

25th Anniversary

A stylized human figure logo in a dark green color, centered on the page. The figure is composed of a solid oval head and two curved lines for arms and legs, forming a shape reminiscent of a person with arms raised or a stylized 'X' shape.

FLORIDA IMPACT
1979-2004

From the Executive Director

I am amazed at how much—when taken altogether—Impact and its statewide network of advocates have accomplished in its first quarter century. If you were to assign a dollar value, the public funding routed to those in need would total in the millions. Hundreds of thousands of Florida children are eating a nutritious breakfast every school day because of Impact. Tens of thousands of legal immigrants, seniors, and working poor are better able to access the public food benefits to which they are entitled. And many homeless people, farm workers, and other disenfranchised populations are enjoying rights and protections they once went without.

Our organization has advocated for policy changes that address the root causes of poverty, but the immediate needs of the more than half a million of Florida’s impoverished children cannot wait. Therefore, the channeling of public resources in the short-term is an important complement to long-term change. Equity in our tax system and its public-assistance programs is another arena in which to “wage justice.”

Standing for and with the poor in the political realm has never been easy, but it’s the stage where the economic struggle gets played out with the highest stakes, the largest impact, and the richest potential for change. The injustice we see all around us reflects human suffering and wasted potential among those in poverty . . . and a poverty of spirit among those in power.

Debra A. Susie, Ph.D.
Executive Director



Mission Statement

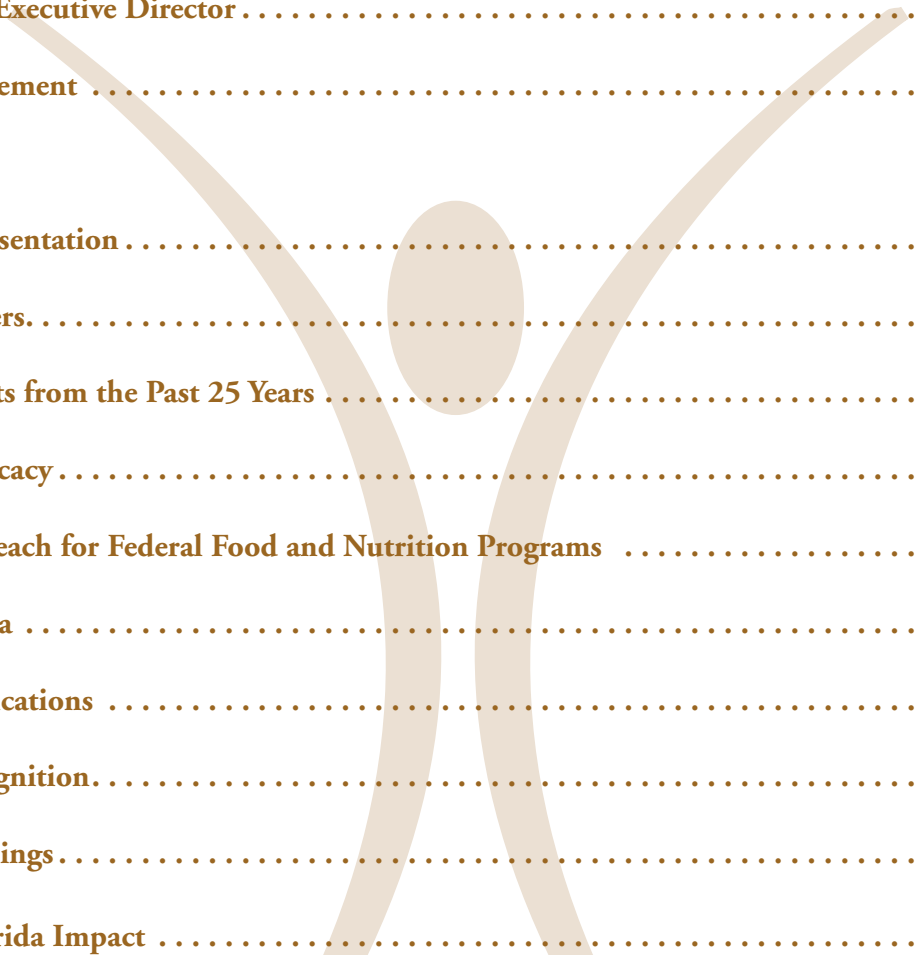
Since 1979, Florida Impact has been dedicated to reducing hunger and poverty in Florida. Our mission is to inspire and enlist the people of Florida to secure justice for and with those whose economic rights have not been realized. We also work to increase access to food programs by conducting aggressive outreach strategies and public policy advocacy.

Florida Impact Staff

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Florida Impact Board Representation

- ✂ African Methodist Episcopal Church, Eleventh Episcopal District
- ✂ Callahan Neighborhood Association, Orange County
- ✂ Child Care Resource Network, Deland
- ✂ Christian Church (Disciples of Christ in Florida)
- ✂ Church Women United in Florida
- ✂ Coconut Grove Family and Youth, Intervention Center, Miami
- ✂ Communities in Action Coalition (Volusia County)
- ✂ Deland Family Resource Center
- ✂ The Episcopal Church
- ✂ Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (Florida-Bahamas Synod)
- ✂ Farmworker Association of Florida
- ✂ Florida Association of Jewish Federations
- ✂ Hollybrook Homes Apartments, Jacksonville
- ✂ Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod (Florida-Georgia District)
- ✂ National Farm Worker Ministry in Florida
- ✂ Greater Palm River Point CDC, Hillsborough County
- ✂ Pax Christi - Florida
- ✂ The Presbyterian Church
- ✂ Religious Society of Friends
- ✂ Union of American Hebrew Congregations (SE Council)
- ✂ United Methodist Church, Alabama/West Florida Conference
- ✂ United Methodist Church, Florida Conference
- ✂ United Methodist Women, Florida Conference
- ✂ Unitarian Universalist Association, Florida District

