

# METRO CHICAGO VITAL SIGNS



A Monthly Report on the Human Impact of the Economic Crisis  
**BY THE CHICAGO COMMUNITY TRUST**

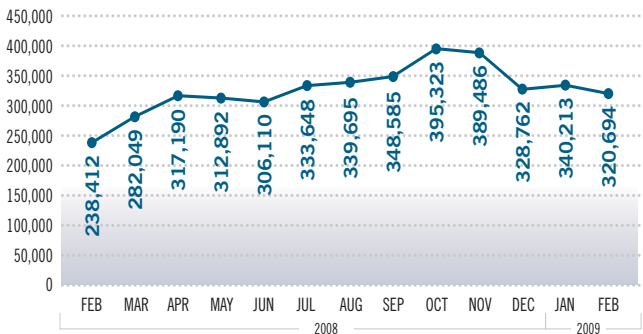
**APRIL 2009**

As headlines report national unemployment at record highs, *Metro Chicago Vital Signs* finds unemployment in metropolitan Chicago rising over 3 percentage points in the last 12 months, to a high of 8.6% in February 2009. Mass layoffs continue to escalate, with 19,000 jobs cut in mass layoff events during February.

The number of individuals who rely on food pantries in metropolitan Chicago remains at record levels—up 34.5% for the month of February 2009 compared to February 2008. Additionally, households relying on food stamps increased by 15%.

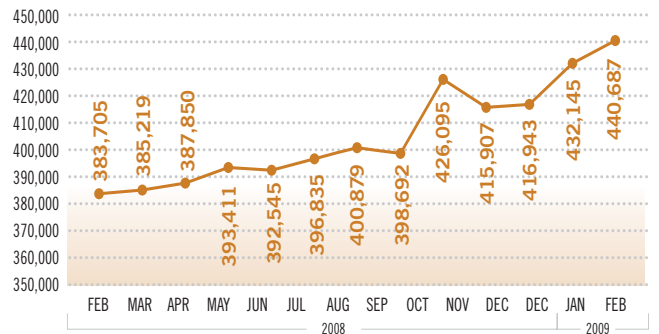
*Metro Chicago Vital Signs* is a monthly report from The Chicago Community Trust, our region's community foundation, that pulls together data defining the human impact of the current economic crisis in six categories. For more information about the Trust and how it is responding to these Vital Signs, please visit [www.cct.org](http://www.cct.org).

## Individuals Served by Food Pantries in the Chicago Area



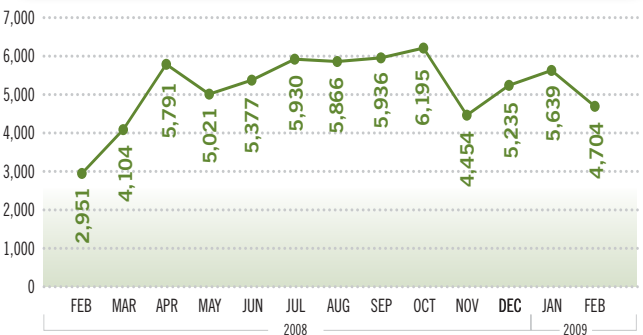
Data from the Greater Chicago Food Depository <sup>1</sup>

## Food Stamp Utilization by Household in Metropolitan Chicago



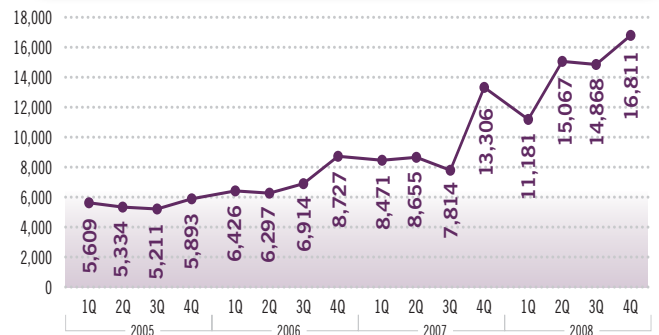
Data from the Illinois Department of Human Services, Net EBT Food Stamps Issuances. Analysis by and data on file with the Heartland Alliance Mid-America Institute on Poverty <sup>2</sup>

