

# ADVOCATING FOR CHANGE



## A STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE TO FORMING AN ANTI-HUNGER ADVOCACY COMMITTEE AT YOUR FOOD BANK

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**PART I:**  
**INTRODUCTION**

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# Introduction

## *How to Use This Handbook*

The goal of this Handbook is to walk you through the step-by-step process of forming an anti-hunger advocacy committee at your food bank. Each section focuses on a single step in the process and lays out the basic steps that you will need to follow to ensure that your committee is successful. Within each section you will also find useful tips and suggestions for the best practices on conducting the necessary work.

Many of the sections also include an “In Reflection” piece that outlines my personal experience from forming an anti-hunger advocacy committee with FOOD for Lane County, the regional food bank in Lane County, Oregon. The Service Providers Advocacy Network (SPAN), the Lane County advocacy committee, is well underway and is ready to have an impact on the public policy debates surrounding issues of hunger and poverty. These reflective sections share anecdotal information about forming an advocacy committee. They will hopefully make the process of forming an anti-hunger advocacy committee more personal and add some of the human element to your understanding of the process.

Throughout the Handbook you will also find sample materials that you can use in the process of forming your advocacy committee. For example, you will find a sample agenda for the first meeting with your advocacy committee after the section on how to run your first meeting. You can take the main points from this sample agenda, adapt them to your needs, and run with it. My hope in providing these samples is that they will make the process as smooth as possible for you.

In the “Resources and Conclusion” section of this Handbook, you will find a list of other resources that you can access for more information on a given topic. You will also find a sample presentation exploring the root causes of hunger that can be changed and developed to meet the needs of your committee. Please feel free to use these materials in any way that you find useful in the process of establishing your own anti-hunger advocacy committee.

On the back cover you will find a compact disc with a copy of this Handbook on it as well as copies of all of the sample documents located throughout this guide. Please feel free to make extra copies of this Handbook and use the sample documents in any way that you find useful.

# Why Advocacy at Food Banks is Important:

More and more food banks are recognizing the important role that they can and must play in advocating for better public policies. Individuals connected to the emergency food system bring an important perspective to the policy debates surrounding hunger and poverty. They see the struggles of people dealing with hunger and poverty every day in their work. They see the shortcomings of the social safety net in the United States and know the stories of those individuals who experience the daily problem of putting food on their table. This unique perspective must be heard by policymakers and it is our job to make sure that they listen.

Many food banks are finding creative ways to overcome the traditional barriers to participating in advocacy work. These barriers include resistant boards of directors, limited amounts of time, lack of funding, and that the results of advocacy work are not immediate. If we do not advocate for better and more equitable public policies, however, solving the problem of hunger will be nearly impossible. Advocacy needs to be seen not as an optional task that food banks can undertake, but as a central attribute to any organization that wishes to eliminate hunger and it is starting to be seen that way by many food banks.

Changing political, economic, and social factors throughout the 1990s led to an increased number of people using emergency food boxes. For example, the number of emergency food boxes distributed in Oregon alone has nearly doubled since 1996.<sup>1</sup> Charitable organizations such as food banks, food pantries, and soup kitchens are not equipped to meet the increasing demand for emergency food services. Without organizations and individuals advocating for public policies that address the root causes of hunger, the dependency on the emergency food system will continue to increase and it is unclear whether or not charitable organizations will be able to keep up with the demand.

The stakes are high and food banks have an important role to play in eliminating hunger. Their role goes beyond distributing food to those in need. Food banks and other organization in the emergency food system must advocate for public policies that will meet the needs of low-income individuals in our communities. As author and advocate Janet Poppendieck argues in her book, *Sweet Charity?*: “Where emergency food programs take on this challenge, to become a means for organizing people to find their common agenda and pursue it, then I think they can play an important role in bringing about real change.”<sup>2</sup>

One way, among many, to ensure that the voices of people connected to food banks – volunteers, staff, and low-income people – are heard is to form an anti-hunger advocacy committee at your food bank. This Handbook is a step-by step guide with instructions on how to form such a committee. While reading through this Handbook, keep in mind some of the major advantages to forming an advocacy committee:

- 1. Increase your number of volunteers and funding.** By creating a new way for people to get involved at your organization, you will increase people’s interest in the work you are doing. Someone who starts out on the advocacy committee might end up volunteering in the food pantry as well. Also, a large part of

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<sup>1</sup> “The State of Hunger,” Oregon Food Bank, 2004.

<sup>2</sup> Janet Poppendieck. *Sweet Charity?* 1998. Penguin Books: New York, p. 317.

advocacy is educating your community about the root causes of hunger. As you are speaking to groups throughout your community, new people will learn about your work and become inspired to donate time or money.

2. ***Bring new faces to the anti-hunger movement.*** There are people in your community who are more interested in advocacy work than in direct service. There will be some people who might not be interested in emergency food assistance, but who are very interested in working on a campaign or public policy issue.
3. ***Reduce the number of people in need of emergency food.*** Ultimately, the goal of advocacy is to reduce the number of people living in hunger and poverty. As this number decreases so will the demand on the emergency food system. This will in turn reduce the work-load of your organization.

Many food banks, food pantries, and other direct service agencies are already engaged in various advocacy activities. The current level of involvement is an important start in addressing the root causes of hunger and the successes that have already been made through advocacy should encourage us to expand our work.



# **PART II:**

## **STEPS TO FORMING AN ADVOCACY COMMITTEE AT YOUR FOOD BANK**

# Should we Form an Advocacy Committee?

## *Making the Initial Decision*

**Introduction.** This section will walk you through the first step in forming an advocacy committee: making the decision to do it. The goal of this section is to advise you on the appropriate questions to ask yourself as an individual and as an organization before beginning an advocacy committee and to help ensure that there is sufficient organizational support within your food bank to make sure that the committee is a success.

**Important Questions.** As you sit down to think about forming an anti-hunger advocacy committee, here are some questions to help guide your thinking:

***Q: What will the formation of an advocacy committee add to your organization in the short term?***

A: In the short term, you will likely see increased community participation in the work of the food bank, more publicity and news around the work that your committee is doing, and excitement among the staff and members of the committee in the new advocacy project.

***Q: What will the formation of an advocacy committee add to your organization in the long term?***

A: In the long term, you will see an increased volunteer base, more potential donors, and a reduction in the number of people who need to receive emergency services.

***Q: Are food pantry managers, volunteers, and recipients of services in your community interested in advocating?***

A: If you have not asked the people within your community if they are interested in doing more advocacy work, this would be a good opportunity to begin that dialogue. It is likely that there are people in your community who are excited about advocating and who would really like the opportunity to be part of an effort such as forming an anti-hunger advocacy committee.

***Q: What might be some of the barriers to forming an advocacy committee? How could these barriers be addressed?***

A: One of the barriers might be that you are not sure how to go about forming an advocacy committee. This book will help you work through that first obstacle. Another barrier might be that you or your food bank does not feel like you have enough time to create an advocacy committee. It is important to remember that although the initial steps of forming an advocacy committee will take some staff time, ultimately, the participants in the committee will be able to take on much of the necessary work.

“Re-direct your anger into positive action. Convert your fear into excitement. Stand tall on your principles. And don’t forget to have fun!”

- Randy Schutt  
*Inciting Democracy*

***Q: Are there legal barriers that keep non-profit organizations from advocating?***

A: Non-profit 501c3 organizations are allowed to advocate and work on legislative issues, although it is a common misperception that they are not. It is important to note, however, that there are certain restrictions around legislative advocacy. If you have any concerns or questions about what your organization can and cannot do, you can find relevant information on the Center for Non-Profit Management's website: [www.cnmsocal.org](http://www.cnmsocal.org).

***Keys to Making the Decision:*** It may seem like an overwhelming task to add yet one more thing to your already busy schedule. It is important to keep in mind, however, the key points from the introduction. First, an advocacy committee may bring new volunteers and funds to your organization. Also, strong advocacy work can lead to the reduction of people who need emergency food in the first place, eventually reducing your work load. And if you are able to develop strong leadership among the members of the committee, those leaders will be able to take some of the work from your hands. As you are making your decision, there are four key points to keep in mind:

- ***Make a decisive decision about whether this is something that your organization wants to pursue.*** It will be much easier to get things going if your organization has made a solid decision to pursue this opportunity.
- ***Get support from people at different levels of your organization.*** In addition to getting the support of other staff, it is possible that you will need to talk to your board of directors to gain support for engaging in more advocacy work.
- ***Figure out who will put time into starting the Advocacy Committee.*** It will require a little bit of time at the beginning to get things started. Once the committee is under way, some of the work can be delegated to the committee participants.
- ***Do not get overwhelmed.*** Although there may be moments when this project feels like extra work and there are tons of other things to do, it is important to think about the formation of this committee in terms of small steps. Each individual step is outlined in this handbook and is very manageable and relatively quick to complete.

# Who Should be at the Table?

## *Designing an Outreach Strategy*

**Introduction.** One of the key first steps to building an advocacy committee is thinking about who you want to be around the table. As you begin to think about the people you would like to have participate in the committee, consider drawing people from the following groups:

- Direct Service Providers
- Food Pantry Volunteers
- Community Kitchen Volunteers
- Food Bank Volunteers
- Recipients of Services
- Community Members
- Members of Other Non-profit Organizations
- Board of Director Members
- Staff members at other social service agencies

**Pros and Cons.** It is helpful to think about the advantages and disadvantages that each type of possible committee member might have. For example, direct service providers bring a hands-on perspective that a member of your board of directors might not have. If the committee is heavily made up of members of the board of directors, the conversation could also easily become very technical and it may be difficult to move into an action stage. Also, if individuals come representing large organizations, things could easily get slowed down if they feel like they need to get approval at every step from their organization. It is important to consider these different possibilities before deciding who to invite.

**Diversity.** It is also important to think about ensuring that there are different voices around the table. One way to do this is to invite people from as many of the above-listed groups of people as possible, but that may be difficult if you are not very well connected to certain groups. Another way to ensure a diverse group of participants is to include people of different races, sexes, ethnicities, classes, and backgrounds. You may be able to find this type of diversity within a single one of the aforementioned groups to which you are already connected.

“We all should know that diversity makes for a rich tapestry, and we must understand that all the threads of the tapestry are equal in value no matter what their color.”

- Maya Angelou

**Where to start.** It is best to first outreach to those with whom you already have relationships and then to begin to expand the committee through their connections. If you are well connected to the direct service providers in your area and the volunteers at the food bank, those are good places to start. After a few meetings, the direct service providers can begin to bring some of their clients and the committee will begin to expand.