Florida Impact's Fiscal Partners

- ✂ Creative Grants, Orlando Friends
- ✂ Christian Church-Disciples of Christ (Reconciliation Grant)
- ✂ Ferman Motor Car Company, Inc.
- ✂ Florida Department of Children and Families
- ✂ Food Research and Action Center
- ✂ Greater Miami Jewish Federation
- ✂ Hunger Free America (Entertainment Industry Foundation)
- ✂ Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod (Florida-Georgia District)
- ✂ MAZON: A Jewish Response to Hunger
- ✂ Pepin Distributing Company
- ✂ Presbyterian Hunger Program
- ✂ Public Welfare Foundation
- ✂ Publix Super Markets Charities
- ✂ Share Our Strength
- ✂ United Methodist Church (Florida Conference)
- ✂ United Methodist Women (Florida Conference)
- ✂ Victory Wholesale Grocers (Congressional Hunger Center)
- ✂ WCTV6 (Tallahassee)

Advocacy

1



The Advocacy Network

Since the beginning, Florida Impact has been committed to raising issues of social and economic justice before the Florida Legislature. Impact staff monitor legislation and budget priorities relative to the concerns of low-income people, draft legislation, secure bill sponsors, and navigate bills through the committee process for passage. Successes have come with the active involvement of Impact's statewide network, comprising people of faith, leaders of low-income community organizations, and direct-service providers.

During each state legislative session, Impact has organized and activated a statewide phone bank. At strategic times, members are asked to contact their own representatives, committee chairs, or the legislative leadership, depending on the status of a particular bill. Impact provides thorough research on each issue and/or policy, informing its members through mail alerts and educational publications so they are prepared to help generate a change via public policy.

2



Florida's School Breakfast Mandate

In 1988, there were 19 Florida counties in which children could not receive a breakfast at school—even though the National School Breakfast

Program was federally funded and already in existence for 14 years. Ironically, many of these counties possessed the state's most vulnerable children, with poverty rates higher than the state's average.

For several years, Impact fought to pass legislation that required all elementary schools to offer the School Breakfast Program, so that a child's access



was not dependent upon where he or she happened to live. In the first year that the mandate was implemented, over 50,000 Florida school children from low-income families sat down for the first time to a school breakfast. Now the program serves nearly half a million children (over 83 percent of them from low-income families),

and over 91 percent of Florida schools (including middle- and high-school) offer school breakfast.

3



Emergency Family Housing Assistance Program

Out of the state's FY1987-88 \$18 billion budget, Impact and a coalition of organizations were able to secure \$1 million for the establishment of an emergency assistance program for two-parent families on the verge of homelessness. At that time it was estimated that over 13,000 people spent their nights in Florida's streets and shelters. Thirty percent of these were members of a growing new category of homeless—families.

Federal funding for housing programs had been dramatically reduced by more than 60 percent in the previous six years. This new program, the Emergency Family Housing Assistance Program (EFHAP), provided one-time direct assistance of up to \$400 to families who were without shelter or facing eviction. These grants were most often used for covering late rent or mortgage payments or for housing and utility deposits. The state's \$1 million in turn generated a dollar-for-dollar federal match from the Temporary Emergency Financial Assistance Program.

The new program began distributing the grants in January of the following year, and the money was gone by March 1st, serving over 5,000 families. Most counties had spent their funds in 45 days. Over the next three legislative sessions, homelessness grew and so did EFHAP's appropriation level—though never enough to meet the need.

Through its multiyear campaign to keep the issue of homelessness before policy makers and the media, Impact implemented several strategies. It sent staff and a camera crew around the state to interview homeless families in shelters and public parks. This footage evolved into a half-hour documentary video, called "Florida's Homeless," the centerpiece of a statewide educational campaign cosponsored with the Florida



Participants came from all over the state to talk

Consumers Federation and culminating in a "tent city" that Impact organized on the lawn of the Capitol.

with their legislators and sleep out overnight to illustrate the problem.

The \$6 million allocation, where EFHAP's funding finally leveled off, was used up each year within two or three months. The program, however, did bring down the much-needed federal one-to-one match and acted as a catalyst for early state funding of local homeless coalitions around the state. This network of coalitions would go on to form the Florida Coalition for the Homeless, for which Impact had coordinated the first statewide organizing meeting.

4



A Trust Fund for Affordable Housing

Florida Impact was part of a unique coalition of for-profits and non-profits in Florida that sought to address the need for an affordable housing stock



via a dedicated source of state funding. This dream became a reality with the 1992 Florida Legislature's passage of the William E. Sadowski Affordable Housing Act, which established a state trust fund for affordable housing. Now a national model, the Sadowski Act continues to dedicate 70 percent of its revenue from a 20-cent documentary stamp tax on real estate transactions to local governments through the State Housing Initiatives Partnership (SHIP) Program, which allows each community to identify its housing needs and design a successful program. Local officials can

then grant low-interest home loans to people who might never have thought that they could own a home.

