

# THE ALASKA FOOD COALITION



**2006 ANNUAL MEMBER MEETING  
ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES  
JOEL GILBERTSON CONFERENCE ROOM  
JUNEAU, ALASKA  
APRIL 20-21, 2006**

## MINUTES

### Members Present

**Darren Adams** (Southeast Alaska Food Bank)  
**Martha Brown** (Southcentral Foundation Elders Program)  
**Linda Coate** (Alaska DEED, USDA Food Program)  
**Ruth Elvsaas** (Food Bank of Alaska)  
**Janelle Gomez** (Alaska DHSS, Office of Children's Services, Family Nutrition Unit)  
**Sophia Gomma** (Catholic Social Services)  
**Katrina Grundhal** (Salvation Army McKinnel Shelter)  
**Susannah Morgan** (Food Bank of Alaska)  
**Becky Parker** (Alaska DHSS)  
**Steve Reshetar** (New Hope on the Last Frontier)  
**AnnaBell Stevens** (United Way of Anchorage)  
**Linda Swarner** (Kenai Peninsula Food Bank Inc.)  
**Andrea Thistle** (Valley Open Bible Fellowship)  
**Nick Timurphy** (Bristol Bay Native Association Regional Food Bank)  
**Claudia Vecchiarelli** (Alpha Omega Life Care, Inc.)  
**Jetta Whittaker** (The Glory Hole)

### Apologies

**Louise Charles** (Bethel Senior Services)  
**Jim Crockett** (Bean's Café)  
**Margaret Duggan** (Municipality of Anchorage, Family Nutrition and Health Services)  
**Trevor Jones** (Kodiak Island Food Bank)  
**Ron Klein** (Alaska DEC, Food Safety and Sanitation Program)  
**Barbara Nichols** (Nome Community Center)  
**Stephanie Wheeler** (Alaska Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives)

**Thursday, April 20<sup>th</sup> (10:00am-4:00pm)**

**10:00 am-12:00 pm Welcome and Child Nutrition Programs**

The meeting was called to order by Susannah Morgan and introductions were made by the all the attendees. Susannah introduced the keynote speaker **Doug O'Brien** (Director of Public Policy and Research, America's Second Harvest) to the members.

Doug began with some background information on America's Second Harvest as well as an historical and national perspective on the Child Nutrition Programs. His talk is summarized below:

America's Second Harvest is an organization with 215 member food banks and 150 subsidiaries. America's Second Harvest distributes nearly 2 billion pounds of donated food and grocery products annually, which amounts to 25.3 million unduplicated people.

A national poll, conducted by McLaughlin and Associates in 2005, found that over two-thirds of voters want to see Congress increase funding to anti-hunger programs like the school nutrition programs, food stamps, and the WIC program. However in a 2001 study by America's Second Harvest, The Red Tape Divide, it was found that to access the programs is becoming increasingly difficult.

Child Nutrition Programs, due for reauthorization in 2008, began with the School Lunch Program in 1945 as part of the Defense Act. During the draft men were being denied entry to the armed forces because of childhood malnutrition. It is a critical program now as it was then because it prepares students for the global economy. Essentially, hungry kids don't learn. Alaska comes out in top bracket of states in terms of participation for the School Lunch Program, but for the School Breakfast Program Alaska comes out in the bottom group of states.

The School Breakfast Program started in the 1960s. President Nixon expanded the program because hunger had become a national embarrassment which diminished the credibility of America as a model for other nations. Today, the School Breakfast Program must be further expanded to meet growing need and to complement the successes of the School Lunch Program. America's Second Harvest believes that the federal government is responsible to fund this expansion.

While 17 million children receive the School Breakfast Program only 3 million receive the Summer Food Service Program. This lack of participation suggests that food pantries are feeding these children in the summer.

In conclusion, the solutions to the health issue of obesity can be found in the Child Nutrition Programs. They must be promoted as vehicles for food nutrition education.

**Stacy Goade** (School Food Service Coordinator, Child Nutrition Services, Alaska DEED), **Jo Dawson** (Child & Adult Care Project Assistant, Child Nutrition Services, Alaska DEED), and **Ann-Marie Martin** (Summer Food Service Project Assistant, Child Nutrition Services, Alaska DEED)

Stacy, Jo and Ann-Marie delivered their presentation to the members by PowerPoint. In addition they distributed a brochure on CNS services. They can be accessed below:

[View CNS Presentation](#) | [View CNS Brochure](#)

After the presentation **Bill Hogan**, Deputy Commissioner of Alaska Department of Health and Social Services visited with the members and wished them a successful meeting. The members expressed their gratitude for the Deputy Commissioner's visit.

