



2017 Wildfires and Mudslides: Lessons from the Frontlines

A Report Prepared for the California Association of Food Banks

September 2018



Acknowledgments

With deep thanks to the California food bank leaders who shared their experiences of and reflections on the disasters of 2017, and to all California food bankers for their selfless devotion to ending hunger.

Photo Credits:

FOOD Share Ventura County
FoodBank of Santa Barbara County
Redwood Empire Food Bank

Written and submitted by Swardenski Consulting – Margaret Melsh and Annamaria Swardenski,
September 2018

Contents

Introduction and Purpose	5
Description of Disaster Events	5
Northern California Fires (October 2017)	5
Ventura/Santa Barbara Fire and Mudslides (December 2017 and January 2018)	6
Northern California Food Banks Response	6
Redwood Empire Food Bank (REFB)	6
Napa Food Bank (Napa FB).....	7
Food Bank of Contra Costa and Solano (FBCC&S).....	8
Regional Coordination.....	8
Southern California Food Banks Response	9
FOOD Share Ventura County (FOOD Share)	9
FoodBank of Santa Barbara County (FBSBC).....	10
CAFB and Feeding America Support	11
Successes.....	12
Challenges.....	13
Lessons Learned and Recommendations	14
Considerations for Future Discussions and Planning.....	15
ATTACHMENTS	
Attachment A – List of Interview Contacts	
Attachment B – Interview Discussion Questions	

Blank Page

Introduction and Purpose

Many of the communities California's network of food banks serves were significantly impacted by the 2017 wildfires and subsequent mudslides. As the disasters unfolded, a number of food banks were asked to respond in ways they may not have imagined or prepared for.

Believing there is much to be learned from these experiences, CAFB contracted with Swardenski Consulting to prepare this report on the food bank responses to the 2017- 2018 wildfires and mudslides. The report is based primarily on interviews with food bank staff from the affected communities – a group that CAFB feels is uniquely qualified to help member food banks better prepare for and meet needs in times of disaster.

The purpose of this report is three-fold:

- 1) To document the roles food banks played in these disasters and the emergency assistance they provided
- 2) To share the successes and challenges of this disaster work as reported by the staff of these food banks
- 3) To capture key lessons learned by and recommendations from these food banks for the benefit of the full CAFB membership

On June 25, 2018, Governor Brown declared a state of emergency in Lake County for the Pawnee Fire and on July 6, 2018 the Holiday Fire broke out in Santa Barbara County, yet again impacting the community and rattling nerves. It is a sad reminder of last year's devastating wildfire season and serves as a sobering wake-up call of what this year's fire season may entail.

Terry Garner, Member Services Director,
CAFB

Description of Disaster Events

The 2017 California wildfire season was quoted as the costliest to date in US history with total losses in homes, business closures, firefighting and rehabilitation costs and several other factors estimated at close to \$180 billion for the year.¹

Northern California Fires (October 2017)

The Northern California wildfires, also known as the Northern California Firestorm, consisted of a series of 250 wildfires that started burning on October 8, 2017. Within the first week, CalFire had reported 14 large wildfires that broke out in numerous counties north of the Bay Area including Napa, Lake, Sonoma, Mendocino, Butte and Solano.

More than 10,000 firefighters battled these blazes using more than 1000 fire engines and other equipment. Crews arrived from as far away as Canada, Australia and American Samoa.

This series of fires included the Tubbs Fire (labeled by CalFire as the most destructive wildfire in California history²), the Atlas Fire, Nuns Fire and Redwood Valley Fire; these four were included on CalFire's 20 Most Destructive California Wildfires list compiled in January 2018.

¹ <https://www.accuweather.com/en/weather-news/californias-2017-wildfire-season-to-rank-among-most-destructive-costly-on-record/70003704>

² http://www.fire.ca.gov/communications/downloads/fact_sheets/Top20_Destruction.pdf

By October 14, the fires had burned more than 210,000 acres, forcing some 90,000 people to evacuate. The fires destroyed thousands of homes, killed 44 people and hospitalized at least 185, and an estimated 8,900 structures were destroyed in Northern California's wine country. At one point in time, California Office of Emergency Services (CalOES) reported 43 evacuation centers operating to support those affected by the disaster.³

Ventura/Santa Barbara Fire and Mudslides (December 2017 and January 2018)

Between December 2017 and January 2018, the Thomas Fire burned 281,893 acres in Ventura and Santa Barbara counties, making it the largest wildfire in California's history at that time. It damaged or destroyed more than 1300 structures, caused the evacuation of more than 100,000 people, and in the City of Ventura alone burned 525 homes. At its height, more than 8500 firefighters were mobilized to assist. About \$110 million was spent fighting the massive Thomas Fire blaze.

