

STRENGTHENING ANTI-HUNGER ADVOCACY IN CALIFORNIA: EVALUATION OF THE CALIFORNIA NUTRITION INITIATIVE 1998-2001



PREPARED FOR

**MAZON: A JEWISH RESPONSE TO HUNGER
AND THE CALIFORNIA ENDOWMENT**

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MAZON: A JEWISH RESPONSE TO HUNGER

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STRENGTHENING ANTI-HUNGER ADVOCACY IN CALIFORNIA: EVALUATION OF THE CALIFORNIA NUTRITION INITIATIVE 1998-2001

I - INTRODUCTION

A - BACKGROUND

MAZON launched the California Nutrition Initiative (CNI) in 1998 with a five-year, \$1,000,000 grant from The California Endowment. The CNI's purpose was "to improve the nutritional health and well-being of low-income Californians by strengthening the capacity of the state's non-profit and anti-hunger network." MAZON articulated clear goals for the Initiative which, in summary, are:

- Build capacity to meaningfully and effectively engage with policy-makers in the welfare decision-making process.
- Increase grantees' capacity to effectively serve low-income clients.
- Broaden grantees' understanding of and role in anti-hunger advocacy in general; and
- Strengthen links between diverse California organizations working on hunger issues.

In its proposal to the California Endowment, MAZON described an evaluation component for the CNI and suggested evaluative strategies and measures. During the five years of the CNI, there have been evaluations of individual grants performed by the grantees, review and monitoring of the grants by MAZON, and five state-wide conferences convened by MAZON for the grantees.

B - GOALS OF THE EVALUATION

In August 2001, MAZON submitted a proposal to the California Endowment to continue, expand and enhance the CNI. As part of the proposal, MAZON received funding to conduct a formal evaluation of the first four years of the CNI to assess the effectiveness of its strategies, define and describe what happened to grantees as a result of CNI funding, and develop a prescriptive model for advocacy capacity-building based on MAZON's strategies and practices.

The evaluation looked at the overall success of the CNI in achieving its stated goals, the effectiveness of the CNI model of grantmaking, the impacts on individual grantees of CNI funding and training, the assessment by grantees of MAZON's added-value to the process, and development of recommendations for next steps. The goals for the evaluation were to assess:

- the overall effectiveness of the CNI in achieving its stated goals
- the strategies in CNI's grantmaking model that enabled grantees to become more effective
- the impacts on individual grantees of CNI funding and training
- the success of individual selected grants
- MAZON's added-value to grantees

C - METHODOLOGY

The evaluation design used a combination of methods to gather qualitative and quantitative data about the effectiveness of the CNI in meeting its goals, assessment of the level of advocacy activity of all grantees, and the experiences of selected individual grantees.

Administrative Data

All grantee proposals, evaluations, MAZON grant write-ups and other written data were reviewed and analyzed. See Section 2 for a simplified grantee database was created listing each grantee and each grant made during the course of the CNI.

Key Informant Interviews

The purpose of the key informant interviews was to determine how well the goals of the California Nutrition Initiative were understood among key stakeholders and decision-makers, what were the perceived successes and failures of the California Nutrition Initiative, and what information they hoped the evaluation would produce. The following individuals were interviewed:

- Stacy Dean, Director of Food Stamp and Immigrant Policy, Center on Budget and Policy Priorities
- Sharon Eghigian, Director, California Association of Food Banks
- Gail Gronert, Speaker's Office of Policy, Assembly Speaker Wesson's Office
- Ken Hecht, Executive Director, California Food Policy Advocates
- Mia Johnson, Grants Director, MAZON
- Edie Mesick, MAZON Grants Committee Member and Executive Director, Nutrition Consortium of New York State
- Evelyn Laser Shlensky, Chair, MAZON Grants Advisory Committee
- H. Eric Schockman, Executive Director, MAZON
- Marion Standish, Senior Program Officer, The California Endowment
- Kim Wade, Director, Northern California Food Banks

Grantee Survey

An on-line survey, using SurveyMonkey software, consisting of 36 questions was designed and delivered to 79 current and former grantees. The survey received 61 responses, for a response rate of 77%. See Section 6 for a list of respondents to the Survey and full Survey data.

Site Visits and In-Depth Evaluation

Seven grantees representing MAZON's different grantee classifications and different geographical regions were selected for site visits or in-depth phone interviews. The interviews explored the grantees experience with MAZON/CNI funding, assessed changes in their advocacy activity level over time, and explored how well they met their goals for CNI funding.

The following agencies were selected for in-depth evaluation:

- Food for People, Eureka
- FoodLink of Tulare County, Visalia
- Grupo de la Comida, Oakland
- Interfaith Community Services, Escondido
- Jewish Family & Children's Service, San Francisco
- Los Angeles Regional Food Bank, Los Angeles
- Ukiah Community Center, Ukiah

CNI@4 - Town Hall Meeting

A "Town Hall Meeting" was held at the 2002 CNI Conference to create an open, interactive dialogue with grantees about the Initiative, what strategies have been successful for them in increasing their capacity for advocacy, what barriers they still face, and their recommended next steps. See Section 3 for a summary of the group feedback from the session.

Results and findings from each of these methodologies are incorporated into the Report.

D - THE STATE OF HUNGER IN CALIFORNIA

Food policy, attitudes toward hunger and levels of advocacy activity are greatly affected by the political climate and the economy. The four-year period that is the focus of this study saw tremendous changes in national, state and local political and economic realities. In 1997, when MAZON submitted its first proposal to the California Endowment, the chief concern was the as yet unknown impact of welfare reform. As decisions determining eligibility, service mix, and length and level of benefits devolved to the states and counties, it became increasingly important for those concerned with food and nutrition issues to share information, target key issues and legislators, and speak with a unified voice. The CNI was designed to encourage and empower the State's anti-hunger agencies and food banks to go beyond provision of emergency food by building capacity for increased advocacy, collaboration, networking, and public education.

It was anticipated that changing welfare policies would result in a greater demand on local food resources. These predictions have been borne out, as detailed in the California Health Interview Survey (CHIS) Policy Brief, "*Over 2.2 Million Low-Income California Adults are Food Insecure; 658,000 Suffer Hunger*" which was publicly released at the 2002 MAZON-CNI Conference. The study documented the extent and prevalence of food insecurity in California, and in fact, under-reported its extent because the survey reached only persons living in households with telephones. Therefore households without telephones and the homeless were not included in the results. The CHIS Study showed that 2.24 million California adults are food insecure and approximately one in three of these individuals, or 658,000 people, experience hunger. The study concluded:

"Food insecurity, with or without hunger, causes families to forego such basic needs as rent, utilities, and medical care in order to put food on the table. Food security is defined as access to an adequate nutritious diet. Food security is a goal of any society, essential for the

good health of all. Based on these new CHIS 2001 findings, the paradox of food insecurity and hunger in food-abundant California clearly shows that this state can do better.”¹

The CHIS Report identified several key policy recommendations to increase Californian’s access to food resources. These recommendations were highlighted and discussed at the MAZON-CNI Conference and are part of California Food Policy Advocates’ (CFPA) 2003 State Legislative Agenda:

1. Hunger and food insecurity should be routinely included as basic health indicators in all health surveillance surveys in California, as they are in national surveys.
2. Increase participation in federal food programs by streamlining enrollment procedures...
3. Seize the opportunity provided by the Congressional Reauthorization of Child Nutrition Programs in 2003...
4. Invest in outreach for the Food Stamp Program and WIC since their target populations are the groups with the highest prevalence of food insecurity and hunger.²

The CHIS data is supported by a study conducted by the Food Security Institute of the Center on Hunger and Poverty released in August 2002 that counted 5,120,000 food insecure households in California. This project analyzed data from the 1998, 1999, and 2000 Food Security Supplement of the U.S. Census Bureau’s Current Population Survey and again does not count those who are homeless. The study said that three states – California, Texas and Florida – account for nearly a third (32.4%) of all individuals living in food insecure households in the U.S.^{3*}

The impact of welfare reform on California’s poor has been documented by The California Budget Project in a recent special report entitled, *“Boom, Bust and Beyond: The State of Working California”*. The study shows that the number of working poor continues to grow with nearly two million California families classified as poor despite having at least one worker. (The study defines “poor” as annual incomes less than 200% of the federal poverty level.) One clear cause of this increase is welfare reform. *“Welfare reform has contributed to the increase in the number of working poor. As welfare recipients continue to make the transition from the welfare rolls to the workforce, the ‘welfare poor’ segment of the population has shrunk and the number of ‘working poor’ families has increased.”⁴*

The California Budget Project does not foresee economic improvement in the State anytime soon. In its analysis of the impact of the Governor’s Proposed 2003-04 Budget on social and economic issues of the State, it concluded: *“California faces a fiscal crisis of unprecedented magnitude...The economy remains mired in recession, increasing the risk to vulnerable Californians and slowing the growth of revenues needed to close the budget gap.”⁵*

Food insecurity and hunger are prevalent and growing problems in the State. It is clear that the work started by the CNI in 1998 was important in beginning to create the infrastructure necessary to respond to the immediate needs of Californians and to engage food providers in the long-term policy work that is needed.

¹ *Over 2.2 Million Low-Income California Adults Are Food Insecure; 658,000 Suffer Hunger*, by Gail G. Harrison, Charles A. DiSogra, George Manolo-LeClair, Jennifer Aguyao, and Wei Yen. U.C.L.A. Center for Health Policy Research, November 2002, p.1.

² *ibid.*, p. 7.

³ *Hunger and Food Insecurity in the Fifty States: 1998-2000*. Ashley F. Sullivan and Eunyong Choi, Center on Hunger and Poverty, Brandeis University, August 2002, p. 2.

⁴ *Boom, Bust and Beyond: The State of Working California*. The California Budget Project, May 2003. p.4

⁵ *Bridging the Gap: The Social and Economic Context of the Governor’s Proposed 2003-04 Budget*, California Budget Project, January 2003, p. 1

II - SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

- ❑ **MAZON is held in extremely high regard by grantees and hunger professionals as both a funder and as an advocacy organization.**

MAZON enjoys a uniformly positive reputation and perception in the anti-hunger community. Its clarity of mission, focus on advocacy and encouragement of others are cited as important added value components to its funding. The size of MAZON's grants alone is not sufficient to account for its level of influence and perceived effectiveness. 81% of survey respondents cited MAZON's "clarity of mission and goals" as "excellent" in comparison to other funders.

"While the size of the grant is small, it is perhaps most valuable in terms of the technical assistance we received through the conference and the sense of partnership and good will the staff creates with its grantees."

- ❑ **MAZON's funding through the CNI was most effective in the building of linkages among the anti-hunger organizations throughout the State.**

Prior to the CNI, there was no regular venue where the state's anti-hunger groups could meet, learn and build relationships. MAZON's strategy of requiring attendance at an annual conference for grantees succeeded in exposing grantees to new information and resources, forging relationships among grantees, and inspiring grantees to do more advocacy work. 70% of survey respondents said that "Creating connection with the larger advocacy community" was the most effective strategy in building a hunger organization's capacity to become more involved in advocacy.

- ❑ **MAZON's expectation of participation in advocacy by grantees provides the impetus and encouragement for many organizations to begin or increase advocacy activity.**

67% of respondents reported that advocacy activities in their organization had increased as a direct result of attending the MAZON conference and 78% reported that their organization's awareness of opportunities for advocacy activity had increased since become a MAZON grantee. For many grantees, the encouragement and inspiration they receive from MAZON, through the conference and the contact with MAZON staff and other grantees, has provided the impetus to become more involved in advocacy.

"Mazon has changed the world for many of its grantees by pushing in subtle and in not so subtle ways to get people active in policy and advocacy. They were the only ones who played a critical role in pressuring people who thought that their job was to collect, store and distribute food to see advocacy as part of what they had to do."

- ❑ **The chief barriers to greater involvement in advocacy are lack of staff time and inadequate funding.**

While this finding is not surprising, it is useful to quantify the degree to which staff and funding impact advocacy activity. 75% of grantees reported that limited financial resources were a moderate or major barrier to advocacy activity and 66% reported that lack of staff time was a moderate to major barrier. MAZON's general support grants are perceived as increasing capacity for advocacy because most grantees' funding is categorical or program-restricted, and the agencies must struggle to maintain a stable base for their operating expenses. General support funding reduces the burden of fund raising on the executive director and allows more time to focus on advocacy activities.

“Funding for advocacy and general support are synonymous to a great extent. Any dollars we receive from MAZON allow us to address needs and in turn to support our advocacy work.”

❑ **Staff is key in determining whether advocacy is prioritized within an agency.**

Site visits and key informant discussions revealed that the commitment of an individual staff member will greatly influence whether advocacy is prioritized within an agency. The impetus for advocacy comes largely from the staff, not the board. In several grantee agencies, advocacy activity changed dramatically, both positively and negatively, when a particular staff member left or joined the organization. This finding supports MAZON’s strategy of investing in staff training through its conference to increase advocacy activity and effectiveness.

❑ **Advocacy is a continuum that is defined by grantees in different ways.**

Grantees engage in a wide spectrum of advocacy activities that largely reflect their organizational type. Emergency food providers tend to define advocacy on the individual level, and concentrate their efforts on working to help their clients secure benefits. Food Banks are more likely to define their advocacy role as increasing public awareness on a county or regional level through education and providing testimony at different levels of government. The MAZON Conference broadens the grantees’ understanding of the range of advocacy activities and encourages them to expand their activities into the broader arena of legislative action and social change.

“My idea of advocacy is a lot different after attending the MAZON Conference last month. I know now that it is a process that needs to come from every part of our program to educate our clients, our supporters, and the community concerning the real needs of our people. It also has to do with knowing, as an organization, how to keep the politicians up to speed on how to meet the needs of our people.”

❑ **Agencies do not have the tools to track advocacy activity or measure results.**

Less than a third of grantees conduct any measurement of their advocacy or public education activities. The most frequently tracked indicator is number of visits with legislators or legislative staff (48.3% report tracking this activity). There is little perceived need to devote time to tracking advocacy activity beyond the anecdotal.

❑ **The perception of MAZON’s role as a “Jewish response to hunger” is both positive and not clearly understood.**

69% of the survey respondents knew the meaning of the word “Mazon.” When asked what it meant to them that MAZON was “a Jewish response to hunger” some respondents cited the fact that MAZON raises money in the Jewish community to support anti-hunger work with the implication that this was something outside of its own community. Others articulated the social change mission of MAZON and connected MAZON’s funding and emphasis on advocacy to bringing about an end to the causes of hunger.

“It means that MAZON organizes the strong support of the Jewish community for the mission of ending hunger. It means that the Jewish community has a history of providing support to ending hunger and a passionate love for justice. MAZON taps into that support and passion, and funnels that support to their grantees.”

❑ ***The California Nutrition Initiative identified and tested strategies that are replicable as a national model.***

The strategies identified by MAZON at the outset of the California Nutrition Initiative have proven to be effective in both increasing individual agency capacity for advocacy and strengthening the statewide anti-hunger network. Respondents cited the importance of MAZON's focus on advocacy, understanding of the issues of hunger and food policy, and willingness to provide ongoing funding. The involvement of California Food Policy Advocates as a partner in the effort made a significant difference in strengthening the grantees' capacity for engaging in advocacy by providing the information and tools.

