

**CITY OF OAKLAND**  
***COUNCIL AGENDA REPORT***

TO: Office of the City Manager  
ATTN: Robert C. Bobb  
FROM: Community and Economic Development Agency  
DATE: October 1, 2002

RE: A REPORT ON THE STATUS OF THE HUNGER SAFETY NET IN OAKLAND.

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**SUMMARY**

The national Hunger Safety Net is comprised of three basic federal program areas: the Food Stamp program, school-based nutritional programs, and commodity programs. These core programs are enhanced by several entitlement programs, such as the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and the Community Services Block Grant (CSBG), which may be used to fund local nutrition and hunger programs. Another integral part of the safety net is donations from the public to Hunger Safety Net programs.

In the City of Oakland, nonprofit community groups and faith-based organizations work with the local food bank to form a food distribution network that provides emergency food and congregate meals to low-income and homeless residents. These groups are generally staffed by volunteers, who package emergency food into brown bags for distribution to the public, or cook and serve hot meals.

In recent years, a combination of age, illness, and organizational fatigue have caused deterioration of some of the local volunteer organizations that comprise the Hunger Safety Net. In addition, local funding for the Hunger Safety Net has declined precipitously, especially from CDBG – a 56% reduction in Fiscal Year (FY) 2002/2003. As a result, several important programs are threatened with closure.

This report provides background on the problem of hunger in general, and its effects worldwide. According to a recent United Nations report, unsustainable practices and policies are undermining the natural resources on which we depend, threatening the well-being of people and the planet. The U. N. report adds that balancing human and environmental needs is an urgent priority that deserves increased attention and resources.

**FISCAL IMPACT**

This is an informational report with no fiscal impact.

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## **BACKGROUND**

### ***Hunger World-Wide***

The problem of hunger is a world problem that puts an estimated 24,000 persons at risk of starvation every day. In the Southern Africa region alone, 13 million persons are threatened with food insecurity and malnutrition. As global population and consumption rise, unsustainable practices and policies are undermining the natural resources on which we depend, threatening the well-being of people and the planet. Increasing pressures on fresh water supplies, agricultural land and fish stocks present unprecedented challenges, according to a new report entitled, "The State of World Population 2001" by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), which says balancing human and environmental needs is an urgent priority that deserves increased attention and resources.

The State of World Population 2001 report states that soil degradation, chronic water shortages, inappropriate agricultural policies and rapid population growth are threatening food production capacities in many poor countries. The gap between production and demand for cereals is expected to jump to 24 million metric tons in South Asia and 27 million metric tons in sub-Saharan Africa by 2020. The ocean's fish stocks are also under threat. Over two thirds of the world's commercial marine fish stocks are fully exploited, over-fished, depleted, or slowly declining, according to the report. The report recommends that countries reverse the current course of land and water degradation and actively protect their resource base, particularly topsoil and freshwater. This requires responsible governance—balancing many competing interests, community participation and local management, a commitment to food security, and international cooperation.

### ***Hunger in the United States***

One of the most disturbing and extraordinary aspects of life in this very wealthy country is the persistence of hunger. The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) reports, based on a national U.S. Census Bureau survey of households representative of the U.S. population, that in 2000 10.5 percent of all U.S. households, representing 20 million adults and 13 million children, were "food insecure" because of lack of resources. "Food security" is a term used by the U. S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) to describe assured access at all times to enough food for an active, healthy life, with no need for recourse to emergency food sources or other extraordinary coping behaviors to meet basic food needs. In a nation as affluent as ours this is a readily achievable goal. Food insecurity refers to the lack of access to enough food to fully meet basic needs at all times due to lack of financial resources. Of the 11 million households that were food insecure, 3.3 million suffered from food insecurity that was so severe that USDA's very conservative measure classified them as "hungry." Households that are classified as hungry are those in which adults have decreased the quality and quantity of food they consume because of lack of money to the point where they are quite likely to be hungry on a frequent basis, or in which children's intake has been reduced due to lack of family financial resources, to the point that children are likely to be hungry on a regular basis and adults' food intake is severely reduced. Over 5.6 million adults and 2.7 million children lived in these hungry households.