**Making contact.** After choosing which groups of people you would like to reach out to for the first meeting, it is time to get in touch with them. There are many ways to invite people

to participate in an advocacy committee, including letters, e-mails, phone calls, and face-to-face contact. Your strategy will vary depending on your relationship to the people you are planning to invite. For people you are familiar with, phone calls are usually the most effective. For people you are less familiar with, but for whom you have contact information, it may work well to send an initial letter explaining the advocacy committee and then follow up with a phone call. Face-to-face outreach works well if you are trying to reach out to people for whom you do not have contact information, but who will likely be in the same geographical location. If you are looking to reach out to community members who may be interested in anti-hunger work, for example, local community events such as farmers markets or street fairs may be a good place to start.

**Framing the Committee.** When conducting outreach, it is important to do a bit of “marketing” about why people should want to be a part of this new group. Some people will jump at the opportunity and you will not need to do much work on engaging them. For those who might not be so easily excited, here are some possible ways of framing the committee. Different frames work better for different people, meaning it will be useful to think about a frame that will work best for your specific audience. Here are some examples of framing that might work well for food pantry managers:

- **Turn your specialized knowledge into action.** “As a direct service provider, you have a unique perspective on hunger. Every day, you see the effects of public policies that are not meeting the needs of the people in our community. Your specialized knowledge could be of great assistance to political decision-makers at the local, state, and national levels around issues of hunger and poverty.”
- **The problem is getting worse.** “Year after year we see an increase in the number of people who need emergency food. Although our work to meet the increasing need is wonderful, it is not getting at the root causes of hunger. Advocating for better public policies will help to solve the underlying problems.”
- **Attract new volunteers and donors.** “There are many people in your community who are interested in tackling the root causes of hunger. By creating a space where they can advocate for

### ***In Reflection ...***

Deciding who to invite to the first Service Providers Advocacy Network (SPAN) meetings was a challenging decision. We were initially thinking about inviting a broad set of organizations to the table and forming more of a coalition-type group. After some careful thinking, we realized that coordinating a coalition of many non-profit organizations was going to take us away from our initial goal of forming an action-oriented advocacy committee. Coalitions often move slowly and organizational representatives need to consult with their organizations before moving forward. This sort of group was not what we were looking to create. Therefore, we decided draw on the people we already knew and to keep the group limited in size – inviting food pantry staff from Lane County. We already had relationships with many of the food pantry managers within the network. They also knew about FOOD for Lane County and were familiar with its work. Also, many of the food pantry managers already knew one another through their mutual connection to FOOD for Lane County. Another advantage was that even if they were not aware of public policy debates about food security or the root causes of hunger, they had hands-on experience with hunger on a daily basis. Lastly, food pantry managers have an important, rarely heard perspective on issues of hunger and poverty. Their experiences can greatly assist decision-makers in determining the appropriate ways to make policies aimed at increasing food security for all. In hindsight, another benefit has been to see the way engaging in advocacy work can re-energize staff and volunteers who have been involved with food pantries for a long time. Members of SPAN have expressed that they are rejuvenated by engaging with advocacy work at a new level. The group will expand to include others as well, but for now, our initial decision to include pantry managers first, seems to have been a good one.

policy changes, you will draw new faces to your organization, creating a new pool of volunteers as well as possible new funding sources.”

- ***Have a more public face in the community.*** “A large piece of advocacy is education. Educating and speaking to other groups and agencies in your community about public policies and the root causes of hunger will increase your visibility as an organization, again, drawing more potential volunteers and donors to your agency.”
- ***Lower the number of people needing emergency food.*** “The ultimate goal of advocacy is to eliminate the root causes of hunger. As those root causes are addressed, fewer people will be dependent on your services for survival. This will allow you to expand your other programs or relieve some of the current stress on your organization.”

***Conclusions.*** On the following pages you will find a sample outreach letter and invitation that can be easily adapted. Please feel free to draw from them as much as you would like as you are putting together your outreach materials.

Date

Recipient's Name

Address

Address

Dear Recipient's Name,

You are invited to participate in the creation of an exciting new advocacy group in Your Community. As you know, hunger and food insecurity continue to be major problems in our communities. All of us work hard to ensure people have access to enough food, but the problem continues to grow. For this reason, we are asking you to participate in a new group called the Name of Your Group. Group Name is a perfect way for you, your volunteers, and your clients to turn your knowledge and passion about ending hunger into action.

Group Name will be an action-oriented group of service providers, volunteers, and those directly affected by hunger that will influence food insecurity in a positive way. Group Name will be a model for other anti-hunger advocacy groups in Your State.

**This is a good place to talk about anti-hunger advocacy work that is already going on in your area that your group might be able to tap in to.**

As a group, we will work to find new and creative ways to address issues surrounding hunger and food insecurity in our community. The types of action we might take include education, holding public hearings, and finding other ways of bringing forward the voices of people experiencing hunger and poverty in Your Community.

The first Group Name meeting will be held on Date of First Meeting. This will be an opportunity to share your good ideas and hear about advocacy efforts in other communities. Dinner will be provided.

To RSVP, or if you have any questions, please contact Your Contact Information. I look forward to seeing you there.

Sincerely,

Your Name

Your Organization

YOU ARE CORDIALLY INVITED TO THE  
FIRST MEETING OF THE ...

*THE NAME OF YOUR  
GROUP*

...TURN YOUR IDEAS  
INTO ACTION...

GROUP NAME IS AN ACTION-ORIENTED COMMITTEE  
OF SERVICE PROVIDERS, VOLUNTEERS, AND  
INDIVIDUALS DIRECTLY AFFECTED BY HUNGER THAT  
ADVOCATES AROUND PRESSING ISSUES TO  
INFLUENCE FOOD INSECURITY IN A POSITIVE WAY

WHEN: DAY, DATE, TIME OF MEETING

WHERE: LOCATION

*DINNER WILL BE SERVED!*

PLEASE LET US KNOW IF YOU ARE ABLE  
TO ATTEND

*To RSVP, if you have any  
questions, or want more  
information, please contact:*

**Your Name** at the **Your Organization**:  
**Your e-mail** or **Your phone number**



# How do I Establish a Process for Making Decisions?

## *Ensuring Accountability*

**Introduction.** As you are brainstorming the vision for your advocacy committee, it is important to think about how decisions will be made in the group. There is no “right way” to make decisions, but ideally the process will be transparent, organized, and democratic. This section and the following page of information put together by the Rural Organizing Project (ROP) in Oregon will help you think about how to develop a decision-making process. It is important to remember that when there is a clear process for making decisions, there is also a level of accountability for the people who make those decisions.

**Who Makes Decisions.** The first step in figuring out a decision-making process is deciding who will be making decisions. Will anyone involved with the advocacy committee be a decision-maker? Or should there be a smaller team of leaders that makes the decisions? If your group is small, it may not be necessary to distinguish between the participants in the group and a leadership group that makes decisions. With a small group it is possible to have anyone who comes to meetings participate in the decision-making process. For larger groups, however, it will probably be necessary to have a set team of people who make important decisions. Another option for large groups is to have a small leadership team that makes the ongoing decisions throughout the year, but to have an annual meeting where anyone who participates can come and help shape the direction of the group for that year. Whatever is decided, it should be clear to all participants who is making decisions.

**How are Decisions Made.** There are a couple different ways to make decisions. You can use a traditional voting model, which works well with larger groups of people. In this scenario, the majority wins. Another possible way to make decisions with smaller groups is to have people vote on an issue by holding up a certain number of fingers depending on how much they support the initiative. For example, one finger is very little support and five fingers is enthusiastic support. If someone holds up no fingers, meaning a fist, then the issue goes back to discussion until that person is comfortable allowing the decision to be made. Lastly, you can use a consensus model where no official vote is taken. For this model, you will have a discussion and see where the discussion is going. As the facilitator, if you feel like there is a general agreement in the room, you can state what you think the agreement is and see if

### ***In Reflection ...***

Thinking about possible decision-making processes was very useful for me as I was going through the process of developing SPAN. Having a vision of a leadership and decision-making structure is a good way to keep yourself on track. SPAN’s decision-making structure is not as clearly defined as it would be in the ideal world. It is still very loose and informal without a set process. But, for me, it was incredibly useful to have a vision of where I would like things to end up. It would be wonderful if all of SPAN’s decisions were made in a democratic way with accountability amongst group members, but that will take a bit more time. Having a decision-making structure goal as a guiding post, however, was a way for me to stay on track and check in with my initial vision. It may seem a bit too theoretical or academic to brainstorm a process for making decisions, but if it is viewed as a means to ensure that the committee is moving in the appropriate direction, it can be an incredibly useful tool. It certainly has been for me.

people agree. After you state the agreement, it is important to ask: “Is there any opposition to this?” or “Would anyone like to add something?” This helps to ensure that the group really has reached consensus. Consensus is easiest with smaller groups, but can also be effective for larger groups if the facilitator is comfortable negotiating a larger number of opinions.

**Note.** Please see the next page on “Named Leadership Teams” by the Rural Organizing Project for more information on decision-making processes.

## **Named Leadership Teams**

**Background:** The Rural Organizing Project exists to develop and support vibrant social justice groups in rural Oregon. In the first 10 years we have learned a lot on what allows a group to thrive and what allows a group to fade away! Three components seem basic to any group having staying power: 1. a named leadership team, 2. a plan of action, and 3. a regularly used communication system for both supporters and the broader community. This memo looks at what it means to have a functional, named leadership team.

**What:** A named leadership team might best describe a ‘Board’. It should be a group of 7-15 people that each commit to a specified period of stewardship for the organization. This working group makes routine decisions and sets directions for the organization.

**Why:** Regardless of what you call it (Board, Steering Committee, Leadership Team), a named leadership team is needed to provide structure. Without structure a group can complete nice isolated projects, but sustaining an ongoing presence that can impact community culture is hard without basic structure. Having the leadership be named allows those names to be made public which makes the group accessible to potential supporters and people in need. It also allows the group to have a decision making process. And, it helps define for members what is expected of them so that they are better able to contribute to the work of the group.

**Who:** It is important that the right people are on a leadership team. There are many perspectives on who is ‘right’ for the job. Here are some screening approaches that the ROP uses. Does the person share the values of the group? Does the person function well in meetings? Some people hate meetings despite their dedication to the group, other people enjoy meetings; the leadership team needs folks that can cope in a meeting setting. Can the person make a time commitment? (If the person is wearing too many other hats, this might not be the best time for them to take a turn on the leadership team.) Is the person willing to make decisions? Is the person willing to cooperate? Do they have the specific skills needed for the role they are being asked to play?

**How:** Once you find that it makes sense to have a leadership team, it is important to define what they (board members) would do. Consider writing job descriptions for the various roles, as you would in hiring someone for a job. These can be simple, but should clearly state what is expected of each member, so they can decide if they’re up to the task. You might want to define the

length of term for the position and include recruiting new leadership in the responsibilities of each person.

