



Farm to Family Out the Door

A Food Bank's Guide to Produce Distribution in California

California Association of Food Banks

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Overview: What is Farm to Family?

Farm to Family is a program designed to connect growers and packers with California's food bank network. Farm to Family, administered by California Association of Food Banks, is modeled after a successful two-year pilot program when innovative members of California's stone fruit industry joined with the Coalition of Northern California Second Harvest Food Banks to establish the Fresh Fruit & Vegetable Initiative. Today Farm to Family partners with dozens of food banks statewide, reaching both urban and rural communities in need.

Millions of Californians have difficulty providing food for their families and themselves. With housing, transportation, and other costs rising steadily, family and food budgets are being severely pinched. Families are increasingly turning to their local food banks, charities, and faith based organizations to help make up the shortfall.

At the same time, the amount of salvaged goods donated by manufacturers and retailers (including dented cans, mislabeled jars, and soon-to-expire dry goods) to California's food banks has dramatically decreased over the last few years. This decrease is due to two main factors: improved manufacturing technology and increased opportunities to sell food in secondary markets.

For California food banks the answer to this decrease in food donations can be found in the abundant agricultural history of the state. California produces more than half of the nation's total fruits, nuts and vegetables. For some commodities, and at certain times of the year, there is a deluge of excess products. Growers and packers are forced to dispose of surplus, as well as cosmetically blemished produce. Discarding produce is costly, time consuming, and wasteful in a state where millions struggle to put food on their tables.

Farm to Family offers a solution by working with growers and packers throughout California to minimize the loss of surplus and unsellable produce. It has established a logistics network that captures surplus produce from one growing region, first distributing within that region, and then to other regions that can use the donations. When multiple food banks around the state are aggregated, the entire surplus is put to good use. Local needs are given priority to benefit surrounding low-income communities and reduce unnecessary transportation costs and pollution. Donors are protected from liability by the nation's Good Samaritan Law (See Good Samaritan Law in Templates) and their efforts are rewarded with tax breaks and positive public relations.

While produce has become more available for food banks in California through the Farm to Family program, business models for distributing this product are still in development. The purpose of this manual is to share models of produce distribution that are emerging within the state and to support food bank efforts to increase produce distributions. For further information or assistance, contact CAFB program staff at FarmToFamily@cafoodbanks.org.

Section 1 – Exploring Various Models of Fresh Produce Distribution

Getting Started: Assessing Capacity and Selecting a Model

Your food bank can deliver fresh fruits and vegetables from Farm to Family to your community in a number of ways. It does take an additional level of planning and coordination to run effective fresh produce distributions, but these distributions have a very positive impact on the low-income individuals and families that you serve.

First you want to assess the capacity and resources you have to deliver fresh produce. This initial assessment will help you to determine which type of produce distribution is best for your food bank, and, ultimately, your community. These are the factors you should consider:

- Number of trucks you have and their condition
- Weight and pallet capacity of your vehicles
- Refrigeration on vehicles and in warehouse
- Lift gates on vehicles
- Number of qualified drivers
- Number of programs staff and/or volunteers
- Type of delivery you can provide (dock, curbside) (boxed or bagged)
- The ability of your agencies to accept and store perishable products
- Frequency of food distributions at your member agencies
- Food sorting capacity

Using this assessment you will be able to determine which of the methods outlined in this section will be the best for distributing Farm to Family produce.

Model #1: Produce Public Partner Distribution

Public partnerships provide a way for food banks to move perishable fruits and vegetables quickly into the community by partnering with public agencies that might include low-resource schools, Special Supplement Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) offices, Head Start sites, US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) housing, and city parks and recreation programs operating in low-income neighborhoods. Such partnerships are effective because these agencies run daily programs offering services to low-income children and families. In this scenario, the food bank manages the site and the school or other public agency acts as the food bank's agent or distribution site (See Public Partnership MOU in Templates). Because these are pre-qualified sites through school lunch eligibility, WIC income requirements, HUD, or census data, the paperwork to qualify and prove residence and income are eliminated.

The site partner is required to direct and facilitate distribution of the fresh produce to individuals and families, keep a signature list of those who receive the food, and work with the food bank staff in scheduling of date and time of the produce delivery and pick up of pallets, if necessary.

Some food banks use their volunteer base to sort and package the fresh produce into family size bags or boxes. If the site location permits, food banks may deliver produce pallets curbside allowing individuals and families to shop according to their needs.

The individuals and families at these partner sites may receive fresh produce as often as it is available and delivered - daily, weekly, bi-weekly or monthly. Frequency of delivery usually depends upon the food bank's capacity or the amount of produce available.

These partnerships are an effective way to get high quality fresh fruits and vegetables out to individuals and families in need and quickly increase the amount of produce the food bank distributes. As a result, it reduces spoilage and dumping often associated with produce distribution. The food bank also benefits from this type of distribution by developing new partnerships in the community.