III - MAZON/CNI GRANTMAKING

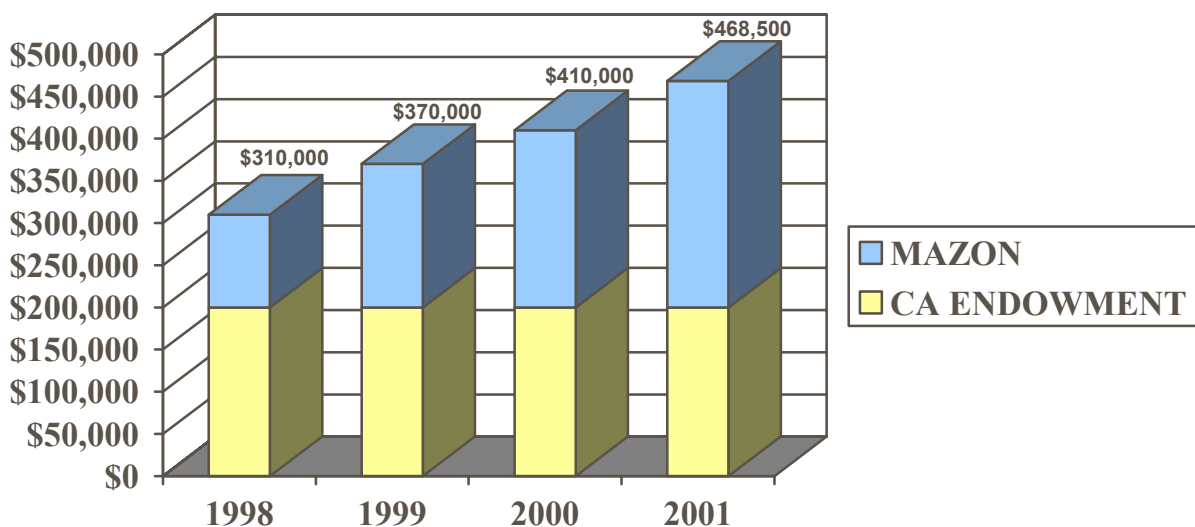
A - LEVEL OF GRANTS

In MAZON's original proposal to the California Endowment of June of 1997, MAZON stated that a goal of the C+NI was to expand the number of organizations it funded in California. California agencies have always received the largest proportion of MAZON's domestic grants. From its founding and first grantmaking in 1986 to the beginning of the CNI in 1998, MAZON had made a total of \$1,728,362 in grants to 80 different anti-hunger and advocacy organizations in California.

MAZON proposed to use the money provided by the California Endowment as leverage to increase the dollar value of the grants it could make in California and to expand the number of grantees it could fund. In 1997, the year prior to the beginning of the CNI, MAZON made grants to 31 grantees in California with a total dollar value of \$238,000. In 1995, there were 30 California grants totaling \$202,000. The first year of funding through the California Nutrition Initiative in 1998 started with 33 grantees, including six first-time grantees, with a dollar value of \$310,000. California Endowment funding provided \$200,000 per year that was applied 100% to grant funding under the Initiative.

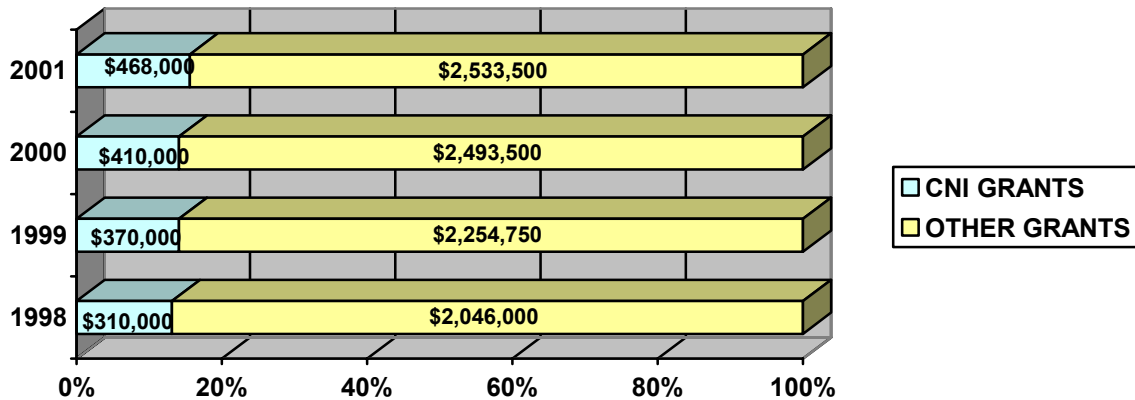
MAZON steadily increased the dollar value of grants from \$310,000 in 1998 to \$468,000 in 2001. It does not appear to be clearly stipulated by the California Endowment, although it may have been implied, that MAZON would continue a 100% maintenance of effort in allocating its existing resources to California grants during the CNI. If that were so, taking 1997 as a baseline, and adding \$200,000 from the California Endowment, the level of CNI grants should have begun at \$438,000 in 1998. However, it is unrealistic to expect that MAZON could have accomplished the outreach and due diligence necessary to double its California grantmaking in one year. By the fourth year, MAZON had added 24 new grantees and was allocating \$468,500 in California (an increase of 58% over the pre-CNI 1997 level). In 2002, MAZON awarded \$730,000 in California, which included the balance of CNI funds plus California Endowment renewed funding to expand the CNI, especially to populations impacted by September 11 and to underserved rural and remote grantees.

ANNUAL DOLLAR VALUE OF MAZON/CNI GRANTS



In the four-year period, CNI grants grew as a percentage of MAZON's total grantmaking from 13.15% in 1998 to 15.6% in 2001.

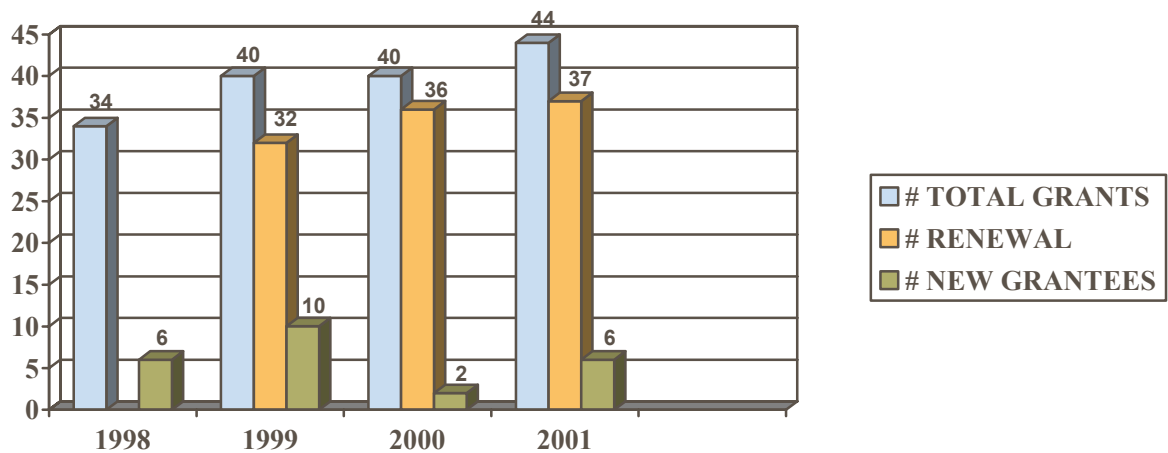
CNI GRANTS AS A PERCENT OF MAZON'S ANNUAL GRANTMAING



B - THE MAZON/CNI GRANTEE POPULATION

A key CNI strategy was multi-year, repeat funding to lessen the grantees' dependence on constant fund raising with the intent of freeing up some staff and budgetary resources for increased advocacy activity. While a commitment to repeat funding decreases the resources available to new grantees, MAZON managed to achieve a renewal rate between 76% and 82% and add 24 new grantees in the first four years of the Initiative. A total of 52 different organizations were funded over the four-year period. (See Section 2, MAZON/CNI California Grantees 1998-2001).

NUMBER OF CNI GRANTS, RENEWALS AND NEW GRANTEEES



C - CATEGORIZATION OF GRANTEEES

MAZON's board has struggled with finding an appropriate balance between its commitment to supporting advocacy and the need to fund direct service. Emergency food assistance has always received the smallest allocation of MAZON's resources, reflecting its belief that *"the country cannot 'food pantry our way' to the end of hunger; that there is much more to ending hunger than simply feeding hungry people; and that MAZON needs to realize a greater return on our limited dollars than emergency food programs can provide."*⁶ This policy reflects MAZON's belief that an overemphasis on charitable solutions does little to address hunger and its causes. It is not a criticism of the agencies and services, but rather a recognition that these programs should not be viewed as solutions to hunger but a short-term fix.

MAZON's grantee categories and its overall grantmaking allocation in each are:

AER - Advocacy/Education/Research – 39%: local, statewide and national organizations that examine the causes and extent of hunger and seek effective public policy solutions.

EFA – Emergency Food Assistance – 8%: programs that provide meals to hungry and impoverished people, including food pantries, home delivered meals, kosher feeding programs, and prepared and perishable food rescue programs.

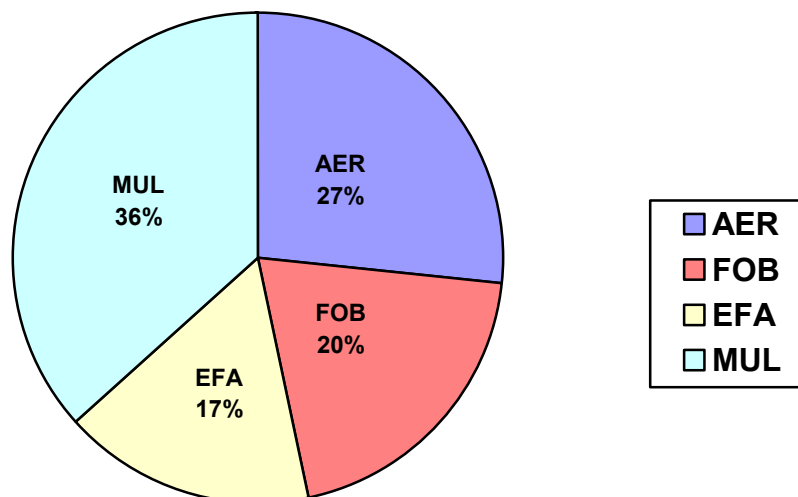
FOB - Food Banks – 20%: organizations whose principal purpose is to distribute donated and purchased food to local networks of nonprofit food providers.

MUL - Multi Service Agencies – 27%: organizations that offer poor and hungry people a broad spectrum of services to foster greater self-reliance and help them move from welfare to work.

Services in addition to food include helter, job training, health care, legal and benefits assistance, etc.

INT – International – 6%: hunger relief and agricultural development projects in Israel and to U.S.-based organizations working in poor countries.

**DISTRIBUTION OF CNI 1998-2001 GRANTS
BY MAZON GRANTEE CATEGORIES**



⁶ A Review of MAZON's Funding Percentages and the Role of Advocacy in Addressing Hunger, MAZON internal document, 1998, p. 3.

As the chart demonstrates, the distribution of the CNI grantees is somewhat more heavily weighted in the EFA category. This reflects the strategy to bring in new grantees and strengthen the State's anti-hunger network by building capacity in these agencies. Some of the agencies classified as food banks, especially the smaller, rural food banks, also offer direct services to clients and perhaps should have been more properly classified as multi-service agencies. The lower percentage in the AER category than MAZON's overall funding allocation is likely due to MAZON's support of national and regional advocacy groups.

IV - ANALYSIS OF GRANTEE SURVEY

A 36 question web-based survey was launched on December 10, 2002 and sent to 79 current and former CNI grantees. The survey included all CNI grantees from 1998 through 2002. Response to the survey was very positive and 61 unduplicated responses were received, for a response rate of 77%. The survey used a combination of multiple choice, rating and open-ended questions. Survey responses were looked at as a whole and were further sorted by MAZON grantee categories to discern whether there were significant differences among grantee categories on particular questions. See Section 6 for the Survey Questionnaire, Detailed Response Data, and a List of Survey Respondents.

A - RESPONDENT CHARACTERISTICS

1. What type of organization are you?			
		Response Percent	Response Total
	Food Bank	18.3%	11
	Emergency Food Pantry/Food Box	13.3%	8
	Congregate Meal Site/Kitchen	0%	0
	Home Delivered Meal Program	3.3%	2
	Advocacy/Research/Education	15%	9
	Multi-Service Organization	46.7%	28
	Other (please specify)	3.3%	2
Total Respondents			60
(skipped this question)			1

It appears that a disproportionate number survey respondents classified themselves as multi-service. Approximately 36% of CNI grantees are classified by MAZON as MUL (multi-service organizations) yet 46.7% of respondents classified themselves as multi-service. The percentages of EFA and FOB reflect MAZON's overall domestic allocation to those categories. The apparent under-representation of AER agencies in the survey sample may be due to MAZON's practice of classifying a grantee as AER if a grant is given to, for example, a food bank or multi-service agency, specifically for advocacy or public education work.

50% of the respondent organizations were founded since 1980, and another 30% since 1970. This reflects the rapid growth of emergency food providers and food banks during this period characterized as "accidental institutionalization" Janet Poppendieck in *Sweet Charity?*

*"No one planned the emergency food network. No one even seems to have envisioned or hoped for its current extensive, well-capitalized state. To a remarkable extent, it reflects a series of accidents."*⁷

⁷ Janet Poppendieck, *Sweet Charity? – Emergency Food and the End of Entitlement.* (New York: Penguin Books), p. 111.

The accidents Poppendieck refers to result from the confluence of the recession of the early '80's, the enormous cuts in social services and assistance programs of the Reagan administration, and the legitimization of characterizing the resulting social problems as "hunger", coupled with the necessity to create mechanisms to distribute large amount of surplus dairy products in the early '80's.

B - BUDGET AND FUNDING LEVELS

The total organizational operating budgets of CNI grantees range from \$27,700 to \$60,000,000. Many multi-service and other programmatically complex grantees do not identify a specific project budget for which they are seeking MAZON funding which makes budget comparisons difficult. When the total organizational budgets of the large multi-service organizations are eliminated, and the project budgets for which MAZON funds were requested are used, operating budgets range from \$27,700 to \$4,100,000. CNI grants range from .002% to 50% of grantee's budgets, a very wide range. From 1998 to 2001, MAZON made 159 grants under the CNI that ranged from \$5,000 to \$33,500, and totaled \$1,558,500. The mean grant was \$9,801 and the median \$9,000.

Over 65% of the respondents say that their operating budgets have increased in each of the years from 1998 to 2001. Significant decreases are reported only in 2002, with 14% reporting a decrease and 17% saying that their budget stayed about the same. Less than 20% of respondents have a separate budget line for advocacy. Those who do budget for advocacy report that their budgets have generally increased or remained about the same during the period of the CNI.

7. If yes, how has your budget for advocacy changed in each of the following years as compared with the previous year?				
	Increased	Decreased	About the Same	Response Total
1998	47% (8)	0% (0)	53% (9)	17
1999	41% (7)	6% (1)	53% (9)	17
2000	29% (5)	6% (1)	65% (11)	17
2001	41% (7)	6% (1)	53% (9)	17
2002	47% (8)	6% (1)	47% (8)	17
Total Respondents				17
(filtered out)				0
(skipped this question)				44

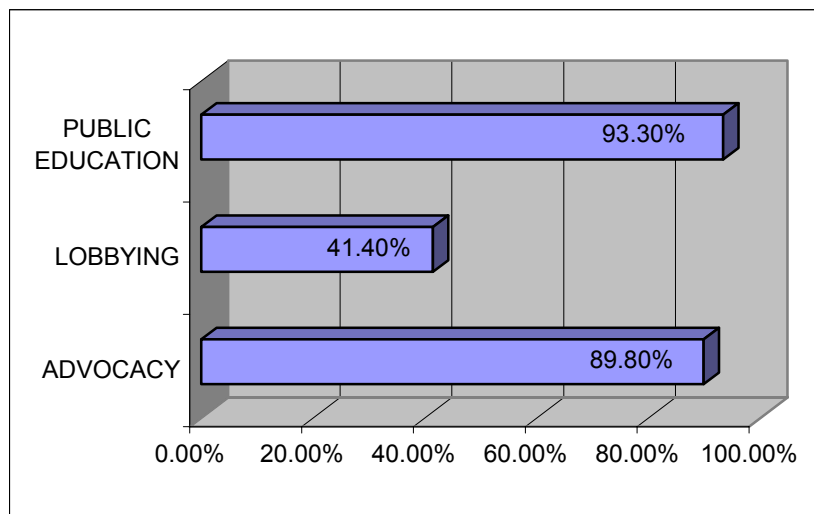
Federal grants and contracts provide the largest proportion of grantee income, followed by foundation grants and fund raising. Not surprisingly, AER grantees are most heavily dependent on foundation grants. When asked whether funding sources have changed significantly over the past three years, many grantees reported that their percentage of non-governmental sources has increased while at the same time reporting a reduction in United Way and foundation support. Many grantees report a greater reliance on individual fund-raising. (See open-ended response to Question 9, If your funding sources have changed significantly in the past three years, please explain how.)

