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**The Evolution, Cost, and Operation of the
Private Food Assistance Network**

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Abstract

Delivery of assistance to the poor has changed drastically in the past 20 years. While the availability of cash assistance has decreased, the availability of food assistance has widened. The most substantial change in assistance available to the poor may have been the emergence of food pantries as a source of free food to prepare at home. Large numbers of Americans rely on food pantries, but many policymakers, academics, and participants in the private food assistance network have limited understanding of the network. This paper aims to fill that gap by examining how the network evolved, how much it costs, and how it operates. We provide a detailed review of domestic food policy since the 1930s, show how agricultural and welfare policies contributed to developing a supply of free food available to the needy, and explain how private efforts, such as the creation of Second Harvest, resulted in a rise in food pantries. Our research also highlights policy changes in the Food Stamp program that may have contributed to the tremendous demand for free food in the 1980s. Using secondary data, we estimate that the private food assistance network costs about $2.3 billion annually, making it about one-twelfth the size of the Food Stamp program. We show that the benefits available to the needy from the network differ among geographic areas. We highlight the heterogeneity of organizations in the network by examining two food banks, the Connecticut Food Bank and the Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank. We conclude that the private food assistance network provides the needy with valuable resources and offer recommendations for making the public food safety net more effective.

The Evolution, Cost, and Operation of the Private Food Assistance Network

I. INTRODUCTION

In the past 20 years, delivery of assistance to the poor has changed drastically. While the availability of cash assistance has narrowed, the availability of food assistance has widened. The most substantial change in assistance available to the needy may have been the emergence of food pantries as a source of free food to prepare at home. In 1997, approximately 19 million Americans received food from a food pantry at least once (Second Harvest 1997). Though many Americans rely on food pantries, most policymakers, academics, and participants in the private food assistance network have limited understanding of how the network evolved, the cost and magnitude of the network, and exactly how it operates. This paper aims to fill that gap.

We refer to the private food assistance *network*, rather than *system*, because the term network allows for actors to act independently and to rely on each other only when the relationship proves beneficial. In our view, the term system would not imply as much independence between actors as actually exists in delivering private food assistance.

Because the network's origins essentially were based on private rather than public efforts (although governmental forces certainly assisted the creation of the network), we refer to the various efforts that result in food being given to the needy at food pantries for preparation at home as the private food assistance network.

Peter Eisinger portrays today's public food assistance system as "a universal means-tested program, combined with targeted programs to serve the especially vulnerable" (Eisinger 1998, p. 126). The universal means-tested program to which he refers is the federal Food Stamp program. In addition to the Food Stamp program, food pantries provide the needy with another untargeted source of food assistance. (By untargeted, we mean programs that are not limited to serve certain demographic groups or geographic areas. For example, the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children [WIC], a targeted program, serves pregnant women and families with young children.) Therefore, two untargeted components of the food safety net are actually available to the needy—the public Food Stamp program and the private food assistance network.

In the first section of this paper, we show how the private food assistance network evolved. We argue that three factors contributed to the formation of the private food assistance network. First, the cessation of the Food Stamp purchase requirement increased a demand for free food. Second, the Reagan administration's antagonism toward the anti-hunger community and legislation which cut the Food Stamp program in the early 1980s encouraged the anti-hunger community to turn to providing private assistance, rather than exerting pressure to increase public food assistance. Third, the re-emergence of the government commodities program in the early 1980s, which used charitable organizations to distribute government commodities to the needy, helped to move the network from an ad hoc to a more permanent status and allowed it to increase the amount of assistance it could provide to the needy.

In the second section, we estimate the size and magnitude of the private food assistance network. We estimate that the network costs approximately $2.3 billion, making it roughly one-twelfth the size of the Food Stamp program.

To demonstrate the heterogeneity of the network and how it actually operates, in the third section we examine the private food assistance network in two areas—Bridgeport, Connecticut, and Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. In the fourth section, we conclude with a discussion and suggest ways in which the food safety net could be more effective.

II. THE EVOLUTION OF THE PRIVATE FOOD ASSISTANCE NETWORK

We start by examining the history of domestic public food assistance. Since today's public assistance system is based on the Food Stamp program, we begin with the Depression-era origins of the

Food Stamp program and discuss how those origins influenced the form and strength of today's food safety net.

A. Evolution of the Food Stamp Program

The Food Stamp program has its roots in the 1930s, when the federal government sought to relieve farmers from the volatility of the commodities market. To reduce uncertainty over the price at which they could sell their goods, the federal government instituted agricultural price supports for farmers.

The federal government used two approaches to stabilize the prices paid to farmers for food. The first was to dispose of "surplus" foods. However, over time, this method became unpopular and expensive. "In the early 1930s, a time when unemployment and poverty were spreading, the spectacle of little pigs being killed and crops being plowed under in the attempt to raise farm prices led to public outcry" (Clarkson 1975, p. 5). In the second approach the government purchased and accumulated "surplus." This method "seemed no better, because the government-held stocks threatened to overwhelm available storage facilities and spoilage made the program an expensive method of destruction" (Clarkson 1975, p. 5).

In the 1930s, as these two methods of price support became politically unpopular because of the waste incurred, the Roosevelt administration sought other ways to deal with surplus commodities. Since becoming president, Franklin Roosevelt had wanted to link assistance to farmers with assistance to the poor (Berry 1984, p. 21). In 1932, the Roosevelt administration began distributing commodities to relief agencies that in turn distributed the food to the needy.

> In an effort to make use of these government stocks without depressing prices, the distribution of surplus commodities through private and state welfare agencies was begun. In 1932 a congressional resolution transferred 40 million bushels of government wheat to the Red Cross for the use of the needy. And from 1933 through 1935, the Federal Surplus Relief Corporation distributed commodities . . . to state welfare agencies. (Clarkson 1975, p. 5)

Problems with the commodities program soon emerged. Because of a lack of monitoring, administrators were not sure that the food was actually going to the needy. The government received evidence of waste in terms of households taking more food than they needed and fraud in terms of recipients selling the food. Furthermore, food retailers did not like the program because it circumvented them (Galer-Unti 1995, p. 21; Berry 1984, p. 21; Maney 1989, p. 15).

> Merchants feared that poor people might be able to satisfy all their needs from food made available at government warehouses and spend the income that usually went for food outside the agricultural economy altogether—on shelter, for example. As a partial remedy to this problem, departmental economists proposed a subsidized cash purchase or food stamp that would expand, rather than displace, domestic demand for agricultural products (Maney 1989, p. 15).

Because of these problems, discussions on alternatives to the federal commodities program, as it was structured, began early in Roosevelt's second term (Berry 1984, p. 21). These discussions resulted in the government offering its first food stamps, which were purchased in Rochester, New York, in May 1939 (Galer-Unti 1995, p. 21). The experimental program attempted to give the poor more purchasing power by allowing them to buy orange-colored food stamps at face value. For every dollar of orange stamps purchased, the participant received $.50 in blue stamps. The orange stamps could be used to purchase any item at a participating store, including nonfood items. The blue stamps, however, were good only for those items the federal government deemed as "surplus." In any given month, the government offered more than 30 different commodities to purchase with blue stamps (Halcrow 1977, p. 60).

The 1939 Food Stamp Plan had multiple goals: to broaden the market for food products, to provide needy families with adequate diets, and to move surplus commodities through regular trade channels (Clarkson 1975, p. 10). The first goal helped the farmers, the second goal pertained to the needy, and the third goal included the food retailers. Unlike the commodities program, this new program had multifaceted goals that seemed to provide a more stable and promising way to distribute surplus food to the needy while concomitantly increasing the demand for commodities.

In August 1942, at the Food Stamp Plan's peak, the program served half the counties in the United States and 88 cities. Four million people participated in the program (Ohls and Beebout 1993, p. 13; Galer-Unti 1995, pp. 21–22). However, as with the first commodities program, problems developed with the Food Stamp Plan. One problem was nonparticipation in the program. Whereas 12.7 million people participated in the Commodities Surplus program in 1939 (Fishbein 1977, p. 1), only 4 million individuals participated in the Food Stamp Plan in 1941 (Berry 1984, p. 22). Either the new program did not reach all needy households or nonneedy households participated in the Commodities Surplus program. Reasons for nonparticipation in the Food Stamp Plan included its seemingly complex nature and the requirement that a household buy into the program with lump sums of cash either once or twice a month. Food assistance policymakers and administrators did not realize that the availability of lump sums of cash at set times could deter low-income households from participating in the program. Instead, policymakers assumed that if recipients did not have money for food at any given time, they would either borrow money or get help from family or friends (Kotz 1969, pp. 54–55).

Another problem with administering the program was that food retailers often allowed participants to purchase noncommodity foods and goods with the blue stamps. "A large number of 'mom and pop' stores succumbed to pressure from long-time customers to give them cash for their blue coupons or let them use those coupons for food not on the USDA list" (Galer-Unti, p. 22). These problems, in combination with competing demands for government food during World War II by U.S. and Allied forces, led to the demise of the first food stamp program in 1943.

Although the food stamp program ended, politicians perceived that hunger in the United States remained a problem. During the draft for World War II, it became clear that malnutrition and hunger prevailed—40 percent of the draftees were rejected from duty due to their poor health (Galer-Unti 1995, p. 22). Hunger was seen as a risk to national security. Rather than offer a program to all hungry people, Congress shifted its food assistance policies and began to target food assistance efforts at specific groups.

Justified by concerns for national security and with backing from agricultural interests and with bipartisan support, Congress passed the National School Lunch Act in 1946 to alleviate hunger among children (Maney, p. 54).

In 1949, Congress authorized the purchase of overproduced commodities to once again be distributed to the poor (Kotz 1969, p. 50). However, the program was not revised to eliminate the problems that occurred with the previous program. The 1949 commodities program (1) was not mandatory, which limited its availability to certain geographic areas; (2) was poorly administered; and (3) gave the poor an amount of food that was insufficient to relieve hunger (Berry 1984, p. 24). In 1959, 39 states participated in the program, and in seven states the program “served less than 10 percent of . . . citizens on public assistance.” In 1960, the commodities program distributed a monthly food package containing flour, lard, rice, butter, and cheese (Berry 1984, p. 24).

Throughout the 1950s, Congresswoman Leonor Sullivan (D-MO), a staunch supporter of food assistance to the needy, unsuccessfully introduced several food stamp bills. Food stamps were seen

> as a means of disposing of the persistent stockpiles of food accumulating under the government farm price support programs while assisting the needy in maintaining an adequate diet. However, the concept was resisted by the Eisenhower Administration as increasing welfare expenditures without increasing the quantity of food consumed by the needy, and no food stamp program was actually implemented during that period (Ohls and Beebout 1993, pp. 13–14).

The Eisenhower administration did not regard food assistance as a priority for the USDA. An undersecretary of agriculture stated the Eisenhower administration’s priorities succinctly: “We are most sympathetic to the plight of needy persons. We must, however, not lose sight of the fact that the primary responsibility of the department is to carry out the farm programs that benefit farmers” (Kotz 1969, p. 51).

In 1959 Congress enacted an agriculture bill (Public Law 341) containing an amendment that authorized a 2-year food stamp program (Berry 1984, pp. 23–24; and Halcrow 1977, p. 61). However, the program was not mandatory and the Secretary of Agriculture chose not to implement it. The USDA did, however, set up a task force to begin work on a pilot project.

John F. Kennedy reintroduced food assistance policy to the national political agenda during his 1958 Senate re-election campaign. While laying the groundwork for his presidential race, Kennedy sought to gain the political support of the Midwest and other agricultural states. By supporting both agricultural and food assistance policy, Kennedy could increase his popularity in Congress among both his agricultural and liberal colleagues and enhance his platform for the upcoming presidential campaign. Food assistance was seen as a way of attracting voters from both rural and urban states.

> The election campaign itself influenced the Kennedy administration's food assistance policy in two crucial ways. First, while campaigning in key states like Wisconsin and West Virginia, Kennedy promised to take particular food aid initiatives if elected. Then, during the general election campaign, Kennedy talked about how the food assistance programs he advocated would fit into the context of general farm policy. Kennedy's farm advisers saw food distribution schemes as providing a range of benefits similar to those that had guided Roosevelt administration officials. Expanded food aid would stimulate greater food consumption and bolster farm income. Social welfare and other humanitarian considerations came second. Privately, Kennedy and his political aides would probably have acknowledged a third set of benefits—that food distribution schemes were good politics in a presidential election campaign (Maney 1989, p. 24).

The West Virginia primary campaign also influenced Kennedy's stance on food assistance policy. West Virginia had one of the largest commodities programs, but Kennedy observed that the program did not end hunger. Exposure to hunger influenced him and he incorporated the issue into his platform. "During the first televised debate [between Kennedy and Nixon], Kennedy cited the hunger problem in a dynamic opening statement. He told the 65 million viewers that he had seen children in West Virginia taking part of their school lunches home with them. Kennedy ridiculed the commodities program and forcefully declared that government was not doing enough to feed the poor" (Berry 1984, p. 24).

B. The 1961 Pilot Food Stamp Projects

Upon Kennedy's election, liberals in Congress held him to his campaign promises. In fact, Congresswoman Sullivan was quick to remind him of his promise to implement a food stamp program and sent him a memo on the day of his inauguration (Berry 1984, p. 25). As president, Kennedy supported and promoted food assistance initiatives.

Kennedy's first executive order in February 1961 expanded food assistance. The order doubled the number of commodities included in the government food surplus program and also directed Kennedy's Secretary of Agriculture, Orville Freeman, to institute the pilot Food Stamp program (Berry 1984, pp. 25–26; Fishbein 1977, p. 2). A 1959 amendment to Public Law 341 granted Kennedy the authority to issue the latter directive. The USDA piloted the program in eight counties (Halcrow 1977, p. 61; Galer-Unti 1995, p. 23). These counties offered the Food Stamp program in place of the surplus commodities program—a participant could not receive assistance from both. On May 29, 1961, an unemployed miner in West Virginia received the first food stamps (Berry 1984, p. 28).

Kennedy's program differed significantly from the earlier Food Stamp Plan. First, project designers removed the two-color stamp system and replaced it with a reduced stamp price that had higher purchasing power (Galer-Unti 1995, p. 23). Second, food stamp purchases were not restricted to surplus commodities—recipients could use their stamps to buy a much wider variety of foods. The theory behind these two changes was that if the program mimicked the free market system while increasing participants' purchasing power, it would ultimately increase the demand for food, which would benefit agricultural interests (Berry 1984, p. 25).

The third change reflected policymakers' and administrators' concerns with fraud, which had plagued the Food Stamp Plan. The USDA task force used the Bureau of Agriculture's data on home spending trends to develop a method in which states could allot food stamps to families while concomitantly avoiding program abuses. These data showed a positive relationship between income and food purchases—as income increased so did the amount of money a family spent on food. The designers thought it was bad policy to implement a food stamp system in which families were allotted the full amount calculated in the economy food plan because if households had excess food dollars available, they might be tempted to sell them for cash (Berry 1984, pp. 26–28).

> With fragile support in the Congress, it was essential that this type of problem [fraud] be avoided as much as possible. To combat this possibility, Kelley and Vanneman [task force members] set up allocation tables that used a sliding scale. As a family's income rose, so did its coupon allotment. Recipients at the lower end of the income scale would not receive enough stamps to purchase a diet at the level of the economy food plan, thus breaking any link between the program and a nutritional standard. Coupon allotments would provide more food, but not necessarily enough for a decent nutritious diet (Berry 1984, pp. 26–27).

The USDA based its food stamp allotment on its Economy Food Plan. In 1961, the Economy Food Plan was $5 per person per week. In addition to the new coupon allotment system, the USDA strictly enforced food stamp regulations to curb program misuse. The USDA added an educational component to the pilot program which taught food stamp recipients how to buy food and create more nutritious meals. Despite the promising changes to improve the program, participants still had to buy into the program with a lump sum, and state and local officials determined program eligibility.

