GAP ANALYSIS REPORT 2009

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Introduction

A Gap Analysis is a statistical view of where an organization is operationally and helps the organization decide the direction it needs to move in order to fulfill its mission statement.

The GAP Analysis Project at the Maryland Food Bank (MFB) was undertaken at the request of CEO, Deborah Flateman. All research, surveying and information gathering was executed from September 2008 – January 2009. Stephany Whitaker, a Bill Emerson Hunger Fellow from the Congressional Hunger Center, was assigned as an intern to the project. The MFB Programs Department staff assisted with the completion of the GAP Analysis Project.

The mission statement of the Maryland Food Bank is: "To lead the movement and nurture the belief that together we can improve the lives of Marylanders by ending hunger". To that end, the following goals were set for the GAP Analysis Project:

- Define, map, and report the status of all of the MFB network partners in each of the counties serviced by the MFB network.
- Establish whether or not the MFB meets Feeding America's standard for adequate service in each county served by the MFB.
- Gather data to establish where service gaps are in the partner network county by county and explain why those gaps exist in the current system. Also, to calculate the amount of poundage necessary to meet those poundage gaps in each county in the MFB network service area.
- Identify ways the MFB can additionally, more effectively, address the unmet hunger needs in Maryland.
- Determine the percentage of food stamp need and use by county in order to provide MFB with valuable information to educate the hungry in Maryland about available resources such as the food stamp program.
- Identify other key stakeholder organizations related to ending hunger in Maryland and the possibilities for collaboration with the MFB.

Methodology & Assumptions

1. The primary assessment tool used for the MFB GAP Analysis project was a questionnaire presented to 20% of all MFB network partners in each of the 21 counties, and Baltimore City, served by the MFB, Salisbury and our Regional Distributions Organizations (RDOs). Full cooperation from the RDOs and Network Partners was assumed.

2. Random surveys of "walk-in" network partners to the MFB were also compiled as agencies came to the MFB to pick-up their orders.

3. A copy of the actual survey questionnaire is found in Appendix A of this report. The survey questionnaire was aimed at information gathering about MFB network partner organizations, the reasons that people in their communities are hungry and seek food assistance, how accessible they are by public transportation, other types of services their organization may provide or referrals they may provide, other stakeholders, customer satisfaction with the MFB and our network partners knowledge of food stamp participation by those they serve.

4. Research was also conducted on state census, school lunch and food stamp data and other poverty related studies which established the numerical baseline for defining "need", "poverty" and "hungry or food insecure" in the state of Maryland for the purposes of this GAP Project.

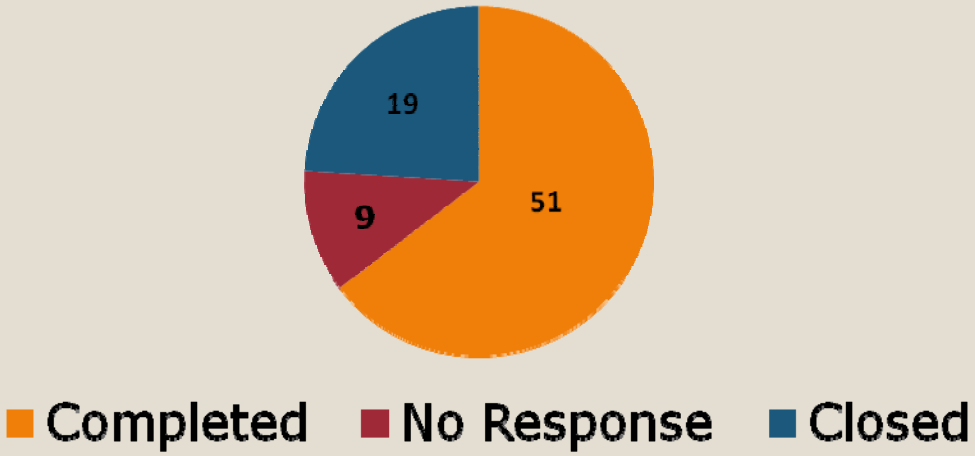
5. In all, a total of 153 (15%) network partners were randomly chosen to be called with the survey questionnaire. A total of 81 (53%) network partner organization's completed the survey questionnaire. Of the remaining 72 organizations, 5 (3.2%) "walk-in" organization's overlapped with the call list, 39 (25.5%) agencies had closed their doors, their phone numbers were no longer in service or they were no longer members of the MFB and the last 28 (18.3%) agencies refused to cooperate or would not respond to our requests to complete the survey questionnaires. An agency standard for telephone surveys is 35-60% (Johnson, 1) (Please see following page for pie charts on these percentages).

6. All poundage totals and data was gathered through Navision database reports and from information provided by the Salisbury branch and the RDO's.

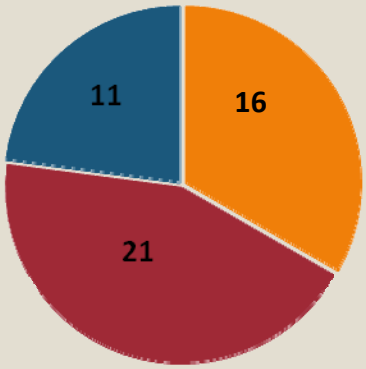
7. Formulas utilized to determine service gaps in the network were from the Feeding America Member Contract and from endhungerinamerica.org.

Network GAP Participation Percentages

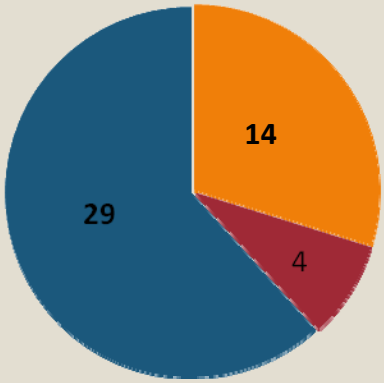
MFB Network Partners



Salisbury Network Partners



RDO Network Partners



* No Response agencies were those that could not be reached when called and did not return messages left on their machines.

* Closed agencies are those which when called, stated that their organization is no longer operating. An agency was also deemed closed if their only known contact information resulted in a wrong or disconnected number.

Hunger in Maryland

According to studies of median household income conducted by the U.S Census Bureau, Maryland is the wealthiest state in the United States (American Fact Finder). However, over half a million Marylanders live below the federal poverty line (see chart on next page for county break down of state poverty) and over 250,000 Marylanders are unemployed which leaves them vulnerable to the effects of poverty and food insecurity (American Fact Finder).

