Closing the Gap

Enhancing the Client Experience at Food Banks

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Golden Gate Community Center
Mountain Park Health Center
Neighborhood Ministries
Rio Vista Center
Salvation Army
San Antonio Food Bank
Seventh Day Adventist Community Center
St. Mary’s Food Bank Alliance
Tempe Community Action Association
United Food Bank
West Valley Human Services Alliance
Yuma Community Food Bank
Introduction

The goal of this report is to deliver recommendations for improving the client experience at food banks. The findings and recommendations from this research are presented in four parts:

- The first section explores hunger, food insecurity, and food bank use among the general population in Arizona, with a special focus on the Latino community.
- The second section includes the results of a survey conducted throughout Maricopa County relating to customer service at food banks and agencies.
- The third section is a compilation of best practices and tool kit materials that focus on three topics: (1) improving food bank and agency relations; (2) customer service; and (3) breaking down barriers Latinos face in accessing emergency food.
- The last section is a set of recommendations derived from information collected during community conversations, focus groups, surveys, and meetings with different community partners.

In 2010, more Americans lived in poverty than ever recorded. Arizona, in particular, faced some of the highest poverty rates in the country. More than 18% of Arizonans lived in poverty, compared to 15.3% of the nation. While poverty and hunger are not the same, they are closely related; for people living in poverty, the ability to buy food is often called into jeopardy. In Arizona, food banks are being called upon to help individuals living in poverty make ends meet. In 2010, the five member food banks of the Association of Arizona Food Banks distributed more than 1.1 million emergency food boxes throughout the state.

The Association of Arizona Food Banks (AAFB) is a statewide organization that serves five regional member food bank reaching people in need at nearly 1,600 sites including pantries, after school programs, congregate meal sites, etc., that collectively serve all fifteen counties in Arizona. AAFB works closely with the Arizona Department of Economic Security (DES), Feeding America, and other community partners to have an impact on ending hunger in Arizona through advocacy and direct service.

Within Arizona, Latino communities have been disproportionately affected by the economic recession and are experiencing a higher rate of poverty and food insecurity, with 26.6% of Latinos in Arizona living in poverty. In addition, Latino communities face an increasingly hostile social and political climate that is exacerbated by strict immigration legislation. It is important to note that the Latino population in Arizona is heterogeneous; it is diverse in terms of national origin, language, culture, and citizenship. Additionally, while immigrant issues and Latino issues are connected, one should be conscious not to confuse them.
Background

Emergency Food and the Face of Hunger in Arizona

Food banking is a relatively new operation. The first food bank in the United States, St. Mary's Food Bank Alliance, opened in the mid 1960s in Phoenix, Arizona, with other food banks following thereafter. Food banking as we now know it evolved into a network in the mid 1980s, when many social, economic, and political factors converged to support the current system.\textsuperscript{v} Since then, the food banking industry has rapidly grown in an attempt to meet the needs of people living in poverty.

The Association of Arizona Food Banks was created in 1984 to help coordinate the equitable distribution of emergency food throughout the state. AAFB also coordinates cooperative food purchases, solicits donations from the food industry, and provides technical support for their five member food banks, while also promoting public awareness and education about hunger and food banking, and advocating for policy to aid food banks and alleviate hunger.

In the current economic recession, need for emergency food has only increased. In 2010, almost 1.14 million Emergency Food Boxes (EFBs) were distributed by AAFB member food banks and their agencies throughout Arizona, up from almost 1.04 million in 2009 and almost 0.9 million in 2008; an 11% increase in just two years. In addition, according to Feeding America's "Hunger in America 2010 – Arizona Report," in 2010, 22% more people were turned away from food banks and agencies due to a lack of food than in 2006.

According to the same report, food bank clients are predominantly female (54.4%), and are most likely to be children between the ages of six and seventeen (35.5%). The majority of food bank clients are Latino (45.6%), followed closely by non-Latino White clients (38.7%). However, it is important to note that clients of all ages and demographics frequent food banks.

Latino Poverty and Food Insecurity in Arizona

Latino communities are disproportionately affected by hunger and poverty. In 2010, 15.1% of Americans were living at or below the federal poverty level, whereas 26.6% of Latinos are affected by poverty. Additionally, poverty is increasing at a much faster rate for Latinos than for the general population.\textsuperscript{vi} Hunger and poverty for Arizona’s Latinos are also impacted by the social and political climate unique to the state, exacerbated in recent years with the passing of House Bill 2008 and Senate Bill 1070. HB2008 requires any city, state, or government employee in Arizona to report individuals they believe to be undocumented to Immigration and Customs Enforcement.\textsuperscript{vii} SB1070 makes the failure to carry immigration documents a crime, and gives local police the power to detain anyone they suspect to be in the country illegally.\textsuperscript{viii} Sources report that these bills have contributed to an increasingly hostile environment for Latino communities in Arizona, and
they have had significant negative impacts on Latino participation in public benefits programs.

The high levels of poverty and hunger experienced by Latinos in Arizona can negatively affect the families of these individuals, and the well-being of the communities in which they live. It affects work-force productivity, restricts full economic participation, and is a detriment to the educational attainment of Latino children, among many other impacts. These factors demonstrate the need for aggressive, targeted hunger relief towards Latino communities in Arizona.

Previous Hunger Fellow Work at AAFB

During a series of community meetings in the past couple of years, staff at AAFB repeatedly heard from community members that the Latino population in Arizona is underserved by the food bank network. As a result of this feedback, and recognizing a need to respond to the changing climate towards Latinos in Arizona, AAFB requested a Bill Emerson National Hunger Fellow to identify barriers that Latino individuals may face in accessing emergency food, and deliver recommendations based on addressing those barriers.

Matthew Mellon, a member of the 17th class of Emerson Hunger Fellows, conducted a geographic analysis of access to emergency food in Latino communities, examining pantry location, Latino population, and the limited English proficient and non-English proficient (LEP/NEP) population in Maricopa County. In addition, he completed twenty-eight in-depth interviews with “service providers, advocates, pastors, and members of the Latino community” in Maricopa County. Throughout his research, he was able to determine six major barriers that Latinos face in accessing emergency food. They are:

- A prevalence of discrimination and racial bias
- Identification requirements
- A misconception of food banks and pantries as government-affiliated programs
- Language barriers
- Excessive paperwork
- Location of food pantries

Some of these barriers are very real, such as the location of food pantries tending to not be as available in areas with a large Latino population, but some of them are misperceptions of the emergency food system, such as the misconception of food banks being government affiliated programs. Real or perceived, all of these barriers truly impact Latinos’ access to emergency food resources.
Survey

Background

In order to gain more insight into the client experience at food banks and agencies, 175 surveys were compiled from nine food banks and agencies throughout Maricopa County during November and December, 2011. The survey was a brief, 10-question survey. There were two questions about race, ethnicity, and language spoken, seven questions about customer service, and a space for a free response. The surveys were conducted in both English and Spanish to all clients accessing EFBs during the time of data collection. Clients were made aware that the survey was not mandatory, it was not being administered in relation to the agency, and that participation would not affect the service they received at the agency.