The following areas implemented the pilot project: McDowell County, West Virginia; Fayette County, Pennsylvania; Floyd County, Kentucky; Franklin County, Illinois; St. Louis, Missouri; Itasca, Minnesota; Silver Bow, Montana; Detroit, Michigan; and San Miguel County, New Mexico (Maney 1989, p. 32). The project had its critics—"Agriculture Department bureaucrats had designed a food stamp program so conservative that reformers called the plan 'Scrooge stamps'" (Kotz 1969, p. 53). Although data from the initial pilot program indicated that food stamp recipients had increased their food purchases and improved their diets, participation in the program among the needy was dismal. As participating counties shifted their food assistance from the Commodities Surplus program to the Food Stamp program, the number of people receiving either type of food assistance decreased from 310,000 to 138,000 between May and November 1961 (Berry 1984, p. 29).

C. The Food Stamp Pilot Projects, 1962

The Kennedy administration implemented a second round of 25 additional pilot projects in August 1962, structured the same as the previous pilots. Inevitably, problems with nonparticipation appeared. Two of the 25 projects in particular, St. Louis and Cleveland, had significant problems with their programs. In St. Louis, participation fell from 50,000 to 1,000 when the county switched from the Commodities Surplus program to the Food Stamp program (Berry 1984, pp. 30–31). A closer look revealed that both St. Louis and Cleveland had high housing costs and low Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) benefit levels, making it nearly impossible for the poor to garner the cash necessary to purchase food stamps. The AFDC benefit level was so low that a dependent family could not purchase food stamps and pay for housing at the same time. Welfare caseworkers showed program administrators that often a family's housing and food stamp costs "exceeded its monthly income from welfare" (Berry 1984, p. 31).

Since Food Stamp program administrators had no power to change the size of a family's welfare grant, they instead devised a way to compensate for the high costs of living in some states. USDA Food Distribution Division administrators analyzed shelter costs for families and found that on average, families spent 30 percent of their income on housing (Berry 1984, p. 32). Thus, any shelter costs above this standard were to be deducted from a family's income in order to determine the family's purchase price for food stamps. Soon after, other expenses like child care, medical costs, and emergency expenses were deducted from a family's disposable income when determining a family's buy-in amount (Berry 1984, p. 32).

D. The Food Stamp Act of 1964

When Congress passed the Food Stamp Act of 1964, it omitted both the educational component and the strict enforcement of regulations found in the pilot projects (Clarkson 1975, p. 11). The pilot programs also differed from this final enacted program in terms of the size of benefits received. In the pilot programs, participants could receive a maximum of 60 percent of their outlay in benefits. In this enacted program, participants could receive as much as 120 percent of their outlay in benefits (Clarkson 1975, pp. 11–12). No other changes were made to the program at this time, in part because program operations were already in place from the pilot projects (Berry 1984, p. 35).

The Food Stamp Act of 1964 offered the program nationwide as "an alternative to direct commodities distribution" (Ohls and Beebout 1993, p. 14). Similar to the commodities program, the Food Stamp Plan, and pilot projects, counties could still opt *not* to offer the program. By offering two separate food assistance programs, Congress tried to serve both the interests of farmers and the needy.

> In the years after the 1964 legislation, the existence of two parallel but alternative programs—the commodities distribution program and the Food Stamp program—reflected a compromise between two competing goals: (1) disposing of commodities, and (2) providing nutritional assistance to low-income households. Although disposal of agricultural surpluses was still of primary importance, the 1964 Act placed the Food Stamp program on a permanent legislative basis, from which food stamps have grown to their current prominence in the income support system (Ohls and Beebout 1993, p. 15).

Political support for food stamps was intimately tied to support for agriculture. "The original food stamp bill went through Congress tied to a wheat-cotton bill in 1964, and for the next 3 years expansions of the program were linked in political trades to legislation supporting southern cotton, peanuts, sugar cane, or tobacco crops" (Kotz 1969, p. 48). Political compromises were essentially based on geography, with Northern Democrats primarily interested in supporting assistance to the poor and Southern Democrats primarily interested in assistance to farmers. Compromise between these two groups resulted in the establishment of the Food Stamp program. "Northern Democrats achieved passage by supporting farm price supports in return for southern support for the Food Stamp program" (Ohls and Beebout 1993, p. 14).

The Food Stamp program incurred administrative costs differently from the commodities distribution program. Shifting assistance from the commodities distribution program to the Food Stamp program moved administrative costs from counties to the federal government and program participants (Maney 1989, p. 74). County government assumed transportation and distribution costs for the commodities distribution program. However, for the Food Stamp program, the federal government "paid all benefit costs, all federal administrative costs, and about 30 percent of state and local administrative costs" (Ohls and Beebout 1993, p. 14). In addition, since individuals had to buy into the program, they also paid for some of the program's costs.

E. Problems with the Food Stamp Program

Throughout the remainder of the 1960s, the program did not change fundamentally, but it increased its reach, shifting food assistance from the direct commodities distribution program to the Food Stamp program (Ohls and Beebout 1993, p. 15). "The problem of low participation, first evidenced in the pilot projects, continued to plague the program as it expanded into new areas of the country. In general, after a county switched from commodities to food stamps, overall participation dropped considerably" (Berry 1984, p. 40). Despite 1961–1964 growth in participation from 4.5 to 6.5 million in both the commodities distribution program and the Food Stamp program, "most real growth came when projects opened in areas where no previous food aid existed" (Berry 1984, p. 81).

Again, an inability to purchase food stamps often kept the very poor from participating. John Zippert, a staffer with the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE), explained to USDA officials why the program appeared ineffective in areas of the South:

> Tenant farmers [in the South] would not want to switch from the commodity program because they had no money to pay the purchase requirement. They would have to borrow money and pay interest on it in the form of "furnish," the term for money advanced by the landlord or from the storekeeper, who took over the stamps as collateral. Either option meant that food stamp recipients would pay a premium for a government benefit to which they were entitled by law. Second, when food stamp recipients went to the store owner to make purchases, they were often overcharged on food costs in what was, in many cases, a captive consumer market (Maney 1989, p. 73).

Program eligibility criteria also affected program participation. Legislation continued to allow states to choose whether or not to operate the program and to set their own eligibility requirements. Thus, eligibility requirements varied drastically across states. Some states used the same eligibility requirements as AFDC, some hinged eligibility for food stamps on receipt of AFDC, and others set even stricter income requirements (Eisinger 1998, p. 39; Maney 1989, p. 84). In fact,

> everywhere, large numbers of people below the poverty line were not eligible to participate. A study by the Consumers Union calculates that among those states taking part in the program in 1970, the maximum monthly income allowable to qualify for food stamps ranged from 38 percent of the federal poverty line (in South Carolina) to 86 percent (in New Jersey). At least seven states refused altogether to take part, but even where states accepted the program, availability at the county level varied sharply. In 1969 slightly fewer than half of the counties in the United States were participating, making food stamps accessible to only 59 percent of the population (Eisinger 1998, p. 39).

Critics also charged that the Food Stamp program did not provide the needy who could afford to participate with ample benefits so they could purchase enough food to meet Department of Agriculture minimum diet requirements (Kotz 1969, p. 45).

In the late 1960s, it became clear that the food assistance available was not eradicating domestic hunger. In 1967, the Senate Subcommittee on Employment, Manpower, and Poverty held hearings on hunger and federal food assistance programs, marking the first time that any committee other than the Agricultural Committee had addressed the issue of hunger (Galer-Unti 1995, p. 25). Testimony at a hearing by residents of the Mississippi Delta region prompted Senators Robert Kennedy (D-NY) and Joseph Clark (D-PA) to travel to the region, where they witnessed extreme poverty and hunger (Berry 1984, p. 43; Galer-Unti 1995, p. 24). The personal visit to the region increased the senators' awareness and political interest in the problem of domestic hunger.

> Kennedy and Clark learned . . . that most of the poorest Americans received the benefits from none of these programs. Fewer than 1 of 6 poor Americans benefitted at all from the commodity or food stamps program. Only two million of seven million poor children received the free or reduced-price school lunches to which they were legally entitled. In fact, little of the school lunch and school milk money was spent on poor children (Kotz 1969, p. 45).

These hearings gave rise to a concern that food assistance was not reaching the neediest and "increased the level of public concern about food assistance policy. . . . The foundations were laid for institutionalizing pressure on department officials from congressional liberals concerned about attacking poverty and improving social welfare policy" (Maney 1989, p. 83).

F. Pressure from the Outside

The availability of food assistance to the poor was often tied to the racial politics of the 1960s. For example, in the South, school lunch programs were often only offered in "colored" schools (in an effort to keep black children from attending white schools), and school lunch was usually only offered in schools with kitchens (which meant that the program was frequently not offered in urban schools where students traditionally ate lunch at home) (Kotz 1969, p. 59).

> Civil rights groups and activists were making the same criticisms of the USDA food program that had been raised during the controversies over food aid implementation in Haywood and Fayette Counties in Tennessee early in the Kennedy administration: (1) that the intergovernmental delivery system was at fault (i.e., local officials could choose whether to participate or not and as a result programs were unavailable in many of the areas where they were most needed); and (2) that USDA officials must realize that many programs were administered in a discriminatory manner (Maney 1989, p. 71).

The media and the critiques by civil rights and other activists pressured Congress to consider modifying food assistance. The presence of the media during Senators Kennedy and Clark's trip to the Delta served as a catalyst for other outside influences to pressure USDA officials and Congress for action on food assistance. Attention came from the media and from publications such as *Hunger U.S.A.*, a report published in 1968 by the Citizens' Board of Inquiry into Hunger and Malnutrition in the United States. That report concluded that hunger was indeed a great problem in the United States (Galer-Unti 1995, p. 25). The Citizens' Board called for changes to the Food Stamp program (such as free stamps for families with no income) and an effort by Congress to increase participation rates.

On May 21, 1968, CBS televised a documentary entitled *Hunger in America*, which showed the faults of the Food Stamp program and USDA officials in combating hunger (Berry 1984, p. 46). Also in

1968, the Field Foundation sent a team of doctors to Mississippi and other states in the South. The doctors "found evidence of chronic hunger and malnutrition in the United States" (Galer-Unti 1995, p. 25). Nick Kotz's 1969 book *Let Them Eat Promises: The Politics of Hunger in America*, which heavily criticized the lack of initiative on the part of the government to address hunger in America, also influenced the views of the public and of Congress on domestic hunger and the Food Stamp program.

> Because of the effects of media attention on poverty and malnutrition, few people in Washington were prepared to argue publicly that there was no need for a food subsidy program of this type. Congress passed a two-year extension that authorized program limits of $200 million for fiscal year 1968 and $225 million for fiscal year 1969. President Johnson's only public involvement with food aid policy during 1967 came when he signed the food stamp bill, PL 90-91, into law on September 27 (Maney 1989, p. 100).

Prior to this time, the Food Stamp program operated with little oversight from Congress (Berry 1984, p. 37). Program administrators had had the freedom to implement the program as they perceived Congress intended the program to be administered. This changed.

> The problem of interpreting congressional intent became increasingly complex between 1969 and 1973. Legislators and interests groups were no longer content to let administrators decide what Congress had meant to say in its statutes. The controversy over legislative intent and administrative discretion was finally stilled by a series of administrative concessions that gave critics almost all the regulatory changes for which they pressed (Berry 1984, p. 76).

Clearly, the overall Congressional intent had not been to discriminate against certain groups of people. Yet, the multiple goals of assisting farmers and providing aid to the poor while ignoring racism, particularly in the South, had negatively affected certain populations. Local administrative control over food assistance eligibility often made the program ineffective. Local residents could not appeal even the most arbitrary decisions, such as one locale in Indiana where officials denied commodities to households with dogs (Kotz 1969, p. 46).

Nonparticipation among needy households in food assistance programs remained problematic. "The total administration of food and welfare programs from the national to the local level seemed designed—consciously or unconsciously—to limit participation. Residency requirements, complicated certification processes, limitation of funds, and inaccessibility of officials all combined to keep people out of programs rather than help them" (Kotz 1969, p. 62). In addition, when the poor did not participate in the cash economy or could not gather the cash necessary to purchase food stamps, they could not participate in the Food Stamp program. The obstacle set by the buy-in requirement led to the next significant change in the program.

G. Food Stamps in the 1970s

The 1970s marked several significant changes in and expansion of the Food Stamp program. The first major modification occurred on December 31, 1970, when Congress passed the 1970 Food Stamp Reform Bill. The bill required that "families be given enough coupons to purchase a nutritionally adequate diet" (Berry 1984, p. 68) as specified by the Economy Food Plan.

The bill essentially changed four aspects of the program. First, it expanded geographic coverage of the program to include Guam, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands. Second, realizing the problem with local eligibility criteria, the bill "called for national standards of eligibility. No longer would a family's eligibility be determined by the income limits of a state's AFDC program. No longer would it be more difficult to qualify for the program in Mississippi than in New York" (Berry 1984, p. 68). Nationally set eligibility standards helped ensure that households seen as needy to federal policymakers would receive food stamps. However, national standards limit the ability of locales to define "needy." For example, the national eligibility standards do not adjust for cost of living differences between geographic areas. National eligibility standards generally expanded eligibility in low-cost areas, but in high-cost areas they restricted eligibility. Instituting national standards was predicted to terminate an estimated 340,000 from the program (Berry 1984, p. 72).

Third, the bill capped the purchase price for food stamps at 30 percent of a family's income and provided free food stamps to families with incomes of less than 30 dollars a month (Berry 1984, p. 68).

Fourth, the bill annually indexed food stamp allotments to the rate of food-price inflation (Galer-Unti 1995, p. 27).

After the bill's enactment, participation in the Food Stamp program soared. From 1970 to 1971, participation grew from 4.3 to 9.4 million (Berry 1984, p. 76). Participation grew rapidly in subsequent years due in part to geographic expansion (particularly in areas were no food assistance program existed) and in part to a declining economy (Berry 1984, pp. 81–82). In 1973, the program was again amended to mandate that all counties offer the program by July 1974 (Maney, p. 117). By 1975, participation increased to 16.3 million.

In 1975, the program finally became available in all counties in the United States, with a national set of eligibility thresholds and benefit levels, and "the commodity program had been phased out in all but a few locations" (Berry 1984, pp. 77–78, 82).

A 1975 U.S. Court of Appeals decision expanded benefit levels further. The decision supported a Food Research and Action Center (FRAC) lawsuit against the USDA which claimed that "the USDA was failing to fulfill the requirement of the 1964 act to provide 'an opportunity more nearly to obtain a nutritionally adequate diet'" (Eisinger 1998, p. 54). This forced the USDA to base food stamp allotments on the Thrifty Food Plan rather than the Economy Food Plan. This increase in Food Stamp program benefits was implemented in 1977 and since then, "maximum food stamp benefits have been set at between 99 percent and 103 percent of the cost of the Thrifty Food Plan" (Eisinger 1998, p. 54).

Between 1974 and 1976, the visibility of food stamps to fellow shoppers and increases in participation due to wider geographic coverage and a worsening economy combined to help build political pressure for the program to be cut. Fellow shoppers reported that food stamp recipients were purchasing frivolous food items and that many food stamp recipients did not appear needy. "Now it was not the farmer in his expensive car going to pick up his check from the government that was drawing critical attention in the media, but the welfare mother or the unemployed middle-class steelworker seeking government benefits" (Maney 1989, pp. 125–126). In 1974, the Ford administration attempted to cut the benefit level by proposing an increase in the purchase price of food stamps and by proposing that all families (except the poorest, who would continue to receive food stamps at no cost) pay 30 percent of their calculated net monthly income for food stamps. Congress soundly defeated these proposals the following year. Despite many attempts to cut the Food Stamp program between 1974 and 1976, the program did not change.

While the Food Stamp program was becoming universal, the distribution of commodities had declined to a trickle. In fact, "in the early 1970's, limited supplies of surplus and CCC [Commodities Credit Corporation] commodities prompted the USDA to sharply curtail commodity donations to domestic food programs, and there were indicators that commodity distribution was going to be discontinued" (Committee on Government Operations 1992, p. 4).