On Maryland's Eastern shore, tourism is a primary source of income and seasonal jobs make up a large percentage of the employment opportunities; Thus, unemployment rates tend to rise and fall with the seasons. Tourism season runs from May until September during which time unemployment rates are typically lower by one to two decimal points (Career and Workforce Information).

So how does the seemingly wealthiest state have so much poverty? Howard County produced an enormous median income of $94,260 (Brewington). A number so large skews the data and makes the whole state seem wealthier. This wealth factor could prove to be detrimental to Maryland in receiving federal and other types of financial aid for the poor, including food stamps.

Roughly 140,000 children under the age of 18 (see page 6 for child poverty by county) fall below the poverty line in Maryland (US Census SAIPE). Hunger is a real issue for children; Federal programs try to address these issues by creating Free and Reduced lunch feeding programs in schools. A similar breakfast program exists, but participation in both the lunch and breakfast programs in Maryland is lower than it should be (see page 6 for student participation in Free and Reduced meals by county); with only 47% of the students receiving free or reduced lunch participating in the breakfast program (Chin et al.3). Of the 631 Maryland schools who are eligible for all students to receive free, state-funded, breakfast, only 193 schools (31%) participate in this free program (Chin et al, 4).

The Maryland Food Bank plays a valuable role in fighting hunger in Maryland. MFB provides food across the state that assists those in need; Including, many Marylanders who are unemployed or underemployed. With the ability to transport great quantities of food across the state, the MFB can be extremely beneficial in exporting information and promoting federal assistance programs. The following analysis examines the current effectiveness of the MFB and identifies weaknesses in the partner network that have, or may, hinder greater outreach and distribution efforts.

Poverty and Unemployment Rates for Maryland Counties (SAIPE) and *(Unemployment by County in Maryland)

County	Population (2007)	Poverty Estimate (2007)	Median Household Income (2007)	*Unemployment Percentage (Nov 2008)
Anne Arundel	512,155	24,888	80,158	4.5
Queen Anne's	46,570	2,807	75,902	4.9
Howard	273,700	12,172	100,744	3.6
St. Mary's	100,380	7,527	72,534	4.2
Charles	140,444	8,151	81,545	4.4
Calvert	88,223	4,528	89,159	4.2
Wicomico	93,600	11,954	49,981	6.9
Caroline	32,910	3,789	48,387	6.4
Cecil	99,695	9,160	62,489	6.0
Kent	19,990	2,381	46,693	5.1
Dorchester	31,846	4,277	42,077	8.2
Worcester	49,375	4,493	49,067	11.2
Frederick	224,705	11,540	76,802	4.3
Talbot	36,195	2,953	56,512	5.0
Baltimore City	637,455	120,813	36,894	8.1
Baltimore County	788,995	58,607	60,828	5.4
Harford	239,993	13,331	72,092	5.0
Carroll	169,220	7,696	79,803	4.5
Washington	145,115	14,287	50,257	6.7
Somerset	26,015	4,746	35,553	7.6
Allegany	72,594	9,389	37,171	6.1
Garrett	29,846	3,747	42,041	5.4

Child Poverty and Free and Reduced School Meal Participation in Maryland Counties (Chin et al, 3) and *(SAIPE)

County	*Poverty Estimate Under Age 18 (2007)	Children Enrolled in Free and Reduced School Lunch Program	Children Enrolled in Free and Reduced School Breakfast Program	Eligible Children Enrolled in Free and Reduced School Breakfast and Lunch Program (%)
Anne Arundel	7,752	10,561	4,925	47
Queen Anne's	845	918	390	43
Howard	3,280	4,710	961	68
St. Mary's	2,436	2,822	1,563	55
Charles	2,789	1,475	1,475	71
Calvert	1,377	1,677	550	44
Wicomico	3,695	5,258	2,724	52
Caroline	1,289	1,875	825	44
Cecil	3,112	3,289	1,797	55
Kent	568	721	489	68
Dorchester	1,314	1,772	1,256	46
Worcester	1,523	1,702	829	49
Frederick	3,660	5,146	2,363	54
Talbot	866	932	474	51
Baltimore City	40,775	40,648	15,337	45
Baltimore County	16,116	26,355	11,858	33
Harford	4,230	6,422	2,810	20
Carroll	2,127	2,396	650	27
Washington	4,315	5,954	3,985	67
Somerset	1,284	1,206	855	59
Allegany	2,310	3,614	2,130	71
Garrett	1,206	1,463	796	44

Maryland Food Stamp Participation

The Food Stamp Program is now called the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). In Maryland, recipients are given credit through the use of an Electronic Benefits Transfer system also known as an EBT card. Individuals are eligible for food stamp benefits if their income is 130% below Maryland's poverty line.

The following rules apply to individuals seeking SNAP assistance:
Eligibility is determined by household which means that all individuals living in the same household, and consuming food together, are counted in order to establish eligibility for benefits.

Gross income and Net income thresholds must be met by the applicant household, unless the household includes an elderly or disabled person, or if the household is receiving other specific federal aid. Household assets may not exceed $2,000 unless the household includes an elderly or disabled person, in which case assets cannot exceed $3,000.

Individuals receiving specific government aid may be exempt from the assets test. Other deductibles include child care and shelter expenses (rent, motel fee, etc) (Snap Summary in Maryland). The majority of those who qualify for SNAP receive an average of $21.00 per week in benefits, that is approximately $3.00 per day. (FRAC Take Action)

Household Size	Maximum Monthly Food Stamp Allotment
1	$ 176
2	$ 323
3	$ 463
4	$ 588
5	$ 698
6	$ 838
7	$ 926

Maryland Food Supplement (SNAP) County Data
(Maryland Hunger Solutions) and *(SAIPE)

