Anti-Hunger Playbook

54TH ARIZONA STATE LEGISLATURE
SECOND REGULAR SESSION

A legislator’s guide to addressing hunger in 2020
Welcome to 2020! For us, the new year brings a new name and a new look, but the same vision: A hunger-free AZ.

We changed our name from the Association of Arizona Food Banks to the Arizona Food Bank Network (AzFBN) to better communicate our role in ending hunger statewide. AzFBN develops anti-hunger solutions through food banking, public policy, and innovation. We support our member food banks in the storage and distribution of emergency food; work with policymakers—like you—to ensure all Arizonans have equitable access to nutritious food; and conduct outreach to engage key partners like schools, health care providers, and other nonprofits.

Thank you for supporting our work in your district and across the state, especially with additional resources in the past two budget cycles. Arizona’s Fresh Produce Fund—a $1 million appropriation in FY 2019, leveraged with private support—allowed 94 organizations in counties across the state to expand their ability to distribute more fresh fruits and vegetables. (See the map on page 4 for awardee locations.) In FY 2020, a $950,000 appropriation supported our network’s capacity to safely distribute the highly nutritious foods made available through the USDA’s trade mitigation efforts.

Building on these successes, we launched a farm-to-food-bank agriculture purchasing program called Friends of the Farm, which brings a wider variety of Arizona Grown produce, dairy, and protein to families in need. Friends of the Farm works primarily with small farmers, contributes to rural economic development, and strengthens the local food system. This nutritious food is critical to Arizonans struggling with food insecurity. (See page 11 for more details.)

This year’s Anti-Hunger Playbook includes facts about hunger in Arizona and what our network does to address it. It features stories from a few of the nearly 980,000 Arizonans who struggle with food insecurity. In addition to sharing this publication, I also want to invite you to visit or volunteer at a food pantry in your district. Meeting clients face-to-face is an ideal way to understand the circumstances of those we serve and identify sustainable policy solutions to improve food security.

Please consider the Arizona Food Bank Network a resource and join us in our fight to end hunger in Arizona. I look forward to working with you in the year ahead.

Sincerely,

Angie Rodgers
President and CEO
Our network has five member food banks that collectively provide emergency food relief to partner agencies in all 15 counties in Arizona. The map above reflects each food bank's service area. Our members distribute food to nearly 1,000 food pantries, community centers, homeless shelters, and other social service providers to get healthy food into the hands of Arizonans in need. (Learn more about our network on page 3.)

Note: HonorHealth Desert Mission Food Bank is a member within St. Mary's Food Bank Alliance’s service area.
About Us: AzFBN is a nonprofit organization dedicated to a hunger-free Arizona. Our mission is to develop solutions to end hunger through food banking, public policy, and innovation. We support our member food banks and the statewide emergency food network with transportation and distribution, anti-hunger advocacy, and outreach to partners.

2019 Highlights

Working with Food Banks
In 2019, AzFBN member food banks collectively served nearly 460,000 Arizonans each month. We distributed more than 182 million pounds of food, and nearly 40 percent of it was fresh produce. With $1 million in state funding and leveraged private sector support, the Arizona Fresh Produce Fund awarded grants to 94 food banks and smaller partners statewide. (See map on page 4 for all awardee locations.)

Southwest Produce Cooperative
Our network has long focused on increasing the nutritional quality of the food served to clients. In 2019, we launched the Southwest Produce Cooperative to rescue and transport more fresh produce across the state. AzFBN coordinates logistics for the co-op to support sharing across Arizona and with the national food bank network in times of excess. In FY 2019, the co-op shared more than 900 truckloads of fresh produce across Arizona and 25 states.

Innovating to End Hunger
AzFBN engages schools, health care providers, and nonprofits in the fight against hunger. In 2019, we worked with school nutrition departments to make school, summer, and after-school meals more accessible and nutritious. We also began strategic efforts to address hunger in underserved populations, namely older adults, college students, and tribal communities.

Advocating to End Hunger
In 2019, AzFBN worked with Arizona’s legislative and executive branches to provide additional state funding for the storage and distribution of healthy food. We worked with key state agencies and outlined the impact of proposed federal rules on Arizonans living in poverty. We also met with members of Congress about strengthening federal child nutrition programs, especially summer meals.
983,500 Arizonans live below the poverty line.¹

The poverty rate declined in Arizona for the fourth consecutive year, due to a strong economy and low unemployment rate. This is great progress, but more work remains for the many households still left behind.

