



Food Banks in California

The Food Banks

California's **efficient food bank network distributes over 200 million pounds of food each year to people in need**. Statewide, about 60 food banks provide 5,000 non-profit agencies with food. These agencies in turn distribute food directly to over 2 million hungry families and individuals. More than 25,000 volunteers support the food bank network.

Food banks are **very efficient operations with low overheads**. Due to the high levels of community support, broad base of volunteers, and industry support, food banks typically leverage approximately \$10 worth of food for every dollar received.

Food banks **recover food from growers and producers** that would otherwise be lost. They work to re-distribute scarce resources and identify surpluses in one region of the state that can be transferred to regions where there are food deficits.

Food banks are **very diverse** -- some are very large facilities that warehouse and distribute many millions of pounds of food each year, while others are smaller, more rural operations. About 20 food banks in California are members of the national America's Second Harvest network.

The People We Serve

Food banks serve a wide range of working people, seniors, families, and individuals. The most comprehensive data ever available for the State on hunger were released in November 2002, as part of the California Health Interview Survey (CHIS).

- More than 2.24 million low-income adults in California cannot always afford to put food on the table.
- As a result, almost one out of three of these low-income adults, 658,000, experience episodes of hunger.
- Among adults who experience hunger and who are below 130% of poverty (the eligibility level for the federal Food Stamp program), 80% were *not* in the Food Stamp program.

The California Association of Food Banks (CAFB)

CAFB was founded in 1995 to promote collaboration in response to emerging social, economic and legislative challenges impacting hungry people throughout California. Our mission is to provide a unified voice among food banks to maximize their ability to build a well-nourished California. To accomplish that mission, our membership focuses on supporting food banks, increasing the visibility of food banking, sharing food resources, and influencing public policy.

Over the last five years, CAFB has worked with the California State Legislature to pass legislation providing state funds for California's food banks and for anti-hunger programs. Since 1998, food banks have received \$4 million for local infrastructure building projects (money for refrigeration, trucks, forklifts and other critically needed equipment). CAFB also sponsored legislation adding the "Emergency Food Assistance Program Fund" to the State tax form as a voluntary contribution fund. Individuals have contributed over \$1.67 million since 1999 and these funds have been used to purchase food to help food banks meet the increased hunger needs in their community. CAFB has also advocated for the Emergency Food Assistance Program, the Senior Brown Bag Nutrition Program, the California Food Assistance Program, and the federal Food Stamp Program.

To learn more or to find a food bank, contact CAFB at (916) 321-4435 or www.cafoodbanks.org