

## TIPS ON DONATING TO LOCAL FOOD PANTRIES

Food pantries need for food donations is great all year long, not just during the winter season. Demand at food pantries is rising in Wisconsin. More than 7% of Wisconsin households experience food insecurity and over 2% report suffering from outright hunger. These estimates indicate that more than 120,000 Wisconsin residents are going hungry.

Senior citizens, single parents and the working poor are among those using food pantries to make ends meet. A 1999 survey of food pantry clients revealed more than one third of the pantry clients are employed and 44% have at least one employed person in their household.

These tips will help your donation best meet the needs of your local food pantry.

- A donation of money is usually more valuable than a donation of food. Donated money gives the pantry staff purchasing power to buy products in bulk at bulk discount prices. The staff can also purchase what is needed to fill in the donated foods to provide a balanced, nutritional package to the families they serve.
- Ask the pantry what their needs are. Sometimes they have need of diapers or other non-food items to help families with infants and young children.
- Some pantries have refrigeration or freezer capacity, but most don't. Most pantries will only want non-perishable items. Be sure your donation is something they really need. Items that most pantries will welcome as donations include:
  - meals in a can, such as stews and ravioli
  - canned soups
  - canned tuna or other canned meat
  - peanut butter
  - pasta sauce
  - canned fruit
  - macaroni and cheese mix
  - disposable diapers and baby formula

For more information, call Melinda Stuart, coordinator of the Waukesha County Nutrition Coalition, 262-970-4713