1 in 5 kids in Arizona lives in poverty.²

Arizona’s poverty rate dropped to 14 percent, while the national average declined to 13 percent.³

Arizona: 14%
USA: 13%

Among America’s 30 poorest towns, Nogales ranks 28th and South Tucson ranks second.⁴

979,170 Arizonans are at risk of going hungry.

348,550 kids in Arizona face hunger.
That would fill Arizona Diamondbacks’ Chase Field more than seven times.

More than 1 in 5 kids is food insecure.

About 1 in 7 adults is food insecure.

Note: Food insecurity and poverty are inextricably linked. People living in poverty generally don’t have consistent access to sufficient nutritious food. All statistics about food insecurity on this page are from Feeding America’s 2019 Map the Meal Gap.⁵
Food banks can't fight hunger alone. For every meal a food bank can provide, federal nutrition programs can provide up to nine. The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), formerly “food stamps,” is a federal nutrition assistance program that helps low-income families afford a nutritionally balanced diet. It is America’s most effective anti-hunger program.

Since it was established in 1964, SNAP has helped people purchase groceries. It provides critical assistance to children, older adults, people living with disabilities, and low-income workers. Here's how it helps Arizona's residents and our economy.

| $161,780,244 | infused into Arizona’s economy each month (2019 monthly average)6 |
| 811,534 | Arizonans participated in SNAP each month (2019 monthly average)7 |
| 69% | Arizonans who participate in SNAP are children, older adults, or people living with disabilities8 |
| 200,000 | Arizonans kept above the poverty line by participating in SNAP9 |
| 3,990 | grocers, convenience stores, and other retailers accept SNAP in Arizona10 |
| $117 | SNAP benefit per person per month (2019 monthly average)11 |
| 83 | farmers’ markets and grocers accept Arizona’s Double Up Food Bucks, which provide incentives to purchase fresh fruits and vegetables12 |
Who SNAP Helps

Children

In 2019, 45 percent of SNAP participants in Arizona were children under 18. When children in low-income families have access to SNAP, they have a lower risk of anemia, lower levels of obesity, and fewer visits to the doctor. They are also 18 percent more likely to graduate from high school than kids in eligible households that don’t participate in SNAP.

Older Adults

Access to SNAP and other public benefits improve older adults’ health, reduce visits to the hospital, and allow people to age in place with dignity. Nearly 12 percent of SNAP participants in Arizona are over age 60. Older adults are the fastest-growing food-insecure population in the United States, and only 30 percent of those eligible participate in SNAP. Addressing hunger among this vulnerable population is a priority for AzFBN, and we are working to eliminate key barriers to SNAP enrollment, including the complex application process.

People Living with Disabilities

People living with disabilities struggle with food insecurity at a rate almost three times higher than people who do not have disabilities. More than 12 percent of SNAP participants in Arizona live with disabilities. A number of studies have shown that food insecurity has negative effects on health and diet quality, and these effects may be greater for people with disabilities.

Retailers & Rural Economies

In rural Arizona, nearly 1 in 4 households participates in SNAP compared with about 1 in 8 households in metropolitan areas. SNAP is a major economic engine in rural areas and high-poverty communities. Economists estimate that every SNAP dollar a household redeems expands the economy by about $1.70, which is critical to keeping our economy healthy.
Workers

About 60 percent of SNAP participants in Arizona who can work, do work—more than 30 hours per week. The remaining 40 percent of adults work part time or are not required to work due to age, pregnancy, caretaker status, or other reasons. (See below for SNAP rule changes related to work.)

SNAP incentivizes work by slowly decreasing the benefit amount as income increases. Many SNAP participants have barriers to employment, however, including a lack of education and training. About 25% of work-eligible adults participating in SNAP lack a high-school diploma or GED, and subsequently face an unemployment rate two-thirds higher than the general population.

Currently, Arizona’s SNAP Employment & Training (E&T) program is only available in urban centers and does not put sufficient resources toward basic education, vocational training, or other types of intensive support that SNAP participants need to transition to full-time, sustainable employment.

New Federal SNAP Rule Takes Effect April 2020

Federal SNAP rules limit participants between the ages of 18 and 49 who are not raising minor children in their homes—known as “able-bodied adults without dependents,” or ABAWDs—to three months of benefits in a three-year period unless they are working at least 20 hours per week. Until now, SNAP rules also allowed states the flexibility to request waivers of these time limits in areas where unemployment is high and sufficient jobs are not available. As a result, ABAWD time limits are in effect in Maricopa, Pima, and Yavapai Counties.