A food bank considering this methodology should first assess its operating costs and ability to add new or re-vamp existing delivery routes. Since the food bank incurs the increased delivery cost, it is essential to recover those costs in order to sustain service. Food banks using this method of distribution usually recover costs through grants and fundraising efforts, not program service fees. Additionally, staff time is needed to establish the public partnerships by attending meetings, developing Memorandum of Understandings (See Sample MOU Template), and providing support to the partner sites.

Model #2: Mobile Produce Pantries

Mobile pantries provide a reliable, efficient way to distribute fresh produce in a number of communities in a scheduled time frame. A mobile pantry schedule detailing distribution sites for each week allows the food bank's operations staff to move produce quickly out of the warehouse and into the community. Rural and remote communities can more effectively be served by a mobile pantry that brings fresh fruits and vegetables right to isolated areas. Urban areas find the mobile pantry the solution to reaching deeper into pockets of poverty where a member pantry might not exist or might not have the capacity to distribute produce.

Mobile produce pantries deliver fresh fruits and vegetables directly to people living in underserved areas of a community. Many individuals and families in these areas do not have reliable transportation and cannot access a food bank member agency pantry. The food bank finds a local church, organization or business to sponsor the mobile pantry in an outlying area.

Sponsoring a mobile pantry distribution gives a church or community service organization an opportunity to help their neighbors in need without having to rent space, store food, or apply to be a member agency. The local sponsor does outreach in the community and provides volunteers on the day of the distribution.

Your food bank will need to have a dedicated, refrigerated vehicle and driver and/or staff to develop and implement the mobile pantry. Many food banks also provide nutrition education and food stamp outreach as part of their mobile pantry program.

Model #3: Produce Pantry Networks

Produce pantry networks deliver healthy foods on a weekly basis into low-income neighborhoods. Allowing for client choice, the pantry network lets individuals and families shop according to their needs, providing critical nutritional support to seniors, children and families.

The food bank works directly with churches, senior centers and other neighborhood based organizations to set up the weekly pantry distribution and provide volunteers. Often volunteers in the pantry network are clients receiving food as well as assisting other clients. This creates a positive and comfortable environment for the food distribution because neighbors are helping neighbors.

A typical pantry network distribution sets up the available items on tables or shelves lining the walls of the room. Items are grouped or placed according to food types. Quantity limit signs are posted on the tables or shelving units. Then a designated number of people are allowed in the distribution room at any one time.

Pantry networks provide a food bank with a steady source of outlets for fresh produce. The food bank can take advantage of surplus produce offerings and last minute availability of produce to maintain a fresh and diverse supply of items for clients. The pantry networks fills a gap in providing fresh, healthy foods to low-income neighborhoods that otherwise may not have regular access to these foods.

Your food bank needs ample cooler and/or refrigeration space to store the amount of fresh produce needed to sustain a weekly pantry network in your service area. Some food banks set up pantries on a bi-weekly or monthly basis because of limited resources and storage space. If your food bank is located in a primarily rural or remote area, distances between low-income neighborhoods or communities may prove prohibitive in achieving quantity and scale for weekly pantry deliveries.

Model #4: Community Produce Programs

Community Produce Programs offer large deliveries of fresh fruits and vegetables on pallets or boxes that are received and distributed on the same day. Through bypassing storage in the food bank warehouse, Community Produce Programs offer tailgate distributions which reduce inventory handling, storage, and transportation costs.

The shipper's truck drives directly to a parking lot site on a day and time that has been pre-arranged with the food bank. The shipper unloads the pallets or boxes of fruits and vegetables. Clients are asked to bring their own shopping bags and self-select produce. Food bank staff and volunteers are on hand to assist with the distribution and answer questions. Once the distribution is complete, the shipper loads up empty containers and departs for the next location.

These tailgate type distributions focus on moving large quantities of produce into a community in a cost-effective, efficient and timely manner. Food banks usually coordinate with social services agencies or other large agencies serving low-income people to advertise and coordinate the distributions. Typically a tailgate distribution

attracts 100—200 families and individuals and upwards to receive the fresh produce. In some outlying areas distributions may occur only once a month due to high transportation costs.

If a food bank lacks sufficient storage or cooler space, then distributions are an optimal way to distribute healthy foods in the community. Because the produce is distributed on the day it arrives in the community, even a food bank with limited storage facilities can distribute thousands of pounds of produce to needy individuals and families.

In largely urban or neighborhood oriented areas where communities' resources are available to meet the need, this type of distribution may not be necessary. Since the food bank must depend on an outside shipper to bring in the produce, scheduling or frequency of delivery issues may arise.

Model #5: Member Agency Produce Promotion

Member agencies are another way to distribute fresh produce in your community. Many of these agencies are operating pantries in low-income neighborhoods and shop on a regular basis at the food bank. Usually agencies have staff and/or volunteer resources available for food distributions.

