nonreligious private nonprofit	25.4	26.4	21.5
Governmental	3.0	2.6	4.8
Informal group of people	2.3	1.9	3.6
Other	1.6	1.8	1.0
Missing data	0.5	0.6	0.3
Selected organizational affiliations¹			
United Way	19.5	22.7	7.2
Other nonprofit organization	17.6	20.2	7.5
Salvation Army	11.0	12.2	6.7
Catholic Charities	8.4	9.5	4.1
Red Cross	6.0	6.8	3.1
Length of time surveyed location has been operating			
Less than 1 year	5.7	6.4	2.8
1 to 3 years	22.2	22.8	20.4
4 to 5 years	11.1	11.0	11.3
6 years or longer:			
6 to 10 years	17.9	16.9	22.0
11 to 15 years	10.1	10.5	7.3
16 to 20 years	12.5	12.6	11.9
21 to 25 years	2.8	3.1	2.1
Longer than 25 years	4.7	4.7	4.7
Not specified	12.3	11.6	15.4
Missing data	0.8	0.5	2.1
Programs with which food pantry is co-located²			
Emergency kitchen	9.1	10.3	4.6
Food bank	3.7	3.7	3.9
Food rescue program	1.4	1.0	3.2
Emergency shelter	0.5	0.6	0.3
Reasons originally began operating at current location³			
Need for new services	76.7	76.1	80.1
Moved to this site from old location	11.4	11.9	8.7
Program expanded, opened this site	4.2	4.9	1.0
Wanted to be closer to clients	3.7	3.8	3.2
Needed larger facility	3.1	2.9	4.2
Parent organization determined site	1.7	1.7	1.6
More affordable location	0.6	0.6	0.3
Forced to move	0.4	0.3	1.0
Wanted to be closer to food sources	0.3	0.3	0.3
Untapped sources of prepared or perishable food	0.2	0.3	0.0
Wanted to be closer to transportation	0.1	0.1	0.0
Needed handicapped accessible facility	0.1	0.1	0.0
Other	11.8	11.6	12.0
Sample size (number)	1,617	1,294	309

¹Categories do not add to 100 percent because many pantries do not have any organizational affiliations.

²Categories do not add to 100 percent because many pantries are not co-located with another provider.

³Categories may sum to more than 100 percent because some pantries provided more than one response.

Co-location = Two different programs operating at the same location.

Notes: Size variable is based on number of households served, frequency of food distribution, and staffing. In general, "small" pantries have fewer than 30 household visits per month; "medium" pantries have 30 to 150 household visits per month; and "large" pantries have more than 150 household visits per month.

The sample sizes for "yes" and "no" responses do not sum to the total sample because some food pantries did not provide answers and are not included.

Source: National Emergency Food Assistance System Survey (2000).

Table 3.22—Primary source of food supplies for food pantries by size of pantry

Sources	All	Size of pantry		
		Small	Medium	Large
		<i>Percent</i>		
Allocation from food banks and/or similar nonprofit organizations¹	56.7	46.0	64.7	62.5
Community donations	31.4	42.5	25.5	22.3
Wholesalers or retailers	10.7	8.6	10.3	14.2
Purchased food at market price	8.0	7.4	8.0	8.3
Received donation of a salable product	2.1	1.3	1.2	4.4
Salvaged food	0.7	0.2	0.7	1.4
State or Federal programs	6.4	3.1	6.3	11.5
Farmers and growers	0.8	0.2	1.3	1.1
Received a direct donation	0.7	0.0	1.3	0.8
Purchased food at market price	0.1	0.2	0.0	0.0
Received food from field-gleaning	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.3
Received leftovers from farmers' markets	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Direct donations from manufacturers	0.6	0.0	1.0	1.2
Leftovers from places that serve food	0.4	0.5	0.5	0.0
Food rescue programs	0.3	0.2	0.5	0.3
Other sources	2.0	2.6	1.8	1.3
Sample size (number)	1,617	597	576	410

¹Includes those mentioning America's Second Harvest. Notes: Total exceeds 100 percent because respondent pantries reported using multiple sources of food supplies. Size variable is defined based on number of households served, frequency of food distribution, and staffing. In general, "small" pantries have fewer than 60 household visits per month; "medium" pantries have 60 to 300 household visits per month; and "large" pantries have more than 300 household visits per month. The sample numbers for food pantry sizes do not sum to the total sample because some food pantries did not provide answers and are not included. Source: National Emergency Food Assistance System Survey (2000), weighted tabulations.