The other 30 percent of the documentary stamp tax revenue goes to the state to fund programs such as the State Apartment Incentive Loan Program (SAIL), which provides incentives for the development of affordable rental housing units. More than 150,000 families have been helped with affordable home ownership and/or rental so far. The Sadowski Trust Fund boosts Florida's economy with money that far surpasses the state's funding for housing by effectively combining private investment with public dollars at a ratio of 7:1. For every \$10 million of state funding, over 700 units are built, rehabilitated, and/or sold to first-time homebuyers; and over 1,500 jobs are created with a total economic impact of over \$78 million.



Farm Worker's Right to Know

Florida's Occupational Health and Safety Act required that employees be notified of toxic substances in the workplace by all employers—all employers except for farmers. In the early 90s, Impact worked for three years in the Florida Legislature to include farm workers in the legal protections that were provided other workers, especially considering agriculture's routine reliance on and direct worker-exposure to chemical pesticides.

Farm workers suffered the highest rate of toxic substance-related injuries in the nation. Studies reported an increased incidence of skin cancers, respiratory problems, liver and kidney damage,



and birth defects in the offspring of exposed populations.

Impact and its farm worker allies advocated for state legislation that would require employers to provide farm workers with printed

information about a pesticide and its potential health consequences. During this period, the farm worker organizations coordinated and drove workers five hours each way to the Capitol from points in central Florida. Organizers would return late each evening after an arduous day of lobbying and then rise again at 4:00 the next morning to pick up more workers in the vans for the trip back to the Capitol. In the last couple weeks before the bill became law, farm workers stood (often with children in hand) at the entrances of the House and Senate chambers, silently holding signs that asked for the simple "right to know."

The media's enthusiastic coverage of these actions generated daily embarrassment for legislators, who in turn transferred that public pressure to agricultural industry lobbyists to negotiate a bill for passage.

On the last day of the 1994 legislative session, the Florida Agricultural Worker Safety Act became law. Under the new statute, an employer must provide a pesticide's "material safety data sheet" within two



working days of a request for such information by a farm worker, and additionally was prohibited from taking retaliatory action against any worker exercising these rights. Noncompliance generated penalties for the employer and legal relief under the “whistleblower’s act” for the worker, including the reinstatement of a fired employee and back pay. Farm worker leaders took this victory back to the fields to begin educating workers about their new right to know.



Regulation of Labor Pools

An ever-growing number of people in Florida resorted to labor pools in the early nineties for employment. A labor pool supplies temporary workers to businesses under contract. This group was primarily male, always poor, and quite often homeless. It was estimated that in the Miami, Orlando, Jacksonville, and St. Pete areas alone, labor pools were hiring 5,000 to 6,000 workers daily. Unlike the traditional hiring halls operated by craft guilds, however, labor pools offered all the advantages to the employer with minimal protection and benefits to the workers. Contracted with a labor pool, employees did not receive paid leave for vacation, illness, or religious holidays or any type of health insurance. Labor pools represented a relatively new industry in

Florida, enjoying tremendous growth but virtually no regulation.

Consequently, reports of abuses began to surface, particularly among the homeless. There were frequent complaints of pay shortages, and some workers were paid with vouchers that were only redeemable at the labor pool or a designated bar or grocery store. Often no deductions were made for social security or taxes, while deductions for transportation, equipment, or uniforms were. Sometimes businesses subjected workers to hazardous conditions without proper safety equipment, and injured employees were told that they were not covered by workers’ compensation although deductions for workers compensation had been taken from their pay.

It was in 1995 that Impact and Florida Legal Services (FLS) won the Labor Pool Act, a law that offered workers several rights and protections. Labor pools could no longer charge workers for safety equipment, clothing, etc.; or more than the prevailing rate for public transportation to or from the work site or for cashing a worker’s check. Like



other workers, day laborers were to be paid at or above the minimum wage and compensated with cash or check, along with

an itemized statement of federal and state tax deductions. Other protections relative to transportation and labor halls were also part of the law, and workers were provided an avenue for civil action against a labor pool in violation of these provisions.



Bill for Environmental Justice

Around 1:00 a.m., in the last five minutes of the 1994 Florida Legislature, Impact and its ally, the Legal Environmental Assistance Fund (LEAF), celebrated the passage of the Environmental Equity and Justice Act. This legislation created a commission to examine and determine the disproportionate concentration of environmental hazards in Florida’s low-income communities. The 17-member commission was charged with assessing how the state could best address these inequities, with an emphasis on prevention. The law also required the Commission to draft model legislation for the 1996 Florida Legislature that would address the findings with corrective strategies. The subsequent report concluded that specific communities were disproportionately impacted by environmental hazards and recommended that a center for environmental equity and justice be established. This was funded by the Legislature in 1998 and established as the Center for Environmental Equity and Justice (CEEJ) at Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University within its Environmental Sciences Institute. CEEJ provides research relative to enforcement, evaluation, health effects and risks, and site placement; educates and trains students, citizens, and local and state government employees through traditional media networks; and continues to serve as a statewide technical and public information resource on matters of environmental justice.