The surveys were conducted in an attempt to confirm the observations of AAFB about Latinos’ access to emergency food, and connect them to the research conducted by the previous Hunger Fellow at AAFB. The survey attempted to gather feedback from clients about their experience with customer service when receiving an EFB, and to determine if there were any differences in how different races or ethnicities perceived the service they were receiving from food banks or agencies.
Survey

Place an X next to your answer.
Please select only one answer for each question.

1. My racial or ethnic background is:
   □ Asian or Pacific Islander
   □ Bi-racial or Multi-racial
   □ Black or African American
   □ Latino or Hispanic
   □ Native American
   □ White or Caucasian
   □ Other (please specify):

2. I feel most comfortable speaking:
   □ English
   □ Spanish
   □ Both English and Spanish
   □ Other (please specify):

3. The staff at this food bank understands me and meets my needs.
   □ Strongly Agree
   □ Agree
   □ Neither Agree nor Disagree
   □ Disagree
   □ Strongly Disagree

4. This food bank employs staff and volunteers from many different backgrounds.
   □ Strongly Agree
   □ Agree
   □ Neither Agree nor Disagree
   □ Disagree
   □ Strongly Disagree

5. I believe that clients of all backgrounds are treated equally at this food bank.
   □ Strongly Agree
   □ Agree
   □ Neither Agree nor Disagree
   □ Disagree
   □ Strongly Disagree

6. I believe that my privacy is respected by food bank staff and volunteers.
   □ Strongly Agree
   □ Agree
   □ Neither Agree nor Disagree
   □ Disagree
   □ Strongly Disagree

7. I believe that I am treated with respect at this food bank.
   □ Strongly Agree
   □ Agree
   □ Neither Agree nor Disagree
   □ Disagree
   □ Strongly Disagree

8. I feel welcome at this food bank.
   □ Strongly Agree
   □ Agree
   □ Neither Agree nor Disagree
   □ Disagree
   □ Strongly Disagree

9. Food banks are useful and helpful to people like me.
   □ Strongly Agree
   □ Agree
   □ Neither Agree nor Disagree
   □ Disagree
   □ Strongly Disagree

10. I would recommend this food bank to others.
    □ Strongly Agree
    □ Agree
    □ Neither Agree nor Disagree
    □ Disagree
    □ Strongly Disagree

11. Additional comments:____________________
    ________________________________
    ________________________________

This survey is for a research study on behalf of the Association of Arizona Food Banks. Thank you for your participation!
Your answers to these questions are completely confidential and will not be shared with any other agency.

Agency: ________ Date: ________
Results

Q1:

Racial or Ethnic Background of Respondants

- Latino or Hispanic: 47%
- White or Caucasian: 37%
- Black or African American: 10%
- Bi-Racial or Multi Racial: 2%
- Native American: 2%
- No Response: 2%

Q2:

Primary Language of Respondants

- English: 70%
- Spanish: 22%
- Both English and Spanish: 8%
Q3: The staff at this food bank understand me and meet my needs.

Q4: This food bank employs staff and volunteers from many different backgrounds.

Q5: I believe that clients of all backgrounds are treated equally at this food bank.

Q6: I believe that my privacy is respected by food bank staff and volunteers.

Q7: I believe that I am treated with respect at this food bank.

Q8: I feel welcome at this food bank.

Q9: Food banks are useful and helpful to people like me.

Q10: I would recommend this food bank to others.
Analysis

Readers should interpret the qualitative data presented in this report with several limitations in mind. This survey was intended to capture an initial sense of the problems and issues at play, and identify areas for future, more in-depth research. It was not designed or conducted scientifically. The sample is not representative of all of the clients that receive assistance from food banks and agencies; they represent only a small sampling. Ultimately, the responses were overwhelmingly positive and are consistent with the result of a similar, more rigorous customer satisfaction survey administered by Feeding America in their Hunger in America – 2010 report. Another factor worth mentioning is that many food bank clients chose not to participate in the survey. Approximately 20% of clients who were approached to participate chose not to, perhaps out of fear of responding in a way that would affect the services they receive at the agency.

By and large, this survey shows food banks and agencies are doing a great job, and clients are pleased with the assistance and service they receive. However, there may also be some factors that confounded client’s responses. Clients may have been scared of responding negatively for fear that it would impact the service they receive at the food bank or agency. On the other hand, clients may not be aware of their rights. Currently, all agencies throughout Arizona have their own systems and procedures. A client that walks into a given pantry may not be aware of the system enough to know that there are certain rights that they, as clients, have. The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) policies, developed by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and DES, determine specific rules and regulations for TEFAP commodities that all agencies must adhere to. According to TEFAP policies, all agencies that receive food from food banks should follow TEFAP policies for all of the food they distribute to clients receiving EFBs. For example, according to TEFAP regulations a prayer cannot be required of clients waiting to receive EFBs, but clients may not be sufficiently cognizant of the system to know that.

Latino and non-Latino White respondents had very similar responses throughout the survey. There were two questions on which there was a difference in responses between those two groups, which are also the two questions with the lowest percentage of “strongly agree” responses. The two questions were: “this food bank employs staff and volunteers from many different backgrounds” (Q4) and “I believe that my privacy is respected by food bank staff and volunteers” (Q6). For Latino clients who may be undocumented, or who are living in a household with undocumented individuals, privacy at agencies is of paramount importance. It is necessary to ensure that agencies have policies in place that make clients feel safe at their organizations.

At the end of the survey, clients were asked to share their additional thoughts. Some of these comments were extremely positive, while others were negative.

- Positive:
  - Everyone is great, and they treat us with respect.
  - These people allow me to be the real person I am, unconditionally. Thanks.
It’s CLEAN and organized!
I am so happy this program exists.
I like that they have people that speak Spanish.
These people do their best to help everyone who comes here.
Thanks to God for all of the help this food bank gives to the entire community.
Thanks to the food bank for help on how to maintain a healthy diet.

Negative:
Don’t look down on us, we are just hungry.
Almost always I feel like they are giving me a hard time.
I am supposed to be in the system but was not told about holiday boxes or vouchers.
Some staff are better than others, some make you feel like a burden.
I was once told I was in the system as deceased.

Some of these comments, such as “everyone is great, and they treat us with respect,” and “Almost always I feel like they are giving me a hard time,” are in direct opposition to each other, demonstrating that individuals can have radically different experiences accessing emergency food. Additionally, some of the negative responses indicate the existence of the barriers uncovered by Matthew Mellon, such as a perception of discrimination based in poor customer service delivery.

The results of the survey demonstrate that food banks and agencies are running strong programs, and many of them are offering services beyond the distribution of emergency food, such as providing information about nutrition. However, while administering surveys, I observed an incongruity between what agencies say they do, and are supposed to be doing, and what is actually happening in their daily operations. For example, I witnessed agencies ask for clients’ social security numbers, and agencies that have a group prayer before distributing food; both occurrences are within direct violation of TEFAP policies.

