

Become an Anti-Hunger Advocate

A Hunger Briefing &
Advocacy Training Guide

BY
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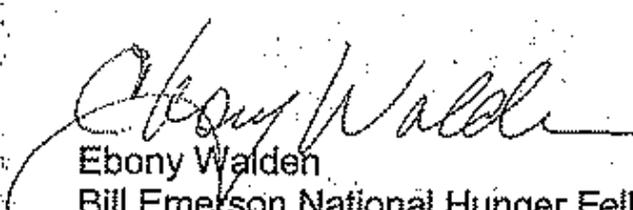
CHILDREN'S ALLIANCE

A Voice for Washington's Children, Youth & Families

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Become An Anti-hunger Advocate

A Hunger Briefing and Advocacy Training Guide

Q: Are you interested in helping to alleviate hunger in your community?

Q: Want to know a good way to provide more food to your clients?

Q: Would you like your job to be more effective in the long run?

Advocacy is a simple way to better serve your clients and make your job more effective in the long run. Advocacy does not have to take long hours; you do not have to be a full-time advocate just a lifetime advocate. You can start advocating with simple activities that take less than 5 minutes. Whether it is trying to influence policy, organize others or change public opinion, anyone can be an advocate because everyone has a role to play, a story to tell and a responsibility to speak out for what they believe. The purpose of this document is to guide and challenge food bankers and other direct service organizations to go beyond their duty of providing food and service to low income populations and use advocacy as another tool to alleviate hunger.

You Can Use This Guide As A Training Tool To:

GET INFORMED

Get key facts on issues, programs and policies you need to become informed about hunger in Washington and in your community.

GET INVOLVED

Find out what resources and mediums are available to support you if you are interested in getting more involved in the anti-hunger community.

TAKE ACTION!

Learn the key skills, steps and actions you can use to effect change in the anti-hunger arena and ultimately become an effective advocate and resource in your community

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PART I: WHAT IS ADVOCACY?

Definitions of Advocacy:

- To pursue and act in the interests of another
- Supporting a cause, an idea or a policy
- Mobilizing resources to make your support active
- Motivating people to change
- Creating change in public policy and opinion

What is your role?

What does it mean to be an Anti-Hunger Advocate?

1. Anti-hunger advocacy is an effective way to **provide more food to hungry people**. An Anti-hunger advocate is someone who works to **effect positive change** and supports programs and policies to **reduce the number of persons who suffer from hunger and food insecurity**.
2. Being an anti-hunger advocate is understanding that **it takes more than food to fight hunger**. Because there are various factors that affect food security, it takes both short- and long-term solutions, such as **food assistance, job training, economic development programs** and **advocacy**, to **have a lasting impact**.
3. Advocacy is for all of us, as it will take each of us to change our communities. Everyone can **speak about their experiences and opinions** to help elected officials and the general public understand what is going on in our communities and organizations. Individual advocates often strengthen their productivity by **forming groups** because there is more **power in numbers**.

What Can You Do?

The Bread for the World Institute suggests the following courses of action as ways through which the "politics of hunger" may be transformed¹:

- People and organizations working against poverty and hunger can **become more aware** of themselves as parts of a large, potentially dynamic movement.
- Individuals and agencies assisting hungry people can **expand what they do to influence government policies**.
- Low-income people's **organizations can be strengthened**, especially in their capacity to influence government policies that affect them.
- People can **expand and strengthen anti-hunger advocacy** organizations.

How Can You Do It?

The Three Legged Stool of Advocacy

Now that you know what advocacy is, and what an anti-hunger advocate's role is, let's talk about the different approaches to advocacy and what actions they involve. First, effective advocacy rests on a **three-legged stool** that encompasses policy, mobilization and media.ⁱⁱ

Public Policy Advocacy is speaking out with the purpose of convincing government to change its policies, programs or budgets. This involves communicating your concerns effectively to elected officials through simple actions like phone calls, letter writing and visits.

Communicating with Policy Makers: What Can I do?

- Call your legislators at 1-800-562-6000
- Write your legislator a letter voicing your concerns and proposing actions
- Next time your legislators are in town – ask them out for coffee or invite them to visit your organization

Grassroots Advocacy is creating change through recruitment and mobilization of advocates around an issue. Having a good support system is key. Gather other partners, clients, providers and stakeholders to bring more power to an issue and decision makers are more likely to listen and respond. This can be as simple as joining a coalition and attending meetings to share information or running a letter writing campaign.

Organizing: What Can I do?

- Create a list: get your friends, neighbors, teachers, relatives and community leaders onto a People Who Care list – notify them of decision points (when their voice can make a difference)
- Register people to vote- those who vote have more power
- Join the Children's Alliance; they'll let you know when your voice is needed by sending alerts that can inform you about issues and prompt you to take action

Media Advocacy is to using the media effectively to educate and change public opinion. This may be as simple as collecting stories, writing a letter to your local paper or inviting the media to an event.

Media: What Can I do?

- Write a letter to the editor (100 words) to a newspaper and conveys your message
- Read the paper and see who writes stories about hunger. Then call up the social issues reporter to have lunch or coffee to talk about your issue
- Write an opinion editorial (700 words) for printing in the paper – find an unusual suspect to write it

What is your story?

The Importance of Telling Stories

Everyone is an expert on their own experiences and can talk about what they have seen, done and heard. Telling stories is a sure way to get people's attention and prompt people to act. To many people in the United States, hunger and poverty are abstract and obscure. Telling real life stories helps three-dimensionalize the issue. Stories help funders, legislators, decision makers and donors understand the situation. Stories can also move people to action: writing a check, volunteering or voting for a bill.

Why are stories especially important for those of us working on hunger?

1. Hunger is difficult to measure, unlike poverty or homelessness or failing test scores, it is difficult to quantify
2. People don't believe it exists
 - Food Lifeline's excellent campaign- the sooner you believe it, the sooner we can end it
 - They think of African hunger

Storytelling/Activities Tips

- Start out every proposal/cover letter with a story
- Keep a story bank: always have at least four stories on hand that clearly illustrate hunger and the effectiveness of your organization
- Just as you back up your stories with facts, back up your facts with stories
- Be sure to include one (try to keep it to one) memorable fact in each story, i.e. "In Washington, one in three school kids can't afford to pack a school lunch" or "we've had a 15% increase in demand since September 11th"
- Keep it short and simple. A written story should be no more than 150 words.
- Whenever possible, tell from personal experience. Those directly affected are the best storytellers
- When you advocating- make an explicit connection between the story and the policy issue you are trying to change

ACTION:

- Interview clients and write down their stories.
- Write down your issue, find a fact that supports the solution, then write down and/or tell someone a real life situation that connects them both.
- Create a story bank- a place that people can write down their stories, collect them and use them when conveying your messages or send them to legislators, decision makers or the media.

**Resource: The Children's Alliance*

What is your responsibility?

Speaking Out (When is it important to speak out?)

- You can speak out when you feel there is something that needs to be maintained or changed for the better
- It is important to speak out when your voice will represent those disenfranchised
- You can speak out of your experiences to help others understand what it is like for your clients, at your organization and in your community. As an advocate it is important for you to elicit the client's views, needs, concerns and to voice these as directed by the client.

Real Life Results Of Speaking Out: Below are some examples of change that occurred as a result of people speaking out.

SPEAKING OUT: When the bank relented on a \$50,000 heist reward to two citizens, the story was printed in the newspaper. The result was an avalanche of negative publicity with a blizzard of customer calls that persuaded the bank to pay the full \$50,000. As stated by the bank, "We always listen to our customers." Because people voiced their concerns two men received \$50,000 that they would not have gotten otherwise.

INFLUENCING DECISION MAKERS: When the Legislature was going to cut money to food banks, a local food banker testified at a hearing in Olympia about the importance of this money to food banks and in alleviating hunger. The Legislators then decided not to go through with the cuts and actually allotted more funds.

AGENCY ADVOCACY: When the WIC Farmers' Market Nutrition Program was last on the priority list of the Department of Health, providers and farmers got together for a meeting with administrators of the program to express their concerns and the need for the program. They are currently in negotiation about how to make the program more stable, expanding its reach and making the program more effective for clients and farmers.

Large Scale Results

Western Region Anti-Hunger Consortium: A group of 10 western region states that have come together to work on federal anti-hunger public policy issues. Together, anti-hunger advocates worked to ensure that legal immigrants would be eligible to receive Food Stamp benefits under the 2002 Farm Bill. Coalition members were successful in mobilizing networks, forming new partnerships, and having their voice heard by Congress.

Anti-Hunger and Nutrition Coalition: The Coalition has ensured state investment in the WIC and WIC Farmers' Market programs. Despite a severe budget crisis during the 2002 legislative session, anti-hunger advocates, public health and nutrition professionals, and farmers were successful in convincing the state legislature not to eliminate the WIC Farmers' Market Nutrition Program. Washington is one of the few states that provide additional Nutrition Services Administration funds in addition to what the USDA provides. The Coalition has been successful in protecting at least part of these funds.

List some ways you or someone you know has spoken up for someone else in the past, how it was done and the positive change that occurred.

1.

2.

What are the Obstacles to Advocacy?ⁱⁱⁱ

Given the great task of providing and distributing food, **who has time for advocacy?** Most staffs are already strapped for time and resources.

There's no easy answer, but there are some practical solutions for direct service organizations committed to doing it. At a basic level you can just take 5 minutes out of your day to call, write a letter or email your legislator telling them your issue and what action you would like them to take. Calling your legislators to voice your opinion is a small task but very effective. It's the job of legislators to listen to their constituents.

Advocacy can also be part of what an organization does day to day, not an extra task tacked on to an already too long "to-do" list. For example, a service provider could automatically have its clients and volunteers participate in a letter writing campaign or a telephone tree to encourage legislative action. ^{iv}

Freeing up the time of one staff person a few hours a week to do policy work may be a great way to go even further. If it is one person's responsibility to stay on top of hunger related issues and legislation, that is a beginning step to keeping an organization informed. But that is not essential for being a good advocate. To make life easier, you can even sign up to get alerts from other organizations to stay abreast on different issues and informing you when to take action.