Food bank agencies usually have pre-qualified their clients based on income and often are required to keep records of this qualification. Because the food bank monitors the agency on a regular basis, this type of distribution may be a safe and efficient way to move produce out into a community.

For food banks with a large and diverse agency base, this type of distribution may reduce costs and time invested in setting up another type of produce distribution. If your food bank can assist its agencies with additional cooler or refrigeration equipment then, the volume of produce your agencies can distribute may be able to meet the demand. Agencies may also need additional training on how to store and handle fresh produce safely.

Model #6: After School Produce Packs

After School Produce Packs are designed to minimize the negative impact that inadequate nutrition has on the health and well being of children by providing take-home food for the weekend when children do not have access to the National School Lunch Program. Many food banks in California participate in Feeding America's The Backpack™ Program, which is designed to meet the needs of hungry children at times when other resources are not available, such as weekends and school vacations.

A food bank delivers supplies of child-friendly, nutritious fresh produce and other items to participating schools in backpacks or ready to be packed into student's own backpack. When a teacher, counselor or other school staff identifies a student who needs food, they send the food home with the student. For some very low resource schools there are no eligibility requirements, and students may receive the food as

often as they need to. When the school needs more food, school personnel contact the participating food bank to schedule delivery. There are no out-of-pocket costs to the schools or the children. Each participating school keeps simple statistics on the number of children served.

The After School Produce Pack allows fresh fruits and vegetables to get directly and immediately into the hands of hungry children. School personnel who are in a position to identify hungry children have the ability to give those children fresh, healthy food. Children receive food with no questions asked and without bureaucratic requirements. Children receive food as often as they need it, which would not necessarily be the case if their parents visited community food pantries or commodity food distributions that limit the number of times a family can receive food.

Most participating food banks operate the program on a weekly basis to participating children. The food banks primarily fund this type of program through grants from Feeding America or local donors in their communities.

Model #7: EFAP and CSFP Produce Bonus Bags

The EFAP-CSFP Produce Bonus Bags offers food banks a way to distribute fresh produce to qualifying households who receive federal commodities once a month. Federal commodities are distributed through two federally funded programs called Emergency Food Assistance Program (EFAP) and Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP). Once recipients are qualified based on income and household structure they receive a designated amount of United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) commodities once a month. The Produce Bonus Bags provide an additional bag of fresh produce to these qualifying households.

CSFP is a federally funded program that works to improve the health of low-income pregnant and breastfeeding women, other new mothers up to one year postpartum, infants, children up to age six, and elderly people at least 60 years of age by supplementing their diets with nutritious USDA commodity foods. It provides food and administrative funds to states to supplement the diets of these groups.

EFAP provides much-needed emergency food supplies to low- and no-income households and individuals, as well as congregate feeding sites such as soup kitchens. Operated locally by authorized food banks throughout the state, this program distributes commodities donated by the Department of Agriculture and fresh and packaged produce donated by California's food growers, packers and processors.

Section 2 - Examples from California's Food Banks

Mobile Produce Pantries: *Moveable Market*

Food Bank of Yolo County

Food Bank of Yolo County is a small food bank located southeast of Sacramento. Primarily a rural and agricultural county, the food bank realized that many low-income residents did not have access to the fresh fruits and vegetables grown right in their backyard. The food bank began looking for a way to address the food insecurity and inadequate nutrition experienced by residents of Yolo County. They began working with other agencies to enhance the community's ability to provide healthy foods to food stamp eligible families.

The *Moveable Market* van delivers fresh fruits and vegetables on a monthly basis to food insecure families throughout Yolo County. At the food bank warehouse volunteers bag the fresh produce into plastic bags donated by a local retail store. Families receive approximately 10–13 pounds of fresh produce. The van then delivers the bagged produce directly to the sites.

The *Moveable Market* coordinator/driver provides education information on cooking produce, reading nutrition labels, and preparing a healthy diet for families on a budget. Distributing at 18 sites throughout the county, *Moveable Market* provides a combination of Farm to Family and locally grown produce to over 250 families a month. Culturally appropriate recipes are provided to the families along with the produce. All information is provided in both English and Spanish.

The program has developed successful partnerships with the Yolo County's Health Department, Five A Day Campaign, local farmers, schools and low-income housing providers. The program was started with funds from the Network for a Healthy California, and is jointly funded through private foundations - The Anderson Family Fund and The Rumsey Tribe.

For Further Information, contact: Charlene C. Ho at charlene@foodbankyc.org.

