

## **Attempting to Feed America: Examining the Many Stakeholders Involved within the Food Banking System**

Katie C. Pelzer  
College of Liberal Arts  
University of Minnesota Duluth  
[pelz0049@d.umn.edu](mailto:pelz0049@d.umn.edu)

UROP Faculty Advisor  
Dr. Rebecca de Souza  
Department of Communications  
College of Liberal Arts  
University of Minnesota Duluth  
[rdesouza@d.umn.edu](mailto:rdesouza@d.umn.edu)

*Food assistance in America is offered to populations that lack the access and necessary means to food in order to live a healthy lifestyle. Food assistance exists in the form of governmental programs as well as through non-profit, charitable organizations--referred to in this research as the food banking system. Even with this established network of programs, we are still seeing many Americans lack consistent access to healthy foods. The purpose of this research was to examine the many stakeholders involved within this intricate system, specifically the relationships they form with each other, with the intention to uncover certain benefits and conflicts that develop within these relationships. Through document analysis and on-site interviews with local food agencies the research conducted was able to thoroughly examine this intricate web of the food banking system. In conclusion, these findings indicate that the many stakeholders benefit more so from the neediness, and lack of rights of the food insecure clients, than the clients actually benefit from the food banking system itself. Throughout the research it can be seen that the conflicts which arise between these stakeholders negatively affect the health and well-being of the client more so than any other stakeholder involved.*

### **1. Introduction**

Food security is something many Americans take for granted daily. Being able to have consistently dependable access and resources to food in order to live a healthy and active life is considered being food secure, while those who are food insecure lack the necessary means and resources to access food (Coleman-Jensen, Nord, and Singh 7). In a 2013 survey sponsored by the USDA's Economic Research Service, 17.6 million American households were found to be food insecure (Coleman-Jensen, Nord, and Singh 7), and further data suggests the number of individual food insecure Americans may range from 36- 49 million (Schuwerk 382). The statistics of those thought to be food insecure have remained virtually stagnant with little to no

change since the annual measurement of food insecure households in 1995 (Chilton 1203). Food insecurity is not only linked to low income and education but it is also associated with poor health in both children and adults, anxiety and depression in adults and adolescents, as well as increased thoughts of suicide in adolescents (Chilton). Over 12 million American children are living in food insecure households and are “at risk for poor development and impaired performance in school” (Chilton 1203). Chilton further explores the negative repercussions of food insecurity by stating, “With more than 12 million children living in households that are food insecure, sizable segments of the population are at risk for poor development and impaired performance in school, an outcome that can diminish national productivity. Food insecurity costs \$90 billion per year in increased medical care costs, lost educational attainment and worker productivity, and investment burden into the emergency food system” (1203).

The government has established many food assistance programs to aid in the diminishing of hunger among American households. Through organizations such as Feeding America, the nation’s largest food assistance charity, local food banks are able to connect their clients to these federal nutrition programs, to better improve their access to food, and to enhance their ability to feed their families (Echevarria 2). While food shelves are a great local access to food for those who are in need, they limit the client’s choice of food and rarely provide foods that are nutrient dense being as they rely almost solely on donations (Schuwerk 386).

This research examines the relationships between the many stakeholders involved within the food banking system. In particular, this research addresses the stakeholders involved in the food banking system, the laws and policies that impact the system, the ways in which these relationships benefit from each other, conflict with each other, and impact the health and well-being of the food insecure clients. This paper will begin by discussing the methodology, and answering each of the specific research questions.

## **2. Methodology**

This research was conducted through document analysis and on-site interviews with local food agencies. Multiple documents surrounding food insecurity were reviewed and the information found was compared and contrasted with existing literature to identify common themes and concepts. The specific documents analyzed include: policy documents, annual documents and informational websites obtained from organizations such as: Feeding America, United States Department of Agriculture, Minnesota Department of Agriculture, U.S. Food & Drug Administration and local Second Harvest. This research focused on the mission values, activities, policies, statistics, process and procedures of each organization and their existing research surrounding food insecurity. In addition, this research specifically examined how Feeding America’s resources are obtained by those who are food insecure and the regulations surrounding these resources including concerns about overall quality and safety of the food distributed through the food banking system.