Food Assistance for Legal Immigrants

The 1996 federal welfare “reforms” restricted the access of most legal immigrants to food stamps and social security, which had a significant effect on the state, since Florida possesses the fourth largest immigrant population. Immigrants, especially the elderly and disabled, were hardest hit. Governor Chiles filed a lawsuit against the federal government, calling the denial of aid unconstitutional. During that same year, states were given the option to provide food stamp benefits to qualified immigrants who were no longer eligible for the federal program. Working closely with Florida Legal Services (FLS), Impact reacted immediately in the 1997 legislative session by securing \$23 million in state funding for emergency assistance to limited categories of legal immigrants. The new budget allocation served as a stopgap measure until the “unintended consequences” of the federal changes could be addressed by Congress. Subsequently in 1998, Impact and FLS returned to the Legislature, which agreed to establish the Temporary Income Bridge Program and fund it for one additional year using the previous year’s unexpended program dollars. Initially this program served only those legal immigrants who were 65 years and older. In 1998, the program



was expanded to serve children and the disabled as well.



State Transportation Initiative for Food Banks

In 1999, Impact persuaded Florida legislators to allocate \$125,000 in new state funding for the Florida Association of Food Banks. This money would be used to transport and store existing supplies of food identified outside the state but previously inaccessible due to the cost of trucking. In the first four months of dispersing these dollars, the Association was able to bring 46 trailer loads with over 1 million pounds of additional food into Florida with a wholesale value of approximately \$1.8 million. These products were distributed through the Association's fourteen community food banks.

In 2000, Impact went back to the Legislature and secured another \$200,000 for the food bank transportation fund. And this time, 20 percent of the allocation was dedicated solely to the transportation and distribution of food in rural communities, which affected virtually every Florida county. In this way, additional food found its way to at-risk families and individuals through thousands of direct service agencies, including churches, synagogues, rehabilitation centers, senior programs, and day care facilities.



Title Loan Reform

In 2000, after four years of collective effort, Florida Impact and Florida Legal Services won a statewide interest cap on a relatively new and unregulated industry that was showing an increasing propensity for predatory lending. Title loan storefronts were popping up in low-income neighborhoods, next to military bases, and just over the line from counties that enacted local regulatory ordinances.

A title loan is a transaction in which money is lent with the title to



a motor vehicle acting as security. The borrower keeps the car and the lender keeps the title. Title lenders repossess the borrower's car if s/he is unable to keep up with payments. Though most title loans are small and based on a percentage of the actual value of the car, the resulting annual percentage rate of a monthly "fee" of 22 percent was evolving into 264 percent—a "legal" rate that the state Attorney General's office said was higher than those charged by loan sharks. By the time the state law passed, 21 counties had approved their own local ordinances to cap interest rates at no more than 30 percent, while another 10 counties were considering similar regulations. That steady advancement of local authority coupled with an unflattering CBS "60 Minutes" program on predatory lending in Florida led to a dramatically more sympathetic environment for

title loan regulation. The bill to cap the industry's interest rate at 30 percent had compelling backers: the U.S. Navy, the state's top law enforcement officer, and, as the Miami Herald put it, "Now . . . a higher authority, God." Impact organized 20 bishops and executive officers of the Jewish and Christian faith communities to meet with Governor Bush as well as hold a news conference in the Capitol on the issue. In winning passage of the Title Loan Act, a scenario much like David and Goliath had Impact and its colleagues facing off with the most senior member of the Florida Senate and an industry that employed 13 of the state's most powerful lobbyists, including three former House speakers.



Individual Development Accounts (IDA) for Public Assistance Recipients

In 2001, Impact led the way to amend Florida's Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) to allow state block grant funds to be used as a match for individual development accounts (or IDAs). This would enable families "on welfare" to establish IDAs for saving earned income without penalty to their public benefits. Federal welfare policy had historically penalized asset acquisition by low-income families by denying eligibility to public assistance for those families with assets in excess of \$2,000. But in 1996, Congress allowed TANF block grant funds to be used as IDA matching



funds expressly for 1) postsecondary educational expenses; 2) a first-home purchase; or 3) business capitalization. The funds saved in an IDA will not be considered when determining eligibility for TANF, food stamps, Medicaid, or other means-tested programs. Once the Legislature voted to incorporate this provision into its state plan, Impact organized community organizations with existing IDAs around the state to participate in the rules developed by the Agency for Workforce Innovation for implementation.

Outreach for Federal Food and Nutrition Programs

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The Summer Food Outreach Campaign

As the school year of 1996 ended, Florida Impact held a news conference to release its report, "What I Did This Summer Without Enough Food." This sparked extensive media coverage across the state on the problem of childhood hunger in Florida, as well as the little-known federal resource called the Summer Food Service Program. When CNN aired its national coverage of the story on the Fourth of July, U.S. Senator Connie Mack saw the program and contacted Florida's Education Commissioner, Frank Brogan. In response, Brogan convened summer food sponsors from around the state at a roundtable in Orlando and

asked Impact to set the agenda. From there the Commissioner announced his formal commitment to make the summer food program a priority and contracted Impact to implement an aggressive, two-year summer food outreach campaign. In the subsequent year, and in partnership with the Florida Department of Education (DOE) and the Food Research and Action Center (FRAC), Impact published “A Recipe for Easing Childhood Hunger: A Guidebook to the Summer Food Service Program”. The publication functioned as a tool to recruit more summer food sponsors and host sites. Especially important were the 13 counties where the summer food program remained nonexistent or dramatically underused. Impact staff scheduled meetings with local private nonprofits and school personnel and also asked successful summer food sponsors from neighboring counties to come along as mentors. To address the under use of the program by families, Impact purchased computer-mapping software with which it plotted all summer food sites, operational hours, and contact names and numbers. This information was provided through a statewide, toll-free summer food line operated out of the Impact offices. Callers could dial in to find the nearest summer food site to their homes in Spanish or English. Impact distributed flyers advertising the summer food help-line phone number to county health departments and social service offices across the state. Impact also released a Public Service Announcement for the help-line featuring the Education Commissioner.