County	* # people below poverty level (2007)	SNAP Participants 2007	SNAP Participants 2008	Percent Change October 2008 vs. October 2007
Anne Arundel	24,888	15,716	19,846	26.30%
Queen Anne's	2,807	1,524	1,890	24.00%
Howard	12,172	6,168	7,588	23.00%
St. Mary's	7,527	6,219	7,557	21.50%
Charles	8,151	7,136	8,643	21.10%
Calvert	4,528	3,885	4,703	21.10%
Wicomico	11,954	9,350	11,242	20.20%
Caroline	3,789	2,847	3,392	19.10%
Cecil	9,160	6,760	8,054	19.10%
Kent	2,381	1,413	1,669	18.10%
Dorchester	4,277	5,019	5,882	17.20%
Worcester	4,493	3,485	4,059	16.50%
Frederick	11,540	7,581	8,786	15.90%
Talbot	2,953	1,841	2,128	15.60%
Baltimore City	120,813	116,909	133,828	14.50%
Baltimore County	58,607	39,077	44,534	14%
Harford	13,331	10,433	11,886	13.90%
Carroll	7,696	5,159	5,825	12.90%
Washington	14,287	11,041	12,359	11.90%
Somerset	4,746	3,449	3,833	11.10%
Allegany	9,389	8,745	9,783	11.90%
Garrett	3,747	2,819	2,986	5.90%

Farm Bill & Economic Stimulus Package Summary

The Federal Farm Bill determines the amount of Federal funding that goes into food stamps, agriculture, agricultural research and other related programs nationwide. In October of 2008, changes made in the Farm Bill increased funding for many food assistance programs:

- $7.8 billion for SNAP (aka Food Stamp Program)
- $1.26 billion for the Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP)
- $1.0 billion for a fresh fruit and vegetables program that aids schools with large numbers of low-income students (Rosenbaum, 1)

Some key changes were also implemented in the SNAP Program(aka. Food Stamp Program):

- Inflation in relation to food costs will be evaluated each year so that the purchasing power of food stamps will not be lost.
- The Dependent Care Deduction cap was completely eliminated so that families, many of those single-parent households, can afford both food and safe child care.
- Tax- deferred retirement or educational accounts are no longer factored in when SNAP benefits are applied for. (Rosenbaum 1)

Due to the deteriorating economy of the United States, on February 17, 2009, President Obama signed the economic stimulus package; Benefits of which will go into effect in April 2009, these benefits include:

- $19.9 billion for SNAP spending (This should double the average persons allotment from about $21.00 per week to $40.00 per week)
- $500 million for the Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) program, which provides formula and benefits for the purchase of specific food items.
- A $25 a week increase in unemployment benefits and 33 weeks of extended unemployment benefits (Highlights of Economic Recovery Bill).

Current MFB Programs & Services

The Maryland Food Bank opened its first warehouse in 1979 on Fairlawn Avenue in Baltimore City; it was the first food bank on the East Coast of the U.S. to be formed. In 1980, MFB opened a branch in Salisbury to serve the eastern shore of Maryland. The first independent Regional Distribution Organization (RDO) was opened in Allegany County in 1983; The Western Maryland Food Bank. Subsequently, five other RDOs were established in Washington County (Food Resources), Garrett County (Food Resources), Charles County (Southern Maryland Food Bank), Howard County (Howard County Food Bank), and Harford County (Community Action Food Bank). The RDOs assist the MFB in serving counties that are far away from Baltimore. Due to much growth and need, the MFB moved to a larger warehouse (52,000 square feet) in 1987 on Franklintown Rd, still in Baltimore City. In 2004, MFB found its current home in a warehouse on Halethorpe Farms Rd (87,000 square feet), outside of Baltimore.

From their Baltimore County warehouse, the MFB houses foods that are donated, collected, or purchased through corporate food producers, local stores, food drives, monetary gifts, products with damaged packaging, low sale items, etc. In FY2007, the MFB distributed over 15 million pounds of food to network partners and over 50,000 individuals received this food statewide. The MFB has instituted quarterly reporting in FY2009 to assist with routine data collection efforts to accurately track numbers served. The following chart shows a breakdown of all MFB network partners statewide and the type of food program they offer to hungry Marylanders with food support from the MFB.

	MFB	Salisbury	RDOs	Total
Pantries	**351**	**179**	**133**	**663**
Soup Kitchens	**31**	**12**	**15**	**58**
Shelters	**25**	**6**	**9**	**40**
Other (schools, residential, daycare, brown bag, youth programs, treatment programs)	**160**	**94**	**49**	**303**
Total Number of Active Partners:	**567**	**291**	**206**	**1,064**

*** Numbers based on MFB agencies in Navision and on lists provided to MFB by each RDO in November 2008).**

Current MFB Network

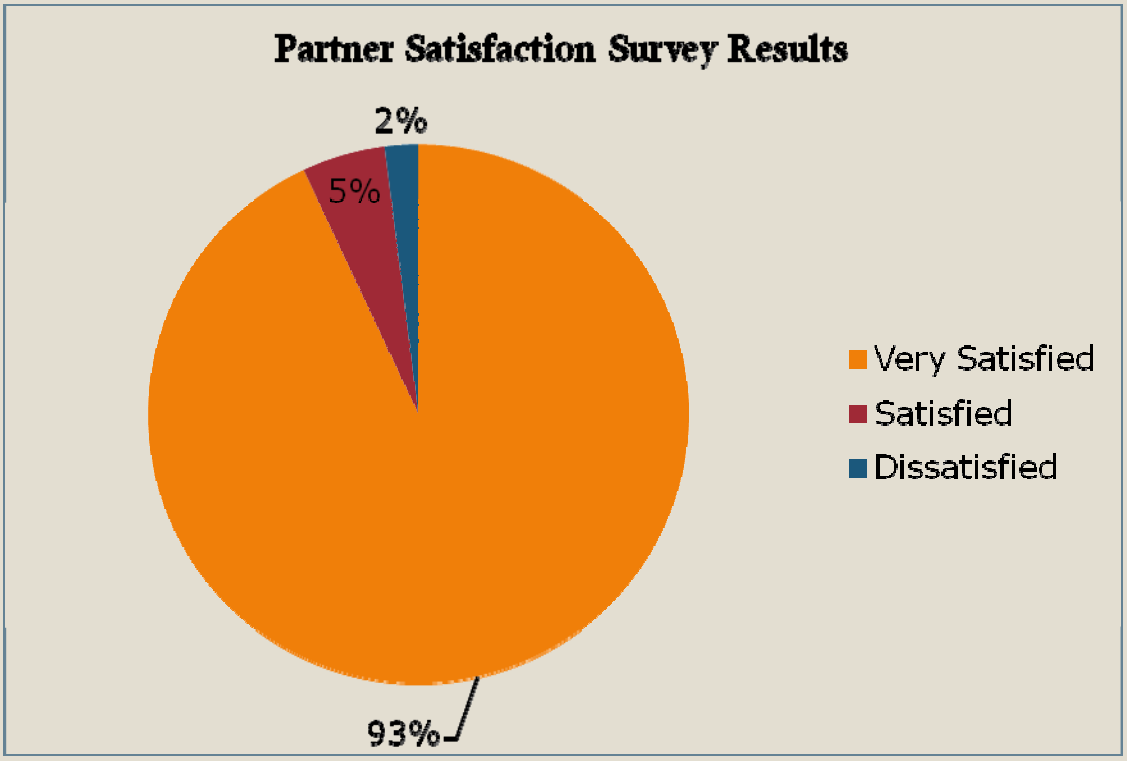
The partner network of the MFB consists of four distinctive parts: the MFB located in Baltimore which serves four counties and Baltimore City (Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Carroll and Howard), the Salisbury Branch located in Salisbury, on the Eastern shore of Maryland, which serves eight counties (Queen Anne's, Wicomico, Caroline, Kent, Dorchester, Worchester, Talbot and Somerset), five Regional Distribution Organization (RDO) partners serving nine counties (Charles, Calvert, St. Mary's, Allegheny, Frederick, Garrett, Washington, Harford and Cecil) and the MFB statewide partner network.