### **3. Findings**

#### *3.1 Stakeholders Involved*

##### *3.1.1 Feeding America*

Feeding America is the leading domestic hunger-relief organization in the United States, providing assistance to over 36 million people each year (Schuwerk 383). This organization works to secure donations from national food and grocery manufacturers, retailers, shippers, packers, growers and government agencies. Feeding America then moves the donated product to member food banks, rather than directly distributing it to the community (“About Us”). These food banks then distribute the appropriate amount of product to local, designated food shelves and meal programs, which in turn directly connects the client to the products and programs available. While each bank and shelf is independent, Feeding America acts as an advocacy organization for their nationwide network of 200 food banks and over 63,000 other food agencies. Feeding America’s network includes roughly 80% of the nation’s food bank population (Kim).

Feeding America works closely with the governmental food assistance programs distributing commodities to smaller food agencies as well as providing information to their member agencies and clients about these programs to further aid in food assistance (“About Us”). Thus Feeding America also holds a high level of influence from a governmental perspective. In their mission statement, Feeding America also strives to educate the public about the problem of hunger and to advocate for legislation that protects the people from going hungry (“About Us”).

##### *3.1.2 Corporations and Institutions*

Corporations and Institutions play perhaps the most significant role in the food banking system. Many studies show that industry donations make up the majority of the food products that are distributed through charitable organizations (Tarasuk and Eakin, “Food Assistance” 178). Ranging from huge corporations such as General Mills to local schools and hospitals, these stakeholders vary in in size, contribution, and organization. They play intricate roles in the food banking system by donating what is known as surplus foods, essentially foods that are leftover or cannot be retailed (Tarasuk and Eakin, “Food Assistance”). These include products damaged during the shipping, handling and storing phase, products affected by manufacturing errors, newer products that failed to appeal to consumers in the marketplace, and even agricultural crops that are deemed unprofitable (i.e. abnormally shaped, colored, or sized “ugly” crops) (Tarasuk and Eakin, “Food Assistance” 178).

Feeding America has each of these stakeholders listed as “partners” and divided by contribution. For example, leadership partners are corporations and organizations whose entire contributions or commitments equal \$10 million or more and 100 million pounds or more of food or grocery products (“About Us”). Some examples of these leadership partners are: Kroger, Target, SuperValu, Sam’s Club, PepsiCo, Nestle, Kraft and Kellogg's. Feeding America’s mission partners are these stakeholders whose contributions equal about \$2 million or more and about 20 million pounds of food and grocery products (“About Us”). Some examples of these mission

partners are: Allstate, Big Lots, CVS, Campbells, Monsanto, and American Idol. Lastly, supporting partners are those whose contributions aren't as calculable or as large but are still considered significant such as Aldi, Bayer, Panera and Best Buy ("About Us").

These industry types of stakeholders number in the thousands nationwide. Donating surplus foods has become a normative for these corporations and what seems like a blessing for the hungry. But how do these corporations benefit from this relationship with the food banking system? This research has uncovered how specific relationships not only conflict with other stakeholders but also benefits from certain stakeholders as well.

### *3.1.3 Federal & State Government*

The government plays a tricky role in the food banking system. From a federal aspect, most of the food banking regulations are handled by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and even further trickled down to the individual state's department of agriculture. The federal government has established many programs in an attempt to end hunger in America. These programs include but are not limited to: Commodity Supplemental Food Programs (CSFP), The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP), Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), and Women, Infants, and Children (WIC). However, while it was the government who founded these programs, it is the local food banks and food shelves that actually connect their clients to these federal nutrition programs (Echevarria 2). The government's role is strictly regulating the eligibility of the each client through forms and questionnaires to be filled out before the client is allowed access to these programs. Questions include age, race, ethnicity, number of persons in household, annual income, etc. (Kearns).