The next question is how do you find these folks when everyone seems so busy? Rule number one – don't beg. Take the time to have enough conversations to find the folks where this commitment matches where they are in their lives. Many other folks might be honored to be considered but need to be supported in understanding what the job would require and being honest if it fits in with their current life. People who decline now might be able to start making the space for a future year's turn at leadership. Start by brainstorming a list of prospects. Divide the list of prospects up and set up formal times to meet with these people and discuss the group, its history, its potential and what it would mean to commit to being on a leadership team. Enter into the one on one meetings with a friendly timeline to allow for them to happen. It would be good to have a first meeting date set for folks who say 'yes' to plan around. Following up with a letter of confirmation as a reminder of the meeting helps.

- Brainstorm names of prospects
- Divide who will meet with which prospect
- Conduct meetings
- Host meeting with new recruits who sign on

**When:** Many groups go through cycles of ebbing and flowing – being more active and less so. When a group is struggling to establish directions, complete projects or get critical mass to a meeting (or even to have a meeting!), it is a good time to consider beefing up your leadership team.

*For more support in getting a leadership team operational in your community contact the ROP: POB 1350, Scappoose, OR 97056, office@rop.org, 503 543-8417*

# How do I Create a Good Agenda?

## *Helping to Ensure a Strong Meeting*

**Introduction.** A strong agenda is one of the most important pieces of a good meeting. This section will walk you through the process of developing an agenda for your meetings. You will find a few useful tips that make forming an agenda easy and effective.

**Making Two Agendas.** It is useful to make two agendas for a meeting – one for the people who will be leading and facilitating the meeting and one for those who will be participating in the meeting. You can think of these as “Staff” agendas and “Public” agendas. On both agendas, it is a good idea to put the name of the group, the date and time of the meeting, as well as the location of the meeting. This will be helpful for your records.

**Staff Agenda.** The Staff Agenda will be your guide through the meeting. It is easiest and most effective to make this agenda first. There are three main parts to this agenda:

- **Goals.** At the top of the agenda, list the goals for the meeting. These can include very specific things such as choosing an issue to work on. You can also include broader goals such as improving the relationships among the members of the group.
- **Agenda Items.** This is the section outlining what you will actually talk about at the meeting. Using the goals you have put forth, brainstorm the different sections of the meeting you will need in order to meet those goals. After all the possible meeting sections are laid out, see if you can combine sections. Then, place the different sections in an order that will make the meeting flow well. Next to each agenda item write down the time allotted for that section as well as the person that will be responsible for running that section of the meeting. Then, under each section of the agenda, write a description of what that section will cover and any important notes to yourself. *See the “Sample Staff Agenda” on the following pages for an example.*
- **Materials.** When the main section of the agenda is complete, go back through it and at the bottom of the agenda list all of the materials that you will need for each section. Although materials might not seem like that most important thing while writing an agenda, it is really nice to have a complete list of needed materials in one place that you can use as a reference and that you can check off before the meeting to ensure that you have everything that you need.

**Public Agenda.** The best way to go from the Staff Agenda to the Public Agenda is to cut and paste the Staff Agenda into a new document titled “Public Agenda.” Then, delete the goals and materials sections, delete the notes beneath each agenda point, and delete the name of the person who will be leading each section. You will be left with an agenda that is ready to go as your Public Agenda. *See the “Sample Public Agenda” on the following pages for an example.*

# How Should I Run the First Meeting?

## *Holding the Initial Gathering*

**Introduction.** The goal of this section is to assist in guiding you through planning the first meeting of your new anti-hunger advocacy committee. Some of the decisions you made earlier around outreach, such as what types of people you want to start the committee with, will help to shape the format of your first meeting. For example, if you invite mainly food bank volunteers to your first meeting, you might need to find a way of connecting their experiences to the root causes of hunger during the meeting.

**Possible Meeting Focuses:** There are many different ways to focus a first meeting and you will need to make a decision about what focus you would like your initial gathering to have. Different focuses of initial meetings include:

- **Informational:** An informational focus means that individuals can come to learn more about the new anti-hunger advocacy committee. They are not making any sort of commitment to the group by showing up, but want to learn more about the possibility of participating.
- **Brainstorming:** A brainstorming focus allows individuals who are fairly committed to the new committee to express their ideas for change. The group discusses different possibilities for the future work of the advocacy committee and people are able to get their concerns off of their chest. At a first meeting, it is likely that the participants will want an opportunity to vent about some of the issues that they see in their community.
- **Educational:** An educational focus to the meeting is about delivering information on issues of hunger and poverty. For example, to focus on education you could give a presentation on the root causes of hunger (see the “Resources” section of the Handbook for a sample presentation on the root causes of hunger). An educational focus is useful to get everyone on the same page in terms of their knowledge of hunger and poverty issues.
- **Action-oriented:** An action-oriented focus for a first meeting is useful if there is something extremely pressing going on in your community

### ***In Reflection ...***

The first meeting of the Service Providers Advocacy Network (SPAN) was focused on education, but there were pieces of an information session combined with a brainstorming session as well. It was important to me to make sure that even though the meeting was focused on education, that there were pieces of the meeting that involved the other focuses. For those who were uncertain about their interest in the group, they could better understand what SPAN was looking to do through the informational section. For those anxious to express their thoughts and begin putting ideas into action, there was the brainstorming piece of the meeting. I chose to focus on education at the first meeting to really make sure that everyone had a common base of knowledge to work from. Incorporating different meeting focuses helped to ensure that people left the meeting excited about the group, with a bit more knowledge about hunger, and having placed some of their ideas on the table. Please see the following pages for a sample first meeting agenda.

that you are using to start this committee. For example, if the School Breakfast Program was just cut at your local high school, an action-oriented focus to the meeting might be exactly what you need.

**Keys to a good first meeting.** You will find below a set of possible items to incorporate into your first meeting. You will most likely not be able to do all of them at your first meeting and some types of meetings are more conducive to some of the suggestions below than others.

- **Introductions.** It sounds basic, but it is incredibly important to have a few minutes at the beginning of the meeting for people to introduce themselves and say why they came to the meeting or why they are interested in anti-hunger advocacy work.
- **Vision Presentation.** Certainly, the members of the advocacy committee will be largely responsible for the vision of the group. It is important, however, for you to share a bit of background on how you came to want to form the group, where you envision it going, and what you envision it might look like. In this section it will be helpful for you to define why advocacy is needed in your community and the ways that you see the advocacy committee at the food bank addressing that need.
- **Food.** This may not seem like a big deal, but it definitely makes a difference. If you are going to meet around dinner time, make sure to have a meal for people. If you are meeting in the afternoon, snacks are fine. Just make sure to have something for people to nibble on.
- **Agenda.** Without an agenda, a meeting will go nowhere. Try to distribute the agenda before the meeting if at all possible. Make sure to review the agenda at the beginning of the meeting and add any changes that people have. It is also a good idea to assign times to each agenda item. That way, you can be sure to end the meeting when you are supposed to.
- **Establishing Committee Norms.** This is a basic exercise, but is a good ice-breaker for a first meeting. Have people think about “ground rules” for the committee. What elements are integral, for them, to participating in a group. You will find a set of sample committee norms on the following pages.
- **Start on time/End on time.** This is easier said than done, but can really strengthen your meeting. By making sure that you start when you say you will and end on time, you show that you value people’s time and do not want to waste it. Also, if you do not start your meetings on time, participants will feel like it is fine to show up a few minutes late to the next meeting.
- **Facilitation.** It is imperative that you have a facilitator to make sure that the meeting runs smoothly. At all meetings, but especially at the first, it is the job of the facilitator to make sure that everyone is given a chance to speak and voice their opinion.
- **Participation.** Regardless of what type of meeting you are running, it is necessary to include the voices and opinions of the people in the room. If communication is only going in one direction – from you to them – people will stop listening and most likely not come back. Whether it is brainstorming or discussing their own work, make sure people have a chance to speak for a good portion of the first meeting.
- **Action.** Although it is not always possible, it is great to have something that people can begin working on right away. There is lots of energy and

excitement at a first meeting and if you can channel that energy into an advocacy project that is already going on, it will help to keep people engaged.

- ***Strong Finish.*** If you want people to continue to be a part of the advocacy committee it is important that the meeting ends on a strong note. Possible ways to end a meeting with strength are to read an inspirational quote or to talk about how excited you are about what was accomplished at the meeting. Anything that will leave the meeting on an exciting rather than a sour note will work well. You want to make sure that people do not trickle out of the meeting towards the end. Also, make sure to set a time for the next meeting and make sure that any tasks that need to be completed are assigned before people leave.

***Conclusion.*** A group's first meeting is important in setting the tone for the committee. Make sure to spend some time before your first meeting thinking about what impression you want to leave with those individuals who come to your initial gathering.



# Service Providers Advocacy Network (SPAN) Agenda – Staff

Tuesday, October 19<sup>th</sup>, 5:30 – 7:30 pm  
FOOD for Lane County, 770 Bailey Hill Road, Eugene

## Goals:

- Introduce SPAN vision and structure
- Develop meeting norms and climate for the group
- Advocacy education – to provide a common base of knowledge for all
- Build group energy and excitement
- Brainstorm about individuals' interests

1. Welcome & Introductions as we eat Dinner (5 min.) **(Jessica)**
2. Review of Agenda (2 min.) **(David)**
3. SPAN Vision and Purpose (15 min.) **(Laurie)**
  - Introduce the vision of SPAN and where we see it going.
4. “Education-to-Action” Presentation (25 min.) **(David)**
  - PowerPoint Presentation and Handout
5. Establishing Meeting Norms/Climate of SPAN (10 min.) **(Jessica)**
  - Brainstorm format
6. Brainstorm Ideas of Issues on Which to Work (20 min.) **(David)**
7. Take Action Now (15 min.) **(David)**
  - We described an anti-hunger advocacy project that was already going on in Oregon that people could get involved in.
8. Next Steps (5 min.) **(Laurie)**
  - Next Meeting Date/Time
  - Facilitator and Note-taker for Next Meeting
9. Adjourn

## Materials Needed:

- Projector/Laptop for advocacy presentation **(David)**
- Sign-in Sheet **(David)**
- A flyer or job description that people can take to recruit others **(David)**
- Food Security Links **(Laurie)**
- Big Paper and Markers **(David)**
- Dinner **(Laurie)**
- Copies of Agenda **(David)**

# Service Providers Advocacy Network (SPAN) Agenda

Tuesday, October 19<sup>th</sup>, 5:30 – 7:30 pm  
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1. Welcome & Introductions as we eat Dinner (5 min.)
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4. “Education-to-Action” Presentation (25 min.)
5. Establishing Meeting Norms/Climate of SPAN (10 min.)
6. Brainstorm Ideas of Issues on Which to Work (20 min.)
7. Take Action Now (15 min.)
8. Next Steps (5 min.)
9. Adjourn

## Anti-Hunger Advocacy Committee Norms

- Participate
- Focus
- Maintain momentum
- Reach closure when possible
- Come on time and be prepared with assignments and agreements
- Start on time/End on time
- Listen respectfully, acknowledge other viewpoints as valid
- One person speaks at a time
- Be honest
- Place greater emphasis on the good of the group than on personal preference or need
- Remember that others really do see the world differently from you
- Consider conflict as a necessary stage along the path of progress
- Maintain team/group integrity and confidentiality
- Give the meeting leader/facilitator the power to interrupt, maintain order, and keep the group focused on the stated goals
- Express your disagreement with ideas, not people
- Ask clarifying questions when necessary

### ***In Reflection ...***

Forming a set of committee norms was a useful exercise for the Service Providers Advocacy Network (SPAN). It gave everyone an opportunity to express their pet peeves about working in groups. It also gave people a chance to talk in a bit more detail about how they would like to see SPAN function. Laying out a list of norms is one very concrete way that you can attempt to start the committee off on the right foot. SPAN participants were appreciative to be given the chance to express their opinions and by laying out committee norms at an early stage in the development of SPAN, we helped to ensure that major issues did not develop down the road.

