

Approaches to Improving Nutrition through the Charitable Feeding System

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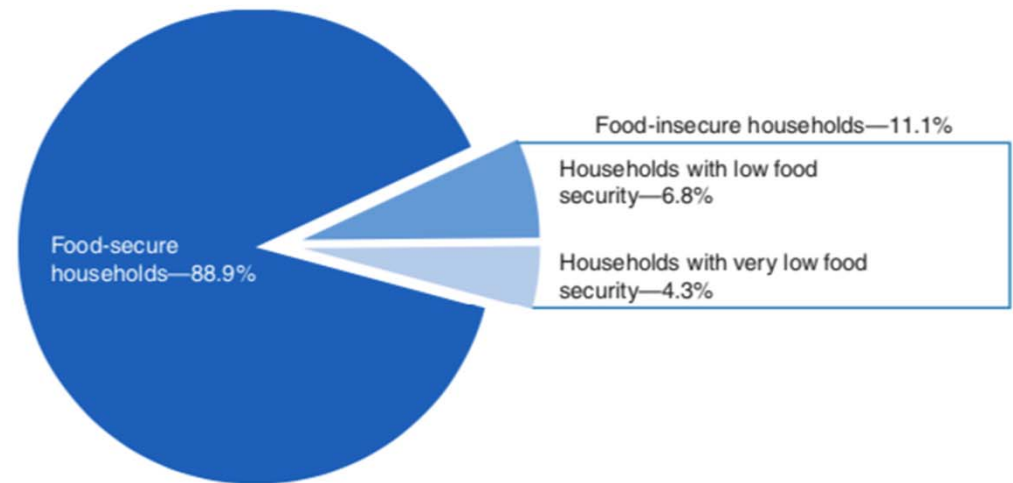
Agenda

- Overview of charitable feeding system
- Nutrition policies across the charitable feeding system
- Strategies to create healthier food banks and pantries
 - HER food banking nutrition standards
 - Regional Produce Cooperatives
 - Food pantry strategies: nudges

37 million people in US live in food insecure households:

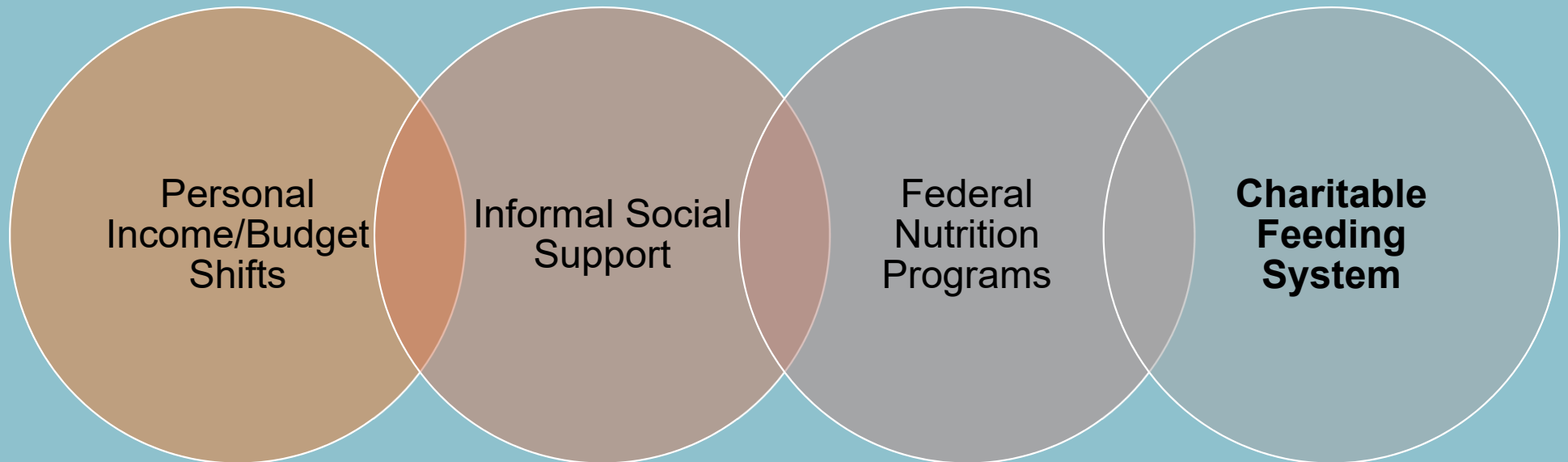
- At times during the year, uncertain of having, or unable to acquire, enough food to meet the needs of all their members because they had insufficient money or other resources for food (*USDA*)