### **12:45 pm-2:15 pm Food Stamp Program**

**Carolyn Spalding** (Social Services Program Coordinator, Division of Public Assistance, Alaska DHSS)

Carolyn informed the members that 22, 000 people in Alaska receive Food Stamps. New developments regarding the Food Stamp Program in Alaska have been:

- the alignment of Food Stamps and Alaska Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) eligibility. An example is the exemption of vehicles as a resource for food stamps.
- the simplification of the process in which applicant families work out eligibility (see <http://www.hss.state.ak.us/dpa/programs/fstamps/#>),
- the work with University of Alaska Fairbanks Cooperative Extension to make sure program rules are in compliance and that remote sites are expanded.

National participation for eligible citizens is 65%, in Alaska 53%. The Alaska DHSS has had on-going issues with making sure that benefits are properly accounted. In FY 2003 the error margin was 14%, yet in FY 2004 it was 7% and the projection is for continuing improvement.

**Joan Chase** (Food Stamp Policy Specialist, Division of Public Assistance, Alaska DHSS)

Joan discussed the application form and application procedure. Joan described how a food stamps applicant completes a form (see <http://www.hss.state.ak.us/dpa/forms/gen50b-packet.pdf>) and then interviews with an agent/care worker. After a successful case is determined continuations must be submitted 6 months after the initial determination. Key eligibility considerations for applicants are:

- they must live in Alaska
- children under 21 must be included in the application
- foreigners are eligible for food stamps after 5 years of residence in the USA

From the Division of Public Assistance Food Stamps website (<http://www.hss.state.ak.us/dpa/programs/fstamps/>) benefits information can be accessed as well as from a help desk (888-804-6330 or 907-269-5777 if you are in Anchorage)

Joan also included information on the program in the form of a handout, which is available below:

View Food Stamp Program Handout

**Doug O'Brien** (Director of Public Policy and Research, America's Second Harvest)

Food Stamps are tied to low-income need; they are also an indicator of a badly performing economy or poverty. Of all Food Stamps 80% of benefits go to households with kids, as a consequence food stamps are a key program in the fight against child hunger. If you are able-bodied without children food stamps benefits are limited. The population of able-bodied adults

without child dependents has moved from food stamps benefits to the charitable food distribution system. As previously stated Food Stamps and TANF have aligned their eligibility rules. The Food Stamps program is the key federal program which will eliminate the problem of hunger in the United States. Advocacy is a key component in the support of the Food Stamp program. Areas of advocacy are:

- Food Banks across the US must write letters expressing the value of the program and we how we must protect it.
- Food Stamp provisions expire in 2007. Food Stamps must be reauthorized on the Farm Bill as states are exceeding federal guidelines. There should be a 50/50 match between state and federal governments on funding but the reality is closer to 60/40 with state governments paying the higher proportion. This also needs to be corrected through advocacy efforts.
- We need better access to the program. As the Hunger in America 2006 report shows only 30% of the eligible population access Food Stamps. The minimum benefit needs to be raised to between \$25-\$30 and the application simplified. However, the base benefit level will be the most costly to implement.
- Food Stamps need to reflect modern life i.e. more convenience in food choice.
- We need to argue the economic right for food stamps. 5% increase in participation in Alaska would mean more money for the program.
- Allow food banks to process applications. The food bank network serves the population seeking food assistance.

### **2:30 pm-4:00 pm Alaska Food Coalition Business**

The *Coordinator's Report-Capacity Building Project* was delivered by Susannah in the Coordinator's absence. It is available below:

[View Capacity-building Project Coordinator's Report](#))

The following review of FY 2006 goals was delivered by Susannah Morgan

#### ***FY 2006 Goals:***

1. Capacity building research – undertake a study of statewide anti-hunger agencies to determine what their particular needs are for capacity building. This could be in preparation for a large grant proposal.
2. Distribute mini-grants to food programs throughout the state to improve their ability to distribute food to hungry Alaskans.
3. Develop materials to educate the public on the anti-hunger network in Alaska utilizing the results of the Hunger Study.
4. Maintain the Alaska Food Coalition network, through teleconferences and annual meetings.
5. Strengthen the Coalition by adding more members, including rural members, politicians, and representatives from the food retail industry.

#### ***FY 2006 Accomplishments***

Goal 1: Capacity-building research (see Coordinator's Report)

Goal 2: Mini-grants

- 15 grants distributed
- 12/15 outside of Anchorage
- Total of \$27,708.80

Goal 3: Hunger Study

- Released February 23, 2006
- Key findings prepared and distributed to media, legislators and opinion-makers in Alaska and publicized on website
- Forum organized at The Glory Hole to formally present results
- Brochure to be ready by National Hunger Awareness Day 6/6/06

Goal 4: Alaska Food Coalition Meetings

- Teleconferences held on 10/27/05 and 1/31/06
- Executive Committee meetings held 9/8/05 and 12/8/05

Goal 5: Membership

- 37 members this year. 48 last year.
- 25 Non-profit, 12 government agencies
- 20 based in Anchorage
- Representatives in Dillingham, Juneau, Kodiak, Nome, Mat-Su, Bethel, Fairbanks, Delta Junction, Soldotna
- Membership pitches made in FY 2006 through e-mails, newsletter articles, phone calls, site visits and Food Bank of Alaska agency meetings.