# How Should I Follow-up After the First Meeting?

## *Building Relationships and Cohesion*

**Introduction.** The follow-up to the first meeting is incredibly important in ensuring the success of a group. This section will help guide you through the time between your first and second advocacy committee meetings. Chances are that you will not leave the first meeting with a well-defined action plan or campaign. Most likely, the details of the work the committee will take on will come during the second meeting. Just because there is not a pre-established action plan, however, does not mean that there is not meaningful work that you can do to ensure the success of the advocacy committee. This “down time” can be used to help build relationships with those individuals who came to the first meeting and to spend some more time recruiting people who you would like to see at the table.

**Meeting Notes.** It is important to type up the notes from your first advocacy committee meeting and distribute them to everyone. This is a great way to do a brief follow-up from the first meeting. You can send the notes out to everyone over e-mail or through snail mail. Along with the meeting notes you can thank them for coming to the meeting, express your excitement about the first meeting, and remind them when the group will be meeting again. Keeping a record of your meetings will also be useful for new people who join the advocacy committee later on. Giving the meeting notes to new people will assist them in catching up to speed on the work of the group.

**One-on-Ones.** It is a good idea to set up one-on-one meetings with the people who came to the first advocacy committee meeting. These meetings can be informal and quite short. The time spent meeting with people, however, will help you better understand their interests, strengths, and personalities and will also assist them in getting to know you a bit better on a more individualized basis. *For sample questions to ask in a one-on-one meeting, please see the following pages.*

**Tips for Success with One-on-Ones.** One-on-one meetings can be a challenge, but they are also a great opportunity to get to know people better. Here are a

### ***In Reflection ...***

One of the most useful steps I took during the process of developing the Service Providers Advocacy Network (SPAN) was setting up one-on-one conversations with the individuals who came to the first meeting. I conducted all of the conversations at the agencies of the people I was meeting with, which gave me an opportunity to better understand them and their day-to-day work. Until I met with them at their organizations, I did not know much about what they did on a daily basis or how that would inform their perspective on advocacy. The one-on-one meetings allowed me to get to know the participants as individuals. It became clear that for one participant, hunger was very much an issue of human rights. For another participant, involvement with SPAN was a way of reconnecting to the activism that she had been a part of earlier in life. These little pieces of information helped me to better understand group dynamics as well as the individual perspectives within the group. After the one-on-one meetings, talking to SPAN participants felt more natural and relaxed. It was no longer like talking to a member of the group, but rather to someone that I knew.

few tips to make sure that your one-on-one's go well.

- ***Meet on their Turf.*** If at all possible, meet them in a place they are used to – their office, their house, etc... If that is not possible, try to meet them in a neutral location such as a restaurant or coffee shop. This helps to ensure that they are comfortable and open when they are speaking. Also, meeting at their organization can help give you a better understanding of their day-to-day work.
- ***Prepare Questions.*** Make sure to have questions in mind before you show up to the one-on-one meeting. Think about the goals of the one-on-one and use those to guide the questions you ask.
- ***Keep it Informal.*** Although it is important to have questions to ask, it is much better to use the questions as a guide and let the conversation flow naturally. Having the questions in front of you just ensures that you will have a way to make it through any awkward silences and that you leave the meeting with the information that you are seeking.
- ***On Taking Notes.*** It is nice to take notes during a one-on-one meeting to ensure that you do not forget any important pieces of information. Let the person know that you are taking notes because you value what they have to say and do not want to forget anything.
- ***Meeting Summary.*** When you are done with the one-on-one meeting, take a few minutes to summarize the meeting and fill in any gaps in your notes. Make sure to highlight any areas of great importance and note anything you said you would do, for example, sending them more information about a specific program.
- ***Listen.*** This one sounds basic, but is incredibly important. Make sure to actively listen to what they are saying. Try to identify their interest not just in the anti-hunger advocacy committee, but their other interests as well. Listen for subtle hints about issues that are important to them so that you better understand their decision to participate in the committee, which will assist you in figuring out ways to ensure that they stay engaged.

## Meeting with Thomas Carter:

Community Sharing Offices: Tuesday, November 2, 10am

1. Can you talk to me a little bit about the work that you do here at Community Sharing?
  - How long have you been here?
  - What other work have you done?
2. What thoughts do you have about the first advocacy committee meeting? Things that went well? Things you would change?
3. What would you like to make sure is on the agenda for the next meeting?
4. What draws you to advocacy work?
5. What experience do you have doing advocacy? What has succeeded? Failed?
6. What do you hope will come out of our advocacy committee?
7. What issues do you think have the most impact on people coming to receive services from your agency (Housing, Health Care, etc...)?
8. What types of actions are you interested in doing (education, writing legislators, accountability sessions, etc...)?
9. Do you know any other people who you think might be interested in being part of our advocacy committee?
10. What tools would be helpful in educating your clients about resources that are available to them?
11. What trainings would you like to be exposed to through the advocacy committee? What skills would you like to develop?

# How do I Develop a Communication Structure?

## *Keeping People Connected*

**Introduction.** Ensuring good communication among the various participants is vital to building an anti-hunger advocacy committee. This section will help you think about ways of building a communication structure that allows for the necessary interactions between members to take place. Although you will need to tailor your communication to the needs of the specific participants in your group, this section will provide you with some of the basics.

**The Three-Pronged System.** There are three aspects of communication that are basic for use within a committee: the phone, e-mail, and a database. Depending on the membership of your group, the emphasis of your communication will vary, but the three above-listed forms of communication will all need to be used.

**Phone.** It may seem old-fashioned in a time so centered on electronic communication, but the phone is still an important means of communication. Phone calls are more personal than e-mails and allow for more of a dialogue than e-mail does. Also, if you have older participants in your committee, they might not use e-mail regularly and you may need to use the phone to stay connected with them. It may also be useful to set up a phone tree or calling chain for your group if it grows to be a bit bigger.

**E-mail.** For mass-communication, meeting reminders, and sending out agendas and meeting notes, e-mail is a great mode of communication. E-mail is quick, easy, and allows you to send documents to other people.

**Listserv.** If you need to send out an e-mail to a group of people on a regular basis, it may be worth forming a listserv. Having a listserv will also allow you to easily add people to e-mail conversations and reminders. There are easy and free services on-line that will allow you to form a listserv. The most user-friendly one is through Google and can be accessed at:  
[www.google.com/groups](http://www.google.com/groups)

**Database.** The last prong of good communication is maintaining a database. There are many fancy databases that you can use, however, setting up an Excel spreadsheet works just fine. All you need is a place to store people's contact information: phone, e-mail, and address. If you want, you can also use the database to track people's participation, involvement, and interests.

**Binders or Folders.** Although it may seem like a simple idea, it can be very useful to give everyone on the committee a three-ring binder or folder with the name of your group on it. Inside, you can put people's contact information, hunger fact sheets, and blank paper for taking notes. People will be able to bring them to meetings to keep agendas, meetings notes, and all of the information about the anti-hunger advocacy committee in one place. Any piece of communication you give them can easily be stored in the binder or folder.

# How Should I Run the Second Meeting?

## *Moving the Committee Forward*

**Introduction.** Now that the initial steps have been completed and you have followed up from your first meeting, it is time to move the anti-hunger advocacy committee forward. It is a bit harder to provide you with specifics for the second meeting because much of the agenda at the second meeting will be determined by what happened at your first gathering and what you were able to identify as people's interests from your one-on-one follow-up conversations. There are a few pieces of advice, however, that might help in planning and conducting your second anti-hunger advocacy committee meeting.

**Incorporating Group Interest.** If you have spent some time engaging with people between meetings, your second gathering is the perfect time to incorporate what you learned from your conversations with people. If people expressed interest in learning a particular skill, the second meeting might be a good time to do a training around that skill. Attempting to bring participants' interests into the conversation of meetings as soon as possible will help set your group up for success.

**Forward Progress.** One of the keys to the second meeting of the group is making forward progress. If you do not move the group's discussion to the next logical point at your second gathering, it will be difficult to keep people engaged. If your second meeting feels just like a repeat of the first, few individuals will stick around for a third meeting.

**Moving to Action.** The second meeting is usually a good time to begin moving the advocacy committee towards concrete action steps. After one meeting focused on brainstorming, education, or information, people will most likely be ready to start thinking about taking action, which was one of the reasons they became involved with the group in the first place. There are many ways to take action; for more information on planning an action, please look at the "How Should we Plan our First Action" section of this guide.

**Note.** For an example of an agenda for the second meeting, see the following pages.

### ***In Reflection ...***

Coming into the second meeting, it was clear to me from my one-on-one conversations with people that we needed to choose an action and begin to move things forward. The vast majority of the second meeting was spent choosing an action to work on. To make this decision we used an exercise called "Who, How, What," which can be found on the following pages. Moving things forward can be difficult. Our conversation easily got stuck on the same issue. Rather than moving through the different possible issues to work on, we stayed on one issue for longer than was necessary. As the group facilitator, it was my role to make sure that the conversation progressed, while also ensuring that people's voices were being heard and that the necessary discussion was happening. If you find yourself in that position, one useful phrase is: "I want to be mindful of the time. Should we amend the agenda and spend more time on this issue or should we move on?" Most likely, people will say that you should move on. This useful phrase allows you to move the meeting forward without offending anyone or silencing anyone's opinion.