Table 3.23—Spoilage of food received by food pantries by size of pantry

Food-spoilage variables	All	Size of pantry		
		Small	Medium	Large
		<i>Percent</i>		
Percent of food received that is distributed				
95 to 100	60.4	51.9	61.9	73.3
90 to 94	10.0	11.5	11.0	7.0
85 to 89	3.1	2.7	3.4	2.8
Less than 85	14.5	21.0	12.6	7.4
Missing data	11.9	12.8	11.1	9.4
Does pantry receive food that cannot be used, due to spoilage and other problems?				
Yes	45.7	41.2	47.8	50.6
No	53.9	58.3	52.0	49.2
Missing data	0.4	0.5	0.2	0.2
Estimated paid staff hours spent disposing of unusable food, per week				
0	71.7	77.0	72.4	63.9
1	14.1	14.9	14.6	12.8
2	3.4	1.5	3.8	5.5
More than 2	5.8	2.5	3.3	13.1
Missing data	5.0	4.2	5.9	4.7
Estimated volunteer hours spent disposing of unusable food, per week				
0	33.9	35.7	37.4	26.1
1	26.3	31.1	27.5	19.2
2	8.5	8.7	6.9	10.8
More than 2	23.0	16.3	19.0	37.6
Missing data	8.3	8.1	9.2	6.2
Sample size (number)	1,617	597	576	410

Note: The sample numbers for food pantry sizes do not sum to the total sample because some food pantries did not provide answers and are not included. Source: National Emergency Food Assistance System Survey (2000), weighted tabulations.

Table 3.24—Variation in food supply available to food pantries by size of pantry

Food-supply variables	All	Size of pantry		
		Small	Medium	Large
		<i>Percent</i>		
Does type and quality of food obtained vary by time of year?				
Yes	66.8	57.2	71.2	76.2
No	31.7	40.3	27.5	23.8
Missing data	1.5	2.5	1.3	0.0
Is this a problem in meeting client needs?				
Yes	39.2	29.9	42.4	45.8
No	60.1	69.5	57.0	53.2
Missing data	0.7	0.6	0.7	0.9
Sample size (number)	1,617	597	576	410

Notes: Size variable is defined based on number of households served, frequency of food distribution, and staffing. In general, "small" pantries have fewer than 30 household visits per month; "medium" pantries have 30 to 150 household visits per month; and "large" pantries have more than 150 household visits per month. The sample numbers for food pantry sizes do not sum to the total sample because some food pantries did not provide answers and are not included. Source: National Emergency Food Assistance System Survey (2000), weighted tabulations.

Table 3.25—Comparison of types of food obtained by food pantries and emergency kitchens during the past 12 months

Food type	Food pantries that receive food type	Emergency kitchens that receive food type
	<i>Percent</i>	
Cereal, pasta, and rice ¹	97.5	95.1
Dry/canned beans, eggs, nuts, peanut butter	97.1	94.3
Frozen, canned, and dried fruits and vegetables and fruit juices	94.2	94.9
Meat, poultry, and fish	85.3	95.2
Desserts	82.0	93.2
Snack foods	77.6	77.9
Bread products	74.8	96.4
Fats and oils	73.5	92.5
Soft drinks, coffee, tea, and other nonjuice beverages	72.0	91.5
Baby food, formula, and nutritional supplements or aids	71.8	44.8
Spices and condiments	66.8	92.1
Dairy products	61.2	86.7
Fresh fruits and vegetables	58.3	90.6
Complete meals, entrees, and prepared foods ²	14.6	30.4
Sample size (number)	1,617	1,517

¹Includes nonbread grain products, such as rice, barley, and noodles.

²Includes packaged meals drawing on multiple food groups, such as canned meat and vegetable products or frozen lasagna dinner.

Source: National Emergency Food Assistance System Survey (2000), weighted tabulations.