Produce Pantry Networks: *Produce Only Pantries*

Redwood Empire Food Bank

Redwood Empire Food Bank (REFB) is located 50 miles north of San Francisco in Sonoma County. A county with a mix of rural, coastal and suburban towns REFB needed to increase the variety and volume of fresh produce distributed to low-income communities. Working with a network of 128 agencies and several direct distribution programs, REFB still saw a need for more fresh fruits and vegetables to be distributed. REFB began partnering with Head Start, low-income housing sites and other community-based sites to set up weekly produce only distributions in their neighborhoods.

At the South Park Head Start Center in Santa Rosa, REFB drops a weekly assortment of fresh produce, usually three to five items. Then the Head Start outreach workers and volunteers from the community distribute the produce directly to approximately 100 - 200 families who live in the low-income neighborhood. The produce is available in bins and volunteers distribute the produce right from the bins to the clients. Once the distribution has ended the food bank truck returns to pick up empty bins and return them to the warehouse. The weekly produce has had an impact on the neighborhood by bringing neighbors together to help one another.

Through these partnership distributions REFB has been able to provide critical nutrition to over 16,000 families a month. By delivering mostly fresh produce to these sites the food bank has significantly increased its produce poundage. REFB's FY06-07 total poundage was 10.75 million and 44% was produce. Produce Pantries distributed 1,932,813 pounds of produce at 25 different locations throughout the county. Of all of the food bank's direct service programs, Produce Pantries were responsible for the most pounds distributed in FY07-08.

For Further Information, contact: Gail Atkins at gatkings@refb.org.

Produce Pantries Network: *Neighborhood Pantry Networks*

San Francisco Food Bank

San Francisco Food Bank is located in the City and County of San Francisco, an ethnically diverse and densely populated urban city. San Francisco Food Bank had worked with its existing agencies to try to expand distributions, but many of their agencies could not commit to weekly pantries. Realizing how great the need was in their county, the food bank began mapping and working directly with community sites in low-income neighborhoods to determine how to start weekly pantries to meet the needs in those neighborhoods. From this a continuum of pantries were developed to meet the diverse needs of low-income San Franciscans.

San Francisco Food Bank now has a network of 191 pantries throughout San Francisco, serving more than 784,000 households yearly.

Through the *Neighborhood Grocery Network* approximately 54 organizations host neighborhood distribution programs located at places of worship and community centers throughout the City. Distributing free weekly groceries to households of low-income families and individuals, neighborhood grocery pantries provide a critical food safety net for residents not reached by other hunger-relief programs. The fresh produce and other food items are distributed in a farmers' market-style.

In 2007, San Francisco Food Bank opened *Healthy Children's Pantries* in 8 of the neediest San Francisco public schools allowing the food bank to provide healthy foods to more than 27,000 households. The program distributes fresh fruits, vegetables, pasta, dairy and other items every week through agencies that serve children and their families exclusively. *The Healthy Children's Pantries* are held at public schools, childcare centers, and family service agencies and subsidized family housing and have expanded to 47 sites throughout the City.

Senior Brown Bag Pantries provide groceries to thousands of seniors struggling to maintain their health and independence. Allowing older San Franciscans to prepare wholesome meals at home, this program ensures that they are not forced to choose between buying food or paying for rent, utilities and medications.

To address the unique challenges of San Francisco's diverse immigrant communities, neighborhood *Immigrant Food Assistance (IFA) Pantries* are operating at 7 sites. Language barriers and bureaucratic red tape prevent many immigrants from receiving the few benefits for which they qualify. The IFA program has reached deeply into immigrant communities, providing a lifeline of culturally appropriate food for those who need help.

Public Housing Pantries offers San Francisco Food Bank an additional way to connect with low-income families and individuals seeking supplemental groceries. Partnering with tenant associations and nonprofit organizations, food is distributed on a weekly basis to residents living in public housing communities. *Supportive Housing Pantries* provide free groceries at locations that house formerly homeless, disabled and low-income individuals. Through these pantries, individuals can easily access fresh fruits, non-perishable items and products that do not require cooking facilities.

San Francisco Food Bank opened 25 new pantry network sites in 2007, for a total of 191 Neighborhood Pantry Network sites. The food bank distributed 31,169,680 million pounds of food in 2007, more than 12 million of which was fresh fruit and vegetables.

For Further Information, contact: Sean Brooks at services@sffb.org.

Community Produce Program: *Rapid Food Distribution*

Los Angeles Regional Food Bank

Los Angeles Regional Food Bank serves Los Angeles County - the most populated county in the nation. The food bank realized many of their member agencies were not distributing healthy produce and other perishable foods because they did not have adequate refrigeration or storage in their pantries. At the same time, many low-income families did not have access to the fruits and vegetables and other fresh foods so important to a healthy diet.

In response the food bank began the *Rapid Food Distribution (RFP)* program which allows a free delivery of fresh produce and other perishable foods to agencies in the hour prior to the scheduled distribution. Working with approximately 50 small to medium sized member agencies, the RFP program distributes about 23,000 pounds of fresh fruits and vegetables a day to low-income families in Los Angeles County.