On January 8, 2018, a month into the fire, heavy rain began to fall. With the natural vegetation burnt, flash floods and mudflows ensued, damaging homes in Montecito. By January 21, at least 21 people had been killed by the sudden flooding and debris flows that destroyed more than 100 homes. Power failures caused by the slides affected more than 6000 homes and businesses in the area and many parts of the community were left without drinkable water.⁴

Northern California Food Banks Response

As the massive wildfires raged, food banks from throughout the region mobilized to assist the thousands of people who fled their homes. The Bay Area Food Banks activated their Mutual Assistance Agreement and successfully managed to share not only emergency food supplies but also trucks, equipment and staff to aid the impacted communities.

Redwood Empire Food Bank (REFB)

REFB was in the thick of the North Bay Fires. Their goal in disasters, which they accomplished, is to continue operating without disruption of service to their regular clients while meeting the needs of a new group of people affected by the disaster. As the fires progressed, they launched their disaster program, called *Station 3990*. This program had multiple components:

- Providing food to evacuation centers
- Offering drive-through distributions to anyone impacted by the disaster
- Providing food to any still-functioning partner organizations (a number of them were damaged or destroyed in the fires)

Their staff, working seven days a week, managed to meet the needs, providing food to thousands of people displaced by the fires. CEO David Goodman said that some of the people affected by the Sonoma Complex Fire appeared to be well-to-do but at that moment, "they had nothing and really needed the food." REFB, which usually distributes 15.5 million pounds of food annually, gave out 1 million pounds of food in just the first two weeks. From the onset of the fires through the end of the

³ <https://sf.curbed.com/2017/10/9/16449670/evacuation-centers-wine-country-fire-california>

⁴ <https://www.lieffcabraser.com/southern-california-wildfires/>

year, Station 3990 held 105 distributions, served 10,900 families, and provided emergency food for 1.2 million meals.

In Sonoma County, there was no government coordination of disaster food distribution. For this event, everything came direct from the suppliers. According to David, the government coordinates the care and shelter function but the vast majority of people don't go to shelters.

They received a generous donation from Foster Farms as well as contributions from other sources. No financial assistance was provided to REFB by government entities. David had to tell donors that the money would be used to help anyone in need – it would be too hard to determine who for sure



was affected by the fire.

This food bank has what David calls a “light” disaster plan. It's rudimentary – it covers topics such as what's expected of staff, a phone tree, emergency generator information and the Bay Area Mutual Assistance Agreement. General principles and concepts from this plan were utilized but more importantly, REFB staff were able to innovate, improvise and think fast on their feet to address needs as they arose.

Looking ahead, REFB has received funding to create what David calls “Engine One” – a tractor-trailer to support their disaster response efforts as well as everyday operations. Key features include walk-up access for people on foot; two distribution points – one for grab and go foods, the other for handing out care packages and bags of produce; shelter from weather for workers; exterior lighting; highly visible identification; and refrigeration. Engine One is designed to be operated completely by volunteers if no staff are available and the trailer unit can be dropped off for outpost operations.⁵

Napa Food Bank (Napa FB)

The Napa Food Bank is a program of CANV (Community Action Napa Valley), the area's antipoverty agency. The food bank has 7 pantries that serve an average of more than 1000 households per month. It also works with 42 nonprofits that shop for USDA commodities weekly. Their typical clients are seniors and working-class poor families. They distribute almost 2 million pounds of food per year, plus non-food items and pet food.

In a disaster, this food bank typically fills three roles:

- Providing immediate food supply to The Salvation Army's canteen, which feeds firefighters, evacuees and others not able to access food
- Providing food to survivors at evacuation centers and the Local Assistance Center
- Serving as a donations center for food

Statistically, 80% of the people they served during the fires were indirectly affected by the fire. Most of them came from the service industry, like a window-washer who lost 8 of her accounts because of the disaster.