H. Targeting—Women and Children First

Targeting food assistance was first introduced as a policy measure with the initiation of the School Lunch program in 1946. In the late 1960s, policymakers reconsidered targeting as a way of expanding food assistance to specific demographic groups. In 1967, prior to the media attention given to the hunger issue, staff at the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare and the USDA began meeting to address the issue of inadequate diets of pregnant women and children (Eisinger 1998, p. 59). These meetings eventually led to 1972 Congressional authorization of a pilot project that would alleviate hunger among pregnant and lactating women whose income fell below 185 percent of poverty, which began the WIC program (Eisinger 1998, p. 59; Galer-Unti 1995, p. 27). The pilot was so successful that in 1974 Congress amended the Child Nutrition Act of 1966, making the WIC program permanent. The following year, Agriculture Secretary Freeman set up a program that supplemented this target population's food stamps with surplus cereals, milk, and juices (Eisinger 1998, p. 59).

Also in 1972, Congress expanded the School Lunch and Breakfast program and the Summer Food program (Galer-Unti 1995, p. 27). In addition, the Older Americans Act of 1965 was amended creating the Congregate Meals program and the Home Delivered Meals program, otherwise known as Meals on Wheels, so needy persons over 60 years old could "obtain at least one nutritious meal a day" (Galer-Unti 1995, p. 27).

Targeting food assistance represented a novel approach. Recognizing that food stamps did not eradicate hunger among all household members, the federal government reinforced its anti-hunger efforts toward groups that appeared most vulnerable.

I. The Carter Administration: The End of the Food Stamp Buy-In Requirement

Hunger eradication efforts of the 1960s and 1970s began to show some success. In 1977, a team of physicians returned to areas where the most serious hunger and malnutrition existed a decade before. They reported that although not eradicated, hunger and malnutrition had decreased. The Senate Select Committee on Hunger and Human Needs, however, reported that "Hunger no longer existed in the U.S. to any great degree" (Galer-Unti 1995, p.28).

The next significant change to food assistance policy came in September 1977 with the passage of the Food Stamp Act of 1977 (P.L. 95-113, Title XIII), which enjoyed support of the Carter administration (which had placed hunger activists in the USDA) and representatives from farm states. The Act reduced the eligibility line and changed how deductions were calculated (which decreased eligibility at the upper end of the income scale), mandated pilot work projects (Berry 1984, p. 95), capped federal spending on the program (which the Carter administration opposed), and, most important, ended the purchase requirement for food stamps (Maney 1989, p. 131).

"Under the 1977 legislation, households received fewer coupons, but the dollar value of the subsidy remained the same, and households no longer had to pay anything out of their own pocket to obtain stamps" (Ohls and Beebout 1993, pp. 16–17). While this lowered one substantial barrier to participation in the program, it may have decreased the program's ultimate effectiveness in eradicating hunger and food insecurity among participants. The benefit did not change, but families were now able to allocate their monthly resources differently, a point we return to in the Discussion section.

It appears that ending the buy-in requirement increased Food Stamp program participation—the program "added an estimated 3.6 million participants, with participation reaching an average of 19 million persons a month after it was implemented" (Ohls and Beebout 1993, p. 17). Also, the program began operating like an entitlement program—"by the second half of the 1970s, all states were required to serve all eligible people who applied for food stamps—making it essentially an entitlement program. Technically, the program was (and still is) subject to the annual appropriations process" (Ohls and Beebout 1993, p. 16). In practice, though, expenditures for the program are continually capped and uncapped (Maney 1989, p. 132).

J. <u>The 1980s: Reagan's Questioning of the Hunger Problem</u>

The election of Ronald Reagan in 1980 represented a decrease in political support for and leadership on public responses to hunger. The Reagan administration first antagonized and angered the anti-hunger community by questioning the existence of hunger in America. Since the administration did not accept that hunger existed, it offered no political support for public food assistance.

The Food Stamp program appeared on the Reagan administration's chopping block. Berry wrote:

> Why has this program, which enjoyed strong public support for so many years, fallen out of favor with the American people? In large part, it is because the program itself has become the issue instead of hunger in America. Ironically, the food stamp program suffers because it has been a success. Together with the child nutrition program, it has eliminated widespread hunger and malnutrition. The public perceives that hunger is no longer a serious problem in America. Consequently, discussion of the food stamp program had focused on issues such as eligibility and fraud (p. 98).

The Reagan administration cut the Food Stamp program substantially. Legislation passed in 1981 and 1982 tightened eligibility for the Food Stamp program and reduced the benefits of all food assistance programs (Maney 1989, p. 129). Specifically, the changes

- required that food stamp allotments during the month of application be prorated according to the number of days left in a month. Previous to this, an eligible applicant was given the full month's worth of benefits. In 1982, this change cut approximately $495 million from the program (Berry 1984, p. 98);

- included a less timely indexing of benefits to the rate of inflation, which in 1982 cut approximately $518 million;

- classified households with gross incomes above 130 percent of the poverty line as ineligible, regardless of their net incomes, cutting approximately $110 million;

- instituted more stringent standard and shelter deductions, which amounted to a $237 million cut;

- decreased the earned income deduction, which cut $48 million;

- converted the program in Puerto Rico to a block grant, which cut $70 million; and

- prohibited strikers and boarders from being eligible, cutting $100 million. (Berry 1984, p. 98; Galer-Unti 1995, p. 28).

These modifications increased the program's complexity and targeted assistance to those with the lowest incomes (Ohls and Beebout 1993, p. 17). Anti-hunger advocates protested the changes.

As a compromise, Congress insisted that the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1982 include legislation that would have "the government distribute federally-owned surplus commodities to soup kitchens and other groups that provided free food to indigent people . . . . A two-year extension of the surplus commodities distribution was passed later that year" (Galer-Unti 1995, p. 29). This legislation represented the emergence of distributing commodities in response to cuts in the Food Stamp program and can be considered the origin of the private food assistance network.

The Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Acts of 1981 and 1982 were a watershed for anti-hunger activists. "For the first time in over a decade, congressional supporters had had to accept a cutback in the rate of growth of major food aid programs . . . . Ever since 1968, their chief aim can be summed up in Oliver Twist's attitude about food. They wanted 'more'. . . . Now suddenly they had to settle for 'less'" (Maney 1989, p. 133). The sudden shift in the political climate toward food assistance prompted anti-hunger activists to turn their efforts and energy toward establishing a parallel food assistance system by drawing upon private and public resources, private nonprofit organizations, and the considerable army of persons willing to involve themselves in providing services to the poor directly.

To appease anti-hunger advocates, Reagan created the President's Task Force on Food Assistance in 1983 to measure the degree of hunger in the United States. The task force concluded that hunger could not be measured and it "was not a widespread national health problem." The task force also proposed that food assistance should be a state issue and recommended that states be subjected to penalties for failing to lower their food stamp error rates and increasing the allowable assets to food stamp recipients (Galer-Unti 1995, p. 30).

In 1984 and 1985, Congress responded by passing legislation that negated some of the administration's cuts. "Congress passed legislation that restored previous cuts in maximum benefit levels [of food stamps] and in the earned income deduction. Several other asset and income limits were liberalized at the same time. The 1985 legislation also enacted a major new food stamp employment and training program, aimed at getting able-bodied food stamp recipients into the work force" (Ohls and Beebout 1993, p. 18).

Rather than expanding the broad-based Food Stamp program, the targeting of food assistance continued in the 1980s. In 1986, senior nutrition programs enjoyed increases in their appropriations (Galer-Unti 1995, p. 32). The Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 1989 reauthorized WIC and, most significantly, permanently authorized the School Lunch program. WIC, the Summer Food program, and the Commodity Distribution program would require periodic renewals. Legislation passed in 1987 targeted the homeless.

K. Distributing Commodities as an Alternative to Food Stamps

"During the early 1980's there was renewed interest in commodity distribution as large inventories of Government-held commodities, substantial reductions in Federal spending for food assistance programs, and poor economic conditions combined to exert pressure for expanded commodity donations by the USDA" (Committee on Government Operations 1992, p. 4). Formal USDA food donations to emergency feeding organizations began in 1981 when the federal government, in response to anti-hunger activists, first released surplus stocks of cheese for distribution (General Farm Bill, p. 109). The distribution of cheese, intended to be a one-time event, came under the auspices of the Surplus Dairy Distribution program (Maney 1989, p. 140). Through this program, the federal government distributed food to the states, which then distributed it to agencies and organizations, which in turn distributed it to needy households. The agencies and organizations that distributed the food were like today's food pantries. Many organizations that began to distribute food in response to the availability of food made possible by this program continued to distribute it for years to come.

The initial distributions did not go as smoothly as the Reagan administration had hoped. Similar to government food distributions in the 1930s, retailers complained about the cheese bypassing them. Agencies noted that poor planning by the government resulted in giving away blocks of cheese that were too large for the typical household and complained of being strapped with distribution costs (Maney 1989, p. 141).

The administration could cite the minimal cost to taxpayers of its "new" anti-hunger effort and was generally pleased with the program. Others, though, found the program troubling. "Food program supporters preferred to have money restored to the food stamp and child nutrition programs, rather than diverted into what they considered a makeshift and demeaning delivery system" (Maney 1989, pp. 141–142).

In spite of these concerns, in 1983, Rep. Leon Panetta (D-CA) sponsored a bill that established the Temporary Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) (U.S. Congress 1983). The recession and a large surplus of perishable commodities such as cheese prompted Secretary of Agriculture John Block to have charitable organizations distribute excess commodities for a 2-year period, until the end of FY 1985 (U.S. Congress 1985). The Commodities Credit Corporation (CCC), a division of the USDA, was to pay initial processing, packaging, and delivery costs, as well as up to $50,000,000 of state agency expenses (administrative, storing, handling, and distribution), and the states were not to charge recipient agencies any program costs. Much of the food was to be distributed through food banks and food pantries.

Though some food pantries existed prior to 1983, they had up until then generally relied on donations from individuals and businesses for food. Distributing TEFAP goods through the private food assistance network resulted in a dramatic increase in responsibility for the food pantries, provided food pantries with a regular supply of substantial and nutritious food, and increased the quantity of food available. Word of the available food soon grew, and although the pantries were not allowed to advertise that they were distributing this food, the tremendous demand created long lines at the pantries. It was reported that some pantries used volunteers for crowd control (U.S. Congress, House Committee on Agriculture, 1985).

From the start of the commodities distribution in 1981 through 1985, over 2.1 billion pounds of surplus foods—primarily dairy products but also wheat, flour, cornmeal, and honey—were distributed and as many as 19 million people received assistance from TEFAP each month (U.S. Congress, House Committee on Agriculture, 1985, p. 75). Officials seemed impressed by the apparent efficiency and low cost of providing food assistance by distributing TEFAP foods through food banks and food pantries. “The cost to the federal government in executing the program has been quite modest. In FY 1984, for example, the federal government’s reimbursement to the states and local distributing agencies amounted to only 3.7 cents for every dollar of food product distributed. . . . [F]or every dollar spent by the food bank network, $120 is provided to recipients of food bank activities” (Lipsky 1985, pp. 110–115).

It seemed that the Reagan administration had found the optimal solution to the hunger problem. TEFAP pleased farmers (by providing for price stability) and appeased and distracted the anti-hunger community (because with the community’s participation, the program seemed to reach the needy). By providing for operational support to the private food assistance network, the program also pleased the food industry, which in addition to donating food out of goodwill, found that it could use the network as an outlet for disposing of food for which it might otherwise have had to pay salvage costs. Thus, the Reagan administration was eager to expand commodity distribution. In 1987, TEFAP expanded to include a wider variety of foods. “Congress ordered a pilot project in which the USDA would distribute surplus meat, poultry, fish, fruits, and vegetables to food banks. Cheese, butter, nonfat dry milk, cornmeal, flour and rice would continue to be dispensed as before” (Galer-Unti 1995, p. 32).

Table 1 shows that throughout its history, TEFAP has been subject to funding fluctuations. Table 2 shows the amount of food the program has distributed between 1982 and 1999. The program has gone through three phases and perhaps is embarking on a fourth. The first phase, from 1983 through fiscal year 1988, represents the program’s establishment. During this period, funding remained constant at $50 million for administrative costs, and the program distributed between approximately 700 million to 1 billion pounds of surplus food annually. No monies were used to purchase food.

The 1989–1993 period represents the program’s second phase. In fact, 1989 was a watershed in U.S. domestic food assistance in that the 1988 Emergency Hunger Prevention Act authorized funds for purchasing food to be distributed, in addition to the distribution of excess commodities (U.S. Congress 1988). That is, public food assistance would be in the form of food handed to recipients (usually by privately run organizations), rather than (or in addition to, depending on whether a needy household also participated in the Food Stamp program) in the form of an income transfer earmarked for food. When surplus food began to become depleted in the late 1980s, there was a question of how to continue the program.[1] By this time, TEFAP had developed a constituency. “Congress approved provisions in the Hunger Prevention Act of 1988 that required the USDA to buy commodities for the TEFAP and for soup

[1]Rapid reduction of CCC inventories led to severe shortages at food pantries in the United States in the early 1990s (Committee on Government Operations 1992, p. 15). By the early 1990s, only about $100 million worth of commodities were donated to TEFAP, down from approximately $1 billion a year in the mid-1980s (Teller 1994).

TABLE 1
TEFAP and Soup Kitchen/Food Bank Funding History
(in thousands of dollars)

Fiscal Year	Appropriation for TEFAP			Appropriation for Soup Kitchens/Food Banks	Total Appropriation (TEFAP + SK/FB)
	Total	Food	Administration		
1983	50,000	0	50,000	0	50,000
1984	50,000	0	50,000	0	50,000
1985	57,000	0	50,000	0	57,000
1986	50,000	0	50,000	0	50,000
1987	50,000	0	50,000	0	50,000
1988	50,000	0	50,000	0	50,000
1989	170,000	120,000	50,000	40,000	210,000
1990	169,395	120,000	50,000	39,440	208,835
1991	169,995	120,000	50,000	32,000	201,995
1992	165,000	120,000	45,000	32,000	197,000
1993	165,000	120,000	45,000	32,000	197,000
1994	120,230	80,000	40,000	40,000	160,230
1995	65,000	25,000	40,000	40,000	105,000
1996	40,000	0	40,000	40,000	80,000
1997	170,000	131,800	38,200	0	170,000
1998	145,000	100,000	45,000	0	145,000
1999	135,000	90,000	45,000	0	135,000

Source: Personal communication, USDA Food Distribution Division, 8/31/99.

TABLE 2
Pounds of TEFAP Commodities Distributed by Year, 1982–1999

Year	Entitlement	Bonus	Total
1982		121,682,012	121,682,012
1983		754,034,303	754,034,303
1984		856,348,140	856,348,140
1985		929,562,429	929,562,429
1986		947,692,348	947,692,348
1987		1,014,088,662	1,014,088,662
1988		693,486,404	693,486,404
1989	140,732,700	276,026,814	416,759,514
1990	148,006,284	262,920,772	410,927,056
1991	177,844,572	234,080,760	411,925,332
1992	159,347,682	239,041,044	398,388,726
1993	288,677,173	110,750,630	399,427,803
1994	180,674,418	95,035,356	275,709,774
1995	62,649,043	33,234,266	95,883,309
1996	40,754,625	18,620,478	59,375,103
1997	268,039,933	49,737,188	317,777,121
1998	211,666,496	146,611,124	358,277,620
1999	100,000,000	100,000,000	200,000,000

Source: Personal communication, USDA Food Distribution Division, 8/31/99.

Note: Entitlement refers to food bought with appropriated funds; bonus refers to food that is surplus. Both entitlement and surplus foods are distributed to states through a formula that considers both the poverty rate and the size of the population.

kitchens and food banks to supplement the diminished amount of commodities available from CCC inventories" (Committee on Government Operations 1992, p. 5). Between 1989 and 1993, the program received $120 million to purchase food and between $45 million and $50 million for administrative expenses. Also in 1989, the Soup Kitchens/Food Banks program began, through which food was purchased explicitly to be given to soup kitchens and food banks. The purchase of commodities for distribution in the private food assistance network in essence shifted TEFAP's mission from price stabilization for farmers to food assistance to the poor.

The third phase of the program, 1994–1996, can be thought of as the phase-out. During this period, the program suffered a large reduction in the amount of appropriations it received and the amount of food it distributed, to the extent that in 1996, *no* monies were appropriated for the purchase of food. The amount of food distributed through the program fell to 59 million pounds, a mere fraction of the amount distributed through the program during Ronald Reagan's tenure (see Table 2). In FY 1997, the Soup Kitchens/Food Banks program was eliminated and rolled into TEFAP.