The RFP truck, a refitted beverage truck, pulls in an hour prior to the distribution. The free produce is displayed and packaged in milk crates, making it easy for volunteers to sort and distribute to their clients. The partner agency must return the empty milk crates to the food bank warehouse prior to the next distribution. Once the agency has made their selection the RFP driver goes to the next scheduled distribution site. This allows for delivery to 5 to 6 sites a day.

To accommodate larger sized agencies, the RFP program purchased a 28 foot trailer and loads full pallets of produce for delivery in the hour prior to the scheduled distribution. About 21,000 pounds are distributed a day through using this transportation methodology.

For Further Information, contact: Jeff Dronkers at jdronkers@lafoodbank.org.

Member Agency Produce Promotion: *Sharing the Harvest*

FOOD Share

FOOD Share is a food bank that distributes millions of pounds of food per year to the hungry. Located in southern California, the food bank serves the primarily agricultural counties of Ventura and Kern. Staff realized that many of the households they served were supported by work in the fields and packing houses, but did not have the resources to bring the harvest to their family table. As the largest hunger relief organization in these counties, FOOD Share wanted to address the issue by initiating the *Sharing the Harvest* program.

Sharing the Harvest provides a variety of fresh produce free of charge to low income families every month in multiple locations in Ventura County. Partnering with six of its member agencies, the food bank distributes approximately 30,000 pounds per month of healthy fruits and vegetables to underserved communities.

In 2005 FOOD Share started *Sharing the Harvest* in order to ensure the timely delivery of produce out into the community. Member agencies that had demonstrated consistency, organizational skills and a strong connection to their local communities were chosen to participate in the program. One full time food bank driver delivers produce to 2 locations per day and unloads bins of fresh produce for member agency volunteers to bag and oversee the distribution. This direct delivery service enables the food bank to reach communities in outlying areas and provide the freshest quality produce.

The produce is distributed directly from field bins or pre-packaged in bags with each family receiving about 15 pounds of produce free of charge. The member agencies host the distribution site and provide volunteers to set up and distribute the produce. The food bank incurs the cost of one full time staff driver, delivery and costs of purchasing produce.

Sharing the Harvest's success has led FOOD Share to consider new ways to minimize loss of perishable foods and improve agency relations. Every Friday afternoon agencies can come in from 1pm to 3pm to pick up free produce, bread and dairy products to further supplement their pantries.

According to FOOD Share agency relations manager, *Sharing the Harvest* has strengthened their relationship with their agencies and increased the food bank's visibility in outlying communities.

For Further Information, contact: John Garcia at jgarcia@foodshare.com.

Produce Public Partner Distribution: *Farm 2 Kids*

Food Bank of Contra Costa and Solano

Food Bank of Contra Costa and Solano serves two large and geographically diverse suburban counties located east of San Francisco. The food bank has a large member agency network, but found that many of their agencies did not have the resources or interest in distributing large quantities of fresh produce on a regular basis. The Food Bank began looking at other options for distribution. Since a number of schools in these counties are low resource schools with a majority of their students qualifying for free or reduced price lunches, the food bank began looking at ways to partner with the school districts.

In January 2007, Food Bank of Contra Costa and Solano launched *Farm 2 Kids* and began providing Farm to Family fresh produce every week to after school programs at 5 schools in Bay Point, a low income community about 5 miles east of the food bank's Concord warehouse. Between June 2007 and September 2008 the *Farm 2 Kids* program expanded to 34 after school sites, serving 3500 children. This successful program currently operates in 5 school districts. After school programs may receive up to three difference produce items in a given week, depending on what is available. Food Bank of Contra Costa and Solano has increased produce distribution in the last 3 years from 900,000 pounds per year to nearly 3 million pounds.

At the food bank on a weekly basis volunteers sort and box the fresh fruits and vegetables that have arrived at the warehouse through the Farm to Family program. Many of the after school program providers come to the food bank to pick up the boxed produce. Other large sites receive pallets or cardboard totes filled with fresh produce from the food bank.

In the City of Fairfield, *Farm 2 Kids* is partnering with the Fairfield School District and the City's Community Services Department which sponsors 8 after school programs through Proposition 49 funding. The Community Service staff incorporates the weekly delivery into nutrition education activities and makes sure each child leaves with a bag of fresh produce.

For Further Information, contact: Lindsay Johnson at Ljohnson@foodbankccs.org.

EFAP and CSFP Produce Bonus Bag: *CSFP Produce Bonus*

Community Action Partnership of Orange County

Located in a densely populated region of Southern California, Community Action Partnership of Orange County (CAP of Orange County) distributes over 15 million pounds of food annually. One of its major programs is the Commodity Supplement Food Program (CSFP), a federally funded program that provides nutritious food supplements for low-income pregnant, postpartum, and breast feeding women, their infants and children up to age six, and the elderly (60+). Food bank personnel distribute CSFP food boxes each month at approximately 56 distribution sites.