⁵ For more info on Engine One, see <https://refb.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/2018-Spring-Newsfeed-Final-Web.pdf>

This food bank partners annually with more than 200 committed volunteers who assist with operations and distribution throughout Napa County. During the fires an additional 137 volunteers came to help.

The Food Bank of Contra Costa and Solano Counties assisted by storing and sorting food donations and providing boxes and much needed specific food items.

They continue to serve—at a variety of sites—290 households and nearly 1400 individuals impacted by the 2017 fires. More than 180,000 pounds of purchased product was distributed to these sites specific to meeting the increased needs. Working class families comprised 71% of those served and many have not returned to their previous earning level.

This food bank had an emergency operations plan and they activated parts of the plan for this event.

Food Bank of Contra Costa and Solano (FBCC&S)

Early on in the North Bay fires, CEO Larry Sly reached out to his partner distribution organizations (PDOs) in Napa and Yuba City and asked what he could do to help. He provided Napa with extra food and a wider variety of items. FBCC&S received a sizeable donation from Shell Oil which was used to support his food bank’s operations and his two affected PDOs. FBCC&S also offered help to REFB and gave them extra food.

The food banks in both Napa and Yuba worked with local government throughout their response. As of May 218, The Yuba Sutter Food Bank (YSFB) was continuing food distribution to low-income/fire affected seniors and rural “hill” areas which were significantly affected by the fire.

As for FBCC&S, Larry did not have to activate the emergency plan, except to make sure his finance people were tracking disaster-specific expenses. His staff felt good about what assistance they were able to provide. There was extra work and it was a bit hard to juggle things but in the end it was manageable and they received incredible media coverage.

We received a significant donation from the Shell Martinez refinery to help us provide food and cover our operating costs for the work we have done and the work we continue to do. Both of the food banks (Napa and Yuba City) who received the financial support from Shell know they have created programs that made a difference in the lives of those affected by the fires. We are grateful for the help Shell has enabled local food banks to provide in rural communities.

Larry Sly, Food Bank of Contra Costa & Solano

“The consortium of Northern California food banks has been activated with regular coordination conference calls to facilitate the sharing of resources. Food and water resources are being mobilized to support the Northern Ca food banks with greatest needs. Additionally, southern California food banks are also offering assistance.”

(Oct 10, 2017 email excerpt from Patrick Crawford, Director of Disaster Services, Feeding America)

Regional Coordination

REFB and FBCC&S are signatories of the Bay Area Food Banks Mutual Assistance Agreement⁶, a tool developed in 2010 to support regional coordination during disasters. Early on in the fire, FBCC&S and other food banks in the group reached out to REFB to offer help if needed. David Goodman of REFB then asked for a regional conference call as provided for in the agreement. On the call he shared what he could and couldn’t do.

More calls ensued over the course of this event and a number of food banks throughout the region helped with additional food supplies, warehouse staff, forklift and pallet jack operators, and transportation support.

⁶ For more info on this agreement see “mutual assistance template” at <http://www.cafoodbanks.org/disaster-preparedness> or click on [http://cafoodbanks.org/sites/default/files/Food%20Bank Mutual Assistance Agreement TEMPLATE.doc](http://cafoodbanks.org/sites/default/files/Food%20Bank%20Mutual%20Assistance%20Agreement%20TEMPLATE.doc)

Of special note was the assistance given to REFB by Barbara Abbott, Director of Food Sourcing and Allocation for the SF-Marin Food Bank, who ran “air traffic control” for food donations. Working remotely, she managed the truckloads of food coming into the impacted area and greatly improved REFB’s ability to respond. Having recently returned from a deployment serving food banks in the Houston area after Hurricane Harvey, Barbara coordinated Feeding America Choice loads, local donations offers, mutual assistance from other Bay Area food banks and food support to evacuee shelters in Marin County. Her Google Doc spreadsheets, shared with REFB, tracked information, offers and distribution/arrival sites. The SF-Marin Food Bank shifted normal staff responsibilities to free up almost 2 weeks of time for Barbara to devote to these efforts.

David Goodman thanked his colleagues as the first reinforcements arrived to help in the response, noting that “They provided much appreciated support, and rest for our staff that have been working long hours since the fire began on Sunday night.”

