



Food Pantry Myths vs. Reality

Myth: Food Stamps are intended to supply a family with all the food they need every month.

Reality: Due to recent significant cuts in the program, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, formerly known as food stamps) benefits are not what they used to be. SNAP benefits do not last most participants the whole month; 90% of SNAP benefits are redeemed by the third week of the month. In addition, food stamps cannot be used for soap, diapers, and personal hygiene products.

Myth: Only homeless, jobless people need emergency food assistance.

Reality: Our food pantry continues to serve more working poor families than ever. Month after month, more and more Dutchess County residents grapple with impossible decisions over which bills to pay. THIRTY-EIGHT PERCENT of the folks that receive emergency food assistance from our pantry are children. Last year, we provided meals to 1,805 children in Dutchess County!

Myth: People abuse services such as food pantries.

Reality: People “use” our services because they need it, and often times asking for help is not easy. We see new families every month. Eighty-one percent of households requesting assistance from the food pantry utilized our emergency food services 3 times or less within a one year period.

Myth: Food Banks provide local food pantries with free food.

Reality: Dutchess Outreach purchases food from the Food Bank on a monthly basis, sometimes more if the food pantry shelves are bare. We rely heavily on monetary and food donations to keep our pantry stocked so that we don't have to purchase from the Food Bank as often.

Myth: Economists have declared the Great Recession has lifted.

Reality: If the economy is improving, we are not seeing signs of it here. The Beverly Closs Food Pantry, Lunch Box and GIFTS programs combined, provided over a quarter of a million meals to our neighbors in need last year!

Myth: It's better for local charities to feed people, not the government.

Reality: Food pantries and soup kitchens were not designed to feed their entire communities. Instead, they were created to solve what were thought to be temporary or emergency situations, not systemic problems. Last year we found it so difficult to keep pace with the growing demand for our emergency food pantry services, we reluctantly decided to reduce our operating hours from five days to four days a week. This year the need continued at a rate that actually surpassed the previous years' use.