Most grantees are either very small or rather large organizations in terms of staff size. Fifty percent of respondents have total paid staff of 10 or fewer, with over 30% reporting 5 or fewer staff. 37% of respondents report 20 or more staff, with multi-service organizations and food banks accounting for over 80% of the agencies reporting 20 or more staff.

C - PARTICIPATION IN ADVOCACY

Almost all grantees report participation in some form of advocacy, with the responses varying depending upon how it is defined by the grantee. Almost 90% of respondents said that they conducted advocacy activity, while a little over 41% said that they conducted lobbying activities.

DOES YOUR ORGANIZATION CONDUCT...?



In an open-ended question, respondents were asked, “*What does ‘advocacy’ mean to you? How do you apply the word to describe the activities that your organization may conduct?*” This question elicited a wide range of responses – the answers ranged from describing advocacy as the agency’s role in being the clients’ voice to help them obtain benefits, or “going to bat” for specific programs, to working on the long term solutions to end hunger through policy and public education. Not surprisingly, emergency food providers are more likely to define advocacy on the individual level and “advocate” for their clients, while the food banks and public policy organizations define advocacy as addressing the legislative issues.

Advocacy is litigating or negotiating on behalf of clients or working on behalf of clients in administrative processes to help them obtain certain benefits or restitution of their rights.

To represent those we serve. To advocate for the needs of the poor and homeless. To serve as a voice for the under-represented. To lead by example of service. To tell the story of [our] clients to those in decision-making positions.

To us, advocacy means long-term solutions to the issue of hunger. Our local donors (financial and food) help to alleviate the immediate hunger needs of our clients. We are ultimately interested in ending hunger...To advocate means to address long-term solutions.

Advocacy means that I add my voice to those of many others to make those changes that are necessary so that each person will have basic human needs. It means trying to make our leaders and elected officials in County, City, State and Federal governments accountable. We lobby!

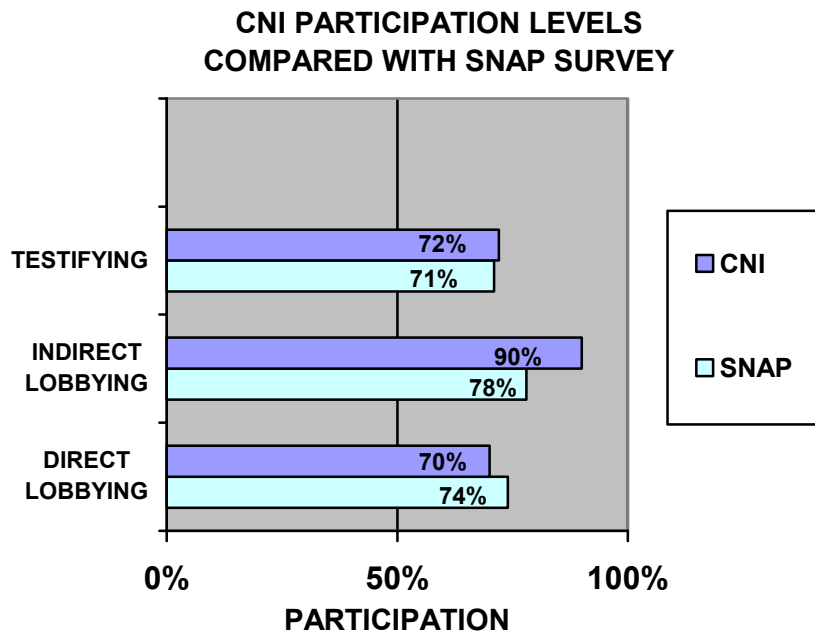
The MAZON/CNI study used the categories of policy participation defined in the national “SNAP Survey” completed in May 2002. The Strengthening Non-Profit Advocacy Project was conducted by OMB Watch, Charity Lobbying in the Public Interest and Tufts University to provide a comprehensive body of national research on the state of nonprofit advocacy and public policy participation and to understand how to motivate more public policy participation by nonprofits in the U.S.⁸ The SNAP surveyed 2,735 randomly selected 501(c)(3) public charities, with the exception of hospitals, universities, and private foundations.

SNAP identified 9 specific policy-influencing activities and defined a nonprofit as a “participator” if it engaged in one or more of the first three activities:

- *Testifying*
- *Direct Lobbying*
- *Indirect or Grassroots Lobbying*

- Responding to Government Requests for Information
- Working in Planning or Advisory Groups with Government Officials
- Meeting Government Officials about Work
- Releasing Research Reports
- Discussing Grants/Contracts with Government Officials
- Interacting Socially with Government Officials

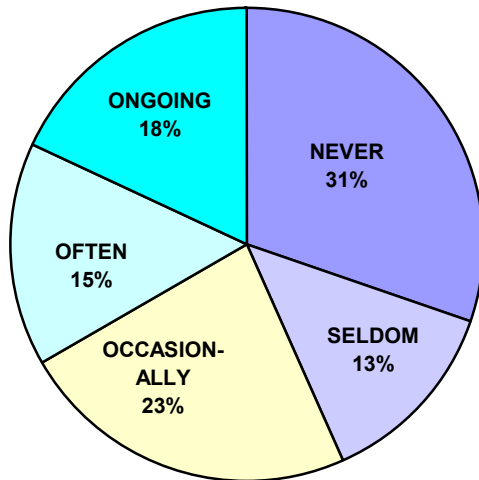
According to SNAP’s criteria, which counted participation regardless of reported frequency, MAZON/CNI grantees participate in advocacy activities at a level similar or greater to the national survey.



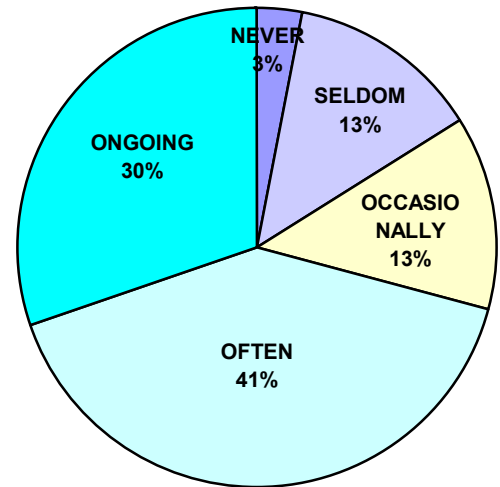
MAZON/CNI grantees reported participating broadly across the nine activities. The MAZON survey also added questions about the frequency of response to Action Alerts from Hunger Coalition partners and whether they testify at local or county-level decision-making meeting.

⁸ SNAP: Strengthening Nonprofit Advocacy Project – Overview of Findings, May 2002, OMB Watch, Charity Lobbying in the Public Interest, p. 5.

CNI GRANTEES FREQUENCY OF PARTICIPATION IN LOBBYING



CNI GRANTEE FREQUENCY OF ENCOURAGING CONTACT WITH LEGISLATORS



The SNAP study concluded that there is an inconsistency in definition and usage of the terms “lobbying,” “advocacy,” and “public policy participation.” This confusion was clearly reflected in the CNI survey. While 44% of respondents say that they “never” or “seldom” lobby, the highest level of reported activity is “encouraging staff, board and/or clients to contact legislators,” with 70% reporting this as “often” or “ongoing” activity. “Lobbying” is perceived to have negative connotations by some, as one respondent put it, *“In contrast to ‘lobbying,’ which is advocating for one own’s self interest, ‘advocacy’ is helping to give voice to others in the public polity processes of government, which is not necessarily in the advocate’s self interest.”*

70% of respondents reported “talking with government administrators about the work you are doing” as “often” or “ongoing” activity and 66% of respondents report “speaking informally or socially with policymakers” often or in an ongoing way. 67% of all respondents report “responding to Action Alerts from hunger coalition partners” as “often” or “ongoing” activity.

There are some distinct differences in advocacy activity among the four categories of MAZON grantees. EFA’s report the lowest overall level of participation in advocacy activities while FOBs report the highest level of participation, slightly higher, in general, than the AERs.

16. What strategies does your organization use to communicate with government officials on issues of importance to you? Please indicate how frequently, if at all, your organization engages in the following activities. You must enter a response for every line. (Never = do not do this at all. Seldom = once a year or less; Occasionally = 4 times per year or less; Often = 5 times per year or more; Ongoing = integral part of our activities).						
	Never	Seldom	Occasionally	Often	Ongoing	Response Average
Direct lobbying with legislators	30% (18)	13% (8)	23% (14)	15% (9)	18% (11)	2.78
Indirect lobbying through grassroots action	10% (6)	15% (9)	28% (17)	28% (17)	18% (11)	3.30
Testifying at State legislative or other hearings	28% (17)	25% (15)	33% (20)	12% (7)	2% (1)	2.33
Responding to requests for information from government agencies	2% (1)	3% (2)	33% (20)	38% (23)	23% (14)	3.78
Talking with government administrators about the work you are doing	2% (1)	7% (4)	22% (13)	33% (20)	37% (22)	3.97
Encouraging staff, board and/or clients to contact legislators	3% (2)	13% (8)	13% (8)	40% (24)	30% (18)	3.80
Releasing research reports or studies to the public	23% (14)	17% (10)	25% (15)	20% (12)	15% (9)	2.87
Participating in government planning or advisory groups	7% (4)	10% (6)	32% (19)	22% (13)	30% (18)	3.58
Testifying or attending local or county decision-making hearings	3% (2)	15% (9)	30% (18)	33% (20)	18% (11)	3.48
Speaking informally or socially with policymakers	2% (1)	15% (9)	17% (10)	33% (20)	33% (20)	3.82
Responding to Action Alerts from hunger coalition partners	2% (1)	13% (8)	18% (11)	35% (21)	32% (19)	3.82
Total Respondents						60
(filtered out)						0
(skipped this question)						

It appears that these contacts are often positive because 70% of respondents say that legislators are “usually interested” or “very interested” in what they had to say. One respondent cited a strategy of linking their goals to the goals of the legislator:

Very interested, but typically require that we identify a specific goal they have and link it to our mission and goals. We generally approach them with an "opportunity" inclusive of common goals.

D - PARTICIPATION IN PUBLIC EDUCATION

The survey made a distinction between advocacy and public education and asked about agency participation in 11 identified public education activities. 93% of respondents said that they did conduct public education activities. The most prevalent of these was "making presentations about hunger issues to congregations, service clubs, professional groups or other gatherings," with 92% of respondents reporting this as an occasional to ongoing activity. 86% report that they regularly send newsletters to community members, and 80% report that they regularly provide information about hunger to the media. The least frequent public education activities reported are "holding candidate nights or issue briefings," with 52% reporting that they "never" did this, and "nominating people for commissions or committees," with 63% reporting that they "never" or "seldom" did this.

18. How often does your organization conduct the following types of public education activities? You must enter a response for every line. (Never=do not do this at all. Seldom=once a year or less, Occasionally=4 times a year or less, Often=5 times a year or more, Ongoing=integral part of our activities)						
	Never	Seldom	Occasionally	Often	Ongoing	Response Average
Make presentations about issues at congregations, service clubs, or other gatherings	0% (0)	8% (5)	15% (9)	22% (13)	55% (33)	4.23
Send newsletter to community members	8% (5)	5% (3)	25% (15)	18% (11)	43% (26)	3.83
Write a letter to the editor about hunger issues	12% (7)	25% (15)	37% (22)	15% (9)	12% (7)	2.90
Write an opinion piece for your local newspaper	17% (10)	30% (18)	33% (20)	12% (7)	8% (5)	2.65
Organize a letter writing campaign	20% (12)	35% (21)	32% (19)	8% (5)	5% (3)	2.43
Nominate people for commissions or committees	25% (15)	38% (23)	23% (14)	10% (6)	3% (2)	2.28
Train volunteers in advocacy	15% (9)	27% (16)	35% (21)	7% (4)	17% (10)	2.83
Hold candidate nights or issue briefings	52% (31)	17% (10)	15% (9)	13% (8)	3% (2)	2.00
Provide information about hunger to the media	3% (2)	17% (10)	15% (9)	25% (15)	40% (24)	3.82
Issue action alerts to constituents	20% (12)	18% (11)	22% (13)	12% (7)	28% (17)	3.10
Contact CFPA for information to use in your public education activities	18% (11)	22% (13)	27% (16)	12% (7)	22% (13)	2.97
Total Respondents						60

E - UTILIZATION OF CFPA

California Food Policy Advocates has been a key program partner in the CNI with MAZON. The CNI provided much program input and content to the Conferences and the Conferences provided a vehicle for CFPA to expand its network and increase its members. Every CNI grantee was added to CFPA's Action Alert Network and received access to CFPA's consultants for help with their local and regional issues. Ken Hecht, Executive Director of CFPA, described this symbiotic relationship as, "MAZON coaxes grantees into advocacy activities and encourages them to depend on us."

California Food Policy Advocates asked to use this survey as an opportunity to measure the respondents' utilization of their resources and services. Three questions were designed to attempt to measure the respondents' utilization of CFPA services, their assessment of the usefulness of specific services and their suggestions for new or improved services that CFPA could provide.

19. How do you use the services offered by California Food Policy Advocates to support your advocacy activities? Please check each CFPA service that you have used.		
	Response Percent	Response Total
Read CFPA Action Alerts and other material	81.4%	48
Use CFPA Action Alerts to organize a campaign	25.4%	15
Use CFPA's technical assistance on program issues	39%	23
Use CFPA materials in newsletters or other public education activities	64.4%	38
Use CFPA's assistance with our advocacy activities	40.7%	24
Attend meetings convened by CFPA	44.1%	26
Do not use CFPA services	8.5%	5

Grantees report great appreciation for CFPA's resources, responsiveness and support. Most respondents read CFPA Action Alerts and use their materials in their newsletters and other public education activities, but then there is a sharp drop off in the utilization of CFPA capacities to provide technical assistance with program issues or advocacy or to participate in meetings convened by CFPA. Other respondents cited using the CFPA web-site for research and information about upcoming legislative issues. CFPA is recognized as a crucial component to the effectiveness of the CNI, as a content provider for the conferences and as a resource for the grantees.

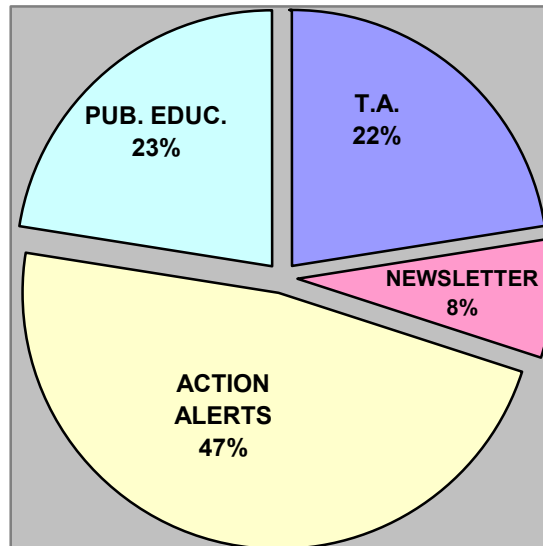
We treasure our relationship with CFPA. Their research and education and briefings on issues are core to our program. Their lead on legislative changes is critical to mobilizing our constituents.

The materials we receive from CFPA at the California Nutrition Initiative Conference MAZON sponsors each year are excellent. We use them all year long.

Grantees were asked what additional services they would like to see CFPA provide. Many respondents said that they would like more region-specific data and more time and services from CFPA in remote areas of the State. It was recognized that CFPA does not have the capacity to do this for 58 California counties, but it was suggested that CFPA could put together a template to help local organizations identify local data and how to use it, such as school meal enrollment, census data, and other useful indicators.

The survey asked respondents to name the one specific CFPA service that is most useful to them. 42 grantees responded to this question, with 19, or 47%, saying that CFPA's Action Alerts were the most useful service. The public education category included CFPA's providing interpretive materials that the organizations used in their newsletters and public presentations, as well as using CFPA's web-site as a research tool. Technical assistance included using CFPA to help with program issues and developing advocacy strategy.