Table 3.26—Food obtained by food pantries in past 12 months by size of pantry

Food type	All	Size of pantry		
		Small	Medium	Large
<i>Percent</i>				
Does type and quality of food obtained vary by time of year?				
Cereal, pasta, and rice ¹	97.5	97.0	98.4	98.1
Dry/canned beans, eggs, nuts, peanut butter	97.1	96.3	97.9	97.2
Frozen, canned, and dried fruits/vegetables and fruit juices	94.2	91.6	95.2	96.5
Meat, poultry, and fish	85.3	79.4	89.4	89.2
Desserts	82.0	75.8	85.5	87.3
Snack foods	77.6	72.5	79.6	83.3
Bread products	74.8	60.7	81.0	88.4
Fats and oils	73.5	68.7	76.1	78.0
Soft drinks, coffee, tea, and other nonjuice beverages	72.0	68.1	73.6	75.9
Baby food, formula, and nutritional supplements or aids	71.8	68.5	72.2	77.3
Spices and condiments	66.8	64.1	66.8	71.1
Dairy products	61.2	53.3	64.9	68.6
Fresh fruits and vegetables	58.3	42.4	62.7	77.2
Complete meals, entrees, and prepared foods ²	14.6	12.0	15.0	18.6
Sample size (number)	1,617	597	576	410

¹Includes nonbread grain products, such as rice, barley, and noodles.

²Includes packaged meals drawing on multiple food groups, such as canned meat and vegetable products or frozen lasagna dinner.

Note: The sample numbers for food pantry sizes do not sum to the total sample because some food pantries did not provide answers and are not included.

Source: National Emergency Food Assistance System Survey (2000), weighted tabulations.

Table 3.27—Types of foods for which food pantries could use additional quantities

Food shortfalls	Food pantries
	<i>Percent</i>
Could use additional quantities of food	82.2
Types of food needed¹	
Meat, poultry, and fish	54.6
Frozen, canned, and dried fruits and vegetables and fruit juices	33.6
Dairy products	27.8
Cereals, pasta, and rice	27.8
Dry and canned beans, eggs, nuts, peanut butter	23.0
Fresh fruits and vegetables	22.1
Baby food, formula, and nutritional supplements or aids	8.9
Fats and oils	7.9
Bread products	7.9
Spices and condiments	6.9
Complete meals, entrees, and prepared foods	5.1
Soft drinks, coffee, tea, and other nonjuice beverages	3.2
Desserts	2.0
Snack foods	1.7
All food types	5.9
Sample size (number)	1,232

¹As a percentage of the pantries that indicated they need additional food.

Source: National Emergency Food Assistance System Survey (2000), weighted tabulations.

Staffing and Other Resources

Budgets

Most food pantries reported fairly low operating budgets (table 3.28). Eighteen percent said they had no budget at all, and another 38 percent reported budgets of less than \$5,000. Only 10 percent had operating budgets in excess of \$20,000. Food budgets, as part of the overall budgets, were somewhat lower, with more of them reported as being under \$5,000 and only about 7 percent as being over \$20,000.

Staffing

Pantries, like kitchens, are heavily dependent on volunteer labor; nearly 93 percent have volunteers (table 3.29), and only 24 percent have paid staff (fig. 3.5). On average, pantries with paid staff use 60 paid-staff hours per week.

A comparison of pantries and kitchens produces interesting findings. First, only about a fourth of pantries have paid staff, compared with roughly half the kitchens. Second, pantries are less likely than kitchens to have unpaid staff such as people satisfying court-ordered community service requirements (23 percent versus 41 percent). Third, kitchens use approximately double the average number of employee hours that pantries do. Because pantries are open less frequently and for fewer hours per day than kitchens, they probably require fewer employees.

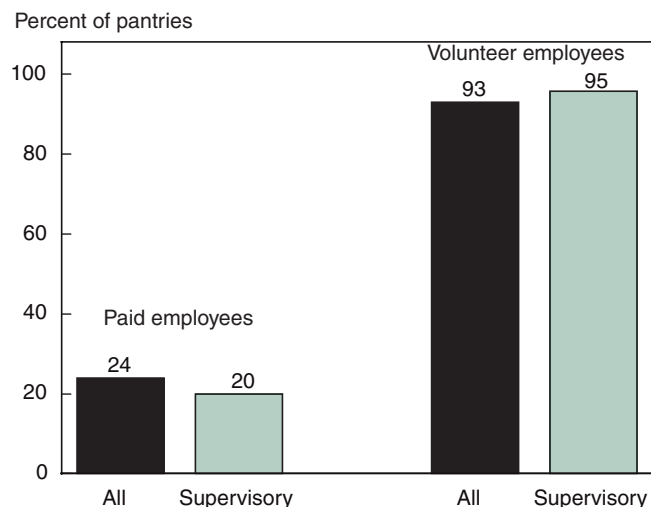
In addition, the work performed in pantries is generally less labor-intensive and somewhat less specialized than that in kitchens, reducing the need to hire paid workers.

