

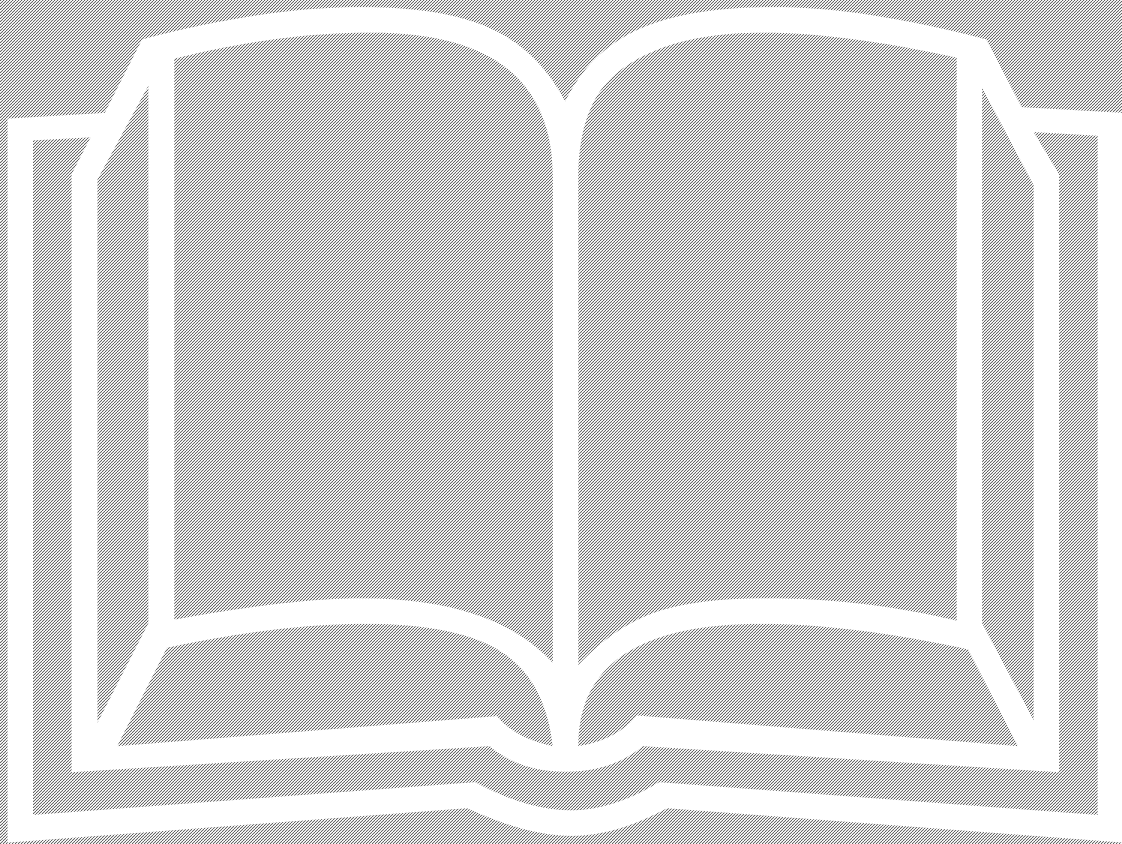
CALIFORNIA ASSOCIATION OF FOOD BANKS

A Primer on How Food Banks Work

Summer 2007

Made Possible through the Support of The California Endowment

The Food Bank Notebook



Basics

What is a food bank?

A charitable organization that solicits, receives, inventories, and stores donated food and grocery products pursuant to grocery industry and appropriate regulatory standards. These products are distributed primarily to charitable human service agencies, which, in turn, provide the products directly to clients with low -incomes through various programs. (Source: America's Second Harvest: The Nation's Food Bank Network <http://www.secondharvest.org>)

Where does a food bank get food?

Food comes from a variety of sources that include growers, manufacturers, distributors, retailers, producers, individual donations through food drives, USDA federal commodities , purchased food programs and California Association of Food Banks' Farm to Family Program. (Source: Alameda County Community Food Bank <http://www.accfb.org>)

Who does the food bank serve?

Those served include the working poor, children, seniors on fixed incomes, single parents, the disabled, the homeless and individuals experiencing medical emergencies or recent job layoffs. (Source: Second Harvest Food Bank of Orange County <http://www.feedoc.org>)

How is the food distributed?

