

AAFB MEMBER FOOD BANKS:

Collectively serving all 15 counties in Arizona

Community Food Bank, Tucson
www.communityfoodbank.org | 520.622.0525

Desert Mission Food Bank, Phoenix
www.jcl.com/foodbank | 602.870.6060 ext. 1502

St. Mary's Food Bank Alliance, Phoenix
www.firstfoodbank.org | 602.242.3663

United Food Bank, Mesa
www.unitedfoodbank.org | 480.926.4897

Yuma Community Food Bank, Yuma
www.yumafoodbank.org | 928.343.1243

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Feeding America
www.feedingamerica.org

Arizona Self Help
www.arizonaselfhelp.org

Health-e-Arizona - online SNAP (food stamp) application
www.healthearizona.org

Community Information & Referral
www.cir.org

Valley of the Sun United Way
www.vsuw.org

Society of St. Vincent de Paul
www.stvincentdepaul.net

Arizona Department of Economic Security
www.azdes.gov

MORE WAYS TO CONNECT WITH AAFB

Stay current on state and federal activities by sending an email with "Subscribe to the AAFB Advocacy Team" in the subject line to Ginny Hildebrand at ghildebrand@azfoodbanks.org.

Subscribe to the bi-weekly AAFB Email Newsletter by emailing Brian Simpson at brian@azfoodbanks.org.

Bookmark the AAFB Event Calendar:
www.azfoodbanks.org/?action=events

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Become a fan on Facebook:
www.facebook.com/azfoodbanks

Check us out on Change:
www.change.org/azfoodbanks

HELP US SAVE COSTS

Consider receiving FOOD LINES in your inbox. While a print version will be available, saving on printing and postage costs will allow us to spend more money on our mission! Email brian@azfoodbanks.org to receive future issues in your inbox.

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OUR MISSION

To deliver food and quality services to food banks and foster relationships in support of our commitment to eliminate hunger.

Established in 1984, AAFB is a support organization serving its five member regional food bank warehouses and a network of nearly 1,700 food pantries and agencies in Arizona. Major activities include: developing more food resources, promoting nutrition, advocating for public policy changes to help hungry people, fostering cooperation among food banks and networking with government, local, state and national leaders dedicated to ending hunger and engaging all sectors of society in hunger awareness and sensitivity. The Association of Arizona Food Banks is not a food bank - we help make food banking better.

2009-10 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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- Child Nutrition Reauthorization 101
- Update: AAFB's Rural Refrigerated Container Project
- Hunger in America 2010 Study Results

IN THIS ISSUE OF FOOD LINES...

LEFT: AAFB's Ginny Hildebrand speaks with Lisa Pino, the USDA's Deputy Director of SNAP (the food stamp program). **RIGHT:** DES Director Neal Young watches Allen Ng of the USDA speak at a Child Nutrition Roundtable in December.



Celebrating 25 Years

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www.azfoodbanks.org

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FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

Ginny Hildebrand, President & CEO



Dear Friends,

I would like to tell you that the recession's impact has lessened and our resources at the Association of Arizona Food Banks are more than plentiful to meet the need.

Unfortunately that is not the case.

Many Arizona families remain devastated. The numbers are hard to contemplate - 939,000 Arizonans living in poverty (\$22,050 or less annual income for a family of four); 265,000 Arizona jobs lost since December, 2007; 431,481 Arizona households, including 508,000 children, receiving Supplemental Nutrition Assistance (formerly food stamps – the highest participation in the history of the state). A study just released reports an increase of 85% in requests for emergency food assistance in Arizona since the last survey in 2006. Our member food banks report distributing 42% more food in the first two quarters of 2009 vs. 2008. Economists predict a slow recovery in the state, with employment the last to rebound.

On the resource and policy side, the state budget deficit of \$1.5 billion this year and \$3.5 billion, for the year beginning this coming July, have led to regrettable policy decisions. State cuts in the past year to AAFB, shelters, medical care, child care have put more strain on already struggling families. More cuts are likely. The Legislature has referred a temporary one-penny per dollar sales tax increase to the May 18th ballot, which, if passed, is one of the solutions, but certainly will not be a cure-all. Arizona remains in a perilous financial condition with painful options.

At the federal level, there are other significant choices to be made as the Child Nutrition Reauthorization Act is considered this year. This act addresses school breakfast and school lunch programs, summer food programs, WIC, Child Care Food Program, and other nutrition assistance critical to children's physical and mental development. AAFB is working with other advocates around the country to educate congressional members on the need to support specific improvements in this legislation—learn more about what you can do to help in this issue of FOOD LINES.