The role of state government in the food banking system is mainly one of risk management. The food banks are required to sign a contract with the state government every three years, mostly for auditing purposes (Moris). The USDA inspects each food bank annually and requires an extensive and thorough inventory count, "right down to the last can" (Moris). This is done to assure food safety for the consumer. While each food bank is contracted with the state for these reasons, the local food shelves are not and do not need to keep such intensive inventory (Kearns).

In terms of support, the government gives no funding to the food banks and only 8% of the food banks products come from government commodities (Moris). Government commodity foods are foods that the USDA purchases and makes available to state agencies, such as food banks, shelters and soup kitchens. These commodities do not make up a complete diet but are rather meant to supplement the nutritional needs of the client. These commodities used to be distributed by government agencies but now, "at least in Minnesota – [in regards to] all the government commodity products, the only way that people can get them is through the food banks" (Kearns).

### *3.1.4 American Institute of Baking*

The American Institute of Baking (AIB) was established in 1919 by the North American wholesale and retail baking industries. The AIB was founded on the principles of a study conducted during World War I that successfully attempted to combat the flour shortage by developing new recipes to bake breads using other supplements. It wasn't until shortly after

World War II that the AIB implemented the Food Safety Audit Program. At that time there was a great demand for an auditing program in the food industry and to this day the AIB's Food Safety and Audit services are considered the standard for all other food safety programs worldwide. The AIB manages risk within the distribution, production and other aspects of the food industry service by performing audits and inspections, as well as implementing educational programs ("AIB History").

The AIB is nationally recognized and supported by the USDA as well as the Food & Drug Administration ("AIB History"). While the USDA still performs mandated annual inspections, the AIB ensures that each step in the food distribution process has certain measures in place to prevent food contamination. The member food banks have a contract with Feeding America that requires them to adhere to specific safety guidelines (Moris). Thus, Feeding America has partnered with the AIB to implement voluntary third party sanitation and safety audits to member food banks of Feeding America. The audit reports then in turn, allow these individual food banks to develop protocols and practices to ensure safety within their daily routine ("Second Harvest Food Bank").

### *3.1.5 Food Banks*

Food banks are independent, privately owned non-profit organizations that collect, store, process and distribute food and food like products to other charitable food agencies such as food shelves, shelters and soup kitchens (Davis). Food banks first originated in 1967 with Saint Mary's Food Bank Alliance, located in Arizona and quickly spread throughout the United States to provide assistance to food insecure populations. The National Second Harvest Network was established in 1969 and grew to be a large network organization changing its name to Feeding America in 2008 (Kim). Today there are over 200 food banks associated with the name Second Harvest and networking with Feeding America ("About Us"). The Second Harvest network is responsible for servicing roughly 68% of all food shelves nationwide and supplies 23.3 million Americans with emergency foods (Verpy 6). Food banks are often referred to as an "umbrella organization" that serve as a centralized warehouse to coordinate the collection of donation from industries and the local community to then distribute to smaller food agencies (Bhattarai; Tarasuk and Eakin, "Food Assistance" 180). Food banks benefit from networking with Feeding America so as to receive surplus food donations from national corporations and industries. In many cases these surplus foods make up almost 75% of the product food banks have on hand (Tarasuk and Eakin, "Food Assistance" 178), whereas only 8% of that product comes from government commodities and a varying number of community donations (Moris).

### *3.1.6 Local Food Shelves*

There are thousands of food shelves across the United States that operate as local charitable food agencies, offering direct assistance to food insecure clients. The vast majority of these food shelves operate under an umbrella organization-such as Second Harvest's food banks- to connect clients to industry surplus foods as well as government commodities. In Minnesota alone, about 44% of the food distributed from food shelves is retrieved from these central agencies and distribution centers whereas about 56% of the product comes from individual donations (Verpy 6).

