In Fall of 2012, members of the Placer Collaborative Network came together to talk about food access in Placer County. A task force was formed and met monthly to learn about the system and identify areas where improvements could be made to strengthen our system and help families have access to healthy food.

What we learned about our community

In Placer County, over 43,000 (1 in 8 individuals) are food insecure, which means they do not know where they will get their next meal. The root cause of hunger in our county is the cost and availability of food. There are “food deserts” located in central Roseville, Lincoln and in northern Auburn. A food desert is where low income families in urban areas do not have access to a supermarket or large grocery store within one mile of their residence.

Applications for food and nutrition assistance (CalFresh/food stamps) increased approximately 200% in Placer County since 2008, yet 58% of income eligible families don’t participate in the program. In FY2013, the Placer Food Bank distributed nearly 6.1 million pounds of food to more than 60 agencies that fed over a half million people.

The hungry in our county are hard-working adults, children and seniors who simply can’t make ends meet. Many are forced to choose between paying for rent, medicine or transportation and buying food. They may miss daily meals or go without food for days. (Continued on next page)
What we learned about our community (continued)

As economic times change, so does the use of food banks and their agencies. What was previously an emergency network created to provide food to people in short-term need has become a regular part of the coping mechanisms people employ to access enough food. In Food Banks: Hunger’s New Staple Study\(^1\), Feeding America research suggests that food from pantries is not just being used to meet temporary acute food needs – instead, for the majority of people seeking food assistance, pantries are now a part of households’ long term strategies to supplement monthly shortfalls in food.

How food donations are mobilized

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**Donations**
- Feeding America
- Food retailers
- Manufacturers
- Growers
- USDA
- Food drives

**Placer Food Bank**
- Weigh
- Sort
- Pack
- Distribute

**Partners**
- Food closets
- Food pantries
- Youth programs
- Faith-based groups
- Senior programs
- Rehabilitation Centers

**The Hungry**
- Working families
- Senior citizens
- Children
- Single parents
- Unemployed
- Disabled
- Homeless

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What assistance can be provided to the 60+ feeding organizations in Placer County?

In May 2013, the task force of Placer Collaborative Network developed a survey of food-providing organizations. These agencies pick up food from the Placer Food Bank at least one time per year, and the majority of them work with the Placer Food Bank weekly. The intent of the survey was to determine how food providing organizations are currently faring in terms of their regular operation and to ascertain what they need to better serve their clients. The survey was sent to 65 organizations and twenty three replied, yielding a 35% response rate. Participants identified specific areas of training that were of interest and answered several open ended questions about their needs. To obtain a copy of the complete survey results send an inquiry by email to: info@placercf.org

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Participating Organizations

- Abundant Life Fellowship
- Auburn Adventist Community Services
- Auburn Interfaith Food Closet
- Calvary Chapel Georgetown Divide Food Ministry
- Castle City Mobile Home Park
- Courage House/ Courage to be You, Inc.
- Elijah’s Jar Food and Clothes Closet
- First United Methodist Church
- Hope, Help, and Healing
- Interfaith Food Ministry of Nevada County
- Koinonia Homes for Teens
- Metro Calvary Church
- Placer Food Bank
- Project MANA
- Rhema Christian Center
- North Roseville REC Center
- Sierra First Baptist Church
- Sierra Reach Ministries Food and Clothing Closet
- Society of St. Vincent de Paul
- Salvation Army Roseville
- The Salt Mine
- Victory Outreach
- West Park Fellowship

Programming and Supplies

- All rely on donations
- 10 are not currently doing CalFresh outreach
- 8 purchase from Placer Food Bank
- 6 are growing and/or interested in growing their own food in community gardens
- Need more fresh produce (6), dairy (4), and meat (3)
- Many are in need of more refrigeration

A quick overview of their responses

**Staffing**
Responding groups were split almost equally between all volunteer and organizations with paid staff and nearly half of respondents list a church as at least one source of volunteers.

![Staffing Pie Chart]

11 are volunteer and 12 are paid staff.

**Location**
11 are in a faith based location, 12 are housed in privately owned or leased buildings.

![Location Pie Chart]

11 in faith-based and 12 in community centers or other facilities.
Training and Network Needs

To address these topics of interest trainings and networking opportunities will be provided in the coming year by Placer Community Foundation, First 5 Placer, Placer Collaborative Network, Placer Network of Care, Placer Food Bank and Placer Food Closet Collaboration.

Many organizations consider themselves well-versed in SNAP/CalFresh outreach, client intake and tracking, facility maintenance and financial management.