Organizations such as food pantries, shelters, soup kitchens and senior citizen and childcare centers apply to a food bank to become participating agencies. In order to utilize the services of a food bank, agencies must be nonprofit, tax exempt organizations and agree to give food received from

the food bank to low-income individuals. They must also agree to be monitored by the food bank on an ongoing basis. Once a member, the agencies order and pick up food from the food bank and then distribute the food directly to low-income people. Food banks can also provide direct distribution to low income communities through specialized programs such as senior brown bags, kids' backpacks and mobile produce pantries. (Source: Los Angeles Regional Food Bank <http://www.lafoodbank.com>)

How is a food bank funded?

Food banks are supported by individual and corporate contributions, private foundation grants, participating agencies' shared maintenance fees and to a limited extent, government funding. (Source: Los Angeles Regional Food Bank <http://www.lafoodbank.com>)

Food Programs

What is the Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP or EFAP)?

EFAP is a federally funded food program where the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) buys food and ships it to 50 States. The amount received by each State depends on its low-income and unemployed population. State agencies establish details of administration and distribution, selecting local organizations that either directly distribute to households or serve meals, or distribute to other local organizations that perform these functions. (Source: United States Department of Agriculture <http://www.usda.gov/fns>)

What is the Commodity Supplement Food Program (CSFP)?

CSFP is a federally funded program, which works to improve the health elderly people at least 60 years of age, low-income pregnant and breastfeeding women, and other new mothers up to one year postpartum, infants and children up to age six by supplementing their diets with nutritious USDA commodity foods. It provides food and administrative funds to States to supplement the diets of these groups. CSFP is currently operated in 5 areas in California: San Diego, Orange County, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Modesto, and North Coast. (Source: United States Department of Agriculture <http://www.fns.usda.gov/fns>) (California Department of Education <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/nu/fd/csfp.asp>)

What are Food Stamps?

Food Stamps enable low-income families to buy nutritious food with Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) cards. Food stamp recipients spend their benefits to buy eligible food in authorized retail food stores.

The USDA administers the Food Stamp Program at the Federal level through its Food and Nutrition Service (FNS). State agencies administer the program at State and local levels, including determination of eligibility and allotments, and distribution of benefits. (Source: United States Department of Agriculture <http://www.fns.usda.gov/fsp>)

In California many food banks administer a Food Stamp Outreach and Access Program which helps to bring information and assistance to encourage people to apply for food stamps and facilitate the process in effort to increase participation. Food banks do this through the statewide information line, by developing and sharing outreach materials, and by collaborating with community partners in 22 counties across the state. (Source: California Association of Food Banks <http://www.myfoodstamps.org>)

What is Nutrition Education?

The USDA Nutrition Education program supports food banks to provide nutrition education to low-income children, adults and seniors and to develop healthy food distribution options. (California Department of Public Health <http://www.cachampionsforchange.net/>)

What are the Child Nutrition Programs?

USDA administers four major domestic food assistance programs that exclusively or primarily serve the nutritional needs of children. The National School Lunch Program, the School Breakfast Program, the Child and Adult Care Food Program, and the Summer Food Service Program together account for a quarter of USDA's domestic food assistance outlays. The child nutrition programs work individually and in concert to provide a nutrition safety net for children. (Source: United States Department of Agriculture <http://www.fns.usda.gov/fns>)

Many food banks operate child nutrition programs including summer lunch, after-school snacks and weekend kids' backpack programs. (Source: California Association of Food Banks <http://www.summerlunch.org>)

What is Farm to Family?

Farm to Family is a statewide produce network that acquires fresh produce directly from growers and packers and coordinates rapid delivery to food banks all across the state. Food banks, in turn, provide the fresh fruits and vegetables to families in need through a network of charities, congregations, and direct distributions. (Source: California Association of Food Banks <http://www.farmtofamily.org>)

What is the Brown Bag Program?

The Brown Bag Program is a State-funded program that provides surplus and donated edible fruits, vegetables and other food products to low income individuals 60 years of age and older. The food is distributed to help supplement the nutritional needs of these older individuals. The program was established in 1981 and is currently authorized under the Older Californians Act. The Area Agencies on Aging contract with local organizations to obtain food and distribute the food to California's eligible population. (Source: California Department of Aging <http://www.aging.ca.gov>)

Operations & Warehouse

What inventory controls does a food bank use?

An inventory record-keeping system must provide general information of a very practical nature, and must be able to track product distribution quickly in the event of a recall; provide data needed by food donors and the IRS for tax deduction purposes; provide a current inventory of the warehouse stock; and reconcile the inventory records of product received, on hand, and distributed.. (Source: America's Second Harvest <http://www.secondharvest.org>)

What are the health and safety requirements?