Ultimately, these surveys indicate that people with negative experiences at food banks are in the minority of food bank clients. However, it is important to focus on those clients that have had negative experiences to ensure that all clients are being treated equitably. The results of this survey are demonstrative of clients who have already decided to seek assistance at a food bank, they do not take into consideration the existing population that is in need of food but has not been to a food bank, perhaps because of perceived barriers. By providing excellent customer service to clients, food banks and agencies can work to reduce the barriers that individuals outside of the system face, and ensure that everyone in the system is being treated respectfully and appropriately. This requires effort on behalf of the food banks and their agencies. Procedures to improve customer service are outlined in the following section.
Best Practices and Tool Kit

Introduction

The following list of best practices is compiled from meetings with food banks and agencies in Maricopa County, research of policies and procedures in effect at other food banks throughout the country, conversations with food bank clients, observations from survey data collection, and interviews with content experts. They are considered best practices because they are programs that have been successfully implemented at other food banks and are working effectively.

These best practices present a systems approach to food banking. There is yet no one magic step that food banks and agencies can take to ensure excellent customer service, but rather a set of procedures that are minimum requirements for an organization to be able to deliver services effectively. This approach for customer service creates a baseline foundation of building blocks in order to reach the top tier of excellent customer service. It is not until agencies have a solid foundation in the basics (e.g., food handling, well trained volunteers with excellent volunteer retention, strong agency monitoring procedures, a grievance system, etc.) that agencies can build up to the top level: consistently excellent customer service. Many of these best practices are measures that the food banks may believe they have implemented, but may have not done so uniformly or consistently at the agency level.

The best practices are broken into three parts: the first section pertains to opening lines of communication between food banks and agencies, the second is aimed at improving customer service, and the last addresses reducing barriers Latinos face in accessing emergency food. These lists are not exhaustive, but instead are a starting point for developing techniques that best suit each individual food bank and agency.

Food Bank/Agency Relations

The food banking system in Arizona is currently set up so that the five member food banks of AAFB provide food for the entire state. These food banks distribute food to a network of over 1,600 agencies throughout Arizona, who in turn serve the food in EFBs to clients throughout the state. It should be in the food bank’s best interest to ensure that their agencies are representing the food bank well, and ensuring that they are serving food to those that need it. Agencies should be viewed as partners in the fight to end hunger by their affiliated food bank, not as adversaries. They need resources at their disposal to help make their organizations places where people want to go.

The relationship between food bank and agencies is mutually beneficial. Agencies, which function within their own communities, are in a better position than the affiliate food bank when it comes to understanding the needs of the clients in their communities. They are able to function as an extension of the food bank, and the food bank’s brand, while
being able to tailor their services to meet the needs of their clients. Agencies are mechanisms to feed hungry people. On the other hand, the food banks have the knowledge, expertise, and food to help keep the agency operating successfully.

Presently, for a variety of reasons, food banks find it difficult to maintain close oversight of their agencies. Food banks are often times located far from their agencies, agencies may not always have an internet connection, or agency staff and volunteers may be experiencing high turnover. These factors make it even harder for food banks to monitor agency activity and facilitate the transfer of information between the two entities. Supporting an agency often consists of more than merely providing food. Food banks should strive to balance providing centralized oversight while still allowing agencies operational autonomy, since they best understand the communities in which they function.

The following best practices are geared towards food banks, except when mentioned, so that they may strive to remove the many barriers that exist between themselves and their agencies and improve the transfer of knowledge between the two entities. Ultimately, this will help to empower the agencies to best serve their clients, thus improving the client experience.

Agency Summits

One way to maintain open lines of communication and facilitate the sharing of knowledge and resources is for food banks to schedule regular summits with agencies on at least an annual basis. Both United Food Bank in Mesa, Arizona, and San Antonio Food Bank in San Antonio, Texas, have found ways to create events that are informative, relevant, and fun for agencies while keeping costs low. United Food Bank has summits that take place throughout the state in order to reach out to agencies that may struggle maintaining a close relationship with them due to geographic distance. The summits are “informal, intimate, and interactive.” They last about four hours, ensuring that agencies do not have to pay for hotels and can minimize other travel costs. The summits cover some mandatory topics, such as TEFAP civil rights trainings and food handling safety. Each summit also focuses on one additional topic, such as capacity building, and also includes time for a question and answer session as well as networking. In order to keep the summits exciting, United also purchases $25 and $50 gift cards, and holds drawings for them throughout the day.

The San Antonio Food Bank (SAFB) is another example of a food bank that holds yearly agency summits. It has a reputation for maintaining successful agency relations, and was kind enough to sit down and speak with me about their programs and grant me permission to share their work. Policies recently implemented by the SAFB have allowed them to simultaneously empower their agencies while strengthen their ties with them, benefiting both groups. The SAFB holds annual networking conferences throughout the different regions of Texas. Breakfast and lunch are served at no cost to the agencies. Similar to United Food Bank, there are mandatory sessions in the conferences, but there is also time for agencies to break up by geographic location and talk about needs specific to their area in order to share strengths, struggles, best practices and learn from each other.
Frequent Workshops

In addition to yearly summits, some food banks conduct frequent workshops throughout the year at their facilities as a form of continuing education. While not all agencies can travel to their affiliate food bank frequently, notes from the workshops can be shared with other agencies, or published online so they can share in the learning process. These workshops can be basic and cover mandatory topics, but food banks should also respond to the needs of their agencies when developing workshop topics.

Possible workshop topics:
- Food handling skills
- TEFAP civil rights training
- Record keeping, administrative and financial skills
- Basic computer skills
- Basic internet skills
  - How to get an agency online and using email
  - How to utilize social media
- How to bring advocacy into your agency, and advocate for your clients
- Registering clients to vote
- Grant writing and capacity building
- Volunteer recruitment, training and retention
- Customer service

Agency Newsletter

Food banks currently communicate with their agencies via emails, faxes, and phone calls that pertain to food ordering, or as other issues arise. However, the more a food bank and agency can be in contact, the stronger their relationship becomes. An easy way to bridge the communication gap between agencies and food banks, and to keep agencies in the loop of developments at the affiliate food banks, is to have a monthly newsletter for all of the agencies. The newsletter could be electronic which would keep costs low for the food bank and make dissemination easy.

Possible things to include in a monthly newsletter:
- General information about the state of hunger in the United States and in Arizona.
- Information on current legislation that affects hunger or poverty, both locally and nationally.
- Any new developments in the food bank.
- Agency or program spotlights, showcasing a successful agency or program, or a different agency every month.
- Updates about any information pertinent to agencies.
- Any reminders about upcoming events, deadlines, etc.