# Service Providers Advocacy Network (SPAN)

## Agenda - Staff

Wednesday, December 1<sup>st</sup>, 3 to 5pm  
FOOD for Lane County

### Goals:

- Choose an issue to work on
- Develop an action plan
- Assign work to do between now and next meeting
- Develop understanding of advocacy
- Examine what advocacy work people are already doing
- Talk about expanding SPAN

### Agenda:

1. Welcome (2 min.) **(David)**
  - Welcome and thank you all for coming
  - Thank you for meeting with me between the last meeting and this one
2. Review of Agenda (2 min.) **(David)**
3. What advocacy work are we already doing? (15 min.) **(Laurie)**
  - Discuss different types of advocacy (one-on-one, talking to groups, lobbying politicians)
  - What skills do you already have for advocating?
4. How can SPAN support the advocacy work you are already doing? (10 min.) **(Jessica)**
5. Identifying SPAN's Agenda (25 min.) **(David)**
  - Who, How, What Exercise
  - Prioritization of issues
  - Emphasis on fact that nothing gets thrown out and no issue is more important than another
  - Important to keep complimentary ideas in mind – how working on one issue can support another
6. How does each of us want to play a role in planning our action? (15 min.) **(David)**
  - Assign the necessary tasks to different members of the group

7. Drawing more people into SPAN (5 min.) **(Laurie)**
  - Have a discussion about how to bring more people into SPAN
8. Next Steps (5 min.) **(David)**
  - Next Meeting Date
9. Adjourn

Materials Needed:

- Copies of the Agenda **(David)**
- More Food Chain Links **(David)**
- Big Flip-Chart Paper **(Laurie)**
- Markers **(Laurie)**
- “Who, How, What” Exercise Starters **(David)**
- Outreach Materials for Don and others **(David)**
- SPAN Binders for Everyone **(David)**

# Service Providers Advocacy Network (SPAN) Agenda

Wednesday, December 1<sup>st</sup>, 3 to 5pm  
FOOD for Lane County

1. Welcome (2 min.)
2. Review of Agenda (2 min.)
3. What advocacy work are we already doing? (15 min.)
4. How can SPAN support the advocacy work you are already doing? (10 min.)
5. Identifying SPAN's Agenda (25 min.)
6. How does each of us want to play a role in planning our action? (15 min.)
7. Drawing more people into SPAN (5 min.)
8. Next Steps (5 min.)
9. Adjourn

# How Should we Plan Our First Action?

## *Developing an Action Strategy*

**Introduction.** Planning to take action is one of the most important things that an action-oriented advocacy committee will do. As the advocacy committee continues to meet, the actions they select to work on will determine the success, sustainability, and impact that the committee will have. This section will guide you through the process of facilitating your committee's action decision-making process.

**Long Term vs. Short Term.** It is important to think both in terms of long and short term actions. Some actions, such as organizing an accountability session with an elected official, might take six months or longer if you have to work around a certain decision-maker's schedule. Other actions might be able to be planned and accomplished in less than a month's time. While brainstorming ideas, the group should not dismiss ideas that seem to be too overwhelming. Hang on to them and maybe the committee can work on them at some point down the road when there is more time.

**Issues vs. Actions.** When planning to take action, it is easy to think in terms of issues and problems, not in terms of actions and solutions. Wanting to confront hunger as a whole or work on food stamps is a good first step, but they are not actions. Deciding to increase food stamp participation through creative new outreach techniques and negotiations with state agencies is an example of action. Making this distinction clear will be useful for the individuals on your committee.

**Achievability.** When thinking about taking on an action, you need to ask yourself: "Is it achievable?" Does the size and scope of your committee allow for the action to be completed? If you are a small advocacy committee, it might be too much to try to mobilize a national march in Washington, DC. Organizing an accountability session with a city councilor, however, is very possible and could have an important impact.

**Excitement.** Is there excitement behind the action that your committee has chosen? If the participants are not excited about the action and do not feel invested in it, your chances for success are minimal.

"In Germany they came first for the Communists, and I didn't speak up because I wasn't a Communist. Then they came for the Jews, and I didn't speak up because I wasn't a Jew. Then they came for the trade-unionists, and I didn't speak up because I wasn't a trade-unionist. Then they came for the Catholics, and I didn't speak up because I was a Protestant. Then they came for me and by that time no one was left to speak up."

- Rev. Martin Niemoller

**Impact.** When deciding on an action, it is important to think about the impact that it will have. There are many ways to measure impact, including changing a policy, engaging more people in the anti-hunger movement, expressing your policy ideas publicly, and convincing a policy-maker of your point of view. While planning an action, it is good to think about what measures you will use to determine whether or not your action was successful and had the desired impact.

**The Role of Education.** Education is necessary and important, but education alone is not action. If your committee only educates others about issues of hunger, but does not provide opportunities for people to take action, you have to ask yourself if you are meeting the goals you initially laid out as a committee.

# “Who, How, What” Exercise

## Choosing an Action

**Step 1: Setting up the Grid.** To begin the process, construct a grid on a piece of big flip-chart paper. Along the top, write the categories, from left to right: Issue, Who?, How?, What? The “Who?” section is about who you want to engage to solve the issue. The “How?” section explores ways of addressing the issue. And, lastly, the “What?” section lists the ultimate outcome you are seeking – it can be both long-term and short-term. Along the side of the grid, number each box. You want your grid to look something like this:

Issue	Who?	How?	What?
1.			
2.			

**Step 2: Identifying Issues.** Now it is time to brainstorm possible issues on which to take action. If the advocacy committee has already brainstormed a list of issues, you can spend some time before the meeting filling those in on the grid. Otherwise, spend a few minutes brainstorming issues at the meetings and write them into your grid. After this step your grid will look something like this:

Issue	Who?	How?	What?
1. Low rate of Food Stamp participation			
2. Social Service workers do not know how to advocate for and with their clients			

**Step 3: Who are we looking to engage?** It is best to do steps three through five for each issue before proceeding to the next issue. Now you will want to begin filling in the grid, starting with the “Who” section. Ask the group: Who do we want to engage to solve this issue? Fill in the grid with their responses. It can be more than one person or group. Your grid will look like this:

Issue	Who?	How?	What?
1. Low rate of Food Stamp participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Retail Store Managers</li> <li>▪ The Department of Human Services</li> </ul>		
2. Social Service workers do not know how to advocate for and with their clients			

**Step 4: How are we going to engage them?** You next want to ask the group: How do we want to engage them? Then fill in the grid with their responses:

Issue	Who?	How?	What?
1. Low rate of Food Stamp participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Retail Store Managers</li> <li>▪ The Department of Human Services</li> </ul>	Through a meeting where we present to them our ideas for addressing the barriers to food stamp participation	
2. Social Service workers do not know how to advocate for and with their clients			

**Step 5: What is our desired outcome?** Here, you want to explicitly state what your goal is. Ask the group and then fill in the grid. Both long and short term goals can be included.

Issue	Who?	How?	What?
1. Low rate of Food Stamp participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Retail Store Managers</li> <li>▪ The Department of Human Services</li> </ul>	Through a meeting where we present to them our ideas for addressing the barriers to food stamp participation.	<u>Long:</u> 100% Participation in the Food Stamp Program <u>Short:</u> Eliminate one prohibitive barrier
2. Social Service workers do not know how to advocate for and with their clients			

**Follow Steps 3 through 5 for each issue.**

**Step 6: Prioritize your issues.** There are many ways that a group can prioritize the issues people are interested in working on. If your committee is small enough, you can pretty easily talk through the issues and prioritize through conversation. If the group is larger, however, a voting method might be best. One way of voting is to give everyone in the room five stickers. Each sticker counts as a vote and everyone can choose how they want to spend their five votes. Have everyone use their stickers and vote by placing them on the chart next to the issue that they want to vote for.

**Step 7: Develop an action.** Once this grid is complete and you have chosen what issue you want to take on. Use the information to build an action plan. The “How?” section describes in pretty good detail what your action will look like. You will just need to plan the various steps necessary to meet your goal.

# How do I Facilitate a Meeting?

## *Ensuring that Meetings Run Smoothly*

**Introduction.** Facilitating meetings can be a challenge, but if done well it can have a huge impact on the success of a group. This section will introduce you to some of the basic attributes of strong facilitation. There are also many good resources on the internet to assist you in increasing your facilitation skills. If you are interested in more information about running good meetings, look in the “Resources” section at the end of this Handbook.

**Aspects of Strong Facilitation.** Although you will need to figure out your own facilitation style, below you will find a few tips that may assist you in improving your facilitation.

- **Start the Meeting Promptly.** Try to start the meeting as close to “on time” as possible. If you continually get started late, people will begin to think that you are inconsiderate with their time. Also, starting late will make it difficult to get everything done that you were hoping to accomplish at the meeting.
- **Introductions.** This is a pretty basic one, but as a facilitator it is good to try to create an environment where everyone in the room knows everyone else in the room. It will make for a more friendly meeting.
- **Review the Agenda.** As a facilitator, make sure that you review the agenda with the group before the meeting starts. If people have things to add, you can work them in to the agenda at the beginning. This also ensures that people are generally on the same page about what you are going to do and accomplish at the meeting, which will make things run more smoothly.
- **Bring Closure to Discussions.** Try not to leave huge unanswered questions lingering throughout your meeting. If a discussion is going on too long, ask if people would like to discuss the topic at the next meeting. Make sure that people feel like their opinions were heard and if the discussion is going to continue later, set a concrete time to continue the dialogue. That will help people move on with the rest of the agenda.
- **Move the Meeting Forward.** Circular, unending conversations often make people stop paying attention to the meeting. One of the most difficult yet most important skills for a facilitator is to be able to allow for productive conversation and know when it is time to cut things off and move on.
- **Stick to the Agenda.** As much as possible, try to stick to the agenda that the group agreed on at the beginning of the meeting. It may help to think of the agenda as a contract between you and the group. The facilitator and the participants agree to stick to the agenda to ensure that the necessary tasks are completed. If you are having trouble keeping the group on track, a useful phrase is: “I want to be conscious of the time. Would you want to change the agenda and spend more time on this issue or should we move on?” People will most likely say that they want to move on and then you have successfully moved the meeting forward without offending anyone.



- ***Draw People Out.*** The most difficult job of a facilitator is to ensure that all voices at the table are being heard. You will quickly be able to tell which people on the committee like to talk a lot and which ones do not. Try to direct questions to specific people who may not speak much. You do not want to intimidate them or make them feel uncomfortable, but you want to make sure that if they would like to speak that they are given the opportunity to do so. In certain groups, one type of person will often dominate the meeting. For example, if only men are speaking in the meeting, as a facilitator, you have the responsibility to say something like: “We have heard a lot from the men in the room. Are there any women who would like to speak?” Trying to include as many voices as possible in the meeting will go a long way in creating an open and productive meeting environment.

# How do I Help Build Leadership within the Advocacy Committee?<sup>3</sup>

## *Developing Leaders*

**Introduction.** This section has two main purposes. The first is to help you identify individuals who will make good leaders within your committee. The second is to suggest some ways that you can develop the leadership abilities of the people who are serving on the committee. The first is something to work on right from the beginning, the second is a goal for the long term.