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- Recent reports by food banks across California - and the nation - show increased demand at food pantries. With unemployment increasing, a greater number of households are forced to make difficult choices to put food on the table for their families.
- At the same time, the number of overweight children has skyrocketed. Many complicated factors affect children's weight, including safe neighborhoods to play, fast food, television and video games, as well as under-consumption of key nutrients: less than 2% of children in a recent survey follow the food guide pyramid, including adequate amounts of fruits and vegetables.
- Increasing neighborhood access to fresh, locally-grown food is often hampered by the limited purchasing power of low-income residents.
- Thirty-three million people—including 13 million children—live in households that experience hunger or the risk of hunger. This represents one in ten households in the United States (10 percent).
- 3.1 percent of U.S. households actually experience hunger: they frequently skip meals or eat too little, sometimes going without food for a whole day. Nearly 8.5 million people, including 2.9 million children, live in these homes.
- 7.3 percent of U.S. households are at risk of hunger: they have lower quality diets or must resort to seeking emergency food because they cannot always afford the food they need. 24.7 million people, including 9.9 million children, live in these homes.

### ***Hunger in Alameda County***

The Alameda County Community Food Bank recently published a study on hunger in Alameda County entitled “Hunger: The Faces & Facts”. The study is available for downloading at the Alameda County Community Food Bank Web Site ([www.accbf.org](http://www.accbf.org)). The study presents the results of a survey of 211 Alameda County Food Bank member agencies and 439 individuals, selected at random, who turned to one of the Food Bank’s emergency food providers in Spring 2001. The findings of the survey were as follows:

- 43% of all individuals who receive emergency food assistance in Alameda County are children under the age of 18; 10% are 5 years old or under.
- In 47% of surveyed households with children, either a parent or child, or both, experience hunger.
- In 32% of surveyed households with children, the children have missed meals due to lack of food or not having enough money to buy food, and 21% report that often their children do not have enough to eat.
- Only 10% of surveyed parents report their children participate in the summer lunch program, while 60% of the Food Bank’s pantries and 100% of soup kitchens report an increase in children receiving emergency food assistance during the summer.
- 73% of the households surveyed have incomes below the federal poverty level.
- 37% of households surveyed have at least one employed adult; 9% have two working adults.
- 28% of surveyed households depend on Social Security or Supplemental Security Income (SSI) for their primary source of income.

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- The average monthly income of all Alameda County households receiving emergency food assistance is \$831 compared to the median monthly income of \$4,662 of Alameda County households in 1999.
- 45% of surveyed respondents had to choose between paying for food or rent.
- 49% of surveyed respondents had to choose between paying for food or utilities.
- 28% of surveyed respondents had to choose between paying for food or medicine or medical care.

## **THE FEDERAL HUNGER SAFETY NET**

The Hunger Safety Net is derived from a series of federal programs in the following areas: Food Stamps/WIC, School-Based Nutrition Programs, and Commodity Programs

### ***Food Stamp Program***

The Food Stamp Program provides a basic safety net to millions of people. The idea for the program was born in the late 1930s, with a limited program in effect from 1939 to 1943. It was revived as a pilot program in 1961 and was extended nationwide in 1974. The current program structure was implemented in 1977 with a goal of alleviating hunger and malnutrition by permitting low-income households to obtain a more nutritious diet through normal channels of trade. The program provides monthly coupons to eligible low-income families which can be used to purchase food. However, electronic benefit transfer systems (EBT) are quickly replacing the use of coupons. EBT replaces paper coupons through use of a benefits card, similar to a bank card. USDA reports that 44 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico are now using EBT systems in some form.

The average monthly participation level in fiscal year (FY) 2001 was 17.3 million individuals. One of the strengths of the Food Stamp Program is its ability to respond to local, state, and national economic changes and emergencies. The Food Stamp Program is targeted toward those most in need. Of all Food Stamp households in FY 2000 (the year for which most recent USDA data are available), 53.9 percent contain children; households with children receive 87 percent of all Food Stamp benefits. Twenty-one percent of Food Stamp households contain an elderly person and 27.5 percent contain a disabled person. Approximately 89 percent of Food Stamp households have gross incomes below the poverty line (\$17,050 for a family of four in 2000). Over one-third of Food Stamp households (approximately 6.1 million) have gross incomes below half of the poverty line.