As I look at hunger and poverty in Arizona, and consider the policy and resource challenges we face, I know the private sector cannot “do it all.” The public sector must still play a major role. However AAFB and others in the non-profit sector play a critical role. Our success has come from collaboration, partnerships, innovation and the faithful support of generous, creative friends like you. By supporting AAFB you help deliver food throughout Arizona and offer a voice on behalf of those who cannot speak for themselves. Please continue to generously support AAFB in this time of unprecedented need.

In gratitude,

Ginny Hildebrand
President and CEO

IT'S DÉJÀ VU ALL OVER AGAIN

As AAFB continues to celebrate its 25th anniversary, it's amazing to ponder the progress made in the fight against hunger during that time. Food banks evolve and adapt, yet the challenges hunger presents are as visible as ever before. As you'll read elsewhere in this issue of FOOD LINES, Arizona saw record demand for emergency food last year, and yet our food banks--through your generosity--rose to the occasion by delivering record amounts of food. Even as the current economic climate yields to periods of prosperity, our member food banks are keeping an eye on the future.

And so on December 21, 2009, United Food Bank hosted a groundbreaking ceremony for it's new 42,000 sq. ft. warehouse in Mesa, replacing the existing 26,000 sq. ft. one. When it first opened in 1982, United distributed 500,000 lbs of food that year. United expects to distribute over 15 million pounds in 2010, hence the need for a larger space. AAFB was there at both groundbreaking, and will be present when St. Mary's Food Bank Alliance opens its expanded warehouse and service facility later this Spring. While no one is happy more Arizonans need the services of our member food banks, it is encouraging to know they stand ready to meet the challenges of both today and tomorrow.

THEN...



AND NOW...



Child Nutrition Reauthorization 101

Beyond the health care debate, mid-term elections and the regular activities of Washington, 2010 is an important year because Congress has begun to hear legislation related to the Child Nutrition Reauthorization Act (CNR). CNR's roots trace back to legislation signed into law by President Lyndon Johnson in 1966, which incorporated the previously created National School Lunch Program (NSLP), and added to it school breakfasts, funding for school kitchen equipment and staff, and the establishment of nutrition guidelines.

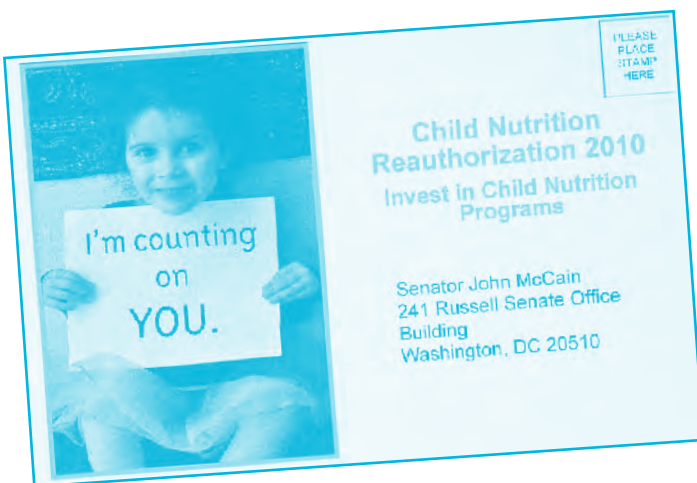
Today, CNR programs collectively comprise a budget of \$15 billion annually, and include the Women Infants and Children program (WIC) for pregnant women and those with children under 5, the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) for children in day-care and after-school programs, the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP), which provides a lunchtime meal to children of all ages during the summer, and more.

CNR expires every five years, allowing Congress the opportunity to amend and expand the legislation as needed. Most recently CNR was set to expire this past September, but President Obama extended the expiration deadline for another year to give lawmakers more time to consider his demand for increased funding, which would drastically improve access to more and higher quality food for the most at-risk children, as well as fund modernization and automation initiatives. More detailed initiatives are outlined in the CNR At-A-Glance box below.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) estimates more than 31 million children ate school lunches in 2009, including over 655,000 in Arizona. Only half of these children are signed up for school breakfasts however, and numerous recent reports show 1 in 5 Arizona children are struggling with hunger. Barely more than 10% of Arizona's children participate in SFSP, well below the national average. Bottom line, more funding is needed to expand CNR programs to more of Arizona's children.

If you are interested in learning more about CNR, visit the Food Research & Action Center website, one of the best resources on the web, at www.frac.org.

You can also keep up on initiatives to end child hunger in Arizona by visiting www.endchildhungeraz.org, a close partner of ours.



CNR AT-A-GLANCE

WHY INVEST IN CNR?

It's been proven time and time again that children who get enough to eat and eat healthy foods do better in school, have fewer discipline problems and are less at-risk of child obesity. Additionally, President Obama has a stated goal of ending childhood hunger by 2015, which will only happen by investing in CNR programs.