Figure 1
U.S. households by food security status, 2018

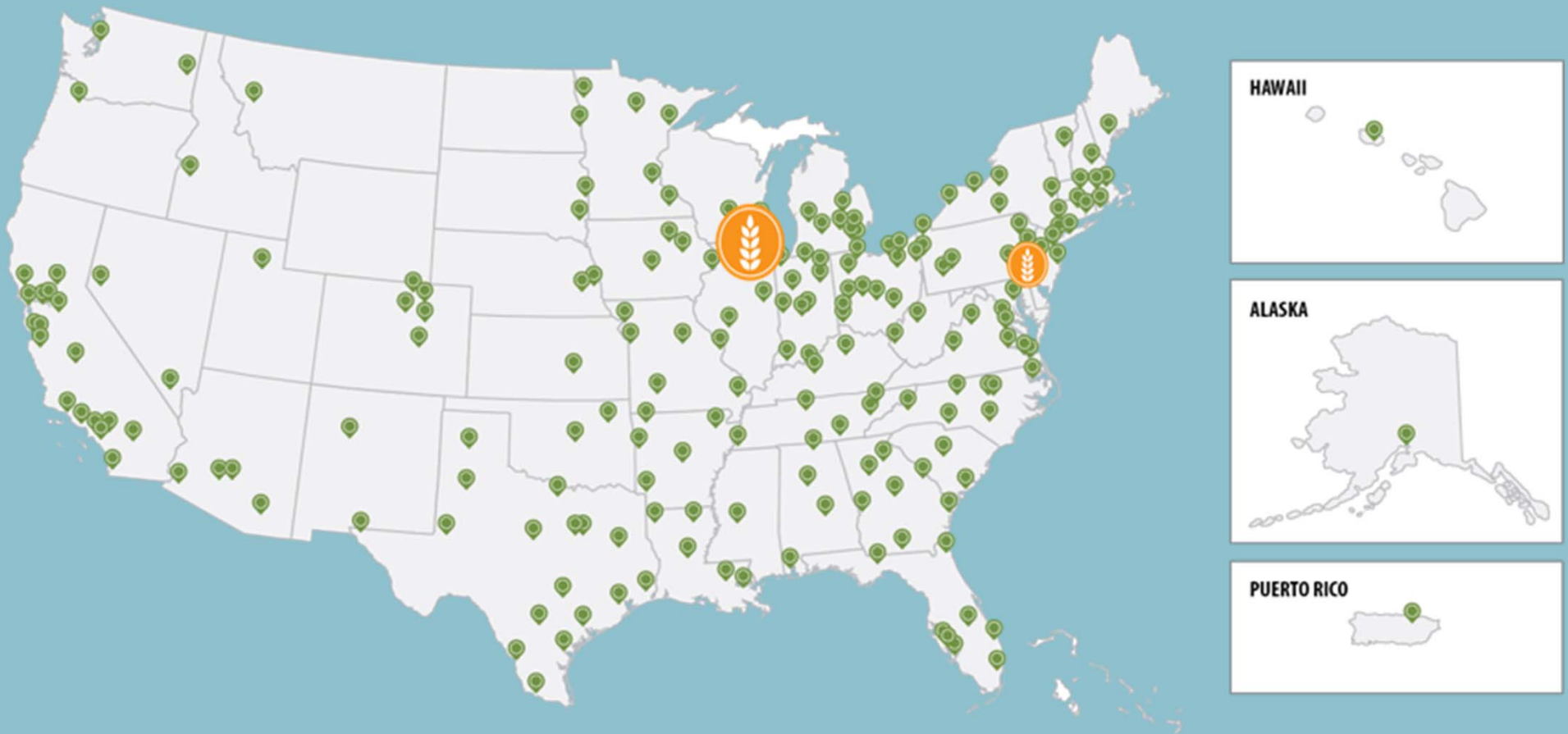


Source: USDA, Economic Research Service using data from U.S. Department of Commerce, U.S. Census Bureau, 2018 Current Population Survey Food Security Supplement.

Resources for Food Insecure Households



The Feeding America network serves every county in the U.S. through a network of >200 food banks



The Feeding America Network

200 MEMBER
FOOD BANKS

+



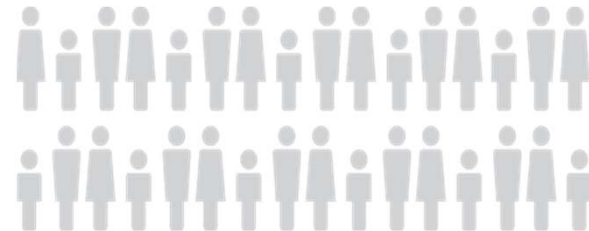
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49M

**AMERICANS
SERVED ANNUALLY**

+

60K FOOD
PANTRIES
AND MEAL
PROGRAMS





We Secure Donations

from national and local retailers, foodservice locations, food companies and government agencies.



We Move Food

to where they are needed most.



We Safely Store and Distribute Donations

at our member food banks.



We Feed People in Need

at food pantries, soup kitchens, youth programs, senior centers and emergency shelters.

Traditional Functions of Feeding America and FA Food Banks



Charitable Feeding System Outputs

- Traditional operations result in **4.3 billion meals** each year
- Federal, state, and local advocacy to end hunger
- Technical assistance & evaluation





Racks for storage of pallets

Large boxes for mixed inventory

Refrigerator/freezer capacity

Staging area for assembly of
outbound food for agencies
(pantries)

Volunteer room

Office





Traditional Pantry



Choice Pantry



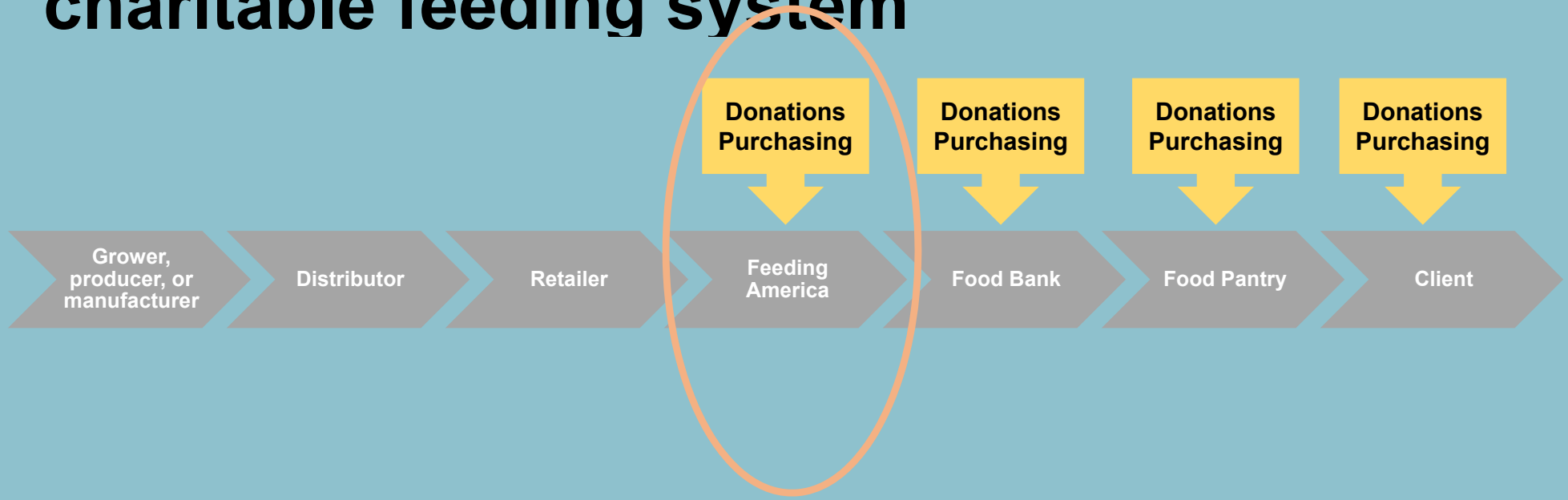
Food can touch many organizations before it gets to the pantry client