The appointment of Dan Glickman as Secretary of Agriculture in 1995 brought a resurgence of TEFAP and perhaps began TEFAP's fourth phase, yet it remains to be seen whether the program will have long-term support and stability. Under Secretary Glickman, concern for hunger issues has once again emerged as a priority for the department. In 1997, monies ($131.8 million) were once again appropriated for food and the program distributed 300 million pounds of food. The USDA anticipates that in 1999 TEFAP will distribute approximately 200 million pounds of food, half of which will be surplus.

In addition to government leadership, market forces affect the amount of food available for distribution through TEFAP.[2] Because of changes in the agricultural subsidy system in the 1980s, the

[2]In 1982, 1985, and 1990, measures were taken to reform the agricultural subsidy system, making it more sensitive to market forces. "Today, farmers' incomes depend on selling their food in both the U.S. and world markets, which keep prices competitive. Government subsidies that support the prices farmers get for their products

availability of government-owned surplus commodities to be distributed through TEFAP has diminished. Surplus commodities are not only distributed through TEFAP, they are also distributed abroad through foreign relief programs.[3]

L. Developing a Parallel Food Assistance System

Purchasing commodities for distribution through private charities represents a new approach to providing assistance and demonstrates government support for the private food assistance network. Using public funds to purchase food for distribution through private agencies signified a departure from the Food Stamp program as *the* nontargeted anti-hunger program. Between the mid-1960s and 1980s, food assistance policy had reversed course. The policy focus had shifted to distributing commodities (and providing public funds for their purchase and distribution) rather than modifying and expanding the Food Stamp program.

TEFAP institutionalized the private food distribution network. TEFAP provides food banks with a steady source of nutritious food and subsidizes some food banks for distributing and storing TEFAP food. TEFAP also indirectly defrays the costs of storing and distributing other foods. The money provided to distributing agencies for reimbursement of administrative expenses is important in an uncertain funding landscape. In fact, when considering whether to provide administrative funding, policymakers have argued that

> If the food banks do not receive administrative reimbursements they will pass along the cost of TEFAP administration like they do their other costs—to the soup kitchens and food pantries that support food bank operations through a levy called a "shared cost"

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are largely a thing of the past" (Arizona Food Lines 1992).

[3]The distribution of food abroad can be controversial. "Contrary to popular belief, the beneficiaries of these subsidies are not necessarily poor, Third World nations. Oil rich nations such as Bahrain, Kuwait and Iraq have received millions of dollars to enable them to purchase U.S. commodities at below-market prices" (Committee on Government Operations 1992, p. 2). Even when the food is given to impoverished nations, the program does not always succeed in attaining its intended goals. For example, Michael Maren (1997) provides a discussion of the results of USAID's food distribution in Somalia in the 1980s. The cost of distributing commodities abroad annually amounts to several billion dollars (Committee on Government Operations 1992, p. 7).

> contribution, typically eight to twelve cents per pound. Thus, the burden of the proposed elimination of administrative costs would fall overwhelmingly on local churches and the hard-pressed urban charities that are already stretched to their limit by their commitments to feeding the hungry and caring for the homeless (Lipsky 1985, p. 115).

In 1990, Congress made TEFAP permanent and the program's name changed from the Temporary Emergency Food Assistance Program to *The* Emergency Food Assistance Program (U.S. Congress 1990). Although the program's original intention was to distribute the surplus of dairy products, the program distributed other commodities when the dairy surplus ran out.

Why has the federal government simply not buttressed and modified the Food Stamp program instead? Worries about fraud provided one impetus to expand TEFAP rather than the Food Stamp program. The Reagan administration had been particularly concerned that the Food Stamp program was vulnerable to fraud. Distributing commodities was seen as a more direct way to get food to the poor (and assist agricultural interests), thus avoiding fraud.

There is reason to believe that TEFAP and private food assistance in general may actually be more prone to fraud than the Food Stamp program. TEFAP and the Food Stamp program differ vastly in the enforcement of regulations and in the documentation required to participate. In the 1980s, government administrators felt that in contrast to the situation with the Food Stamp program, excessive enforcement of eligibility requirements in TEFAP was not cost effective. In 1985, "the typical distribution to households involved items of less than $15 in value" (U.S. Congress, House Committee on Agriculture, 1985). A complex auditing system to determine eligibility might have cost more money than it saved.

In addition, the food banks themselves strenuously objected to the additional paperwork that would be required to strictly enforce eligibility requirements. For 6 months in 1984, the Cleveland Food Bank refused to distribute commodities because it was "fed up with the reporting requirements" (General Farm Bill, p. 117). More recently, the administrator of a large food pantry in Pittsburgh has threatened to have a bonfire with the index cards she keeps on clients if any government official attempts to examine them.

To be eligible for TEFAP, food pantries generally have clients sign a form on which they self-report that their household income falls below the TEFAP threshold level of 150 percent of poverty. In Pennsylvania, the form does not make it clear whether the income is gross or net. Many organizations have balked at proposals from the federal government requiring them to certify that those receiving commodities meet eligibility requirements by asking their clients to provide their names, addresses, and household incomes and to keep this information on file for a period of 3 years. Some administrators feel that collecting such data is intrusive and inconsistent with their mission.

In contrast, the Food Stamp program requires proof of income, assets, and expenses (e.g., pay stubs, canceled rent checks, electric bills, etc.). Program administrators often use computerized networks to gain access to a household's financial information. Given the disparity in the enforcement of eligibility regulations, the TEFAP program might be more prone to fraud than the Food Stamp program, especially when considering whether TEFAP is being distributed only to persons eligible for the program's benefits.[4, 5]

Another reason that the Reagan administration chose to buttress the private food assistance network is that voluntary organizations which distribute commodities are frequently linked with other community-based social programs benefitting those in need. Voluntary distribution of surplus

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[4]In the Food Stamp program, when a household that exceeds the eligibility criteria has been found to have received Food Stamps, household members are forced to pay back the excess food stamps. We know of no case in which such a household has been forced to reimburse or return TEFAP food.

[5]With respect to on-site feeding programs (e.g., soup kitchens, shelters) there are *no* eligibility requirements for individuals receiving TEFAP foods. Those administering and serving prepared meals believe that the act of waiting in line for a hot meal is proof enough that people are needy and deserve to receive food. Agencies and organizations that provide on-site feeding are only required to certify that they are eligible to receive and distribute the commodities and are then free to distribute them as they see fit.

commodities was seen as performing a vital community service (Committee on Government Operations 1992).

By supporting the private food assistance network, the government essentially changed the threshold below which people were seen to be in need of government-sponsored food assistance. Whereas households must have incomes below 130 percent of the poverty level and pass an asset test to be eligible for the Food Stamp program, households with incomes below 150 percent of poverty can receive TEFAP foods with no asset test. States are allowed to set lower income thresholds for TEFAP.

Compared to the Food Stamp program, TEFAP is administered inequitably and in an ad hoc manner. The distribution of TEFAP foods generally depends on the existence of an effective local volunteer-based organization willing to administer the program (Lipsky 1985, p. 117). For example, in the fall of 1984, “Florida had no distribution in fifteen out of 67 counties and Texas had no program in ten counties” (Lipsky 1985, p. 117). This requirement posed more problems in the early 1980s than it does today, although problems still exists. Needy people living in urban areas with a large number of charitable resources have a much higher chance of being helped by the program than equally needy people living in rural areas who may not have easy access to charitable organizations. For example, the executive director of the Connecticut Food Bank reported that services at food pantries in northeast Connecticut are insufficient to meet the demand for food following the closing of three factories. As the private food assistance network has matured and proliferated, inequities in the distribution of TEFAP foods have lessened.

However, there remain issues of administering the TEFAP program at the local level that perhaps result in unnecessary inefficiencies and may contribute to local inequities. The federal government does not spell out exactly how TEFAP should be administered. In Allegheny County, Pennsylvania, the program is administered by a county official who, for historical reasons, chooses to use Lutheran Services as the TEFAP contracting agency for distributing food to food pantries rather than the local food bank. Lutheran Services then subcontracts with six agencies, one of which is the Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank. Food pantries can receive food from one of the subcontractors. In the past, the food allocated to each subcontractor was not based on a per-person-served formula, and the larger subcontractors did not receive shares proportionate to their client base. Recently, this problem has been rectified.

Food assistance since the 1960s has reversed course and in a sense has come full circle since the 1930s. The fact that only 42 percent of food pantry clients receive food stamps (Second Harvest 1997, p. 185) demonstrates that private food assistance has become a parallel food assistance system. The emergence of private food assistance as an alternative to public food assistance has not been without critics.

> Handouts are not the most appropriate way of addressing the hunger problem. It was the failure of the commodity distribution program, of course, that led to the creation of the food stamp program in 1961. Still, it is difficult to convince people that food banks are a step backwards because they seem to combine humanitarianism with good common sense. What can be wrong with taking surplus food out of the warehouses and putting it into the mouths of the hungry? What is wrong is that food banks distract attention away from programs that work and thus the pressure on government to stop cutting those same programs (Berry 1984, p. 151).[6]

M. Getting Private Donors Involved—Second Harvest

While TEFAP helped to establish the private food assistance network, the other precipitating force in the network's evolution was the formation of a nonprofit organization called Second Harvest. Second Harvest provides a relatively easy way for potential donors of large quantities of food (e.g., the food industry) to donate to the private food assistance network.

In 1967, Richard Boone of the Citizen's Board of Inquiry wrote to the CEOs of major food corporations informing them of domestic hunger and malnutrition and the lack of adequate funding for federal food assistance programs, and asked why the food industry had not involved itself in solving the

[6]Poppendieck (1998) raises these same criticisms of private food assistance.

domestic hunger problem. “Most of the executives quizzed by the Board of Inquiry felt that the food industry had neither the know-how nor the obligation to deal with the unprofitable problems of feeding the hungry or to provide especially nutritious foods at low cost to help the poor” (Kotz 1969, p. 130). Nick Kotz wrote, “Private industry . . . says that hunger in the United States is either a government problem, an economic problem, or no problem at all” (Kotz 1969, p. 132). In Kotz’s view, the food industry believed it had contributed to ending hunger by investing in modern technology which allowed for the mass production of food and for food to be offered to the consumer at low costs (Kotz 1969, pp. 137–138).

In the late 1970s, the food industry decided to take on a more active role in anti-hunger efforts. Businessman John Van Hengel had started a food bank in 1967 in St. Mary’s Church in Phoenix (Poppendieck 1998, chapter 4). In the 1970s, he solicited from agriculture and food companies donations to a small network of food banks based in the Southwest. Donations to the network grew, as did the number of food banks in the network. In 1979, 2 years after the purchase requirement ended in the Food Stamp program, Second Harvest incorporated itself as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. In 1984, Second Harvest moved from Fanes, Arizona, to Chicago, Illinois, a location chosen for its proximity to the national food industry.

Second Harvest is a member organization, and its members are food banks. Most (over 95 percent) food banks in the United States are members of Second Harvest (Douglas O’Brien, personal communication, 9/99). Second Harvest certifies that its member food banks have met a set a standards. Second Harvest food banks must:

- be 501(c)(3) organizations;
- serve a defined geographic area;
- not misuse products;
- comply with its health and safety standards;

- comply with its sanitation standards;
- maintain warehouse and storage capacity, which includes 4,050 square feet of dry storage;
- have sufficient staff to allow full-time operations of the food bank;
- keep adequate records on product inventory and finances, and have an adequate management information system;
- have financial stability and be insured;
- have support from the community; and
- be able to participate in disaster relief.

To join the Second Harvest network, a food bank must sign Second Harvest's 26-page contract.

In 1980, the Second Harvest network consisted of 29 food banks. By 1989, this figure increased to 185 and has remained at that level. Some 34,000 food pantries are affiliated with Second Harvest, and food pantries distribute 80 percent of the food that Second Harvest receives (Second Harvest 1997, p. 28).

The Second Harvest concept is quite clever. Second Harvest serves "as liaison between the food industry and the Network, facilitating equitable allocation and distribution of food and grocery products on the national level" (Second Harvest 1996, p. 6). Second Harvest solicits pledges of donations from food companies and agriculture—half a truckload of cereal, two truckloads of apples, etc.—and then offers the food to food banks. Second Harvest does not have a warehouse and never handles food directly—its function is purely organizational. By certifying food banks, Second Harvest assures potential donors that the food and paperwork involved will be handled appropriately, thus giving donors confidence in the act of donating and making the act of donating easy.

To determine which food bank to offer pledged food on a given day, Second Harvest has a computerized system which considers the number of people in poverty in each food bank's service area and the number of pounds of food the food bank has already received in the current year. At times, Second Harvest also considers the portability of the food and the distance between the donation and a potentially recipient food bank. Every year, Second Harvest calculates for each food bank the number of pounds of food the food bank should get based on the amount of food it anticipates will be donated and refers to this number as the goal. Daily, Second Harvest prints out a list of food banks ranked by the percentage of the goal of food the food bank has received to date, listed from least to most. The food banks at the top of the list are first in line to receive donations on a given day.

A donor faxes, e-mails, or telephones Second Harvest to notify it of a donation. Donations to Second Harvest are usually measured by the truckload (semitrailer). When a donation is pledged, it is systematically offered to a food bank, starting at the top of the list. The food bank has 2 hours to respond to the offer. If a donation involves less than one truckload of food and if the food bank does not respond to the offer within the 2-hour period, then the food bank must accept the offer and pay Second Harvest what is called the shared maintenance fee for the food, which generally ranges from two to three cents per pound, and the donation is added to the percentage of the goal received. If a food bank accepts an offer of less than one truckload within half an hour of being notified, then the food is not counted toward the percentage of its goal achieved. If a donation involves more than one truckload and if the food bank does respond to the offer within 2 hours, then the donation is considered a “turnaround” and, generally, the food can be sent anywhere in the country. Second Harvest then offers the food to the next food bank on the list. This system keeps the distribution of Second Harvest food equitable.

Food is not transported to a central location—instead it goes directly from the site of the donation to the recipient food bank. Usually, food banks arrange their own transportation. However, Second Harvest developed a program called Relief Fleet, which allows trucking companies to donate transportation. A truck company notifies Second Harvest of a route it will travel without freight. If a donation can go that same route, then the truck company ships the food for free.

Donations to Second Harvest grew tremendously in the 1980s. In 1979, national donations amounted to 3.9 million pounds. By 1989, this figure increased to 135.1 million pounds, and in 1998, Second Harvest managed 260 million pounds of food.

Along with an increase in food donations, Second Harvest's budget has increased dramatically. In 1979, its expenses were $939,000 (in 1997 dollars), a figure which had increased nearly tenfold by 1998 to $9,004,000 (in 1997 dollars). Over this period, Second Harvest's efficiency has increased. In 1979, it cost approximately 10 cents (in 1997 dollars) to manage a pound of food. In 1995, this figure had decreased to 2 cents, but in 1998 had increased to 3.5 cents.

N. An Overview of Food Pantries

Given the volume of food that Second Harvest manages, it is clear that its efforts have an impact on the amount of food available at food banks and food pantries. Second Harvest sponsored a large survey of food banks, food pantries, and food pantry clients. Results from that survey appear in *Hunger 1997: The Faces and Facts*. The project involved 79 of its 185 member food banks and 25,319 agencies operating "emergency" food programs. In addition, 27,771 clients of emergency food programs participated in personal interviews.

Second Harvest's survey found that food pantries distributed approximately 960.5 million pounds of food, and Second Harvest managed 250.8 pounds of food in its national network (Second Harvest 1997, p. 31). Therefore, Second Harvest's efforts contributed to 26 percent of the food that food pantries distributed to households.

Food banks provide food pantries with most (61 percent) of their food. The remainder of food distributed by food pantries comes from food purchases (13 percent), churches (13 percent), government (3 percent), merchants/farmers (4 percent), and other sources (5 percent) (Second Harvest 1997, p. 58). Most food pantries operate on a shoestring budget—60 percent have incomes of less than $5,000 and another 13 percent have incomes between $5000 and $10,000 (Second Harvest 1997, p. 73). It is not surprising, then, that 18 percent of pantries view themselves as threatened or unstable, and of these, half (55 percent) report the reason as a lack of funding (Second Harvest 1997, pp. 86–87).