**Spotting a Leader.** There are some people who will immediately display leadership qualities. It is these people who you want to tap into and formally ask to take on a leadership role within the committee. You can ask them to help facilitate meetings, send out meeting notes, or plan meetings. Identifying a leader should be one of your goals right from the start. These people will be able to take on important tasks without needing much training or support from you. When you find a leader, make sure to compliment them on their strengths and tell them why you think that they would make a good leader for the advocacy committee.

**Characteristics of a Leader.** When looking for someone who already possesses leadership abilities, you should look for someone who:

- Others look to for advice and guidance
- Is willing to take on responsibility
- Knows how to speak up and be heard
- Knows how to listen
- Is willing to learn
- Is reliable and consistent
- Sets an example for those around them

**Developing Leaders.** Although there will certainly be some people in your group who are “natural” leaders and who are ready to take on responsibility, many people will not be ready to lead. You will most likely not have time to do much leadership development right at the beginning of the committee’s formation, but as things progress, it might make sense to increase the leadership abilities within the anti-hunger advocacy committee. Leadership development can be seen as a long-term goal for the group. The rest of this section will explore ways of developing leaders. There are two main areas in which leaders can be developed: skills and issue-specific knowledge. Although skill and knowledge development are treated separately in this section, they are not actually entirely separate. While learning about an issue, a leader can also learn to strategize, speak on, or facilitate a meeting on that issue.

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<sup>3</sup> This section is taken largely from *Developing Leaders in a Community Group* by Lori Leibowitz in conjunction with the Hunger Task Force ([www.hungertaskforce.org](http://www.hungertaskforce.org)).

***Developing Leadership Skills.*** When deciding how to go about training participants within your committee, you must first consider who needs to be trained in what skills. Some skills that are important for the leaders in an advocacy group are:

- Recruiting members
- Creating agendas/facilitating meetings
- Researching issues
- Strategizing around issue campaigns
- Citizen advocacy (making your case to public officials)

These skills can also be taught in a variety of ways:

- Large group workshops
- Individual trainings
- At meetings of committee leaders

Skills training is an ongoing process and everyone will need to be trained in different skills. You may not have the resources to conduct all of the necessary trainings yourself. If you are not comfortable running a skills training in a certain area, there may be another person within your organization or at another agency who would be great at running a training on that topic. Looking to those around you for support will make a huge difference.

***Developing Specific Knowledge.*** It is also very important that the leaders of the committee are gaining specific knowledge about anti-hunger and anti-poverty issues. Some of the areas where it might be useful to run a knowledge-based training for your group include:

- The Food Stamp Program
- What are the Root Causes of Hunger
- The Policy-making process
- Understanding the Welfare System
- Models of Social Change
- Community Food Security

Certainly, it will be difficult for you to run a training on all of these different issues. There are many people who you can tap into to help run these trainings. Another possibility would be to work on putting together an anti-hunger advocacy training conference for people in the area. A conference is a good way to train people in some of the basics of advocacy – both along the lines of skill development and knowledge development – and to expand the participation in your advocacy committee by letting more people know about the work that you are doing.

# How do I Build Long-Term Sustainability?<sup>4</sup>

## *The Long Haul*

**Introduction.** Ensuring sustainability of the anti-hunger advocacy committee at your food bank will require a few basic steps. This section outlines some of the proactive ways you can increase the sustainability of your advocacy committee amidst the upswings and downswings of life.

**The Four Basic Steps.** There are many ways to think about and to ensure the sustainability of your anti-hunger advocacy committee. There are four basic components, however, that will help to make sure that the committee at your food bank maintains its momentum: leadership, communication, action, and outreach.

**Leadership.** It is necessary to have a leadership structure in place for your advocacy committee. Ideally, it would be good to have a few (three to four) people who are dedicated to the committee and are willing to play named leadership roles. These individuals should be willing to take on the responsibility of calling meetings, setting agendas, following up from meetings, and ensuring that the action of the group is moving forward. For more information on leadership, see the following pages where you will find more resources from the Rural Organizing Project – a non-profit organization based in Scappoose, Oregon helping to create communities that are accountable to a standard of human dignity.

**Communication.** A stable communication system among the participants in the group is very important in ensuring sustainability. If you have a phone list, an e-mail list or listserv, and a database with all participant information, you are well on your way to a sustainable communication system. For more information, make sure to see the “How to Build a Communication Structure” section of this Handbook.

**Action Plan.** Having a concrete plan of action is vital to keeping a group moving forward and ensuring its sustainability. Working on meaningful actions keeps current participants engaged and excited about the work, gives your group a public face to draw more people into the committee, and is one of the main reasons that people became involved with the anti-hunger advocacy committee in the first place.

**Outreach.** It is generally thought that if your group is not getting larger, it is getting smaller. People move on to new things, change jobs, or change interests. It is important to think about ways of bringing new people on board to participate in your committee and

“No social advance rolls in on the wheels of inevitability. It comes through the tireless efforts and persistent work of dedicated individuals.”

- Martin Luther King, Jr.

<sup>4</sup> Pieces of this section are drawn from the organizing resources of Rural Organizing Project (ROP). Their website and contact information can be found at [www.rop.org](http://www.rop.org).

to keep an eye out for people who you think might have interest in participating in anti-hunger advocacy work.

**Conclusions.** Building sustainability ensures that your group will be more effective, that the responsibilities of the group are shared, and that you are not single-handedly taking on too much work. Building leadership, developing strong communication, sticking to an action plan, and keeping an eye toward outreach will be key steps in ensuring the sustainability of your anti-hunger advocacy committee.



## Keeping your local group alive and kicking (*discrimination in the butt!*)

### **1. Core leadership is needed**

There's no getting around it. There needs to be a core of no less than three to seven people who will do all the little projects that need to happen to have a group feel alive and be effective. These projects include:

- Ø maintaining a good data base of volunteers, members, and interested folks.
- Ø putting together meetings that provide structure to focus the group.
- Ø coordinating calls through the membership and inviting them to periodic meetings and events ( a communication system).
- Ø moving a plan of action forward.

While a single person can do these tasks, a team provides a more stable structure. Minimally there needs to be a back-up person who can fill in when the inevitable crisis makes one leader unable to fulfill their tasks. ROP always has a number of groups where the primary leader has had to leave unexpectedly and the rest of the team never grasped how much work that person did to keep the group going and so the group suffers in the transition. A team approach avoids this.

### **2. Don't underestimate the power of personal contact**

Often when we're planning for events or meetings we send out a postcard or email reminder but don't call our list. Calling people and inviting them is the only way you'll have an idea of who is *really* coming to your event. And, of course, you'll still have a ratio of people who had to change plans at the last minute, but there's a higher level of accountability when you've spoken with someone and it permits you to call back and check-in. You might find out the person who didn't show is just the person to help take on a new task you determined needed to happen at the meeting. Personal check ins with people also shows that their presence means something. You noticed they weren't there and bothered to call to check. That process begins accountability to each other and builds the group. The more interaction you have with your supporters (i.e. phone calls are interactive, post cards are limited, email is unpredictable) the better information you'll have about the people you're working with.

### **3. Great data is an indicator of a strong group**

Your data base provides you with a line to your supporters. A data base needs to be carefully maintained with information updated monthly. You need a person in your group

whose task it is to keep the records of the group updated. While a data base is only of value if used, having a current system with a back-up housed elsewhere insures that you can create mailing labels for a flyer or calling a list for a meeting or an email list serve when needed.

#### **4. If You are not growing You are shrinking**

This principle is that without active recruitment, the likelihood is you are losing members who you once counted on. People move, have to take care of ailing parents, and otherwise need to change their priorities. The group needs to be consistent about asking people to join the group, sign on to the mailing list. And then you need to maintain contact with new people to develop their relationship with the group. Without a conscious effort to expand, you are likely talking to fewer people than you imagine. This point is closely related to keeping good data base. Every group needs to figure out a communication system that allows what the group is doing or has done to be communicated. A poor communication system will yield a shrinking group.

#### **5. Education is important but action is critical**

This is a tricky balance because people like learning about lots of issues that are near and dear to their hearts, but often there doesn't seem to be the time to take action. Or simply learning about an issue can feel like an action. The challenge of leadership is to help distinguish between education and action and to facilitate a process that creates a series of smaller actions that makes tackling issues effective and rewarding. Incorporating simple actions into every meeting will help get people in the pattern of not just learning, but doing. ROP's Kitchen Table Activism is one such example.

#### **6. Planning is paramount**

Without a plan you have no measurable goal posts of where you've been, how far you've come, or where you're going. Part of the work of ROP is to help local groups create plans and then provide the support to help make sure those plans can happen. As the group becomes more established, yearly plans are advisable, but starting with short-term plans is a must. A critical role in the planning process is a person who can be realistic and keep the number of objectives to a workable number. No one enjoys experiencing only partial success. Factor in as best you can all the items you need to attend to (like enough time to build your base, expanding the core, fixing problems) and still aim high enough to keep your group moving forward, ROP offers staff time to facilitate your planning process

# Dealing with Common Challenges

## *Troubleshooting*

**Introduction.** Although forming an anti-hunger advocacy committee will generally be fun and exciting, you will probably run into a few difficult spots along the road. It is important to remember that no problem is too difficult to overcome and that you are not alone if you run into some difficulties. This section will outline some common challenges that you may run in to while forming an anti-hunger advocacy committee.

“The probability that we may fail in the struggle ought not to deter us from the support of a cause we believe to be just.”

- Abraham Lincoln

**Common Challenges.** Below are some common challenges followed by possible ways of dealing with them:

- **Low Meeting Turn-out.** Low turn-out for meetings is always a downer, for both you and the participants in the group. There are four main strategies for dealing with this issue. First, you can do more outreach and try to increase the group’s size. Second, you can see if people are not interested in the work that the group is doing. A good way to see if people are losing interest in the group is to take a few minutes and call the people who have not been coming. Let them know that you value their participation and that you are concerned that they have not shown up to the past few meetings. Ask them what would draw them back to the work of the committee. Third, it may be that your meetings are not at a good time for people. Check in with everyone again and see if there might be a better time to hold meetings. Lastly, you can think about going with what you have. Even a few people can make a real difference and with a small group you can give people more attention and help them develop as leaders. You can see the participants as the core of your committee who will serve as leaders once more people are added.
- **Participants Are Not Willing to Do Work.** Although this is certainly not always an issue, sometimes individuals enjoy participating in groups and venting their concerns and ideas, but they do not like to take on any of the work that needs to be done. There are a few possible ways to deal with an issue like this. You can present the issue openly to the group and say that there is no way that you can do all of the work that needs to be done and that unless people begin to do some work, it will be difficult for the group to continue. Another possibility is to break up the tasks that need to be done into smaller pieces. Then, ask individual people if they would be willing to take one of them on. People are more likely to take on work if they feel like the task is manageable and specific. It is also nice to spend a few minutes at the beginning of a meeting to acknowledge and thank the individuals who have completed important tasks between meetings.
- **Unable to Choose an Action.** It is common that groups have a difficult time moving from ideas to action. Talking about problems is a lot easier than



developing concrete solutions. At the same time, most people will express a desire to move into taking action. As a facilitator, you can use that expressed desire to push the agenda forward and move the group into action. Sometimes it helps to develop a very detailed plan to narrow down issues and pick an action to undertake. The more structure that you are able to provide the group with, the more likely that the committee will be able to move to action.