From December 1996 to December 2000, the Food Stamp caseload fell by over 6.7 million persons. Some reduction in poverty and improvement in the overall unemployment rate contributed to Food Stamp Program caseload declines in the period, but other factors, including program changes by Congress, interactions with the cash public assistance system that make Food Stamp access harder for eligible families, and lack of information about the program among potentially eligible people, explained much of the drop.

Because of the 1996 welfare law, by August 22, 1997 most legal immigrants lost eligibility for federal Food Stamp benefits. Some immigrants were made newly eligible November 1, 1998, but

a majority remained barred from the program. The period after March 1997 was also marked by implementation of cuts in Food Stamp Program eligibility for many childless, jobless adults. Implementation of the new, separate Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Program established by the 1996 welfare law also had major, unintended, adverse effects on the Food Stamp Program, as families lost Food Stamps (for which many were still eligible) at the same time that they lost TANF benefits. According to a July 2001 USDA report to Congress, over half (56 percent) of caseload declines between 1994 and 1999 “occurred because fewer eligible individuals participated in the program,” rather than because of the economy or changes in eligibility rules. Further, USDA finds, “nearly a quarter of all leavers experienced hunger in the first year after leaving the Food Stamp Program.” In Alameda County, 152,381 families were eligible for the Food Stamp program, yet only 83,200 (55%) of families participated.

### ***Special Supplemental Nutrition Program For Women, Infants And Children***

The Special Supplemental Food Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) was established by Congress as a pilot program in 1972 and authorized as a national program in 1974. WIC is a cost-effective federally funded preventive nutrition program that provides nutritious foods, nutrition education, and access to health care to low-income pregnant women, new mothers, and infants and children at nutritional risk. In Alameda County, of the 40,891 families eligible to participate in the WIC program, 32,511 (80%) actually received benefits, making WIC one of the most widely accessed food assistance programs.

### ***National School Lunch Program***

The National School Lunch Program (NSLP), was created by Congress over 50 years ago as a "measure of national security, to safeguard the health and well-being of the Nation's children." It was a direct response to the fact that many of the young men responding to the draft call in WWII were rejected due to conditions arising from serious nutritional deficiencies. The 1946 National School Lunch Act was enacted to provide the opportunity for children across the United States to receive at least one healthful meal every school day. The National School Lunch program is the most widely accessed food assistance program in Alameda County, with 81% of eligible households participating (55,463 households participating out of 66,542 eligible).

### ***School Breakfast Program***

The School Breakfast Program was established by Congress — first as a temporary measure through the Child Nutrition Act of 1966 in areas where children had long bus rides to school and in areas where many mothers were in the workforce; then with permanent authorization in 1975 - to assist schools in providing a nutritious morning meal to children. Despite the availability of this program, only 23% of eligible families in Alameda County participated (15,852 participating out of 68,542 eligible).

### ***Summer Food Service Program for Children***

The Summer Food Service Program for Children was created by Congress in 1968. It is an entitlement program designed to provide funds for eligible sponsoring organizations to serve nutritious meals to low-income children when school is not in session. Only 25% of eligible families were served by this program (16,802 participating of 68,542 eligible).

***Child And Adult Care Food Program***

The Child and Adult Care Food Program was founded in 1968 to provide federal funds for meals and snacks to licensed public and nonprofit child care centers and family and group child care homes for preschool children. Funds are also provided for meals and snacks served at after-school programs for school-age children, and to adult day care centers serving chronically impaired adults or people over age 60.

***The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP)***

TEFAP was first authorized to distribute surplus commodities as the Temporary Emergency Food Assistance Program in 1981. The 1988 Hunger Prevention Act required USDA to purchase additional commodities for low-income households and local emergency feeding organizations. Under the 1990 farm bill, the program was renamed The Emergency Food Assistance Program.