An example of a agency newsletter is the Pinal County Food Pantry Newsletter, produced by CAHRA, the Community Action Human Resources Agency.
Community Garden Project— Eloy, AZ
by Staci Martin, CAHRA FAIR Planner

When I looked at the empty lots and tried to envision what it could be, it was hard to imagine and little bit intimidating. The first question was, “where to begin?” I had investigated community gardens online that were operating throughout the United States, and found interesting tid-bits at many sites. One particular site - the American Community Gardening Association website - had multiple links to information about community gardens. Once I had an idea of what was entailed, I met with the City of Eloy staff to discuss plans. The Zoning and Community Development Managers offered a lot of technical information about the property in question. Fortunately, there were no special re-zoning issues to contend with, just putting together a plan of action to apply for permits, utility service, etc. I then met with Rich, U of A Cooperative Extension Horticulture Director. He gave me even more information and it took a while to digest it all. After a quick lesson, I was able to do my own soil testing and per-form a check for proper drainage. He also offered his assistance to plan the layout of garden, and provided names of master gardeners that might help. He also told me how I could have seeds in the ground in a week, if that’s what I wanted!

The next step: ACTION! But, safety first! I ordered the lots to be “blue staked.” Blue staking is when the utility companies go to the lots and outline pipes, cables, etc. that are running through the property so you can safely dig. That was a process in itself, and once again tons more info to digest to do the job correctly. So now armed with knowledge and confidence, I gathered my shovels and buckets of water and headed out to the lots to dig holes in multiple locations at varied depths.

Food Coalition Meeting:
Wednesday May 18, 2011
10:00-11:30
at Pinal Gila Council for Senior Citizens
8969 W McCartney Rd
Casa Grande, AZ 85194

2011 Hunger Champions Award
Nominations Sought

Do you know of a local county assistance office that promotes the mission of SNAP?
Mission: “To increase food security and to reduce hunger by providing children and low income people with food, a healthy diet and nutrition education.” If you have experienced or observed a local office providing outstanding customer service to clients signing up for SNAP or creative outreach activities to encourage enrollment, please take a moment to fill out a nomination form on the USDA website.

This would be a great encouragement to the local offices that are often on the receiving end of complaints, not compliments.
Radiation Contaminated Food
What is the REAL risk?

The recent talk about radiation and the contamination of Japan’s food and water supply has raised questions to what is radiation contamination. While no one would argue that radiation contamination sounds bad, what are the real risks?

First, a bit of science. Radiation that is absorbed by the human body is measured in a rad, a radiation absorbed dose. The type of radiation is then factored with the quantity of radiation to determine the biological effect on the human body, called a rem. When radiation measurements are less than 1, prefixes relay the quantity, like the metric system. (1 millirem = 0.001 of a rad.) The average human receives 300 millirem (mrem) of radiation from natural sources over a year.

FYI: A dose of 400-450 mrem of radiation, within 30 days is lethal in 50% of exposures, without any treatment.

Common natural sources and quantities of radiation:
- Food: 20 mrem/year
- From other people: 40 mrem/year
- TV: 1 mrem/year
- Soil: 100 mrem/year
- Airline Pilot: 250 mrem/year
- Flights: 5 mrem per hour
- X-rays: 1 to 60 mrem, depending on the type and location on the body.

Living at higher elevations increases mrem exposure due to changes in cosmic rays.

Marble and Granite emit higher levels of natural radiation. The U.S. Capital Building is composed mainly of granite and marble. The radiation emitted within the Capital Building is 55 times higher than standing by the fence of a normal functioning nuclear plant.

How does this translate to the information being reported about Japan’s food supply? Drinking contaminated milk for one year would add 100 mrem of radiation, or the equivalent of one CAT scan. Eating contaminated spinach for one year would add 22 mrem of radiation, or 1/5 the amount from a CAT scan. The amounts found in the food are five times higher than allowed by law, however, the levels are not high enough to pose detrimental health issues for humans. Those higher at risk, children, elderly, or pregnant women, may be more sensitive to the increases. It will take some time to really know the long-term effects of the disaster in Japan. For now avoiding contaminated items is recommended as a precaution.

Information Sources on page 4

Funny Food Thoughts

In the Spot Light
Gold Canyon United Methodist Church Food Bank

The Gold Canyon United Methodist Church has an all-volunteer mission that provides an emergency food supply to any family in need. Started in 1998, using a closet for storage, they have slowly and continually grown, but with the current economy, are now growing very rapidly. Their client database contained 475 families in December 2009 and now currently serves over 1,100 families. In an average week, 80 families representing approximately 240-260 individuals seek emergency food. This unprecedented growth has made it difficult to keep the shelves supplied with the necessary staples to feed families as they would like.

With the implementation of a computerized intake procedure, households receive a laminated card with a family number. Volunteers enter the family number and the household information is instantly accessed which enables an immediate view of any special dietary needs within the household. Non-perishable items are prepackaged and supplemental items are added or substituted based on the specific dietary needs of household members.

Summer is traditionally the hardest time to meet the demand. The food comes from members, Gold Canyon businesses, local community groups, other local Churches, Starbucks, Alpine Bakery and United Food Bank. Another opportunity to donate has been created with the support of the many concerts and community activities that take place at the Church. Instead of charging admission, a donation of a can or two of food is the admission price. Weekly outside sales are made with the Church Missions budget.

In addition, personal hygiene items and other non-food products are available. The products are not eligible purchases using food assistance programs which makes them very valuable commodities. The most frequently requested non-food items are toilet paper, hand soap, shampoo, and toothpaste.

Sadie’s Mission provides pet food for dogs and cats. Often in hard times, pets are the first to go without.

Another part of the Church’s mission involves having books available free for Food Bank client’s elementary or younger age children.

Mission:
To provide food to those who need it with a minimum 2 week interval.

Hours of Operation:
Monday through Friday from 8:30 AM until Noon.

Please contact Jeff Downing, Dan Gray, or Rush Tucker, managers, for more information.
(480) 982-3776

As food banks, we are often the first line of defense for food insecure households. Remember to refer families to sign up for SNAP (food stamps), WIC (Women’s Infants and Children’s program), to help supplement the lack of food for families.
Food Pantry Resources

The following list of resource websites is continuously changing and evolving. If you have a website that would be helpful to be included, please email Staci at: smartin@cahrapinal.org, and it will be added to the next newsletter.
(For easy recognition, new resources are highlighted when they are added.)

Pinal County Resources:
www.pinalresources.org

Volunteer Center of Pinal County:
www.vcopc.org

Arizona Partnership to End Childhood Hunger:
www.endchildhungeraz.org

Northern Pinal Network:
Contact Russ Smith at Empowerment Systems to receive event calendar and meeting information
rsmith@emsysonline.org

Fruit and Vegetable Coop:
www.bountifulbaskets.org

Discount Meals:
www.thetreasurebox.org

American Community Gardening Association:
www.communitygarden.org

Arizona Self Help:
www.arizonaselfhelp.org
A free, easy way to find out if you are eligible for 31 health, human service programs.

CARE Network:
Meets at 9:00 the 2nd Wednesday of each month at Pinal Gila Council for Senior Citizens, 8969 W McCartney Rd in Casa Grande. For information please contact Anne at ageib@cahrapinal.org.