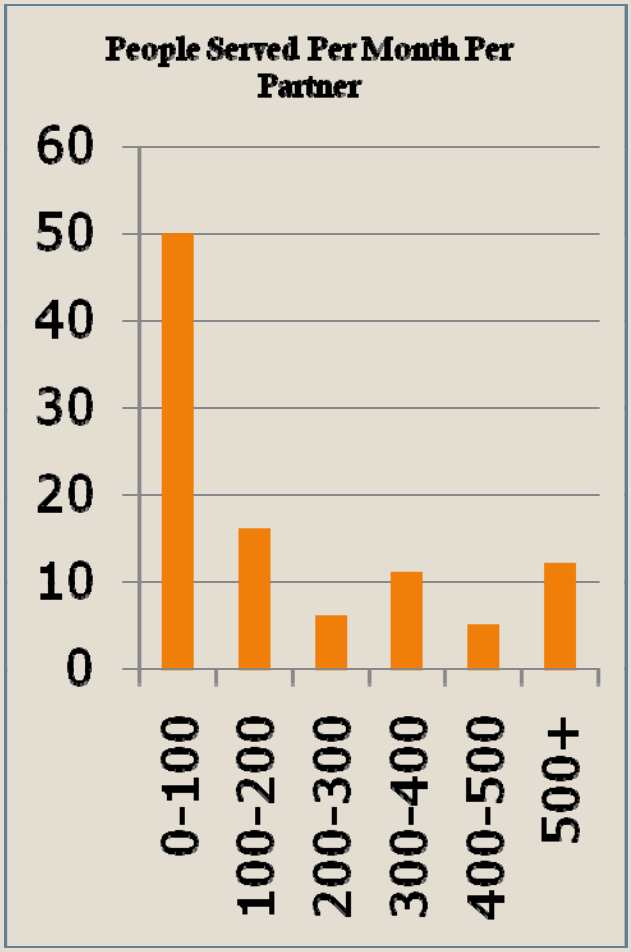
The MFB statewide partner network consists of 1,064 partners who distribute food to hungry Marylanders across the state. These partners represent diverse groups and populations and include food pantries, school pantries, emergency shelters and longer term shelters, soup kitchens, residential facilities, daycare programs, senior programs and brown bag clubs. Nearly 80% of all the non-profit food distribution sites that MFB works in conjunction with are faith-based.

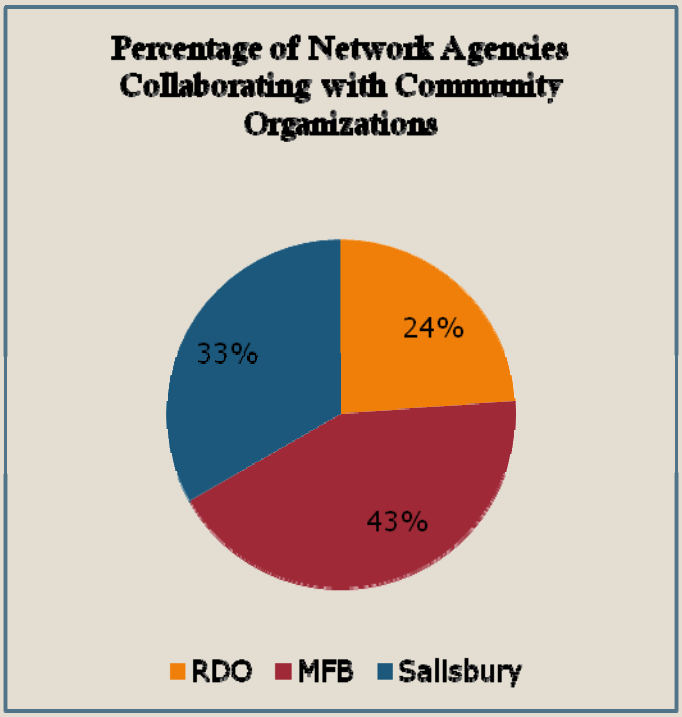
While the primary outreach of the MFB is food distribution to partners placing orders from the MFB daily menu, the MFB also provides youth program funding and support to partners hosting school pantries, kids café's, backpack food programs, Summer Youth Food Service and At-Risk Snack sites. Another outreach of the MFB is providing Mobile pantry drops. Mobile pantry drops are pre-scheduled food distributions of bagged or boxed pantry and produce items in areas that are food insecure. These mobile pantry distributions are made statewide usually working in partnership with the network.

The MFB also coordinates MEFP, ESFP, TEFP and SNAP funding and food allocations for our statewide partner network and to other non-member organizations when specified in the grant guidelines. Grant funds from foundations, corporations and individuals, for activities such as nutrition education, produce for seniors, purchases of new freezers and other equipment are also administered by the MFB to network partners. Recent ancillary outreach activities to partners include capacity building workshops and a monthly partner e-newsletter.