Northern California Responding Food Banks at a Glance

Food Bank	# Staff	Pounds of Food Distributed Annually
Redwood Empire	61	15.5 million
Napa	9	2 million
Contra Costa-Solano	70	22 million

Southern California Food Banks Response

FOOD Share of Ventura County and FoodBank of Santa Barbara County (FBSBC) worked both independently and together to serve their respective communities throughout these events. Nearly every person in the Ventura community was affected by the blaze, either indirectly like the volunteers, or directly like FOOD Share’s CEO Monica White whose home suffered smoke damage and to which she is still unable to return.

FOOD Share Ventura County (FOOD Share)

Working with a downsized staff and budget, FOOD Share had recently refocused on basic operations when the Thomas Fire started. FOOD Share actively responded and accomplished the following:

- Supplied shelf-stable food to American Red Cross-run shelters for survivors
- Supplied food to local chefs who were cooking for displaced people and firefighters at the fairgrounds
- Delivered food to Carpinteria when FBSBC could not get access
- While unusual, received and distributed some non-food donations – 200 starter kitchen sets from Pampered Chef and cast-iron griddles from another source.
- Continued to supply food to their local partner agencies



In all, they distributed 800,000 pounds of additional food (normal annual distribution is 11.5 million pounds). The people they helped were a mix of those who lost homes and service workers.

As COO, Susan Haverland handled all fire-related calls, which came from a mix of people who needed help and those who wanted to give help. Even with limited staff, things went well; there was some overtime but it wasn't significant. Many new volunteers came forward to help and FOOD Share's one volunteer coordinator very capably managed them. A particular asset in its timely and comprehensive response to the fire is FOOD Share's strong working relationship with city and county government officials.

They received assistance from several quarters:

- Because their freezer and cooler were full, Dole Packaged Foods donated a refrigerated truck that was used by volunteer chefs who prepared 3 meals a day for fire survivors and first responders.
- CAFB offered help and Feeding America sent truckloads of food.
- Other food banks reached out to them and the LARFB sent water.

In addition to all the groups referenced above, FOOD Share coordinated with the Ventura County Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (VOAD). Susan reported some issues but thinks the fire helped various aid agencies learn best collaborative practices.

The public was generous with its time and donations. Besides food, they received monetary donations, enough to cover their costs with some left over. They have been looking at long-term needs and are still considering how to use the excess funds. They are wondering what other food banks in the same situation have decided.

FoodBank of Santa Barbara County (FBSBC)

Many of FBSBC's partner agencies distribute food out of doors but could not operate because of the heavy smoke from the fire. To fill the gaps, FBSBC started new indoor distribution sites with the aid of new volunteers. These were set up in schools, community centers and other venues. During the time of the fire, they served 42% more clients and 47% more meals than in the same period the previous year. The numbers remained somewhat elevated afterward and to this day there is still significant impact.



According to CEO Erik Talkin, the fire presented an opportunity for them to communicate more widely with the public regarding their role – to serve the whole community. They kept information flowing by attending daily disaster briefings, issuing press releases, posting on social media, and reaching out to supporters. A key purpose was letting people know where to get food but the messages also helped them raise more funds from foundations (including a significant gift from Vons Foundation), corporations

and individuals. They received a modest amount of funding from the county and a number of cities. Some staff were affected by the disaster and unable to get to work. Burnout was an issue, especially for those involved with communications and operations.

They did not have prior relationships with local government and found it hard to work with them. They also had some difficulty working with American Red Cross to set up distribution sites. Erik wishes they'd had a relationship with the CHP, thinking that might have helped them get through roadblocks to deliver food.

The local VOAD served primarily as a forum for information-sharing. FBSBC is the fiscal sponsor for VOAD-SBC and coordinates with other VOAD member organizations to get food and water distributed.

Erik appreciated CAFB's offer of help. Feeding America also offered help but couldn't deliver exactly what FBSBC needed – items that are more readily eaten without heating or much preparation, such as lunch items for kids because schools were not in session.

Dan Thomas, Chief Development Officer, worked with FEMA staff on a request for reimbursement for some of their extra disaster expenses. One of their biggest costs was staff overtime. They were also able to submit billings for staff who worked outside of their usual jobs. Other costs included in their reimbursement claim were for food, mileage, contract labor and use of trucks. The claim was submitted through the County and they hope to be reimbursed for \$50,000.