Association of Arizona Food Banks
www.azfoodbanks.org

Community Information and Referral
www.cir.org

Connecting Individuals with Volunteering Opportunities
www.jumo.com

Pinal County Network
Meets at 9:00 the 1st Wednesday of each month at the Coolidge Police Department.

Senior Resources
www.pgcsc.org

Food Related Research and Information:
www.frac.org

United States Department of Agriculture:
www.usda.gov

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SUMMER FOOD SERVICE
Providing free meals to Arizona children.
To find a site near you, visit our website at: azsummerfood.gov

Additional feeding sites are needed. Please contact: www.azsummerfood.gov for more information.

Blame It On Corn....Or Maybe Soy?

Droughts in Russia, floods in the Australia, freezing temperatures in Florida, all of these conditions affect global commodity pricing of corn. The same phenomenon has greatly affected the prices on the soy market, which in turn affects other grain and produce markets as well.

An astonishing amount of soy and corn product end up directly or indirectly in the food we eat. From the feed for pigs or cattle, to ingredients in food, to the fiber used in processed foods, humans consume a large quantity of these legumes whether they know it or not.

Eating out will be more pricey also. The increased product costs will be passed on to the customer. Even though prices may increase only a few cents - a few cents on many items adds up quickly.

Not much can be done to combat the rise in prices, and consumers may need to look to less expensive options and limit products using corn, soy, or other grains.

Some ideas:

- The price of eggs has not increased drastically compared to other items. We may need to eat eggs more often as a protein source.

- Make an effort to make baked goods at home instead purchasing ready made items at the store or coffee shop.

- Discover cooking at home for less expensive and healthier options to eating out.

- Purchase foods that are on sale and in season. Exchange fresh produce for canned when not economical.

Hopefully, we will be smarter consumers in these pressing times and learn habits that will last beyond the hard times.

I am only one, but I am one. I cannot do everything, but I can do something. And I will not let what I cannot do interfere with what I can do. Edward Everett Hale
VITA - Free Tax Preparation

United Way of Pinal County is pleased to announce the opening of the 2011 Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) sites this month and continuing throughout the tax season. Beginning January 29th through April 18th, VITA will provide free-of-charge assistance to moderate or low-income families by filing basic tax returns courtesy of volunteers certified by the IRS.

Through the filing of these returns, some families may qualify for the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC), refunding taxpayers up to $5,666. The Earned Income Tax Credit is an especially important component of federal aid to working families, lifting almost 5 million people out of poverty each year. To qualify for VITA assistance, a family with any dependents must make $48,000 annually or less and those without dependents, less than $25,000.

annually. The taxpayer must also have a basic tax return, typically wage income with certain deductions, child tax credits, Earned Income Tax Credit, or education credits. Taxpayers should call ahead to make sure they qualify.

Last year in Pinal County, 431 families and individuals filed through VITA. The program generated $83,000 in savings and $452,000 in EITC. VITA sites are located throughout Pinal County including Apache Junction, Casa Grande, Coolidge, Eloy, and Maricopa.

Service may be available in other areas in Pinal County on an appointment basis. Please call United Way to set up appointment.

For more information contact Ricardo Banuelos taxhelp@unitedwayofpc.org or call United Way of Pinal County at 520-836-0736.

Information is also online at www.unitedwayofpc.org/vita

Site Locations:
- Coolidge Teen Center, 660 S. Main Street, Coolidge - Mondays 4pm - 6:00pm, beginning January 31st
- Maricopa Lutheran Church, 16540 N. Porter Rd., Maricopa - Saturdays 11am-3pm, beginning February 5th
- Eloy Public Library, 100 E. 7th St., Eloy - Wednesdays 4pm - 6:30pm, beginning February 2nd
- Seeds of Hope Neighborhood Center, 525 W. Melrose St., Casa Grande - Tuesdays and Wednesdays 6pm - 8pm, beginning February 1st
- Sun Life Family Health Center, 865 N. Arizola Rd., Casa Grande - Saturdays - Apr. 2nd, Apr. 9th, 8:00am-11:30am.

Free Community Food Distribution
At St Helen’s Catholic Church 205 W 8th Street Eloy, AZ 85131

Tuesday, May 17, 2011
8:30 am sign in begins
9:00 am food distribution begins

Open to ALL Pinal County residents

Continued from page 2: Radiation? What is the REAL risk?

For more information or further explanation, please visit:
www.nrc.gov U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
www.cdc.gov - Centers for Disease Control
Agency Guidebook

Some agencies have been established for some time while others are just starting out; some are large-scale operations while some are run out of a small room in a church. Having one document that contains all the information pertinent for agencies to turn to for guidance or assistance, or for answers when things come up could help better the food bank – agency relationship. One food bank that has found this tool beneficial is the San Antonio Food Bank. Their agency guidebook recognizes that being an agency is more than just having a 501c3 and a food safety inspection. An example of their agency guidebook can be found here: http://www.safoodbank.org/images/pdf/2009-safb-agency-guidebook_12-14-09.pdf.

Possible elements to include in an agency guidebook:
- Program requirements to become an agency
- TEFAP policies
- Client eligibility, and documents required for intake
- Monitoring and inspection procedures
- Fiscal management and accountability to the food bank
- Record keeping and administrative responsibilities
- Warehouse guidelines
- Agency suspension and termination guidelines
- Grievance procedures
- Any forms or documents an agency needs
- An advocacy tool kit

Agency Appreciation Banquet

Another easy way to maintain a positive relationship with agencies, while also showing gratitude and recognizing the hard work they do, is holding an annual agency appreciation banquet. San Antonio Food Bank has annual banquets for their agencies that take place in a location that is not the food bank (for example, a YMCA), where dinner is served and there is an awards ceremony. Agencies and volunteers are recognized for superlatives such as best volunteer, best customer service, best senior program, etc. This is a way for agencies to come together in a way that doesn’t revolve around work, it makes them feel appreciated, and it also is a great opportunity for unstructured networking and bonding time.

Agency Committees

Some food banks have standing committees comprised by agencies that meet on a regular basis in order to maintain open lines of communication between the food bank and agencies. One food bank that has successfully implemented this technique is the Food Bank of the Rockies. A committee of their agencies meet monthly at the Food Bank of the Rockies to provide suggestions to the food bank, to be a voice for agencies, provide support for struggling agencies, and help approve new agencies. These committees engage agency leadership, facilitate communication between agencies, and allow for agencies to act as
mentors for agencies that are struggling. Creating such a system allows for agencies to receive feedback from their peers and be advised by other organizations that truly understand their struggles.

Another important element to hunger relief that is encapsulated by agency committees is community input. When working to end hunger for a certain population, it is necessary to work with them and not solely for them. Working to end hunger in a community involves collaboration between many different organizations, groups, and individuals. A good example of an organization that ensured community involvement in a project is Community Food Bank of Southern Arizona in Tucson. When the food bank was developing a community garden, they engaged in a year-long process that identified the history and culture of the community in which they were working, and approached the project with the intent to develop understanding of the community before moving forward with their work. During their project, key community players were a part of every step of the process.