Pending litigation, the USDA will place more restrictions on ABAWD waivers beginning in April 2020, and fewer counties will qualify, which means thousands of Arizonans could lose access to SNAP if they are unable to prove consistent work hours. This will primarily affect seasonal, temporary, shift, and low-wage workers. In addition to the three counties that currently have ABAWD time limits, it is expected that the following counties will no longer qualify for waivers: Cochise, Coconino, Gila, Graham, Greenlee, Mohave, and Pinal.
Michael Hing, Superior

“My grandfather opened our family’s first grocery store here nearly 100 years ago, and I carry on the tradition of serving the community as the only grocer in the area. As the former mayor of Superior, I have a commitment to the residents. Our store accepts SNAP, and we work hard to keep prices affordable. Even with the minimum wage increase and a little more money in their pockets, a lot of people aren’t able to make ends meet in today’s economy.”

Carmen Estrada, Chandler

“It’s hard. I’m 87 years old, and I’ve worked since I was 15. And, still, I only have $1,000 in Social Security to live on each month. After I pay for housing, gas, utilities, and medical expenses, I don’t have much left over. I get $18 in SNAP each month, and I come to AZCEND Food Bank in Chandler once a month for a food box. I also volunteer at AZCEND, packing produce and checking eggs. It’s a great neighborhood center, and I like giving back to my community.”

Monica Ramos, Mesa

“I work in the public school system, so, when summer comes along and I’m not working, money is tight. I could try to find a summer job, but then I’d have to pay for daycare for my daughters, so it really doesn’t make sense. During the school year, we’re a two-income household, so our girls don’t qualify for free or even reduced-price lunches. During the summer, our finances change. I’m grateful that the Summer Meals program is available in our area, and it’s totally free—and the girls love the food!”

Martin Robert Johnson, Flagstaff

“As a disabled veteran, I have a lot of medical appointments and am limited in the number of hours I can work. But I do work one day a week at a fast-food restaurant. After my injury, I didn’t really think there was much to live for, but I found the help I needed and was inspired to give back by volunteering. Since I can drive, I also give people who have no transportation a ride to the Flagstaff Family Food Center for a food box. I recently started picking up a box myself, and, since I’m a vegetarian, the fresh produce is really important.”
Susan Foster, Dolan Springs

“Imagine living in a place where you cannot buy fresh food. That’s Dolan Springs. I don’t have transportation so I depend on friends to drive me to the food bank in Kingman. It is 40 minutes each way, but so worth it for the eggs, fruit, and fresh vegetables—everything I need to stay healthy. I live in a trailer with no electricity, so I use a propane stove to cook. I’m lucky to have a roof over my head, but I feel stuck. Without the food bank and SNAP, I would go hungry.”

Ted Rico, Top-of-the-World

“Money is tight for my parents. My dad gets a small pension from working for the state, and my mom doesn’t work because she’s been raising my sister’s kids since they were born. Times are tough, and we make our food last. I’m a long-distance learner at Mesa Community College, studying criminal justice, and the food we pick up from United Food Bank at the monthly We Care Wednesdays events on campus is worth the 150-mile roundtrip drive.”

Patricia Ternoir, Phoenix

“I’ve been legally blind for 20 years, so I can’t work. I stretch my disability and SNAP benefits as much as possible, but the food that’s cheap isn’t good for you. At Desert Mission Food Bank, I can get lots of vegetables, like squash, spinach, and kale. There’s a lot of need in this community, but people are good to each other.”

Delbert Nelson, Winslow

“There aren’t a lot of job opportunities here in Winslow, especially if you’re like me and never finished high school. I work full time at a diner, and my wife works part time at a gas station. We get a little SNAP, not much, which helps us feed our three growing children. When we run out of money, we go to the food bank. And every Thursday, we have a family outing to the church for a free meal. We feel blessed, but we still have dreams. My wife wants to go to college, and I’m going to help her accomplish that.”
Friends of the Farm: Farm-to-Food-Bank Purchasing Program

Friends of the Farm provides food bank clients with consistent access to a variety of Arizona Grown produce and other fresh food. It also helps Arizona small farmers and the local food system.