Other Obstacles:

- It is very easy, as an advocate to become discouraged because the change you want is not taking place immediately. Sometimes it takes months or years to obtain your desired change. If it does not happen immediately small steps toward your goal will keep you in the game. Persistence is key.
- Note that if you are a good advocate, you will make someone uncomfortable or angry. Do not be intimidated; this may be a sign that your efforts are effective.

PART II: QUALITIES OF A GOOD ADVOCATE

Now that you know what advocacy is, the scope of an anti-hunger advocate and the results it produces, the next step is learning the qualities of a good anti-hunger advocate.

What makes a Good Anti- Hunger Advocate?

The 5 most important Qualities of a Good Advocate

- 1. Has Good Information**
(Knowing the hunger facts and having other facts to support/develop your position)
- 2. Is Clear About What The Issue Is And Can Convey The Message Effectively**
(What specific hunger related issue, program or policies are you advocating for?)
- 3. Understands The Decision Making Process**
(Who makes the specific change or decision? To whom do they listen? & What is the process?)
- 4. Knows How To Communicate With Decision Makers**
(How do you inform and communicate with your community and elected officials?)
- 5. Thinks About How To Get Others Interested And Active**
(How can you get as people interested and involved to bring force to your issue/argument?)

A GOOD ADVOCATE:

HAS GOOD INFORMATION: GET INFORMED ABOUT HUNGER

When speaking out, it is very effective if you can back up your stories with facts and figures that are relevant to your issue and support your solution. A good advocate not only needs to know what information they need, but where and how to get the information they need. Below is information about Hunger in the US and Washington that will help you understand problems and issues related to hunger.

Key Definitions:

Hunger is the painful or uneasy sensation caused by a recurrent or involuntary lack of food.
Food Insecurity occurs when access to nutritionally adequate and safe foods is either limited or uncertain, or the ability to obtain food occurs in socially unacceptable ways.

Hunger in the US

It is hard to imagine that people are going hungry in the US, but providing enough nutritious food for one's family is becoming increasingly difficult for many of America's families. The number of households that are food insecure and/or hungry continues to increase. Recent USDA Household Food Security data indicates that **36.2 million Americans** live in food insecure households and **9 million live** in households where at least one member went hungry at times. This means that their hunger was not a one-time event, but they had to skip meals, or eat low quality, low cost meals because their money and food resources ran out.

Even though parents often skip meals to feed their children in times of food scarcity, **13 million children** live in food insecure households and **3 million children** live in households that experience hunger. Childhood hunger in western states is higher than in any other US region. Similarly, there is a relatively high prevalence of hunger in the Northwest, particularly Oregon and Washington, which are ranked one and two in hunger.

Household Food Security in the United States, USDA 2001

- About 51 percent of food-insecure households received help from one or more of the three largest Federal food assistance programs. (*25 percent received food stamps, 33 percent received free or reduced-price school lunches for children, and 13 percent received WIC assistance.*)
- 3 million households received emergency food from a food pantry, church, or food bank.
- Single mothers with children registered the highest levels of food stress; 32 percent of these households were food insecure, 8.7 percent were food insecure with hunger, and in 1.4 percent, children as well as adults were hungry.

Income and Poverty

Income, of course, was a major factor in food insecurity and hunger:

- The number of poor in the U.S. in 2001 (**32.9 million people**) was 1.3 million more than in 2000.^v
- According to the National Center for Childhood Poverty, **27 million children** live in low-income families; families with incomes below 200 percent of the poverty line (\$36,200 for a family of four).
- More than one third of low-income households were food insecure, and in 10.9 percent, household members experienced hunger.^{vi}

Washington Fact Sheet

Population: 6,041,700

Poverty – *US Census 2000*

- Number of people living in poverty: **612,370 (10.6%)**
- Children living in poverty: **Approximately 238,000 (17%)**

Jobs – *US Census 2000*

- Unemployment: **6.2%**
- Population with income below poverty level: **16.17% in 1999**
- Per Capita Income: **\$15,976 in 1999**
- Average annual pay: **\$37,630 in 2000**

Food Insecurity – *Center on Hunger and Poverty- Hunger and Food Insecurity in the 50 States 1998-2000*

- Percent of people who are food insecure: **12.93%**
- Percent of people who are food insecure with hunger: **5.05%**
- Number of households who are food insecure: **289,000**
- Number of households who are food insecure with hunger: **113,000**
- Number of adults who are food insecure: **485,000**
- Number of children who are food insecure: **286,000**

Safety Net Program Participation

- Food Stamps: **520,759 participants in 2001**– (57% of those eligible receive Food Stamps) *-Department of Health and Human Services, 2001*
- WIC: **147,000 clients per month** (Over 78% of those eligible are served). Half of all babies born in Washington benefit from the WIC program. *-WALWICA*
- National School Lunch: **Nearly all schools** in Washington participate in the school lunch program. *-Washington Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, 2000*
- Breakfast: **About 84% of school districts** in Washington serve school breakfast. However, over 20,000 low-income school children have no access to the program. *-Washington Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, 2000*
- Summer Food: **Only 10% of kids** (30,000 out of 300,000) who qualify for free or reduced price school meals receive free summer meals through the Summer Food Service Program. *-Washington Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, 2000*

Emergency Food System

- Food banks in Washington serve over 70 million pounds of food a year to approximately one million people. *-Department of Community, Trade and Economic Development, 2002*
- Visits to food banks increase as much as 50% in some neighborhoods; past donors and the newly unemployed, are becoming food bank clients. *-Food Lifeline*

Where Can You Find Good Information?

Get the information you need to take action. Don't overwhelm yourself, do what you can.

For more information on Hunger refer Section 2. There is more information on Hunger in WA, detailed explanations of the Safety Net Programs and a brief overview of hunger issues.

Information from Other Organizations:

- There are organizations such as the Children's Alliance that already have fact sheets and data for the purpose of informing advocates
- Find an organization that cares about what you care about (Try the Children's Alliance and become a Children's Action Network (CAN) Member)
- Sign up for their legislative alert so that you stay informed and know when to act.
- Check out their web pages and look at their legislative agendas to get an overview of key issues and positions

Use the Web to find out more about issues:

- *Use a search engine to find general or specific data*
(www.google.com/www.excite.com/www.inforseek.com)
- *Get information about hunger and low income populations in WA*
 1. (Center on Hunger and Poverty State Data/ www.centeronhunger.org/states/wa.html)
 2. (USDA Economic Research Service- <http://www.ers.usda.gov/Briefing/FoodSecurity/>)
 3. (US Census Bureau Data - <http://factfinder.census.gov/>)
- *Stay Abreast of National Hunger Issues-*
Subscribe to the Food Research and Action Center Digest
(<http://www.frac.org/html/news/newsdigest/latest.htm>)
- *Get information on state policies and programs*
(Washington State Institute for Public Policy - www.leg.wa.gov/wsipp)

For more resources on **Hunger** see **Attachment 1**
For resources on **Where to go for Information** see **Attachment 2**

A GOOD ADVOCATE:

IS CLEAR ABOUT THE ISSUE & CAN DEVELOP EFFECTIVE MESSAGES

Of all of the issues surrounding hunger, what matters to you the most right now? It can be reducing the number of people who need food assistance or making government anti-hunger programs (Food Stamps, WIC, Child nutrition) more accessible. In public policy advocacy it is essential to know your issue so that you can effectively communicate your concerns and solutions to legislators.

**For more information on issues surrounding hunger refer to Section 2.*

Effective Advocacy depends on knowing the difference between a *problem* and an *issue*...

Problem: A broad area of concern. For example, health care, hunger, and racism are problems.

Issue: A solution or partial solution to a problem. For example, increasing the accessibility of food stamps is an example of an issue to address hunger.

A good issue should:

- Result in a real improvement in people's lives
- Make people feel good
- Be worthwhile

Problem/issue worksheet: List a few problems in anti-hunger community and then define an issue for each one.

PROBLEM	ISSUE
<i>Example: Teenagers have nowhere to go after schools are getting into trouble.</i>	<i>Example: After-school programs that offer constructive, enriching activities for youth.</i>

Being Clear about your issue:

1. What general issue surrounding hunger is the most important to you today?
2. What is your vision regarding this issue? What would you like to see different?
3. What is the most important change that could happen today to get us closer to your vision?
4. Is this the smallest slice of the issue that you can take?

What is the Best Way to Convey Your Message?

One of the most important things a good advocate can do is figure out how to tell their story. Ideally you would have enough time to get your message across but sometimes it does not work that way. So you have to be prepared with a short and concise message.

Here is a model of how to tell your story or voice your issue in a short, clear, and compelling way. This is very useful in public policy advocacy when communicating with elected officials and decision makers but it is useful when conveying your message to anyone.

If you can come up with brief answers to these five questions, you are well on your way to coming up with a message that is concise, clear, and compelling.

After you have developed your message, practice conveying it to someone and get his or her feedback. Can they answer the 5 questions from what you have told them?

- 1. WHO ARE YOU?**
- 2. WHAT IS YOUR ISSUE?**
- 3. WHY DO YOU CARE?**
- 4. WHY SHOULD I CARE?**
- 5. WHAT SPECIFICALLY DO YOU WANT ME TO DO ABOUT IT?**

**Use the worksheet on the next page you to help you develop your messages*

1. WHO ARE YOU?

- Name
- Do you live in the legislator’s district? Are you a constituent?
- Are you affiliated with an organization? How many members? Statewide? Regional?

2. WHAT IS YOUR ISSUE?

- Pick one issue and tell one story.
- Be prepared to describe your issue and don’t be surprised if your legislator is unfamiliar with it – legislators have their policy plates full of everything from salmon to roads to child care to prisons
- Be prepared to describe your issue briefly and plainly (no more than two to three sentences) – don’t bombard them initially with the details. You can communicate the detail in the form of written materials that you can leave behind.