The following *Treasurer's Report* as of March 31, 2006 was delivered by Alaska Food Coalition Treasurer, Susannah Morgan.

	<b>Q3 Actual</b>	<b>Annual Budget</b>	<b>Remaining in Budget</b>
Personnel Services	14,982	18,000	3,018
Travel	2,218	5,000	2,782
Supplies	1,000	1,000	-
Other	27,708	41,000	13,292
<b>Total</b>	<b>45,908</b>	<b>65,000</b>	<b>19,092</b>

The following *goals and budget for FY 2007* were agreed upon by the membership.

1. Complete capacity building project, including developing and submitting a large grant for capital improvements. This process includes developing a 'model' food pantry, conducting the final analysis of community needs, identifying grant opportunities and submitting a grant proposal.
2. Develop educational outreach program. In order to further the Alaska Food Coalition's mission 'to educate policy makers about Alaskan food needs', the AFC Coordinator will regular contact legislators and opinion makers with information on hunger and anti-hunger efforts. The AFC Coordinator will also continue to publicize the results of the Hunger in America 2006 Alaska report.
3. Distribute mini-grants to food programs throughout the state to improve their ability to distribute food to hungry Alaskans.
4. Maintain the Alaska Food Coalition network, through teleconferences and annual meetings.
5. Strengthen the Coalition by adding more members from a broad spectrum of opinion-makers, politicians and representatives from the food retail industry.

<b>Revenue</b>	<b>FY 2007</b>
State of Alaska grant	65,000
<b>Total Revenue</b>	65,000
<b>Expenses</b>	
AFC Coordinator (salary and benefits)	45,000
Travel	5,000
Supplies	1,000
Other	
Mini-grants	10,000
Educational materials	2,000
Website maintenance and updates	2,000
<b>Total Expenses</b>	65,000
<b>Surplus (Loss)</b>	0

*Election of officers for FY 2007*

A slate of officers was presented to the Alaska Food Coalition. The slate was:

President: **Linda Swarner**

Vice-President: **Jim Crockett**

Secretary: **Nick Timurphy**

Treasurer: **Susannah Morgan**

The slate was voted on and approved. The new officers were congratulated.

**Friday, April 21<sup>st</sup> (12:30 pm – 5:00 pm)**

Commissioner of Alaska Department of Health and Social Services, **Karleen Jackson** paid a visit to the members and expressed her thanks for the work of the members in providing emergency food assistance to the hungry of Alaska. In turn the members discussed their visits with legislators in the morning as well as the possible establishment of a Commission on Hunger. Karleen responded that one of the best courses of action would be to attach the hunger issue to one of the existing commissions.

**12:30 pm-2:00 pm Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children-WIC**

**Doug O'Brien** (Director of Public Policy and Research, America's Second Harvest)

According to some commentators this is the "best program ever created". The General Accounting Office discovered that every \$1 spent on WIC saved \$4 in Medicaid costs. WIC serves a sympathetic population and is therefore a popular program for funding. In the last 10 years 1 million more people have been added to the program to make a total of 7.8 million of the population. The program is discretionary and therefore subject to annual appropriations. There has been more money available for WIC than any other federal food program but it is still unable to meet demand. President Bush in 2001 stated that one of his spending priorities was to give WIC full funding so that everyone eligible will be able to access it. In the 2008 reauthorization of WIC, America's Second Harvest would like to make WIC an entitlement. Local agencies are asked to advocate for this change in status.

**Dana Kent** (WIC Clinic Operations Coordinator, OCS-Family Nutrition Programs-WIC, Alaska DHSS)

The focus on Dana's presentation was to provide members with up-to-date information on the WIC program in Alaska. Dana discussed the application and interview process and the kinds of food available to the program participants. Dana also informed the members of WIC Alaska's goals, challenges and successes as well as suggesting opportunities for state and non-profit agency collaboration.