The average number of paid staff of food pantries is 1.3 persons (Second Harvest 1997, p. 84). Pantries rely heavily on volunteers to assist with pantry operations and food distribution. On average, a food pantry has 10 volunteers and in 1997 received 1,877 hours of volunteer time. Had the pantries paid minimum wage to these volunteers, the cost would have been $9,854. Nationally, then, the 34,112 Second Harvest-affiliated food pantries receive approximately $336 million dollars in volunteer time annually. Although the amount of time donated is large, 23 percent of those pantries that report themselves as unstable cite a lack of volunteers as a factor contributing to their instability.

Second Harvest-affiliated food pantries in the United States served approximately 19.2 million (unduplicated) persons at least once in 1997. Most (72 percent) pantries are church-affiliated and 23 percent are private nonprofits. Only 2 percent of pantries are run through or by a government agency. One-third (36 percent) of pantries were formed since 1991, and three-quarters (78 percent) were formed since 1981.

In 1997, a food pantry served an average of 1,507 unduplicated individuals[7] living in 545 households. Food pantries distributed an average of 790,753 pounds of food in 1997. Nineteen percent of pantry clients use more than one pantry, a practice which is generally frowned upon and referred to as “double dipping” (Second Harvest 1997).

O. Who Uses Private Food Assistance?

For most clients, using a food pantry is chronic rather than a solution to a short-term shortage. Pantry administrators regard their assistance as “emergency” in nature more so than do clients. According to pantry administrators, 24 percent of clients rely on the pantry for less than 4 weeks and 26

[7]These figures represent “unduplicated” clients—meaning that if a person went to the pantry six times in 1997, he/she was counted only once.

percent rely on it for more than 1 year (Second Harvest 1997, p. 102). However, when asked about how long ago they first turned to a food pantry for assistance, only 16 percent of clients reported less than 1 month ago and 60 percent reported more than 1 year ago (Second Harvest 1997, p. 108). Although the questions asked to pantry administrators and clients are not identical, one can infer that administrators see the assistance they give as more temporary than it actually is. Further, a 1993 survey of food pantry clients in the Pittsburgh area found that the median length of time of using a pantry is 18 months, and approximately 20 percent of clients had used a pantry for at least 4 years (Daponte et al. 1994, pp. 5–6).

When U.S. pantry clients are asked why they seek aid from a food pantry (respondents could give more than one reason), 54 percent of them cite recent unemployment, 35 percent cite long-term unemployment, 57 percent say that although they are working they need more money. Other reasons include an illness (23 percent), high fixed expenses (22 percent), and ran out of food stamps (13 percent). Only 36 percent of clients report an emergency or crisis as a reason for relying on a food pantry (Second Harvest 1997, p. 152). That is, while the system is designed to respond to emergencies, only one-third of clients rely on it for that reason.

Nationally, approximately 21 percent of clients are employed, 36 percent are unemployed, 22 percent are disabled, 12 percent are retired, 8 percent are housewives, and 2 percent are students. These figures imply a labor force participation rate of 57 percent and an astoundingly high unemployment rate of 64 percent among pantry clients. Of those who report themselves as employed, only 49 percent report that they work full-time (Second Harvest 1997, pp. 154–156).

Food pantries provide assistance to persons of all ages. One-third of persons who rely on a food pantry are children (less than 18 years old). While half are of working age, 17 percent are 65 years or older. Fifty-two percent of pantry client households with children are single-parent households (Second Harvest 1997, pp. 135, 144).

Among adults using food pantries, 41 percent do not have a high school diploma and 23 percent have training past the high school level (Second Harvest 1997, p. 175). The annual household income of food pantry clients is low, with 67 percent having an annual income of less than $10,000, 15 percent having an income of $10,000 to $14,000, 11 percent having an income of $14,001 to $21,000, and only 7 percent having an income above $21,000 (Second Harvest 1997, p. 166). Twenty-one percent of food pantry clients do not have their own housing (Second Harvest 1997, p. 116).

Though some (42 percent) food pantry clients also receive food stamps, most (58 percent) do not. In fact, 38 percent of food pantry clients have not even applied for food stamps. When those who have not applied for food stamps were asked to give up to two reasons for not applying, 40 percent cited ineligibility for the program, 23 percent cited an unwillingness to apply, 13 percent stated that food stamps are not worth the trouble, and 19 percent gave another reason. Of the 33 percent of food pantry clients who do not receive but have applied for food stamps, half were found ineligible for the program, 38 percent were awaiting approval, and 12 percent were unsure or refused to reveal the status of their application (Second Harvest 1997, pp. 193–194).

Among food pantry clients receiving food stamps, 52 percent have received them for more than 2 years and 16 percent have received them for 1 to 2 years. Only 31 percent have received food stamps for less than 1 year (Second Harvest 1997, p. 187). When persons receiving food stamps were asked how long a 1-month allocation of food stamps lasts, 22 percent of food pantry clients replied less than 1 week, 28 percent replied 2 weeks, 33 percent replied 3 weeks, and 14 percent replied 4 or more weeks (Second Harvest 1997, pp. 187, 189). These figures suggest that food pantry clients may not be at the lowest rungs of the income scale.

Approximately one-third of food pantry clients report that they receive free food from other sources (e.g., friends and neighbors). Many food pantry clients also rely on other food programs. For example, 65 percent of children participate in the school breakfast/school lunch program, 31 percent of age-eligible households participate in the WIC program, 20 percent of elderly receive food at senior nutrition sites, and 13 percent of households participate in government mass distributions of food (not from a food pantry) (Second Harvest 1997, pp. 187, 189).

Even though many client households participate in other food programs, two-thirds of clients report that they do not receive enough food from the pantry (Second Harvest 1997, p. 225). Also, 9 percent of children who rely on food pantries missed meals in the past month because there was not enough food or money to purchase food in the household (Second Harvest 1997, p. 204).

Daponte (2000) used multinomial logistic regression to learn what factors influence whether a poor household in Allegheny County, Pennsylvania, makes one of four food assistance utilization decisions—to use no assistance, to receive food only from a pantry, to participate only in the food stamp program, or to receive benefits from both a food pantry and the food stamp program. In a 1993 sample of poor households in Allegheny County, 38 percent of households used neither form of assistance, 11 percent used only a food pantry, 29 percent used only food stamps, and 23 percent used both forms of assistance. Based on those data, Daponte observed the following relationships:

- households below poverty have a higher probability of relying on food stamps than do poor households above poverty;
- education does not significantly affect food stamp or food pantry usage;
- households that spend more than 40 percent of their income on shelter have a higher probability of using food stamps but not food pantries;
- distance to a food pantry does not affect the probability of relying on one;
- households headed by a young adult tend to rely on food stamps in contrast to households headed by senior citizens, which tend not to use food stamps, but age of the household head has no significant impact on using a food pantry;
- households headed by an African American have a higher probability of relying on food stamps than their nonblack statistical counterparts;
- married-couple households tend not to use food stamps;

- female-headed households have a higher probability of using food stamps than male-headed statistical counterparts;
- having children present in the household correlates positively with food stamp usage;
- households with vehicles tend not to use food stamps and tend not to use food pantries.

Food pantries provide many households with needed resources. We next turn to considering the cost of the private food assistance network.

III. HOW MUCH DOES PRIVATE ASSISTANCE COST?

One can estimate the cost of the private food assistance network by disaggregating its components and estimating the cost of each component. Table 3 summarizes the disaggregation. Based on our assumptions, we estimate that the private food assistance network annually costs approximately $2.3 billion including the value of food, or $900 million excluding food. These estimates do not include the assets held by the network or many of the in-kind contributions (e.g., Relief Fleet) that it receives. To put the figure in perspective, the cost of the network is roughly one-twelfth the size of the Food Stamp program (Committee on Ways and Means, *1998 Green Book*). However, some of the assumptions made in this calculation may make the total estimated cost conservative.

We start by estimating the value of the food distributed. In its 1998 annual report, Second Harvest values the food distributed at a wholesale rate of $1.48 per pound. In 1997, the network of food pantries distributed approximately 960.5 million pounds (Second Harvest 1997, p. 31). These two figures imply that the value of the food distributed by food pantries can be estimated at $1.4 billion.

The network relies on volunteers. In 1997, Second Harvest Food Banks received 4,094,748 volunteer hours (Second Harvest 1999, Table 3). Assuming an hour of volunteer time is worth minimum wage ($5.25 per hour), then the worth of this time is an estimated $21.5 million. Second Harvest

TABLE 3
Estimated Value of Private Food Assistance System

Item	Estimated Value
Food	$1,421,500,000
Volunteers	
Food banks	$21,500,000
Subsidiary Distribution Organizations	$5,700,000
Food pantries	$336,000,000
Operating Expenses	
Food banks	$272,200,000
Food pantries	$268,400,000
Estimated total	$2,325,400,000

Source: See text for a discussion of assumptions used and sources.

Subsidiary Distribution Organizations (SDOs)[8] benefitted from approximately 1,083,000 hours of volunteer time (Second Harvest 1999, Table 33), valued at $5.7 million. Second Harvest estimated that in 1997, 34,112 Second Harvest-affiliated pantries existed. On average, a pantry receives 1,877 volunteer hours annually (Second Harvest 1997, p. 84), which can be valued at approximately $336 million.

In 1997, an average food pantry spent $7,867 to distribute food (Second Harvest 1997, p. 72). Given the number of food pantries, this amounts to $268.4 million in expenses. Food banks had operating expenses totaling $272.2 million (Second Harvest 1999, Table 18).[9] Summing the above figures, we arrive at an estimated value of $2.3 billion.

IV. THE PRIVATE FOOD ASSISTANCE NETWORK IN TWO LOCALES: BRIDGEPORT, CONNECTICUT, AND PITTSBURGH, PENNSYLVANIA

Given the size and apparent importance of the private food assistance network to clients, volunteers, administrators, and donors, it is important to understand exactly how the network actually operates at the local level. In this section, we describe in detail how the private food assistance network operates in two metropolitan areas—Bridgeport, Connecticut, and Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

Food and resources enter the system at the state, county, municipal, and neighborhood level. Examining only one area might give the false impression that the system is homogeneous. Local conditions impact both the supply of and demand for food. Therefore, to demonstrate that private food assistance is heterogeneous, we need to consider more than one area. Limited resources restrict the examination to only two local areas.

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[8]SDOs are smaller food banks or larger agencies allied with Certified Affiliate food banks. SDOs are private, nonprofit, charitable organizations providing important community services. Although some are agencies, SDOs distribute part of their food to other charities for direct distribution to clients.

[9]A portion of operating expenses of food banks and food pantries may include some money spent on food. If so, then the cost of that food is double-counted in this summation. To offset this to some degree, the operating costs of SDOs that are 501(c)(3)s are not included because of a lack of data. The $2.3 billion should be taken as a rough estimate.

The authors chose Pittsburgh because they resided there and had extensive ties to the system.[10] Bridgeport was chosen for numerous reasons. It appears similar to Pittsburgh with respect to the economic struggles it faced in the 1970s and 1980s, but the governmental structure it operates in differs from Pittsburgh's. Unlike Pennsylvania, Connecticut does not have county government. The "town" system of government may manifest itself in that comprehensive, coordinated responses to need may be difficult to formulate. Also, while Pittsburgh has a wealth of local foundations to formulate, assist, and support initiatives, the Bridgeport area is not as fortunate. Finally, one of the authors (Daponte) is a native of the Bridgeport area, which made navigating through Connecticut's social service arena easier. Therefore, the two areas were chosen because, though similar, they differ enough to demonstrate that unique local conditions produce a heterogeneous food assistance network. The Connecticut Food Bank (CFB) serves Bridgeport and other areas while the Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank (GPCFB) serves the Pittsburgh metropolitan area.

The U.S. Census Bureau estimates that in 1999 approximately 2.3 million people lived in the CFB's service area and 1.3 million lived in the GPSFB's service area. Per capita incomes derived from the 1990 census varied widely between the two areas, with persons in the CFB's service area enjoying a 1989 per capita income of $20,800, while persons in the GPCFB's service area had a per capita income of $15,100. According to the 1990 census, the CFB's and GPCFB's service areas had comparable numbers of people living below the poverty line—146,000 in the CFB area and 151,000 in the GPCFB area (U.S. Census Bureau 2000).

To learn about the environment, operations, and challenges facing each food bank, we conducted interviews with staff at both food banks and gathered data on each, primarily from their annual reports.

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[10]Ms. Bade works as a community organizer for Just Harvest, a local anti-hunger advocacy organization. Dr. Daponte serves on the board of Hunger Services Network and will be working with the Southwest Pennsylvania Food Assistance Council on a USDA-sponsored project. The authors consulted for and wrote *The Impact of Welfare Reform on the Food Pantries* for the Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank.

The purpose of the interviews was simply to gather information. The descriptions of the respective food banks pertain to operations in 1998 and 1999.

We now turn to examining and contrasting these two food banks. First, we provide background information on each food bank. Next, we discuss the food sources of each, followed by an examination of funding sources. We then consider the relationship the food banks have with member food pantries and the services they offer to their food pantries.

A. The Connecticut Food Bank

The CFB, located in East Haven, Connecticut, serves six of the state's eight counties: Fairfield, Litchfield, Middlesex, New Haven, New London, and Windham. The Hartford Food Share serves the other two counties, Tolland and Hartford. We interviewed staff of the CFB in October 1998 and then returned to Connecticut in July 1999 to interview state employees and anti-hunger advocates involved in food assistance.

The CFB opened in 1982. The idea for a single, reliable storage and distribution site for emergency food came from a volunteer, Mark Patton, who worked at a soup kitchen in New Haven (CFB Annual Report, 1985–86). During its first year of operation in a one-room office, the CFB distributed less than 500,000 million pounds of food to a "handful" of emergency food agencies (CFB Annual Report FY 1996–97, p. 2). In 1996, with 22,000 square feet of space, CFB distributed 3.5 million pounds of food to 450 member agencies (CFB Annual Report FY 1996–97, p. 2, and Second Harvest 1999, Table 5, p. 12 of 31).

In addition to its member soup kitchens, day care centers, senior centers, and emergency shelters, the CFB distributes food to 124 food pantries in its membership and also distributes TEFAP food to nonmember agencies[11] (Michelle Budwitz, Director of Agency Relations, CFB, personal communication, 10/5/98).

Currently, food pantries make up 39 percent of the CFB member agencies, and residential programs, day programs, and emergency shelters/soup kitchens account for another 23 percent, 20 percent, and 9 percent, respectively (CFB Annual Report FY 1996–97, p. 8). Agencies pay $50 per year for membership to the CFB and must be a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization.

In addition to its main site in East Haven, the CFB operates and maintains administrative responsibility over three warehouses/satellite food banks in Waterbury, East Haven, and Fairfield. These warehouses exist to minimize the distance that food pantry personnel need to travel to acquire food from the CFB. In addition to the warehouses, the CFB has two distribution sites in Norfolk and Norwich, as well as drop-off points for food pantries in the northeast counties of Windham and Brookline. The existence of warehouses and drop-off points for food assures that no pantry needs to travel more than 30 minutes by car to acquire food.

The Food Bank of Lower Fairfield County, located in Stamford, is an SDO of the Connecticut Food Bank. Although the Food Bank of Lower Fairfield County affiliates itself with the CFB, it is responsible for its own administration and has a separate staff. The Food Bank of Lower Fairfield County does its own fundraising, meaning that it, rather than the CFB, can tap into the resources of the wealthy communities of lower Fairfield County (e.g., the New York City commuter towns of Greenwich, Westport, Southport, and Darien).

In May 1997, the CFB opened a warehouse in Fairfield. Prior to that, Fairfield had its own food bank but due to poor administration and difficulties in maintaining Second Harvest's standards of operations, the Fairfield Food Bank closed in February 1997. A group of food pantry administrators in

[11]The CFB requires its members to be 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations. However, the USDA does not require emergency food programs to have this designation (Michelle Budwitz, Director of Agency Relations, CFB, personal communication, 10/5/98). Therefore, TEFAP food can be distributed to nonmember agencies.

the Bridgeport/Fairfield area asked the CFB to serve them in Fairfield, thus the formation of the warehouse.