3. WHY DO YOU CARE?

- Why does this matter to you?
- Why does it matter enough for you to take the time to write, call or visit?
- How will it change your life? The lives of people you know?
- Tell a personal story, tell a story from your heart – no one has ever been moved by a beautiful graph

4. WHY SHOULD I CARE?

- Why should your listener care?
- What’s happening in their district, their community?

5. WHAT DO YOU SPECIFICALLY WANT ME TO DO ABOUT IT?

- Always have a clear call to action – a “to-do”
- Always ask for an outcome, follow-up
- Be specific in your request – don’t ask for “support,” support is a vague thing. Ask for a “yes” or a “no” vote. Ask that they help get a bill heard in committee or brought up for a vote
- Sometimes, the best action you can hope for is keeping the dialogue open – ask if they would be willing to read some supporting materials and then get a follow-up phone call from you.

**Source: The Children’s Alliance Developing Key Messages Worksheet*

A GOOD ADVOCATE:

KNOWS WHO THE DECISION MAKERS ARE & UNDERSTANDS THE PROCESS

Once you have decided what specific change you are seeking, find out who is responsible for making those decisions. This is specifically important in public policy advocacy but is an important step in any type of change you want to bring about.

Some tips:

- Make sure you know what level of government makes the decisions. Federal (President or Congress), State (State Legislators) or Local (Mayors, City Councils, School Boards)
- If you are seeking to change a government program or expenditure, find out about who is responsible for implementing that program or expanding the money and work through those channels
- If you are trying to promote a policy or program that you have heard about from somewhere else, find out who runs the program in that area. Their counterparts here probably run it in your community

Public Policy Advocacy: Communicating with Legislators

Who is my legislator?

The Washington State Legislature is a body with 49 members in the Senate and 98 members in the House of Representatives. There is one Senator and two House members in each of Washington's 49 legislative districts. You can find out your district and legislator by going to: www.leg.wa.gov or calling the legislative hotline at: 1-800-562-6000. For a list of key legislators to contact about food and nutrition programs and policies **see Attachment 3.**

What is the process?

The citizen legislature meets annually on the second Monday in January in Olympia. In even numbered years, the legislature meets for 60 days and in the odd numbered years they meet for 105 days.

The legislative cycle is two years long. Within that two-year cycle, there are two kinds of legislative sessions: regular sessions and extraordinary, or special, sessions.

A member may introduce a bill in either the Senate or House of Representatives. The ideas for bills come from a number of places: something has happened in the last year that inspires new legislation (for instance, the change in people's perception of crime gave rise to the youth violence bills that were offered during the 1994 Session), a member wishes to address an issue that is specific to his or her district, the Legislature decides to tackle a

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major issue (such as regulatory reform), changes in technology dictate a change in the State's laws, etc.

Once a member introduces a bill, the legislative process begins. The process has a number of specific steps. If the bill makes it through all the steps in the chamber in which it was introduced (the "first house"), it goes to the other chamber (or "second house") and goes through the same steps there. If it goes through the second house it is then sent to the Governor for veto or signing into law.

Resources: www.leg.wa.gov - For more information on the legislative process visit the website or **see Attachment 4.*

Where do the citizens fit in this process?

Voicing concerns to legislators – It is the job of legislators to hear the concerns of citizens and especially represent the concerns of residents in their district. If citizens do not voice their concerns legislators will not know what is important and what changes need to be made in their community. You can reach legislators by email, phone, letter or visiting their offices.

Public Hearings - legislators hear testimony from interested and informed parties to better inform them of what the issues are as well as citizen's concerns. Anyone can testify at a public hearing.

Drafting a Bill- anyone can write a bill, individuals, and agencies or legislators. Once you write a bill you must find a legislator to sponsor it. Even talking or visiting a legislator and voicing a concern can prompt the writing and sponsorship of a bill by your legislator.

Who else should be involved?

Ideally you can work directly with the officials who will make the final decision. A good advocate, however always thinks not only about those who make the final decision, but about those the decision makers listen to as well.

For instance, in order to start a breakfast program in a district, you may have a decision that is ultimately up to the school board. Whose opinion influences the school? Teachers? Principals? Parents? Business people? All these groups?

The school board continues to be your target, but all the other groups become another target. A smart advocate would work with parents, teachers, and local business people to get them to support the proposal and to talk it up to the school board.

A GOOD ADVOCATE:

KNOWS HOW TO COMMUNICATE WITH OFFICIALS

How Can I Contact My Legislator?

For advocacy to be effective there are various ways an advocate can communicate with elected officials. Remember to use your key message while communicating with legislators. Your key message should answer the following questions: who you are, what your issue is, why you care, why your legislator should care, and what you want them to do about it.

- **Email** is a quick and easy way to make contact. However email is informal and easy to discard. You can find your legislator's email address at www.leg.wa.gov. Remember not all legislators have or use their email. You may want to call and ask their preferred method of communication. Make sure you use the criteria discussed above to convey your message.
- **Phone Calls** are a good way to communicate your issue in a timely manner. Our Legislature has a toll-free Legislative Hotline. You can call it at 800.562.6000. It is a fast way for citizens to convey their views on bills under consideration. Remember your key message (your own or from an action alert). For tips on how to contact your legislators by phone refer to the Children's Alliance **Advocacy by Telephone Attachment 5**.
- **Letters** are a good way to present your information and your arguments. They show that you are invested enough to sit down and write a letter. You can find your legislators addresses on the legislative website, in a directory or by calling the hotline. For more information on how to write and effective letter refer to the Children's Alliance **Advocacy by Letter Attachment 6**.
- **Visits** are a great way to establish a personal relationship and give legislators a chance to put a name and face to the issue. You can visit your legislator in Olympia during session, at their offices in the off-season, by inviting them to your organization or inviting them to coffee. For more information on visits refer to the Children's Alliance **Visiting your Legislator Attachment 7**.

A GOOD ADVOCATE:

THINKS ABOUT HOW TO GET OTHERS INTERESTED & INVOLVED

Grass Roots Advocacy: Being an Advocate In Your Community

How Can You Get Others Interested and Involved?

How To Organize A Phone Tree^{vii}

Advocates often have to mobilize people very quickly. You may need individuals to fax letters, make phone calls or show up for a meeting. One of the fastest ways to mobilize people is by setting up a phone tree.

How A Phone Tree Works

A phone tree is a pyramid where a designated coordinator maintains the names, addresses, and phone numbers of participants on an issue. The coordinator recruits prime contacts, (friends, family, coworkers, other interested people and organizations) making sure that each person helps recruit and maintain a team of 3 to 5 advocates. These are the people the coordinator will contact when the action is needed. The coordinator sends out a message to their network, everyone who receives the message then takes action and sends the message to others in their network.

Example:

Hunger Action Day. Shelley Curtis from the Children's Alliance has a list of contacts and sends a message out to her contacts telling the legislature not to cut food programs that support kids and families. The receiver calls his/her legislator, conveys this message and then sends this message out to all of his/her contacts. This proceeds and at the end of the day legislators have calls from thousands of people insisting not to cut food programs.

Make Your Message Short and Simple

Make sure your action message is short and simple, so it doesn't get jumbled by the time it gets to the advocates. You should not relay lengthy background information, use your developing messages training. Contacts should be given more detailed information through the mail.

Sample Message:

Contact Governor Locke with the message below:

Washington has the second highest rate of hunger in the nation. When you develop your budget proposal, please protect food and nutrition programs that provide families with a basic nutrition safety net.

Don't Forget to Take Action

The single greatest way phone trees fail is by advocates forgetting to take action on the issue and only contacting the activists on their list. Always take action first, and then call the activists on your list.

**Source: National Wildlife Association*

How To Run A Petition Drive^{viii}

Nearly all of us have signed a petition after only a short explanation of the issue. Experience shows us that as an advocacy tool, the power of petitions is based on quantity and not quality. Because lawmakers know that petition signers may not be actively engaged in this method, petitions are less effective.

**Setting up for a petition drive is pretty much just like setting up for a letter-writing event*

The Value of Petitions:

- *Publicity:* Getting press coverage for a petition drive kick-off or when delivering the completed petitions to the lawmaker enhances the public impact of your efforts. Doing the petition drive in a very public place, complete with a large banner that explains your organization or your issue will tell passers-by that something important is going on.
- *Organizational promotion:* Giving petition signers a flyer, which tells more about your issue and organization, and what they can do to get involved, is an inexpensive way to recruit more members and volunteers.
- *Follow-up:* Folks who give their names and addresses to you on the petition are presumably fair game for sending written alerts or further information.
- *Outreach to special groups:* Petitions may be a practical vehicle for allowing children, the illiterate, and other groups who are challenged to become involved.
- *Volunteer involvement:* Gathering petitions are a very achievable, concrete task for inexperienced advocates. It gives a lot of people a chance to reach out and communicate the importance of the issue to others. People who gather petitions effectively can probably be counted on to accomplish more responsible tasks.

**Source: National Wildlife Association*

How To Set Up A Letter Writing Table^{ix}

One simple outreach strategy is to set up a table displaying information on your issue and encouraging people to write to the appropriate lawmaker. Setting up a letter-writing table so clients and volunteers can write letters is a good idea. Running a campaign when the legislature is in session or around an event such as World Hunger Day is a good catalyst. However, anytime or anywhere there will be heavy traffic is also appropriate.

- Draft a short sample letter that people can use as a model. One or two paragraphs are sufficient. Be sure to include the lawmaker's and the writer's address. (Tape the sample letter to the table where it will be easily seen.)
- Have writing supplies.
- Have a congressional or state legislative directory.

Depending on time and location, the letters can be taken directly to the appropriate lawmaker's district office, or mailed. (To help defray postage, you might want to have a collection plate on the table as well.)