Of the funds raised, they set aside an amount to be used for disaster planning, focused on three areas:

- 1) Preparing a new disaster volunteer force to, among other things, set up distribution sites. These volunteers will also be of help to the FBSBC generally.
- 2) Creating disaster food boxes designed to feed one person for a week. They will contain items that can be easily managed and eaten. They plan to sell them at twice the cost with the extra income providing a box for someone who can't afford one.
- 3) Ongoing disaster training. This fall they are hosting a disaster conference for their local partners and member agencies. The aim will be to help participants more effectively plan and collaborate during an emergency. The event will feature an exercise and a variety of workshops.

Southern California Responding Food Banks at a Glance

Food Bank	# Staff	Pounds of Food Distributed Annually
FOOD Share Ventura	24	12 million +
FoodBank of Santa Barbara County	37	9.7 million

CAFB and Feeding America Support

When the wildfires and mudslides impacted CAFB members, CAFB staff immediately acted in the following ways to provide support:

- Communicated with members to offer assistance and asses their needs
- Determined the types of food needed and solicited donors
- Coordinated delivery of free produce and ready-to-eat items



- Engaged with state officials to support release and delivery of disaster TEFAP
- Engaged with state officials to monitor and advise on CalFresh activities, including mass replacement of benefits and Disaster CalFresh
- Coordinated on the ground Disaster CalFresh outreach in Lake and Sonoma counties
- Offered communications assistance to affected food banks
- Amplified food banks' communications through CAFB channels
- Accepted and directed donations for affected food banks

According to its website, Feeding America positions emergency food supplies throughout the country for speedy distribution in the event of disaster. During a disaster, Feeding America leverages its nationwide network—including 10 million square feet of warehouse space and 2,400 trucks that are used every day—to bring food to people in need. These logistical solutions are repurposed for disaster relief when needed and are vital to delivering food, water and supplies.⁷

Successes

Some successes had to do with food bank operations:

- Being able to serve regular clientele while responding to disaster needs was mentioned by several interviewees as a high priority. It appears that all the food banks were able to meet this standard.
- Staff performance generally received high marks from the food banks. Most employees were working under less than ideal conditions (smoke, long hours, etc.). David Goodman described his staff as “professional, hardworking people; they can innovate, improvise and think fast on their feet.”
- Most food banks reported having more volunteers than usual, from moderate to major increases. The volunteers were eager to help and the food banks benefited from their efforts. FBSBC engaged new volunteers in staffing new distribution sites when the outdoor sites normally provided by their partners could not open due to smoke. Susan Haverland made a point of praising the efforts of FOOD Share’s volunteer coordinator.
- Napa FB reported that their board was fairly engaged for the disaster, although less so at other times.

Other successes were noted regarding coordination with other entities:

- CAFB received high marks from all interviewees. Someone from CAFB called each of the food banks to see if they needed anything. REFB reported receiving appropriate food items from Farm to Family.
- Feeding America staff also reached out to the affected food banks and offered food and other assistance. REFB and FOOD Share reported receiving truckloads of Feeding America food.
- Regarding local government, FOOD Share worked with the city manager and various department heads. They have had the CalFresh contract for 7 years, “so it worked well,” in

⁷ The authors had hoped to include information and perspectives from Feeding America staff regarding the latter’s responses to the California disasters but attempts to connect with them were unsuccessful.

their words. Napa and Yuba City also reportedly worked closely with local government throughout the response in their communities.

- The Bay Area food banks activated their mutual assistance agreement, convened conference calls and provided support where it was needed

Still other successes revolved around donations – in-kind and financial:

- All food banks received donations from a variety of sources. Most received corporate financial and in-kind contributions. For example, FOOD Share’s freezer and cooler were full, so Dole provided a refrigerated truck to store food for a field feeding operation. In another example, California Emergency Food Link, a private nonprofit, sent a refrigerated truck to Napa. The public was also generous with financial aid and some food banks received foundation grants.



And one success was uniquely experienced by FBSBC:

- They were able to submit a claim through the county to FEMA for reimbursement of some of its disaster-related costs. A FEMA staffer helped the food bank determine which expenses would qualify as reimbursable and assisted with the application process. Such claims can take months or even years, so the outcome is not yet known.

