Feeding America: The Food Bank Perspective

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“Food insecurity” is the federal government’s own measure of risk of hunger or uncertainty about the source of the next meal.

- More than 36.2 million Americans were food insecure in 2007. - 12.4 million were children (16.9% of all children).
- Very low food security increased significantly (8.5 million Americans in 2000, 11.9 million Americans in 2007).
- Nearly 3.8 million more people got SNAP/food stamps in November 2008 than in November 2007.
Feeding America

- Annually provides more than **2 billion pounds of food** and grocery products to low-income Americans at risk of hunger through a network of **205 food banks** that serve **63,000 food pantries, soup kitchens and other agencies**. Also provides food and groceries in times of disaster.

- Sources food from national food industry donors and distributes millions of dollars to fund:
  - food banks general operations, transportation costs, purchase initiatives and child nutrition and education programs.
- Federal government provides one fourth of food moved through food banks, but does not provide direct funds.
The Feeding America Network serves over **25 million Americans** annually through our Network.

- 9 million children
- 2.5 million seniors
- 36% of households have at least one adult who is employed
- 42% report having to choose between paying for food & paying for utilities
- 35% had to choose between paying for food and paying their rent or mortgage
- 32% had to choose between paying for food & paying for medicine/medical care

We are working on a new study that will be released in November-December of 2009 that will provide updated information on who we serve, why, and how many.
Surveyed 160 food bank network members this fall and found:

- 100% reported increases in demand for emergency food assistance over the last year.

- When food banks were asked what were the most prominent contributors to increases in demand:
  - 91% cited rising cost of food
  - 90.5% cited increasing unemployment; 67% cited increasing underemployment
  - 63% cited the cost of fuel
Addressing the Increase in Demand

Recent Survey Findings (Cont’d)

- When food banks were asked what populations they and their agencies were seeing:
  - 99.4% reported seeing more first-time users
  - 74% reported seeing more newly unemployed persons
  - 73% reported seeing increased need among existing clients (more repeat visits)
  - 59% reported seeing more employed persons
  - 48% reported seeing more children

72% of food banks do not feel as though they are able to adequately meet the needs of their communities without adjusting the amount of food distributed.
Strategic Efforts to Better Meet the Need

Feeding America recently underwent a strategic planning process aimed at helping us better serve hungry Americans.

Our goals between now and 2012 include:

• Provide access to food to one million more people each year.
• Work to increase participation in federal nutrition programs by at least 25%.
Strategic Initiatives

Work toward achieving those outcomes will be done through:

• Increased product sourcing
• More effective distribution
• Boosting public awareness of hunger and Feeding America’s work
• Capacity and capability development in our Network (food banks and agencies)
• Federal nutrition program outreach
SNAP/Food Stamp Outreach

The Problem/Gaps

• Only 67% of people eligible for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) (formerly the “Food Stamp Program”) actually enroll in the program.
• A host of barriers exist: lack of awareness of eligibility, stigma, difficult application processes, transportation, etc.

Two controllable areas in which we believe we can impact participation:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Food Bank Outreach Activity</th>
<th>Food Stamp Friendly State Policies</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aggressive Outreach</td>
<td>Most Receptive Waiver Adoption</td>
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<tr>
<td>Moderate Outreach</td>
<td>More Receptive Waiver Adoption</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entry Level Outreach</td>
<td>Least Receptive Waiver Adoption</td>
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</tbody>
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Conversion Model Hypothesis Participation Rates Increase
SNAP Plan

• Work to Increase Participation in Federal Nutrition Programs by 25% (Board Outcome)
• Increase and leverage government resources (Sub-outcome)
  - Increase the rate of food banks engaged in SNAP outreach from 65% to 80%
  - Increase aggressive, moderate and entry level activities by 25%

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Current Activity Level</th>
<th>Food Banks Participating (Current)</th>
<th>2012 Goal (25% increase)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Aggressive Outreach</strong></td>
<td>53</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(more than three outreach activities)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Moderate Outreach</strong></td>
<td>30</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(performing three outreach activities)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Entry Level</strong></td>
<td>53</td>
<td>66</td>
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<tr>
<td>(distributing information)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>No Outreach</strong></td>
<td>66</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Update
• Feeding America selected 5 states for targeted assistance and advocacy (CA, NC, NJ, RI, and MD)

Activities
• Providing technical assistance and develop outreach plans with food banks in 5 targeted states to increase the number of food banks included in state plans
• Influencing all states to adopt more options that positively impact enrollment in SNAP

What Does Success Look Like?
• An increase in adoption of the 12 state options (out of the 22 state options total) available that help increase access to the SNAP among the targeted states
• An increase in the number of states including food banks in their formal state SNAP outreach plans
Increase access to meals for children in need through integration and expansion of emergency and programmatic services.
Recommendations focused on feeding children in the summer, outside of school hours, and in school.

- Further simplify participation in the SFSP
  - For example: Reduce the administrative burden on SFSP sponsors

- Improve child feeding outside of school hours
  - For example: Expand Supper availability to additional states

- Improve school feeding
  - For example: Ensure that reimbursement rates are adequate for provision of nutritious meals for both NSLP and SBP
Nutrition Program Highlights:

• The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)
  -$19.9 billion for incremental SNAP spending

• The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP)
  -Additional funding of $150 million for TEFAP.

• Other Nutrition Funding Benefiting Low-Income Americans
  -$500 million for Women, Infants and Children Program (WIC)
  - $100 million for school food service equipment grants
  - $100 million for the Emergency Food and Shelter Program
    under the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)
In Conclusion

• **Feeding America** strives to **end hunger now**, through emergency food distribution, while also **ending hunger tomorrow**, through boosting participation in federal nutrition programs like SNAP (formerly Food Stamps) and mobilizing the public.

• **Child hunger** is an area of serious concern and will serve as a focus for the Feeding America Network.