WHAT AAFB WOULD LIKE TO SEE

- Elimination of reduced-fare meals, allowing all students who qualify to receive free breakfast and lunch.
- "Direct Cert," or the automatic enrollment of any child who comes from a household already enrolled in SNAP or has other siblings already enrolled in school breakfast and lunch programs.
- Incentives for all schools to provide breakfast and after-school "third meal" options.
- Continued funding for the Women Infants and Children program (WIC).
- Increased funding for the Summer Food Service Program and the exploration of alternatives for children living in rural areas without Summer feeding sites.

HOW YOU CAN HELP

Help AAFB spread the word about the importance of CNR by talking to your friends and neighbors, and sending electronic letters in support of CNR to selected Arizona legislators at www.change.org/azfoodbanks, or download and mail a traditional letter available at www.azfoodbanks.org.

Volunteers Wanted: Help Fill Food Bank Shelves

Perfect for work, church or youth groups, your group of 10-40 is needed to help repackage pasta, beans or other dry foods from bulk bins into family size packages for food banks to distribute to families in need.

- **WHEN:** Weekdays or evenings, Saturday daytime – just two hours of work can bring great results!
- **WHERE:** The Mesa Cannery, 235 S. El Dorado Circle, Mesa (Loop 101 and Broadway) has generously offered its facility for the benefit of the food banks. Occasional or regularly scheduled groups are needed.
- **HOW:** Call Kathy or Bob McNelly at 480-839-4694 or 480-695-3552 to schedule a time.

Make Your Donation to AAFB Today

Spring is upon us, but for many Arizona households, hope is not springing eternal. Unemployment and underemployment, home foreclosures and the lagging economy are all still conspiring to send record numbers to our food banks. With nearly 1 in 5 Arizonans struggling with hunger, your donation to AAFB ensures continued outreach and education, in addition to needed food, finds them. As always, AAFB offers several convenient options:

- Return the enclosed envelope with your tax-deductible donation today.
- Make a secure online donation anytime at www.azfoodbanks.org.
- Consider monthly giving, or a gift in honor or memory of a loved one.

UPDATE: AAFB'S RURAL REFRIGERATED CONTAINER PROJECT

When AAFB embarked on its ambitious plan to place refrigerated container units at rural food pantries around Arizona, there was little indication the economy would crash as much as it has. Modeled off similar programs in Oklahoma and Mississippi, the concept of converting metal storage units into large refrigerators by retrofitting them with cooling units was a blend of smart recycling and cost-effective solution designed to increase capacity in smaller towns. As it turns out, the timing couldn't have been any better as record numbers of Arizonans have had to turn to food banks as unemployment and home foreclosures have soared, especially in rural communities.

"I love our cooler!" exclaims Angie Mikkelson, who along with her husband Guy, operate the Williams Food Bank in Northern Arizona and have over 500 families on their client roster, nearly double the number from a couple years ago. Mikkelson went on to explain how the cooler has made it possible for them to serve more families and other local organizations than ever before.

"We have a relationship with our local grocery store that has made it possible to pick-up produce from them six days a week. We also pick-up from four grocery stores in Flagstaff and bring it back. The ability to store and keep cool produce, bread and drinks have allowed us to support groups like Camp Civitan, which takes developmentally disabled kids camping in the summer."

Indeed, the ability to store fresh produce has had a tremendous impact on increasing the variety and nutritional value of what rural food pantries can offer people coming for assistance. Instead of just emergency food boxes or shelf-stable commodities received from regional food banks such as St. Mary's Food Bank Alliance or Community Food Bank in southern Arizona, these smaller food pantries are now able to accept fresh fruit and vegetables that larger food banks have long considered staples in their quest to feed more people with more nutritious offerings.

The increased capacity is crucial according to Guy: "If we didn't have the cooler, we wouldn't be able to serve as much food as we do. It's made a huge difference for us."

Stan Garner, of the St. Vincent de Paul Society in the Southern Arizona community of Sierra Vista agrees: "We're now able to accept a full load of product from Community Food Bank. Half of the load we receive we distribute the day it comes in, the other half we put in the cooler. We have it full three out of the four weeks of the month. We have lots more food to give to the community. Last month we served 700 families."

All told, fifteen refrigerated container units were placed in nine of Arizona's fifteen counties in communities as diverse as Chinle and Fredonia in the north, Safford and Springerville to the east, and Tombstone and Sells to the south. Each is large enough to accept several pallets of perishable food from the regional food banks while also accommodating local donations.

While the containers have been a blessing for many communities, any project of this scope is bound to run into some obstacles. Repair and maintenance have proved challenging in a few rare instances where specific replacement parts have been hard to come by, or when finding qualified repair technicians willing to travel long distances to some of the farther-out communities has been difficult or cost-prohibitive. Unswayed, AAFB has worked closely with the regional food banks to find the quickest and most cost-effective solutions so the communities can still reap the benefits. Thus far, no community has had to go without use of their cooler for any significant amount of time, and future expansion remains a possibility.