Some challenges are relatively unique to the charitable feeding system



Some challenges are relatively unique to the charitable feeding system



Feeding America: Our Goal

By 2025, Feeding America, in collaboration with our network and our partners, will ensure access to enough nutritious food for people struggling with hunger and make meaningful progress toward ending hunger.



Feeding America

Vision

Hunger Free America

2025 Goal

By 2025, Feeding America, in collaboration with our network and our partners, will ensure access to enough nutritious food for people struggling with hunger, and make meaningful progress toward ending hunger.

2025 Outcome

Improved food security

Strategic Pillars

FEED

A Increased access to nutritious food

People facing hunger have reliable access to enough nutritious food

NOURISH

B Improved diet quality

People facing hunger are supported in making healthy choices

EMPOWER

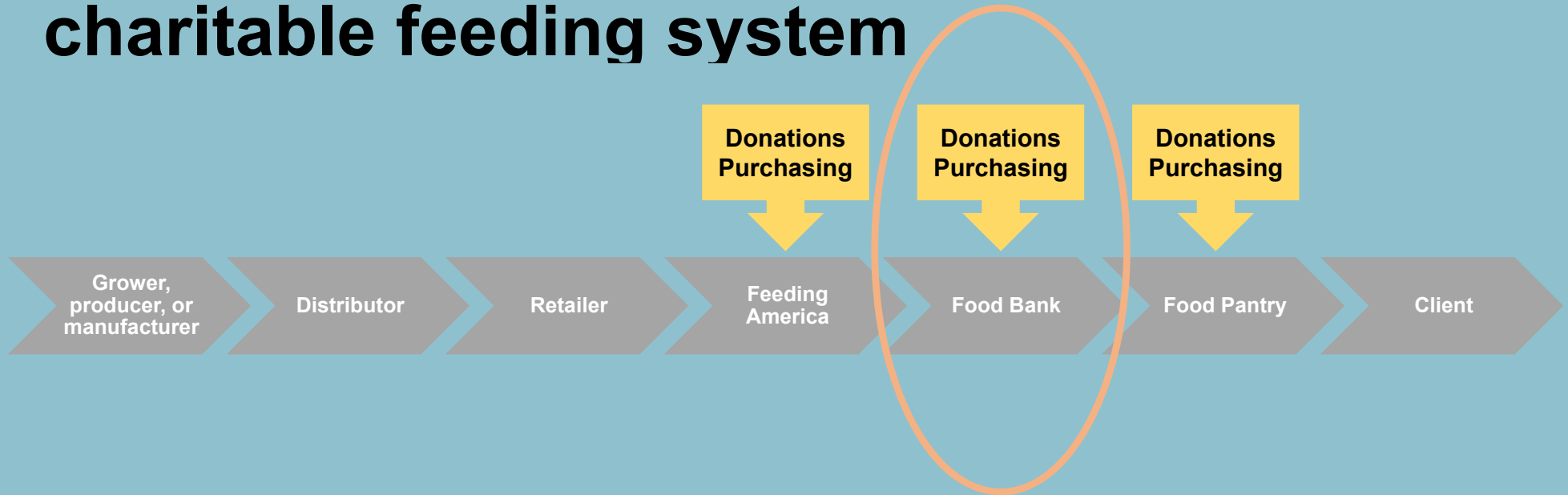
C Improved financial security

People facing hunger experience improvements in financial security

UNITE

D Increased public passion to end hunger
Hunger is unacceptable in America

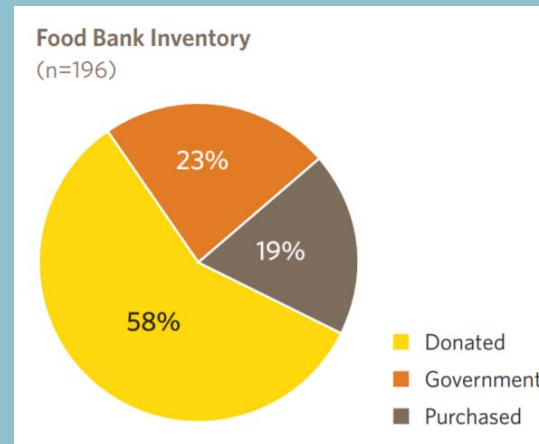
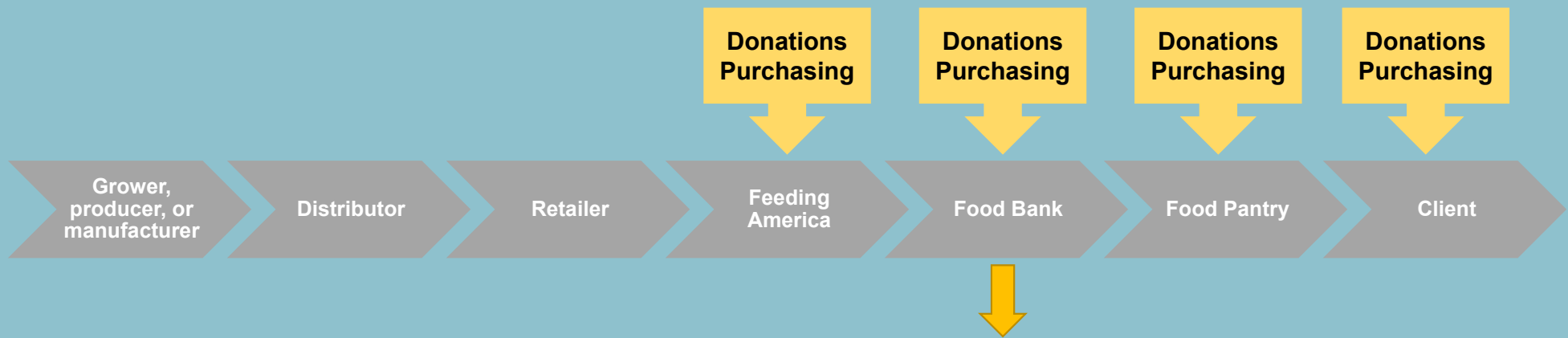
Some challenges are relatively unique to the charitable feeding system