The PSA was distributed to 35 television and 57 radio stations across the state, and paid-air time was purchased from stations covering the “I-4 Corridor” (or central Florida) with a \$10,000 grant from the Florida Lottery. Impact fielded over 300 calls from 29 counties during the Help-line’s first summer with 14 new sponsors coming on board across the state. In its second summer, calls more than doubled to 740 from 54 of the state’s 67 counties. The Florida Lottery then raised its advertising grant to \$50,000 in order to underwrite paid-air time in two additional markets, Miami and Jacksonville.



13



The Florida Food Stamp Help-line

In 1998, Florida Impact uncovered an innovative way to leverage federal funds with private money to conduct aggressive food stamp outreach in Florida. The 1996 federal welfare reforms contributed to a growing confusion around food stamp eligibility. To address this, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) offered a 50-50 match of food stamp outreach funds to states that agreed to draw up a state plan for food stamp outreach. Florida declined to be one of those states until Impact entered the picture.

Impact’s Executive Director met with Florida’s Assistant Secretary for Economic Self-Sufficiency

in September 1999 to offer Impact's own private funds as a match for the federal outreach dollars. The Florida Department of Children and Families (DCF) accepted the offer, calling it a "win/win for the state of Florida."

Impact began with a \$40,000 private grant from the State Welfare Redesign Grants Pool, which also required a 50-50 match, to draw down as much in federal funding. With that initial investment, Impact developed its own automated prescreening software that could determine an individual's projected food stamp eligibility and monthly benefit level.

On World Food Day in October 2000, Impact officially opened its statewide, toll-free Help-line, through which individuals could be prescreened for food stamp eligibility in the privacy of their homes.



All Help-line staff are bilingual, and call volume has grown from the 50 a month at its inception to over 1,400 calls in less than four years. Those choosing to apply for food stamps are mailed a printed, filled-in food stamp application, a checklist of the supporting documents required for the interview with the DCF caseworker, and a voter registration card. Posters in Spanish, English, and Creole are distributed around the state in county health departments and a variety of social service organizations. The Help-line's most effective advertiser has been the county school districts, many of which print the help-line number in the free and reduced-price school meal applications.

Even USDA's national automated food stamp line refers callers to the Impact Help-line.

14



The Florida Food Resource Directory

In preparation for the opening of its Food Stamp Help-line in 2000, Impact organized twelve community food stamp trainings around the state and brought together community human-service organizations with local DCF food stamp personnel. Private nonprofits served many clients who were not accessing the food stamps for which they were eligible, so the meetings were designed to share strategies for better addressing this need.

The meetings generated the idea for a comprehensive, searchable database of local emergency food providers, called the Florida Food Resource Directory, which Impact continues to maintain at its website (www.flimpact.org). The statewide listings have grown from 750 to over 1,600 in number. Each entry—updated at least once a year—includes information on client requirements, hours of operation, and types of service offered.

The local constituent organizations include food pantries, WIC offices, senior service centers, summer food sponsors, etc. The Food Stamp Help-line staff provides this information to callers after they are prescreened for food stamps. The Directory serves those not eligible for Food Stamps or those in need of additional or immediate help. The federally funded National Hunger Clearinghouse Hotline makes regular use of this resource provided by Florida Impact.

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The Florida Food Stamp Access Project

In January 2001, Florida Impact was one of fourteen organizations nationwide to receive a federal food stamp outreach grant from the USDA Food and Nutrition Service. The grant provided funding for innovative models designed to eliminate barriers to the Food Stamp Program, especially for certain at-risk target populations. In the summer of that year, Impact used its nearly \$300,000 grant to conduct an 18-month project that would pilot the use of its food stamp prescreening software within community-based organizations as well as with mobile units.

The primary strategy was to provide full-time, in-person food stamp outreach staff to community-based organizations serving the targeted



populations. Project staff used a laptop computer to prescreen clients for food stamp eligibility and their projected monthly

benefit level. The Impact software demonstrated a 97 percent rate of accuracy. In other words, those projected to be eligible by Impact's prescreening tool were subsequently deemed eligible by the state.

Impact's community partners for this project were the Daytona Beach Housing Authority; Daystar Life Center in St. Petersburg; Emergency

Care Help Organization (ECHO) in Leon and Gadsden counties; Catholic Charities Bureau of Jacksonville; and Redlands Christian Migrant Association (RCMA) in Hardee, Highlands, DeSoto, and Palm Beach counties.

Three hard-to-reach populations were targeted by this effort – seniors, immigrants and the working poor. Over the course of the project's life, more than 8,000 individuals in various areas of the state were served. From this successful project, Impact was able to identify to the USDA the primary barriers that kept the target populations from seeking food stamp benefits.

16



The Elder Nutrition Pilot Project

In December 2001, the Florida Department of Children and Families (DCF) contracted with Florida Impact to conduct the public-education component of its Elder Nutrition Pilot—one of only six food stamp application projects in the nation.