Facilities

In a physical sense, pantries are small operations. About a third of pantries reported occupying less than 250 square

Figure 3.5

Use of paid and volunteer staff for all staff and selected staff categories



Source: National Emergency Food Assistance System Survey (2000), weighted tabulations.

Table 3.28—Operating budgets of food pantries by size of pantry

Dollar amounts	All	Size of pantry		
		Small	Medium	Large
		<i>Percent</i>		
Total operating budget for past 12 months				
0	17.6	28.1	13.3	9.1
1 to 1,000	10.8	18.3	7.9	3.4
1,001 to 5,000	27.4	28.3	32.0	19.8
5,001 to 10,000	12.6	8.1	14.8	16.6
10,001 to 20,000	9.2	3.6	10.4	15.9
More than 20,000	10.0	3.3	8.9	22.7
Missing data	12.4	10.4	13.5	12.5
Budget for purchasing food for past 12 months				
0	14.4	20.0	11.4	9.9
1 to 1,000	12.4	20.6	10.2	3.7
1,001 to 5,000	33.2	35.1	36.8	26.4
5,001 to 10,000	12.2	8.1	13.4	17.3
10,001 to 20,000	7.1	2.8	8.0	12.5
More than 20,000	6.8	1.7	6.7	15.3
Missing data	13.8	11.8	13.5	14.9
Sample size (number)	1,617	597	576	410

Notes: Size variable is based on number of households served, frequency of food distribution, and staffing. In general, "small" pantries have fewer than 30 household visits per month; "medium" pantries have 30 to 150 household visits per month; and "large" pantries have more than 150 household visits per month.

The sample numbers for food pantry sizes do not sum to the total sample because some food pantries did not provide answers and are not included.

Source: National Emergency Food Assistance System Survey (2000), weighted tabulations.

feet (table 3.30). This is roughly equivalent to two medium-size living rooms.³⁵ About 17 percent of pantries own their own building. Consistent with the fact that most pantries distribute nonperishable food, about 13 percent of those sampled did not have either onsite refrigeration or freezer capacity (not shown). Moreover, more than half cannot prepare hot meals because they lack access to the necessary equipment. Most have vehicles available for their use, but only 19 percent own them. As might be expected, large pantries are likely to have more kinds of equipment and facilities than smaller ones (table 3.31).

Because it may be related to a pantry's stability, we cross-tabulated pantry characteristics by whether the pantry owned the building it was using. The results,

³⁵Two rooms that were 10 feet by 12 feet would occupy 240 square feet.

reported in table 3.32, show no major differences between those who own and those who do not. However, pantries that own are somewhat less likely to be faith-based and more likely to be nonreligious private nonprofit organizations.³⁶ Interestingly, pantries that own are also more likely to be affiliated with the United Way or the Salvation Army.

Funding

Pantries receive funding from a number of sources, but they are heavily dependent on only a few (table 3.33). In particular, local sources appear to be major funding

³⁶The question on the survey reads "Does the 'Pantry' or 'Kitchen' own the building?" In general, we believe that a pantry located in a room of a church or synagogue would have answered this question as "No," but there may have been some variation in interpretation among respondents.