Other Comments

“We do our best to give well rounded meal choices in our bags.”
“We grow as cold storage becomes available. We welcome more!”
“We have volunteers step up as called by the Lord. We serve the number of people there at the time until we are finished.”
“We try our best. We could use more peanut butter for families and our homeless clients. Our budget is tight so we can’t always afford peanut butter. “We need shelter for the homeless.”

Opportunities identified for feeding organizations:

• Acquire mobile food distribution trucks that offer healthier selections for areas with little or no access to fresh and healthy foods and for agencies already distributing food
• Change distribution to include more nutritious options
• Educate food closet visitors on how to use healthy foods in everyday cooking
• Encourage Family Resource Centers to assist with more outreach to low income families on the distribution centers in their neighborhoods
• Adopt “Choose My Plate” guidelines
• Register for Network of Care
• Participate in Placer Collaborative Network activities to network with other service providers
• Participate in Placer Food Closet Collaboration
• Participate in trainings offered by Placer Community Foundation, First 5 Placer and Placer Food Bank
Other Recommendations

A community outreach campaign is needed to explain that monetary donations can be better than direct food donations as the food bank and food closets can purchase more food in bulk at a better price than individuals are able to purchase independently.

Create a food insecurity map (potential partnership with UC Davis Center for Regional Change) to identify pockets of need in our community and to pinpoint where services are currently being offered.

Develop a community knowledge series on different focus areas including food deserts, children’s, seniors and homeless issues.

Utilize the Food Access widget on the Placer County Network of Care. The Food Access widget was one of the first products of the task force. The widget gives access to a variety of information regarding access to food in Placer County. Users can locate more than 20 food pantries, find a local farmers market, or find out about supplemental income programs that will promote access to affordable foods. Additionally, users can utilize a variety of tools to make better informed meal decisions, such as healthy eating tips, ensuring children develop good eating habits, and healthy meal planning worksheets. Learn more at http://www.placer.networkofcare.org/food

The holiday season is when the food bank and food closets receive the most donations. Consider having a Christmas in June event to encourage donations mid-year.

Thank you to the following people who served on the Food Access Task Force and were involved in survey development, analysis and recommendations:

Sandy Bassett, President, Auburn Interfaith Food Closet
Veronica Blake, CEO, Placer Community Foundation
Sue Bordelon, Placer Sustain
Robert Bradshaw, Community Liaison, Placer County Office of Education/First 5 Placer County
Cheryl Davis, Placer County Health and Human Services
Cindy Fake, UC Cooperative Extension, Placer & Nevada Counties
Janice LeRoux, Executive Director, First 5 Placer County
Robyn Krock, Project Manager, Valley Vision
Dan Macon, UC Cooperative Extension, Placer & Nevada Counties
Dave Martinez, Executive Director, Placer Food Bank
Alan Osterstock, Program Director, Placer Food Bank
Gerry Paulsen, Volunteer, Community Media
Mylan Ton, Placer County Network of Care

Placer Food Closet Collaboration (PFCC)
Meeting Dates/Times:
First Month of the Quarter, 3rd Friday, at 9:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. at the Seventh Day Adventist Church in Auburn
Contact: Sandy Bassett, PFCC Chair slbassett@att.net 530-878-9324
Anyone who is interested in food closet or feeding agency issues may join the PFCC and the Yahoo group.
It includes organizations in Placer, Nevada and El Dorado Counties.
(continued on next page)
Thank You (continued)

Placer Collaborative Network (PCN)
The Placer Collaborative Network Project is a member-based association of over 60 non-profit, government, faith-based, educational and municipal entities working on collaborative solutions to issues facing children, adults and families of Placer County. The Placer Collaborative Network is fiscally sponsored by and a project of the Placer Community Foundation.
For more information, including a schedule of meetings, visit www.placercollaborativenetwork.org

Placer Food Bank (PFB)
Placer Food Bank serves as the primary food distribution channel for hunger-relief and charitable organizations located in Placer, El Dorado and Nevada counties. They collect and distribute fresh and non-perishable food to a network of more than 50 partner agencies who in turn distribute the food to the hungry.
To learn more, visit www.placerfoodbank.org

The Placer County Network of Care
The Placer County Network of Care is a free resource used to connect individuals, families, and service providers with over 300 resources in Placer County. The Network of Care also features sections on food access (www.placernetworkofcare.org/food), providing links to food distribution points, creating food budgets, and how to eat healthy.

Placer Community Foundation (PCF)
The Placer Community Foundation's mission is to encourage philanthropy to strengthen our community. It works with donors to create charitable endowments and distributes grants. The board and staff are continually cultivating a deep knowledge about the issues and opportunities that shape our community. PCF monitors community needs and opportunities in a variety of areas, including arts and culture, education, environment, and health and human services. Placer Community Foundation matches the generosity of its donors with needs in our community.