Each food shelf operates differently depending on the amount of people they serve, the amount and selection of foods they are allotted by central agencies, and, of course, varying individual donations. Some food shelves, such as Duluth's Chum, allow for some client choice for what they receive. Chum has a unique system which provides a "grocery list" of categorized items to the client allowing them only a certain number of "points" for each specific category. For example, a family of one is allowed three points worth of grains--7 ounces of pasta is worth 1 point and a box of cereal is worth 2 points (Kearns). The list is broken down into grains, milk, fruit, vegetables and proteins allowing for an adequate mix of selection. However, this method is not universally practiced. In many food banks, clients do not have the ability to choose their own foods. To combat with limited supplies, food shelf workers even further restrict clients' selection and quantity of foods by bagging foods for them. In addition, many food shelves offer a selection of free goods, which is typically a selection of foods that are damaged, expired, have low functional use, or "highly perishable produce" (Tarasuk and Eakin, "Charitable Food" 1508).

Food shelves originated as a temporary means to solve food insecurity, yet studies show that the median length of time clients utilize food shelf assistance is two years. These food insecure populations are thus becoming dependent on food shelves rather than utilizing them temporarily. The needs of the clients have proven to be more constant and "chronic cases as opposed to the emergency cases they were created to serve" (Bhattarai).

### *3.1.7 Clients*

Clients who utilize the food banking system are restricted in every aspect of it. From the eligibility, frequency, selection and even requests for more of different foods it can be seen that the client has little to no rights when it comes to receiving food assistance (Tarasuk and Eakin, "Food Assistance" 182). Food insecurity affects roughly 36-49 million Americans (Schuwerk 382). In addition to that statistic, roughly 46 million Americans rely on food assistance, whether through food shelves of government programs (DiBlasio). However, to access these programs and food assistance the client must be eligible. Eligibility is mainly dependent on family size and level of income. Those who make up to 185% of the national poverty line are considered to be eligible (Bello). For instance, the poverty level for a family of four is equal to \$24,250 a year (OR \$2,020.83 a month). However, since the guideline is up to 185% of that poverty level a family with an annual earnings of \$44,862 (OR \$3,738.54 a month) would qualify ("2015 Poverty Guidelines"). On average, the clients associated with Feeding America's network earn about \$927 a month (DiBlasio).

The frequency in which clients are allowed to receive assistance is limited by the individual food shelves. Chum, the local food shelf in Duluth, utilized in this study allows one visit per month and only on select days (Kearns). However, according to USDA's regulations Meg Kearns, the distributive services director of Chum, stated, "On a first visit we can't turn anyone away [the USDA] want[s] to be sure that the government commodities [are] accessible to people... but if we have no product to give out it's not going to work". In addition to that Kearns stated that if a family needs assistance more than once in a month the shelf will typically try to reason with them to see if they can skip the following month should they receive assistance this second time (Kearns). This decision is entirely up to the discretion of the food shelf workers.



The clients' selection of foods is limited by every other stakeholder involved as well. The product the food shelf has is dependent on the products individually donated as well as allotted from the food bank, which in turn are dependent on the products industry donated (Schuwerk 385), yet, these products typically tend to be non-perishable food items whereas the main request from clients and most desired products were fresh dairy items, rather than powdered, more meat products, and more fresh vegetables, rather than canned. One client expressed the need for larger quantities to feed her family. Since their amount, selection and frequency of use is limited, the client expressed her struggle by stating, "I get almost a pound of hamburger for 6 people, that's one meal, so now what do we do for the next 29 days?" (Verpy 9).

### *3.2 Policies*

#### *3.2.1 The Bill Emerson Good Samaritan Food Donation Act*

This law was passed in 1996 by President Bill Clinton. It was implemented to protect any food donor acting in good faith from liability should the product donated cause any harm to the consumer. All individuals, corporations, partnerships, organizations, wholesalers, retailers, restaurateurs, caterers, farmers, and nonprofit agencies are specifically protected by this law (U.S. House). This law diminishes the donors' responsibility for the health and safety of the products they choose to donate. "Food banks thus provide a legitimate, economical, and "environmentally friendly" means for food corporations to dispose of unsaleable products, while promoting the image of good citizenship" (Tarasuk and Eakin, "Food Assistance" 178).