Where Do Food Banks (Generally) Receive Their Food?

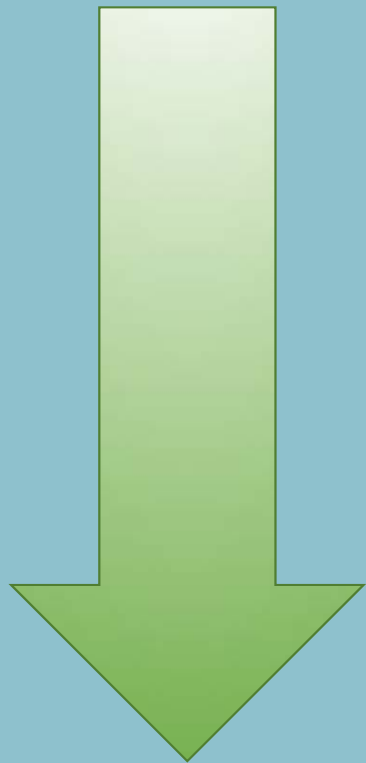
- **USDA**
 - The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP)
 - Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP)
 - *Trade Mitigation Program – 2019 only*
- **Partners: national, regional, state, and local**
 - Relationships with growers, producers, manufacturers, and distributors
 - Relationships with retailers (e.g., grocery pick-up)
 - Other food banks
 - Individual donations (e.g., food drives)
- **Money for food purchases**
 - State and local funds
 - Individual donations

Some challenges are relatively unique to the charitable feeding system



<https://mazon.org/assets/download-files/MAZON-TippingPointReport-FINAL.pdf>

Nutrition policies in food banks



No nutrition goals or policies

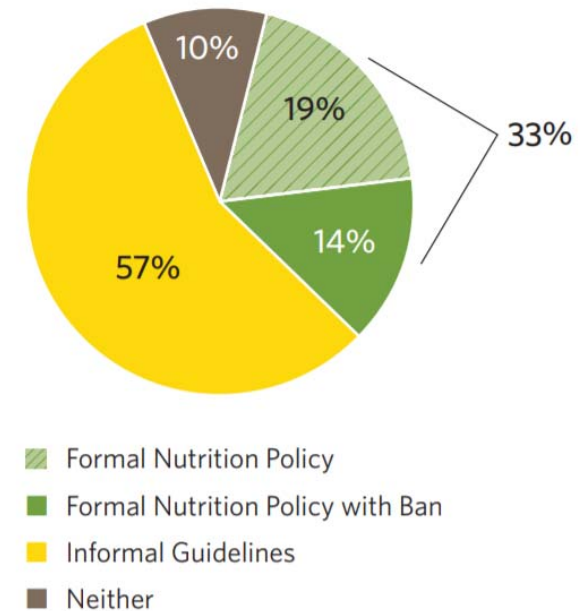
Informal guidelines: operating plan goal for food sourcing

Informal guidelines: Budget resource allocation (staffing & purchasing)

Formal nutrition policy

Formal nutrition policy with ban

Food Bank Nutrition Policy Status
(n=183)