Dana's presentation can be accessed here:

[View WIC Presentation](#)

**Kathleen Wayne** (Family Nutrition Program Manager, OCS-Family Nutrition Programs-WIC, Alaska DHSS)

Kathleen focused her presentation on the current state of the WIC program. She also discussed the Food Nutrition Program's vision and how present and future initiatives were consistent with it. Kathleen's presentation is available here:

[View State of the State-Kathleen Presentation](#)

A brochure detailing WIC services was made available to the members and can be downloaded from this link:

[View WIC Brochure](#)

## **2:30 pm-4:00 pm the Commodity Supplemental Food Program-CSFP, the Farmers Market Nutrition Program and The Emergency Food Assistance Program-TEFAP**

### ***CSFP and the Farmers Market Nutrition Program***

**Doug O'Brien** (Director of Public Policy and Research, America's Second Harvest)

Doug discussed the CSFP program which he informed the members was first piloted in 1962 in 15 states. Under the Johnson administration it was further expanded to 17 states and continued to grow to the point where 32 states are now served, although more states have tried to be added in the last 3 fiscal years. In the CSFP program whole states are not served and service is localized. This year the funding for CSFP was zeroed by the President's budget on February 2<sup>nd</sup>. America's Second Harvest is confident the program will be restored with more money. WIC and CSFP cannot be accessed simultaneously and because of this America's Second Harvest would like to see CSFP develop into a senior's program while WIC would primarily serve children. Funding this vision is costly. If all eligible seniors were to be on the program, the cost of CSFP would increase from 1.8 billion to 10 billion. Therefore, this strategy of developing CSFP as a senior's program would therefore have to show efficacy through a pilot program.

**Janelle Gomez** (Public Health Specialist, OCS-Family Nutrition Programs, Alaska DHSS)

In her dual role working on the CSFP and the Farmers Market Nutrition Programs, Janelle provided the latest information to the members on these two programs in Alaska. Janelle discussed at greater length the Farmers Market Nutrition Program as it is the lesser known of the two. Janelle's presentation's and a brochure are available here:

[View CSFP Presentation](#) | [View CSFP Brochure](#) | [View Farmers Market Nutrition Program](#)

### ***TEFAP***

**Doug O'Brien** (Director of Public Policy and Research, America's Second Harvest)

Doug began by giving a modern historical review of the TEFAP program. In a 1981 political convergence under President Reagan's administration, the push to reduce the \$70 billion deficit resulted in proposed social service cuts. The federal government had been purchasing commodities and stories had emerged of full warehouses of food. The federal government in a bid to offset criticism generated by these stories and the social service cuts decided to empty the warehouses of food for eventual distribution to people in need of assistance. By 1988 the stocks were exhausted. Then Kennedy-Leahy sponsored a bill for congress to fund the purchase of commodities which coincided with the emergence of food banks. In 1990 \$100 million was authorized but in 1992, 1993, and 1994 President Clinton zeroed the funding. In a turn of events, congress in 1995 authorized 97 million for TEFAP and the 1996 welfare reform act made TEFAP mandatory and therefore a reliable source of food for the food bank network. In 2001 bonus commodities were introduced in over \$141,000 million in mandatory funding for market support services. The USDA makes purchases to support in-trouble food industries. A recent example is the poultry industry which has surpluses because of a possible Avian flu pandemic.

America's Second Harvest anticipates that TEFAP will get bigger. Of every \$1 spent on TEFAP, \$0.85 goes to back to the farmer – a wise use of federal money. The present challenge is that the food industry is one of the most technologically innovative, resulting in fewer and fewer surpluses. America's Second Harvest is seeking \$140-250 million in mandatory funding for the TEFAP program. Doug warned that the program must not be subject to cuts and added "touch it and you will die".

**Linda Coate** (Project Coordinator, Child Nutrition Services, Alaska DEED)

Linda updated members on TEFAP in Alaska. Discussing a new database which means orders can be made online and a shipment tracked. Linda's presentation documents can be accessed here:

View Alaska USDA Commodity Program

#### **4:30 pm-5:00 pm Conclusions**

Doug urged members to advocate for increased funding and support of federal food programs. Information and ideas in order to do this can be found at: [www.hungeractioncenter.org](http://www.hungeractioncenter.org)

Doug added his thoughts about the Katrina emergency. He stated that the business of charitable food distribution agencies is to feed people in economic distress. In an emergency this work is more applicable than ever. In the gulf region during the Katrina emergency approximately half of the food banks and agencies were wiped out. Those which survived concentrated on emergency relief and those which did not were established elsewhere in the region and began distribution. America's Second Harvest had professional staff on the ground and trucks rolling the day after the hurricane hit. In addition, the largest food bank in the US was set up in 2 days in the gulf region. Food banks across the nation donated equipment and professionals and 40 million pounds of food was distributed.

The emergency led to a reassessment of the role of the food bank network in a disaster. The huge collaborative effort of charitable organizations proved that as a network, food banks and agencies are influential stakeholders in such situations. Susannah added that the Alaska Food Coalition members will be critical service providers in a disaster situation.

Linda Swarner, concluded the meeting by asking the members to look to other Alaska commissions which could be used as a vehicle for raising hunger issues, she added that the coalition wait on further action until the elections for Governor of Alaska had been resolved. Linda thanked the members for their attendance and then adjourned the meeting.

Minutes submitted by Henryk Szadziewski, Alaska Food Coalition Coordinator