Table 3.29—Type and number of staff hours used by food pantries

Staff category	Pantries with staff types	Average staff hours used per week for pantries with staff type
	Percent	Hours
Paid employees	24.4	59.9
Supervisory personnel	19.9	33.3
Clerical staff	10.1	24.9
Nonskilled help	6.0	35.4
Skilled kitchen help	2.7	41.0
Nutritionists	1.7	19.5
Other help for program	3.6	37.8
Volunteer employees	92.6	52.6
Nonskilled help	65.1	34.6
Supervisory personnel	57.4	16.6
Clerical staff	33.2	12.9
Skilled kitchen help	9.4	18.9
Nutritionists	8.7	10.5
Other help for program	23.3	35.7
Unpaid employees¹	21.7	27.2
Nonskilled help	13.6	23.4
Supervisory personnel	2.5	16.6
Clerical staff	2.4	17.6
Skilled kitchen help	1.3	14.9
Nutritionists	0.3	9.1
Other help for program	4.3	16.1
All employees	96.6	66.5
Supervisory personnel	73.4	22.5
Nonskilled help	68.0	40.9
Clerical staff	41.8	17.2
Skilled kitchen help	11.7	25.9
Nutritionists	10.4	12.2
Other help for program	27.3	37.7
Sample size (number)	1,617	NA

¹Includes workers performing court-ordered community service or welfare-related work. NA = Not applicable.

Note: Many of the pantries that reported having particular types of staff were unable to estimate the number of hours worked per week by staff type. Thus, the average numbers of staff hours are calculated based on 87 to 96 percent of the number of pantries that have the staff type.

Source: National Emergency Food Assistance System Survey (2000), weighted tabulations.

Table 3.30—Physical capacity, facilities, and equipment used by food pantries by metropolitan status

Capacity/equipment	All	Metropolitan status	
		Metropolitan	Nonmetropolitan
		<i>Percent</i>	
Square footage at site			
Less than 100	13.1	12.3	15.0
100 to 249.99	19.6	18.2	22.7
250 to 499.99	10.5	10.4	10.6
500 to 749.99	6.2	6.4	5.6
750 to 999.99	3.5	3.7	2.9
1,000 to 1,999.99	8.2	7.7	9.5
2,000 to 2,999.99	3.7	4.2	2.5
3,000 to 4,999.99	1.4	1.6	1.0
5,000 or more	3.2	3.5	2.6
Missing data	30.7	32.0	27.7
(Mean, square feet)	(981.0)	(790.5)	(1,066.6)
(Median, square feet)	(300.0)	(225.0)	(300.0)
Owns building	17.3	18.1	15.3
Refrigeration capacity			
Have home refrigerator onsite	65.5	65.6	65.4
Have walk-in refrigerator onsite	6.0	6.8	4.1
Have other type of refrigerator onsite	12.7	14.7	8.1
Do not have refrigeration capacity onsite	19.6	17.1	25.5
Freezer capacity			
Have home freezer onsite	64.0	64.5	63.0
Have walk-in freezer onsite	5.7	6.6	3.8
Have other type of freezer onsite	15.0	16.8	10.6
Do not have freezer capacity onsite	17.6	14.9	23.9
Storage			
Have separate warehouse for food storage	10.5	11.1	9.3
Have other offsite storage	4.2	4.3	4.0
Food preparation equipment			
Own onsite food preparation equipment	12.7	14.7	8.1
Have onsite food preparation equipment but do not own it	16.5	17.9	13.2
Have access to equipment to prepare hot meals or components of meals	17.8	17.2	19.3
Do not have access to equipment to prepare hot meals or components of meals	52.3	49.5	59.0
Preservation or processing facilities			
Have access to facilities to preserve or process perishable foods	12.9	13.6	11.3
Have access to refrigerated vehicles to transport prepared or perishable foods	4.4	4.4	4.4
Repackaging equipment or facilities			
Have access to equipment or facilities to repackage foods, such as rice or dry beans	31.0	32.3	28.0
Transportation for delivery or pickup of food			
Own vehicles	19.0	20.6	15.0
Have vehicles but do not own them	61.7	62.0	61.0
Do not have vehicles	18.7	16.7	23.5
Sample size (number)	1,617	1,145	472

Source: National Emergency Food Assistance System Survey (2000), weighted tabulations.