The Act specifically defines the term "apparently wholesome food" as "food that meets all quality and labeling standards imposed by Federal, State, and local laws and regulations". While the quality of the food is subjective, labeled foods must include information regarding even though the food may not be readily marketable due to appearance, age, freshness, grade, size, surplus, or other conditions". After this law was passed in 1996, food banks-such as America's Second Harvest-experienced an increase in donations of nearly 90 million pounds of food that following year (Van Zuiden).

#### *3.2.2 Current Tax Law: Internal Revenue Code/ Section 170:*

Laws involving tax incentives for donors have been drafted and recreated multiple times within state and federal government. Many businesses although protected from liability through the Good Samaritan Law, were still hesitant to donate to charities simply because they could not afford to offset the costs claiming that it takes "management, commitment and money to properly save excess foods for donation to hunger agencies" (Internal Revenue Code). Originally the law was drafted so that the donors would receive full market value for their products. However, in 1960 section 170 was finally drafted to decrease that amount. The Senate had concerns about particular situations where the tax benefits were so large that charitable motivation was unclear (Van Zuiden). This final draft allowed for nearly half of the products market value to be tax deductible as well as stating that "a corporation's charitable contribution for any given year may not exceed 10% of the corporation's taxable income" but should that contribution exceed 10% the remainder is allowed to be carried over for the next five years (Van Zuiden). An example of this would be:

“Morris Corporation has charitable contribution carryovers of \$12,000 from 2007 and \$8,000 from 2008. During 2009, Morris has taxable income of \$400,000 before considering charitable contributions of \$26,000. In determining its taxable income for 2009, Morris will first deduct the \$26,000 current-year contributions, then the \$12,000 carryover from 2007, and then \$2,000 from 2008 (to total \$40,000, the 10% of taxable income limit, as explained below). Thus, the contributions carryover to 2010 will be \$6,000, all from the year 2008” (Everett).

### *3.3 Conflicts & Benefits*

Throughout this research it was clear that there was a definite imbalance in power. The stakeholders that had more money, resources and influence benefited the most from these relationships. That being said, many conflicts arise between powerful stakeholders and the powerless. Demonstrated below are many types of conflicts that arise between the less influential stakeholders which in turn benefit the stronger stakeholders.

#### *3.3.1 Food Banks Conflict with Corporations/Industries:*

Studies show that the sorting, handling and processing of these industry donations is very much so a labor-intensive task (Tarasuk and Eakin, “Food Assistance” 177). The food banks utilize the labor of many volunteers to sort through, salvage the edibles, and take inventory of the many donations. In an interview with Shaye Moris, the executive director of Duluth’s local Second Harvest food bank, she reveals that about 14,000 volunteers are needed annually to allow the process to run as smoothly and efficiently as possible. Many of the foods donated are nearing expiration date, so speed and efficiency is needed so as to be able to supply these products to the local shelves and further down to the clients before excessively passing the expiration date (Tarasuk and Eakin, “Food Assistance”). The word excessively is used here because a large part of this study revealed that many products are able to last longer than the printed expiration date, and in many cases it is quite common for clients to receive expired foods (United States).

Another conflict these industry donations may impose on the food banks is the type of product they choose to donate. The food bank has no say in the products they receive. While striving to keep the health of their client in mind, most food banks attempt to keep 60-85% of their products nutritious (Jacob 16). However, they may be forced to accept entire cases of soda, chips, cookies or other junk food simply to stay in good measure with that particular donor. “We sort of have to take it with a grain of salt”, Moris stated referring to these donations. She explained that if it is a frequent occurrence and no other product is being donated but highly processed junk foods, the bank will then end the relationship. For the most part they have to accept the good with the bad. An entire case of cookies this month could be an entire case of vegetables next (Moris).

#### *3.3.2 Clients Conflict with Corporations/Industries:*

While the corporations do not deal directly with the clients, they do benefit exponentially from them through their relationship with the food banks. The clients’ interests conflict with this relationship because these corporations have the advantage of the “neediness of food bank clients, and clients’ lack of rights in this system”, which is a strange paradox (Tarasuk and Eakin, “Food Assistance” 177). These corporations claim they are trying to end food insecurity and



donate to the feed the hungry for a good cause, yet they take advantage of them within this system. Through this advantage these corporations are able to dispose of and distribute “visibly substandard, outdated, or otherwise undesirable products” (Tarasuk and Eakin, “Food Assistance” 182). In fact, a client’s willingness to accept poor quality foods was indicative to just how in need of food they were (Tarasuk and Eakin, “Food Assistance” 182).