***Community Food and Nutrition Program***

The Community Food and Nutrition Program (CFNP) is the primary source of federal funding for anti-hunger and nutrition advocacy groups at the local, state and national level. The fundamental purpose of the program is to provide hunger relief to individuals across the nation in an effort to improve the nutritional status of low-income individuals. These funds are administered locally through the Community Action Agencies (CAA).

**THE LOCAL HUNGER SAFETY NET PROGRAM**

The local Hunger Safety Net is comprised of the federal programs listed above, administered by the State of California through local jurisdictions. The Food Stamp and WIC programs are administered through Alameda County Social Services Agency, and the School-Based Nutrition Programs are administered jointly by Alameda County and local school districts. The local community-based portion of the safety net is based primarily on a distribution network consisting of the local food bank and a network of community-based organizations that distribute commodity foods.

***The Alameda County Community Food Bank***

The local Hunger Safety Net is anchored by the Alameda County Community Food Bank, which is the primary distributor of commodity foods in the region. As Alameda County's central clearinghouse for donated food, the Food Bank collected more than 12 million pounds of food during FY 2001-2002. In turn, the Food Bank's network of 300 hunger relief agencies provided food assistance to 120,000 individuals each month, including adults, children, the elderly, abuse survivors, people living with AIDS, and the homeless.

The Food Bank receives donations of surplus food from grocery chains, local growers and produce handlers, large food processing companies, community food drives and donations from corporations and private individuals. Another important resource is the The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP). The Food Bank receives over 1 million pounds of food annually through the TEFAP program.

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- **Emergency Food Box Program.** To ensure that families facing crises receive nutritious food, Alameda County contracts with the Food Bank to operate an emergency food distribution program. The Food Bank coordinates the purchase and distribution of food to 25 sites across the county. These sites prepare three-day nutritionally balanced food boxes for individuals on Social Security Income (SSI); families referred to the program by county social workers; the working poor; immigrants; and the homeless.
- **Shared Maintenance Scholarships** are subsidies by the Alameda County Community Food Bank to local food pantries and service providers to allow them to gain access to emergency food. Although the Food Bank does not charge money for emergency food, there is a small handling and distribution charge which the poorest congregations cannot afford. The Shared Maintenance Scholarships, funded through the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) allow those members of the Hunger Safety Net to participate in the distribution of emergency food.

### *The City of Oakland Hunger Program*

The City of Oakland's Hunger Program provides brown bags of emergency food to low income households in the seven Community Development (CD) Districts of Oakland. Food is provided to CD district residents free of charge. Each bag of groceries contains from 10 to 16 meals, and has an average cost of \$8. Food distributions occur at least five times per year, with the focus of effort and resources coming in the winter months. The average food distribution consists of 2800 bags of groceries citywide that are distributed equitably among the seven CD districts in accordance with their proportion of low- and moderate-income residents per census data. The average distribution is approximately 400 bags of groceries per district. The City of Oakland has committed \$100,000 per year from its general fund to fight hunger. The City contribution to the Hunger Program is known as the "baseline" allocation. The Community Development Block Grant provides an opportunity for CD districts to contribute funds to purchase additional food for their districts. Several districts have opted to participate for fiscal year 2002/2003, including the Elmhurst, Western Oakland, and Eastlake/San Antonio/Chinatown Districts.

Food procurement and bulk delivery functions of the City of Oakland Hunger Program are carried out in partnership with the Alameda County Community Food Bank. The Food Bank uses CDBG and City dollars to buy food in bulk from large wholesalers and other outlets, allowing the program to take advantage of economies of scale. The Food Bank also contributes donated food to the distribution effort, and often provides seasonal fresh produce for distribution at no cost. The fact that the Food Bank is a nonprofit organization, and food delivery is provided at cost, further leverages CDBG and City funding in the distribution of emergency food to low-income Oakland residents. In addition, note that none of this allocation of funds goes to support staff or administrative functions.

Although the City's Hunger Program and the Alameda County Community Food Bank work in partnership on monthly food distributions, it is important to distinguish clearly between the two programs. The Food Bank delivers food commodities on a daily basis in large bulk quantities to community-based organizations, and their scope of distribution services is exponentially greater

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than that of the City's Hunger Program. By way of comparison, the Food Bank distributes over 13 million pounds of emergency food each year. The City of Oakland Program distributes approximately 210,000 pounds of food annually. The City's program is a niche function, which concentrates on the distribution of poultry, and other protein-rich foods, staples, canned goods and fresh produce to members of the general public.