The CFB employs 18 full-time-equivalent paid staff members and benefits from the services of approximately 300 volunteers, including individuals involved with fundraisers such as the Walk for Hunger. Other volunteer activities include data entry, general office duties, and sorting and boxing donated foods. Several people per week to come in to assist with general office maintenance. Approximately one-third of volunteers at CFB are elderly. In 1995–96, 221 volunteers donated 3,120 hours to help with CFB operations (CFB Annual Report FY 1995–96). Table 4 presents the CFB' s organizational structure. In 1997, the CFB reported to Second Harvest that it incurred $1,624,088 in operating expenses.

B. The Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank

The GPCFB was founded in 1980, through the initiative of the Hunger Action Coalition, the Hunger Project, and the Thomas Merton Center (GPCFB 1998, p. 1). In 1979, a delegation of members from these organizations went to Harrisburg (the state capital) to meet with representatives from Second Harvest about the possibility of opening a food bank in the Pittsburgh area. In that same year, the Hunger Action Coalition agreed to sponsor a food bank in Pittsburgh. In 1980, the Pittsburgh Community Food Bank officially opened and received its first shipment of Second Harvest food on December 1. By December 1981, it had distributed 1 million pounds of food.

When the food bank first opened, it resided in the Hill District of Pittsburgh, an urban, predominantly black neighborhood. In 1981 it moved its facilities to the south side of Pittsburgh, which at the time was a low-income predominantly white area (which is now undergoing gentrification). In 1983, the Pittsburgh Community Food Bank separated from the Hunger Action Coalition and became its own 501(c)(3) and an official member of the Second Harvest National Food Bank Network. In 1985, the Pittsburgh Community Food Bank moved to McKeesport, a community in the Monongahela Valley,

TABLE 4
Organizational Structure of the Connecticut Food Bank, 1999

Board of Directors

I. **Executive Director**
   A. **Development Director**
      1. Public Relations/Special Events Coordinator
      2. Development Assistant
   B. **Associate Director**
      1. Administrative Assistant
      2. Bookkeeper
      3. Receptionist
      4. Agency Relations
      5. Management Information Systems
   C. **Cluster Coordinator**
   D. **Operations Director**
      1. Marketing Coordinator
      2. Distribution Coordinator
         a. Drivers
      3. East Haven/West Haven Manager
         a. Salvage
         b. Warehouse Assistant
         c. Janitor
      4. Waterbury Branch Manager
      5. Fairfield Branch Manager
         a. Warehouse Assistant

formerly renowned for steel production. That year, the food bank changed its name to the Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank.

The GPCFB distributes food to 12 counties in western Pennsylvania through either member agencies or SDOs. The counties include Allegheny, Armstrong, Beaver, Butler, Cambria, Greene, Fayette, Somerset, Washington, Indiana, Lawrence, and Westmoreland. In 1997, the GPCFB distributed 13,250,944 pounds of food (GPCFB 1997 Annual Report). The GPCFB has 350 member agencies, 265 (75 percent) of which are food pantries (Cindy Moore, agency relations manager, personal communication, 11/19/98). Agencies pay an annual membership fee of $30 and must be a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. In 1998, the GPCFB served between 13,000 and 18,000 clients per month (peaking in November) (Daponte and Bade 1999, p. T-2).

Currently, the GPCFB has a 161,487-square-foot warehouse. In 1997, the GPCFB started a capital campaign to build a new warehouse in the city of Duquesne, also in the Monongahela Valley.

With 45.5 full-time-equivalent employees (Second Harvest 1999, Table 2, p. 4 of 8), the GPCFB has the fourth largest staff of all Second Harvest food banks. The GPCFB's staff includes individuals who work outside of the warehouse, such as on the Food Bank Farm. In 1997, volunteers donated 40,182 hours to assist the GPCFB in its operations. Table 5 shows the GPCFB's organizational structure.

C. Food Sources

Food banks receive food from a variety of sources, including Second Harvest, federal and state governments, individual donors, and food drives. From July 1, 1997 to June 30, 1998, the CFB received 4 million pounds to distribute to agencies and actually distributed 4.5 million pounds of food, the extra 500,000 pounds coming from the previous year's inventory stock. In addition, the CFB received approximately 800,000 pounds of unusable food (trash) that had to be discarded (Second Harvest 1999, Table 29). Trash is food that has passed its expiration date, has been opened, or is obviously bad. CBF either dumps trash or gives it to a local pig farmer.

TABLE 5
Organizational Structure of the Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank, 1999

<u>**Board of Directors**</u>

I. Executive Director
- A. Administrative Assistant
- B. Associate Director
  - **1. Resource Development/Information Systems Manager**
    - a. Development Supervisor
      - i. Communications and Development Specialist
      - ii. Developmental Assistant
    - b. Food Industry Marketing Specialist
    - c. Capital Campaign Coordinator
    - d. Senior Volunteer Coordinator
  - **2. Healthy Harvest Manager**
    - a. Super Pantry Coordinator
    - b. Urban Agriculture Coordinator
    - c. Farmstand Coordinator
    - d. Nutritionist
    - e. Farm Stand Operator
  - **3. Comptroller/Accounting Manager**
    - a. Staff Accountant
      - i. Clerical Staff Supervisor
        - - Receptionist
        - - Clerk/Receptionist
        - - Clerk (part-time)
  - **4. Agency Relations Manager**
    - a. Agency Relations Coordinator
    - b. Agency Relations Assistant
  - **5. Operations Manager**
    - a. Maintenance Supervisor
      - i. Maintenance Assistant
      - ii. Custodian (2 part-time)
    - b. Warehouse Manager
      - i. Reclamation/Repack Coordinator
        - - Repack Assistants (2 full-time)
        - - Reclamation Group Leader
        - - Reclamation Operators (6 full-time)
      - ii. Receiver
      - iii. Three Rivers Table Staff (3 FTEs)
      - iv. Warehouse workers and drivers (8 FTEs)
    - c. Traffic Coordinator

In contrast, the GPCFB distributed 13 million pounds of food, or three times that of the CFB, and dumped 488,000 pounds. The GPCFB incurs the majority of costs associated with trash (Giant Eagle, the largest grocery chain in the Pittsburgh area, pays some of the costs), paying roughly $100,000 annually to dump trash. The Allegheny County Health Department strictly enforces its rule that prohibits the food bank from giving the trash to pig farmers. Below, we briefly describe the sources of the food the respective food banks distribute.

1. *TEFAP*

The state of Connecticut administers TEFAP by contracting with the CFB and Hartford Food Share, an arrangement that has existed since 1994. Before that, 14 Community Action Programs (CAPs) distributed federal commodities to 40,000 households through the Household Distribution Program (Mary Plaskonka, Connecticut Department of Social Services, personal communication, 7/30/99). The CAPs arose out of the War on Poverty through the Office of Economic Opportunity. Federal regulations required that these programs demonstrate that they were grassroots organizations.

The state, however, was not satisfied with how the CAPs administered the TEFAP foods. State officials thought that in general, the CAPs administered the program inefficiently. State officials also did not like seeing the “breadlines” that would form when the CAPs distributed bulk foods such as flour, butter, green beans, and rice. In 1994, there was a decrease in the supply of food available from TEFAP, and the Department of Social Services stopped contracting out TEFAP foods with the CAPs. According to state officials, “the CAPs were actually glad [to not distribute TEFAP food] because it was a lot of work for very little food and it [the Household Distribution Program] was very dependent on a lot of volunteers” (Mary Plaskonka, personal communication, 7/30/99). The Household Distribution Program had been administered monthly and an official from the Department of Social Services believes that the lack of infrastructure within the CAPs kept the food from being distributed efficiently. State officials believe that food banks are better equipped to administer the TEFAP and the State Supplemental Nutrition Assistance programs.

In 1999, Connecticut received from TEFAP food valued at approximately $900,000 plus administrative money. The state's two food banks split the state's TEFAP resources, with the CFB receiving 75 percent and Hartford Food Share receiving 25 percent of the resources. This 75/25 ratio is roughly based on the size of the geographic area served by each food bank and on U.S. census data. The food banks distribute the food and administrative money to the distributing agencies (food pantries, soup kitchens, etc.) based on a formula that considers the size of the population they serve, poverty levels, and size of distribution area.

Within Connecticut, the Connecticut Department of Social Services and the Connecticut Department of Administrative services jointly run the TEFAP program. The state orders which of the available TEFAP foods it wants. Specifically, the U.S. Department of Agriculture sends commodity order forms to the state. The manager of the Food Distribution Program, which falls under the Department of Administrative Services, contacts the liaisons at the Connecticut Food Bank and Hartford Food Share for their specific TEFAP food requests. The Connecticut Department of Administrative Services then places the order with the USDA. In the 1998–99 fiscal year, Connecticut ordered 829,000 pounds of food and received $367,633 of federal dollars for administrative costs.

The manager of Connecticut's Food Distribution Program monitors the distribution process of TEFAP food at the two food banks by conducting site checks that are announced ahead of time. The state monitors the distribution process only to the extent that it monitors a food bank—no monitoring occurs at the food pantry or soup kitchen level. The state takes the two food banks at their word that TEFAP foods are appropriately distributed to needy individuals. In addition, the food banks send the Department of Social Services an annual report that discloses the number of meals/bags of TEFAP food given to unduplicated clients per month.

In the past Connecticut had allocated $0.10 per pound of food distributed for administering the program to the food banks, but for the past 2 years the state has paid the food banks a flat rate based on the 75/25 split. The state found administering the $0.10 per pound rate difficult because of uncertainties in the amount of food that would be distributed throughout the year. The state pays itself $20,000 for its role in administering the program from the funds that TEFAP earmarks for administrative costs.

The CFB receives some TEFAP food once a year, and it orders other food quarterly from a menu that lists available commodities. Agencies eligible for TEFAP foods are “emergency” feeding programs that serve needy individuals—agencies do not have to be a member of the CFB. In fact, the CFB distributes TEFAP foods to six agencies that are not members of CFB. Need is demonstrated by conducting an income test. In general, the state requires less reporting on clients meeting eligibility criteria from soup kitchens.

Nancy Carrington, executive director of the CFB, has noticed an increase in the quality and quantity of TEFAP foods in the 1997–1998 period. “Over time, we have seen an increase in money for administering the TEFAP program and a greater amount of more desirable foods with a higher nutritional value” (Nancy Carrington, personal communication, 1998).

In Pennsylvania, TEFAP operates quite differently. One difference may be a manifestation of the different governmental environments in which the two food banks operate. Connecticut does not have county government, but Pennsylvania does. In Connecticut, all government food assistance programs are administered at the state level and distributed directly to each municipality or to the nearest charitable organization/human service agency. In Pennsylvania, food assistance and many other social services programs are administered from the state to the county level and finally to a charitable organization.

The second difference between TEFAP administration in Pennsylvania and Connecticut is that the GPCFB, unlike the CFB, does not handle the majority of food from this federal program, the reasons probably being historical. In Allegheny County, Pennsylvania (which encompasses Pittsburgh and the site of the GPCFB), Lutheran Services Society is the primary contractor of TEFAP. This arrangement came about because the County Department of Aging administers the Meals on Wheels and the Congregate Meals programs. Lutheran Services Society has always operated Meals on Wheels. When TEFAP money became available in the early 1980s, the County Department of Aging contracted with Lutheran Services to administer the program because Lutheran Services was already involved in food assistance. At that point, the food bank was in its infancy.

Lutheran Services currently subcontracts with seven agencies, the GPCFB being one, to distribute TEFAP foods to local food pantries. In our opinion, this arrangement results in the program being administered in a more complex manner than necessary. For example, while the GPCFB resides in McKeesport, so does another TEFAP subcontractor, the Salvation Army of McKeesport. Pantry administrators decide from which subcontractor they will receive TEFAP food.

Currently, TEFAP is administered through the Allegheny Department of Human Services, Bureau of Hunger and Housing Services, rather than the Department of Aging. This bureau was created after pressure was put on the county by anti-hunger advocates. In 1990–91, the food bank and Just Harvest, a local anti-hunger advocacy organization, pressured the county to appoint a hunger point-person. They felt that administration of anti-hunger programs went through too many agencies and that information between the agencies regarding food assistance was not being shared. The county appointed a hunger point-person in the Department of Aging. Despite being transferred to the Mental Health/Mental Retardation Department a year later, that person continued to be the hunger point-person. The one-person office has evolved into a three-person bureau.

Although Lutheran Services holds the TEFAP contract, the subcontract with the GPCFB allows food bank member agencies to have the TEFAP food delivered from Lutheran Services to the GPCFB so that when receiving GPCFB food, the agency can also pick up TEFAP food. Approximately one-quarter of GPCFB member pantries ask for their TEFAP food to be delivered to the food bank.

Monthly, the GPCFB writes an invoice to Lutheran Services for the cost of administration and receives $0.07 per pound of TEFAP food stored. At the end of Lutheran Services' fiscal year, October 1, the GPCFB writes another invoice for the total poundage of TEFAP food received for the 12-month period, multiplied by an additional $0.03 per pound. If Lutheran Services has any funds remaining at the end of the year, it pays the food bank the additional amount.

For 12 agencies, the State Department of Agriculture contracts directly with GPCFB for GPCFB to handle TEFAP food on the department's behalf. These agencies only serve prepared meals on site to their clients (e.g., a soup kitchen). The GPCFB receives $0.10 per pound of TEFAP food to pay for the cost of administering this contract.

2. *State Food Programs: SFPP and SSNAP*

In both Connecticut and Pennsylvania, the 1980s marked one of the worst recessions since the Great Depression, and political pressure intensified for these states to provide additional food assistance. In Pennsylvania, the Hunger Action Coalition and the GPCFB lobbied the state for funds to alleviate hunger. State Representative James Manderino, the House majority leader, introduced the State Food Purchase Program (SFPP) into the supplemental state budget in July 1983 (GPCFB Annual Report, 1983 and 1989).

In 1983, Pennsylvania allocated $8 million for the SFPP and, based on a formula that considers poverty and unemployment, Allegheny County received $967,705. Since its inception, the county has contracted with the GPCFB to administer the program to member agencies. The GPCFB purchases food in bulk with the state money and then distributes the food at a lower cost to its members.

Similar to Pennsylvania's SFPP, the state of Connecticut has the State Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SSNAP). In 1989 the CFB, the Connecticut Anti-Hunger Coalition, and other advocacy and emergency feeding organizations pressured the state to create the SSNAP program. The Connecticut Department of Social Services runs the SSNAP program and the CFB administers it.

The CFB can use SSNAP funds only to purchase high-protein foods—the funds cannot be used for administrative costs. For the past 10 years, the CFB has received SSNAP money. In fiscal year 1998–99, the CFB received $428,000. The CFB allocates a portion of the SSNAP money to agencies, and then the agencies choose which protein foods to purchase with their SSNAP dollars. Member agencies that qualify for SSNAP foods must be 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations. The agencies place their order with the CFB, which purchases the food. The CFB receives payments for administering SSNAP from agencies, which pay the CFB $0.05 per pound for administering SSNAP foods. There are three distributions of SSNAP foods per year. Unfortunately, not all food pantries participate in the SSNAP program.

At its inception, the SSNAP program was funded through Connecticut's general fund. The program is currently funded through the Social Services Block Grants Funds. Table 6 shows SSNAP and Allegheny County's share of Pennsylvania's SFPP funding over the past decade.

Connecticut state officials from the Department of Food Distribution and Social Services attribute the recent decrease in SSNAP funding to a decline in the demand for unprepared foods. "People are fussy, it's a different kind of people we're dealing with. If it's not in a box or ready-made, people do not know what to do with the food. You can't give people flour, sugar, and milk and ask them to make a pancake." It is unclear to us exactly how the cooking skills of pantry clients translates into decreased dollars to purchase nutritious foods. Further, it is unclear that clients' demand for unprepared foods has decreased.

