



## Hunger jumps as city copes with hard times

### Things go ‘from worse to worser’ as emergency meals spike 9 percent

by metro / metro new york

JUL 16, 2008

**If some Gothamites are more worried about A-Rod and the new iPhone than going hungry, they might say a bit of thanks. Their neighbor may not be so lucky.**



A meal is served at the mission. (Photo: aharon rothschild/metro)

More New Yorkers are visiting soup kitchens and pantries for food, according to a new report by the New York City Coalition Against Hunger.

“This recession has been driving more people to emergency food than ever before,” said, Joel Berg, executive director of the coalition. “It’s gone from worse to worser.”

The study, using city data, reports that 1.9 million meals were served by emergency food services in March and April of 2008, over 167,000 more than in the same period last year — representing a 9 percent jump.

Anti-poverty advocates like Berg say it’s proof of what they see at places like the Bowery Mission, a homeless shelter, soup kitchen and food pantry on the Lower East Side.

“There’s a growing need,” said Tom Basile, director of the Bowery Mission. “It’s not double-digit growth, but it’s close.”

“Once it seemed to be more elderly people, but now it’s a lot of families with a lot of kids,” said Louis Colon, 58, who once used the mission’s kitchen regularly. He now just volunteers at the mission, but still uses the pantry on occasion, given the skyrocketing price of food. “The lines have gotten longer,” Colon added.

“If anyone doubts that it’s a recession, that it’s just whining, I issue an open invitation to visit a pantry or soup kitchen with me,” Berg said.

**by andrew s. garib**