### ***The Food Provider Network***

Emergency Food from the Alameda County Community Food Bank and the City of Oakland is distributed to the general public through a volunteer network of food pantries, faith-based organizations, and community groups. Some of these community groups form an Oakland-based organization called the Emergency Food Providers Advisory Committee (EFPAC), which meets monthly and advises Oakland City staff on matters of food policy. EFPAC also provides community input into the content of the brown bags, ensuring that menus and nutritional values reflect neighborhood concerns. These volunteer groups receive the food, which is delivered in bulk to their sites by the Food Bank, and package it into individual brown bags for distribution to the public.

One of the goals of the City's Hunger Program is to support and strengthen the network of emergency food providers through technical assistance and infrastructure building. One target for the program is to establish a dedicated food pantry in each district, and a coordinated hot meal program in each district. A food pantry is distinguished from an intermittent volunteer distribution site in that a food pantry stores emergency food boxes for distribution to needy families at any time. The intermittent food distribution sites do not have a permanent supply of food, but only distribute brown bags of food five or more specified times per year.

There are several other safety net programs which are important to note.

- **The Elmhurst Food Pantry** is a dedicated food resource serving the Elmhurst District of East Oakland. This program has been active in the area for many years, and provides emergency food to over 200 families per week. The Elmhurst Food Pantry has been beset, in recent years, with problems as an organization, including ill-health among its principals and volunteers. The Elmhurst Food Pantry was not funded by CDBG for the current fiscal year and is in danger of closure. As a food pantry that distributes emergency food boxes, this organization is an important resource.
- **The East Oakland Food Pantry** is another dedicated food pantry in the Central East Oakland District. Due to ill-health of its director, the East Oakland Food Pantry was forced to scale back its operations in recent years. Although it remains a volunteer distribution site, it no longer offers regular emergency food boxes to the public on a drop-in basis.
- **Amazing Grace Outreach** is another long-time distribution site located in the Fruitvale District. Again, because of increasing age and ill-health of its pastor, the site was forced to suspend regular distribution operations this year. Efforts are ongoing to establish a new and permanent food distribution site in the Fruitvale CD District.
- **The Oakland Congregate Meal Consortium (OCMC)** is comprised of over 20 local soup kitchens and churches which provide congregate hot meals for area residents. This

organization applied for CDBG funding in Fiscal Year 2002/2003 but did not receive funding.

- **Meals on Wheels** is a program offering home delivered meals to frail and homebound elderly residents by Bay Area Community Services, Inc., a non-profit organization which has traditionally received CDBG funding for this program. The CDBG allocation for Fiscal Year 2002/2003 was significantly lower than in past years.
- **Operation Potluck** is a food recovery program in which restaurants, caterers and other food service industry agencies donate fresh hot foods for distribution to low income Oakland residents in group homes, senior centers, shelters, and other residential facilities. Although Operation Potluck has been funded in the past through CDBG funds, it did not receive funding during Fiscal Year 2002/2003. Interestingly, the City of Oakland's Film Office has recently begun to use Operation Potluck to pick up left over foods from film shoots in Oakland.

### *Funding for the Hunger Safety Net*

The Hunger Safety Net is funded through donations, both cash and in-kind, and grants from both public and private sources. These sources are supplemented by local food drives, often sponsored by local corporations and community organizations.

- **Food Drive Program.** Over 500,000 pounds of food and significant financial contributions are donated annually through the Alameda County Community Food Bank's corporate and community Food Drive Program. While two-thirds of these donations are generated during the holiday season, Food Bank staff works year round to develop new food drives designed to increase participation during the spring, summer and fall.

Primary public local funding for the Hunger Safety Net comes from the City of Oakland, Alameda County, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), the Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) and the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG).