"It's amazing to be able to give so much to people in tough situations when they come to a food bank," says Angie Mikkelson. "I love our cooler!"



SITTING PRETTY: The refrigerated container in Ajo, AZ.



KEEPIN' COOL: The inside of the container in Williams, AZ.

Arizona Statewide Gleaning Project Update

By Jami Kakinuma, Gleaning Operations Administrative Manager

Throughout most of Arizona, it's citrus season from January through late March, and sometimes into early April. During this time, St. Mary's Food Bank Alliance, United Food Bank and Yuma Community Food Bank gladly accept donations of any citrus type, coordinating volunteers to go to donors' properties and glean the citrus from their trees, while also encouraging the community to glean their own trees and drop-off their citrus at the food bank.

Citrus donations are first used by the food banks to distribute to their agencies and clients throughout Arizona. Since what is collected is far more than what can be distributed and used by Arizona's hungry, the Arizona Statewide Gleaning Project (ASGP) with help from the food banks, have set up a distribution schedule to share truckloads of citrus with food banks throughout Arizona and across the Western United States. In return, our food banks may receive truckloads of product not typically grown in Arizona, such as apples or potatoes.

In 2009, ASGP coordinated the delivery of 61 truckloads, or over 2.2 million pounds of citrus, to food banks in Arizona and throughout the western United States. This represented a 30% increase over 2008, and the food banks are optimistic that 2010 will see another improvement, even after a slow start due to strong winter rains.

Of course, the biggest help to the food banks are folks who pick the citrus themselves and donate to the food banks. Requests to have food bank volunteers come out to pick citrus trees fill quickly each year, meaning that a large percentage of citrus donations come from residents who glean their own trees and deliver the citrus to the food banks themselves. The ASGP thanks donors, volunteer "gleaners" and the hard-working staff at our member food banks for all doing your part to get this fresh, nutritious fruit to those in need!

If you are interested in learning how to boost your citrus bounty for the food banks, you must have strong, healthy trees that are cared for properly. For more information on citrus trees and how to properly care for them, visit www.citrus-tree-care.com.

While citrus season is in full swing, it also happens to be the busy time of year for the Yuma Community Food Bank, a partner of the ASGP located in one of the biggest produce areas in the country. This relatively small food bank and its staff are really quite incredible when it comes to soliciting produce donations. In 2009 alone they shared over 2.9 million pounds of salad items with the ASGP, which then distributed the salad items to food banks throughout Arizona and across the country.

RIGHT: A volunteer helps collect citrus.



ARIZONA STATEWIDE GLEANING PROJECT

PHOENIX, AZ

A PROGRAM OF THE

ASSOCIATION OF ARIZONA FOOD BANKS

AAFB ASKS... DID YOU KNOW?

Everyone knows about citrus like lemons, oranges and grapefruit, but do you know what a **tangelo** is? They are surprisingly abundant here in Arizona thanks to their high-tolerance of chilly winter weather, but most people know very little about them. Typically, a tangelo is a hybrid of a grapefruit and either a tangerine or orange. Tangelos are roughly the size of an orange, and are known for their plentiful mild and sweet juice.



Not only do food banks benefit from generous citrus donations, but increasingly home gardeners help out by participating in **Plant-A-Row**. Since 1995, Plant-A-Row asks gardeners to plant an extra row of produce to donate to their local food bank. With an estimated 84 million households with a garden in the U.S., a significant impact can be made by planting that extra row. Find out more at www.gardenwriters.org. Locate your local food pantry at www.azfoodbanks.org or www.ampleharvest.org.

Hunger in America 2010 Study Released

The fourth edition of the quadrennial study commissioned by Feeding America, in conjunction with Mathematica Policy Research, is the culmination of 37,000 agency and 61,000 face-to-face client interviews from February to June 2009 nationwide. In Arizona, face-to-face interviews were conducted with 1,390 individuals and 526 agencies, painting a picture of who was hungry in 2009 and the changes that have taken place since last study was released in 2006. View the full study at www.azfoodbanks.org.

ARIZONA SNAPSHOT

- 888,100 unduplicated individuals in Arizona received emergency food in 2009, an 85% increase from 2006 study.
- Almost half (46%; 408,526 total) are children under the age of 18.
- 74% live in households below Federal Poverty Level (\$22,050 for a family of four).
- 77% live in households experiencing food insecurity.
- 38% live in households experiencing very low food insecurity--outright hunger.

NATIONAL SNAPSHOT

- 37 million (1 in 8) unduplicated individuals received emergency food in 2009, a 46% increase from the 2006 study.
- 14 million were children under the age of 18.
- Almost 3 million were seniors 65 and over.
- 76% live in households experiencing food insecurity.
- 36% live in households experiencing very low food insecurity--outright hunger.

ASSOCIATION OF ARIZONA FOOD BANKS