With new funding for the purchase of and increased access to Farm to Family produce, the food bank staff realized that the infrastructure they had in place for CSFP provided the most efficient outlet to distribute produce. Each day a full time driver is dispatched to CSFP sites throughout the county, carrying 2 - 4 items of fresh fruits and vegetables. The food bank has a truck with a 10 pallet capacity for delivery.

The staff and volunteers stage pallets along side the CSFP boxes in order for recipients to receive their 40 pound box of commodity foods and fresh produce in one distribution center. Some distribution sites served over 1,400 recipients a day and are drive-thru distributions where the recipients do not leave their car as volunteers load their trunks with the food.

During the height of the produce season, the food bank can distribute record levels of fresh, healthy produce to needy seniors and families. Over 70,000 pounds of produce is distributed monthly through the CAP of Orange County's commodity CSFP program. Each recipient also receives nutrition information and recipes included in their commodity box.

Additionally, the food bank delivers fresh produce weekly to 3 - 4 community centers located in low-income neighborhoods. The community centers provide the outreach and volunteers to distribute the produce. Over 5,500 pounds of produce are distributed weekly via this distribution method.

For Further Information, contact: Mark Lowry at mlowry@capoc.org.

Section 3 - Nutrition Education and Produce Promotion

Many California food banks incorporate nutrition education and produce promotion at their produce distributions in order to ensure that low-income families are successful at incorporating fresh produce in their diets. By offering nutrition education, food banks can help these families integrate new produce items like winter squash, eggplant, nectarines, artichokes, cabbage and broccoli into their diets.

Fourteen CAFB member food banks are participating in the USDA Food Stamp Nutrition Education (FSNE) match funding program administered by the Association in coordination with the California Department of Social Services and Department of Public Health's *Network for a Healthy California*. Some food banks have found that produce bags, with nutrition education messages have been a good way to promote produce to families while also enhancing the ability of food bank member agencies to distribute produce. Other food banks use peer education or food demos to promote the use of produce during the distributions. For more information about CAFB's Nutrition Education Program, contact Jessica Bartholow at jessica@cafoodbanks.org or (510) 272-4435 x204.

Section 4 - Helping Your Agencies Distribute Produce

Food banks may have member agencies that are reluctant to distribute fresh produce in their pantries. Often cited for this reluctance is a lack of refrigeration and storage, not enough volunteers, produce is too difficult to distribute or goes bad or their clients don't know how to cook fresh foods. By offering practical tools, resources and nutrition education, a food bank may be able to overcome some of the real barriers member agencies face when distributing fresh fruits and vegetables.

Action Plan

Here is a suggested action plan to help overcome some of the issues identified above.

- Meet with food bank program staff to identify potential agencies to target for produce distributions.
- Establish a target and determine the scope of the activity for recruitment and promotion efforts.
- Make copies of the State and Federal "Good Samaritan" laws (*See Good Samaritan Law in Templates*) to distribute to agencies.
- Contact local businesses and civic groups and request their support for the targeted agencies with in-kind donations of equipment, plastic bags, volunteers or funds.
- Develop a publicity plan.
- Prepare a volunteer fact sheet, outlining types of produce available, safe handling, and needed equipment.
- Hold the agency training session. Distribute tip sheets and discuss transportation arrangements and contingency plans in case of bad weather.
- Confirm delivery sites, dates, and times with participating agencies, as well as food delivery guidelines.
- Prepare and distribute flyers, radio announcements and press releases once your agencies are ready for produce distributions.

Tools

Member agencies are an essential link between food banks and low-income communities. As your food bank increases the amount of fresh fruits and vegetables bought in, your agencies can play a vital role distributing widely in the community. Below is a menu of tools you can use to encourage produce distributions among your agencies.

- Offer free produce deliveries.
- Give food safety training.
- Provide recipes and nutrition education materials.
- Conduct site visits to other agencies distributing produce.
- Piggy-back on established programs.
- Conform to their pick-up/delivery schedule.
- Share equipment.
- Help enlist volunteers.

- ❑ Raise money to give agencies grants to purchase equipment.
- ❑ Host an agency conference focusing on fresh produce distributions.
- ❑ Prepare tip sheets on how to run an efficient produce distribution.
- ❑ Keep lines of communication open and respond quickly to complaints.
- ❑ Maintain quality control of produce.