<https://mazon.org/assets/download-files/MAZON-TippingPointReport-FINAL.pdf>

Resource for food banks interested in creating a nutrition policy



DEVELOPING A FOOD BANK NUTRITION POLICY: A GUIDE TO PROCURE HEALTHFUL FOODS

Self-paced

COURSE DATE:
Open

DURATION:
6 weeks

COMMITMENT:
1-2 hrs/week

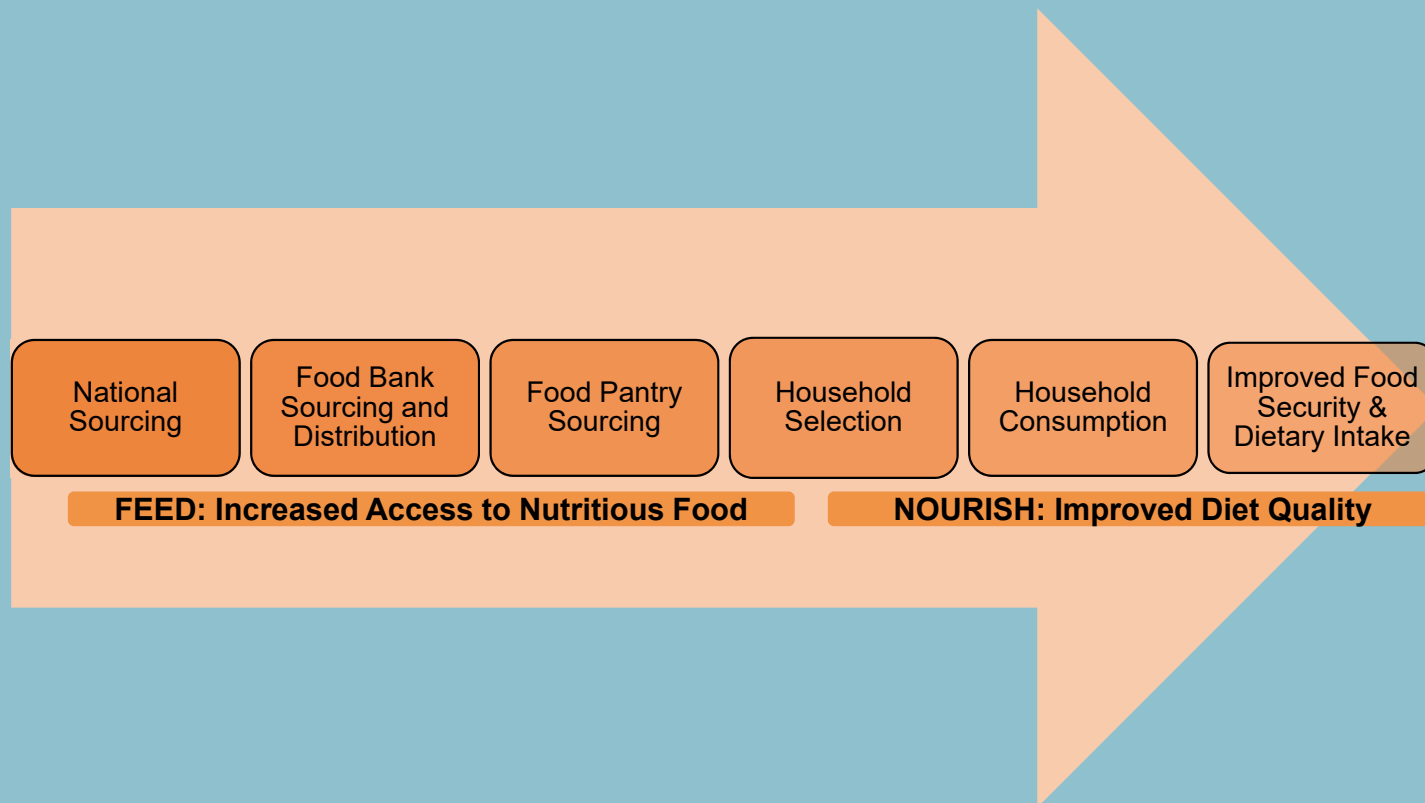
REQUIREMENT:
None

COURSE TYPE:
Self-paced

CREDENTIAL:
Free certificate

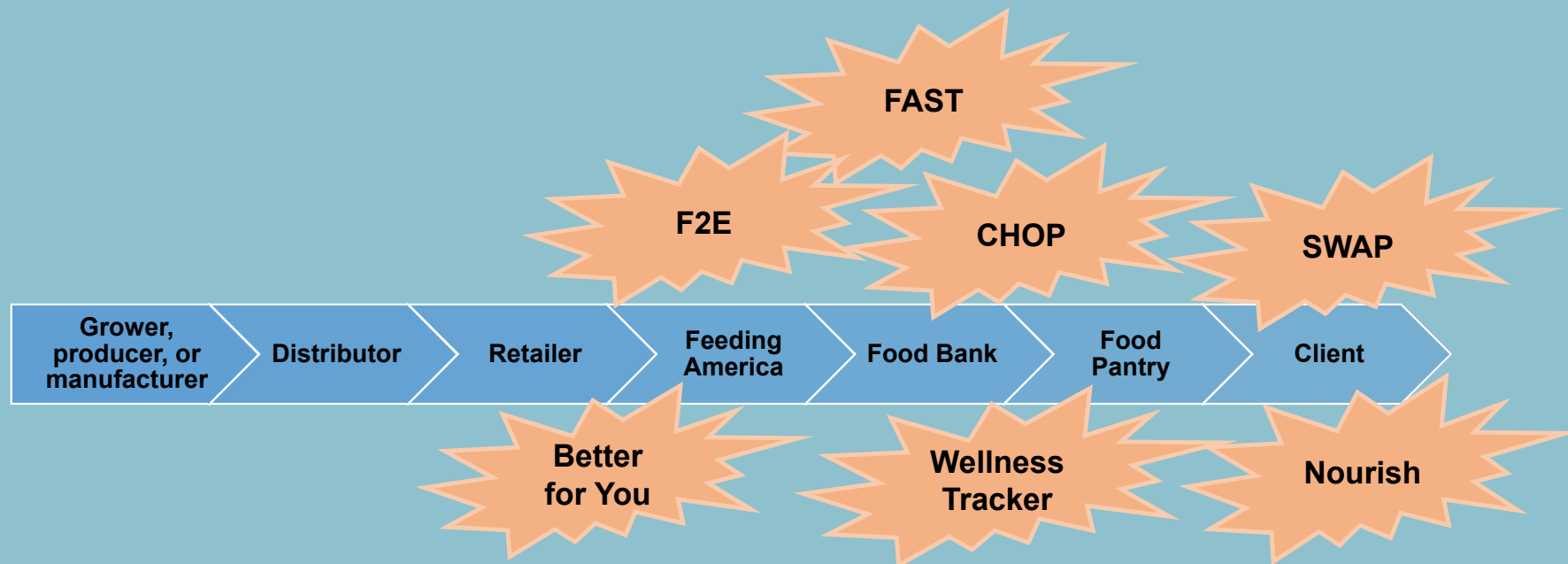
<https://hungerandhealth.feedingamerica.org/resource/developing-a-food-bank-nutrition-policy-a-guide-to-procure-healthy-foods/>

A common definition of “nutritious food” can ensure consistency across a complex continuum

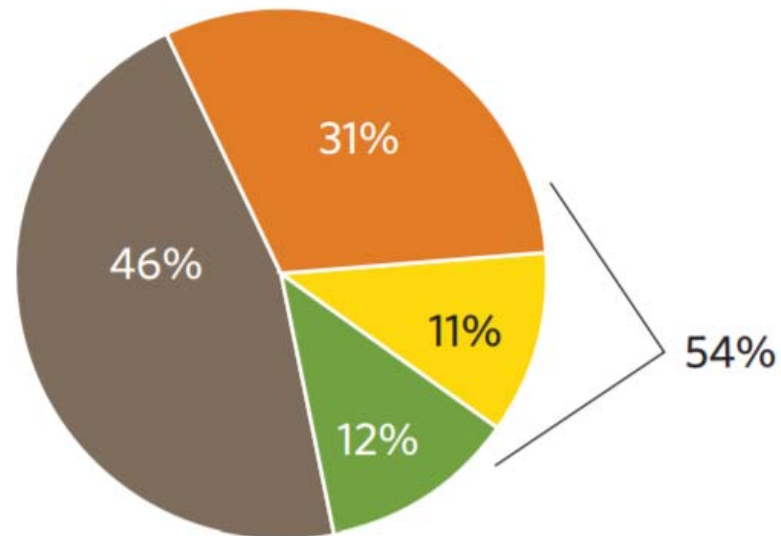


What is “nutritious food”?

