



**MONTHLY TELECONFERENCE
FOOD BANK OF ALASKA
ANCHORAGE
OCTOBER 16, 2008
2:30 – 3:00 P.M.**

Toll Free Number: 1-866-316-1519 Participant Code: 723725

MINUTES

1. Welcome from Alaska Food Coalition President, Andrea Thistle
 - a. Members in Attendance
 1. Susan Marthaller, Kids Kitchen/Beans Café
 2. Gary Forrester, Lutheran Social Services
 3. Leslie Wheeler, Mid-Valley Seniors
 4. Rebecca Stedman, Valdez Food Pantry
 5. Jamie Jones-Birch, AK Department of Public Assistance
 6. Gus Marx, Juneau Youth Services
 7. AlexAnna Salmon, Igiugig Tribal Council
 8. Michael Curran, AK Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives
 9. Andrea Thistle, Valley Open Bible Fellowship
 10. Jenniver Nieves, Catholic Social Services
 11. George Briggs, The Glory Hole
 12. George Olanna, Nome Community Center
 13. Kerri Burrows, Alaska Food Coalition
 14. Kokayi Nosakhere, Food Bank of Alaska
 - b. Hunger Fact:

With a rate of 11.2%, Alaska has the 11th lowest poverty in the United States. While the state average is very low, the poverty rates across the state vary drastically. Poverty rates along the western coastline of the state and the Yukon-Koyukuk average more than 19 percent. This area is one of the most rural areas in the United States--the population density in this area never rises above an average of 0.4 people per square mile in any borough. To put this population density into perspective, Fairbanks fits 948.7 people per

square mile and New York City crams in an amazing 26,402.9 people per square mile.

Currently, the AFC has 2 member organizations in this region. Less than 200,000 pounds of food comes into the area from food banks and there are only 36 anti-hunger agencies, several of which are only serving to a subsection of the community and are only open seasonally. On the upside, half of the agencies in this area have signed on in the last year through the SFSP (Summer Food Service Program) or FDPIR (Food Distribution on Indian Reservations) programs.

2. Member Quick Intro – Igiugig Tribal Council, AlexAnna Salmon
 - a. Igiugig is a very small village on in the Lake and Peninsula Borough. It is primarily Alaska Native. The village received a grant from the AFC a few years ago to build a chicken coop and has expanded that program to include a community potato garden and hopes to get funding for a greenhouse that will allow the community to provide its residents a source of sustainable fruits and vegetables all year long. Thus far, the chickens have provided more than \$3,000 worth of protein-rich eggs to residents. All of these initiatives will not only decrease food costs for residents, but will provide the kind of heart-healthy foods that are desperately needed in rural Alaska.
3. AFC News – Kerri Burrows, Alaska Food Coalition
 - a. Legislative Advocacy Day –
 1. A big thank you goes out to all of the agencies that participated in Legislative Advocacy Day. This was our first year and we had great turnout. Next year, we plan to change a few things and make it even better. Stay tuned!
 - b. Mini-Grant Deadline
 1. The mini-grant deadline is quickly approaching. The applications are due October 31, 2008. If you have questions about the grant, please contact the [AFC Manager](#).
4. Food Stamps in Alaska – Jamie Jones-Birch, Alaska Division of Public Assistance
 - a. Jamie introduced herself and gave a quick overview of the changes from the Farm Bill that are impacting the Food Stamp program in Alaska
 1. The official federal name of Food Stamps is now S.N.A.P. (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) States have one year to decide what name they use. Alaska knows that they will not continue the use of Food Stamps, but have not come up with a new name.
 2. The standard deduction for Alaska has increased
 3. Applicants can now deduct the entire cost of childcare.
 4. The resource limit will be raised \$250 per year for the next several years.
 5. The minimum benefit for urban areas increased from \$10 per month to \$14. The federal government has not yet release figures for the minimum benefit in the two segments of rural areas in Alaska.

- b. It is important for DPA to have a partnership with anti-hunger organizations. We know that you interact with the clients on a regular basis and can help them overcome some of the stigmas associated with the program. Much more can be learned about the program from the DPA website.
www.hss.state.ak.us/dpa
 - 1. The website also includes a Food Stamp Eligibility Calculator. Clients can get on the website and plug in their income information to find out if they might likely be eligible for food stamps. This might be a great tool to have available at agencies during food distributions!
 - c. DPA is looking at closing the Gambell location in Anchorage in the next few years. They are looking for suggestions about a new location and are requesting input from the anti-hunger agencies. Please send your ideas to Jamie Jones-Burch at jamie.jones-burch@alaska.gov.
5. Questions
6. Other business, concerns or issues
- a. George Olanna noted that his agency is looking for grants addressing homelessness. Gus Marx suggested he look at the Alaska Housing Finance SNUG grant. It is due at the end of this month and might fit into the needs of Nome Community Center.
7. Wrap-up