**Agency Rewards System**

A trend among many successful food banks is the development of a rewards system for their agencies. This is a simple and inexpensive way to get agencies excited about participating in food bank programs and increase communication between food bank and agencies. For example, agencies could receive points that they could transfer into credits to their shared maintenance account, which is the mechanism by which agencies share in the expense borne by their affiliate food bank. There could be monthly drawings for gift cards to local stores like grocery stores or stores like Target. The points are tied to agency performance and meeting food bank standards, and it gives agencies and food banks even more incentive to stay engaged and make their relationship exciting and relevant.

**Social Media**

Social media can be useful in keeping agencies and clients abreast of developments in an organization, informing them about ongoing work, and spreading awareness of hunger and poverty. Social media can also help organizations recruit more volunteers, solicit donations, make people aware of donation needs, and educate the public, raising awareness of what is happening in the food or policy world. Any organization that is minimally connected to the internet can easily create a Facebook account where they can post their hours and information about their programs, post pictures, and engage with potential clients and donors in a relevant way.

**Customer Service**

Customer service in food banks is closely related with maintaining vigilance about civil rights. Since there are so many agencies throughout Arizona that have their own methods of operation, I propose that food banks administer more stringent rules and leave less agency autonomy when it comes to client services. Many barriers that prevent Latino
households or other individuals from coming to food banks are tied to customer service issues. Part of the battle to eliminate barriers is ensuring that everyone feels comfortable coming to a food bank or agency in the first place, but a large part is making sure that everyone who enters in the door is treated equally. Many of the following best practices are related to ensuring that everyone who comes for emergency food assistance is treated equitably and respectfully. Much of what is presented is already occurring on the food bank level, and it is important for food banks to ensure that all of their agencies are also operating in an equitable way.

Agency Monitoring

Food banks that contract with DES for Food Administration funding are required to monitor their agencies that distribute TEFAP by visiting them at least once every two years. Currently, those visits tend to focus on monitoring the technical aspects of running an agency – namely food storage. In order to ensure that agencies have a plan in place to reduce barriers that may prevent people from accessing emergency food, food banks should also monitor to ensure that their agencies are maintaining appropriate TEFAP civil rights policies such as checking what documentation they require from their clients, and what process they have in place for customers with a service complaint.

Currently, many food bank monitoring forms I have seen do inquire into TEFAP civil rights policies, but there are agencies of those food banks in direct violation of TEFAP policies. For example, some agencies require their clients to participate in a prayer session before receiving food, or require much more intake documentation than allowed, or require clients to volunteer in order to receive food. There is a clear disconnect between what food banks are monitoring and what is actually happening on the ground. It is important for food banks to ensure monitor their agencies for more than just food safety. They must also make sure that agency policies are not in violation of TEFAP policies and instead are providing appropriate customer service without inequity or discrimination.

Agencies should also be monitored more frequently and more effectively, so that their affiliate food bank maintains a larger presence in their organizations. Monitoring should not be viewed as getting an agency in trouble, but as a collaborative effort in empowering the agency to operate at its very best. Agency monitoring is a way for food banks to continually invest in their agencies, and ensure the passage of information between entities.

Grievance Form and Help Line

According to TEFAP policies, all agencies should have a system in place to field complaints or concerns from clients. In practice, however, many agencies do not have such a system in place. It can be difficult and intimidating for clients in small agencies to report that they are being treated poorly when there is no grievance system in place, or if they are unaware of such a system. For example, in one agency I visited, a client wanted to file a grievance and she was told to speak with the agency owner – who was the one that offended her in the first place. The TEFAP grievance form should be made clearly available
to all clients, and food banks should ensure that agencies understand and acknowledge the procedure for dealing with those claims. The TEFAP form could be used uniformly throughout all agencies in order to obtain consistent feedback.

In addition to having a grievance form, clients should have a grievance hot line that they can call if they want to file a complaint upon leaving a food bank. This way, they can log a complaint if they do not feel comfortable filing one at the agency. I believe that having AAFB add this function to their existing emergency food hotline would be an easy way for AAFB to continue to support the food banks at no cost to any party involved. AAFB already has a hotline staffed during regular work hours, and this way, AAFB staff could then report the grievance to the affiliate food bank for them to follow up on with little added work on behalf of AAFB.
CIVIL RIGHTS COMPLAINT/GRIEVANCE FORM
Department of Economic Security/ Hunger Relief Program
Title VI – (Race, Color, or National Origin Discrimination)
Title IX – (Sex Discrimination)
Section 504 – (Handicap Discrimination)

Name ___________________________ Date __________________

Address __________________________

(Street)

(City)       (State)     (Zip Code)

Telephone __________________________

(Home)   (Cell #)   (Email address)

Check type of discrimination:
  Race
  Color
  National Origin
  Sex
  Age
  Disability

Status of person filing complaint/grievance:
  Individual
  Organization
  Employee
  Other

Statement of complaint/grievance (include type of discrimination charged and the specific incident and (s) in which it occurred):


Signature of Complainant: ___________________________ Date Received __________________

Agancy Location of Incident ___________________________


Signature of person receiving complaint ___________________________ Date Received __________________

 complaint number __________________

INSTRUCTIONS: Log Complaint in Agency Civil Rights Complaint Log

The client may directly register a complaint of discrimination:
  – DES/Hunger Relief Program (602-542-0322) or (602-542-5071) or DES/ADA Liaison at (602-771-7500).
  – USDA Director, Office of Civil Rights 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410 or call 800-795-3272 (voice) or 202-720-6382 (TTY). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.
**Posted Bill of Rights**

During TEFAP civil rights training run by DES, food banks and agencies were prompted to clearly list out all of their policies and prominently display them so that there could be no confusion by clients or staff about policies or programs. While this occurs at some agencies, many do not clearly post this information. As stated in the survey analysis, clients may not always be aware of their rights when accessing emergency food. In addition, pantries have certain rights, too. For example, they reserve the right to refuse service to any client if they are acting in a way that threatens staff or volunteers. Food banks should provide their agencies with a posted bill of rights for both clients and the agency that outlines the expectations for both clients and staff or volunteers. This is also a way for agencies to hold themselves accountable. A telephone number for the food bank (or the grievance help line) could be posted, as well, with a sign that says:

“Compliments or Concerns? Please call the affiliate food bank (or AAFB grievance hotline) with any compliments or concerns you may have about this partner agency at (###) - ### - ####.

Possible things to include in an agency bill of rights:

- This agency has a right to request the information on their intake form.
- This agency has a right to determine their hours and service guidelines as long as all clients are served equitably and all information is clearly posted.
- This agency has the right to refuse service to a client if:
  - The client is creating a stressful situation for other clients.
  - The client is belligerent and disrespectful of staff or volunteers.
  - The client is posing a safety threat to other clients.

Possible things to include in a client bill of rights:

- The agency will treat the client with respect and dignity at all times.
- At no time should the client be asked to make a donation of time or money in exchange for assistance.
- At no time should the client be required to participate in religious or political activity at the time you are receiving assistance.
- The client should provide the agency with all the information on the intake form, but should never be required to show proof of national residency or a social security card to receive an emergency food box.