- ***Lack of Momentum.*** A loss of momentum is no reason to panic. After a few meetings, a committee can begin to feel a bit stuck. There are a bunch of ways to liven up a group. You could bring in a really energizing speaker. You could get dinner for the group and spend the first part of a meeting just talking, eating, and getting to know one another better. Taking on a very small advocacy action is also a good way to spice things up. For example, have everyone write a letter to their state representative about an issue that is important to them.
- ***You Don't Have Any More Time.*** There is a chance that your schedule will get busier and you will have less time to give to supporting the work of the advocacy committee. There are two possibilities in this situation. First, you could ask another staff person at your food bank to offer support for the committee. The best solution, however, would be to build a leadership structure for the committee, which will take the stress off of you. If there are people willing to facilitate meetings, send out agendas and meeting notes, and contact people with meeting reminders, you can play much more of a support role and not have to deal with the details of the committee as much.

***Conclusion.*** Chances are you will face some barriers along the way to forming an anti-hunger advocacy committee. It is important to remember, however, that people have run into the same barrier before and that you can overcome it. Also, keep in mind that there are experts all around you – within your organization and at other agencies – who will be more than happy to meet with you and help you through any obstacles you may be facing. Hopefully, these suggestions will prove helpful. It may also be useful to look through the “Resources” section of this Handbook to see what other organizations or articles may be able to help you with the issues that you encounter.



# **PART III:**

## **RESOURCES & CONCLUSION**

The following pages contain a sample presentation on the root causes of hunger. Many of the statistics are specific to either Oregon or the Eugene area, but can be easily adapted to reflect what is going on in your community. Please feel free to use any or all of this presentation for your own purposes.

## The Root Causes of Hunger

### A Call to Action

### Outline of Presentation

- ❖ **Basic Family Budget**
  - How families are meeting and not meeting their economic needs
- ❖ **Root Causes of Hunger**
  - What are some of the reasons that people are going hungry?
- ❖ **Action Steps**
  - A look at ways to take action to address some of the roots causes of hunger

### Oregon Basic Family Budget

**Four Person Family with two adults and two children**

<u>ITEM</u>	<u>COST (PER MONTH)</u>	
RENT	707	<small>(NATIONAL LOW INCOME HOUSING COALITION, OUT OF REACH, 2003)</small>
FOOD	606	<small>(USDA, LOW-COST PLAN, 2004)</small>
TRANSPORTATION	243	<small>(ECONOMIC POLICY INSTITUTE)</small>
HEALTH CARE	284	<small>(WWW.EHEALTHINSURANCE.COM)</small>
CHILD CARE	740	<small>(OREGON CHILD CARE MARKET RATE STUDY)</small>
OTHER NEEDS	407	<small>(ECONOMIC POLICY INSTITUTE)</small>
<b>MONTHLY PAYROLL TAXES</b>	<b>229</b>	<small>(7.65% OF INCOME, ASSUMING INCOME = EXPENSES)</small>
MONTHLY TAXES	249	<small>(WWW.DOR.STATE.OR/PIT/RATE_CALC.LAB5019)</small>
<b>MONTHLY TOTAL</b>	<b>3,236</b>	
<b>ANNUAL TOTAL</b>	<b>38,832</b>	<small>(205% OF POVERTY LINE)</small>

## Short of the Basic Budget



- ❖ MORE THAN ONE MILLION OREGONIANS TRY TO SURVIVE WITH INCOMES BELOW 200% OF THE FEDERAL POVERTY LINE
- ❖ ONE IN FOUR AMERICAN WORKING FAMILIES NOW EARN WAGES SO LOW THAT THEY HAVE DIFFICULTY MEETING THE BASIC FAMILY BUDGET <sup>1</sup>

1. Source: Oregon Food Bank, *The State of Hunger*, 2004.

## What's Missing?

*What is left out of the basic family budget?*

EDUCATION  
 TOYS  
 BANK FEES  
 BIRTHDAYS  
 READING MATERIALS  
 VISITING FRIENDS  
 MUSIC  
 TELEVISION  
 INSURANCE  
 ENTERTAINMENT

## Coping Mechanisms

WORK MORE  
 GET DRUNK OR STONED  
 BEG, BORROW, STEAL  
 LEAVE CHILDREN UNATTENDED  
 SLEEP  
 HOMELESSNESS  
 CHARITY  
 RESORT TO SEXUAL ABUSE OR VIOLENCE  
 RUN AWAY  
 DROP OUT  
 REMAIN SICK  
 SUICIDE  
 LIVE IN UNSAFE CONDITIONS  
 TURN OFF THE HEAT  
 BUY CHEAP UNHEALTHY FOODS  
 EAT LESS

## Food and Flexibility



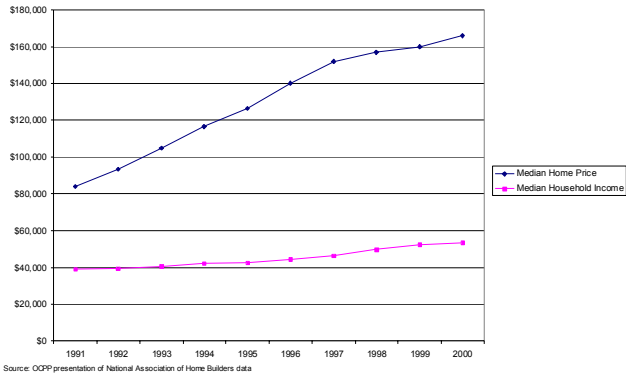
- ❖ Of the items that people need, food is often considered to be the category with the most flexibility
- ❖ Many people try to save money for other necessities by using emergency food services or by going hungry

## Food as a Forecaster

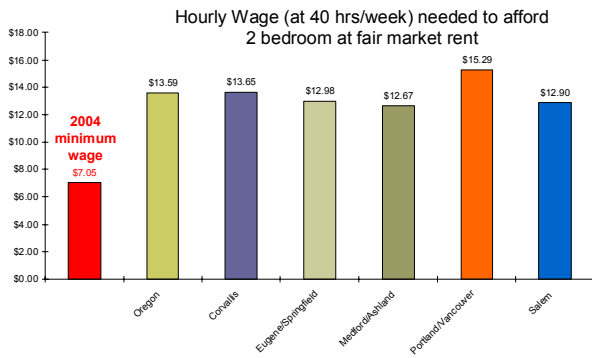
- ❖ Because food is often the budget item that gets cut first, when there is an increase in the number of people using the emergency food system, it is a good indication that there are deeper problems at hand
- ❖ Root Causes of Hunger Include:
  - Housing Costs
  - Health Care Prices
  - Unfair Taxation
  - Child Care
  - Shortage of Family Wage Jobs
  - Lack of Political Accountability

## Housing Costs

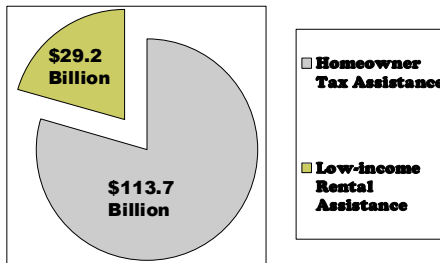
## Home Prices vs. Household Income Portland metro area 1991 - 2000



## Housing and Wages in Oregon, 2003

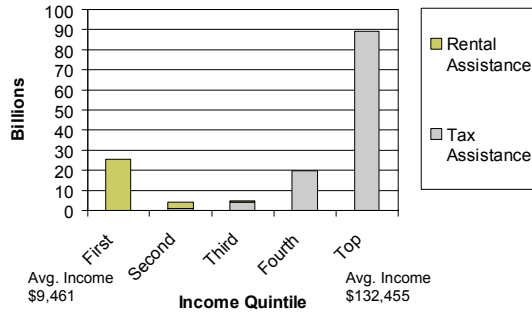


## Public Investment in Housing Estimated federal housing subsidies 2002



Source: Changing Priorities - The Federal Budget and Housing Assistance 1976-2007  
National Low Income Housing Coalition

## Distribution of Federal Housing Subsidies 2002



## Escalating Medical Costs

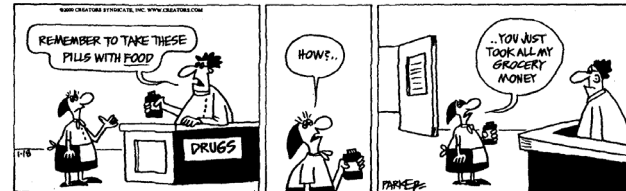
According to Oregonians for Health Security:

- ❖ Since 1991, average retail prices for prescription drugs grew twice as fast as average monthly Social Security benefits for elderly couples.<sup>1</sup>
- ❖ From 1995-2002, health insurance increased 45% in Oregon; whereas wages only increased between 12-16%.<sup>2</sup>
- ❖ One in ten Oregon Children (95,000) do not have health care coverage.

1. U.S. Action. "Impossible Choices." Oct. 2000.  
 2. Oregon AFL-CIO Cost Study  
 3. 2002 Oregon Population Survey.

## Do You Buy Food or Medicine?

WIZARD OF ID

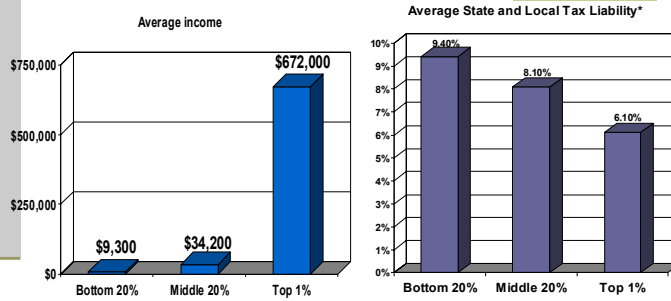


Wizard of Id, (c) 2000, by permission of Johnny Hart and Creators Syndicate, Inc.



# Taxes

## Average Oregon State and Local Tax Liability

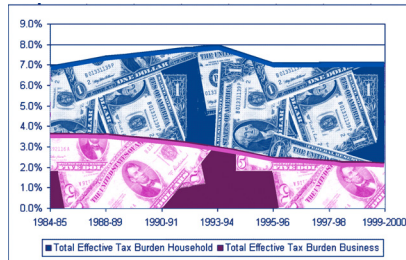


\* figures account for federal deduction of state/local taxes

Source: "Who Pays," Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy, January 2003

## Declining Business Tax Burden

The effective tax burden for Oregon businesses declined by more than 1/3 during the 1990s.