3. *FEMA*

In Connecticut, Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) funds go to 20 agencies that are members of the Greater New Haven Emergency Food Council (GNHEFC) in the areas of New Haven, East Haven, West Haven, and Branford. In fiscal year 1997–98, the GNHEFC received $34,000 of FEMA money. The CFB gets 9 percent of this for transportation. There are two FEMA distributions

TABLE 6
State Funding for Food Assistance, Connecticut and Pennsylvania

Fiscal Year	Connecticut	Allegheny County
1992–93	$411,490	$1,170,748
1993–94	$389,120	$1,263,324
1994–95	$389,120	$1,349,952
1995–96	$389,242	$1,341,328
1996–97	$409,520	$1,331,712
1997–98	$419,520	$1,365,444
1998–99	NA	$1,368,700
1999–2000	NA	$1,438,732

Source: Connecticut State Department of Social Services, July 1999, and Connecticut Food Bank SSNAP recap figures from 1989–1997; Richard Venezia, Allegheny County Department of Human Services, personal communication.

Note: In FY 1998–99, the SFPP provided a total of $13,775,000 to the state of Pennsylvania, of which $1,368,700 was allocated to Allegheny County (Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture).

per year, and these items can be perishable. The CFB administers FEMA for the GNHEFC because the organization is small and does not have the resources to administer the program itself. Other agencies outside of the GNHEFC may apply directly to FEMA for funds.

Allegheny County receives approximately $440,000 in FEMA funds, of which the GPCFB administers $122,000. Between 90 and 100 food pantries receive FEMA assistance, which is given to them in the form of lines of credit for food. With a line of credit, a pantry can purchase food and nonfood items (with the exception of diapers) from the GPCFB's Wholesale Buying Program. A pantry can also use FEMA funds to pay the shared maintenance fee of $0.07 per pound of food received from the GPCFB. In the Pittsburgh area, pantries do not directly apply for FEMA funds. Instead, the GPCFB chooses to give them FEMA funds based on the need of the pantry for funds and the size of the pantry's clientele. The GPCFB does not receive any administrative monies for administering FEMA.

4. *Buying Club and the Wholesale Buying Program*

The CFB has a Buying Club for food pantries. Food pantries that have the money can order and purchase additional products through the CFB at a greatly reduced cost. The CFB buys products that are often not donated (e.g., paper products, cleaning supplies) from a wholesaler for food pantries. The CFB adds on 7 percent to the price that it pays for the products and offers these items to member agencies. The CFB asks for bids from different companies for these products and companies fax in the bids.

The GPCFB has a similar program called the Wholesale Buying Program. This program started in 1982 for agencies to supplement their food streams with rarely donated items such as eggs, meats, and paper products. The food bank charges member agencies 12 percent of the cost of the items. According to Joyce Rothermel, executive director of the GPCFB, this program "would be a lot larger if agencies [food pantries and kitchens] had more money." In addition to the Wholesale Buying Program, the GPCFB has a Cooperative Purchasing Program, which is offered to both member and nonmember agencies. These agencies can choose which items they wish to purchase at greatly discounted prices from a list. There is no dollar limit to the purchases a pantry makes through the Wholesale Buying Program.

5. *Food Drives*

Food drives are a popular but perhaps ineffective way to increase the supply of food. Clearly, they raise the public's awareness of hunger issues. A variety of organizations hold food drives to benefit the CFB or the GPCFB. These food drives vary in size, composition, longevity, and ingenuity.

For example, in Connecticut, two local radio stations run a week-long campaign around the holiday season called Stuff-a-Bus, now named Operation Stuff-a-Semi. Initially, the stations arranged for a bus to be parked in a central location so individuals could donate food by putting it in the bus. The bus was literally stuffed—food was placed under seats, etc. When the event began, donations filled one bus. In 1996, donations filled 10 buses, and in 1997, a semitrailer was used to collect donations.

The *New Haven Register* sponsors the Help Us Help food drive. It occurs at Stop & Shop stores, whose employees volunteer their time to box the food collected. In 1992–93, this drive collected 11,925 pounds of food.

Scouting for Food, a national effort, in 1992–93 collected 41,350 pounds of food for the CFB and in 1996 collected nearly 500,000 pounds of food for the GPCFB. In Connecticut, Subway Sandwich shops in 1992–93 held a one-day food drive in which the public was to give "a can of food for a six inch sub." This drive collected 8,000 pounds of food.

In Connecticut, the governor's Care and Share program started in 1984. The Boy Scouts, National Guard, Department of Motor Vehicles Emission Stations, and other state agencies and volunteers participate in this effort to raise food and money to support soup kitchens and food pantries. In 1991–92, the effort collected 209,656 pounds of food and over $10,800 (CFB Annual Report 1991–92).

In 1982, the GPCFB partnered with a local television station and launched the Turkey Fund. The fund originally started by encouraging people to donate $10 so that needy families could enjoy a turkey at Thanksgiving. It was a grass-roots effort. The popularity of the fund has grown, and now large corporations actively participate in the effort to raise money for the purchase of turkeys. Recipients are given a $10 gift certificate good toward the purchase of either turkey, chicken, or ham redeemable at a number of large grocery chains.

In 1994, the CFB started a turkey drive based on the GPCFB's model. In the first year, the CFB received 3,000 donated turkeys (or vouchers for the purchase of turkeys). In 1995–96, the CFB received 6,000 turkeys. This program is a favorite of parents—they often bring their children with them to make the donation. In addition to periodic food drives, the CFB places bins to collect canned goods and in the wealthier towns of Connecticut on an ongoing basis.

In 1996, the National Association of Letter Carriers held its fourth annual food drive and collected 436,000 pounds of food for the GPCFB and 34,000 pounds of food for the CFB. This food drive asks residents to participate by placing donated food by their mail boxes on a certain day. Letter carriers pick up food as they deliver the mail.

6. *Grocery Chains*

Some grocery stores donate their salvage items to the CFB and GPCFB. Salvage items include foods that are close to the expiration date, boxes or cans not entirely filled during the packaging process, recipe variations, mislabeled product, product that was shipped to the wrong destination, excess test-marketing product, or items that are damaged but unopened, such as dented cans or distressed packaging (Nancy Carrington, executive director of the CFB, personal communication, and GPCFB Annual Report 1983–84, p. 3). Rather than pay for the cost of dumping, grocery stores often donate these items to the local food banks so they can be given to the needy. In fact, in both Pittsburgh and Connecticut, the largest grocery chains in the area have been strong supporters of the food banks.

Stop & Shop, a local food store chain, is the largest donor in this category for CFB. CFB estimates that it receives roughly 30,000 pounds of food per week from Stop & Shop. "It's almost too much. Sometimes, there are not enough volunteers to handle the salvage" (Nancy Carrington, personal communication). Salvage items require a multitude of volunteers to re-inspect all food items to make sure that no items are beyond their expiration date or otherwise unacceptable for distribution.

In Allegheny County, Giant Eagle (a prominent local grocery chain) is the GPCFB's biggest donor. Generally, the GPCFB will only accept salvage donations when 75 percent of the food is salvageable. Only 60 percent of Giant Eagle's donations are salvageable, so Giant Eagle helps the GPCFB operate the reclamation center in two ways. First, Giant Eagle underwrites the cost of eight employees to work in the center. Employees are paid roughly $15,000–20,000 a year plus benefits. In addition, Giant Eagle pays a fraction of the costs of utilities and rent, as well as a percentage of the total dumping costs per month. Thus, the GPCFB does not rely on volunteers to sort through the large grocery chain's salvage. Giant Eagle benefits in a number of ways. First, it does not have to incur the entire cost of dumping. Second, Giant Eagle receives both federal and state tax credits for its donation to the food banks. The GPCFB and Giant Eagle have had this mutually beneficial relationship since 1985.

7. *Farmers, Farms, and Farm Stands*

The CFB recently started the Produce Program, which encourages local food growers to donate fresh vegetables. The food growers come mostly from the towns of North Haven, Branford, and Orange. On Mondays and Wednesdays, the CFB rents a truck to pick up produce from local farms and deliver it to 13 agencies in the Greater New Haven area. The CFB does not glean food.

The GPCFB has designed the Green Harvest program, which involves gleaning, growing, and distributing fresh produce. The program gleans unharvested produce from local farmers. Farmers notify the food bank of a gleaning opportunity and the food bank sends out a team of volunteers to harvest the produce and deliver it to the member agencies. In 1996, approximately 90 volunteers gleaned 43,171 pounds of produce.

The Green Harvest program also includes the food bank's farm where it grows produce for member agencies, shareholders, and the Farm Stand project. In 1996, the GPCFB produced 61,813 pounds of fresh produce for member agencies and 22,725 pounds for 103 shareholders who received weekly parcels of fresh produce through the Community Supported Agriculture project. The 20-acre plot also grew 3,000 pounds of food to be sold in low-income communities through a project called the Farm Stand project. This project aims to help low-income communities gain access to fresh produce. The food bank provides technical assistance to individuals who wish to operate a farm stand in their community. In total, the project in 1996, distributed 30,999 pounds of produce in low-income communities. The farm stands accept cash as well as WIC Farmer's Market Nutrition Program Vouchers and food stamps.

8. *Individuals*

Individual food contributions are garnered in a variety of ways. At times, extraordinary efforts surface. In 1984, one particular donor from Connecticut, Bill Liddell, started to donate and deliver extra food from his garden in his own vehicle. Over the years, he had donated a tremendous amount of food that was grown on 3/4 of an acre. In July 1991, he delivered 1,200 pounds of fresh produce weekly (CFB Annual Report 1991–92). In fiscal year 1992–93, he grew and donated 20,000–30,000 pounds of fresh produce.

9. *Small Businesses*

In addition to donations from food manufacturers, grocery stores, farmers, and individuals, the GPCFB and CFB receive daily and weekly donations from smaller businesses in the area. In the Pittsburgh area, over 50 local businesses donate to the GPCFB on a regular basis.

One business that donates to the CFB is Luigi's Bakery, a renowned Italian bakery located in Bridgeport. Luigi's has donated food to various organizations since the bakery's inception 31 years ago. Although Luigi's consistently donates to the CFB as well as to other local organizations, it has never taken a federal tax credit from the CFB.

John Di Marco, the owner of Luigi's, donates roughly $50,000–$60,000 worth of product per year to local nonprofit organizations in need. The CFB initiated the relationship with Luigi's Bakery, which donates an estimated $100 worth (retail price) of food per week to the CFB. Luigi's drivers generally drop off food at the food bank daily. Di Marco donates breads, rolls, stuffed breads, pastries, and cookies. He apparently does not make additional food in order to donate.

Di Marco donates food for several reasons. When asked why he donates and if he thinks it makes a difference, he replied:

> We feel that there are people out there that need it. Nothing makes me feel better than giving to those in need. It makes me feel good, it's a good product. How can I know if it helps? I'm sure there are some moochers. I can't say he deserves, and he doesn't deserve. . . . I have a weakness, I can't see people hurting.

In addition to his compassion for the needy, Di Marco also believes that donating to organizations is a good business practice. He believes that when he donates to organizations and to their events, he attracts anyone associated with the organization or event to the bakery and that donating ultimately increases sales.

D. <u>Funding</u>

Both food banks raise revenues in variety of ways: individual contributions, fundraising events, donations from corporations and religious and civic organizations, grants from foundations, and interest on investments. Other revenues for administration, operating costs, and food come from the state and federal governments. In addition, the GPCFB and CFB charge nominal membership fees ($30 and $50 annually, respectively) for affiliated agencies as well as shared maintenance fees and other associated costs.

The CFB's revenues for FY 1996–97 were $7.1 million, with the value of donated food accounting for 73 percent of that amount. In contrast, the GPCFB received $16 million in support during the same period, with donated food constituting 82 percent of the total. The GPCFB received $280,000 in funding from foundations (GPCFB 1998, p. 16). This funding stream is critical because of its sponsorship of research and funding initiatives that let the GPCFB better plan for the future and try out innovative programs on a test basis. Foundation funding allows the food bank to be more responsive to the community it serves. Pittsburgh is fortunate to have a host of foundations.

For financial support, the CFB primarily depends on monetary donations from a broad base of individuals and fundraisers. The CFB has roughly 8,000–10,000 active donors who give in the range of $25–$50 annually. “Our donor base comes from a highly educated, concerned, caring group of people. Not so much old money or big money” (Mary Johnson, CFB director of development, personal communication). As with food donations, some persons donate exceptional amounts. For example, in FY 1997, a couple gave $10,000.

The GPCFB has a donor base of 18,000, with roughly 8,000–9,000 active donors. The majority of their individual contributions come from direct mail. The GPCFB publishes a bimonthly newsletter and in three of these issues asks for contributions; in 1997, 1,003 individuals made contributions averaging $37.28.

Fundraisers constitute the second largest source of CFB operational funds. Fundraisers are as diverse and innovative as the food drives. The events range from a small community church collection to larger events such as the Walk Against Hunger fundraiser. Walk Against Hunger started 15 years ago, before the emergence of CFB. The local event is a 3.1-mile walk and takes place at the Yale Bowl in New Haven. The event raises money by garnering pledges from individuals. CFB organized the first event in 1990 and raised $30,000 for itself and for emergency feeding programs in the Greater New Haven area. Corporate sponsors covered the overhead costs of the event, bringing the grand total to $54,000.

The GPCFB also engages in a wide variety of fundraising activities and in 1997 raised $199,322. One annual event, the Empty Bowls Dinner, raises approximately $12,000–$13,000. The event is a joint effort with a local advocacy organization called Just Harvest, and the two organizations divide the proceeds. Participants in the event purchase a ticket entitling them to a handmade ceramic bowl and a small dinner of soup and bread, simulating a soup kitchen. The two organizations solicit approximately 1,000 ceramic bowls from local high school students and artists, find local restaurants to donate soup and bread, organize 100 volunteers, and organize the entertainment.

Share Our Strength's Taste of the Nation is a national fundraiser that contributes to both the CFB's and GPCFB's operations. Share Our Strength recruits restaurants and chefs in over 100 host cities to donate, cook, and serve a dish at this one-day tasting event. All of the revenues from ticket sales to the event are donated to anti-hunger and anti-poverty nonprofit organizations. In 1998, Taste of the Nation raised $4.6 million dollars.

In 1997–98, the CFB received $540,000 in individual contributions and $148,000 was raised through fundraisers. Money raised from these two categories is unrestricted and therefore can be used for operational expenses. In contrast, in 1997 the GPCFB raised $422,500 from individuals and $200,000 from fundraising events.

The next category of donations is at the corporate level. The CFB reports having difficulty expanding in this area because of their location and competition with other food banks. Most corporate headquarters in Connecticut area are located either in Hartford or in lower Fairfield County—not in CFB's service area. Second Harvest food banks are not permitted to compete with each other for funding. Hartford Food Share has stronger relationships with Hartford's corporations than does the CFB. The SDO in lower Fairfield County has better access to the corporations in its area, and thus the CFB and the SDO compete for funding from the corporations in lower Fairfield County. The CFB received $90,000 from corporations in FY 1997. In contrast, GPCFB secured $212,252 in contributions from local corporations in 1997.

Another funding barrier that the CFB perceives is the shift in the funding focus of foundations and other donors from direct service to social change. The CFB's director of development stated that "The new direction of funding is for empowerment-type work instead of direct service. If people are hungry, they won't be very empowered. There are long-term health implications of being hungry. People who are trying to get back on track and are going to training programs need to eat to do well." To counteract what it feels is a precarious funding environment, the CFB is actively trying to diversify funding sources by increasing foundation support and implementing another grassroots fundraiser.

Foundations in the Pittsburgh area are shifting from capital campaign contributions, which have been funded in the past, to funding operational costs. This presents a challenge to the GPCFB in securing funding for its new warehouse. However, in July 1999 Pennsylvania Governor Tom Ridge presented the GPCFB with a $1.2 million grant from the state for the new warehouse.

E. Relationships with Food Pantries

Both food banks have agency relations coordinators on staff who deal directly with food pantry administrators. Similar to Second Harvest, both food banks have their own set of criteria that agencies must adhere to in order to become and remain members. Not all food pantries in Connecticut belong to the CFB, nor do all food pantries in the 11 counties around Allegheny County belong to the GPCFB. The CFB's membership includes 124 food pantries and 97 multiservice programs with pantries. Members of the CFB are not permitted to proselytize or discriminate against their clients. They are to serve strikers so long as the strike pay is below 185 percent of the poverty level. Although member agencies are supposed to serve anybody in need, this openness is not always practiced. The CFB reports having a soup kitchen in New Haven that refuses to serve single men. The CFB claims that its membership serves roughly 250,000 individuals.