**Providing Additional Resources**

Lack of access to information is an important factor that adds to the oppressiveness of poverty. Agencies do what they can do help their clients with the limited resources they have. However, it can be difficult for agencies to know of organizations in their area that can provide other assistance to clients. I often observed staff at an agency turning away a client who they could not help, when I knew that more services were available in the area. At the very least, agencies should be providing clients with information about 2-1-1, the
new Community Information & Referral number, which clients can call for information about different services throughout Arizona.

Another best practice would be having a handout for clients about federal and community based nutrition and food programs that food banks and community partners provide. The AAFB/DES Food Assistance Program Sheet is a good resource for additional information about food resources. The AAFB/DES Food Assistance Program Sheet can be found in English and Spanish here: http://www.azfoodbanks.org/index.php/foodbank/. Agencies should ensure that they are training their volunteers properly on other resources in their surrounding community, both for food and other important necessities, such as housing, job assistance, etc.

Additionally, clients should not be turned away from food banks without food, except in rare circumstances. This is mentioned during the DES TEFAP civil rights training, but it is not an official policy, and it is not in practice universally in Arizona. An easy way to implement this system is to follow the example of the San Antonio Food Bank. They give a client an EFB the first time they come into an agency, regardless of what zip code they reside in, or what documentation they have at the time of their first visit, etc. If the client is out of their service area, they are given information about what agencies serve their area. From that point on, the client is expected to go to an agency in their area, and will not be given an EFB if they go to an agency out of their service area, but they are not initially turned away without food.

**Volunteer Recruitment, Training, and Utilization**

Good volunteers can be hard to find if an agency isn't aware of or fully utilizing its resources. Some possible places to look for volunteers are:

- Current volunteers. Ask them if they have any friends that would be interested in volunteering, or have a "bring a friend to work" day.
- Current clients. Clients are familiar with the agency and the system, as well as the community in which the agency operates. They may be looking for a way to give back.
- Word of mouth. Let your current volunteers, friends, and family know you are in need of volunteers.
- Advertise in church bulletins, newspapers, or at high schools.
- Look into retirement programs, schools, churches, or fraternal organizations.
- Make a post on your organization’s social media platforms.

Train volunteers well. Orient volunteers on issues about hunger and poverty, how the agency functions, how to interact with clients, etc. Have frequent refresher trainings. Volunteer training is so much more than telling volunteers how to compile a food box. Tell volunteers about hunger and poverty in your area. Help them become advocates for your clients. Most importantly, help your volunteers understand the challenges that people living in poverty face.
Make sure your volunteers are treating your clients with respect and dignity. This means going above and beyond the TEFAP civil rights training that is required of food bank and agency staff once a year. TEFAP civil rights training is a baseline, coverall training that should be added on to during other trainings, not considered the be all and end all of customer service training.

Desert Mission Food Bank in Phoenix, Arizona, has a great method of volunteer training. They have frequent trainings in which they educate their volunteers on what is going on both internally and current events in hunger and poverty. All volunteers have a base level of consistent training, but their strengths are also utilized. New volunteers have an extensive training, but regular volunteers also have continuous training to refresh their skills and knowledge base.

Use volunteers well. Follow a strength-based model in which volunteers are utilized based on their strengths by having them perform tasks that they enjoy and are good at doing. Have a volunteer application with a space to provide available skills. Match volunteers with tasks that best utilize their skills and interests. Be transparent about hours, policies, etc, so that clients, staff, and volunteers are aware of what is going on, and to deter staff, volunteers, and clients from feeling victimized, bullied, or discriminated against. An example of a detailed volunteer form can be found here: https://secure3.convio.net/fbnyc/site/SSurvey?ACTION_REQUIRED=URI_ACTION_USER_REQUESTS&SURVEY_ID=2061.

Latinos

Many of the best practices outlined in this tool kit help reduce unintentional and intentional discrimination. However, since Latinos face specific barriers to accessing emergency food, and disproportionately high rates of food insecurity, more work should be done to reach out to this marginalized population. According to Feeding America's Hunger in America 2010 report, 45.6% of people that visit food banks in Arizona are Latino, versus 11.3% nationwide. Additionally, according to Feeding America, Latinos are the fastest growing population of food bank clients in the United States.

Food Boxes

One very easy thing agencies can do to help their Latino clients is ensuring the food in the emergency food boxes is culturally relevant and appropriate to the population. This is possible to do without increasing the cost of the food in the EFBs or alienating other demographics.

The Salvation Army in Phoenix, Arizona was successful in making changes in their EFBs to meet the needs of their clients. They noticed that certain foods from their EFBs were constantly left littered around their parking lot and around the building. After realizing they were not doing their best to serve their primarily Latino population, they polled their clients and staff to see what foods might be more culturally appropriate. The
Salvation Army was able to incorporate fideos (noodles) into their food boxes, which are cheap and easy to cook. They reached out to their donors and publicized that they were looking for donations of fideos, and now fideos are a staple in Salvation Army’s EFBs. Since making this change, Salvation Army staff reports they haven’t seen food left outside of the building. This is a great example of using community input to solve a problem, and how it can be easy and cost effective it can be to ensure clients are receiving food that is relevant to them.

**Language Tools**

Food banks and agencies should be doing what they can to build their language capacity, and make a priority to get volunteers with language skills that align with their population served. According to TEFAP policies, all food banks and agencies should have a LEP plan ensuring that they are able to accommodate clients that do not speak English, but this is not always the case. Food banks should ensure during their monitoring visits that agencies have an LEP plan in place, and agencies should continue to strive to best meet the needs of all clients that walk in their doors.

While having Spanish speaking staff or volunteers is ideal, there are some online resources that can be used for basic translation services and to help create a LEP plan:

- The federal interagency working group on Limited English Proficiency has created “I Speak...” cards, with “mark this box if you read or speak ____” written in thirty eight different languages, with the language written next to the box in English. These can be used to at least determine what language a client speaks. These cards can be found here: [http://www.lep.gov/ISpeakCards2004.pdf](http://www.lep.gov/ISpeakCards2004.pdf)
- Google has a free online language translation service that quickly translates text and websites. Its translations are not always perfect, but they are adequate and at least communicate the main idea of what you are trying to say. This website can be found here: [http://translate.google.com/](http://translate.google.com/)