Resources

United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) <http://www.usda.gov/>
 California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) <http://www.cdfa.ca.gov/>

Nutrition Education

California Healthy Kids Resource Center <http://www.californiahealthykids.org>

Fit Source for Afterschool Programs <http://www.nccic.org/fitsource>

Food and Nutrition Information Center (FNIC) <http://fnic.nal.usda.gov/nal>

FoodSafety.gov <http://www.foodsafety.gov>

Dole Five-a-Day www.dole5aday.com/

International Fruit and Vegetable Association <http://www.ifava.org/>

Nutrition Navigator A Better Way to Eat <http://www.nutritionnavigator.org>

Produce for Kids <http://www.produceforkids.org>

Produce for Better Health Foundation <http://www.fruitandveggiesmoremater.org>

The Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) <http://www.cde.gov/>

The Fruit Pages <http://www.thefruitpages.com/>

The Network for a Healthy California
<http://ww2.cdph.ca.gov/programs/CPNS/Pages/default.aspx>

USDA Food and Nutrition Services My Pyramid www.mypyramid.gov

USDA Team Nutrition <http://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/>

Note: Feeding America food banks can access many materials via their intranet.

Section 5: Budgeting for Your Fresh Produce Distributions

Budgeting Costs

Before the beginning of your fiscal year you will want to start thinking about the budgetary resources needed to sustain fresh produce distributions for the upcoming year. You will need to estimate the costs required to sustain or expand the number of pounds of fresh produce distributed by your food bank.

Farm to Family has negotiated with growers and packers to pay pennies on the pound for “culled” product. This is product that has been pulled and not available for traditional markets due to minor blemishes. Typically cost per pound for produce varies from 3 to 10 cents depending on the produce and availability, but can be subject to change due to market fluctuations.

Additionally, Farm to Family charges a small administrative fee per pound to cover the costs incurred for the solicitation and logistics management of acquiring produce and distributing it to your food bank.

Costs associated with transportation of the produce, both from the source and out to the distribution sites should not be overlooked during the budgeting process. While Farm to Family provides some relief by acting as an intermediary to minimize the transportation costs of moving the produce from California’s growing regions to other regions of the state, there are still associated costs. Additionally, depending on the type of distributions your food bank sets up there will be other costs to consider.

Standard Costs of Produce Distribution

When developing your produce distribution budget, you will need to consider the following:

- Produce Value Added Product (VAP)
- CAFB administrative fee
- Inbound transportation to the food bank
- Salaries and benefits of drivers
- Gasoline to deliver produce to distribution sites
- Field bins
- Refrigeration for warehouse and trucks

Additional Costs (Optional)

- Additional volunteer supervision
- Produce bags
- Nutrition education staff and materials

Section 6: How to Handle and Store Produce Safely

Storage

Produce distribution requires more attention and monitoring. To determine its freshness check the produce regularly. Adopt a “FIFO” system: First In is First Out. Food must be stored properly to comply with the federal Good Samaritan Law (See Good Samaritan Law in Templates). Fresh produce is best preserved if stored according to the chart below, but may be stored at prevailing warehouse temperature depending upon the kind of produce received and the facility's capacity for handling it. Rapid movement and distribution of fresh produce is essential to prevent quality losses or waste.

Products in dry storage must be maintained off the floor by using pallets, shelving or other means, and must be kept 18 inches away from walls. The 18-inch distance between product and walls must be maintained to facilitate inspections and pest control activities. A white sanitation stripe should be painted on the floor along the perimeter to assist in inspections and sanitation controls.

Adequate air circulation must be provided in freezers and coolers. Product should be stored four inches from walls. Each freezer and cooler unit must be provided with an accurate, easily visible and readable thermometer.

Boxing Produce

Once Farm to Family is received by the food bank, the produce may need to be re-boxed or bagged for distribution. Volunteers should be educated on how to handle fresh produce. The volunteers, in general, should minimize the handling of the produce and wear gloves. For example, leafy vegetables should be stripped of any unsightly or brown leaves and then boxed. Some fruits and vegetables may be oddly shaped or have cosmetic blemishes, but they are just as tasty as nutritious and should not be discarded.

The following may be used as the source of a daily checklist at the conclusion of a day's sorting operation:

- ✓ Put unsorted boxes back in storage. The storage area or the boxes themselves should be labeled “Unsorted Produce-- Do Not Distribute.”
- ✓ Dispose of all contaminated boxes outside the warehouse.
- ✓ Clean and store reusable boxes or totes in a designated area.
- ✓ Clean all salvage-sorting surfaces with a sanitizing solution (200 ppm chlorine or equivalent).
- ✓ Sweep floors and inspect for spills. Clean floors with sanitizing solution as necessary.
- ✓ Clean any utensils or equipment that have been used in the operation.
- ✓ Thoroughly wash and sanitize sinks.
- ✓ Replenish supplies.

Temperatures

Following are recommended shipping temperatures as supplied by the United Fresh Fruit & Vegetable Association www.uffva.org. These may change if the shipper suggests a different temperature due to the condition of the product being shipped.