Oversight of CFB food pantries is done through site checks, once every 2 years by appointment. The agency relations director does spot checks when needed. For example, if the CFB receives a complaint about a particular pantry, the CFB makes an unannounced visit to the pantry. If extreme violations are discovered, the pantry's food supply is cut immediately. However, extreme violations are rare. Usually the food pantry is asked to correct the violation within a set time without its food supply being cut off. One form of a violation would be if a member food pantry charged or solicited donations from clients for food. Pantries that charge for food are asked to stop or are expelled from the CFB.

The GPCFB also conducts site checks, but does so annually. During these pre-arranged monitoring visits of each and every member agency, a representative of the food bank evaluates the facilities and the distribution methods of a food pantry, examines the pantry's client-verification system (e.g., collection of clients' demographic information and income-eligibility information), talks with food pantry clients to learn about how the organization serves them, and talks with food pantry personnel to learn how the food bank can better serve the food pantry. If the food bank had reason to believe that operations at the pantry were problematic, a representative would do an unannounced spot-check of the pantry. In an 11-year period, the GPCFB has only once cut off the food supply of a food pantry because of a gross violation of food bank rules.

Both the CFB and GPCFB advocate a client choice approach, where the food pantry is set up like a grocery store and clients can choose what they want. The agency relations director believes that "It helps with clients' self-esteem." However, most food pantries prepack bags or boxes for their clients.

In Connecticut, distribution of food at pantries varies. Some pantries distribute food only three times per year, others distribute quarterly, monthly, or weekly. Approximately 10 percent of food pantries have a paid coordinator and 80 percent of food pantries are religiously affiliated. Over the past 5 years, the number of new food pantries has grown, but many pantries have closed. In 1998, there was a net difference of roughly six new food pantries. The director of agency relations attributes food pantry closings to a lack of staff and funds, plus a loss of interest in running a pantry. The director has also seen an increase in residential food programs, such as after-school programs.

F. Transporting Food to Food Pantries

At the CFB, food pantries must pick up food from the food bank (or satellite warehouse). Delivering food to pantries is limited because the CFB has only one truck and it is used mainly to pick up food from donors. At the time of the pick-up, the pantry representative can shop in the warehouse for food. Foods, other than TEFAP, selected by the pantries are weighed as they go out.

Member agencies of the GPCFB order food from a telephone menu that is produced early each morning. Volunteers package a food pantry's order for either pick-up or delivery, which the GPCFB provides for member agencies that have limited transportation means.

G. Supportive Services

The CFB offers technical assistance to member agencies. Technical assistance is provided in a variety of ways, such as newsletters, letters, and workshops. Topics include nutrition education, grant writing, networking, how to become a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, and welfare reform. In addition, a one-day, all-agency conference is held every other year. The Connecticut Anti-Hunger Coalition also sponsors meetings every 6 months for each region.

In contrast, the GPCFB has organized and usually hosts quarterly Food Provider Meetings. The food bank arranges for a variety of individuals to share information at the meetings about any policies, research, opportunities, and news that might impact program administrators or their clients. The GPCFB also distributes a quarterly newsletter.

In addition to the GPCFB's efforts, Allegheny County hosts quarterly meetings to discuss policy changes, etc. These meetings provide a forum for organizations to cooperate and plan.

H. Discussion

Since the late 1970s, private food assistance has evolved from simply handing out available food to a complex organization in which food banks obtain food from many sources and distribute it to (mostly) charitable organizations that in turn give it to the needy. The two food banks examined in this paper demonstrate that the sources and amounts of food available for distribution in their respective service areas differ substantially.

The political history and context of a local area contribute to the differences in the form and strength of the private food assistance network. The political history of these areas—specifically, differences in the existence and form of county government—manifests itself in the administration of TEFAP. Although both Connecticut and Pennsylvania suffered from recession in the early 1980s, Pennsylvania's state food purchase program began in 1983 while Connecticut's did not start until 1988, perhaps because of the varying strength of political activists and anti-hunger activists in the two areas. Even though the two food banks have a similar number of people below the poverty line in their service areas, Pennsylvania provides the GPCFB with twice as much money as Connecticut provides to the CFB for the purchase of food. Overall, the two food banks vary significantly in the size, scope, and intensity of their activities.

In the next section we offer concluding remarks about the private food assistance network.

V. CONCLUSIONS

Public food assistance has always responded to the dual goals of aiding agriculture and the needy. In contrast, private food assistance has only concerned itself with aiding the needy. The private food assistance network provides a way by which both public and private goods can be distributed to the needy.

The private food assistance network emerged as the result of the convergence of two precipitating forces—the government responding to hunger by establishing the Temporary Emergency Federal Assistance Program and the formation of Second Harvest. These two factors fostered the existence of private food assistance by providing it with a steady stream of revenue and food from both public and private sources.

Having a supply of resources so that assistance can be given is but one aspect of the private food assistance network's creation. The other aspect is the demand for free food. The explosion in the demand for free food in the 1980s had three roots. First, the extremely poor—those eligible for the maximum in food stamp benefits—demanded free food because it is difficult to rely solely on the Food Stamp program's Thrifty Food Plan on a long-term basis. Second, the structural unemployment attributable to the deindustrialization of the U.S. economy in the early 1980s created a group of newly poor that had an acute need for free food.

The third root of the increased demand for food in the early 1980s was a manifestation of the cessation of the food stamp purchase requirement which took effect January 1, 1979. Anti-hunger advocates had lobbied for a repeal of the purchase requirement out of concern that eligible households did not participate in the Food Stamp program because they could not afford to do so. Lifting the purchase requirement led to a dramatic rise in participation in the Food Stamp program but may also have unintentionally increased the demand for free food.

Before the purchase requirement was lifted, critics contended that the food stamp allotment (at a variable price, depending on the level of need) was insufficient to provide a family's entire food needs throughout a month. However, when the purchase requirement ceased, there was no assurance that a family would reserve the dollars that it formerly budgeted for purchasing food stamps for purchasing food directly. Without the purchase requirement, a family no longer had as much of an economic incentive to allocate the "buy-in dollars" for food. Also, without the purchase requirement, the cost of the food needed above and beyond the food stamp benefit rose, increasing the incentive for households to obtain food at the lowest cost. Of course, the demand for free food increased.

In an economics framework, while the cost of food from the Food Stamp program became zero, recipients had to bear the entire marginal cost of additional food. When the purchase requirement was lifted in 1977, policymakers assumed that program participants would continue to budget for food to the same degree as when the program had the purchase requirement. However, perhaps lifting the purchase requirement increased a household's incentive to scavenge for food. When there are competing demands for the use of money in a household and there is a source for free food, it becomes rational for food stamp participants to rely on food pantries to supplement their food stamps. The cessation of the purchase requirement may have led to an increase in usage of and chronic reliance on food pantries.

Food stamp recipients' perceptions of the goal of the Food Stamp program did not keep pace with the lifting of the purchase requirement. Between the time that FRAC won its lawsuit against the USDA and the lifting of the purchase requirement, recipients were given food stamps designed to last a month. When the purchase requirement ceased, the length of time that food stamps were designed to last a family decreased. With the exception of households receiving the maximum in food stamp benefits, food stamps are now *not* designed to last a month. However, perceptions of the intent of the program have not changed. In 1998, food pantry participants of focus groups lamented that "food stamps do not last the month" (and actually last for only about 2 weeks) and that they rely on food pantries after spending their food stamp dollars (Daponte and Bade 1999).

The current structure of the Food Stamp program, in which food stamps are not designed to last a month for most participants, encourages scavenging for food. Galer-Unti found that:

> The attendance of individuals at emergency food assistance sites who also reported the use of food stamps (48 percent) indicates that food stamp allotment for these individuals was too low. Although food stamps were effective in eliminating hunger among household members, 71 percent of food stamp recipients indicated that their food stamps ran out before the month's end. When their food stamps ran out, respondents indicated that hunger returned to the household" (Galer-Unti 1995, p. 114).

A. <u>Reconsidering Food Stamps in Providing for an Effective Food Safety Net</u>

The targeting of many food assistance programs to certain demographic groups hinders the ability of government to provide all residents with an effective food safety net. Piecemeal efforts make it difficult for needy households to access all of the programs for which they are eligible. Current food assistance programs are disorganized and hard to navigate.

> Low participation rates, low benefit levels, and reliance on more than one food assistance program indicate wide-scale problems with the system of food assistance in the United States. Food assistance in the U.S. is fragmented and under the auspices of several different agencies. Food assistance programs are not controlled and monitored by any one group. There is a heavy reliance on the private sector to compensate for the inadequacies of the government programs. Extensive restructuring of government food assistance program must occur in order to effectively eradicate hunger among U.S. citizens. Changes must include the development of food assistance programs that are far more sensitive to fluctuating needs and programs should be controlled by one government agency (Galer-Unti 1995, p. 119).

The Food Stamp program could be modified to provide the needy with an effective food safety net. Modifications we outline below include reinstating, to some degree, the purchase requirement, simplifying the eligibility determination for the program, and raising the income and asset eligibility thresholds.

With respect to the purchase requirement, the Food Stamp program could be restructured so that households have an incentive to purchase enough food for a family to become food secure. Prior to 1977 the purchase requirement was an onerous barrier to participating in the Food Stamp program because families had to have a lump sum of cash to purchase food stamps. With today’s technology available in large grocery stores, the buy-in could be spread throughout the month. The Food Stamp program could be structured so that for every dollar spent on an allowable food item, a family’s electronic benefits account would credited with food stamp funds. The ratio of funds provided to out-of-pocket expenditures would depend on the severity of a household’s situation. Having some degree of matching for food purchases would provide families with an incentive to spend money on food. As the program is currently structured, there is no incentive to spend more on food and hence no assurance that food stamps decrease food insecurity.

With respect to eligibility for the program, the criteria need to be simplified. Research conducted by Daponte, Sanders, and Taylor (1999) shows that low-income households tend not to know their eligibility status for the program. For example, when a sample of nonparticipating low-income households was asked why they do not participate in the Food Stamp program, 60 percent of those later found to be ineligible correctly stated that they did not participate because they were ineligible. However, 63 percent of those later found to be eligible incorrectly stated that their nonparticipation was due to ineligibility. Daponte, Sanders, and Taylor also found that providing respondents with information regarding the amount in benefits for which they are eligible increases the likelihood of their participation in the program.

Simplifying the eligibility criteria may assure that the program reaches a larger proportion of the needy. For example, IRA and retirement savings are currently applied to the asset limit.[12] Daponte, Sanders, and Taylor found that a small portion of households are ineligible for food stamps solely due to having saved for retirement. Applying some retirement savings but not others increases the complexity of the Food Stamp program's eligibility rules. Perhaps encouraging the needy to delve into retirement savings is a shortsighted policy that discourages saving behavior.

The Food Stamp program's rules for calculating a household's net monthly income with respect to the dependent care deduction also seem unnecessarily complex and arbitrary. For example, the deduction limit for children younger than 2 years is $200 per month, while the deduction limit for children older than 2 years decreases to $175 per month. Not only does the age differential make the rule more complex, but the deductible limit does not come close to approaching actual child care costs. Other

[12]However, if the retirement savings are in a company's plan that the individual cannot access, then the savings are not applied.

examples of complexity and arbitrariness in food stamp eligibility rules abound (e.g., shelter deduction, medical care deduction).

Having complex and arbitrary rules discourages participation in the program. When households observe that apparently similar households are ineligible for the program, they tend not to apply, although their own situation may differ enough to make them eligible for the program. A lack of participation in the Food Stamp program and the program's structural inadequacies increase the chronic dependence of many needy families on the private food assistance network.

Private food assistance provides millions of persons with valuable assistance. The network can now be valued in the billions of dollars and provides important benefits to households that use it as an alternative to or supplement for the Food Stamp program. However, as our description of some aspects of the Connecticut Food Bank and Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank shows, not only is the network heterogeneous, but its benefits to the needy differ. We believe that if we had examined areas even more diverse with respect to the political environment, community history, culture, funding opportunities, and local economic circumstances, we would have observed even greater differences in how the network is structured, the resources available to it, and the amount of food that is given to the needy. For example, one could imagine that the private food assistance network in Appalachian Kentucky would have differed even more from the networks in Pittsburgh or Connecticut.

All of the persons with whom we spoke—pantry administrators, advocates, government officials, staff at food banks and Second Harvest—would like to see hunger in the United States eradicated. They would also like to see government provide the needy with an effective food safety net. In the absence of an effective public food safety net, the private food assistance network continues to provide food to the needy.

Appendix A
Persons Interviewed

Connecticut Food Bank, October 5–7, 1998

Nancy Carrington, executive director
Rose Majestic, associate director
Michelle Budwitz, agency relations coordinator
Mary Johnson, director of development
Jim Stuhlman, Fairfield Branch warehouse manager
Donna, warehouse manager
Anna, database manager
Jeanne Fereira, Trumbull Social Services

Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank, November 19, 1998

Joyce Rothermel, executive director
Miriam Manion, associate director
Cynthia Moore, agency relations manager
Ann Olson, accounting manager
Lisa Scales, Green Harvest manager
Barbara Nicholas, resource development and information systems manager

Interviews in Connecticut on July 27–28, 1999

Mark Winne, Hartford Food System
Mary Plaskonka, Department of Social Services, State of Connecticut
Doris Vieira, Department of Administrative Social Services, State of Connecticut
Alan J. Carbonneau, Department of Social Services, State of Connecticut
Bill Rufleth, Department of Social Services
Edie Cassidy, Catholic Charities of Bridgeport, Connecticut
John Di Marco, Luigi’s Italian Bakery, Bridgeport, Connecticut

Second Harvest, Chicago, Illinois, September 9–10, 1999

Doug O’Brien
Marcus Fruechter
Dale McCloud

Allegheny County, Pennsylvania

Rich Venezia, administrator, Allegheny County Department of Human Services, Bureau of Hunger and Housing Services
Mary Rieger, East End Cooperative Ministries
Sue Gates, North Side Common Ministries

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Private-sector partners are often independent of the political mandates of national, state or local governments and they may mobilize more specific expertise and greater capital more efficiently and cost-effectively than public-sector partners.Â Evaluations of food fortification programmes in low-income countries suggest that cost-effective and sustainable results are feasible when there is close collaboration among the public sector to improve population health; the private sector, with expertise in food production, technology, marketing communications and consumer reach; and NGO that deliver programmes and services to vulnerable groups(Reference Mannar and van Ameringen88). Financing of humanitarian food assistance interventions will be prioritised according to (i) the severity of the crisis and the scale of the unmet needs (ii) the immediacy. Guatemala - Training to women in the Dry Corridor Â© European Union, 2013 - photo by EC/ECHO/WFP/. Francisco FiÃ³n.Â The design of any response should compare alternative activities and tools on the basis of their cost-effectiveness for meeting the defined needs. When food aid is deemed to be the most appropriate tool, local purchase (i.e. purchase in the country of operation) or, secondarily, regional food purchases (i.e. procuring from neighbouring countries) are favoured, so as to maximise acceptability of food products, protect or support local markets, and reduce transportation costs and delivery timeframes. people with USG food assistance resources. Over the past decade, as the number of complex conflict and climate-driven emergencies has risen, assistance has become more difficultâ€”and more costlyâ€”to provide. Increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of every food assistance dollar and doing more with the resources available has become essential.Â Expressing the compassion and good will of the people of the United States, we mobilize Americaâ€™s resources to predict, prevent, and respond to chronic and acute hunger overseas. Through our emergency programs, we strive to provide food assistance to save lives, reduce suffering, and support the early recovery of populations affected by both acute and chronic emergencies. Distributed foods are prepared and consumed elsewhere. Pantries often require referrals or proof of need. The Paradox of Food Insecurity and Obesity in America. the need to maximize caloric intake the trade-off between food quantity and quality overeating when food is available. National School Lunch Act.Â 1978, DHHS, Administration on Aging (AOA), with financial support of the USDA provide incentives to states and tribes for the efficient delivery of nutritious meals to older adults people 60+, those less than 60 with disabilities. Commodity Foods. 1961, USDA, FNS Support American agricultural producers by providing cash reimbursements for meals served in schools, provide nutritious, USDA-purchased food for the NSLP, CACFP, SFSP. Food Distribution Disaster Assistance.