The innovative pilot simplified the application and benefit-determination process for seniors so only a one-page, large-print food stamp application and no back-up documentation on the part of the applicant was required. All income verification (i.e., social security benefits) was verified electronically; and the usual face-to-face interview with the caseworker was waived in favor of an over-the-phone interview. Since the application could be mailed in, the pilot eliminated the need for the senior to visit the food stamp office in person. The pilot covered two north Florida counties, Leon and Gadsden. Impact's job was to get the word out about this limited opportunity



for households of those 60 years of age and older. Impact then printed and broadly distributed over 12,000 informational posters and handout cards at pharmacies, senior centers,

and other programs frequented by elders. The staff at Impact also made numerous presentations to senior groups during the two years of the pilot.

The most effective strategy was a 30-second public service announcement, featuring DCF Secretary Jerry Regier. The ad ran during the television programming spots most watched by seniors. Impact's phone number was listed on the PSA, so that the person could call in to our helpline. Then Impact staff mailed a one-page application with an envelope addressed to the local DCF office. Those who responded seemed to feel more comfortable calling from the privacy of their homes than asking questions before an audience of their peers. The PSA proved to be the most effective and inexpensive way to reach those seniors in the more remote areas of the counties. During the twelve weeks the PSA aired during the second year of the pilot, over 680 people called. Of those who submitted a food stamp application, only one or two proved NOT to be eligible for food stamps.

Media

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News Conferences and Events

Impact's effectiveness in addressing the needs of low-income people through changes to public policy and programs is directly linked to how successfully it can involve Florida's news media and Capitol press corps in its issues. No year has passed in the last 25 without Impact holding a news conference, staging a media event, or releasing a publication to bring attention to the continued existence of poverty and hunger.

The most successful news conference took place in the classroom of a group of primary school children. The students had prepared for the many cameras and reporters by building a pyramid of cans and boxes of food, in part, to illustrate the problem of hunger among their peers on World Food Day. Also visiting were the heads of five state agencies plus a regional USDA food and nutrition administrator, who traveled from Atlanta to be part of the announcement of Florida's toll-free Food Stamp Help-line. The room was electric with activity and excitement as several of the children delivered their comments on the need for good nutrition in order to learn. One seasoned cameraman said, "This is the most fun I've ever had at a news conference!" Once the 5:00 news released the story, a flood of literally thousands of calls over a two-week period began to flood Impact's Food Stamp Help-line. Virtually all of the state's media had covered the story.

Sometimes the urgency of an issue coupled with the inattention of policy makers requires Impact to stage more dramatic news events. The tent city on the lawn of the Capitol was one example. Seniors, farm workers, homeless people, and clergy came to Tallahassee from All-points, Florida, to pitch a tent and sleep outside during one legislative



session in order to “turn up the volume” on the desperate message of people without homes. One

south Florida legislator joined Tent City because he was so moved by the demonstration. The media coverage generated by this event helped win state funding for Florida’s first Emergency Family Housing Assistance fund.

Similar to tent city, farm workers brought their children and stood silently with signs outside the House and Senate chambers, asking for their right to know about hazardous chemicals at their work sites. This event led to passage of the Florida Agricultural Worker Safety Act.

The bishops and chief executive officers of the state’s Christian and Jewish faiths made two pilgrimages to the state Capitol to hold news conferences. During the first meeting, the religious leaders met with Governor Chiles to ask for emergency cash assistance for legal immigrants suddenly knocked off the food stamp program. At the second meeting they met with Governor Bush to request an end to predatory lending

practices of the title loan companies in low-income neighborhoods.

Publications

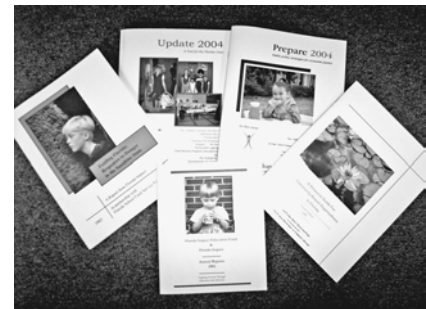
18



The Prepare & Update

Every year, prior to the opening of the Florida Legislature’s 60-day regular session, Florida Impact publishes the *Prepare*. This booklet

serves as a tool for those who wish to be proactive in addressing economic



justice within Florida’s public policymaking arena. *Prepare* provides analyses for budget and policy priorities affecting low-income families before the Florida Legislature and the U.S. Congress. A full legislative directory is included, listing all of Florida’s state legislators, their contact numbers, and the committees on which they serve.

When individuals and congregations within the Impact state network are asked to call their policymakers on a particular issue, it is the *Prepare* that fully informs the points they make to their legislators and congressional representatives. This publication can also be viewed on Impact’s website.

Another annual publication is the *Update*, circulated after the Florida Legislature has ended its regular and sometimes additional special sessions. This booklet summarizes the final outcomes and committee-level voting records of the priorities outlined in the *Prepare*.

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A Guidebook for the Summer Food Service Program

In December 1996, Florida Impact—in cooperation with the Florida Department of Education and the Washington-based Food Research and Action Center—published, “A Recipe for Easing Childhood Hunger: A Guidebook to the Summer Food Service Program.” The Guidebook outlined the process of setting up a Summer Food Service Program, using “best practice” models from around the nation. The publication became an important tool in Impact’s efforts to recruit more summer food sponsors and sites. Combined with the number of guides circulated by FRAC to other states, close to 2,000 copies of the Guidebook were distributed.