A food bank should follow the processes and practices as defined in the federal codes and regulation that govern the distribution or re-distribution of food and grocery products. Many are modeled after the Good Manufacturing Practices developed by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) as The Current Good Manufacturing

Practices for the Manufacturing, Processing, Packing, or Holding of Human Food. These regulations are found in Chapter 21 of the Code of Federal Regulations, Section 110.1. This document outlines both required and suggested practices to assure that human food is prepared, handled, and stored safely. It outlines suggested personal cleanliness practices and minimum standards for building, grounds, sanitation, and equipment. Food banks should also follow the provisions of regulations governing food salvage programs. These include the Model Salvage Code, developed by the FDA and the Association of Food and Drug Officials (AFDO) to provide model standards and guidelines for state legislators. Additionally, food banks incorporate the applicable provisions of the Federal Food, Drug and Cosmetic Act (1975) prohibiting the re-distribution of contaminated or potentially contaminated products and the Fair Packaging and Labeling Act (1989, amended in 1998) which prohibits the distribution of food products whose labeling is illegible or missing. (Source: America's Second Harvest <http://www.secondharvest.org>)

What is the Good Samaritan Law?

The Federal Bill Emerson Good Samaritan Food Donation Act encourages donation of food and grocery products to non-profit organizations for distribution to needy individuals. This law protects you from liability when you donate to a non-profit organization; protects you from civil and criminal liability should the product donated in good faith later cause harm to the needy recipient and standardizes donor liability exposure. (Source: America's Second Harvest <http://www.secondharvest.org>)

Anti-Hunger Advocacy

Can a food bank lobby their elected official on hunger issues?

Yes, a food bank can lobby. Congress has stated that influencing legislation is an appropriate and legitimate activity for charitable organizations. In 1976, it passed legislation giving public charities the right to lobby up to defined percentages of their annual expenditures. Section 501(h) and its companion, Section 4911, also enacted that year, set specific dollar limits on the amount electing public charities may spend to influence legislation, without incurring penalty taxes or losing their exempt status. Those limits are substantially in excess of the very small percentages to which many 501(c) (3) organizations, absent definite guidance, now limit themselves. (Source: Alliance for Justice <http://www.afj.org>)

How does a food bank advocate for the hungry in their community?

Food banks promote public policies that address hunger and its root causes. Working with policymakers and elected officials to improve access to government food programs, such as the Food Stamp Program and the Summer Food Service Program for children, helps ensure that low-income individuals and families have safe, nutritious, and adequate food at all times. (Source: Alameda County Community Food Banks <http://www.accfb.org>)

What state or national organizations provide resources on advocacy?

At the state level, California Association of Food Banks (CAFB), California Food Policy Advocates (CFPA) and California Hunger Action Coalition (CHAC) provide advocacy information and resources. (Source: California Association of Food Banks <http://www.cafoodbanks.org>) (California

Food Policy Advocates <http://www.cfpa.net>) (California Hunger Action Coalition <http://www.hungeraction.net>)

On a national level Food Research and Action Center (FRAC) America's Second Harvest (A2H) and Center on Budget and Policy Priorities (CBPP) provide advocacy resources for food banks. (Source: Food Research and Action Center <http://www.frac.org>) (Source: America's Second Harvest <http://secondharvest.org>) (Center on Budget and Policy Priorities <http://www.cbpp.org>)

What is a hunger study?

A study undertaken by a food bank to provide information on hunger in the community it serves and the charitable response. (Source: San Francisco Food Bank <http://www.sffoodbank.org/About-Hunger/about-hunger/overview.html>)

What is Hunger 101?

Hunger 101 is an interactive tool food banks use to educate their community about hunger. Participants take on the role of a low-income person in their community and are challenged to manage their resources and get enough food to feed their family. The experience then will guides an informational discussion about hunger in the community and how participants can help. (Source: San Francisco Food Bank <http://www.sffoodbank.org/About-Hunger/about-hunger/overview.html>)

Food Bank Networks

What is the California Association of Food Banks?

The California Association of Food Banks (CAFB) is a statewide network of 40 food bank members who provide food to pantries, soup kitchens, churches and other agencies that serve the low-income in their local communities. CAFB was founded in 1995 to promote collaboration and provide a unified voice among California food banks. Its mission is to build a well-nourished California. (Source: California Association of Food Banks
<http://www.cafoodbanks.org>)

What is America's Second Harvest: The Nation's Food Bank Network (A2H)?

America's Second Harvest—The Nation's Food Bank Network is the nation's largest charitable hunger-relief organization. It is a network of more than 200 Member food banks and food-rescue organization, serving all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico. The America's Second Harvest Network secures and distributes more than 2 billion pounds of donated food and grocery products annually. (Source: America's Second Harvest
<http://www.secondharvest.org>)