Table 3.31—Physical capacity, facilities, and equipment used by food pantries by size of pantry

Capacity/equipment	All	Size of pantry		
		Small	Medium	Large
		<i>Percent</i>		
Square footage at site				
Less than 100	13.1	22.7	8.9	4.4
100 to 249.99	19.6	27.3	18.8	10.0
250 to 499.99	10.5	8.6	13.8	8.8
500 to 749.99	6.2	3.2	7.3	9.0
750 to 999.99	3.5	2.0	4.9	4.0
1,000 to 1,999.99	8.2	5.3	8.5	13.1
2,000 to 2,999.99	3.7	1.7	3.5	7.2
3,000 to 4,999.99	1.4	0.6	0.8	3.4
5,000 or more	3.2	0.8	1.9	9.0
Missing data	30.7	27.7	31.7	31.1
(Mean)	(981.0)	(470.9)	(811.1)	(2,071.4)
(Median)	(300.0)	(144.0)	(350.0)	(800.0)
Food pantry owns building	17.3	14.9	16.5	22.7
Refrigeration capacity				
Have home refrigerator onsite	65.5	60.5	70.5	66.5
Do not have refrigeration capacity onsite	19.6	29.0	15.4	11.3
Have other type of refrigerator onsite	12.7	10.1	13.3	16.2
Have walk-in refrigerator onsite	6.0	2.1	4.6	13.5
Freezer capacity				
Have home freezer onsite	64.0	59.1	68.8	65.8
Do not have freezer capacity onsite	17.6	26.6	13.1	9.4
Have other type of freezer onsite	15.0	10.8	16.9	19.6
Have walk-in freezer onsite	5.7	2.5	4.5	11.9
Storage				
Have separate warehouse for food storage	10.5	6.5	11.2	14.9
Have other offsite storage	4.2	2.2	4.4	7.3
Food preparation equipment				
Own onsite food preparation equipment	12.7	9.0	13.0	18.5
Have onsite food preparation equipment but do not own it	16.5	18.2	16.3	14.3
Have access to offsite equipment to prepare hot meals or components of meals	17.8	20.8	17.4	13.8
Do not have access to equipment to prepare hot meals or components of meals	52.3	52.0	52.5	52.6
Preservation or processing facilities				
Have access to facilities to preserve/process perishable foods	12.9	11.3	13.3	14.4
Have access to refrigerated vehicles to transport prepared or perishable foods	4.4	3.5	4.1	6.5
Repackaging equipment or facilities				
Have access to equipment or facilities to repackage foods, such as rice or dry beans	31.0	25.6	31.0	40.8
Transportation for delivery or pickup of food				
Own vehicles	19.0	14.1	15.9	31.7
Have vehicles but do not own them	61.7	63.1	66.0	54.6
Do not have vehicles	18.7	22.7	17.4	12.9
Sample size (number)	1,617	597	576	410

Notes: Size variable is based on number of households served, frequency of food distribution, and staffing. In general, "small" pantries have fewer than 30 household visits per month; "medium" pantries have 30 to 150 household visits per month; and "large" pantries have more than 150 household visits per month.

The sample numbers for food pantry sizes do not sum to the total sample because some food pantries did not provide answers and are not included.

Source: National Emergency Food Assistance System Survey (2000), weighted tabulations.

Table 3.32—Selected characteristics of food pantries by whether they own their buildings