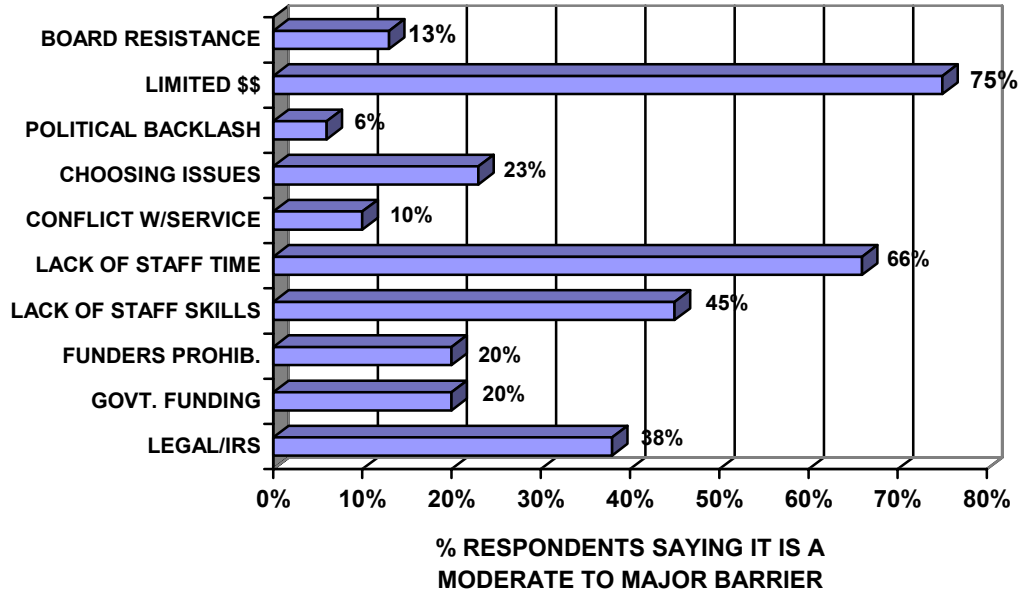
MOST USEFUL CPFA SERVICES IN SUPPORTING AGENCY ADVOCACY ACTIVITIES



F - BARRIERS AND INCENTIVES TO ADVOCACY

The survey and grantee interviews demonstrated that lack of financial resources is the most significant barrier to greater engagement in advocacy. Respondents felt that there was a direct trade-off in dollars spent on advocacy not being available for service delivery. Staff time was the next most significant barrier. Most respondents do not perceive that their boards as a barrier to advocacy and, in general, do not fear community or political backlash, although some interviewees said that they must pick their issues carefully and frame them in terms that are more politically acceptable. In their communities, Limited staff time and lack of staff skills are often significant barriers to participation in advocacy.

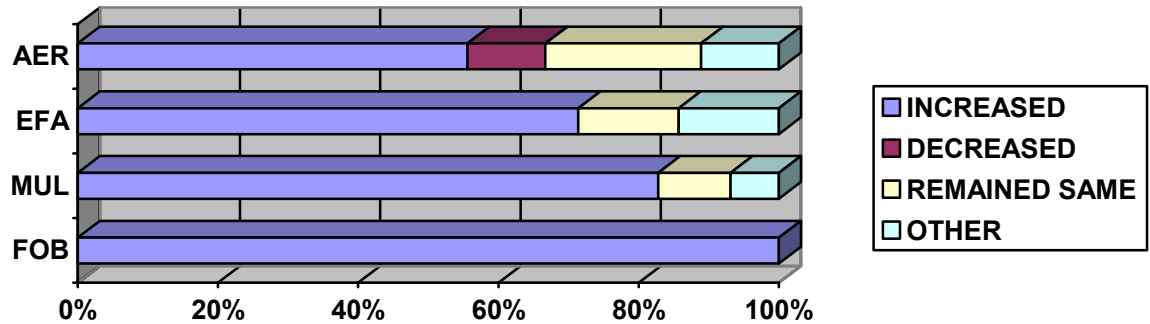
BARRIERS TO GREATER INVOLVEMENT IN ADVOCACY



The MAZON/CNI funding was particularly effective in moving agencies toward greater involvement in advocacy because of MAZON's clear expectation whether or not funds were specifically earmarked to support advocacy. When asked what would motivate their organizations to become more involved in advocacy, 95% said that receiving foundation funding to support advocacy activities was moderately to very important. Although funding is important, 97% rated awareness of opportunities to support issues of importance to constituents as moderately to very important in spurring them on to greater advocacy. Opportunities for networking and strategizing are also effective, with 88% of respondents saying that participating in policy-setting with similar organizations is an important factor in increasing advocacy activity.

Overall, 78% of grantees report that their awareness of opportunities for advocacy had increased since becoming a MAZON. Over 11% report it had remained the same. When looked at by grantee type, it is somewhat surprising to see that 100% of the Food Banks report that their awareness of advocacy opportunities had increased since becoming a MAZON grantee. Even 55.6% of the Advocacy, Education and Research organizations report an increase in awareness of opportunities.

**MAZON'S IMPACT ON THE AWARENESS OF
 OPPORTUNITIES FOR ADVOCACY BY GRANTEE TYPE**



Many respondents formally and informally cited the effectiveness of the MAZON conference as a key factor in increasing their awareness of the importance of advocacy activities, their knowledge of the issues and their skills in conducting advocacy activities in their agencies. In an effort to quantify how the conference has impacted grantees, the survey listed advocacy activity actions and whether the agencies took action as a direct result of participation in the MAZON Conference. Most clearly, over two-thirds of the respondents said that advocacy activities in their organizations have increased as a direct result of attending the MAZON Conference.

25. In the evaluations of past MAZON Conferences, participants listed the following as action steps they planned to take when they returned from the conference. Please check each action you have actually taken since you began attending MAZON conferences and whether taking this action step was as a direct result of information (or inspiration) you received or skills you learned through your conference attendance.

	Have Taken This Step	As A Result of Conference	Response Total
Increase advocacy activities in my organization	85% (41)	67% (32)	48
Increase public education activities in my organization	91% (41)	51% (23)	45
Help clients to receive benefits to which they are entitled	93% (43)	37% (17)	46
Provide advocacy education to my board	94% (30)	47% (15)	32
Participate in Hunger Action Day in Sacramento	93% (25)	44% (12)	27
Seek information from CFPA	95% (37)	49% (19)	39
Plan a legislative agenda for our organization	95% (21)	27% (6)	22
Join anti-hunger collaborative efforts	93% (39)	36% (15)	42
Write a letter to the editor about hunger issues	83% (25)	43% (13)	30
Write articles for our agency newsletter about hunger policy issues	91% (31)	38% (13)	34
Share conference information with staff	85% (46)	74% (40)	54
Share conference information with board	84% (38)	73% (33)	45
Share conference information with constituents/clients	84% (32)	74% (28)	38

However, the survey revealed that indicators of increased activity are largely anecdotal or experiential because the agencies, in general, do not track their advocacy activity. One-third of respondents said that they do not collect any information about advocacy activities at all. Respondents report that they do not have the time or the tools to measure these activities, or feel that time taken in quantifying their activities is time taken away from actually doing advocacy work.

G – MAZON AS FUNDER AND CAPACITY BUILDER

MAZON wanted to use the opportunity of the survey to assess grantees' understanding of the Jewish basis of MAZON's mission and their knowledge about social justice/social change focus of MAZON's funding strategy arising from the Jewish value of "*tikkun olam*" – to repair the world.

MAZON has deliberately chosen to identify strongly and publicly as "a Jewish response to hunger." The name, MAZON, is the Hebrew word for food. However, MAZON does not consistently interpret its religious and philosophical meaning to their grantees and, as an organization, wanted to know how strongly the meaning of their Jewish identification was understood by grantees. 69% of the survey respondents knew that "Mazon" meant "food." The next largest group, 15.5%, said that they "Didn't Know" what the word meant. Most interesting were the responses to an open-ended question that asked, "What does it mean to you that MAZON is 'a Jewish response to hunger.'" Some respondents cited the fact that MAZON raises money in the Jewish community to support anti-hunger work, with the implication that this was something outside of its own community. Many were able to accurately articulate the social change mission of MAZON and connect MAZON's funding and emphasis on advocacy to bringing about an end to the causes of hunger.

"It means that MAZON organizes the strong support of the Jewish community for the mission of ending hunger. It means that the Jewish community has a history of providing support to ending hunger and a passionate love for justice. MAZON taps into that support and passion, and funnels that support to their grantees."

"It makes it more apparent to me that defeating hunger is a team sport. I appreciate so much the caring way the Mazon staff worked to train and inform us to be better equipped to make a difference for the people we have been trusted with."

"That the organization's goals are focused on the Jewish (religious and cultural) mandate (1) to assist the hungry and homeless (regardless of their religious affiliation) and (2) that unlike other foundations, the organization focuses only on hunger and directly related issues."

"That the Jewish community supports advocacy efforts at eliminating the root causes of hunger."

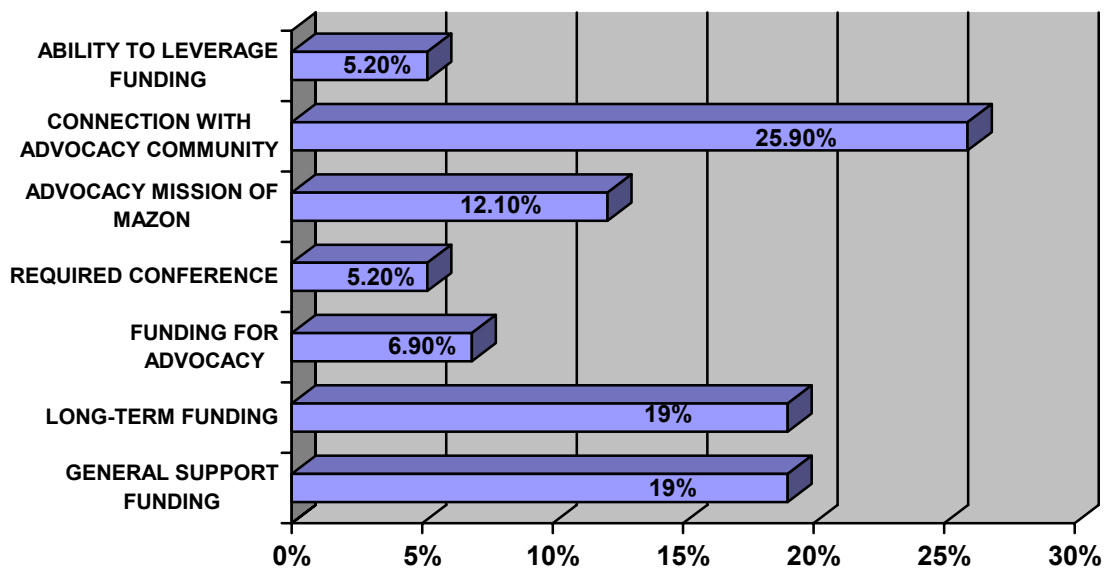
An important component of this study was the assessment of the effectiveness of the strategies that build advocacy capacity in grantees. These strategies, articulated in MAZON's original proposals to the California Endowment, were:

- Repeat funding, to establish ongoing partnerships with grantees, and provide a predictable source of support – once an initial rigorous application process is completed and annual goals are met
- General support funding, to enable grantees to leverage funds and free up staff time devoted to fund-raising for increased advocacy activity
- Establishing a clear expectation for all MAZON grantees to participate in anti-hunger advocacy
- Building capacity for advocacy through mandatory attendance for all grantees at the annual California Hunger and Policy Conference

- Building the State's anti-hunger network through strengthening connections between CNI and the State's anti-hunger policy groups and among grantees themselves

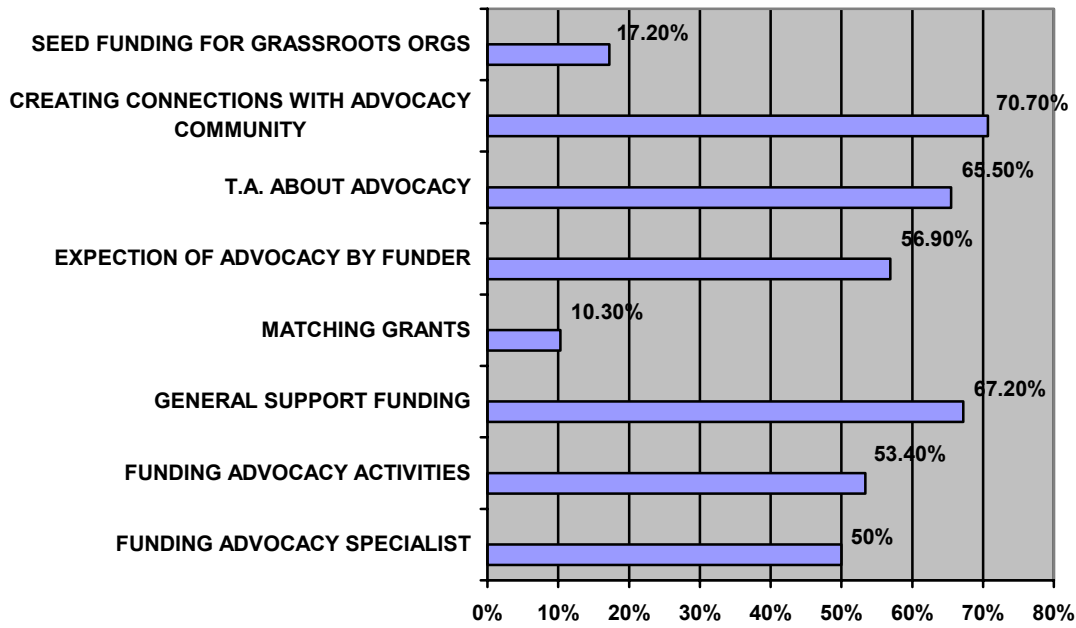
The survey asked two questions which attempted to assess the effectiveness of these strategies. The first asked respondents to identify the single component in MAZON's grantmaking strategy that influenced them to increase their involvement in advocacy. Because this question only permitted one selection, the responses were more evenly distributed across the choices, but clearly the top three are the connections with the advocacy community, repeat funding and general support funding.

MAZON'S GRANTMAKING STRATEGY THAT INFLUENCED GRANTEE MOST TO INCREASE ADVOCACY ACTIVITY



The next question asked respondents to identify what they thought were the most effective strategies in building a hunger organization's capacity to become involved in advocacy. Respondents were asked to check all that they felt applied, which resulted in much larger numbers in most categories. Once again, creating connections with the larger advocacy community was cited as the most effective strategy in building capacity:

**STRATEGIES THAT ARE MOST EFFECTIVE IN BUILDING A
 HUNGER ORGANIZATION’S CAPACITY FOR ADVOCACY**



Respondents were then asked to select the most effective capacity building strategy for advocacy in their opinion and to say why. Variations in response can be attributed to the differences in type and size of organization and the respondents’ level of experience in advocacy work. Grantees identified creating connections with the advocacy community and funding a staff person dedicated to advocacy activities as the two most effective strategies:

Funding for a specialist and building an advocacy community. Funding helps an organization by providing staff to put in the time that is needed to advocate most effectively. One staff person at one organization cannot be successful by herself. We need to come together as a community of advocates, and MAZON can facilitate that kind of collaboration.

Creating connections with the larger advocacy community. Providing access to professionals and resources creates the link that enables small organizations to build capacity with the support of experts in the field.

Funding for advocacy and general support are synonymous to a great extent. Any dollars we received from MAZON allow us to address needs and in turn to support our advocacy work. I would love to also have support for an advocacy specialist, but not at the expense of direct service dollars that free up my time as Executive Director to serve in an advocacy position.

The expectation to participate in advocacy is key for beginning advocacy work. Organizations applying for [MAZON] funds know that they need to meet this expectation. Once an organization is “up and running” with their advocacy work, then creating connections with the larger advocacy community is very effective for building advocacy capacity.