Source: Oregon Center for Public Policy, "Clearing the Air on Tax Day - Assessing the Tax Burden in Oregon," Jeff Thompson, April 2001, pp. 1, 2, 4, 6.

Graph design: Michel Bolesey, Catalina Group

## Taxing Oregon's Working Poor

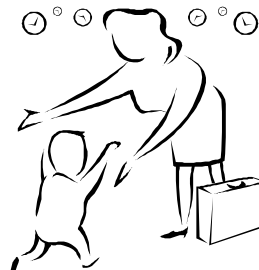
- ❖ **A family of four living at the poverty line & making \$18,390 in 2002** paid \$267 in state income taxes. This was the 8th highest state income tax burden of any state.
- ❖ **A family of four that earned \$22,938 in 2002** (a little more than the poverty level) paid \$730 in state income taxes. This was the 2nd highest state income tax burden in the country.

Source: Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, *State Income Tax Burdens on Low-Income Families in 2002*, April 11, 2003.

## Child Care Prices

### Child Care

- ❖ Child care costs place a huge burden on low and middle-income families
- ❖ In the Eugene/Springfield area, child care costs are approximately \$560/month per toddler at child care centers.



1. Source: 2004 Child Care Market Rate Study, Oregon Department of Human Services.

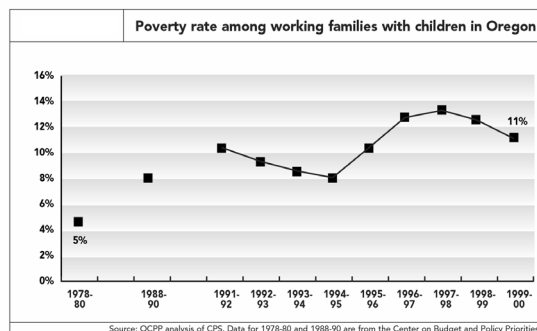
# Family Wage Jobs

## Shortage of Family Wage Jobs

- ❖ The typical household lost nearly \$3,000 in the recent economic downturn and has less actual income than they did in 1988-1989 <sup>1</sup>
- ❖ Of the households receiving emergency food assistance from the Oregon Food Bank Network, 43% had at least one working member <sup>2</sup>
- ❖ In order to earn the Basic Family Budget of \$38,832 while making Oregon's minimum wage of \$7.05/hour, someone would need to work more than 100 hours/week

1. Source: Oregon Center for Public Policy, *In the Shadows of the Recovery: The State of Working Oregon 2004*  
2. Source: *Profiles of Hunger and Poverty in Oregon and Clark County, WA*, Oregon Food Bank, 2004.

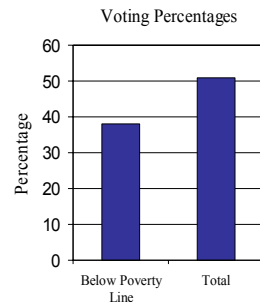
## Poverty Rate for Working Families



# Political Accountability

## Accountable to Whom?

- ❖ United States Voter Turnout Rates are Very Low ...
  - Only 51% of the voting age population voted in 2000 <sup>1</sup>
- ❖ ... Especially for poor people
  - In 2000, voters living below the poverty line had a turn-out rate of only 38% <sup>2</sup>



1. Source: Federal Election Commission website: <http://www.fec.gov/pages/2000turnout/reg&to00.htm>  
2. Source: Center for Community Change website: [www.communitychange.org](http://www.communitychange.org)

## Accountable to Whom?



- ❖ We are not organized
  - Some politicians are not as responsive when they only hear individual voices on a given issues
  - As an organized group of concerned citizens, however, our voices will be heard in a different way

# Action

## Types of Actions

- ❖ **Education**
  - Building awareness about a given issue or topic
- ❖ **Direct Service**
  - Meeting an individual's immediate needs
- ❖ **Community Economic Development**
  - Building community-based job-creating institutions
- ❖ **Advocacy**
  - Speaking on behalf of yourself or someone else to decision-makers
- ❖ **Electoral Politics**
  - Voting others into elected positions, running for office yourself, or ensuring the success of important ballot measures
- ❖ **Community Organizing**
  - Bringing together those directly affected by a situation to help change a systemic problem

## General Advocacy and Action Steps

- ❖ Organize other people to write letters, make phone calls, and sign petitions to tell elected officials what you want
- ❖ Run workshops in your community to educate people about a given issue
- ❖ Organize people to visit your elected officials to speak with them about your concerns



## Action Steps (cont' d..)

- ❖ Invite your elected officials or agency appointees (DHS employees) to a community forum or accountability session where you can express your issues to them on your turf
- ❖ Vote for people and policies that address issues of hunger and poverty
- ❖ Run a campaign to get a particular policy or law passed either through the legislature or through state agencies
- ❖ Help others to organize themselves and stand up for their rights (family-wage campaign, stopping unjust evictions, ensuring free and reduced priced meals at school, etc...)

## Improving the Food Stamp Program

- ❖ Work with the Department of Human Services to increase Food Stamp participation
- ❖ Do Food Stamp outreach and education yourselves
- ❖ Push for regulatory changes in the Food Stamp Program that would improve its effectiveness
  - Increasing Minimum Benefit
  - Expedited Food Stamps for those in need of them



## Community Food Security



1. Source: Community Food Security Coalition

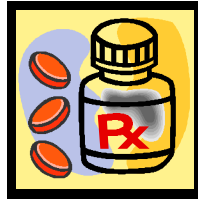
- ❖ Goals:
  - Strong, sustainable, local and regional food systems
  - Access to affordable, nutritious, and culturally appropriate food for all people at all times
  - Self-reliance among all communities in obtaining their food
  - A food system that maintains that principles of justice, democracy, and sustainability<sup>1</sup>

## Housing Action Steps



- ❖ Renter's Tax Credit
- ❖ Preserve Section 8 Vouchers
- ❖ Work with Tenant Associations
- ❖ Support efforts of groups already doing housing justice work such as the Southern Oregon Fair Housing Project

## Health Care Action Steps



- ❖ Increase funding for the Oregon Health Plan
- ❖ Encourage businesses to provide medical insurance for their employees
- ❖ Support organizations such as Health Care for All Oregon that are working to ensure that everyone has access to affordable health care

## Tax Reform

- ❖ Push for an equal or progressive state level income tax
- ❖ Educate others about the importance of Tax Justice
- ❖ Outreach to community about the Federal Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC)
- ❖ Push legislators to adopt a state-level refundable Earned Income Credit (EIC)



## Child Care Action Steps

- ❖ Push to increase governmental subsidies for child care, such as child care vouchers
  - Example: Increase the income cap from 150% to 185% of the Federal Poverty Line for the Employment Related Day Care program



## Increase Family Wage Jobs



- ❖ Pass a family wage ordinance at the city or county level
- ❖ Shop at stores that pay their workers a family wage and ask others to do the same
- ❖ Educate others about the importance of living wages
- ❖ Support and work with groups such as Jobs With Justice who are already moving on issues of family wage jobs

## Increasing Political Accountability

- ❖ Contact your legislators
- ❖ Vote and register others to vote
- ❖ Hold legislative breakfasts and accountability sessions





## **Ending Hunger- The Long Term**

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### ❖ Long Term Goals:

- Family Economic Stability
- Community Food Security
- Political Accountability

# Other Useful Sources of Information

## ***Hunger and Poverty Issues:***

Food Research and Action Center (FRAC): [www.frac.org](http://www.frac.org)

USDA's Food Nutrition Service (FNS): [www.fns.usda.gov](http://www.fns.usda.gov)

America's Second Harvest: [www.seconddharvest.org](http://www.seconddharvest.org)

World Hunger Year: [www.worldhungeryear.org](http://www.worldhungeryear.org)

Center on Hunger and Poverty: [www.centeronhunger.org](http://www.centeronhunger.org)

RESULTS: [www.results.org](http://www.results.org)

Food Security Coalition: [www.foodsecurity.org](http://www.foodsecurity.org)

Center on Budget and Policy Priorities: [www.cbpp.org](http://www.cbpp.org)

## ***Citizen Advocacy:***

American Civil Liberties Union: [www.aclu.org](http://www.aclu.org)

Citizen Advocacy Center: [www.citizenadvocacycenter.org](http://www.citizenadvocacycenter.org)

Advocacy Institute: [www.advocacy.org](http://www.advocacy.org)

Stand for Children: [www.stand.org](http://www.stand.org)

## ***Community Organizing:***

Rural Organizing Project: [www.rop.org](http://www.rop.org)

Western States Center: [www.westernstatescenter.org](http://www.westernstatescenter.org)

Virginia Organizing Project: [www.virginia-organizing.org](http://www.virginia-organizing.org)

Center for Community Change: [www.communitychange.org](http://www.communitychange.org)

Center for Third World Organizing: [www.ctwo.org](http://www.ctwo.org)

Applied Research Center: [www.arc.org](http://www.arc.org)

Fifth Avenue Committee: [www.fifthave.org](http://www.fifthave.org)

Grass-Roots: [www.grass-roots.org](http://www.grass-roots.org)

Midwest Academy. (2001). *Organizing for Social Change: Midwest Academy Manual for Activists*. Santa Ana, CA: Seven Lock Press.

Si Kahn. (1999). *Organizing: A Guide for Grassroots Leaders*. Washington, DC: National Association of Social Workers.

Gary Delgado. (1999). *Beyond the Politics of Place: New Directions in Community Organizing in the 1990s*. Oakland, CA: Chardon Press.

### ***Planning and Facilitating Meetings:***

Virginia Organizing Project: [www.virginia-organizing.org](http://www.virginia-organizing.org)

Mel Silberman. (1998). *Active Training*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Pfeiffer.

Duane Dale; Robert Miller; and D. Magnani. (1979). *Beyond Experts: A Guide for Citizen Group Training*. Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts.

Michael Doyle and David Straus (contributor). (1993). *How to Make Meetings Work: The New Interaction Method*. New York: Berkeley Publishing Group.

Sam Kaner, et al. (1996). *Facilitator's Guide to Participatory Decision-Making*. Philadelphia: New Society Publishers.

# Conclusion

## *Wrapping Things Up*

My hope is that this Handbook was useful for you and that you are ready to start an anti-hunger advocacy committee at your food bank. As more and more food banks and direct service agencies increase their involvement in advocacy work throughout the country, we will become an even more powerful voice for change.

If you would like more copies of this Handbook, please do not hesitate to contact me, David Pedulla, at [dpedulla@hungercenter.org](mailto:dpedulla@hungercenter.org). Also, if you would like any clarification or have any specific questions for me, you should feel free to e-mail me. And please take advantage of the websites of the organizations listed in the “Resources” section of this Handbook. There is a wealth of useful information on each one.

Good luck as you move forward with your anti-hunger advocacy efforts. We can, we must, advocate for change.