Additional Survey Data







Partner Perspectives

"We used to buy small 'gifts' (tooth brushes, soap, useful items), enough for everyone at a table to have one, but now we cant afford to buy for everyone because we have to feed more people. Now we do raffles, but we wish we could still buy for everyone."- Sonshine Club

"It would be nice if you could help Brenda (Southern Maryland Food Bank) get more space and a bigger truck"- Smile Pantry

"The economy is bad, people need money, and they need jobs that will give them enough"- Royal Light Missionary Baptist

"I would say inflation has caused a lot of the hunger in the county, we've had about a 40% increase [in clients] this year."- C.A.R.E.S

Partner Perspectives

"Communication! Let us know when things are going on, when you have extra grants, coupons, etc. We always hear about it too late, when everything is gone."- Helping Hurting People

"The Food Bank should have more leniency for people who have a good history [In relation to paying bills]. Sometimes you need more food because there are more people than you thought. – Feeding Kids in Need

"Put expiration dates on menu, or allow for old shopping method so we can look at the dates ourselves and choose what we want and how much we need."- Bridgeway Community Cupboard

"We can see there is more need now, we are trying to find a large facility, and would like to open a soup kitchen."- Evangelistic Church of Deliverance

GAPS Identified By Data Collection

The Gap Analysis Project work identified gaps in the MFB partner network that, if addressed, would enable the MFB to more effectively and efficiently achieve its mission of ending hunger. The largest and perhaps the most far reaching gap identified was the enormous amount of food poundage distribution necessary to meet the adequate service area guidelines and in turn the need for strengthening the network in order to increase food distribution and meet the Feeding America and endhungerinamerica.org adequate service formula requirements.

I. ***Addressing service gaps throughout the network*** – In order for the MFB to increase poundage distribution statewide, the network must be healthy, educated, supported and functional. Obstacles or GAPS in the network which may make it difficult or impossible for the MFB to meet the service requirements, were identified by the GAP Analysis fieldwork as follows:

- The Southern Maryland Food Bank located in St. Mary's county is limited and handicapped by several factors. First, they receive their funding from Catholic Charities in Washington, DC (CCDC) and are a peripheral project of the main work done by CCDC. There are two employees only, both of whom are employed by Catholic Charities. Recently both the assistant and the truck which had been furnished by CCDC were taken back from the SMFB and reassigned to the headquarters office in DC. This change left the SMFB in dire straights both in terms of manpower and equipment support**.**

  The SMFB's limitations and handicaps have caused a negative perception amongst agencies wishing to join the SMFB or causing others to drop off. The SMFB was not able to handle the volume of orders and agencies because they lacked the manpower and infrastructure to do so. This is especially problematic because of the current economic situation which has dramatically increased the demand for food assistance, and the fact that the SMFB covers three counties in the MFB network. In the current fiscal year approximately eight new agencies have sought membership at the MFB directly and while the protocol is to send these applications to the SMFB; However, they are not able to process or provide for new agencies, thus limiting the MFB's reach in the counties of St. Mary's, Calvert and Charles.

- Because the MFB network has evolved over a long period of time and that growth has been fostered and agencies established under many different individuals over the years, the network is held together in a patchwork and piece meal way without the critical benefits of strategic planning, standards and in some cases common sense. It seems that a new, strategic approached, guided by the new MFB mission and a well known, stated, purpose is necessary to organize and strengthen the partner network in order to achieve substantial, increased, distribution of food on the part of the MFB to the network.

- Currently, membership to the MFB is granted solely on what is best for possible partners with little to no thought as to how this new partner, their outreach and their abilities can positively or negatively affect the MFB.

- A very important component of responding to the GAP Analysis research data is addressing the service gaps by county to comply with Feeding America's Inadequate Service formula and the "endinghungerinamerica.org" Ideal Food for Those In Poverty formula. These formulas and the services gaps in the MFB network are presented on subsequent pages in this report.

Feeding America's Inadequate Service Area

The Feeding America contract with its' member food banks, effective October 2008, included guidelines for Determining Inadequate Service by county for each member food bank nationwide. Through June 30, 2010, a service area may be declared inadequately served by Feeding America, and the member food bank deemed "Out of Compliance", if the level of service provided by a member food bank fails to meet each of the following three tests:

1.The total pounds distributed in the previous twelve months by the MFB (pounds actually distributed in each of the counties served by MFB) divided by the number of people in poverty in each of those counties, equals or exceeds 50% of the Network Service Area Median, which for Maryland is 9.5 pounds of food per person in poverty.

2.If any part of a member's service area fails to meet the first test, the member must be able to demonstrate that, for the past two completed calendar years, the member has increased the total pounds distributed in the service area by at least an average of 5% (for Maryland is 9.975 pounds) greater than the network median during that time period.

3.If a member service area does not meet either the first or second test, Feeding America shall determine if there exists extenuating circumstances despite the member's best efforts to serve all the counties in their service area. Extenuating circumstances may include:

- Unusual hardships due to member's distance from food sources.
- The lack of existence of an agency network to distribute food.
- The local food and funding resources and opportunities in the service area.
- The existence of an independent, non-member, food bank or similar organization providing a significant service in the service area.
- The distribution of large amounts of USDA or government purchased food in the service area by another entity.

MFB Inadequate Service Areas

For the purposes of both the GAP Analysis Project and for Feeding America compliance preparation, the GAP Analysis team gathered information from RDO's, Salisbury branch and from the MFB Navision database. The data gathered was used to analyze and ascertain which counties , according to the inadequate service formulas, were not adequately served by the MFB network and therefore would not be in compliance when audited by Feeding America. The challenge to get accurate, complete and reasonable data to compute the FA "Inadequate Service Area" formula was very difficult. Getting data was difficult for the following reasons:

- Getting data from the RDO's serving multiple counties about the poundage distributed in each of those counties was difficult.

- Salisbury was serving three counties in Delaware while the Delaware Food Bank(DFB) was serving three counties in Maryland. For the three counties being served by DFB the MFB had no poundage information, thus these three counties appear to be inadequately served. Currently, two of those counties are being served by Salisbury and one county is now being served by Harford County Community Action, the RDO in Harford County.

- Poundage and other pertinent information about mobile pantry sites were entered into Navision under the MFB's address and therefore the pounds for these drops, regardless of the county in which the food was actually distributed, are included in the total poundage number in the database for Baltimore County. This method of inputting the data skewed both the Baltimore County poundage numbers and those of the other counties being reported on.

- Two of the RDO's, Food Bank of Southern Maryland and Food Resources, serve multiple counties; However, the orders placed for these RDO's in the MFB Navision database are recorded only under the county in which the RDO is located. Therefore, while we know the total number of pounds for the RDO and the number of agencies, we do not know how many of the total RDO pounds went to what agencies in what counties.

