

Hunger ministries in congregations

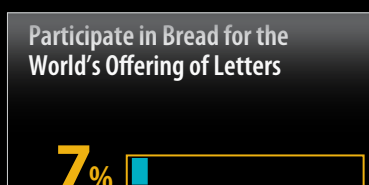
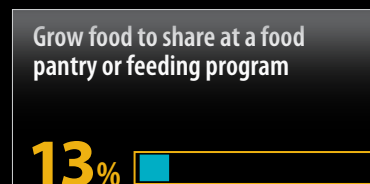
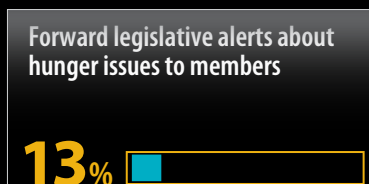
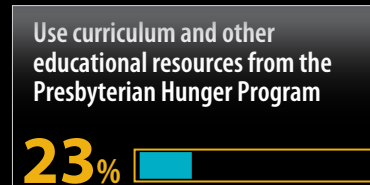
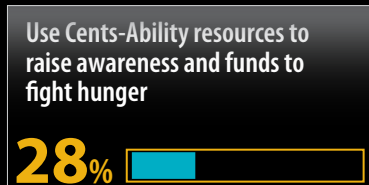
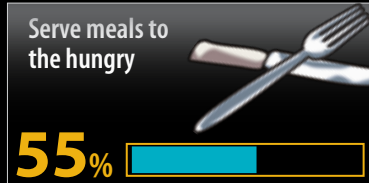
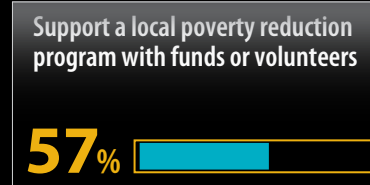
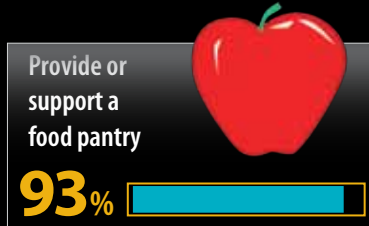
How congregations participate in hunger ministry

Percent of congregations participating, alone or with their presbytery or other congregations

3 Number of different hunger ministries the median congregation engages in

5+ 26 percent of congregations engage in 5 or more hunger ministries

7+ 3 percent of congregations engage in 7 or more hunger ministries



What the research shows

Feeding the hungry is a gospel imperative that Presbyterians take seriously. But there are important differences among congregations in how many and what types of ministries they support.

The most common congregational activities involve direct action—providing food or volunteers—and financial contributions. At the other extreme, relatively few congregations are involved in advocacy work to influence government or corporate policies.

Overall, the median congregation is engaged in three of 11 kinds of hunger ministry. One in four congregations (26 percent) are involved in five or more ministries, including 3 percent that are engaged in seven or more.

Larger congregations are typically involved in more kinds of hunger ministry. The median small (fewer than 100 members) and mid-sized (100 to 299 members) congregations both engage in two types of such ministry, compared with five for large congregations (300 or more members).

Larger congregations are also more likely than smaller ones to undertake hunger ministries on their own, as opposed to doing so only in cooperation with their presbytery or with other congregations. This pattern is most pronounced for fair trade products: While 14 percent of small congregations have used or sold these on their own, 30 percent of mid-sized and 51 percent of large congregations have done so. The only exception is for food pantries; regardless of size, around 55 percent of congregations offer food pantries on their own.

Jack Marcum is coordinator of Research Services of the General Assembly Mission Council of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

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