**Source: National Wildlife Association*

Instead of writing letters send Postcards

Postcards are an inexpensive way for many people to be involved in the advocacy process. A postcard campaign to influence a particular situation or vote can be very effective. Postcards provide an opportunity for brief messages, which convey the basic request you are making to the legislator. Post-cards can be preaddressed for mailing and clients and volunteers can provide personal messages to legislators. Collecting postcards immediately at the point of distribution and mailing a large number is best. Remember, postcards are only effective if policy makers receive large quantities.

Where Can You Get Support?

Working with various stakeholders in your community can provide you with the support you need. Gathering or joining interested individuals and organizations can make your goals easier to achieve and present a unified effort in alleviating hunger in your community. Joining or creating a coalition or committee to discuss issues around food and hunger is worthwhile.

Why Are Coalitions Important?*

- Coalitions are a way for diverse organizations to come together around a specific issue or concern to share work, information and resources.
- Coalitions are particularly useful when dealing with complex issues such as hunger that involve many services and players in a community.
- Coalitions provide an opportunity for people affected by the issues to have a voice and to become involved in the process of change.
- Coalitions can focus on a particular piece of legislation in the short term or seek more broad long-term reforms efforts.

Why Should You Join A Coalition?

Coalitions Can Help You ^{xi}

- Share information
- Make new contacts
- Get input from a variety of sources
- Minimize duplication and competition
- Address gaps in services
- Built support and legitimacy for your cause
- Plan and launch initiatives
- Share initiative costs
- Work towards a common goal
- Broaden your scope and accomplishments

Ask yourself a few questions before joining a Coalition

1. Does the coalition's mission include and working on hunger or hunger related causes?
2. Are you willing to spend time to make it successful?
3. Does the coalition include a range of service providers and individuals interested in hunger?

Successful Coalitions:^{xii}

- Establish realistic expectations for outcomes
- Choose unifying issues. There needs to be a common cause, not just a desire to work on one another's agendas
- Are based on the understanding that coalition members may have different motivations and levels of commitment for seeking the same outcome as you are seeking.
- Understand that takes time to discuss issues and reach agreement on initiatives. An ongoing effort must be made to communicate problems, concerns, ideas and plans effectively.

*For a list of some coalitions in Washington see **Attachment 8**

Media Advocacy: Informing the Larger Community

How Can You Influence Public Opinion?

Working With the Media

A good way to try to shape and influence public opinion is communicating through media channels. The letter-to-the-editor page is among the most closely read parts of newspaper. Policy-makers look at them to gauge public opinion. Therefore the media is another effective way to convey your message about an issue.

Communicating with journalists makes a difference. It does not have to be perfect; not all letters to journalists need to be for publication. Even a one-sentence, handwritten note or telephone call to a reporter outlining your issue and conveying your message can be helpful. If you take the time to type a substantive letter, send copies of it to two or three places within the media outlet-perhaps to the reporter, his or her editor, as well as to the letters-to-the-editor department.

How To Write A Letter To The Editor^{xiii}

Letters should be short and concise, typically about 250 words, or about four short paragraphs. For a news magazine or a radio news show, they should be even shorter, about 100 words. Letters should be written with passion, using strong but not harsh language. Letters that are intended for publication should usually be drafted more carefully. Here are some tips to keep in mind:

- Keep your letter brief (Generally two short paragraphs are ideal)
- You also must include your name, signature, address and phone number. A typed letter is preferred
- Make one point (or at most two) in your letter or fax. State the point clearly, ideally in the first sentence
- Make your letter timely. If you are not addressing a specific article, editorial or letter that recently appeared in the paper you are writing to, then tie your letter to a recent event
- Familiarize yourself with the coverage and editorial position of the paper to which you are writing. Refute or support specific statements, address relevant facts that are ignored, but do avoid blanket attacks on the media in general or the newspaper in particular
- Just remember, when you challenge a position, you should support your view with facts and not let your emotions get in the way
- Tell your readers what action needs to be taken

**Source: F.A.I.R (Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting)*

Sample Letter To The Editor

**Printed in the January 16, 2003 issue of the Olympian.*

Tax system that burdens the poor is unfair

The news that our state's tax structure leans heaviest on the poor strikes me as cruelly unfair, especially right now. With layoffs, deep cuts to human services and a high rate of unemployment, we should ask higher income families to at least pay an equal share. In Olympia, it's clear that our low and moderate-income working families need help, not a heavy tax burden. Without new revenue, our state's budget hole will consume critical services for children and families. This hurts all of us and will cost us more in the long term. We need to raise revenue to pay for what our kids and families need today, so that our state is strong and healthy tomorrow.

Heidi Williams, Olympia

How to Write an Opinion Editorial^{xiv}

Opinion Editorials (Op-Eds) are longer than letters to the editor, and there is more competition for space. You may want to call the paper for length requirements (usually 600-800 words).

Write on a controversial issue being covered at that time. If you can use a professional title that suggests authority, do so. If you work for an organization, get permission to sign the op-ed as a representative of that organization.

Feel free to send it to papers far from where you live, but avoid sending it to two newspapers in the same "market." But you can easily submit the same piece to five or ten local dailies in different regions—greatly increasing your chances of being published.

In writing op-eds, avoid excessive rhetoric. State the subject under controversy and proposed action or solution clearly. You are trying to persuade a middle-of-the-road readership. If you rely on facts not commonly found in mainstream media, cite your sources.

Try to think of a catchy title. If you don't, the paper will be more likely to run its own—which may not emphasize your central message.

Be prepared to shorten and re-submit your article as a letter to the editor in case it does not get accepted as an op-ed. *Make it timely, lively and readable.*

**Source: F.A.I.R (Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting)*

Sample Opinion Editorial

*Printed in the Spokane Review
October 15, 2001*

Now is the time to bolster the food stamp program

By Linda Stone

Although the very foundations of our global family's security was threatened on Sept. 11, I am heartened – as a local child and family advocate to feel a strong renewed sense of community. The days ahead bring us uncertainty, however, and while Spokane is not likely to be a target of terrorism, our economic security is fragile. As we face the future together, our American values will not let us turn away from those in need.

We need to remember that security comes in many forms: safety, health and well-being. There is no more vivid representative of security than the ability of parents to put food on the table of their children. In the months ahead it will be harder for some families to make ends meet and it is up to those of us who are able to ensure that a safety net is in place to catch these families that falter.

Today in Spokane, 30,000 people receive help from the food stamp program- half of them children. Although our county contains only 7 percent of Washington's population, Spokane people make up 10 percent of the state's food stamp enrollment. It is likely that our local economy and rate of employment will be affected by the national economic instability.

In this event, the number of families needing help will rise. These families are our neighbors, co-workers, relatives and friends. The Food Stamp Program is increasingly a support program for low-wage workers and their families as well as parents moving from welfare to work. Food Stamps can make a key difference for families in transition and for communities struck by business closures, layoffs and dramatic shifts in economy.

Food Stamps help families put food on the table but they also help to stabilize rural and impoverished communities. Food Stamps enable families to purchase approximately \$24 million in food from Spokane grocery stores each year, helping to support local businesses and our state's farmers. Research shows that food stamps are the second most important tool we have to counter recession—only unemployment has a greater impact.

Prior to the tragedies on the East Coast, Congress was debating a five-year farm bill. A critical piece of this legislation includes modernizing the national Food Stamp Program and making it easier for working families to access help. We understand that Congress will resume debate on farm provisions very soon, as well as consider an economic stimulus package. Food Stamp improvements should move forward in both of these legislative initiatives.

Along with our colleagues in 10 western states, the Children's Alliance launched a campaign called Food Stamp Target 2001 to ensure that western issues are part of the policy debate. Our mandate is to bring the voices of hungry families to the table in Congress, so they are heard along with all the other voices that agricultural interests bring.

We have listened to hungry families in our communities, talked with state administrative who oversee the Food Stamp Program, met with our members of Congress and developed a list of priorities so that in the end the program can better meet the needs of working families.

The changes we feel are most essential include:

- ◆ Rewarding states for taking action to improve access to Food Stamps for working families and reducing the complexity of program regulations so that the application process does not bewilder families.
- ◆ Making Food Stamp Program rules less sensitive to the fluctuating budgets of working families and more responsive to the real costs of housing, utilities and transportation.
- ◆ Restoring food stamp benefits to all immigrants legally in this country. Washington State made this commitment in 1997 and continues to fund state food assistance at \$5 million to \$6 million per year. The national safety net must again extend to these families that enrich our culture and strengthen our economy.
- ◆ Improving the health and nutritional value of the Food Stamp Program by increasing the amount of Food Stamps available to be eligible families and seniors and increasing the minimum benefit from \$10 to \$25.