I guess the seed funding. My organization is primarily focused on giving out food. My Board and volunteers are older and stretched to the max. They have no major interest in advocacy. The case needs to be made to them, this job needs to be given to someone (probably paid staff) before this will happen.

Respondents were asked to compare MAZON with other funders that they work with on a variety of variables. The response from grantees is overwhelmingly positive, with only “size of grants” receiving any negative ratings,

35. As a funder, how does MAZON compare with other funders you work with?					
	Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent	Response Average
Size of grants available	3% (2)	31% (18)	58% (34)	8% (5)	2.71
Level of technical assistance and support	0% (0)	9% (5)	45% (26)	47% (27)	3.38
Responsiveness of staff	0% (0)	2% (1)	12% (7)	86% (50)	3.84
Turn-around time from request to notification	0% (0)	7% (4)	49% (29)	44% (26)	3.37
Clarity of application process	0% (0)	2% (1)	34% (20)	64% (37)	3.62
Clarity of mission and goals of funder	0% (0)	2% (1)	17% (10)	81% (47)	3.79
Total Respondents					59
(skipped this question)					2

MAZON’s staff receives uniformly high ratings for its responsiveness, helpfulness and understanding of the realities of the world of anti-hunger advocacy and service provision. MAZON’S clarity of mission, focus on advocacy, and encouragement of others are cited as important added value components to its funding. 98% of survey respondents cited MAZON’s “clarity of mission and goals” as “good” to “excellent” in comparison to other funders. An outstanding 98% rate the responsiveness of MAZON’s staff as “good” or “excellent” in comparison to other funders. The lowest rating is given to “size of grants available.” MAZON’s strategy is to give small grants to many organizations. The size of MAZON’s grants alone is not sufficient to account for its level of influence and perceived effectiveness. Its effectiveness comes from its clarity of mission and vision, its strong support for advocacy among its grantees, and the added-value of the technical assistance and education grantees receive from MAZON’s staff and at the CNI Conference.

The final survey question asked grantees to share insights on how MAZON can better achieve its goals. Responses were overwhelmingly positive with a few specific recommendations for additional steps that MAZON could take:

We believe that MAZON has identified a need, set goals and taken actions to help eradicate hunger that has been sorely lacking in other organizations committed to similar goals. At this point, with limited experience working with the organization, we believe that MAZON has an excellent plan to achieve its goals.

MAZON has provided [the agency] with ongoing support, both financial and moral, to build a strong advocacy program. In addition, MAZON has challenged us to become more aggressive in our advocacy and lobbying. As a result of suggestions from MAZON staff and conferences speakers, we have included our Board in advocacy activities and decision making. MAZON should continue to fund the community building among anti-hunger advocates in California and impart on its awardees its strong commitment to advocacy.

I feel that there are many levels of advocacy, from legislation to grass roots community awareness activities. I think MAZON is very aware of all the different levels and does an excellent job being supportive and always nudging us to do a little more.

While the size of the grant is small, it is perhaps the most valuable, in terms of the technical assistance we receive through the conference and the sense of partnership and good will the staff creates with its grantees. I look forward to the annual conference, it recharges me. I also enjoy reconnecting with all of my colleagues who are also doing this work. I wish more funders would work towards developing an attitude of trust, respect and partnership with their grantees as MAZON does.

V - CNI ANNUAL CONFERENCES

A – ASSESSMENT OF THE CNI ANNUAL CONFERENCE

MAZON's CNI annual conference is a key strategy to build the State's anti-hunger network and the advocacy capacity of CNI grantees. The conferences brought grantees together, many for the first time, with other anti-hunger organizations, state and national food policy advocates, and anti-hunger professionals. MAZON understood that if the conference was to be most effective, it had to be mandatory for all CNI grantees and therefore it paid all expenses for participants. Conference costs of \$15,000 - \$20,000 annually were borne directly by MAZON. Many participants expressed their appreciation for MAZON's sensitivity to how difficult it was to take off time for the conference and said the fact that it was mandatory gave them "permission" to take time off from direct service for education and renewal.

Participants said that the conferences were empowering and inspirational experiences that increased their commitment to advocacy and their skills. The conferences were clearly successful in creating and deepening relationships that strengthened the State's anti-hunger network. Many participants work in relative isolation and do not have access to training, resources and tools. At each conference, participants received a binder containing legislative analyses and updates, advocacy tools, articles, web-site directories and other resources that many participants said they referred to throughout the year.

One of the goals of the CNI was to broaden grantees' understanding of and role in anti-hunger advocacy in general and survey responses and grantee interviews indicate that participation in the MAZON Conference was an effective tool in accomplishing this goal.

"My idea of advocacy is a lot different after attending the MAZON Conference last month. I know now that it is a process that needs to come from every part of our program to educate our clients, our supporters, and the community concerning the real needs of our people. It also has to do with knowing, as an organization, how to keep the politicians up to speed on how to meet the needs of our people."

B – CONFERENCE CONTENT

The Conferences strongly emphasized MAZON's advocacy and social change message. Sessions and speakers focused on building agency staff skills in advocacy and exploring the critical legislative and policy issues impacting clients. Attendance at the conference steadily increased, from 35 different agencies in 1998 to 78 in 2002. The five conferences held were:

YEAR	TITLE OF CONFERENCE	NUMBER OF PARTICIPATING AGENCIES
1998	<i>Promoting Advocacy, Service and Change</i>	35
1999	<i>Strategies and Tools for Social Change</i>	41
2000	<i>Hunger Matters: Progress Through Partnership</i>	42
2001	<i>Repairing the World: Responding to Hunger in Turbulent Times</i>	48
2002	<i>Feeding the Future: From Hardship to Hope</i>	78

In reviewing the participant evaluation forms for all conferences, there is unanimous approval and appreciation expressed for the conference. All participants rated the conferences as useful to them in

their work and reported that they provided excellent opportunities for networking and learning. Many participants cited the inspiration and encouragement received from MAZON and the program speakers in spurring them to begin or intensify their advocacy activity. Exposure to national figures such as Robert Greenstein of Washington D.C.'s Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, and Deborah Leff, former President and CEO of America's Second Harvest helped local staff feel connected to the larger issues of hunger and advocacy in the U.S. National organizations such as the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities and Food Research & Action Center used the conference to reach into local communities and connect with their concerns.

The programs each year were a mix of issue and policy-based sessions, sharing of tools and models, specialized sessions on working the media and technology, and personal issues such as burn-out. Program sessions fell into five broad categories with an emphasis on legislative and policy issues and advocacy tools and strategies.

At each conference, evaluation surveys asked participants to identify what next steps or follow-up from MAZON would help them most to achieve greater long-term impact. The following are some of the key suggestions that came out of the Conferences:

- *Develop list-serv so grantees can communicate and share advocacy ideas throughout the year.*
- *More best-practices surveys, like the one CFPA published on food stamps.*
- *MAZON funding for a media-advocate to work with MAZON grantees.*
- *Keep us networked with each other and with CFPA, FRAC, Center on Budget & Policy Priorities, etc.*
- *Continue to provide support and leadership to those of us on the frontline of hunger relief and advocacy.*
- *Continue the CNI!*

**CALIFORNIA NUTRITION INITIATIVE CONFERENCE
 SUMMARY OF SESSIONS**

NAME OF SESSION	CONFERENCE
ADVOCACY TOOLS AND STRATEGIES	
Advanced Advocacy: Demystifying the Budget and Legislative Process	1998
Beyond Sound Bites: Public Relations and Advocacy	1998
Top 10 Advocacy Opportunities for the Food Stamp Program	1999
Welfare Reform and the Role of Faith-Based Charities	1999
Models for Community-Based Food Stamp Outreach, Enrollment and Advocacy	1999
Beyond Soup Lines and Sound Bites: the Media and Hunger	2000
Lobbying and Advocacy by Nonprofits	2000
Advocacy That Works: Success Stories from the Field	2000
Voices for the Voiceless: Cultivating Client Advocates	2001
CFPA@10: Where California's Food Advocacy Partnership Has Been & Where It Is Heading	2002
Getting the News Out on Hunger: Media Tools & Tips	2002
LEGISLATION, POLICIES AND ISSUES	
Food Stamps for Poets and Activists	1998
Effective Approaches to EITC Outreach	1998
Immigrants and Public Benefits	1998, 1999
Legislative Update and Policy Platform Development	1998
Hunger Among Low Income Seniors	1999
Food Stamp Reauthorization: Redoubling Our Efforts	2000, 2001
Increasing Immigrant Access to Food Stamps	2000
Hunger in the Wake of Terror	2001
School and Snacks: Improving Child Nutrition Programs	2001
Following the Faith-Based Initiative	2001
The Poor Pay More: Shedding Light on California's Energy Crisis	2001
Food Insecurity in California	2002
The Diet of Poverty: Preventing Childhood Obesity	2002
Perspectives from Inside the Beltway	2002
Doing Our Homework: Preparing for Child Nutrition Reauthorization	2002
Making Work Pay: Support for Working Families	2002
Reducing Access Barriers for Immigrants	2002
AGENCY CAPACITY AND COALITION BUILDING	
Care and Feeding of Local Coalitions	1998
Educating Your Board of Directors About Advocacy	1999
Leadership Roundtable	1999
Hindsight and Insight About Child Nutrition Program Partnerships	2000
Tools and Tips for "Stamping" Out Hunger	2002
Rural and Remote Perspectives on Service Delivery	2002
RESEARCH AND TOOLS	
Measuring Hunger: Powerful New Tools for Community Research	1998
Navigating the Information Superhighway: An Open Road to Advocacy	2001
PERSONAL	
Battling Burnout: A Balanced Approach to Fulfilling Your Mission	2000
Stress Spa: Remembering to Relax	2001

C – CNI @ 4 TOWN HALL MEETING

At the 2002 MAZON CNI Conference, a “Town Hall” meeting” was held at the 2002 CNI Conference to create an open, interactive dialogue with grantees about the CNI. The grantees were asked to sit at tables according to their grantee type. There were 14 tables: 3 – AER, 4 – FOB, 3 – EFA, and 4 – MUL. The session began with a “Report from the Field,” where three MAZON grantees were asked to respond as a panel to the three questions which were going to be discussed by the group:

1. What strategies worked best to increase advocacy activity in your organization?
2. What barriers still exist?
3. What are your priorities and next steps to continue the development of your agency’s advocacy capacity?

The panelists were: David Goodman, Executive Director of the Redwood Empire Food Bank in Santa Rosa, Rhonda Meister, Executive Director of St. Joseph’s Center in Venice, and Tom Ciccarelli, Executive Director of Interfaith Ministries of Modesto. Following the panel, each table discussed the questions and developed priorities and recommendations for next steps that they and MAZON could take to build on what had been accomplished over the first four years of the CNI. The groups were asked to record their discussions on sheets that were at each table and asked to identify the top three strategies, barriers and priorities that they had discussed.

The feedback sheets were tabulated by number of times a specific strategy was recorded at each table and the types of grantees that mentioned the strategy. (See Section 3, CNI@4 - Group Feedback for complete results). The top three responses to each question were:

Qu. 1 – Strategies That Work Best to Increase Advocacy

- Coalition building with other communities with similar issues and needs
- Community forums to educate local providers on issues and means of participating
- Using youth group members to speak at schools and groups

Qu. 2 – Barriers That Still Exist

- Money – consistent and continuing funding
- Lack of time – attention divided between service, education and advocacy, being overwhelmed
- Lack of staff

Qu. 3 – Priorities and Next Steps

- Grow our collaboration and network building
- Work on the county and city level to bring the issues local
- Developing stronger contacts with the media
- Develop more resources for advocacy activities and outreach (tie with above)

These results reinforce the survey findings that identified coalition building and communication connection are the most effective strategies, and that lack of money, time and staff are the principal barriers to advocacy. The priorities, identified point to ways funders can support next steps in strengthening network building, media skills and providing resources for advocacy and outreach.

VI - SITE VISITS/AGENCY EVALUATIONS

A – SELECTION CRITERIA

Seven CNI grantees were selected for in-depth review to assess the impact of the CNI on individual grantees, and site visits were made to four of these agencies. Agencies were selected according to the following criteria:

- *Multi-year support* – agencies were selected that had received CNI support for a minimum of three years.
- *Geographic diversity* – agencies were selected to represent the geographic diversity of the State, North and South, coastal and valley, urban and rural.
- *Grantee size* – agencies were selected to represent both large and small MAZON's grantees in terms of annual budget
- *New and recurring grantee* – agencies were selected that represented both new MAZON grantees and MAZON grantees prior to the CNI

The agencies selected were:

- Food for People, Eureka
- FoodLink for Tulare County, Visalia
- Grupo de la Comida – East Bay, Oakland
- Interfaith Community Services, Escondido
- Jewish Family & Children's Service, San Francisco
- Los Angeles Food Bank, Los Angeles
- Ukiah Community Center, Ukiah

With each agency, certain key variables were explored through personal or telephone interviews. Each agency's proposals and end-of-year reports to MAZON were reviewed. Because MAZON funding is for operating expenses, it was difficult to identify or track quantifiable goals for each agency during the grant period. The evaluation interview focused on identifying how their participation in the CNI had affected their participation in advocacy activity and their attitudes toward advocacy. The following issues were discussed with all agencies:

- Changes in levels of advocacy activity
- Changes in board, staff and client attitudes toward advocacy
- Identification of a continuum of advocacy activity in the agency
- Establishment of goals for advocacy activity and measurement of achievement
- Barriers to greater advocacy activity

B – AGENCY EVALUATIONS

Food for People, Eureka

CNI FUNDING HISTORY

1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
0	\$7,000	\$10,000	\$11,000	\$11,000

Food for People is the food bank of Humboldt County and provides food to 20 rural and remote pantries. A MAZON grantee since 1999, Food for People had a 2002 total budget of \$361,392, making it one of MAZON’s smaller grantees. A site visit and in-depth interview with Executive Director Ann Holcomb and Outreach Coordinator Jennifer Rishel was conducted on March 10, 2003. It was difficult to assess the impact of CNI funding on Food for People over time because the Executive Director started with the agency two years ago and there are no records of the level of their advocacy activity prior to that time. However, it is clear that Food for People is one of the most involved and innovative rural food banks in the State. Their outreach and program activities go far beyond just providing food to their pantry members. Some of their activities include:

- Conducting focus groups with local residents to identify barriers to food stamp participation and developing methods to address the barriers
- Holding a Food Pantry Summit to bring together their pantry members for a day to review administrative requirements, disseminate information about food stamp access, and educate about advocacy opportunities
- Disseminate Hunger 101 curriculum in schools
- Starting a Healthy Food Initiative to improve quality of food in school vending machines
- Starting Farm-to-School programs to create links between schools and local farms to increase servings of fresh food, organized Farm to School Conference
- Organizing a “Plant a Row for the Hungry” campaign with local farmers

MAZON funding has had significant added-value to Food for People. The agency makes good use of the information that it receives at the Conferences and reports that they use the resource materials throughout the year. Ann Holcomb appeared on a local radio show focusing on Hunger in Humboldt and invited Dr. Charles DiSogra, Director of the California Health Interview Survey (CHIS), whom she met at the MAZON 2002 Conference, to present findings relevant to the County. The also take advantage CFPA and use their materials with their board and in their newsletters. MAZON’s validation and support of advocacy activities has enabled them to leverage other funders to support these activities.

Food for People received funding for an outreach worker to improve utilization of the remote food stamp eligibility processes. The Executive Director says that it is important to have a dedicated worker to ensure success in these efforts as it is difficult for the Executive Director to stay oh top of things, disseminate information and follow-up with the remote sites to keep program progress on track. The funding for this position is not secure.

Food for People involved in direct advocacy and has frequent contact with their State and County legislators on issues of importance to them. They were central in coordinating the response to the threat to the Senior Brown Bag program and organized letter writing campaigns and meetings of seniors with their State Senators. Food for People’s board is engaged in its advocacy and supports the agency’s efforts.