### *3.3.3 Food Shelves Conflict with Feeding America:*

While Feeding America maintains yearly contracts with each food bank to ensure food safety, those regulations do not necessarily trickle down to the food shelves. In fact, many of these regulations are seen as implicit at the food shelf level. For example, if one were to obtain a package of strawberries and one strawberry was moldy, Feeding America would say to throw out the entire package. For the food shelf workers, those strawberries are seen as a valuable item being as fresh fruits are scarce in their establishment. Thus, the worker or volunteer at the food shelf might only throw out the one strawberry and salvage the rest. (Kearns).

### *3.3.4 Clients Conflict with Food Shelves*

The selection of foods that clients receive is where the lack of individual rights severely emerges. There is a clear disconnect from food distribution and the needs of the clients. While the food agencies claim to strive for “equity and nutritional value” their entire selection of foods and the amounts which they were given are very strictly limited (Tarasuk and Eakin, “Food Assistance” 180). Many clients have no other option but to take what they are given. Thus the neediness of the clients reflects in their willingness to accept poor quality foods or foods they are unfamiliar with. In these instances, we see an especially unique imbalance of power between the food shelf workers and the marginalized clients. Many of these workers feel the need to differentiate their agencies from grocery stores stating that since their work is done on a volunteer basis, these clients should be happy and grateful for whatever they receive (Tarasuk and Eakin, “Food Assistance” 182). In these same agencies, if a client were to visibly decline a particular item or discard of it they would be threatened by workers to be denied of any future assistance. Food shelf workers complain about clients abusing the system claiming they should be more appreciative for the products they do receive (Tarasuk and Eakin, “Food Assistance” 183).

There are many factors--social and economic-- that are thought to have an effect on food insecurity, nearly all of which are directly related to poverty. These factors include, but are not limited to: lack of education, lack of sufficient income, limited access to or lack of health care and health education, dangerous living situations- such as unsafe water, poor housing and unsafe neighborhood environment (Chilton 1204). Poverty in itself is associated with many feelings of humiliation, embarrassment and shame, yet clients suggest these feelings are exacerbated by having to utilize food assistance programs. “Social exclusion is an integral part of food insecurity because those affected are forced to adopt food consumption patterns and food acquisition strategies that fall outside social norms” (Tarasuk and Eakin, “Food Assistance” 184).

### *3.3.5 Food Banks & Food Shelves Conflict with Government:*

In so many ways, the government encourages charitable donations of what they refer to as “nutritious foods” (“Food Safety”). The USDA defines nutritious foods as foods that include whole grains and a variety of fruits and vegetables, foods with no more than 30% of calories from fat, and foods low in salt (“Food Safety”). Yet, because they operate mainly on a donation basis, food banks and food shelves struggle to obtain foods that fall within that definition. Industry donations consist of foods that were deemed unfit for the retail market or nearing expiration (Tarasuk and Eakin, “Food Assistance” 178). Many of these foods are processed, non-perishable food items. In fact, previous studies have examined the nutritional value of these donated foods finding that nearly 33% of all products distributed were termed “discretionary foods;” these include: condiments, convenience/boxed meals, baking supplies, and junk food-chips, donuts etc. (Hoisington 575).

There is a strong correlation between those who utilize programs like SNAP and those who utilize food shelves. In fact, in many cases they go hand in hand (Bhattarai). In recent years the benefits of SNAP have become a political issue. Both democrats and republicans are in the interest of reducing these benefits. In 2009 SNAP benefits were reduced by roughly \$40 per family, per month; these cuts affect over 47 million Americans (Bello). In contrast to this, food banks have been reporting nearly 20% increase in the number of clients who are in need of food assistance since these cuts were implemented in 2009 (DiBlasio).