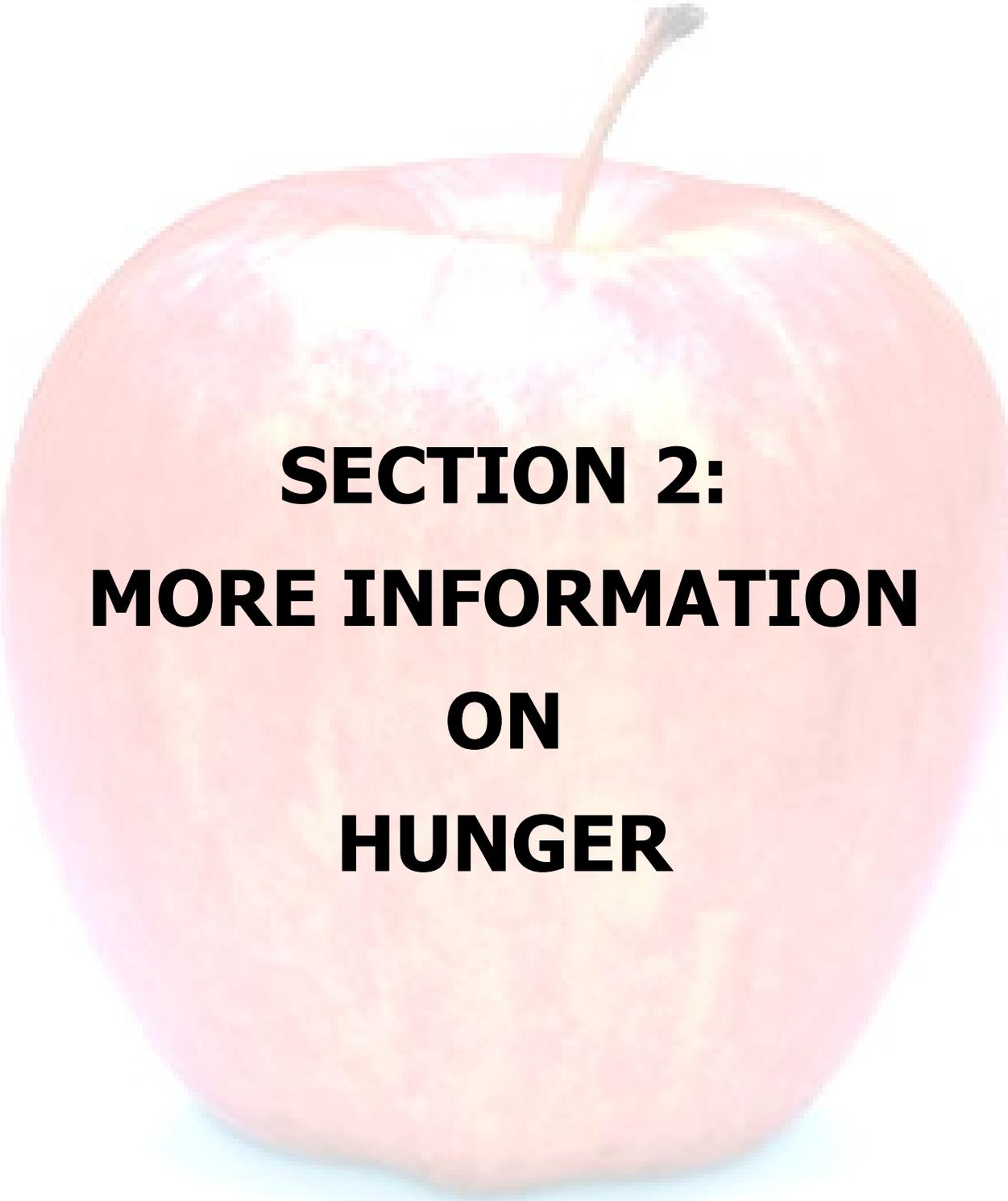
We want to see Congress pass a farm bill that incorporates Food Stamps this year, to make sure the Food Stamp Program will be up to the challenge in the months included in any economic stimulus package.

Helping our neighbors could never be more appropriate. And assisting working families to put food on the table helps us live up to the values we all hold dear.

Linda Stone is the Interim Executive Director for the Children's Alliance

Resources:

- ⁱ Resource Guide for Advocacy Coordinators - <http://www.concentric.net/~logmnj/hunger.htm>
- ⁱⁱ Information Modified from the Children's Alliance Advocacy Training Materials
- ⁱⁱⁱ Center for Community Change – Advocacy 101- www.communitychange.org/howheard.htm
- ^{iv} Center for Community Change – Advocacy 101- www.communitychange.org/howheard.htm
- ^v US Census Bureau. Poverty in the United States, 2001
- ^{vi} Household Food Security in the United States, USDA/ERS 2001
- ^{vii} National Wildlife Association <http://www.nwf.org/action/howtos/howphont.html>
- ^{viii} National Wildlife Association <http://www.nwf.org/action/howtos/howphont.html>
- ^{ix} National Wildlife Association <http://www.nwf.org/action/howtos/howphont.html>
- ^x United Nations Association Advocacy Guide: Building and Working with Coalitions - <http://www.unausa.org/membership/chaptersdivision/meetings/advocacy1.asp>
- ^{xi} Working in Coalitions: The Best Start Experience.
www.beststart.org/pract_prod/new_materials/How_Tos/coal_intro.html
- ^{xii} Reading Recovery Council of North America-How to Become an Advocate: Working in Coalitions-
<http://www.readingrecovery.org/sections/home/coalitions.asp>
- ^{xiii} F.A.I.R (Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting) - Activism/How to Communicate with Journalist.
<http://www.fair.org/activism/communicate.html>
- ^{xiv} F.A.I.R (Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting) - Activism/How to Communicate with Journalist.
<http://www.fair.org/activism/communicate.html>



**SECTION 2:
MORE INFORMATION
ON
HUNGER**

What Does Hunger Look Like in Washington?

Washington, average 1998-2000ⁱ

	Total	Food Insecure	Food Insecure with Hunger
Percent of Households (%)	100.0	12.93	5.03
Number of Households (thousands)	2,242	289	113
Number of People in Households (thousands)	5,706	770	254
Rank (out of 51)	--	10	2

Hunger in Washington

**Source: USDA Household Food Security, 2001*

You do not have to search far for people that have to go without food. Many families are struggling more now than ever to make ends meet. Hunger in Washington has become a very serious matter. Washington holds the number two spot for hunger in the US. In 2000, about 5 percent of all Washington households contained members who were hungry because they could not pay for adequate food. The average US hunger rate for 49 states is 3.3 percent.

Thousands of Washington families had to skip or reduce meal quantity or quality because they simply could not afford an adequate amount of food. In total, 289,000 households (12.93 percent) in Washington are “food insecure” which includes households that go hungry at times and those who have poor quality meals to prevent hunger. About, 770,000 Washington residents live in these food insecure households. As a result, visits to food banks have increased as much as 50% in some neighborhoods and 630,000 people are now visiting neighborhood food banks.ⁱⁱ

Who Is Hungry in Washington?

**Source: Michael Leachman. Hunger in Your State 2002. Oregon Center on Public Policy.*

Washingtonians that struggle with accessing a good quantity of food, represent a variety of different groups including, children, working families, those living in rural areas, immigrants, renters and the undereducated.

Children

The face of hunger is changing. Nearly one in five Washington children (18.8%) live in food insecure households. There are about 286,000 children in food insecure households and 92,000 children in households that experience hunger.ⁱⁱⁱ Approximately 238,000 (17%) of Washington's children under 18 live below the federal poverty level of \$18,100 for a family of four.^{iv}

Working People

The working poor, those retired and disabled are also affected by hunger. For adults and families that experience hunger the primary source of income for 75% is a job, retirement or disability.^v It is obvious that work does not guarantee enough food on the table. About 12 percent of all working households are food insecure and 3.7 % include members who go hungry at times. As of January 2002, minimum wage in Washington will be \$6.90/hour. A full-time minimum wage worker only makes \$14,352/year.

Rural Washingtonians

Rates of hunger are higher in rural areas outside of the Puget Sound area. About 22% of all people living in rural households are food insecure. Rural households in Washington are twice as likely to be food insecure than households in urban areas. Comparatively, only 11 percent of people in urban areas live in food insecure households.

Families living in and just above poverty

Low-income households in Washington are more likely to struggle with getting adequate food for themselves and their children. In Washington, about 34% of people in households with incomes under 185% of the poverty level (approximately \$33, 485 for a family of four) are food insecure. And about a third of those households have at least one member that has experienced hunger.

People of Color and Immigrants

Research on food insecurity and hunger in immigrant populations indicates that children in immigrant households are more likely to experience hunger than children in non-immigrant households. Rural Latino children are particularly vulnerable, with twice (2.8%) the rate of hunger than rural white children (1%).

Renters

It is a harsh reality that families often have to make a choice between eating and paying for housing. About one quarter of all renting households in Washington are food insecure. Consequently, about 10 percent of renting households have members that go hungry at times. Comparatively, homeowners are less likely to struggle to feed their families. Even still, 8 percent of homeowner households are food insecure. Home ownership is often out of reach for low-income persons because of the hurdles lack of affordable housing, high down payment requirements, and the difficult purchasing process present to less financially stable people.

Undereducated

One in eight of those households headed by persons aged 25 and older without a bachelor's degree are food insecure. However, increasingly not only the under educated are food insecure. The face of hunger is steadily changing to include more individuals and

families that are newly poor. Evidence shows that more food bank recipients in Western Washington have post-high school education compared to national average.^{vi}

Possible Reasons Why Hunger Rates Are High

Poverty

Although hunger in Washington has continued to increase, poverty in Washington has remained about the same over the past ten years. This exhibits an apparent disconnect between hunger and poverty rates. This could be due to the arbitrary poverty line or an increasing number of people above poverty now experiencing hunger. Research is inconclusive. However, over 10 percent of Washington's residents and 17 percent of Washington's children live in poverty.^{vii}

Employment

Washington State has one of the worst unemployment rates nationwide. Washington's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate rose one-tenth of a percentage point to 6.8 percent in December.^{viii} Comparatively, the national rate is about one point lower. Possible contributing factors are the increase of layoffs across industries and that Washington remains stuck in recession.

Income

The most recent data indicates that the richest one-fifth of Washington residents earned almost half of the total income.^{ix} Though 612,000 people live below poverty in Washington, in 2000 1,492,788 people lived below 200% of poverty, which still means only \$36,200 for a family of four.^x The poverty line is an artificial measure of poverty and sometimes tends to underestimate the number of poor people in the state. The poverty line is relative, arbitrary and does not measure individual need. For example: Minimum wage in Washington is \$6.90/hour which full time translates into \$14,352/year. Thus, a person making minimum wage lives significantly above poverty (\$8,860 for an individual and \$18,100 for a family of four) but is far from meeting their basic needs. Conversely, the self-sufficiency standards researched by the University of Washington, which calculates the amount of income it takes to meet the basic needs in various areas of an individual in King County is \$20,287 and \$49,699 for a family of four.^{xi} Which means that a working two person household may not make enough to provide for the basic needs of a family. These people often have to make the difficult choices between food, healthcare, and shelter.