- **The City of Oakland Hunger Program**, described previously in this report, is funded by a \$100,000 grant from the City's General Fund. This funding has been in place since the 1999/2001 budget cycle, and has continued for the 2001/2003 budget.
- **Alameda County** administers the federal Food Stamp program and the WIC program and the Emergency Food Box Program.
- **FEMA** provides funding for the emergency food distribution program, which assists local community-based organizations to distribute emergency food to local residents.
- **CSBG** is administered through the Community Action Agency, and the Food and Nutrition Program provides grants to several Hunger Safety Net agencies.
- **CDBG** is a federal program which is administered by the City of Oakland. A portion of the CDBG grant is earmarked for public services. It is subject to citizen review and recommendations for funding. CDBG funding has been used traditionally to support the Hunger Safety Net, but recent funding allocations have seen a substantial decrease in such funding.

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## KEY ISSUES WITH REGARD TO HUNGER FUNDING

### *CDBG Funding Issues*

The Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) is an extremely flexible funding instrument. Eligible activities include housing rehabilitation, economic development, improvements to public facilities, public services and others. The City of Oakland's Annual Action Plan of the Consolidated Plan for Housing and Community Development for fiscal year 2002/2003 identified four priority areas in a coordinated CDBG funding strategy: 1) Housing 2) Homelessness 3) Economic Development 4) Public Services and Infrastructure. Because of the high priority the City Council places on these program areas and the requirements of HUD funding, the Housing and Economic Development activities are allocated specific percentages of the CDBG. Funding allocations within those areas are made directly by the City Council in response to recommendations from City staff, subject to public review and comment. The allocations for Public Services and Infrastructure are made from the remaining portion of the grant through an interactive public process, with significant citizen participation.

Within the priority of Public Services, the following action items were identified in the Annual Action Plan:

- Provision of social services for seniors, youth, childcare, battered and abused spouses, and other low and moderate income residents.
- Hunger Relief
- Employment, Education and Job Training Programs
- Infrastructure/Neighborhood Improvements including acquisition and rehabilitation of facilities serving low and moderate income persons
- Substance Abuse Intervention and Prevention Programs

CDBG allocations for public services are made by the City Council in cooperation with local District Boards in each of the seven Community Development Districts. Local service-providing organizations submit proposals for projects which address the identified needs of the Consolidated Plan, and make presentations of these proposals to the District Boards. Based on the analysis of needs and priorities in their communities, the District Boards make recommendations to a Citizens Advisory Committee which then makes final funding recommendations to the City Manager. The City Manager then makes final funding recommendations to the Oakland City Council.

A brief survey of historical CDBG allocations to the Hunger Safety Net is instructive as follows:

- 1998: \$255,758
- 1999: \$292,208
- 2000: \$248,463
- 2001: \$361,072
- 2002: \$164,462

The 2002 CDBG allocation to the Hunger Safety Net represented a drop of over 56% relative to the average allocation of the previous four years. This drastic funding cut has severely impacted the Hunger Safety Net. Due to lack of funding, several programs are threatened with closure.

How and why did this happen? Several factors can be cited:

- **Instability and diminished capacity of Hunger Safety Net organizations.** In several cases, a combination of ill-health, age, and physical deterioration of facilities caught up with community-based organizations. Certain agencies that make up the Hunger Safety Net have experienced diminished capacity, and a new generation of providers has not stepped forward to replace them.
- **High turnover for District Boards.** Many of the District Boards had a very high turnover from previous years, resulting in a loss of institutional memory. In addition, perhaps additional training on the priorities and goals of the Consolidated Plan should be done.
- **Changing neighborhood priorities affected District Board decisions.** District Board members are residents of the neighborhoods they represent and are well informed as to the changing needs of their community. Certain social problems – the growing homicide rate in Oakland, for example – may be perceived as crises that override established needs and priorities. Programs that provide assistance to at-risk youth in violent environments, for instance, may tend to be viewed as topical and timely, while programs providing emergency food assistance may be perceived as mundane, even though they perform a vital service, especially for children..

The District Boards designated the five priority areas, but allocations to each area are not in balance with allocations to other priorities. The problem is that child care programs, recreation programs, services to seniors, and youth programs are competing head-to-head with Hunger Safety Net programs for the same resources. Who is to say that hunger is more important than child care or vice versa? It is often difficult for people to decide between survival programs for hunger and homelessness and other worthy programs for youth, seniors, the disabled and other groups.