## Inquiries Received by Homelessness Prevention Call Center in Chicago



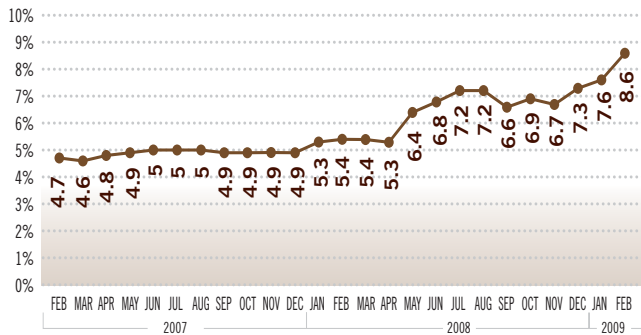
Data from The Catholic Charities of The Archdiocese of Chicago <sup>3</sup>

## Foreclosure Rate for Metropolitan Chicago



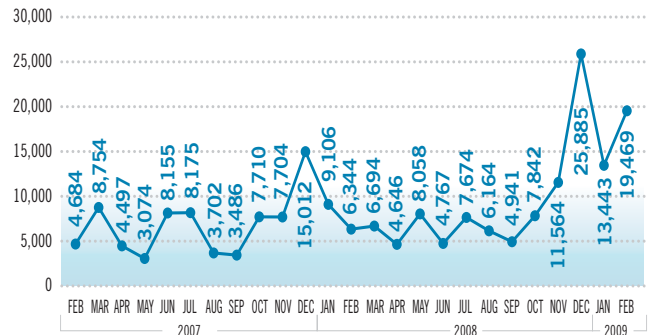
Data from the Woodstock Institute <sup>4</sup>

## Unemployment Rate in Metropolitan Chicago



Data from the Illinois Department of Employment Security <sup>5</sup>

## Illinois Mass Layoff Events



Data from the Illinois Department of Employment Security <sup>6</sup>

### DATA SOURCE ANALYSIS

<sup>1</sup> Data from Greater Chicago Food Depository (GCFD) are reported by food pantries in Cook County. The amount of food distributed can be influenced by the amount of food available. The pantries recorded here are those pantries supplied by the GCFD. Some pantries in the Chicago Area are outside of the GCFD system, so the number of individuals served reflected in this chart is a conservative assessment of the total number of individuals in the Chicago Area served by food pantries.

<sup>2</sup> Food Stamp Utilization in Metropolitan Chicago: Cook, DuPage, Kane, Lake, McHenry and Will counties. The number of households utilizing food stamps depends on family income and household makeup, the success of outreach efforts to reach eligible households, and ease of access to benefits.

<sup>3</sup> Chicago residents who call the City's 311 number indicating they are at risk of becoming homeless are routed by 311 operators directly to the Homelessness Prevention Call Center.

<sup>4</sup> Foreclosure rate for Metropolitan Chicago: Cook, DuPage, Kane, Lake, McHenry and Will counties. The counts represent the total number of foreclosure filings observed in that quarter. The decrease in filings in the third quarter of 2008 is the result in decreased filings in Cook County. The drop may reflect County's the capacity to process the high volume of claims.

<sup>5</sup> Unemployment rate for Metropolitan Chicago: Cook, DuPage, Kane, Lake, McHenry and Will counties. While unemployment rates follow regular seasonal patterns, it is now rising to levels clearly higher than in recent years. Unemployment figures do not include "discouraged" workers who have taken themselves out of the workforce; the rate calculated here reflects persons surveyed who say they are searching for a job.

<sup>6</sup> Data reflects temporary or seasonal mass layoffs and extended mass layoffs for the state of Illinois. The US Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics defines a mass layoff as the occurrence of at least 50 initial claims for unemployment filed against an establishment during a consecutive 5-week period. An extended mass layoff occurs when at least 50 initial claims are filed against an establishment during a consecutive 5-week period and at least 50 workers have been separated from jobs for more than 30 days.

**CORRECTION:** In previous issues of *Metro Chicago Vital Signs* the data for mass layoffs in the state of Illinois was incorrectly labeled. Data labeled from a particular month in 2009 was in fact from the same month 2008. The Chicago Community Trust regrets this error and apologizes for any misunderstanding it may have caused. In an effort to provide a clarification, the April 2009 issue provides a look at the past two years of unemployment and mass layoff data.

For 93 years, The Chicago Community Trust, our region's community foundation, has connected the generosity of donors with community needs by making grants to organizations working to improve metropolitan Chicago. In 2008, the Trust, together with its donors granted more than \$100 million to not-for-profit organizations. From strengthening community schools to assisting local art programs, from building health centers to helping lives affected by violence, the Trust continues to enhance our region.