Population Growth

In 2001, Washington's population reached 6 million, one million more than in 1990. Population growth is concentrated primarily in economic strips throughout Western Washington. Although the population grew more slowly in 2000 and 2001, the state's average growth rate from 1990 to 2001 was on a par with that of India and was the tenth highest in the US.^{xii} States with rapid population growth tended to have higher hunger rates in the last portion of the 90's. Increased population growth tends to drive up the cost

of living, increase the strain on social service programs and the increase competition for a limited number of jobs.

Increased Cost of Housing

Working families with children are being priced out of Seattle where so many of the region's jobs are concentrated. It has become increasingly hard to purchase affordable homes in close proximity to employment centers. According to the Washington Center for Real Estate Research, "the largest concentration of less costly housing is outside a reasonable commuting distance from major population centers." The median house price in Washington is \$168,300. In King County, where much of the state's population and employment are located, the median price is \$236,900.

WHAT IS BEING DONE? CURRENT WAYS OF FIGHTING HUNGER

Low wages, the high cost of living and cuts in federally funded social programs have forced millions of people to turn to handouts in order to live. Four recently issued reports document the growing number of individuals and families with children who rely on soup kitchens and food banks in an attempt to meet basic food needs. The reports also emphasize the increasing inability of charity-based organizations to exclusively meet the growing demand for food assistance. Thus, the effort to alleviate hunger lies not just in food donations but emergency food coupled with increased funding and accessibility of Government Safety Net Programs that fight hunger while also supporting programs and policies that promote ways families can obtain and maintain a level of self sufficiency.

Emergency Food

Demand for emergency food is up 25 to 30 percent from last year, when 23.3 million people sought assistance. America's Second Harvest, the nation's leading hunger-relief organization, now estimates that more than 40 percent of America's hungry are working poor. According to Food Lifeline, In Washington, 630,000 people are now visiting neighborhood food banks. What used to be emergency food assistance has now become supplemental food week in and week out and charitable organizations have become more and more stressed trying to provide this great need.

Current Ways of Fighting Hunger: Government Programs

The Food Stamp Program (FSP) is our nation's number one defense against hunger and help low-income households increase their food purchasing power and obtain more nutritious food.

1. FSP allows eligible participants to receive benefits to purchase food at authorized food stores and farmers markets.
2. Benefits are provided in the form of electronic benefits on a debit card known as the EBT card (Electronic Benefits Transfer Card). Washington has changed its name to "The Basic Food Program"
3. Eligibility specifications are based on the most monthly income you can earn before taxes as well as the maximum allotment given for a particular household size.
4. In Washington clients can apply for food stamps online at <https://wvs2.wa.gov/dshs/onlineapp> or go to the nearest Community Service Organization (CSO).

The Child Nutrition Programs provide healthy, nutritious meals and snacks to the nation's children.

1. Run by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, they are entitlement programs that reimburse schools and other eligible organizations for serving nutritious meals to eligible children.
2. For many children, free school meal programs provide up to 60% of their nutritional intake. There is still work to be done.

National School Lunch Program (NSLP):

The National School Lunch Program is the most well known and well utilized of the child nutrition programs and provides students with healthy and reimbursable meals at school.

School Breakfast Program (SBP):

Available through the NSLP the School Breakfast Program provides kids with nutritious breakfast to start the day. Schools that 40% or more are eligible for free or reduced price meals are mandated by the state to run a program. Schools can also elect to provide free breakfast to all kids and receive a break in the required paperwork.

Summer Food Service Program (SFSP):

This program reimburses school districts, non-profit organizations, tribes and public agencies for meals served to kids in low-income areas. In Washington the SFSP feeds approximately 30,000 kids each summer.

After-School Snack Program (At-Risk):

After-school programs, schools, and non-profit organizations can provide healthy snack alternatives by participating in the After-School Snack Program, schools and non-profit organizations available through the NSLP or CACFP.

Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP):

The Child and Adult Care Food Program provide reimbursements for meals and snacks served in child-care programs and adult day care centers.

Work to be done

1. **Is there a program in the community you are serving?**
2. **Are your clients aware of the benefits? Can you become a sponsor?**
3. **Do you know another non-profit organization that would be a likely sponsor?**

The Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)

provides quality nutrition education and services, breastfeeding education and support, monthly supplemental nutritious foods, and access to prenatal and pediatric health care services for low-income pregnant women, new mothers, infants, and preschool-age children.

1. WIC participants obtain nutritious food that would normally be unavailable to them at contracted retail stores by using vouchers to buy specific foods.

2. WIC services include WIC Farmer's Market Nutrition Program, which (in some states) connects low-income women and children to fresh fruits and vegetables at local farmer's markets.

The Senior Nutrition Programs provide older adults with nutritionally sound meals, both in home and at specified sites.

Congregate Nutrition Services

Provides nutritionally sound and satisfying meals in-group settings.

Home-Delivered Nutrition Services

Delivers nutritionally sound meals to homebound seniors due to illness, incapacitating disability, or otherwise isolated.

Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program

Provides fresh, locally grown fruits and vegetables to low-income seniors to improve nutritional status by supporting local farmers.

The Emergency Food Assistance Program (EFAP) provides funding, technical assistance and information to community programs that deliver emergency food services to hungry people.

The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) is a federal program that helps supplement the diets of low-income needy people, by providing them with emergency food and nutrition assistance at no cost.

Under TEFAP, commodity foods are made available by the U.S. Department of Agriculture to States. States provide the food to local agencies that they have selected, usually food banks, which in turn, distribute the food to soup kitchens and food pantries that directly serve the public.

Work to be done:

Barriers remain for food insecure adults, families and children to access these programs. Work needs to be done in bringing on new sponsors, expanding current programs, stabilizing funding and increasing awareness and participation.

Some Points for Improvement:

1. Programs too hard to access - Transportation also remains a barrier especially in rural areas.
2. Lots of Paper Work – for schools and other organizations wanting to sponsor a Child Nutrition Program paper work is a significant barrier.
3. Low Participation Rates – Because of the lack of sponsors and awareness – 4 out of 5 of the Child Nutrition Programs are underutilized.
4. Communication and awareness to clients about benefits and application process - There are many families that are not aware of meal sites in their community.
5. All Programs need continued funding to function. Legislators need to be continually reminded of the importance of these programs in fighting hunger.

What Are The Hot Topics in Hunger?

Federal Hunger Issues

Child Nutrition Reauthorization:

In 2003, Congress will reauthorize the Child Nutrition Programs – (Including The National School Lunch and School Breakfast Program, Summer Food Service Program and Child and Adult Care Food Program and WIC). These programs already lead the fight in hunger, but they can and should do more. Reauthorization provides a wonderful opportunity to improve and simplify these programs at the federal level.

In a letter to President Bush, 19 Democratic senators, asked for additional funding for child nutrition programs. Four dozen anti-hunger groups recently called for an increase of \$1 billion a year, or about 10 percent, to ensure year-round meals for all children and to help children learn healthy eating habits.

The President's Budget

The President's budget fails to allocate any additional funds to improve the school breakfast and lunch, childcare food, summer food and after school food programs. However the President is proposing a \$4.8 billion budget for the WIC program in 2004, to increase participation for women, infants and children. For more information visit www.frac.org

Key Issues in Reauthorization

1. Streamlining programs to reach more kids (less paperwork)
2. Universal breakfast (free breakfast for all kids)
3. Full funding for WIC
4. Preventing childhood obesity

Other issues on the rise:

- Accusations of nutrition programs contributing to the obesity epidemic are likely to come up during reauthorization.
- Over certification, or children receiving free or reduced priced school meals when they are not eligible, is likely to come up as an issue during reauthorization in 2003.

Section 32 funds

The Bush Administration announced intention to use \$752 million of Section 32 funds for disaster aid. Section 32 money is used to purchase and process surplus commodities provided to food banks through TEFAP, other charitable organizations, and federal school meal programs. More than 300 million pounds of USDA donated food is at risk. It would cut about 2/3rds of commodity foods for food banks in WA, or about 6,240,000 pounds of food over the course of a year. America's Second Harvest is working with a broad coalition of partners to reverse this policy.

State Hunger Issues

Budget Deficit in Washington - The state government is facing its biggest fiscal crisis in over twenty years. How will our state's lawmakers handle a projected budget deficit of \$2.6 billion?

The Governor's budget released in December indicates that there are no reductions in state funds for WIC, the WIC Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (WIC FMNP), or the Emergency Food Assistance Program (EFAP). Nor are there reductions in state matching funds for The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) or state funds for school meal programs. The Governor's budget is the first step in the state's budget making process. ***The protection of these programs is not definitive*** as we have a long legislative session and anything could happen in the House and Senate budget proposals. However this is a great opportunity to speak up for the hungry/food insecure and low income populations.

One way this budget crisis could affect Washington's Food Assistance Organizations:

The State gave \$3.7 million dollars this year to food banks and the legislature set aside \$1 million to buy trucks refrigerators, and freezers so that food banks could handle more perishable and frozen donations. With the 2.6 million dollar deficit this money may not be available to food banks if voters do not express the importance of this money.

What Can You Do?

The Bread for the World Institute suggests the following courses of action as ways through which the "politics of hunger" may be transformed^{xiii}:

- People and organizations working against poverty and hunger can become more aware of themselves as parts of a large, potentially dynamic movement.
- Individuals and agencies assisting hungry people can expand what they do to influence government policies.
- Low-income people's organizations can be strengthened, especially in their capacity to influence government policies that affect them.
- People can expand and strengthen anti-hunger advocacy organizations.

How: Take a step beyond your duties of distributing food (tell your stories, speak out, stay aware of current issues, influence decision makers, build partnerships) and advocate for programs and policies that will help your clients.