APPLES 32 degrees F
AVOCADOES 40 degrees F
ASPARAGUS 33 degrees F
BANANAS 57 degrees F
BEANS 40 degrees F
BROCCOLI 32 degrees F
CANTALOUPE 38 degrees F
CABBAGE 32 degrees F
CARROTS 32 degrees F
CAULIFLOWER 32 degrees F
CELERY 32 degrees F
CHERRIES 31 degrees F
CORN 32 degrees F
CUCUMBERS 52 degrees F
DRY ONIONS 50 degrees F
GRAPEFRUIT 48 degrees F
GREEN BEANS 42 degrees F
HONEYDEW 48 degrees F
KIWI FRUIT 32 degrees F
LEMONS / LIMES 48 degrees F
LETTUCE, all types 34 degrees F

NECTARINES 32 degrees F
ORANGES FL, TX 36 degrees F
ORANGES AZ, CA 42 degrees F
PEACHES 32 degrees F
PEARS 32 degrees F
PINEAPPLES 45 degrees F
PLUMS / PRUNES 32 degree
PEPPERS, all types 48 degrees F
POTATOES *, spring 55 degrees F
POTATOES, fall 45 degrees F
SUMMER SQUASH 45 degrees F
WINTER SQUASH 52 degrees F
SWEET POTATOES 55 degrees F
STRAWBERRIES 32 degrees F
TANGERINES 40 degrees F
TOMATOES, ripe 58 degrees F
TOMATOES, unripe 60 degrees F

** Temperature varies depending on origin and season*

Sanitizing Produce Bins

Plastic produce field bins must be thoroughly cleaned AND sanitized each time before returning to the packer. Failure to do so will not only jeopardize the client's safety, but may lead to a packer's refusal to fill our bins with produce. The safety of fresh produce has been elevated tremendously because of contamination issues in California's Salinas Valley that resulted in illness.

Various sanitizers are available, ranging from bleach/water solutions to less toxic cleaners like *HidroxiPro* or *Benefect Disinfectant*. Bins should be placed in an area with very good ventilation far from food storage areas. Workers wearing gloves and mask should thoroughly clean the bins first with appropriate cleaners and then rinse. Apply the disinfecting solution to all inside surfaces of the bins. Rinse thoroughly after 5 minutes. Allow bins to air dry and stack bins then store in a clean area.

Section 7: Templates

The Emerson Good Samaritan Act, Summarized

To encourage donations of food to nonprofit organizations such as homeless shelters, hot meal programs, and religious organizations for distribution to the needy, President Clinton signed the Bill Emerson Good Samaritan Food Donation Act into law in 1996. This law gives uniform national protection to citizens, businesses, and nonprofit organizations that act in good faith to donate, recover, and distribute excess food.

The Act promotes food recovery and gleaning by limiting donors' liability to instances of gross negligence or intentional misconduct. Under the Act, volunteers, nonprofit organizations, and businesses are not subject to civil or criminal liabilities for claims that arise from the nature, age, packaging, or condition of apparently wholesome or fit grocery products that they received as donations.

Although the Bill Emerson Good Samaritan Food Donation Act takes precedence over the various state forms of "Good Samaritan" laws, it may not entirely replace them. State "Good Samaritan" laws still may provide protection for donors and gleaners above and beyond that which is guaranteed by Federal law.

Full text of the Act: www.usda.gov/news/pubs/gleaning/appc.htm

State Good Samaritan Laws: www.usda.gov/news/pubs/gleaning/appd.htm

Template: Produce Public Partner Memorandum of Understanding

[Food Bank Name] is initiating a collaboration with the [Name School District] and [Name Recreation and Park District] in order to expand children's access to fresh produce in the community of Name.

The Food Bank proposes to deliver fresh produce each week, on early release day, in field bins, to 5 schools located in [Name of Locations]. The Food Bank will return to each site on the same day to pick up the pallets or boxes that have been emptied of produce.

Staff from the [Name Recreation and Park District] will oversee the bagging and distribution of the produce as part of the afterschool program. Produce may be used as snacks or for cooking classes with the balance being sent home with children at the end of the day.

This program will follow the afterschool program calendar. The Food Bank will make every effort to provide a continual supply of produce; however, in the event that surplus crops are not available, the Food Bank will notify the [Name Recreation and Park District] that there will be no delivery. The Food Bank also agrees to consult with the [Name Recreation and Park District] with regard to the suitability of some produce items.

[Name Recreation and Park District] agrees to provide bags for this project. [Name Recreation and Part District] also agrees to provide demographic and service statistics to the Food Bank.

The Food Bank agrees to provide in full force and effect public liability insurance coverage to the amount of \$2,000,000.

This agreement can terminate with 30 days written notice.

[Name Unified School District]

Signed by: _____ Date:_____

Title: _____

[Name Parks and Recreation District]

Signed by: _____ Date:_____

Title: _____

[Food Bank Name]

Signed by: _____ Date:_____

Title: _____