No consensus on what is considered “healthy” within the charitable feeding system

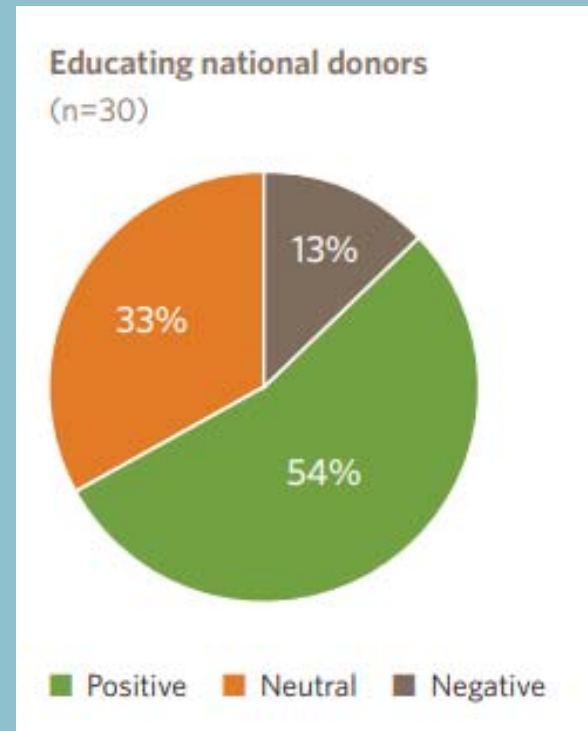
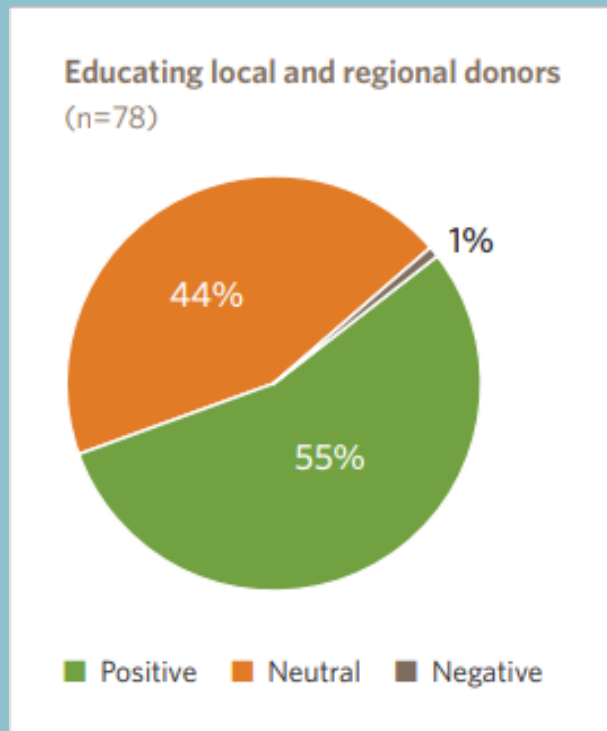


Food bank use of inventory tracking systems
(n=185)