Resources

ⁱ A. Sullivan and E. Choi (August 2002). Hunger and Food Insecurity in the Fifty States: 1998-2000. Waltham, MA: Food Security Institute, Center on Hunger and Poverty.

ⁱⁱ Food Lifeline. Startling New Facts About Hunger. www.foodlifeline.org/hunger/index.html

ⁱⁱⁱ A. Sullivan and E. Choi (August 2002). Hunger and Food Insecurity in the Fifty States: 1998-2000. Waltham, MA: Food Security Institute, Center on Hunger and Poverty.

^{iv} *Census 2000 Supplemental Survey, US Census Bureau, 2000.*

^v Food LifeLine. Startling New Facts About Hunger. www.foodlifeline.org/hunger/index.html

^{vi} Food LifeLine. Startling New Facts About Hunger. www.foodlifeline.org/hunger/index.html

^{vii} Census 2000 Supplemental Survey, US Census Bureau, 2000

^{viii} Washington State Employment Security, 2003

^{ix} "The State of Washington's Children", University of Washington School of Public Health and Community Medicine, spring 2000

^x US Census Bureau 2000

^{xi} Diana Peirce. The Self Sufficiency Standard for Washington State. 2001.

^{xii} Northwest Environment Watch. How Washington Measures Up.

www.northwestwatch.org/press/tpoe02wa.pdf

^{xiii} Resource Guide for Advocacy Coordinators - <http://www.concentric.net/~logmnj/hunger.htm>

ATTACHMENTS

1. Websites To Learn More About Hunger
2. Where to go for (Food) Policy, Food Security and Poverty Information
3. Key State Legislators
4. Advocacy by Telephone
5. Advocacy by Letter
6. Meeting with Legislators
7. The Legislative Process: How a bill becomes a law
8. Organizations That Provide Support

Websites to Learn More about Hunger

Hunger

Bread for the World
<http://www.bread.org>

Center on Hunger and Poverty
<http://www.centeronhunger.org>

Center on Budget and Policy Priorities (CBPP)
<http://www.cbpp.org>

Congressional Hunger Center
<http://www.hungercenter.org>

Food First
<http://www.foodfirst.org>

Food for the Hungry
<http://www.fh.org>

Food Research and Action Center (FRAC)
<http://www.frac.org>

MAZON
<http://www.shamash.org/soc-action/mazon>

Oxfam America
<http://www.oxfamamerica.org>

International Hunger

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)
<http://www.fao.org>

United Nations Development Program
<http://undp.org>

Oxfam International
<http://www.oxfam.org>

US Agency for International Development (USAID)
<http://www.info.usaid.gov>

United Nations World Food Program
<http://www.wfp.org>

Attachment

World Bank
<http://www.worldbank.org>

Hunger in Washington

The Hunger Project
<http://www.thp.org>

Children's Alliance
<http://www.childrensalliance.org>

The Hunger Site
<http://www.hungersite.com>

Food Lifeline
<http://www.foodlifeline.org>

Fremont Public Association
<http://www.fremontpublic.org>

Northwest Harvest
<http://www.northwestharvest.org>

RESULTS
<http://results.action.org>

Washington Kids Count
<http://www.hspsc.org/wko/index.html>

America's Second Harvest
<http://www.secondharvest.org>

Western Region Anti-Hunger Consortium
<http://www.wrahc.org>

Share Our Strength
<http://www.strength.org>

U.S.D.A. (Food and Nutrition Services)
<http://fns.usda.gov/fns>

Where to go for (Food) Policy Information

Children's Alliance	www.childrensalliance.org
Gov. Gary Locke, State of Washington	www.governor.wa.gov
WA State Legislature	www.leg.wa.gov
Office of Financial Management	www.ofm.wa.gov
Food Research and Action Center	www.frac.org
Western Region Anti-Hunger Consortium	www.wrahc.org
Center on Budget and Policy Priorities	www.cbpp.org
WA State Dietetic Association	www.nutritionwsda.org
American Dietetic Association	www.eatright.org
America's Second Harvest	www.secondharvest.org
American School Food Service Program	www.asfsa.org
Center for Science in Public Interest	www.cspinet.org
International Food Policy Research Institute	www.ifpri.cgiar.org
California Food Policy Advocates	www.cfpa.net
Oregon Center for Public Policy	www.ocpp.org
Center on Hunger, Poverty and Nutrition Policy	http://hunger.tufts.edu
Children's Defense Fund	www.childrensdefense.org
Bread of the World	www.bread.org

Where to go for Hunger and Food Security Data

USDA Economic Research Service <i>Household Food Security in the US</i>	www.ers.usda.gov/ publications/fanrr29/
Center on Hunger and Poverty <i>Hunger and Food Insecurity in the 50 States 1998-2000</i>	www.centeronhunger.org/ pdf/statedata98-
Oregon Center on Public Policy <i>Hunger in Your State</i>	www.ocpp.org/2002/ rpt021114.pdf

Where to go for Income and Poverty Information

Children's Alliance	www.childrensalliance.org
National Center on Children in Poverty	www.nccp.org
US Census Bureau	www.census.gov/
Washington Access <i>Online Reports on Poverty</i>	http://www.accessinfo.org/ reports_on_poverty.htm

Attachment

Key State Legislators

House of Representatives Standing Committees

Agriculture and Ecology

- Kelli Linville - *Chair* (D)
- Phil Rockefeller - *Vice Chair* (D)
- Mark Schoesler - *ranking Minority member* (R)
- Janéa Holmquist - *asst. ranking Minority member* (R)
- Dan Kristiansen - *asst. ranking Minority member* (R)

Appropriations

- Helen Sommers - *Chair* (D)
- Bill Fromhold - *Vice chair* (D)
- Barry Sehlin - *ranking Minority member* (R)
- Kirk Pearson - *asst. ranking Minority member* (R)

Children and Family Services

- Ruth Kagi - *Chair* (D)
- Jeannie Darnelle - *Vice Chair* (D)
- Marc Boldt - *ranking Minority member* (R)
- Dan Roach - *asst. ranking Minority member* (R)

Rules

- Frank Chopp - *Chair* (D)

Senate Standing Committees

Agriculture

- Swecker, *Chair*;
- Brandland, *Vice Chair*;
- Rasmussen; Jacobsen
- Sheahan

Children & Family Services & Corrections

- Stevens, *Chair*
- Parlette, *Vice Chair*;
- Hargrove; Carlson
- Deccio
- McAuliffe
- Regal

Ways & Means

- Rossi, *Chair*
- Hewitt, *Vice Chair*
- Zarelli, *Vice Chair Capital Budget*
- Fairley
- Poulsen
- Brown

How a Bill Becomes a Law in Washington

1. A bill may be introduced in either the Senate or House of Representatives by a member.
2. It is referred to a committee for a hearing. The committee studies the bill and may hold public hearings on it. It can then pass, reject or take no action on the bill.
3. The committee report on the passed bill is read in open session of the House or Senate, and the bill is then referred to the Rules Committee.
4. The Rules Committee can either place the bill on the second reading of the calendar for debate before the entire body, or take no action.
5. At the second reading, a bill is subject to debate and amendment before being placed on the third reading calendar for final passage.
6. After passing one house, the bill goes through the same procedure in the other house.
7. If amendments are made, the other house must approve the changes.
8. When the bill is accepted in both houses, it is signed by the respective leaders and sent to the governor.
9. The governor signs the bill into law or may veto all or part of it. If the governor fails to act on the bill, it may become law without a signature.



CHILDREN'S ALLIANCE
A Voice for Washington's Children, Youth & Families

Advocacy by Telephone

Calling your legislator's office directly:

When the legislature is in session you can call your legislators at their offices in Olympia. Lists of members' names, office address, and telephone numbers are available from the Bill Room in the Capitol building (360.786.7573) or on the Web at www.leg.wa.gov

Here are some recommendations for making telephone calls directly to your legislators:

- ◆ Whether you created it or took it from an action alert -- remember your key message!
- ◆ In the course of delivering your message, be sure to:
 - Identify yourself by name and address (this verifies that you are a constituent).
 - Identify the bill you wish to talk about, by name and number (if possible).
- ◆ If your legislator needs further information, supply it as fast as possible.
- ◆ It bears repeating....
 - Do not be abusive; don't threaten your legislator.
 - Don't argue if the legislator has an opposing view or hasn't yet decided.
- ◆ Recognize that legislators are often away from the office, at Committee business or on the floor of the chamber, so you may talk instead to an aide. That's great! Use the same basic rules. Staff members are very reliable and will pass along what you said.
- ◆ Follow the call with a note restating your position, and thanking them for their time.

Using the Legislative Hotline

Our Legislature has a toll-free, Legislative Hotline. You can call it at 800.562.6000. It is a fast way for citizens to convey their views on bills under consideration. Here are a few tips for using the Hotline.

- ◆ Remember your key message (your own or from an action alert) -- BUT this is definitely the time to use your most streamlined version! Being brief and clear will increase the chance that your message is taken down correctly and that it will be understood when it is ready by your legislator later.
- ◆ You can use the Hotline to send the same message to all three of your legislators *and* the Governor!
- ◆ The Hotline is not an answering service, but only a service for brief messages about specific bills. If you wish to speak directly to a legislator you must call their office -- Hotline operators cannot transfer your call.
- ◆ If the Hotline is busy (it often is), just keep trying. Getting through often takes several calls.
- ◆ During the legislative session, weekday hours are 8:00 am - 8:00 pm, and Saturdays from 9:00am - 1:00pm. The Hotline also operates when the legislature is not in session, with slightly different hours.

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CHILDREN'S ALLIANCE
A Voice for Washington's Children, Youth & Families

Advocacy by Letter

Letters are an important, even critical, way to influence legislation. Letters to the writer's own Senator and Representative are especially important.