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A Resource Guide for Community-Based Organizations in Florida

Every couple of years since 1997, Florida Impact has published the popular, “*Resource Guide for Community-based Organizations in Florida*.” As part of Impact’s commitment to help strengthen resident-led, community-based organizations

of low-income people, the Resource Guide provides information on public and private grants, technical assistance, and other resources useful for these groups in Florida. Although Impact staff updates this resource, the printing costs have been underwritten by partners in several state agencies, including the Florida departments of Community Affairs, Juvenile Justice, and Children and Families. This publication is distributed to approximately 1,000 to 2,000 individuals and organizations around the state.

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The Florida Community Childhood Hunger Identification Project

In 1989-90, at the invitation of the Food Research and Action Center (FRAC), Impact conducted the Florida component of the Community Childhood Hunger Identification Project or CCHIP-- the first nationwide, scientific study on childhood hunger in America. In order to conduct the survey in Polk County, Impact recruited, trained, and hired women from low-income communities to conduct interviews in the homes of families with incomes at or below 185 percent of the poverty level and with at least one child under the age of twelve.

Extrapolating from hunger rates found in Polk, Impact projected that one out of every three young families in Florida were hungry or at risk of hunger. This translated to at least half a million hungry Florida children. Florida’s governor and lieutenant governor (Lawton Chiles and Buddy McKay), as well as other prominent political and business leaders, served on the Florida CCHIP board.

The national CCHIP model led to collaboration between the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and the Department of Agriculture to develop a hunger module for the U.S. Census Bureau's annual Current Population Survey. The Survey is given to 50,000 to 60,000 households every month and is sponsored by the Bureau of Labor Statistics. The National Food Security Measure represents the country's first formal and ongoing evaluative measure for hunger.

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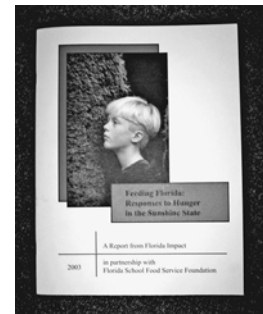


The Florida Hunger Reports

What I Did This Summer ... Without Enough Food — When subsequent new CCHIP data was released, every major media outlet in Florida covered the story. On more than one occasion, they asked for the “human face” of hunger within the local communities. Impact responded in July 1996 with “What I Did This Summer ... Without Enough Food.” The publication was the second in what would become a series of statewide hunger reports. It linked childhood hunger in Florida's counties to low-levels of community participation in the Summer Food Service Program. Again, the media picked up the story, which was featured in virtually all of the state's major newspapers, broadcast media, and rural community newspapers. This led to a national CNN broadcast on the Summer Food Service Program and a two-year outreach contract for Impact with the Florida Department of Education. This gave unprecedented attention to the summer food program and to the struggle with hunger that many Florida children had previously faced silently in the summer months.

Why Johnny Can't Eat: Childhood Hunger in Florida — In late March 1999, Impact and the Florida School Food Service Foundation published, “Why Johnny Can't Eat: Childhood Hunger in Florida”. This was Impact's third state hunger report. The report addressed Florida's high percentage of children at risk of hunger and also identified federal child food and nutrition programs for which the state had not accessed the full funding to which it was entitled. Florida was one of only six states with hunger rates above the national average, and yet it allowed \$1 million in federal food and nutrition program funding to remain in Washington. The report featured three federal programs in which available outreach dollars were not being used or underused by the state: food stamps, school breakfast, and summer food. It also detailed two other federal programs that would benefit from state subsidies: the Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) and the Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC). In conjunction with this report, Impact published a four-week religious study guide on hunger called, “When Did We See You Hungry?” for use by Jewish and Christian groups.

Feeding Florida: Responses to Hunger in the Sunshine State — Again in partnership with the Florida School Food Service Foundation, Impact published in 2003, “Feeding Florida: Responses to Hunger in the Sunshine State”. As an educational and advocacy resource, Feeding Florida focused on the state's 67 counties. The report offered data on each county's projected level of food insecurity and its use of the six federal food and nutrition programs



to address hunger. An overview was provided for each of the programs: National School Breakfast and School Lunch, Summer Food Service, Child and Adult Care Food, and Special Supplemental Nutrition for Women, Infants and Children or WIC. Strategies were suggested for greater levels of participation in each program.

Recognition

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The Congressional Hunger Center's Victory Against Hunger Award

In 2001 and again in 2003, the Congressional Hunger Center and Victory Wholesale Grocers selected Florida Impact as one of approximately twenty organizations to win a "Victory Against Hunger Award." A check for \$1,000 was presented to Impact's Executive Director, each time in front of television cameras by U.S. Senator Bob Graham and Congressman Allen Boyd, respectively. The award is presented to organizations with outstanding local, state, and national reputation for fighting childhood hunger.