It has taken a leadership role in convening the Humboldt County Food Stamp Access Task Force. Some recent successes of the Task Force are:

- Providing a monthly roving eligibility worker from DSS to reach residents in the poorest, rural communities in the county who can't come to Eureka to apply for Food Stamps
- Initiating mailing food stamps to rural recipients to eliminate trips to Eureka or Garberville to pick them up
- Implementation of a simplified, mail-in Food Stamp application form

Ann Holcomb identified several major barriers to greater advocacy activity in the region:

- Hopelessness - especially among the younger poor population. Many are transients and do not have connections with the community. It is very difficult to involve this population in advocating for their needs or for societal change.
- Illiteracy – the County illiteracy rate is 20%. This requires more personally intensive outreach activities because flyers and written materials do not reach them.
- Stigma – in the small towns of the County, public activity around hunger, use of food stamps, etc. is equated with “welfare” and participants are stigmatized.

FoodLink of Tulare County, Visalia

CNI Funding History

1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
\$8,000	\$9,000	\$9,000	\$11,000	\$11,000

FoodLink of Tulare County is the food bank serving Tulare and Kings County in Central California. A telephone interview was conducted with Sandy Beals, Executive Director, on March 24, 2003. A MAZON grantee prior to the CNI, FoodLink had a 2002 budget of \$687,789. Like Food for People, FoodLink is a rural food bank with significant advocacy and programmatic components.

As a long-time MAZON grantee, FoodLink reports that a significant change that occurred in the past four years, partially as a result of the CNI, has been the strengthening of the California Association of Food Banks and the formation of the Northern California Food Bank Coalition. The Northern California Coalition is an 11-member group funded by the Packard Foundation. As a member of the Northern California Coalition, FoodLink received funding to hire a half-time Community Relations Coordinator who increased their advocacy and outreach capacities. Membership in the Association and the Coalition has helped them to prioritize advocacy within the agency and to focus on issues that will end hunger.

Sandy Beals said that her board is receptive to education about advocacy and are active in writing letters to support selected issues. She makes a lot of community presentations to Rotaries and other civic groups. She says that in her community it is important to frame the message on certain issues carefully. For example, she said, that in opposing finger imaging for Food Stamp recipients, it is more effective to emphasize the increased administrative costs rather than the concerns about privacy. She reports that the agency tracks the level of its advocacy activity such as the number of participants in advocacy workshops, number of trainings held, number of letters or e-mails sent, and number of staff contacts with legislators. Since CNI funding has began, these indicators have increased. She cites the effectiveness of the partnership between MAZON and CFPA in providing access to good, usable information. Also the California Association of Food Banks has made it easier to write letters and encourage others to do so. Sandy Beals said, “*Working with Sharon [Eghigian] I can do something in ten minutes that would take me two hours to do.*”

FoodLink began a two-year Education & Advocacy Project in 2001, partially funded by the Packard Foundation. FoodLink allocates part of its MAZON funding to support activities under this program. The Project has created a local version of the Hunger 101 curriculum to use with board, staff, local agencies, county employees and community groups. FoodLink Board members have formed a “speakers’ bureau” to advocate on hunger issues. They have also conducted a bus tour, taking local legislators, county employees, media, and community leaders to visit agencies working on the alleviation of hunger.

FoodLink emphasizes the importance of drawing the connection between hunger and health care costs. Sandy Beals said that in speaking with doctors about the issues, she can actually “see the light bulb go off.” She recommends that stronger alliances be formed with the health care community and others interested in the connection between nutrition and health.

Sandy Beals cites the importance of MAZON’s conferences in energizing and inspiring her. She said, “Support from MAZON has always been good – good isn’t the right word – it has continued to be great. There is no question that MAZON is by far the best funder that we have. They make it a point to really understand our issues. No other funder really does that.”

Grupo de la Comida – East Bay, Oakland

CNI Funding History

1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
0	\$5,000	\$7,000	\$7,000	\$14,000

Grupo de la Comida is a weekly food box provider serving primarily the Latino immigrant and refugee community of East Oakland. Their total 2002 operating budget is \$27,700, making them MAZON’s smallest size grantee, with MAZON providing more than 50% of their annual budget in 2002. Grupo was not a MAZON grantee prior to the CNI. A site visit and interview with Board member John Castelfranco was conducted on March 21, 2003. Grupo is almost entirely volunteer run, with only one part-time paid staff person.

MAZON funding has enabled them to buy some food from the Alameda County Food Bank to supplement the donations they receive from the Oakland Produce Market, supermarkets and USDA commodities. The rent on their church space has more than doubled in the past year. Even with such limited budget, Grupo provides food boxes to approximately 180 families per week and serves an unduplicated 800 families per year. In addition to food provision, Grupo offers education to their constituents about Food Stamp and WIC eligibility, health care information and screenings, help with tax preparation and filing for the earned income tax credit, and conducts English as a Second Language classes for people waiting for the food distribution.

As an emergency food provider, Grupo’s emphasis naturally is on securing sources of food for its constituents, however through their involvement as a MAZON grantee they have become better connected to the network of food policy advocates. Grupo credits their involvement with MAZON in connecting them to the Alameda County Food Bank’s Food Stamp Outreach Program and has begun to work with CFPA on food-policy issues related to immigrants.

While Grupo encourages their clients and board to become involved in advocacy, they keep no records about participation. They encourage their clients to become active in advocacy and take volunteers to speak at community events. This year, for the first time, their staff person went to Sacramento to advocate on behalf of their clients’ needs. They credit this action to the strategies they learned at the MAZON Conference and their greater confidence about undertaking advocacy activities since becoming a CNI grantee.

It is clear that MAZON funding has had a significant impact in building capacity in this small, volunteer-driven organization and strengthening its ties with the anti-hunger network. The chief concern is its level of dependence on MAZON funding and the difficulty it faces in diversifying its funding sources.

Interfaith Community Services, Escondido

CNI Funding History

1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
\$6,000	0	\$6,000	\$6,000	\$16,000

Interfaith Community Services is a multi-service organization that provides a broad array of social services in Northern San Diego County. With an annual budget of \$4,200,000, they are in the mid-range in size of MAZON's grantees. ICS was a MAZON grantee prior to 1998. A telephone interview was conducted with Executive Director Suzanne Stewart Pohlman on March 27, 2003.

MAZON funding is used for operating costs for their Nutrition Program and to pay a portion of the salary of their Food Security Manager. The Food Security Manager is responsible for hunger advocacy in the agency supplemented by their Congregational Liaison/Volunteer Coordinator. ICS has a broad program scope that encompasses provision of basic human needs, substance abuse counseling, housing, senior services, and veterans' needs. While their MAZON grant is a small part of their operating budget, being part of the CNI has had a significant impact on their advocacy activities. Suzanne Pohlman says that attendance at the MAZON Conference has helped the organization renew its commitment to advocacy and broaden the understanding within the agency that advocacy is an essential part of bringing about policy change.

ICS has used the information from the MAZON Conferences in their membership meetings and shared it with representatives of over 100 different congregations. Using what they have learned at the Conference, they have organized their community response to their most urgent needs and targeted assembly members and local council people who "need nudges". They have organized e-mail alerts, letter-writing campaigns and faxes. They ask for people to send copies of letters that they send so that they can track participation, but not all people do this so they really do not have an accurate assessment of the level of response.

She reported that there has not been much activity in the San Diego Hunger Coalition recently and feels that this is a "hole in the boat."

Jewish Family and Children's Services, San Francisco

CNI Funding History

1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$13,000	\$13,000

Jewish Family and Children's Services is a large, multi-service organization with an annual budget of over \$22,000,000. They were a MAZON grant recipient prior to the CNI. MAZON funding is used to fund their Kosher Meals on Wheels Program and Family Meal Delivery Program for individuals and families with disabilities, chronic illness, AIDS or other special needs that make it difficult for them to secure food. A site visit and interview was conducted on March 4, 2003 with Amy Rassen, Associate Executive Director, and Suzy Varadi, Food Service Manager.

JF&CS' food program consists of congregate meals for seniors that is funded through government contracts, Kosher home-delivered meals for home-bound seniors, home-delivered meals to disabled

adults and families with disabled children. The agency started a small food pantry on-site for immediate needs and emergency assistance and also delivers fresh produce twice weekly to seniors. Amy Rassen said that being a MAZON grantee increased their awareness of the importance of the issue of hunger to their clients and stimulated them become more invested in food provision as part of their comprehensive care plan for each client that includes individual needs assessment, case management, counseling and financial assistance. As a result of participation in the MAZON Conference, the agency created the position of Food Service Manager to improve their food services and increase their connections in the anti-hunger community. Their participation as a MAZON Grantee has helped them feel part of a bigger movement on food issues.

JF&CS is very involved in advocacy and has a sophisticated board Public Issues Committee that creates six policy papers each year that set their advocacy priorities and defines their strategies.. Committee members and executive staff go to Sacramento and meet with key legislators. Legislators come to meet with the Committee to hear their concerns. JF&CS communicates their policy statements and advocacy priorities through their e-mail list to thousands of donors and supporters. They do not monitor what action is taken as a result of their e-mails.

JF&CS is a clear example of how the impact of a MAZON grant goes far beyond the actual dollars received. Since attending the MAZON CNI Conferences, Amy Rassen reported that she has lead an effort to increase the agency's participation in advocacy for food and hunger issues. In addition, she has highlighted the issue of reduction in food programs in her role as a board member of Family Support America, a national coalition of family and child advocates, and helped to frame its message to Congress regarding maintaining the budget for food for poor families.

Amy Rassen suggested steps toward greater advocacy success that has worked in their agency:

- Have a clear strategy
- Build relationships with legislators
- Involve board members and volunteers
- Tell everybody what you need
- Join coalitions

Los Angeles Regional Food Bank, Los Angeles

CNI Funding History

1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
\$10,000	0	\$10,000	\$12,000	\$13,000

The Los Angeles Regional Food Bank, with a network of more than 1,000 members and an annual budget of over \$5,000,000, is the largest MAZON-CNI Food Bank grantee. An interview was conducted with Michael Flood, Executive Director, by phone on March 31, 2003.

During the course of the CNI, the L.A. Regional Food Bank has expanded its mission to include a commitment to fight hunger on a policy level. This movement toward advocacy is largely attributable to a year-long strategic planning process begun in 1998. One outcome was that the board committed to going beyond collecting and distributing food to addressing the root causes of hunger. The timing of this process dovetailed with the CNI and MAZON's increased focus on advocacy. Michael Flood, the LA. Regional Food Bank's Executive Director said that MAZON's leadership role in highlighting the importance of food banks' role in advocacy was extremely valuable in moving more food banks into advocacy. Although MAZON's level of funding is small, MAZON's focus on the work of food banks is important.

The staff of the L.A. Regional Food Bank identifies the issues that it feels are most important to it and those where their position, as the food bank of Los Angeles, can have the most impact. Michael Flood said that they were careful in supporting issues selectively and not “watering-down” their name. He feels that there are three levels of issues, that move from what they know the most about to those where they are less involved. These are:

1. Distribution of food to charities – policies around commodity distribution, eligibility, food donations
2. Federal nutrition policy – the LA. Regional Food Bank feels that it has developed sufficient expertise on food stamp policy to be able to take useful positions.
3. Effects of proposed tax cut on programs.

They provide some training on advocacy at their annual charities conference that has 500 participants. There are usually at least two or three workshops about child food programs.

The Food Bank does mailings to its member charities to provide information on issues and mobilize members to advocate about specific issues. The Food Bank also maintains a web-site that posts information about hunger and policy issues to increase hunger awareness. Internally they track how often they meet with legislators and policymakers and to whom they send letters. They do not track responses that network members make to alerts or other actions that may have been taken as a result of their web-site or mailings. Michael Flood reinforced what other grantee executive directors had said about this issue, *“While that is important information, the whole issue of measuring activity...but any dollar or hour you use is taken away from what you are attempting to do.”*

Michael Flood reported that feedback he has received from some of the agencies who attend the MAZON conference, especially those that are small and do not do advocacy work in a sustained way, is that the Conference is both overwhelming and energizing. He felt that there should be different sessions for those who are new to advocacy to help them determine how to get involved and focus on a particular area. However, the benefit of the conference, in exposing people to the state and national agencies and creating the networking opportunities is felt to be extremely valuable.

Ukiah Community Center, Ukiah

CNI FUNDING HISTORY

1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
0	5,000	9,000	10,000	12,000

Ukiah Community Center is classified by MAZON as a Food Bank grantee although it also offers a number of direct community center and homeless services. The agency is the primary safety net organization in the region and provides emergency services, day shelter for homeless, case management and crisis services. The Food Bank serves 15 pantries and food distribution sites in addition to distributing food boxes on-site three days a week. A site visit and interview was conducted with Executive Director Kathleen Stone on March 11, 2003.

The UCC has been going through some difficult staff transitions over the past two years and the agency appears still to be in a great deal of flux. Kathleen Stone assumed the position of Executive Director in September 2002 after the Director who had been there for two years had left. Kathleen had been the Homeless Services Programs Director at the agency for four years prior to becoming Executive Director. The previous Director had been preceded by the founder of the agency who had been there for 30 years. Their long-time food bank manager left in October and has not been replaced because of budgetary constraints. Then the Food Bank Warehouse Assistant quit in

December, during their busiest time. The Food Bank is now staffed by a Warehouse Manager and Kathleen is overseeing the Food Bank operations.

The food bank is managing to continue to provide basic services to its pantries and food box distribution but Kathleen feels that their operations need to be completely reviewed. The Food Bank has some operational difficulties because the previous director had developed a database and reporting program that no one knows how to use. When he left suddenly, due to medical reasons, there was no transition. The Warehouse Manager has become a full-time data entry clerk and they are seeking the help of the Redwood Empire Food Bank with their data gathering and reporting needs.

Kathleen Stone said that since the Food Bank Manager left, the Mendocino County Hunger Task Force has not met because he was the one who kept it going. None of the other participants have come forward to take it over and Kathleen said that she cannot manage it at this time. The agency is less connected now to the regional and statewide provider networks as the previous Manager had been on the Board of the California Association of Food Banks and very involved in statewide activities.

Kathleen said that she felt that they were “on the bottom rung” and were starting over. She is trying to re-start their newsletter and will have a food bank page. She said that she gets Action Alerts from CFPA but doesn’t know what they can do to help her. She said that she could use some education on how to do advocacy. She did not attend the November MAZON Conference. She feels that the Board is more interested in the food bank than it ever has been and is ready to commit to making it successful operationally and taking on a broader role in addressing impact-issues around food. The Board is over 50% new as many members left when the original Executive Director left. They are all learning together how to operate the agency. Kathleen feels that three of them are willing to become personally active in advocacy.

The experience of the Ukiah Community Center illustrates the importance of a key staff member to make advocacy happen in an agency. It is often due to the interest and impetus of a single individual that an agency becomes a catalyst and leader for advocacy.

Update on Ukiah Community Center: The evaluator called Kathleen Stone on June 16, 2003 to get an update on their situation. She said that things were going much better. She followed up on a suggestion made at the site visit and asked Dave Goodman of Redwood Empire Food Bank for some assistance with her food bank operations and board involvement. Kathleen reported that Dave had a very productive meeting with their Board and staff. He spoke about the Board’s role in education and advocacy for hunger and homeless issues. Dave also helped the Board and staff understand the where their agency fits into the larger picture of state and Federal anti-hunger work. She also said that she had begun to forward CFPA Action Alerts to her Board and ask them to let her know when they take action.

VII – SUMMARY OF KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEWS

The purpose of the key informant interviews were to determine how well the goals of the California Nutrition Initiative were understood among key stakeholders and decision-makers, what were the perceived successes and failures of the California Nutrition Initiative, and what information they hoped the evaluation would produce. See Section 4~, Sample Key Informant Interview Protocol. The following individuals were interviewed:

- Stacy Dean, Director of Food Stamp and Immigrant Policy, Center on Budget and Policy Priorities
- Sharon Eghigian, Director, California Association of Food Banks
- Gail Gronert, Speaker's Office of Policy, Assembly Speaker Wesson's Office
- Ken Hecht, Executive Director, California Food Policy Advocates
- Mia Johnson, Grants Director, MAZON
- Edie Mesick, MAZON Grants Committee Member and Executive Director, Nutrition Consortium of New York State
- Evelyn Laser Shlensky, Chair, MAZON Grants Advisory Committee
- H. Eric Schockman, Executive Director, MAZON
- Marion Standish, Senior Program Officer, The California Endowment
- Kim Wade, Director, Northern California Food Banks

Certain themes emerged from the interviews which are explored with informants' comments reported anonymously.