### *3.3.6 Health Implications*

Examining the health and well-being of the client seems like strange paradox when delving into the food banking system. On one hand, many individual donors view contributing foods as a clearing house. If it is not being used within their own homes somebody lacking access to food could use it to feed their own families. On the other hand, those items tend to be non-perishable, with what seems like an infinite shelf-life. This results in many clients receiving product well beyond the expiration date, in some cases even five years (Verpy 10). In fact, the majority of individual donors contribute items without consciously considering nutrition (Verpy 12). One client, while recollecting her experience with the food bank system, described receiving items such as moldy breads, cans with yellowed labels, and food that tastes more like the can than the food it was supposed to be. This particular client was quoted saying, “you know you don’t want to appear ungrateful, but it’s not nice when people clear off their shelves” (Verpy 10).

In terms of surplus donations, especially being the majority of product donated, clients are forced to accept these foods that are otherwise deemed unsellable in the public market. In fact, it has already been mentioned that the clients need for food was evident by their willingness to accept these poor quality foods and the distribution of these undesired products is enabled by this neediness, in addition to the client’s lack of rights (Tarasuk and Eakin, “Food Assistance” 182). Further studies involving the surveys of food bank clients suggest that the assistance they receive is insufficient and not nearly enough to meet their needs. This inadequate assistance is partly the result of food banks limited resources in terms of food quantity and availability of nutritionally dense products (Tarasuk and Eakin, “Charitable Food” 1506). This leads to clients receiving

poor quality foods in limited amounts resulting in the “continued and growing need for charitable food assistance” (Tarasuk and Eakin, “Charitable Food” 1513).

#### 4. Discussion and Conclusion

This system of food banking was established as a means to end hunger. As the years progress, this system has gotten larger and the need for food assistance is in higher demand. This growth has resulted in more and more stakeholder involvement and policies created involving this very system as well as its multiple stakeholders. However, this research has concluded that these many stakeholders benefit more so from the neediness, and lack of rights of these food insecure clients, than the clients actually benefit from the food banking system itself.

This research has revealed the benefits of the government delegating safety inspections and regulations to second and third party agencies, while conflicting with time management and resources of the food banks and food shelves. This relationship thus leads to many policies put in place protecting donors (community & industry) from any liability, while also rewarding them for their contributions. This relationship in turn, conflicts with the health and well-being of the clients consuming this donated product. Even within the food banks and food shelves regulating the eligibility of the clients, the frequency in which they are allowed to utilize this assistance, and their selection of foods, we can see that the conflicts that arise between these stakeholders negatively affect the health and well-being of the client more so than any other stakeholder involved.

#### References

- "2015 Poverty Guidelines." *2015 Poverty Guidelines*. U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, 1 Jan. 2015. Web. 27 Apr. 2015.
- "About Us." *Feeding America*. n.d. Web. 27 Apr. 2015.
- "AIB History." *AIB International*. n.d. Web. 16 Apr. 2015.
- Bello, Marisol, and Saerom Yoo. "Oregon Feels Pain of Food Stamp Cuts." *USA Today* 5 Dec. 2013. Web. 15 Apr. 2015.
- Bhattarai, Gandhi Raj, Patricia A Duffy, and Jennie Raymond. "Use of Food Pantries and Food Stamps in Low-Income Households in the United States." *Journal of Consumer Affairs* (2005) : 276-98. *Academic Search Premier*. Web. 19 Apr. 2015.
- Chilton, Mariana, and Donald Rose. "A Rights-Based Approach to Food Insecurity in the United States." *American Journal of Public Health* 99.7 (2009) : 1203-211. Print.
- Coleman-Jensen, Alisha, Mark Nord, and Anita Singh. "Household Food Security in the United States 2012." *USDA ERS - Home*. United States Department of Agriculture, 1 Sept. 2013. Web. 19 Sept. 2014.

Davis, Lauren B. "Scheduling Food Bank Collections and Deliveries to Ensure Food Safety and Improve Access." *Socioeconomic Planning Sciences* 48.3 (2014) : 175-88. *Academic Search Premier*. Web. 8 Apr. 2015.