- Other MFB programs such as produce drops, Backpack program, School Pantry Program, At Risk Snack program, Summer Food Service and Kids Café programs are all listed in Navision under the MFB address, again their pounds, regardless of where the food was distributed, are counted in Baltimore County. Most programs are located in Baltimore City while others are located in Baltimore City and in Anne Arundel County.

The chart on the following page illustrates the data gathered for each county in MFB's service area. It is important to remember when reading the chart that a Feeding America audit will look at the "total pounds distributed over the last 12 months". Therefore figures are not in line with Fiscal Year data and may change dramatically between the timeframe shown here, January 2008 – December 2008 and the time in which Feeding America executes their field audits.

Ideal Poundage Formula for People in Poverty

County	MFB PARTNERS	# In Poverty	Pounds Needed to meet 2/3 lb. Indicator	Total Pounds Distributed Over Last 12 Months	Service Gaps
Allegheny	75	4,389	1,027,026	407,457	-619,569
Anne Arundel	22	24,888	5,823,792	156,437	-5,667,355
Baltimore City	452	120,813	28,270,242	5,091,743	-23,178,499
Baltimore County	74	58,607	13,714,038	1,105,374	-12,608,664
Calvert	6	4,528	1,059,552	25,667	-1,033,885
Caroline	14	3,789	886,626	7,382	-879,244
Carroll	5	7,696	1,800,864	244,419	-1,556,445
Cecil		9,160	2,143,440	0	-2,143,440
Charles	5	8,151	1,9907,334	175,948	-1,731,386
Dorchester	28	4,277	1,000,818	11,505	-989,313
Frederick	14	11,540	2,700,360	47,031	-2,653,329
Garrett	20	3,747	876,798	375,793	-501,411
Harford	26	13,331	3,119,454	373,387	-2,746,067
Howard	17	12,172	2,848,248	208,968	-2,639,280
Kent	2	2,381	557,154	253	-556,901
Queen Anne's	1	2,807	656,838	2,250	-654,588
St. Mary's	2	7,527	1,761,318	37,974	-1,723,344
Somerset	29	4,746	1,110,564	17,738	-1,092,826
Talbot	5	2,953	691,002	1,984	-689,018
Washington	32	14,287	3,343,158	679,693	-2663,465
Wicomico	211	11,954	2,797,236	124,679	-2,672,557
Worchester	24	4,493	1,051,362	12,135	-1,039,227
Totals:	1,064	343,236	80,317,224	9,107,817	-71,209,407

FEEDING AMERICA INADEQUATE SERVICE FORMULA BY COUNTY

County	Total Pounds Distributed Over Last 12 Months	# In Poverty	# of pounds distributed to those in poverty	= or < 50% of Poverty Median (9.5 pounds)
Allegheny	407,457	4,389	93	Adequate
Anne * Arundel	156,437	24,888	6	Inadequate
Baltimore City	5,091,743	120,813	42	Adequate
Baltimore County	1,105,374	58,607	19	Adequate
Calvert√	25,667	4,528	6	Inadequate
Caroline	7,382	3,789	2	Inadequate
Carroll	244,419	7,696	32	Adequate
Cecil #	0	9,160	0	Inadequate
Charles	175,948	8,151	22	Adequate
Dorchester	11,505	4,277	3	Inadequate
Frederick√	47,031	11,540	4	Inadequate
Garrett	375,793	3,747	100	Adequate
Harford	373,387	13,331	28	Adequate
Howard	208,968	12,172	17	Adequate
Kent #	253	2,381	.10	Inadequate
Queen # Anne's	2,250	2,807	.80	Inadequate
St. Mary's √	37,974	7,527	5	Inadequate
Somerset	17,738	4,746	4	Inadequate
Talbot	1,984	2,953	1	Inadequate
Washington	679,693	14,287	48	Adequate
Wicomico	124,679	11,954	10	Inadequate
Worchester	12,135	4,493	3	Inadequate
Totals:	9,107,817	343,236	Median = 19	59% Inadequate

*Anne Arundel county has an independent , non-member, food bank which distributes a large volume of food only in Anne Arundel and surrounding counties.

Cecil, Kent and Queen Anne's counties were served by the Delaware Food Bank until January 2009.

√ Calvert and Frederick counties' numbers are included with their RDO's in the database.

Actions Necessary for Addressing Service Gaps

The MFB management team has said that the partner network is one of the organization's "greatest assets". Thus, an investment in the tracking and support of the network is necessary. Following are recommendations for supporting and strengthening the MFB partner network to handle an increase in food distribution to meet the FA inadequate service guidelines and the ideal poverty formula.

- ***Food Distribution Ability in the Service Area*** - While this GAP Analysis data is helpful and provides an overall, statewide, picture of the current condition of the MFB network, steps must be instituted into the MFB reporting and tracking processes in order that accurate numbers can be analyzed for long term budget and other planning and decisions by management. Currently there is no way of truly tracking the effectiveness of the MFB efforts other than through inaccurate poundage distribution numbers.

  Quarterly or other standard reporting utilized by the MFB should be required of each RDO and Salisbury. If the RDO's already require reporting from their agencies, copies of those documents may also be requested. This information should be routinely entered into the MFB Navision system until updated technology could be instituted for this purpose.

  Efforts should be made to reconcile and correct the network information currently in Navision to reflect the true state of the network. Internal processes and systems should be put into place which assign direct responsibility for the information entered into Navision and that require monthly or quarterly reconciliation such as is done in Finance to ensure that inconsistencies or mistakes are correctly quickly.

- ***Feeding America Inadequate Service Formula*** - MFB staff in all departments must have a full understanding of the Feeding America Inadequate Service formula and that of the endhungerinamerica.org formula in order to incorporate these requirements into their planning and everyday decision making if meeting these requirements is a goal of management.

- ***Membership*** - Strategic and targeted membership to the MFB, where only agencies located in underserved areas, serving underserved populations or highly evolved and effective partners capable of helping to achieve the targeted MFB goals are given membership.

➢***Network Organization*** - Strategic planning and actions on the part of the MFB to evaluate, understand and make decisions about how network partners are provided membership, retain membership and are evaluated. Without this the MFB is only a wholesale grocery store with any organization with tax exempt status entitled to becoming a member.

➢***More Food*** – Of course finding more sources of donated and affordable, appropriate food is an obvious and continual need. However, a positive image in the community and a strong, unified and effective network will help to promote the MFB's cause and reassure donors that they are indeed getting the greatest impact for their donation by giving to the MFB. Getting food out the door and making a real impact are two very real and different things.