Healthy Food for Hungry People

Food insecurity is a key contributor to diabetes and other diet-related illnesses. It also inhibits children’s ability to learn and thrive in school. Friends of the Farm brings year-round variety of Arizona Grown produce to families in need, which contributes to improved health. As a result of a similar farm-to-food-bank program in Kentucky, nearly 90 percent of surveyed clients reported eating healthier.25

Stable Market for Small Farmers

Friends of the Farm provides a reliable market for Arizona’s small farmers. This supports economic development in rural areas and expanded capacity for growers. Planned purchases from food banks contribute to farm stability and ease the marketing burden, which can take up to 40 percent of a small farmer’s time. The program will lead to job creation and potentially new small-acreage farms.

Strong Local Food System

Arizona Grown produce offers quality you can see and taste. By purchasing locally grown fruits and vegetables, Friends of the Farm not only gets fresher food to families in need, but it also contributes to a thriving local food system. Buying Arizona Grown produce has a multiplier effect on local economies and reduces the negative impact on the environment by reducing transportation, fuel, and packaging. More than 1,000 registered growers operate in Arizona food bank service areas. Friends of the Farm purchases food directly from growers and co-ops and can include costs associated with harvesting and transportation.
State Funding for Hunger Relief

Arizona began appropriating resources for food banks and other emergency hunger relief providers in 1987 through the Coordinated Hunger Services special line item (SLI) within the Department of Economic Security’s budget. Initially, $64,900 was appropriated for use in rural food bank development. The SLI has grown over the years to the current amount of $1,754,600, which is used to provide coordinated food assistance through regional food banks and their network of pantries and agencies to low-income families and individuals statewide.26

These funds are vital to helping Arizonans facing hunger. In 2019, they helped our network distribute more than 165 million pounds of food, including roughly $70 million worth of federal commodities. Please protect the SLI.

Please Support:

- **Let’s Grow Arizona:** Double Up Food Bucks (Arizona’s name for the national Nutrition Assistance Produce Incentive Program) doubles the value of SNAP benefits used at farmers’ markets across Arizona, helping people bring home more healthy produce while also supporting local farmers. AzFBN supports Pinnacle Prevention’s efforts to continue this program statewide through a request for ongoing funding.

- **Agriculture Workforce Development Program:** Agriculture is one of Arizona’s top industries, but its workforce is aging. This important program would provide internships for beginning farmers to enter the workforce. AzFBN supports this new program, and we urge you to do the same.

*For more information about these programs and corresponding bills, visit the Arizona Food Systems Network website ([www.azfsn.org/advocacy](http://www.azfsn.org/advocacy)) or contact Jessie Gruner at jessiegruner@pinnacleprevention.org.*

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

4. *USA Today*. “Across the US: What are the 35 poorest towns in America?” by Michael B. Sauter. June 9, 2019. Accessed December 27, 2019. Ranking by *USA Today* and 24/7 Wall St., based on household income data from the *U.S. Census Bureau’s 2018 American Community Survey* in every American town with a population between 1,000 and 25,000. Boroughs, census-designated places, cities, towns, and villages were all considered.


7. Ibid.

8. DES, Division of Benefits and Medical Eligibility (DBME). Public Records Request: “SNAP Recipients: Senior Citizens & People with Disabilities, as of October 28, 2019, by County.”

9. SNAP kept 200,000 people above the poverty line in Arizona, including 99,000 children, each year, on average, during 2013 to 2016 (i.e., the most recent years with data available). These figures use the Supplemental Poverty Measure and adjust for households’ underreporting of benefits. Source: Center on Budget and Policy Priorities analysis of U.S. Census Bureau’s *March Current Population Survey* and SPM public use files. Corrections for underreported benefits are from Department of Health and Human Services/Urban Institute Transfer Income Model.


12. For every $1 SNAP participants spend on eligible food items, they get $1 to spend on Arizona Grown fruits and vegetables at participating farmers’ markets and grocery stores, up to $20 per day. See more at [www.doubleupaz.org](http://www.doubleupaz.org).


15. Ibid.


20. USDA ERS, “Disability Is an Important Risk Factor for Food Insecurity.”


23. DES, DBME. Public Records Request: “Households with Countable Income Earned through Employment, Participation in Nutrition Assistance by County, 2018.”

24. CBPP. *Waivers Add Key State Flexibility to SNAP’s Three-Month Time Limit,* by Ed Bolen and Stacy Dean. February 6, 2018.


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