DiBlasio, Natalie. "Hunger Pangs: 1 in 7 Use Food Banks." *USA Today* 18 Aug. 2014. Web. 15 Apr. 2015.

Echevarria, Samuel, Robert Santos, Elaine Waxman, Emily Engelhard, and Theresa Del Vecchio. "Food Banks: Hunger's New Staple." *Feeding America: Hunger-Relief Charity | FeedingAmerica.org*. 1 Jan. 2009. Web. 1 Oct. 2014.

Everett, John O., and Cherie J. Hennig. "C Corps- Charitable Deduction and Miscellaneous Expenses." *Contemporary Tax Practice: Research, Planning and Strategies*. Chicago, IL: CCH, 2008. Print.

"Food Safety and Handling Manual." *Feeding America*. n.d. Web. 15 Apr. 2015.

Hoisington, Anne, Melinda M. Manore, and Carolyn Raab. "Nutritional Quality of Emergency Foods." *Journal of the American Dietetic Association* : 573-76. Print.

Internal Revenue Code. "Charitable, etc., contribution & gifts. Part VI- Itemized deductions for individuals and corporations". Title 26. *U.S. Code*, Sec. 170. 2006 ed. Supp. V, 2011. 17 Apr. 2015.

Jacob, Dianne. "The Fine Art of Feeding the Hungry." *Gastronomica* : 14-20. Print.

Kearns, Meg. Personal interview. 30 Mar. 2015

Kim, Sunhee. "Exploring the Endogenous Governance Model for Alleviating Food Insecurity: Comparative Analysis of Food Bank Systems in Korea and the USA." *International Journal of Social Welfare* 24.2 (2014) : 145-58. *Academic Search Premier*. Web. 7 Apr. 2015.

Moris, Shaye. Personal interview. 4 Mar. 2015.

"Second Harvest Food Bank Receives AIB Food Safety Certification." *Second Harvest Food Bank of the Mahoning Valley*. 24 March 2014. Web. 17 April 2015.

Schuwerk, Tara J. "Food Bank Culture: Food and Nutrition Communication in a Hunger-relief Organization." *Food as Communication/ Communication as Food*. Ed. Janet M. Cramer. New York: Peter Lang, 2011. 381-403. Print.

Tarasuk, Valerie, and Joan M. Eakin. "Food Assistance through "Surplus" Food: Insights from an Ethnographic Study of Food Bank Work." *Agriculture and Human Values* 22.2 (2005) : 177-86. Web. 7 Apr. 2015.

Tarasuk, Valerie, and Joan M Eakin. "Charitable Food Assistance as Symbolic Gesture: An Ethnographic Study of Food Banks in Ontario." *Social Science & Medicine* (2002) : 1505-515. Print.

United States. Department of Agriculture, Food Safety and Inspection Services. *Food Safety Information: Food Product Dating*. REVISED. Aug. 2013. PDF.

U.S. House. 104th Congress. 42 U.S. Code *H.R. 2428, Bill Emerson Good Samaritan Food Donation Act*. U.S. Government Information GPO. 1 Oct. 1996.

Van Zuiden, Stacey. "The Good Food Fight for Good Samaritans: The History of Alleviating Liability and Equalizing Tax Incentives for Food Donors." *Drake Journal of Agricultural Law* 17 (2012) : 237-262. Web. 17 Apr. 2015.

Verpy, H., C. Smith, and M. Reicks. "Attitudes and Behaviors of Food Donors and Perceived Needs and Wants of Food Shelf Clients." *Journal of Nutrition Education and Behavior*: 6-15. Print.

|                                 |  |
|---------------------------------|--|
| <b>Citation</b>                 | Pelzer, K.C. (2015). Attempting to feed America: Examining the many stakeholders involved within the food banking system. <i>Duluth Journal of Undergraduate Research</i> , 2, 7-19.<br>Permalink: <a href="http://hdl.handle.net/10792/2653">http://hdl.handle.net/10792/2653</a> |
| <a href="#">View Statistics</a> |  |