- ***California Food Banks and emergency food providers have experienced significant growth in capacity, stability and involvement in advocacy during the period 1998-2001.***

The CNI and the Packard Foundation's grant to the Northern California Association of Food Banks significantly increased capacity, collaboration, and advocacy activities during the period 1998-2001. The Packard Foundation grant created the Northern California Association of Food Banks that linked 11 Second Harvest Food Banks in North and Central California and funded a half-time person at each Food Bank to provide education and advocacy services. The Association is coordinated by Kim Wade, who provides training, communication and technical assistance. This grant, however, is in its final year of funding and the agencies have had to absorb the staff person or eliminate the position.

The networking and mutual support facilitated by the Packard initiative, the CNI and other regional hunger coalitions have strengthened the infrastructure of many of the State's food banks and providers and have enabled them to stabilize their operations. Through the learning opportunities created by the CNI conference, participation in Hunger Days, dissemination of the Hunger 101 curriculum, and other resources, food banks are now better able to put some time into advocacy. Key informants all stressed that there has been increasing emphasis placed on advocacy and more engagement in advocacy activity in the past five years.

There has definitely been an increase in the level of engagement and advocacy in California and an increase in focus. There is a lot of focus now.

There was expressed fear, however, that domestic issues have been pushed off the national and state radar by war and security issues. At the same time, hunger and nutrition advocacy has lost some of its stigma because of its decoupling from welfare reform.

- **Associations and networks are essential to provide impetus and support for advocacy**

For an initiative like the CNI to be successful, statewide policy agencies like CFPA are crucial to help set the statewide and federal agenda so that the individual groups don't have to spend time in research and priority setting. The CNI has had an important role in increasing CFPA's connection with grassroots agencies and making available CFPA's resources to a wider number of constituents.

CFPA works well here as a statewide organization of the techies/policy crowd. They listen to the grassroots to the extent they are plugged in. This is important. MAZON has emphasized this.

Anchor organizations like CFPA and the California Association of Food Banks, the Northern California Association of Food Banks and regional coalitions are all cited as critical in engaging local food banks and providers in advocacy and connecting them with the larger anti-hunger community. The food banks share the training and educational materials they receive from the networks with their members, often in "pantry day" events, that enable providers to become involved at appropriate levels. However, infrastructure beyond the food banks is still minimal. Many emergency food providers are entirely volunteer run, have limited or no connection to other agencies, and have no budget.

The food banks do sharing on perceptions of issues and what they are seeing in the community. [Pantries] may be staffed by an 80-year-old part-time volunteer who is stressed to do the basic functions.

It is also essential for the statewide policy groups to set the agenda and strategies. The individual agencies do not have the capacity to do this.

California has the anchor organizations listening and working with people to set a statewide and federal agenda. Individual groups that may have a part-time advocacy person don't have to decide what the priorities are. They can work on the statewide agenda with others.

- **MAZON is perceived by hunger professionals as an unusually effective and involved funder.**

The hunger professionals interviewed all acknowledged MAZON's unique position as a funder with a "point of view" and felt that its strategies were effective. MAZON's expectation and encouragement of advocacy has been instrumental in moving grantees along the continuum to more involvement and its strategy of providing operating support gives the flexibility needed to encourage agencies to take on advocacy activities.

"Mazon has changed the world for many of its grantees by pushing in subtle and in not so subtle ways to get people active in policy and advocacy. They were the only ones who played a critical role in pressuring people who thought that their job was to collect, store and distribute food to see advocacy as part of what they had to do."

"Grantees love them. The application is fun. You can talk about what you want to do. It is so liberating. Hopefully they never change. It is OK that they say, 'Here is what we think are the priorities...'"

“MAZON provides glue money to bring people together. That is hard to come by There is a need to get together and strategize.”

- **It is important to turn policy issues into what it means for each constituency and community**

The catalyst for Involvement in advocacy is a personal connection with the policy issue. This applies both to gaining agency commitment as well as making connections with the legislator. When attempting to encourage a food bank or food provider to engage in advocacy, it is essential that they have information about the impact that the policies will have on their clients. For example, one of the recent successful advocacy stories is the effort to save Senior Brown Bag funding. This was an issue that everyone could easily understand and mobilize around.

“It was really exciting to see how much energy providers put into saving the program. It shows that when people are given a little stimulus and an issue that they care about, they will rally to support.”

From the point of view of the legislator, this campaign was effective because it put a human face on the issue and was specific about the impact on individual constituents.

- **What would it look like if the CNI were successful?**

- ✓ Most eligible people would be connected with government programs with limited paperwork
- ✓ California would have taken advantage of all opportunities under Federal programs, like Food Stamps, WIC, etc.
- ✓ Emergency providers would not be primary source of support for families
- ✓ Connection between nutrition and health would be clearly made – There would be resources to help people make better food choices within their budgets.
- ✓ There would be a visible network of anti-hunger organizations in active communication with one another
- ✓ There would be an Identification of prioritized consensus issues that all agencies were working on
- ✓ Access to best practices on operational level would be created to support infrastructure and capacity
- ✓ Access to sustainable source of dollars so that organizations do not have to choose between service and advocacy
- ✓ All grantees are engaged in policy and advocacy work
- ✓ Organizations are reaching deeply into communities and getting to underserved, not just those who show up for food

Conversation with Gail Gronert, Speaker’s Office of Policy

The key informant process also explored what effective advocacy is from the point of view of the legislator. A conversation was held with Gail Gronert, of Speaker Wesson’s Office of Policy, on April 10, 2003. Ms. Gronert handles the Social Services area of the policy agenda. The key points to effective advocacy, from her point of view are:

- Develop relationships with the members in their districts and in Sacramento
- Be concise and concrete in your messages – the more graphic and immediate you can be, the better. Send photos, use graphics, to make your issue stand out.
- Try to get the legislator to visit your organization. Personal experience and exposure is very important. On-site visits are very effective to put a human face on an issue and help the legislator understand the importance of the services.

- Legislators remember things by anecdote. Tell stories. Personal stories provide a hook and create an image in their mind.
- Don't use form letters, but form letters are better than nothing.
- Do use one-page fact sheets.
- E-mail letters, petitions and action alerts are counted. Legislators do keep track of volume but E-mail lacks the punch of stacks of letters.
- Legislators are very sensitive to cost-effectiveness. Food banks are inherently cost-effective.
- Food and nutrition issues are more effective with Republican legislators than issues like poverty or immigrants. Food is more easily understandable. Food is an immediate need.

VIII - A MODEL FOR FUNDER INTERVENTION TO SUPPORT ADVOCACY

The following model diagrams opportunities for funder inputs that are needed to support advocacy at different stages in the agency action continuum of advocacy activity. Through this study, several key choice-points were discovered where, with stimulation and support by funders, agencies advance toward greater advocacy activity.

The first is **IMPETUS**. Many grantees cited MAZON's clear expectation of advocacy as key in stimulating them to take action. In agencies where advocacy was an established part of their operations, it was often either a person who was committed to advocacy who pushed the effort or an issue that galvanized staff and board. Funder inputs at this point include the expectation of advocacy activity, setting an example by being involved in advocacy, and providing funding for general support or for specific advocacy activity.

PERMISSION is often where agencies experience barriers. Many organizations believe that they are not "allowed" to engage in advocacy or lobbying, either because of funders' restrictions or simply by virtue of their nonprofit status. Some organizations face an inhospitable political climate in their local communities, sometimes simply because they serve the poor, minorities, immigrants, and welfare recipients. Funder inputs to support education about the legal issues of nonprofit advocacy, educating other funders to remove restrictions about "lobbying" on their grant documents, and training of agency boards can help establish permission to move forward.

ENGAGEMENT was cited by many grantees as the most effective strategy for building capacity for advocacy. Creation and support of community coalitions, conferences, networks, and communication tools are essential in increasing the quantity and quality of advocacy involvement. Support for regional and statewide networks, like the California Association of Food Banks, helps to build ongoing engagement, connection and relationships. Support for coalition building is one of the most effective things that a funder can do to build capacity for advocacy.

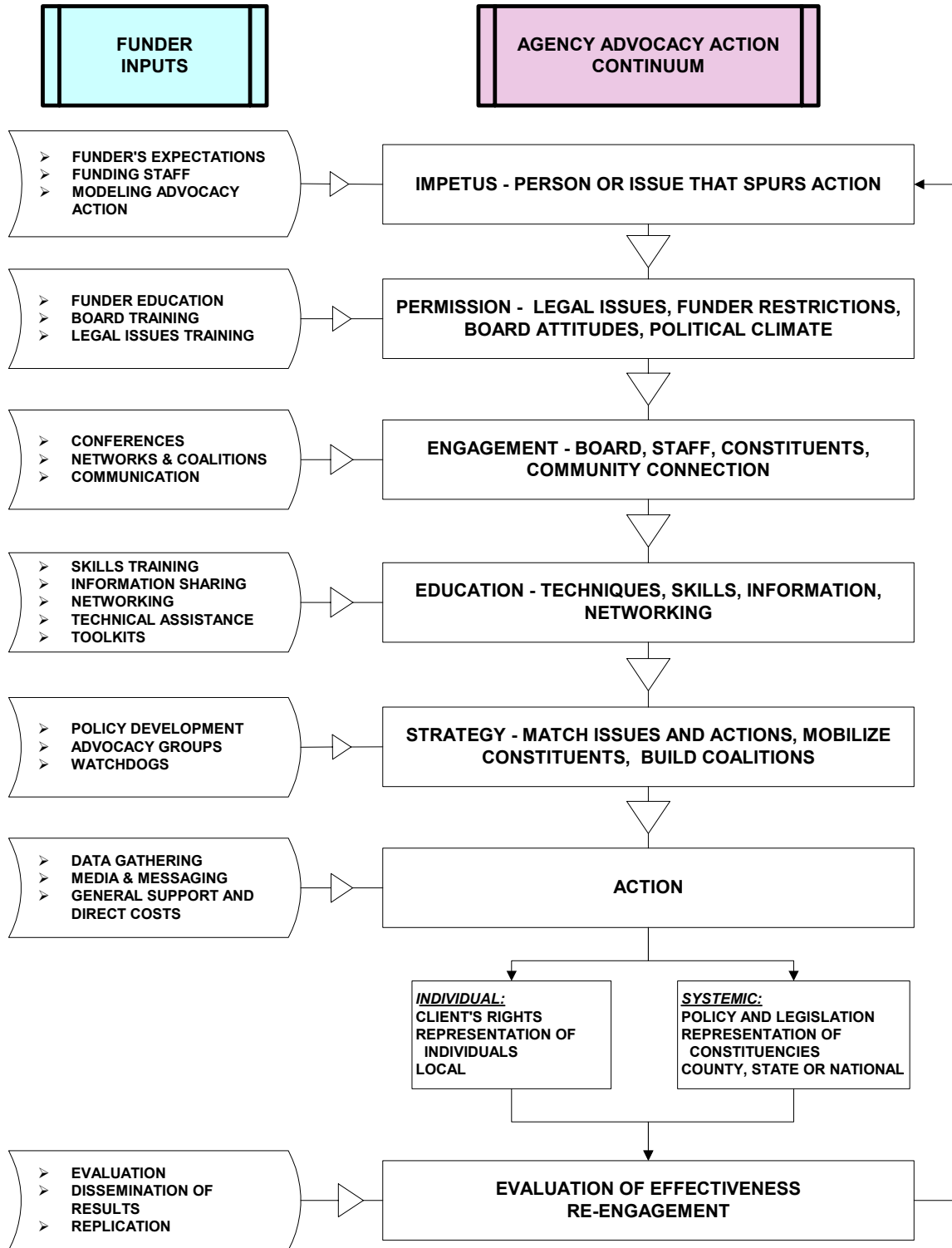
EDUCATION to build skills and confidence in media relations, letter writing, visiting legislators and other advocacy actions is essential. Funders can support regional workshops, development and dissemination of toolkits, technical assistance, and specialists to work with groups of organizations.

STRATEGY increases agencies' effectiveness and empowerment. It is important to match the issues and targets with the appropriate actions and to mobilize the right constituents to join in larger efforts. Policy development and advocacy groups, like CFPA and FRAC, are essential to the infrastructure of support and provide a depth of knowledge, analysis, strategy development, and tracking that the individual agencies are unable to do by themselves. Support for these types of groups should be part of every advocacy funder's portfolio.

ACTION occurs on both the individual and systemic level. Advocacy on the individual level is representing a specific client or group of clients to obtain rights or benefits and usually happens at the local level. Systemic advocacy addresses larger legislative issues, whether county, state or national, or other broad-based media campaigns aimed at bringing about social change. While it is important to do both, moving agencies toward more systemic advocacy requires the impetus and support outlined in this model. At this point, funders' support for media and messaging is important as well as funding data gathering so that evaluation can occur.

EVALUATION OF EFFECTIVENESS is essential both for feedback into the system to fine-tune actions and to encourage participants to keep going. Assessment of the effectiveness of advocacy activities is often difficult to measure and it is easy to become discouraged when progress appears to be slow. Funders should support the development of easily implemented evaluation tools to measure advocacy activity and success indicators.

Opportunities for Funder Input into Agency Advocacy Continuum



IX - MAZON AS FUNDER

A - ACHIEVEMENT OF GRANTMAKING GOALS

How well did MAZON achieve its goals for the CNI and how effective was its grantmaking strategy? To review, the goals of the CNI are:

- Build capacity to meaningfully and effectively engage with policy-makers in the welfare decision-making process.
- Increase grantees' capacity to effectively serve low-income clients.
- Broaden grantees' understanding of and role in anti-hunger advocacy in general; and
- Strengthen links between diverse California organizations working on hunger issues.

MAZON defined its role in building capacity for advocacy in its grantees as follows: "As a funder, MAZON can help facilitate the process of capacity-building and advocacy strengthening by helping grantees identify worthwhile advocacy opportunities and disseminating information to support their advocacy efforts, while continuing to educate them about their role in anti-hunger advocacy activities."⁹ No baseline data existed about the grantees "capacity to effectively serve low income clients" or on the grantees' "understanding of and role in anti-hunger advocacy in general" at the beginning of the CNI. Therefore, it was difficult to quantify grantees' movement toward greater effectiveness in those goal areas. The data revealed in the survey and in the grantee interviews however strongly indicates that the CNI was very effective in achieving both goals. Grantees, primarily through the CNI Conference, learned about how to assist their clients to access benefits such as the Earned Income Tax Credit, Food Stamps and WIC, and grantees were involved in important advocacy efforts, such as streamlining the application process for Food Stamps and saving the Senior Brown Bag program.

MAZON's grants are not of sufficient size to substantially impact the operations of most of its grantees. With the exception of a few, very small, grassroots organizations, for whom MAZON is a major funder, most of the grantees are influenced more by MAZON's consistent emphasis on advocacy and the opportunity offered by the Conference to expand their knowledge about policy issues and their skills in advocacy. It has been unequivocally demonstrated, through the survey, conference evaluations and interviews, that the Conference has stimulated advocacy activity and built advocacy capacity in the grantee organizations. Survey results show that grantees initiated a variety of advocacy activities as a direct result of participation in the conference. Agencies demonstrate sophistication in picking their issues and messages and targeting specific lawmakers. There is a high degree of usage of CFPA resources and demonstrated growth in CFPA's network as a result of the connections made through the CNI. Participation in the CNI has also raised awareness of and connection to the broader anti-hunger movement and broadened the understanding of the connections between policy and hunger.

While MAZON makes clear its expectation that all CNI grantees "will be able to demonstrate a measurable, meaningful increase in the amount of resources (financial, personnel, volunteer, etc.) devoted to advocacy by the end of the grant period,"¹⁰ it did not make clear to grantees how to quantify this information. No baseline data of budgeting for advocacy or the level of advocacy activity at the beginning of CNI funding were collected and the grantees' annual evaluations are usually very general and anecdotal. The vast majority of grantees report that they do not track their advocacy activity and do not have data to substantiate their assertions that this activity had increased since the

⁹ MAZON, *Interim Grant Report to The California Endowment, March 1999, p.2.*

¹⁰ "About the California Nutrition Initiative," MAZON internal document, undated.