### ***Public Health and Safety Issues***

Concerns about the delivery of food in public parks, especially LaFayette Park, continue to exist. There are a number of private organizations that are attempting to address the needs of poor people for food. Many of these groups are operating outside of City-funded programs. Issues regarding public health and safety in the area of food handling sometimes arise from actions, however well-meaning, taken by these organizations.

The Parks and Recreation Department continues to work with these private organizations to address these issues pertaining to food handling while being mindful of the public health issues pertaining to hunger, as well.

*Legislative Issues***California Food Policy Advocates have endorsed the following legislative initiatives regarding food policy:**

- **Feeding Hungry Minds in Low-Performing Schools**

All children should start the day with a healthy breakfast; a hungry child cannot learn. Yet more than 450 schools in California with large numbers of low income children do not serve breakfast. As a first step toward providing breakfast for all of California's school children, CFPA proposes to focus on our lowest performing schools as identified by the School Accountability Act of 1999. Recognizing the essential role of good nutrition in educational success, these low-performing schools have a special responsibility to their students to serve breakfast.

- **The Red Tape Reduction Act for Hungry, Working Californians: Five Measures to Improve the Food Stamp Program**

More than 71% of the households eligible for Food Stamps in California are working households. Yet most of these working Californians do not get the support that Food Stamps provide. Red tape in the Food Stamp Program makes it difficult for people to work and to get help putting food on the table. CFPA proposes The Red Tape Reduction Act for Hungry, Working Californians to reduce these hassles. The bill would contain the following five improvements: 1) Remove Redundant Red Tape: End Monthly Reporting; 2) Support Welfare-to-Work: Transitional Benefits for Welfare Leavers; 3) Introduce Fast Lane to Food Assistance: Connecting Medi-Cal Recipients to Food Stamps; 4) Take Advantage of County Options for Working Californians; and 5) Protect California's Workers in High Unemployment Areas.

- **Make Food Stamps Work for Working Californians: Allow Hungry Folks to Own Reliable Cars**

Food Stamps increasingly serve as an essential nutrition support for low-wage working families, who must depend upon reliable cars to get to work. A key barrier to Food Stamp participation is the state's car rule that can disqualify applicants if the value of their car exceeds \$4,650. These people face a difficult choice: Give up the car needed for work or go hungry. If we want Food Stamps to work for working Californians, they have to be able to get to work AND put food on the table.

**THE HUNGER SAFETY NET AND THE CONTINUUM OF CARE**

Despite the great need for emergency services in the Hunger Safety Net and the similarities and overlap of client populations with the Alameda County-Wide Continuum of Care for Homeless Services, there is relatively little coordination between hunger and homeless service providing agencies. Both the County-Wide Continuum of Care Plan and the Oakland Continuum of Care Plan have sections which address the provision of hunger programs and services, and there is a greater need for coordination and communication and joint planning in these areas. One problem is that, aside from the Alameda County Community Food Bank, there is very little capacity within the Hunger Safety Net for coordinated dialog, organizational development activities, or

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hunger advocacy. Most hunger service providers are grassroots organizations that provide direct services to the public, and have very little organizational, fiscal, or fund raising capability.

The City of Oakland is currently taking steps to update its Continuum of Care Plan. One of the priority activities that has been identified is the need to more fully integrate the Hunger Safety Net into the larger Continuum of Care.

### **SUSTAINABLE OPPORTUNITIES**

This is an informational report which does not directly address sustainability issues.

### **ENVIRONMENTAL OPPORTUNITIES**

No environmental opportunities or impacts have been identified.

### **DISABILITY AND SENIOR ACCESS**

Issues with regards to disability and senior access are not addressed in this informational report. Access for qualified seniors and disabled persons is assured in the City of Oakland Hunger Program.

### **ACTION REQUESTED OF THE CITY COUNCIL**

Accept this informational report.

Respectfully submitted,

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WILLIAM E. CLAGGETT  
Executive Director

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APPROVED AND FORWARDED  
TO THE COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE:

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