Challenges

Like successes, some challenges pertained to food bank operations:

- REFB and FBSBC noted that some of their local partner agencies were unable to function – due to damaged or destroyed facilities (REFB) or because of smoke (FBSBC). Both food banks adapted. REFB set up mobile drive-through pantries and FBSBC set up new indoor distribution sites.
- FBSBC and FOOD Share reported some agency staff were affected by the disaster and unable to get to work.
- In both disasters, food banks reported that long hours and staff burnout became an issue, among other challenges.
- In most cases, new volunteers showed up in droves and often there were challenges accommodating the numbers. Napa FB coped by having the Volunteer Center set up groups and work schedules. REFB CEO used the word “ferocity” to describe the volunteers. This food bank used social media to get the word out but it led to too many people showing up. They finally hit on a solution of asking people to email in and then assigning each a color code, using the codes as a way to stagger group assignments. Another issue reported was that some warehouse volunteers were not always paying attention to potential safety hazards, such as moving forklifts.
- After a couple days of multiple staff fielding disaster-related calls, FOOD Share switched to a single person doing traffic control, leading to better outcomes.

- Most reported having a board that is normally not very involved (“hands-off”) in food bank operations. These did not necessarily register as complaints but rather as explanations of their respective board’s lack of involvement in the disaster specific operations.

Other challenges revolved around coordinating with others:

- Most food banks reported difficulties working with local government. Napa FB had some connection with government and participated in the Local Assistance Center. However, they were disappointed that a long-standing MOU with the County was not honored. REFB reported their county was not willing to partner and no help. FBSBC found it hard to work with local government and did not have any prior relationships with them.
- Viewpoints on local VOADs were somewhat mixed. Napa County’s Community Organizations Active in Disaster (COAD) had been recently and loosely formed and did not have any staff at the time the fires broke out. Shirley participated in some calls and the agencies in the Local Assistance Center (LAC) were able to have informal offline meetings. REFB participated in VOAD calls, although they did not get anything out of those connections but certainly kept them informed of the food bank’s work. FOOD Share reported that several agencies were trying to lead the charge in their VOAD. And FBSBC said their VOAD operated in a minor way and that it was more about sharing information.
- Working with other agencies, especially American Red Cross (ARC), was reported to be challenging. Napa FB reported it was hard to work with ARC, that they did not communicate well and that their disaster activities appeared to be random.

While in-kind donations were a blessing in many cases, they also presented problems:

- Unwanted donations were mentioned by more than one food bank as an issue that needs to be addressed.

Lessons Learned and Recommendations

Lessons learned by and recommendations from the interviewees touched on a wide variety of subjects, including the following:

- *Pre-disaster public education on how to donate appropriately*

During a disaster is too late. Proffered gifts to the food bank of perishable food, cooked food and homemade food have to be turned away.

- *Communicating your Food Bank’s role*

Take the opportunity of the disaster to communicate widely with the community your role to serve all of the community.

- *Strengthen relationships with others*

Work more closely with local VOAD and VOAD member agencies. Coordinate more closely with local government, even the CHP with respect to road closures and access. A disaster is not the time to exchange business cards.



- *Clarify the food bank's eligibility for FEMA reimbursement for large events*
David said only congregate feeding was supported for the North Bay fires yet the FoodBank of Santa Barbara County was able to submit a sizeable claim through their county with FEMA help.
- *Establish agreements ahead of time*
Think about generators, fork lift operators. Talk with neighboring foodbanks about ways to support one another with staffing, equipment, and other resources.
- *Volunteer coordination*
Consider use of REFB concept of color coded groups. Or ask a Volunteer Center or other entity to do the scheduling for you.
- *Be clear in your role and act accordingly*
Clearly articulate what your food bank can and can't do and share this information widely. Stay in your own lane.

"Volunteers continue to make themselves available in large numbers. We have implemented a color code allocation system that will allow us to call appropriate numbers for discreet periods of time. This minimizes the frustration, disappointment and anger (sometimes) if volunteers are turned away. This is one of the casualties of disaster relief."