Characteristics	All	Own building?	
		Yes	No
Size of pantry		<i>Percent</i>	
Small	37.9	32.6	39.2
Medium	35.3	33.7	35.7
Large	24.8	32.6	23.0
Missing data	2.1	1.1	2.2
Region			
West	15.1	17.7	14.5
Midwest	24.6	23.7	24.9
South	40.1	39.8	40.1
Northeast	20.3	18.9	20.5
Metropolitan status			
Metropolitan	70.3	73.7	69.6
Nonmetropolitan	29.7	26.3	30.4
Type of organization			
Nonprofit, associated with religious group	67.1	62.3	68.2
Nonreligious private nonprofit	25.4	30.9	24.1
Governmental	3.0	1.0	3.5
Informal group of people	2.3	3.7	2.0
Other	1.6	1.8	1.6
Missing data	0.5	0.3	0.6
Selected organizational affiliation¹			
United Way	19.5	25.9	18.0
Salvation Army	11.0	15.2	10.1
Catholic Charities	8.4	8.7	8.3
Red Cross	6.0	6.2	5.9
Other nonprofit organization	17.6	19.1	17.4
Length of time surveyed location has been operating			
Less than 1 year	5.7	5.5	5.8
1 to 3 years	22.2	20.5	22.6
4 to 5 years	11.1	8.5	11.6
6 years or longer:			
6 to 10 years	17.9	17.5	17.8
11 to 15 years	10.1	11.9	9.7
16 to 20 years	12.5	11.9	12.6
21 to 25 years	2.8	3.0	2.8
Longer than 25 years	4.7	7.8	4.1
Not specified	12.3	12.3	12.2
Missing data	0.8	1.0	0.7
Programs with which food pantry is co-located²			
Food bank	3.7	4.0	3.6
Emergency kitchen	9.1	13.8	8.1
Food rescue program	1.4	1.2	1.4
Emergency shelter	0.5	0.9	0.4
Reasons originally began operating at current location³			
Need for new services	76.7	77.2	76.7
Moved to this site from old location	11.4	13.2	11.0
Program expanded, opened this site	4.2	5.1	4.1
Wanted to be closer to clients	3.7	4.5	3.5
Needed larger facility	3.1	3.2	3.1
Parent organization determined site	1.7	1.6	1.7
More affordable location	0.6	0.2	0.7
Forced to move	0.4	0.0	0.5
Wanted to be closer to food sources	0.3	0.4	0.3
Untapped sources of prepared or perishable food	0.2	0.6	0.2
Wanted to be closer to transportation	0.1	0.0	0.1
Needed handicapped accessible facility	0.1	0.0	0.1
Other	11.8	12.9	11.5
Sample size (number)	1,617	285	1,321

¹Categories do not add to 100 percent because many pantries do not have any organizational affiliations.

²Categories do not add to 100 percent because many pantries are not co-located with another provider.

³Categories may sum to more than 100 percent because some pantries provided more than one response.

Co-located = Two different programs operating at the same location.

Note: The sample sizes for "yes" and "no" responses do not sum to the total sample because some food pantries did not provide answers and are not included.

Source: National Emergency Food Assistance System Survey (2000), weighted tabulations.

streams. Sixty-five percent of pantries receive funding through donations from local individuals and groups, and about one-quarter obtain monetary support through fundraising activities. Donations account for, on average, 66 percent of the operating budgets of pantries that use this source. While we have no direct evidence of this, it is reasonable to speculate that this reliance on local donations may cause some pantries to be vulnerable to economic downturns, as compared, for instance, with the Food Stamp Program or some other government program that relies on Federal funding (which is unlikely to be cut back in a recession).

Another interesting finding is that sources that are not used much by pantries in general sometimes contribute a large portion of the operating budget for those that use them. For example, only 10 percent of pantries use “other” government sources that, on average, comprise about 40 percent of their budgets. (Respondents were not asked to specify these “other government sources.” One example may be funds from the municipal or county government.)

Ten percent of the pantries indicated that they received contributions from at least some of their clients, with the typical contribution being \$2 (table 3.34). It

Table 3.33—Funding sources for food pantries

Sources of funding	Food pantries that use source ¹		Operating budget source contributes (mean %) ^{2,3}
Government sources		<i>Percent</i>	
FEMA funds	16.3		26.1
TEFAP administrative funds	4.1		26.5
Other government sources	10.4		40.6
Nongovernment sources			
Donations from local individuals or groups	64.8		66.1
Fundraising activities	24.2		31.1
Grants from foundations	13.1		25.0
United Way	12.8		21.8
Fees from clients	2.0		25.0
National organizations	4.0		25.1
Other sources	18.9		45.8
Missing data	2.1		NA
Sample size (number)	1,617		NA

¹Total exceeds 100 percent because many pantries reported having multiple funding sources. ²When source is used. ³Many of the food pantries that reported receiving donations from a particular source were unable to estimate contributions to their budgets. Thus, the contribution of most of the funding sources is calculated based on reports from the pantries who knew what portion of their operating budget came from that source. For example, 16 percent of all food pantries receive funds from FEMA. Seventy percent of these were able to relate the specific amounts to their overall budgets. The reported mean in this case is based on 11 percent of all pantries. FEMA = Federal Emergency Management Agency. TEFAP = The Emergency Food Assistance Program. NA = Not applicable.

Note: Total exceeds 100 percent because many pantries reported having multiple funding sources. Source: National Emergency Food Assistance System Survey (2000), weighted tabulations.