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The Bill Emerson National Hunger Fellowships

The Bill Emerson National Hunger Fellowships are the primary programmatic activity of the Congressional Hunger Center. Founded in 1993, the Congressional Hunger Center's mission is to fight hunger by developing leaders who have a shared

commitment to a nation and a world free of hunger. Through the National Hunger Fellows Program,



about twenty participants are selected annually for a twelve-month program. The fellows spend six months working in rural or urban community-based organizations whose missions are to fight hunger at the local level. Participant organizations range from food banks, community kitchens, and local advocacy agencies. The other six months of the fellowship are spent in Washington, DC, working at national organizations focused on anti-hunger and anti-poverty work, including national advocacy organizations, think tanks, and federal agencies. Congress pays for the Fellows' salaries and health benefits while the field placement site provides housing. Impact has been chosen for the last three consecutive years to serve as field placements for two Hunger Fellows. Four of the six Fellows worked in north Florida's rural communities to organize summer

food sites where there were none. The third set in 2004 will conduct similar organizing for universal school breakfast pilots. Fellows are also assigned responsibilities for the research and compilation of Impact's state hunger reports and the interagency Florida Food Security Team report.

Training

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Statewide Trainings

Impact's presence in the state's Capitol is defined by the unique partnering of two groups for whom poverty is a priority: the organized religious leadership of the state and community-based organizations (CBOs) of low-income people. The latter are often under-resourced and preoccupied with organizational survival, as well as the immediate needs of their community. Yet within these groups reside leadership and knowledge of the issues that are indispensable when advocating for policies to address the concerns of low-income families. To strengthen the role of low-income leaders in public policymaking, Impact has offered the following statewide trainings designed to enhance the skills and capacity of Florida's CBOs. The Impact board identified these issues as useful to CBO representatives.

- * **“Organize!” conference, May 1996:** 100 leaders from over 50 low-income CBOs interacted with resource speakers on public funding, private grants, and technical assistance targeted to CBOs.

- * **“Neighborhood Organizers Training,” July 1997:** Featured specific strategies to further the community development and political action of resident-led CBOs in low-income areas. Over 85 people participated, representing over 45 organizations
- * **Legislative training at the State Capitol, March 1998:** Participants walked through the journey a bill takes towards passage, using two current pieces of legislation.
- * **CBO Retreat, September 1998:** In anticipation of local crises resulting from the October TANF (welfare reform) cut-offs, Impact board members listened to stress management speakers and participated in group dialogue.



- * **“Taking Charge! Resource & Leadership Training, February 5 & 6, 1999:** In collaboration with the Healthy Community Initiatives of Greater Orlando, Impact focused this training on developing resources for sustainable, resident-led community development, economic justice, and legislative action initiatives. The agenda included presentations on public/private funding sources, minority/women business enterprises, the Florida Community Loan Fund, and becoming

a nonprofit organization or a community development corporation. Approximately 100 people from over 30 organizations attended this training.



- * **Legislative Training-April 7-9, 1999:** This two-day training in Tallahassee included members of the Florida Coalition for the Homeless as well as Impact board organizations. Fifty-three participants learned about the budget process, heard speakers on a variety of bills affecting low-income people, monitored the legislative session, and attended a news conference with Florida's bishops and religious leaders on title loan reform. A farm worker leader joined the religious leaders in a private meeting with Governor Jeb Bush to appeal for help with the displaced farm workers around Lake Apopka. Another farm worker group came to the Capitol early to follow legislation on the harvesting of the saw palmetto berry, which threatened to affect the livelihoods of their members.
- * **Internet "Circuit Rider" Trainings, Summer 1999:** To help the 11 board groups network more effectively; our staff conducted an assessment of each

organization's current capacity for using electronic communications. The assessments were used to profile and price what each organization would need to effectively use the Internet, email, and software that would expedite their work.

Impact offered five of the board organizations a dollar-for-dollar match to purchase needed equipment and software. Those participating in this offer had the products delivered to their office. Additionally, Impact's staff set up the computers and provided training.

- * **Mapping Community Assets, October 22, 1999:** The Children's Board of Hillsborough County and Impact cosponsored this event at the Tampa YMCA headquarters. A professional trainer presented the theory and practice of mapping out a community's assets as a way of addressing needs and enhancing community development. Registrants represented over 40 organizations.
- * **"It's A Living—Or Is It? Organizing for a Local Living Wage Ordinance," November 16, 2000:** Over 70 grassroots, labor, and religious activists gathered in Orlando to strategize about organizing living wage campaigns in their communities. Participants heard from members of the Community Coalition for a Living Wage, a coalition that proposed the successful Miami-Dade ordinance.
- * **"Neighborhood Economic Leadership Training (NELT)", September 29, 2001:** This training targeted low-income leaders who wanted to develop skills within their neighborhoods for addressing predatory lending practices. The training covered comprehensive and proactive approaches

to individual, family, and community economic development strategies. Additionally, an innovative banking model targeted to the needs of low-income people, community development credit unions, IDAs, minority/women business models, and micro-enterprise programs were offered. Approximately 32 CBOs were represented.

- * **On Nov. 3 and 4, 2002:** Board organizations were provided with a one-hour private consultation in Orlando with Tim Siegel, formerly with the Center for Community Change in Washington DC. Each organization submitted a one-page summary of what particular challenge(s) their organization faced. Mr. Siegel advised the group leaders on steps for accomplishing their goals.

The training agenda also included a resource speaker for a model Weed and Seed program. Lt. Tony Holloway, with the Clearwater Police Department, outlined an impressive model that links police officers with the families of a community.

- * **March 2 and 3, 2004:** Approximately 40 individuals, largely clergy and representatives from the Greater Palm River Point Community Development Corporation, participated with other child-service advocates in the annual Children's Week at the Capitol. Impact arranged for additional speakers to address other bills effecting low-income Floridians. Impact staff provided a Capitol tour and facilitated meetings between the low-income leaders and their legislators.



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