REFB - David Goodman

Considerations for Future Discussions and Planning

- *Review innovative solutions for possible applicability to other food banks, such as:*
 - REFB "Engine One" concept – explore use for food banks' mutual assistance across the state
 - FBSBC's plans for a conference/disaster training and exercise
 - Volunteer management strategies as noted under "volunteer coordination" in section above
- *Convene a discussion on what to do with any funds designated for fire/disaster relief that remain when the emergency phase is over*
What expenses are appropriate or not appropriate? Differences between food bank points of view were noted. How does a food bank decide? Could food banks benefit from wisdom and experience of agencies involved in long-term recovery groups?
- *Explore ways to help food bank leadership better understand the realities and challenges of working in disasters*
Consider executive mentoring program to have experienced food banks support staff in impacted areas with technical expertise or remote resources. As one CEO put it, "Prior to this, I had no interest or knowledge of disasters. My specialty has been in innovative programming. This disaster gave me an opportunity to learn something I did not know about."
- *Create templates for disaster communication that could be easily accessed and used by food banks when a disaster strikes*
If food banks serve all people in need in disasters, not just their typical low-income clients, how does that message get crafted? Does the message vary according to the audience? Are there

"The best way to make friends is to throw a party, so FoodBank of Santa Barbara County is hosting a big disaster training and exercise event in the fall of 2018 and inviting everyone. Relationships are more important than MOUs."

FoodBank of Santa Barbara County – Erik Talkin

other disaster communication challenges that should be considered? Can food banks that have had to address communication issues assist in the development of templates?

- *Explore ways to strengthen partnerships with government*
 - Encourage food banks to introduce themselves to local, state and federal officials pre-disaster with the goals of strengthening relationships and potentially paving the way for FEMA/State cost reimbursement (see FBSBC's experience).
 - Explore establishing stronger communication linkages with the State's Feeding Task Force and Mass Care Committee members in advance of any disaster or emergency to better understand how food banks can be connected as vital partners.
- *Consider food bank disaster experiences serving urban/suburban areas versus rural and remote communities*

Differences? Similarities? Are there lessons learned from the 2017 fires that could be helpful to Food banks serving rural/remote communities?
- *Clarify role of VOADs*

Help food banks gain a better understanding of VOAD from local to state to national. Focus on primary roles and operating principles for National and State level VOADs, while noting differences among local VOADs.

ATTACHMENT A

List of Food Bank Representatives Interviewed

Food Bank of Contra Costa and Solano

Larry Sly, Executive Director

LSly@foodbankccs.org

925-771-1300

Food Share Ventura

Monica White, President/CEO

mwhite@foodshare.com

805-983-7100 x 111

Susan Haverland, Chief Operating Officer

shaverland@foodshare.com

805-983-7100 x118

FoodBank of Santa Barbara County

Erik Talkin, Chief Executive Officer

etalkin@foodbanksbc.org

805-967-5741 x100

Dan Thomas, Chief Development Officer

dthomas@foodbanksbc.org

805-967-5741 x101

Napa Food Bank

(a program of Community Action of Napa Valley- CANV)

Shirley King, Program Director

sking@can-v.org

707-253-6128

Redwood Empire Food Bank

David Goodman, Chief Executive Officer

dgoodman@refb.org

707-523-7900

San Francisco – Marin Food Bank

Barbara Abbott, Director of Food Sourcing and Allocation

babbott@sfmfoodbank.org

415-282-1907 x364

ATTACHMENT B

Interview Discussion Questions

- 1) Describe your role and responsibilities as they related to the disaster that impacted your community and service area
- 2) What successes and challenges did you have with respect to the work your Food Bank engaged in with your
 - a. Staff, volunteers and board members
 - b. FB partner agencies
 - c. Local government jurisdictions that were impacted and responding
 - d. Broader community – including VOAD, if one existed
 - e. CAFB and Feeding America
- 3) What would you say were the notable and quantifiable outcomes of your work in terms of
 - dollars spent/funds raised?
 - hours contributed by staff/volunteers?
 - pounds of food distributed related to these events?

Are there any after action reports or summaries of FB efforts that you can share with us?

- 4) Were there lessons learned or things you wish you had known before it happened? What recommendations do you have for other Food Banks that may wish to learn from your experiences?
- 5) Did your Food Bank have an emergency operations plan? If so, did you use it?
- 6) Anything else you'd like us to know?

No report can be complete without the acknowledgment of the swift, generous and effective responses of so many: Bay Area Food Banks, California Association of Food Banks, Department of Social Services, Department of Education, Feeding America, Corporate Food Donors, All of the individual efforts...be it volunteerism or food donations, and of course...the entire staff. I know I've mentioned them before, but it's something you have to see to fully appreciate. In the world of don't tell me, show me...they've shown us all.

David Goodman, CEO, Redwood Empire Food Bank