**Unified Intake Form**

Many Latinos are fearful of going to food banks for fear of identification requirements. As the system currently stands, each agency has their own intake form and can determine what type of identification they require from their clients, as long as the policy fits the TEFAP criteria. However, many agencies seem confused about what constitutes appropriate intake information, and many currently have intake forms that are in violation of TEFAP policies. In order to ensure that agencies are not asking for more information than they should, food banks should create a unified intake form for all of their agencies. The intake form should ask for general information, and then any additional information that would help an agency help their clients, or information that would be good for recordkeeping, without asking about immigration status or anything in violation of TEFAP policies. An example of a unified intake form from Yuma Community Food Bank can be found on the next page. The form was developed by Yuma Community Food Bank, and approved by DES, which is standard protocol for intake forms when an organization in Arizona handles the distribution of TEFAP products.
Collecting information about specific demographics, such as race and ethnicity, can help food banks and agencies have a better idea of their clients and their needs. Collecting information about assistance received can help food banks and agencies better understand and serve their populations, and it can also be an indicator of a community in which there is still need. Having a source of client data can also help agencies by providing them with information to seek additional sources of funding, like grants.
Last Name (Apellido): ___________________________  First Name (Nombre): ______________________  Date: __________

Address: _____________________________________  City: __________________  AZ  Zip: _________  Phone: __________________

Box issued date: __________

You may choose not to answer the following questions. (Puede elijir no contestar las siguentes preguntas)

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DOB (Fecha De nacimiento) (mm/dd/year) ___________  Age (Edad): _____  Gender (Circle): Male Female

Ethnicity (Circle):  Asian  Black  Hispanic  Native American  Pacific Islander  White  Other

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I meet the current eligibility guidelines to receive USDA commodities. My household income does not exceed 185% of the Federal Poverty level. Neither I nor members of my household have received commodities from any other distribution site during the month. I will not sell, trade, barter or exchange these commodities for services. I live in the geographic area served by this distribution. (Cumplo con los requisitos de elegibilidad actual para recibir productos de la USDA. Mis ingresos no supere el 185% del nivel federal de pobreza. Ni yo ni los miembros de mi familia han recibido producto de cualquier punto de distribución durante el mes. No vendere o cambiare este producto por servicios. Declaro que yo vivo en la area geografica de servicio.)

Signature signifies release of the Yuma Community Food Bank and its agents against all liabilities or claims whatsoever arising out of donation/services and consents to the sharing of the information for purposes of soliciting donations and grants. (Firma significa la liberación de la Organización de Yuma Community Food Bank y sus agentes contra todas las responsabilidades o reclamaciones que pudieran derivarse de la donación o servicio y y presta su consentimiento para el uso de la información para efectos de solicitar donaciones y subvenciones)

Signature of Client: ____________________________  Date: __________

YCFB Representative: _________________________  Proof of Address:  Source: ____________________
Continued Outreach

Food banks should continue outreach in underserved areas, and continue to look to establish agencies in high need areas. Matthew Mellon’s work has very useful maps of areas in which there is high need in relation to current agency location. AAFB, food banks, and pantries should also continue to make personal connections in the Latino communities in Arizona in order to build connections with those communities and be able to best serve them.

Two effective ways of spreading information in Latino communities in Arizona can be through fliers and through the use of Spanish media. A flyer emphasizing that food banks and agencies are not government entities, but rather places where Latino households can feel safe and comfortable knowing they will receive emergency food could be useful in breaking down some barriers Latinos face in accessing emergency food. Additionally, during focus groups, many Latino individuals mentioned that they and their friends receive the bulk of their news and information from Spanish media, like TV and radio. Utilizing these resources would also be an effective way of spreading that message in Latino communities. In both instances, it should always be remembered that the most effective way of developing outreach strategies is doing so with community input, in order to determine how to frame the message, what language to use, etc. It is important to remember that there is not a “one size fits all” approach when it comes to outreach to Latino communities.

Agency committees could be useful in beginning the conversation about outreach to underserved populations. Agencies understand the needs of their individual communities. They may have existing relationships and contacts whose voices should also be brought to the table in order to begin to develop an effective outreach strategy.

TEFAP Civil Rights Training

The stated goal of TEFAP civil rights is to eliminate all illegal barriers that prevent people from receiving benefits. However, discrepancies remain between the federal TEFAP guidelines, what DES and the food banks understand them to be, and what is actually happening in practice. These entities should work together to continue to clarify TEFAP policies, to help reduce barriers that keep all people, and especially Latinos, from getting the food they need. At a minimum, enforcing TEFAP standards would ensure all agencies are treating customers equally, and that certain agencies are not being overloaded because clients are avoiding others that provide poor service.

Additionally, TEFAP guidelines should be constantly evaluated, revisited, and maintained. They should not be viewed as something to be checked off the “to do list” once a year. As it stands, some agencies are not meeting the requirements and there is no true accountability to ensure that they are providing equitable service to their communities.
Frequently Used Terms and Acronyms

**AAFB:** Association of Arizona Food Banks, a statewide organization serving five regional food banks that serve all fifteen counties in Arizona.

*Agency:* “A public or nonprofit organization that distributes food to low-income and unemployed households... to relieve situations of emergency and distress.”

**DES:** Arizona Department of Economic Security, which supplies food banks with United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) surplus commodities called The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP). Also administers federal and state funds to support the food bank network.

**EFB:** Emergency Food Box, received from food banks and agencies for families or individuals living below a certain income or experiencing an emergency. Generally have a three- to five-day supply of food, and are designed to meet the immediate needs of the client.

**Feeding America:** The nation’s leading hunger-relief organization; a nation-wide network of over 200 food banks and food rescue organizations.

**Food bank:** “A public or charitable institution that maintains an established operation involving the provision of food or edible commodities, or the products of food or edible commodities, to food pantries, soup kitchens, hunger relief centers, or other food or feeding centers (agencies), that as an integral part of their normal activities, provide meals or food to needy persons on a regular basis.”

**Food Insecurity:** A United States Department of Agriculture designation, indicating a household-level economic and social condition of limited or uncertain access, both physically and economically, to adequate food.

**Latino:** Used in this report to refer to persons of Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Central and South American, Dominican, Spanish, or other Hispanic descent, regardless of race.

**LEP/NEP:** Limited English proficient, non-English proficient. Used to describe levels of English proficiency.

**Poverty:** A condition in which the income of an individual, or the combined income of a household, falls below the Federal Poverty Level.

**TEFAP:** The Emergency Food Assistance Program, supplies surplus USDA commodities to food banks and agencies, shelters, and soup kitchens across the country. TEFAP commodities are allocated through the DES to be distributed by the food banks. Government commodities are governed by certain policies, and according to the DES, all agencies receiving food from food banks should follow TEFAP policies for all of the food they distribute in EFBs.

**Undocumented:** the state of residing in the United States while not possessing the government-issued documentation to prove US residency.
End Notes

http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/poverty/data/historical/people.html (February 2012)

through American Fact Finder: http://factfinder2.census.gov (February 2012)

iii American Community Survey 2010 1-year estimates, U.S. Census Bureau. Accessed through  
American Fact Finder: http://factfinder2.census.gov (February 2012)


http://www.pewhispanic.org/2012/01/26/hispanics-say-they-have-the-worst-of-a-bad-economy/ (February 2012)


ix Lawrence, Marie. Around a Common Table: Advancing Community Based SNAP Outreach for Latino Households in Arizona. 2011.  


For a copy of any of the documents in this report, please contact the Association of Arizona Food Banks at askaafb@azfoodbanks.org.