Relationships with Regional Distribution Organizations

II. Strengthening relationships with the RDO's - The entire statewide network is fighting for the same purpose to end hunger in Maryland, and while there is great competition for resources across the nation, the MFB is uniquely positioned to lead the numerous Maryland stakeholders in the fight against hunger . Therefore, it is very important that efforts be made to improve the relationship between the MFB and Regional Distribution Organizations (RDOs).

RDO Gaps

- The response rate for the GAP survey questionnaire was low from RDOs (53%). RDO agencies did not understand the Gap Analysis or its' importance.

- RDOs may be in need of additional aid: extra trucks, larger space, more employees/ training for employees.

- RDO agencies did not understand the MFB's interest in their operations; they do not consider themselves a part of the MFB network or feel that the MFB supports the RDOs. MFB's lack of connection with the RDO's and partners reinforces the idea that the MFB is just a wholesale grocery store for them to shop with and not a true partner in ending hunger.

- Counties outside of Baltimore City and Baltimore and Anne Arundel Counties do not receive At Risk Snack, Back Pack, Capacity Building services or programs from the MFB.

- There is not a standard, reliable, form of communication with partners to keep them informed of events, grants, coupons, etc. There is not an up-to-date informational database (regarding service areas, days and hours of operation, programs available at each site, size, and current contact info) on RDOs or their agencies.

- There is no standard procedure for communication of data changes, troubles, needs, etc. with RDOs or a standard way of responding to RDO needs.

Efforts to strengthen relationships with the RDO's would enhance the quality of performance and communication throughout the network. There seems to be distrust and ignorance on the part of many RDO agencies about the role which the MFB plays with the RDO's. When RDO agencies were contacted directly with the GAP Analysis survey questionnaire, they often stated they did not receive food from the MFB and could not understand why the surveyor was calling. On several occasions, the RDO Director or lead staff member was verbally hostile towards the surveyor when asked questions about their organization and agencies.

RDO information is not widely known or understood across MFB departments. For example, few staff know that the Washington County RDO has jurisdiction over Frederick County and all orders for Frederick County RDO agencies are reported under the Washington County RDO, while three other Frederick county agencies, not part of the RDO, are reported individually in Navision. This lack of knowledge, and standard procedure has created a disconnect between the MFB staff and their attention to and understanding of the RDO organizations, their mission, purpose, operations and needs. Thus this lack of understanding on the part of MFB staff reinforces the negativity felt by RDO partners.

Actions Necessary for Improving RDO Relationships

- RDO history, service areas, contact information and other basic information not in Navision should be available on the F drive .
- MFB must understand that RDO's are much more invested in and connected to the communities they serve and that the work for them is personal and hands on. A formal, hands off, corporate type of interaction between the MFB and the RDO's will not work. MFB needs to take a more personal, in person, hands on role with the RDO's in order to bridge the current gaps.

- A clear chain of command and communication guidelines need to be established and communicated with the MFB staff and with the RDO's to lessen confusion and negativity when RDO's are contacted for many different MFB purposes. This would reinforce their value to the MFB and quickly work to erase the suspicions and negativity between the RDO's and the MFB.

- More detailed RDO information should be entered into Navision

- Updates concerning the RDO's should be regularly shared with all staff.

- Include RDO Network Partners in the MFB system so information of operations can be kept up to date.

- Improved, consistent, communication with RDOs: a monthly meeting/ conference call to discuss issues, celebrate successes, share events and best practices, consider ways to share resources more efficiently.

- Include RDO partners in MFB network communications: newsletters, emails, etc.

- Create an understanding that all counties are striving for the same goal: craft mission statements, plan events, etc. Collaborate with neighboring agencies so they can form focus groups of sorts to discuss best practices, up-coming event and logistics, and set times/dates of operation to best reach the hungry in their communities.

- Weekly/ biweekly meetings between department supervisors who have direct contact with network partners to discuss what is happening in their departments so any and all messages will be clear regardless of which department it comes from.

- Create/Offer a re-granting program that will aid RDOs in purchasing needed trucks, renovations, information systems, and perhaps an additional staff member (budget permitting).

- Allow for cross training so experienced MFB staff can assist new RDO positions/staff in becoming acquainted with proper procedures and practices. Paul Rolandelli recently trained new staff from the Howard County RDO on forklift operation and other safety guidelines.

- Create cross training programs between agencies, extremely successful agencies can work with other agencies interested in improving their operations, maybe trainings can be facilitated through the food bank. Consider collaboration on creating regional events, networking opportunities, and publicity for RDOs and agencies for special events and programs.

Technology

IV. Integrated technology for service area wide network - Also extremely beneficial to the MFB would be the creation of an informational database for ALL of the agencies within its network. If a shortened version of the GAP Analysis survey questionnaire could be presented to all agencies over the phone and the data gathered entered into the new Navision program, the entire MFB network would benefit. This sort of base knowledge will help the food bank build and maintain relationships with their agencies and help to keep information up to date. Basic information can help inform callers, who are seeking food assistance, which pantry is closest to them, whether or not they need a referral to receive aid, and times, dates and locations of soup kitchen meals. Furthermore, a database of this nature would be immensely useful in conducting and organizing future large and small scale research projects, or to help find recipients for grants, donations, etc.

- Lack of technology and institutional wide processes to gather information and track it across the network accurately, timely and in a standardized way.

- Information gathered and tracked in Navision has been inconsistently entered over a long period of time. There is no check and balance system to reconcile, update and correct information in the system.

- No standard training or process exists at the MFB for various departments to enter information about the partner network. The majority of staff members entering information into Navision lack an understanding of the reason or purpose for why information is entered into Navision the way it is or how what information they enter is or may be utilized by management to when making decisions.

- Responsibility for overseeing the information in Navision has not been clearly assigned.

- A standard Navision training program needs to be created and executed upon the hire of new employees and refresher trainings given to existing users of the system. This should be done as soon as possible.

- Development and other MFB areas not currently able to access Navision should be given access, at the very least to reporting and informational modules.

Communication Gaps

Improved, routine, communication with all Network Partners, RDOs, and MFB departments would greatly enhance working relationships across the board, and ultimately the effectiveness of the entire network working to end hunger in Maryland. This communication includes updated technology and information, standard procedures and informational exchange.