Here are some guidelines:

- ◆ **TAKE THE TIME TO QUICKLY CRAFT A KEY MESSAGE** -- it doesn't have to be perfect (perfect is the enemy of good!), or entirely original (expanding on a message from a group's action alert is fine) whether your own or from an action alert)

Remember, your key message should answer the following questions: who you are, what your issue is, why you care, why your legislator should care, and what you want them to do about it.

- ◆ Write in your own words and include your own thoughts.: tell how the legislation will affect you and others like you.
- ◆ Show as much knowledge as you can, but don't worry if you're not an expert: Your personal experience is the best testimony that you can offer.
- ◆ Avoid sending form letters, but if you send one, be sure to personalize it with a handwritten note.
- ◆ Don't threaten, browbeat, or get nasty.
- ◆ Write briefly, on one subject at a time, and refer to bills by name and number.
- ◆ Don't try to become a pen pal; if you write too often you become a nuisance.
- ◆ If you ask a question and don't get a reply, follow up with another letter asking politely, but clearly for a response.
- ◆ When a legislator votes as you asked, send a thank-you note.

In short, an effective letter would deliver your key message and include:

- ◆ **Who you are** (*I am a voter in your district, and I belong to the 350-member Association of Pizza-Eating Voters....*)

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- **Your brief description of the bill (your issue) and what it will do** (*We are writing to ask your support of House Bill 1234 when it comes before your Committee. This bill would require all public feeding programs – e.g., school lunch, senior citizen – to serve pizza three times a week.*)
- **Why you care** (*My child frequently skips what's offered for lunch at his school, but he always eats pizza. The more pizza offered, the more I can be confident that he will eat.*)
- **Why they should care** (*Pizza can be an appealing and cost-effective way to meet the nutrition needs of children and seniors in our district.*)
- **Who else supports it** (*This bill is supported by a broad coalition of pizza makers, tomato growers, sausage producers, and the local Weight Watchers....*)
- **What you want done again, in slightly different words** (*Please make this possible, by voting for HB 1234 in Committee and again later on the House Floor....*)
- **Your name, address, and telephone number** (*Please feel free to contact us; we would be happy to answer any questions or be of other assistance to you in this matter.*)

During the legislative session, letters should be sent directly to Olympia, and may be addressed:

Senator (or Representative) _____
State Capitol
Olympia, WA 98504

When legislators are not in Olympia, you can still send letters to them in Olympia, but delivery will be quite delayed as the letters get forwarded to district offices. Better yet, call the Legislative Hotline (800.562.6000) or the Bill Room at (360.786.7573) to get your legislators' district mailing addresses.



CHILDREN'S ALLIANCE
A Voice for Washington's Children, Youth & Families

Meeting with your Legislator in the off-season

Personal visits are a highly effective way of helping legislators understand your position or program. Legislators welcome visits from constituents. They want you involved, even though they are busy people. Legislators are more available and are better able to keep appointments when the legislature is not in session, so visits during this time are critical.

Residents of Washington have three state legislators: one state senator and two state representatives. Generally, they represent fairly small geographic areas (smaller than your federal congressional district) and they want to get to know the people and the programs they represent. If you do not know who your legislators are, call your local county elections office or the legislative hotline at 1-800-562-6000.

Flexibility is always important when making appointments with legislators. Be as flexible as possible when scheduling your meeting. Try to remove any barriers such as time and place. For example, if your legislator can only meet with you briefly on his/her way to a speaking engagement-- take this opportunity. Be prepared for schedule changes; do not take these changes personally, this is just how it is. Please remember that time is a valuable commodity to legislators. So with all contacts, be brief, be specific and be polite!

Tips for planning your Meeting:

Scheduling the Meeting--

- Be flexible! Try to make it easy for your legislator to meet with you. Negotiate a time and location that works for well for them. By being flexible on time and location you will seem reasonable and have a better chance of getting a meeting.
- Make your appointment in advance.
- Be prepared for delays or cancellations.

At the Meeting --

- Be on time for your appointment. Be prepared, dress neatly, be polite and be brief.
- At the beginning of the meeting, state who you are, whom you represent, what you want to discuss, and what you want your legislator to do.
- Do not be surprised if your legislator does not know about your issue or program. Legislators have to know about many issues and may specialize in areas unrelated to your work. Avoid overwhelming the legislator with information and detail.
- If you do not know the answer to a specific question, offer to find the answer and then forward the information to the legislator.

Before you leave the Meeting--

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- Try to find out where your legislator stands on your issue.
- Leave a one-page fact sheet summarizing your points; include your name, address and telephone number. (A tip sheet on doing fact sheets is available from the Alliance.) More detailed information should be included in attachments. Again, be careful about overwhelming the legislator with information.
- *Perhaps the most critical part of your visit* — Ask your legislator for some sort of commitment, some way that they would like to help you.

You will have to gauge their interest at that moment:

- Are they being polite, but non-committal? How about asking them if they would be willing to read additional information about your issue?
 - Somewhat interested? How about asking them to come out to program for a site visit?
 - Seem interested in getting more information on the issue? You could invite them to sit down informally with a few other folks who know the issue well (consumers, practitioners, policy analysts) and talk in more depth about the issue.
 - Already on board with the issue? You might ask them if they would be willing to share this information with other members of their caucus.
 - No matter what the next step is, you must be sure to follow-up! Ask your legislator when you can call him or her to follow-up (e.g. see if they have questions about materials you want them to read, make arrangements for a site visit, see if the other members of their caucus had any questions about the issue, etc.)
- If your legislator needs more information, make arrangements to give them information AND ask them when you should follow-up with them.
 - Try to leave the meeting knowing what your next steps should be (e.g. calling their office to set up a site visit, organizing that small informal meeting, providing additional information, etc.)

After the Meeting—

- Follow up the meeting with a thank you note, thanking the legislator for his or her time. Be sure to re-state your position in this note.
- If the legislator asks for more information, please get this information to them. If you need help responding to questions, call the Children's Alliance.

Coalitions and Other Resources in WA

Anti-Hunger and Nutrition Coalition meets at Riverton United Methodist Church in SeaTac every third Thursday of the month from 10- noon. Advocates, state agencies and providers gather to discuss how we can shape public policy to reduce hunger in Washington State. For more information contact Shelley Curtis at shelley@childrensalliance.org or 206-324-0340 x17.

Meals Partnership Coalition of Seattle meets the second Thursday of each month. All programs providing meals to low-income and/or homeless people are welcome to attend meetings. For more information contact Dannette Allen at (206) 568-7858.

Seattle Food Committee (SFC) - A coalition of food bank providers who work together to coordinate and maximize emergency food services. The SFC combines resources for greater food buying power, and provides information about emergency food programs and hunger issues to the media, SFC members and others. The SFC meets the second Monday of every month. For more information, contact Ava Dowell, (206) 694-6722; Lorrie Johnson, (206) 523-7060; or Trish Twomey, (206) 694-6757.

Seattle Human Services Coalition (SHSC) - The Seattle Human Services Coalition is actively involved in lobbying for adequate funding of human services programs at the federal, state and local levels. For more information, contact Julia Sterkovsky, (206) 325-7105.

King County Food Coalition - A coalition of emergency food providers in King County. Emergency food providers wishing to receive FEMA food purchases must join the Coalition. For more information, contact Karen Bauman (206) 695-7542, or Lila Henderson, (425) 432-8139.

The Food Bank Network - A coalition of neighborhood food banks throughout King County. For more information, contact Bonnie Baker (206) 568-5453.

Washington Food Coalition - A cooperative association of food programs working together to more effectively meet the needs of hungry people in Washington state. Members include food banks, food distribution centers, hot meal programs and others. For more information, contact Rebecca Brislain at (509) 328-5991. <http://www.wafoodcoalition.org/>

The Food Resource Network Federation (FRNF) - A federation of five major food banks, a home delivery food service, and a community garden advisory and support group. For more information, contact, Dennis Moore at (206) 223-1774. <http://www.sch.org/frnf>

Food-Sources

Food Lifeline - One of the two major food distributors in Seattle. Food Lifeline distributes more than 18 million pounds of food annually through its network of approximately 250 neighborhood food banks, shelters, and meal programs throughout western Washington. Agencies recognized by the Internal Revenue Service as non-profit [501(c)(3)] are eligible to join Food Lifeline's network and participate in a variety of its programs. <http://www.foodlifeline.org/>

For information about Food Lifeline programs contact Food Lifeline's Agency Relations Dept. at (206) 545-6600, ext. 237.

Northwest Harvest - Central collection and distribution of food to 270 hunger programs in Washington State. Operates Cherry Street Food Bank in downtown Seattle. Distributes statewide approximately 14,000,000 lbs. of food annually to sit-down meal programs and food banks providing groceries. No needs test, or fees of any kind required for Northwest Harvest food. For more information, call (206) 625-0755 in King County or 1-800-722-6924. <http://www.northwestharvest.org/>

Fund Sources

Human Services Program (HSP) and General Funds - City of Seattle funding for human services programs, including emergency food programs. For more information, contact Fe Arreola, (206) 684-0281.

Emergency Food Assistance Program (EFAP) - State funds which are allocated to food banks through Food Resources. A portion is retained by Food Resources to make food purchases for Seattle Food Committee members, to cover administrative expenses, and to provide transportation of food to food banks. For more information, contact Trish Twomey, (206) 694-6757. <http://www.ocd.wa.gov/factsheets/community/food.htm>

Seattle Employees Food Fund - An automated payroll deduction system for City of Seattle employees. The City of Seattle sends the annual contributions to the Church Council of Greater Seattle. Half of the monies donated go to the Emergency Feeding Program; the other half goes to Food Lifeline to make bulk food purchases. For more information, contact Fe Arreola, (206) 684-0281.

Federal Emergency Management Act (FEMA) - Federal funds which go to Food Lifeline to purchase food and paper/plastic products. To be eligible to receive FEMA purchases, emergency food programs must meet specific eligibility requirements. For more information, contact Trish Twomey, (206) 694-6757. <http://www.fema.gov/>

**Source: Food Lifeline: www.foodlifeline.org*