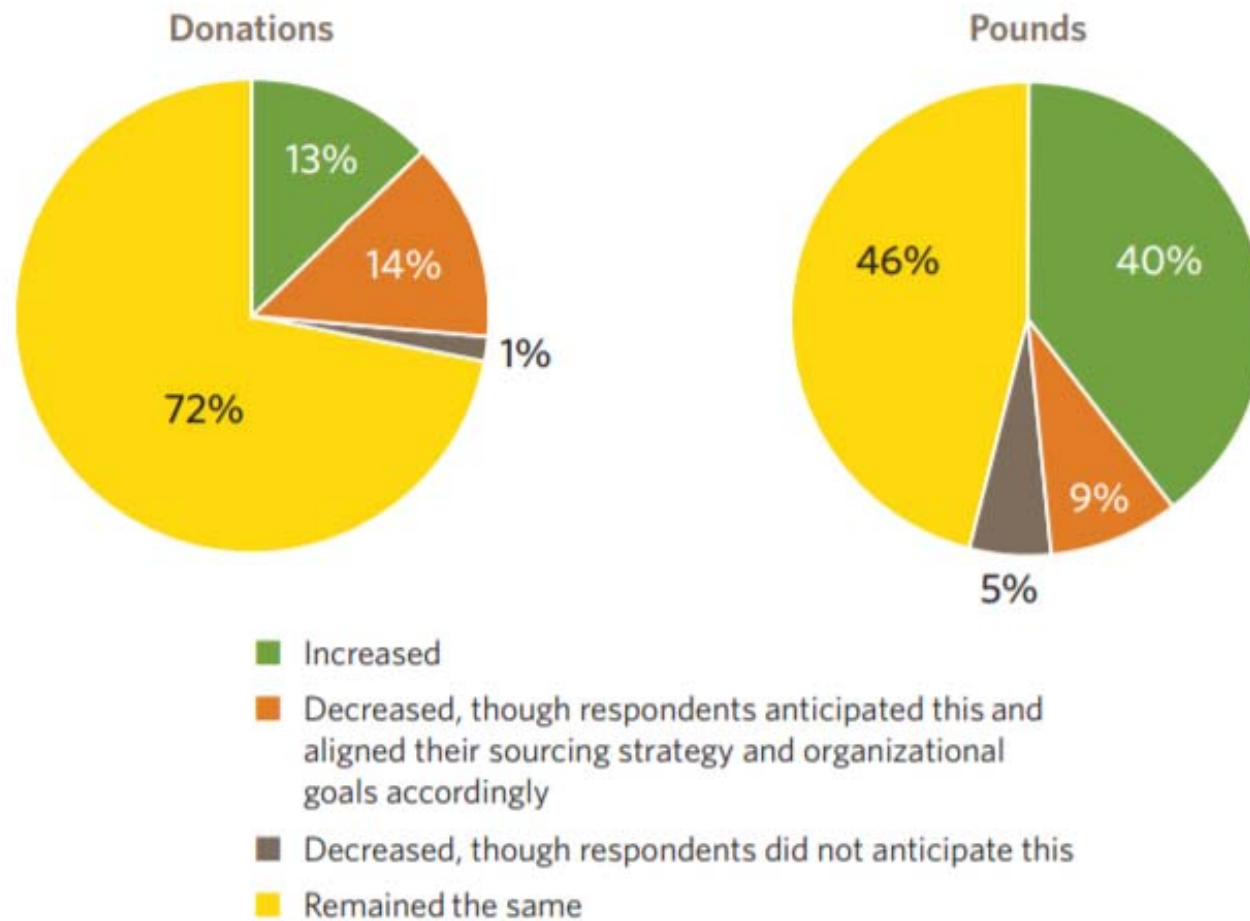


- Foods to Encourage (F2E)
- Choose Healthy Options Program (CHOP)
- Customized tracking system
- Do not currently utilize a system

Fear of Antagonizing Donors May be Exaggerated



Impact of formal nutrition policies and informal nutrition guidelines over past year
(n=139)



Healthy Eating Research Food Bank Nutrition Guidelines Expert Panel

- In February, Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Healthy Eating Research convened a panel of experts led to support the charitable feeding network on developing standards
 - Co-Chairs: Hilary Seligman and Marlene Schwartz



System challenges

- Reliance on volunteers
- Access to nutrition expertise
- Cost: tracking and inventory management, staff time, purchased product
- Mixed pallets, combination foods

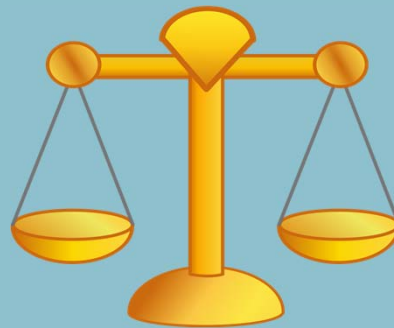
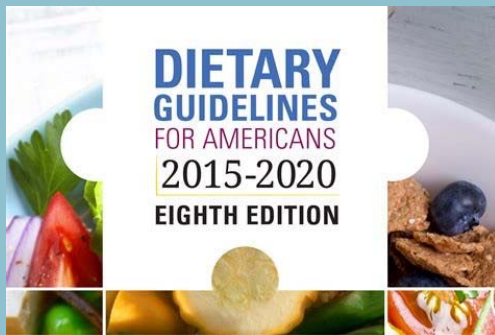
Talking about nutrition in the charitable feeding system

- Tremendous momentum and energy, but...
- Potential threats to food donors and board members
- Wide range of stakeholders; some new to the system
- Food banks traditionally measure success by pounds distributed
 - Prioritizing healthy food can reduce “pounds distributed”
 - Some food banks have no capacity to purchase product to fill in gaps
- Mission to “end hunger” not compatible with limiting access to certain food items
- Preference for slowly changing distribution mix, rather than implementing rigid standards

The Challenge

The nutrition standards must balance being:

- **Evidence-based**
- **Responsive to the complexity of the charitable feeding system**



Who is involved?

- Diverse group of **14 panel members** with a broad range of expertise in the charitable feeding system and nutrition sectors

Nutrition Guidelines for Charitable Feeding

- **Target audience**
 - Food banks and food pantries
 - Food purchasing, donation, and client selection (nutrition education)
- **Three tiered system**
 - Often (green), Sometimes (yellow), Rarely (red)
 - Can be collapsed
- **Primary focus on nutrients to limit**
 - Saturated Fat, Sugar, and Sodium

Nutrition Guidelines for Charitable Feeding

- **Alignment with USDA and MyPlate**
 - Consistent with WIC and SNAP-Ed
- **Information must be on the package**
 - Nutrition Facts
 - Ingredient Labels (for whole grains)
 - Serving Size
- **Steps of implementation**
 - Multiple “on-ramps”

Progress



Category	Completed
Grains	✓
Fruits and vegetables	✓
Beverages	✓
Dairy	✓
Proteins	✓
Mixed Dishes	✓
Processed/Packaged Snacks	✓
Desserts	✓
Cooking/baking staples	✓
Condiments	In progress

Implementation Guidance

- **Offer a tiered approach** for implementation of standards in order to support food banks and agencies with varying levels of resources and capacities
- **Implementation challenges**
 - Clients “don’t want to” eat/choose healthier food and beverage options
 - Barriers to implementation (cost, storage, reliance on volunteers, access to nutrition expertise)
 - Impact of turning away “junk food” donations
- **Training Materials** to communicate guidelines to staff and volunteers
- **Talking Points** for communicating guidelines to food donors

Timeline

- Release spring 2020
- Implementation documents, talking points, and training materials summer 2020

Systems Innovation in Procurement: Regional Produce Cooperatives

Challenges to procurement of fresh fruits and vegetables:

- Perishable
- Full truck loads often can not be distributed by a single food bank
- Sourcing may be limited in your food bank service area, particularly in urban areas
- Transportation costs