MFB Network Partner Gaps

- There is not an up-to-date informational database (regarding service areas, days and hours of operation, programs available at each site, size, and current contact info) about agencies.
- The Salisbury branch has a separate business program from the MFB, this disconnect costs the MFB a great deal of time and money when trying to put information together.
- The Maryland Food Bank Receives and distributes food with incredible turn around. However, they do not exercise this ability with transferring information.
- There is not a standard, reliable form of communication with partners to keep them informed of events, grants, coupons, etc.
- Network Partners are unaware of all of the services the food bank offers.
- Network partners typically do not reach outside their own organizations in collaborating for ideas, programs, operational procedures, or to discuss hours/times of operation in order to most effectively serve the hungry in their communities.
- Departments talking to network partners within the MFB do not strategize in order to present one united front when dealing with the network.

Actions Necessary to Closing the Communication Gaps

- Create an up-to-date database within the MFB business system (Navision) that can be accessed easily by all food bank staff. This database would contain the above mentioned basic info about each agency. The ideal would be for the Salisbury branch to be able to log onto and use this same system so all of their current information would be easily accessible all the time.
- Create an understanding that all counties are striving for the same goal: craft mission statements, plan events, etc. Collaborate with neighboring agencies so they can form focus groups of sorts to discuss best practices, up-coming event and logistics, and set times/dates of operation to best reach the hungry in their communities.
- Weekly/ biweekly meetings between department supervisors who have direct contact with network partners to discuss what is happening in their departments so any and all messages will be clear regardless of which department it comes from.

Investment & Incentive Gaps

Financial aid, trainings, and special events or recognitions would create incentives to encourage RDOs and Network Partners to try to work together and become more active in the fight to end hunger.

MFB Network Partners Gaps

- MFB Network Partners often feel disconnected and occasionally feel some negativity towards the food bank because they feel left out of the loop.
- There are no set guidelines or programs to help agencies that would like to expand their operations.

Actions Necessary to Closing the Investment & Incentive Gaps

- Create/Offer a re-granting program that will aid RDOs in purchasing needed trucks, renovations, information systems, and perhaps an additional staff member (budget permitting).

- Allow for cross training so experienced MFB staff can assist new RDO positions/staff in becoming acquainted with proper procedures and practices. Paul Rolandelli recently trained new staff from the Howard County RDO on forklift operation and other safety guidelines.

- Create cross training programs between agencies, extremely successful agencies can work with other agencies interested in improving their operations, maybe trainings can be facilitated through the food bank. Consider collaboration on creating regional events, networking opportunities, and publicity for RDOs and agencies for special events and programs.

- Create more trainings that directly address issues specific network partner needs such as expansion, creating a business with volunteer workers, fundraising, annual planning, grant writing etc.

- Assist RDOs and outlying MFB counties with trainings.

- Ensure that RDO's have access to Hungernet information for updates and increased understanding.

Conclusion

Many people believe the face of food banking is forever changing; therefore, the most efficient food banks are those who keep up with the flow of change. The data gathered through the MFB GAP Project confirms, through data the weakest areas of the MFB network and gives suggestions for addressing areas that need improvement. As our economy fluctuates, so does our food banking system and the population of those that seek services. In 2008, a study led by Harvard Professor J. Larry Brown concluded that the United States could end hunger as a serious national problem by spending $12 billion more on federal nutrition programs, primarily food stamps. That is less than the $14.5 billion which nonprofit groups spend to feed the hungry (Greenwell, 2).

The analysis from the GAP Project demonstrates that the MFB is doing a good job meeting the current need and that 93% of the agencies surveyed were satisfied with the MFB and their services. To keep up with the rapidly changing landscape of those who are hungry and to best serve the communities in need, it would be behoove the Maryland Food Bank to improve relationships between MFB and the RDOs and to update information for each partner within the network and to improve relationships with the RDO's, communication with the network, technology to connect all the components and investment and incentives to support the work of the network.

Also, it is important for food stamps to be used to their full advantage. Increasing food stamp usage would be a tremendously effective way for the MFB to fight hunger statewide. It is also essential for individuals who need services to be educated about the resources available. The MFB is uniquely positioned to take a lead on helping to get the word out about food stamp benefits.

The Maryland Food Bank is making great strides towards improving services. Internal practices such as setting standard procedures, frequent staff meetings with general and senior staff, and departmental bonding and retreats are being implemented. New efficient equipment and an efficient ordering and pick up system in the warehouse are working to cut sorting times and streamline agency ordering. The MFB has worked hard to implement produce drops and mobile pantries to extend their reach to hungry Marylanders.

The MFB has a strong foundation, dedicated staff, effective programs and a network with great potential. With the implementation of basic improvements relative to strengthening the network, improved relationships with RDO partners, routine updates to the database and standardized, organizational wide, processes, the quality and performance of the MFB will be well equipped and prepared to face the ever increasing challenge of meeting the hunger needs in Maryland and leading the efforts to best serve communities in need.

Resources

- Share Our Strength- striving to end childhood hunger

- Governor O'Malley- partnered with SOS to end childhood hunger. State of Maryland received $2,397,663 from the Emergency Food and Shelter

- Maryland State Department of Education Food and Nutritional Services: Funding and programs to help improve the nutrition of children such as free and reduced meals, milk programs, nutrition education, etc. Some include: School Breakfast Program- offering breakfast to students to increase their academic performance and enhance them nutritionally. Schools are reimbursed for students who are eligible for free and reduced meals.

- Maryland Meals for Achievement- breakfast program funded by the state, qualifying schools can offer free breakfast to ALL students in the classroom income independent. Only 31% (193/631) of eligible schools participate.

- Maryland Hunger Solutions- strives to fight poverty and encourage links between Marylanders and healthy foods.

- Catholic Charities- working to unite organizations to cut poverty in half.

- Annie E Casey Foundation- creates grants to help various outlets improve/support the lives of families and children.

- Bridgemer Green Buildings- offer grants to help reduce a buildings ecological imprint, and help reduce a buildings energy and waste costs.

- Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy- offers grants to help an organization increase its use of renewable energy and energy efficiency technologies.

Appendix

1. Survey Questionnaire
2. Network partner call lists
3. Navision print outs of county distributed poundage numbers for 1/01/2008 – 1/01/2009
4. Maryland Food Supplemental County Data October 2008 One Year Participation Change
5. Maryland Hunger Solutions Policy Brief: Breakfast in Maryland Counties October 2008
6. School Breakfast Scorecard SY 2007-2008
7. Feeding America Member Contract, Inadequate Service Area Formula
8. Community Charity Food Needs Formula
9. MFB Partner Agency Locations Map

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