CNI. Measures of the quantity and effectiveness of advocacy activity are elusive. However, the survey results reflect the large number of grantees who report that their knowledge of, comfort with, and participation in advocacy activity had increased, along with positive changes in attitude of staff and board as a result of participation in the CNI.

B - EFFECTIVENESS OF MAZON'S CNI GRANTMAKING PROCESS

The grantmaking criteria MAZON articulated for the CNI reflects its overall grantmaking approach. From MAZON's inception, it has consistently demanded that its grantees do more than provide emergency food. MAZON co-founder, Susan Cramer, is quoted in *Sweet Charity?* as saying, "*MAZON doesn't fund food pantries or any emergency feeding projects unless they have a strong, well-defined anti-hunger advocacy components and/or referral component. They have to demonstrate to us that they are doing more than just feeding people, that they are working with other organizations that are addressing the causes of the clients' hunger or they themselves are trying to find out why these people are in line...*"¹¹

At the beginning of the CNI, the MAZON Grants Committee did not treat the California grants differently or consider them apart from other proposals on their docket. It was the feeling of members of the Grant Committee said that "*This is what MAZON does anyway, so the strategies are the same.*" There was, however, discussion about how to reach out to new groups since the dollars available for California grants had significantly increased. One strategy used was to reach out through the food banks that MAZON was funding to their direct service providers. The CNI Grant Guidelines said, "Preference will be given to organizations that demonstrate an understanding of and involvement in broad-based anti-hunger work; i.e., participating in anti-hunger advocacy, education and organizing and offering programs and services that increase the self-reliance of low-income, nutritionally at-risk people."

The MAZON Grants Committee meets twice a year and reviews over 300 proposals per year. This is a tremendous volume and the committee is heavily dependent upon staff review and recommendation. This is a national committee and only three of the thirteen committee members live in California.

The implementation of the CNI would have been improved if a California Grants Advisory Committee had been established at the beginning of the CNI to strengthen its focus, outreach capabilities and strategic impact. A California Advisory Committee, made up of the California members of the Grants Committee, other MAZON volunteers, and State hunger professionals, could have developed recommendations for the Grants Committee on California-specific strategies and grantees.

C - INDICATORS OF FUNDER'S EFFECTIVENESS

The Center for Effective Philanthropy recently developed some indicators for effectiveness of foundation performance. While the data were drawn from the performance of some of the 100 largest private foundations, some of the indicators reflect MAZON's grantmaking strategy and the stated goals of the CNI:

- Are we improving grantee effectiveness?
- Do we influence others to fund our grantees?

¹¹ Poppendieck, op.cit., p. 278.

- Have we advanced the field by influencing thinking of policymakers, funders, thought leaders, or the public?¹²

Grantee satisfaction is one indicator of foundation performance looked at in the study. They found that high grantee satisfaction is created by the perception that the foundation has a culture of responsiveness, approachability, and fairness, and that the grantees feels that the foundation has made a positive impact on the grantee organization.¹³ MAZON scores very high on all these variables. As reported in the survey, MAZON's staff is regarded as unusually helpful and responsive by grantees and MAZON's emphasis on advocacy is both appreciated and admired.

“Grantees have the ability to separate their satisfaction with their own interactions with a foundation and their perceptions of the foundation’s impact. Grantees do not appear, for example, to confuse positive foundation interactions with a foundation’s effectiveness in making an overall impact on the field. When investigating the important drivers of positive perceptions of the foundation’s impact on the grantee’s field, satisfaction with interactions between the foundation staff and the grantee is one important factor, but much less important than the grantees’ perceptions of the foundation’s ability to advance knowledge or public policy.”¹⁴

Or as a MAZON grantee put it in one of the open-ended survey questions:

“I think MAZON is doing a wonderful job. Not only are they a funder, they are an educator and an inspiration for us all. Of course, more money is always great, but even if MAZON didn’t have any more money to grant, I would hope that they would continue their work with organizations to educate us about anti-hunger and poverty advocacy.”

The Alliance for Justice, in its April 2003 *Foundation Advocacy Bulletin*, quoted Adam Meyerson, president of The Philanthropy Roundtable who identified “Seven Habits of Highly Effective Philanthropists in Public Policy.” MAZON has demonstrated that it shares many of these traits with other funders who seek to improve local, state and national public policy:

1. *They are committed to their principles and do not compromise.*
2. *They redefine public debate through strategic investment in ideas and collection of the right data.*
3. *They recognize that policy reform takes time, and they give long-term support.*
4. *They build a broad-based multiracial coalition across party lines.*
5. *They are not afraid of controversy.*
6. *They study what works in the field before setting the larger reform agenda.*
7. *They work closely with funders who share their principles and public policy strategy.¹⁵*

D - MAZON'S ADDED VALUE

The California Endowment chose to use MAZON as a regranter to achieve its goals in strengthening California's anti-hunger network because it believed that MAZON would bring added value to the process. MAZON already had good relationships with California's community of food providers and advocacy organizations and would help California Endowment funding reach down into communities at a level that the Endowment did not want to manage.

¹² *Indictors of Effectiveness: Understanding and Improving Foundation Performance.* The Center for Effective Philanthropy. 2002. p. 13.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 18.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 18.

¹⁵ “*Seven Habits of Highly Effective Philanthropists in Public Policy*,” *Foundation Advocacy Bulletin*, Alliance for Justice, April 2003. p. 3.

In addition to MAZON's function as a grantmaker, its function as a convener was very important to the success of the CNI. It was easily able to galvanize State and national resources to create the annual CNI conferences to provide a venue for learning and exposure to the broader issues of policy and hunger. It was the first time that the State's emergency food providers, food banks and advocacy groups came together with MAZON as the catalyst and agenda-setter.

E - IMPACT OF CNI ON MAZON

The grant from the California Endowment was the largest grant ever received by MAZON and added stress to a system that was already over-burdened. During the first four years of the CNI, MAZON had one full-time grants director who received some assistance in proposal review from other MAZON professionals who were not primarily grantmakers. MAZON reviews well over 300 proposals per year and its volume of grantmaking is unusually large for a funder of its size. MAZON makes a lot of small grants all over the country and internationally. In 2001, the MAZON Grants Director's active portfolio consisted of 253 domestic grants and 20 international grants. The Grants Director is responsible for all of the proposal review, evaluation, write-ups, and grantee communication.

The original CNI proposal did not ask for any funding for staff or administrative expenses. In hindsight, this may have been a mistake on MAZON's part because added pressure to increase outreach to find new quality grantees and to focus on developing a statewide strategy, as well as the considerable effort of conference planning. In 2002, funding was received, as part of the renewal of the CNI, for a California Program Associate with responsibility for implementing the continuation of the CNI, increasing outreach to new grantees, reviewing California proposals, and staffing the annual conference. Had this position been funded earlier in the Initiative, in conjunction with a California Advisory Committee, the CNI may have been able to achieve even greater strategic impact.

F - MAZON'S ADVOCACY ROLE

MAZON's Executive Director, H. Eric Schockman, is active in anti-hunger advocacy on a national level. He is chair of The Medford Group, a coalition of the 14 CEOs of national anti-hunger organizations, who work together on national anti-hunger policy development and advocacy. The Medford Group issued a Millennium Declaration to End Hunger in America as a call to action to Congress and the Administration that outlines what is needed to end hunger. The Group is sponsoring a Presidential Forum on Hunger prior to the Iowa Caucus to bring national attention to the issue and will ask all Presidential candidates to identify their strategies to end hunger.

MAZON is a founding member of the Alliance to End Hunger, a broad coalition of religious institutions, businesses, universities, civil rights groups, labor unions and others that was formed to engage diverse institutions more deeply in the effort to shift U.S. public opinion, institutions and policy to reduce hunger. Eric is also chairperson of next year's National Interfaith Hunger Symposium which brings together over 200 people working on congregations whose portfolio is hunger to discuss strategies for activating people on the congregational level and develop new tools to use in congregations.

M

There is no affinity group for anti-hunger funders and thus few opportunities for MAZON to work with other funders to leverage additional funding for anti-hunger advocacy. Funders working in the field have met several times in recent years, usually after the national FRAC Conference. Participants in this group have included: Philip Morris, Share Our Strength, Presbyterian Hunger Program, Bonner Foundation, Food for All, Public Welfare Foundation, Packard Foundation and Sara Lee. The funders have different agendas and approaches and share little common ground. In addition, no one has been willing to put ongoing energy and resources into an effort to convene the group more frequently.

MAZON has not made it a priority to broaden the discussion on anti-hunger funding or advocacy to a wider group of funders. Because of its limited budget and staff time, it has not allocated resources to joining many other funders groups. It is not, for example, a member of the Council on Foundations or the Southern California Association of Philanthropy. MAZON belongs to the Jewish Funders Network but, since it is a public charity and not a private foundation, and many of the JFN's members are MAZON donors, it may be viewed more as a fund-raiser than a grantmaker in this venue. There are opportunities for MAZON to be a model to a broader array of funders, both in the anti-hunger funding universe and beyond, to demonstrate the potential and the power of funding advocacy.

Among progressive funders, anti-hunger funding is sometimes seen as not sufficiently integrated with larger social justice movements such as living wage, affordable housing or health care. Traditional anti-hunger/food policy work is also viewed by some as mainstream "representative" advocacy where a group of providers and advocates, primarily white and middle-class, are advocating "for" the issue rather than empowering food recipients to advocate for themselves. MAZON itself is cast in that light by some of the grantees who interpret MAZON's role as raising money in the Jewish community for a need that is assumed to be outside of its own community.

X - RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations came out of the research results, key informant interviews, observations and readings. Some address broader funding and policy needs and some are specific to MAZON's operations.

Maintain and strengthen the network

Significant progress has been made in the past five years in building the capacity of food banks and providers for both service delivery and advocacy. Infrastructure has been built and many organizations have stabilized to a point where they can look beyond their daily survival. The CNI developed new ties among grantees and built their relationships with advocacy and research organizations such as CFPA and FRAC. The CNI network was reinforced by the increased resources put into supporting the food banks during the same period that enabled the food banks to engage in more advocacy and public education and to offer more services to their provider networks. The agencies feel greatly empowered by these new relationships and better connected to a larger anti-hunger community. These gains, however, may be jeopardized by the California budget crisis and the decline in foundation support for the maintenance of these programs. Many grantees raised the issue of the loss of funding from the Packard Foundation for the Northern California Association of Food Banks initiative and emphasized the importance of building upon the gains of recent years by continuing to fund mechanisms that improve communication, provide learning opportunities, and bring food banks and service providers together in statewide and regional conferences. The people and the network are in place; funding should be directed toward bringing this infrastructure to the next level.

Develop focused messages about the societal cost of hunger

One of the key next steps is the need to develop messages that go beyond the emotional level to making the case for the economic impact of hunger. Next step strategies should include the development of tools to educate the public and legislators about the long-term effects of hunger, the link between policy and hunger, and the impact of hunger and poor nutrition on health care costs.

Strengthen the network and providers' ability to interact with the media.

In conjunction with the recommendation on the development of different messages about hunger, there needs to be greater sophistication in dealing with the media about the issues of hunger and the Statewide economic impact of hunger and poor nutrition. Provider agencies identified the need to increase their ability to interact with the media and to get media attention for their issues. Media workshops and other skill building components should be a regular part of the CNI Conference.

Form strategic alliances in California that go beyond the food sphere.

The advocacy message would be strengthened by a statewide coalition, similar to the Alliance to End Hunger, that would bring together a wider circle of organizations to focus on issues of hunger and food insecurity. Hunger needs to be better integrated into the organizations working on

poverty, homelessness, workers' rights, and health care. This group could include labor unions, health care professionals, farm bureaus, and human rights groups.

❑ ***Create more opportunities for local and regional networking.***

Many grantees cited the need for opportunities to come together, in addition to the annual conference, to continue to build alliances and to focus on more local issues. There are a number of county hunger task forces, but these seem to be struggling for leadership and focus. Funding that was aimed specifically at strengthening these task forces, where they exist, and helping new ones to form by providing staffing and other resources might be very useful in building these regional networks. In addition, the local networks could bring in organizations who are not MAZON grantees who would benefit from the learning that the conference attendees experienced.

❑ ***Increase funding for advocacy staff, technical assistance and coalition building***

Grantees consistently named funding for staff dedicated to advocacy, education on how to do advocacy, and connections to broader coalitions as the three most effective means of building their capacity to engage in advocacy. It is becoming even more difficult for service agencies to devote any staff time to advocacy because of the increasing pressures on operational funding needs. Advocacy is not prioritized because providers are understaffed and overwhelmed. Every agency feels stretched to the maximum and any free time not taken up by direct service needs to be devoted to fund raising. If advocacy is going to happen in direct service agencies, it has to be supported.

❑ ***Make larger grants to support coalition building and test new innovations.***

Grantees commented that there is a need for grants in the \$50,000 - \$100,000 range to help the food banks, coalitions and statewide advocacy groups to test new ideas. MAZON's grants don't exceed \$25,000 in most cases and other funders, like the Packard Foundation and the California Endowment, generally prefer to make much larger grants. There is a need identified for mid-level grants that would help these organization take next steps. MAZON historically makes a large number of small grants. It could test the impact of making a few larger grants to advance the advocacy agenda in California. MAZON could lead a consortium of funders in the State to create a pool of such funds.

❑ ***Increase grantees' capacity for data gathering and evaluation of advocacy activity***

The study discovered very little capacity for data gathering and evaluation, particularly about their advocacy activities, among the agencies. Food banks and emergency food providers are immersed in data collection about their service levels, pounds of food in and out, verification of eligibility of clients, different tracking systems for different government grants, and other time-consuming record-keeping. It is extremely difficult for them to take the time to gather information about the response rate when they send an action alert to their constituents or to track participation of their constituents in advocacy activity. In many cases, the agencies don't know what to track or how to do it. It might be worthwhile, for MAZON or other funders, to put some funding into some training and simple tools that could be applied to assist agencies to gather data about advocacy activity.

Ask grantees to establish baseline measurements of advocacy activity and put dollars into evaluation of change

In conjunction with the above recommendation, at minimum, MAZON should specify what data grantees should gather at the beginning of their grant and how to determine changes in advocacy activity. Costs of evaluation should be built into the grants. MAZON and other funders could establish some tools for measurement at different levels of engagement, such as:

Individual >>>>>> Behavioral change

Agency >>>>>> Mission, policy, capacity change

Community >>>>> Linkages, poverty levels, utilization levels, economic indicators

State >>>>>>>> Policy/legislative change

Create a California Grants Advisory Committee

Grants in California make up almost one-quarter of MAZON's domestic grantmaking in 2002 with the increase in CNI funding. The creation of a California Grants Advisory Committee would strengthen the strategic impact of California grants and increase outreach capabilities. The Advisory Committee, made up of California hunger professionals, California-resident MAZON board members, and other volunteers, would bring specific knowledge of California's agencies, issues and needs, and could identify and implement strategic directions or priorities. The Committee would review the proposals from California agencies and make recommendations to the MAZON Grants Committee for funding.

Continue position of California Program Associate

The position of California Program Associate, created with the renewal of the California Nutrition Initiative grant from the California Endowment, has greatly increased MAZON's capacity in outreach, development of program strategy, provision of technical assistance, and proposal review. The California Program Associate has developed a good relationship with the California grantees and is able to focus on developing new program areas, such as the outreach to the rural and remote food providers. Staffing the California Grants Advisory Committee could be added to the California Program Associate's portfolio.

Develop and communicate MAZON's message to its grantees about the meaning of "a Jewish response to hunger"

For most grantees, MAZON is their only Jewish funder and for many, their only contact with the Jewish community. While MAZON's mission of *tikkun olam* is well articulated for its donors, it is not consistently communicated to its grantees. A clearly articulated message to grantees about MAZON's roots in the Jewish tradition of social justice for all people would support grantees in being better able to interpret the deeper meaning of MAZON's funding in their communities and beyond.