Procurement: Regional Produce Cooperatives

- Model to procure and process larger volumes of produce
 - Facilities receive, store and distribute large amounts of produce
 - Able to accept more produce donations
- Allows food banks of all sizes to receive the produce needed for their local community
- Cooperatives located in strategic locations across the country to centralize produce sourcing and distribution within in each region

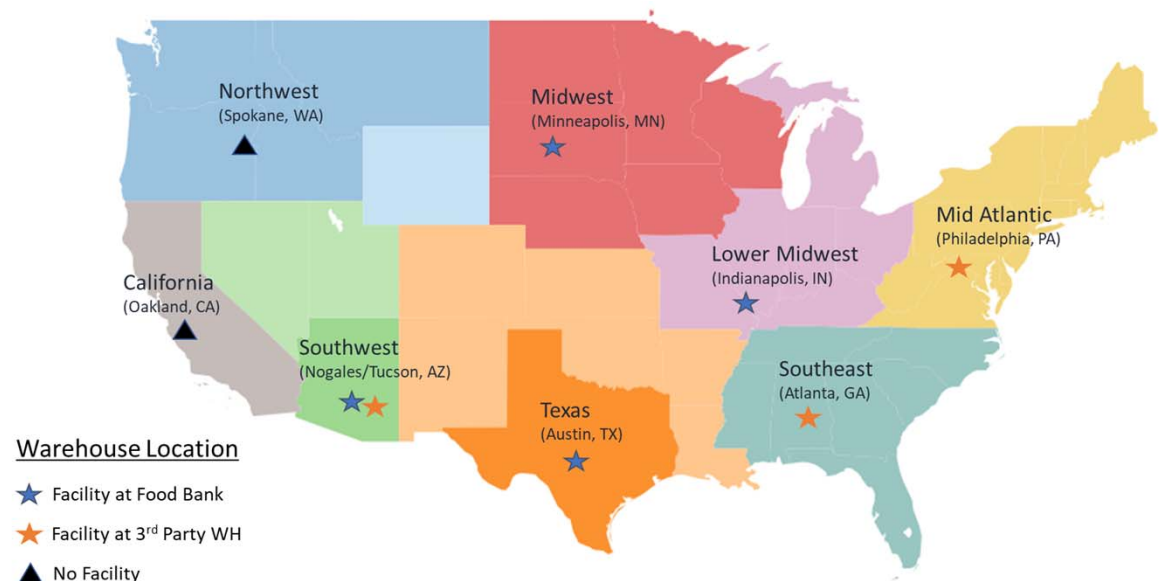
Regional Cooperatives

Within their regions, cooperatives can:

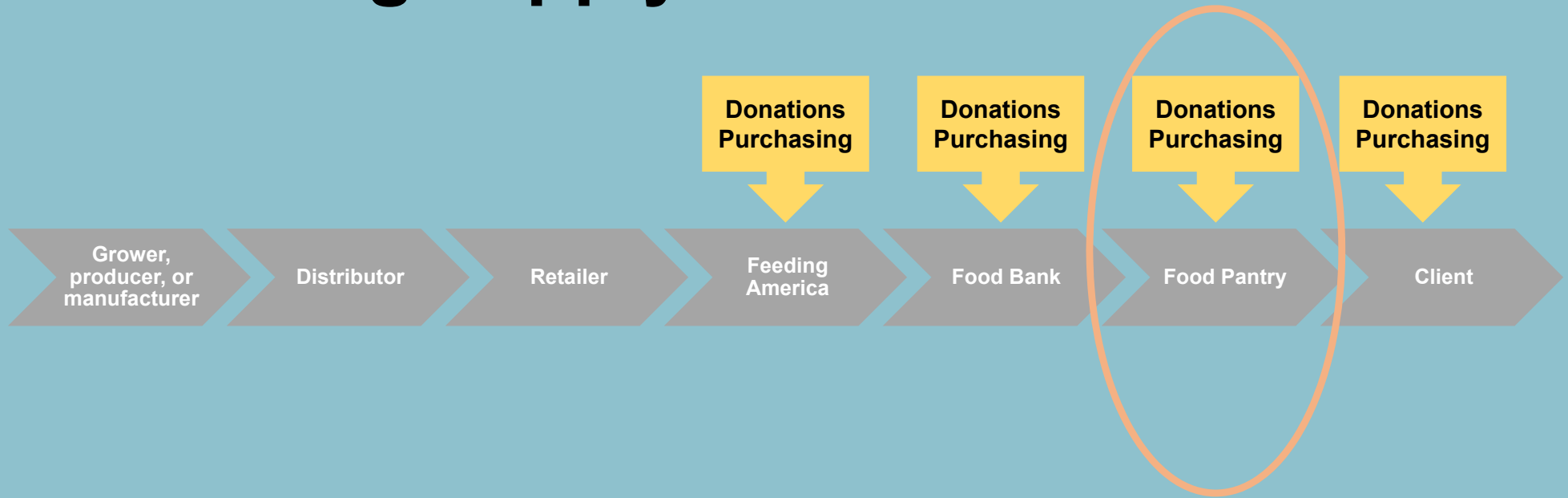
- Understand and aggregate demand to negotiate better pricing
- Convert truckload quantities into more easily handled or mixed loads
- Streamline planning, negotiating and decision making for members
- Capitalize on in-region donations



Eight Regional Cooperatives are now serving as sourcing and distribution “hubs” for food banks in their region



Balancing supply & demand



Nudges: Behavioral Economic Strategies to Promote Healthier Pantries

- **Placement matters:**
 - Attractive, organized, and full displays of fruits and vegetables
 - Healthy foods displayed first, at eye-level, and in multiple places
 - Unhealthy foods displayed in lower quantities
- **Pay attention to signage**
 - Posters displaying attractive images of healthier food items
- **Make healthier items more visible**



Healthy Choice Pantries

- Designed like small grocery and allows client to choose foods they prefer
- Emphasis on promoting healthier food items
- Incorporate nutrition education component



Thank you!
Questions?