



Association of Arizona Food Banks

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Association of Arizona Food Banks Reaction to State Budget Cuts

PHOENIX, ARIZONA: In the wake of state budget reductions affecting numerous social service programs, the Association of Arizona Food Banks (AAFB) wishes to make the following statement:

Today, the Arizona Department of Economic Security announced budgetary reductions impacting hundreds of thousands of the most vulnerable citizens statewide. These cuts affect critical programs providing services to families and children, the elderly, the disabled, the homeless, the unemployed, and underemployed. Many of these people already use the services food banks provide. While the budgets of the AAFB and its member food banks were cut sparingly relative to many other programs, the immediate impacts of these cuts will be shouldered by the state's food banks and the community agencies they serve. Food banks already experienced a 47.9% increase in demand for their services in the fourth quarter of 2008 and were planning even more, but the additional demand resulting from these cuts is much greater than could be anticipated. Now more than ever food banks turn to members of community for financial and volunteer support to meet the increasing challenges.

As this story unfolds, the AAFB will be at the forefront of providing critical information and response regarding the impact on member food banks and the community at large. AAFB welcomes after hour and President's Day inquiries to discuss how these budget reductions will impact Arizona:

**Ginny Hildebrand, President and CEO at 602-909-0240 (cell) or
Brian Simpson, Director of Communications: 602-334-7796 (cell)**

Established in 1984, the Association of Arizona Food Banks is a private, non-profit organization serving its five-member regional food bank warehouses (Community Food Bank, Desert Mission Food Bank, St. Mary's Food Bank Alliance, United Food Bank, Yuma Community Food Bank) and a network of nearly 1,700 food pantries and agencies. The AAFB mission helps bring a more efficient, coordinated approach to the enormous task of providing food to the growing number of Arizona's hungry citizens. As one of the first state food bank associations in the nation, AAFB was instrumental in the development of a statewide gleaning project, and our advocacy efforts have brought about beneficial state and federal legislation for our member food banks and the people they serve. AAFB has been recognized nationally by Feeding America, The Nation's Food Bank Network and the U.S. Department of Agriculture. For more information, to find a food bank or pantry in your area, or to learn more about donation and volunteer opportunities, please visit www.azfoodbanks.org.

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