Table 3.34—Voluntary contributions received from clients of food pantries by size of pantry

Client contributions	All	Size of pantry		
		Small	Medium	Large
		<i>Percent</i>		
Percent of pantries having clients who make voluntary contributions	10.1	8.4	10.6	12.5
Median contribution (N = 126) ^{1,2}	2.00	3.00	2.00	1.00
Average contribution (N = 126) ^{1,2}	2.87	3.29	2.92	2.52
Percent of clients actually making a voluntary contribution (N = 164)¹				
1 to 25	78.2	77.7	79.0	78.8
26 to 50	11.5	4.1	14.5	13.8
51 to 75	2.0	4.6	0.0	1.9
76 to 100	8.4	13.7	6.5	5.5
Sample size (number)	1,617	597	576	410

¹For sites where some clients make a contribution. ²The reported “typical” entry is the average across sites of contributions within a site. Note: The sample numbers for food pantry sizes do not sum to the total sample because some food pantries did not provide answers and are not included. Source: National Emergency Food Assistance System Survey (2000), weighted tabulations.

appears, however, that most clients do not, in fact, contribute to the pantries receiving contributions; 78 percent of these pantries reported that 25 percent or fewer of their clients contribute.

In-Kind Contributions

In addition to monetary support, in-kind contributions can be vital for a food pantry. Nearly half the pantries reported that they received in-kind contributions of

all or part of their needed space, and approximately the same number indicated that building maintenance was provided to them as a contribution (table 3.35). Other support was received in the form of packing material for food or for such services as food transport, utilities, and legal and accounting services. The probability of receiving donated goods and services does not seem to vary substantially by size of pantry (table 3.36).

Table 3.35—Donated or reduced-price goods and services received by food pantries by size of pantry

Donated foods and services	All	Size of pantry		
		Small	Medium	Large
<i>Percent</i>				
Facilities				
Facilities, including rent or other costs related to the building or space in building	48.2	49.0	50.9	44.0
Building maintenance	47.2	47.2	49.3	45.3
Utilities, including heating and air conditioning	42.2	44.2	45.1	36.4
Services				
Transportation for food	48.1	45.2	51.0	49.4
Materials for packing food	47.0	46.4	47.7	47.2
Equipment maintenance, including equipment maintenance contracts	36.7	36.3	37.7	37.2
Legal and accounting services	27.4	24.6	28.5	31.1
Computer equipment or training	24.0	18.0	24.8	32.6
Other	4.9	5.1	5.2	4.3
Do not know about any donated or reduced-price goods and services	1.9	1.2	2.6	2.0
Sample size (number)	1,617	597	576	410

Notes: Size variable is based on number of households served, frequency of food distribution, and staffing. In general, "small" pantries have fewer than 30 household visits per month; "medium" pantries have 30 to 150 household visits per month; and "large" pantries have more than 150 household visits per month. The sample numbers for food pantry sizes do not sum to the total sample because some food pantries did not provide answers and are not included.

Source: National Emergency Food Assistance System Survey (2000), weighted tabulations.

Table 3.36—Donated or reduced-price goods and services received by food pantries by region

Goods and services	All	Region			
		West	Midwest	South	Northeast
<i>Percent</i>					
Facilities					
Facilities, including rent or other costs related to the building or space in building	48.2	47.6	48.1	47.4	50.5
Building maintenance	47.2	45.8	48.1	45.5	50.8
Utilities, inc. heating and air conditioning	42.2	40.0	41.7	41.7	45.5
Other					
Transportation for food	48.1	47.9	48.9	47.2	48.9
Materials for packaging food	47.0	47.3	44.9	47.0	49.4
Equipment maintenance, including equipment maintenance contracts	36.7	56.4	36.2	35.3	40.2
Legal and accounting services	27.4	25.2	27.9	26.8	29.7
Computer equipment or training	24.0	26.9	20.8	23.2	27.4
Other	4.9	6.3	6.6	3.6	4.0
Do not know about any donated or reduced-price goods and services	1.9	1.6	1.4	1.7	3.3
Sample size (number)	1,617	252	402	648	315

Note: Total exceeds 100 percent because many pantries reported receiving multiple donated or reduced-price goods and services.

Source: National Emergency Food Assistance System Survey (2000), weighted tabulations.