

FLORIDA IMPACT



a report



1979
THROUGH
2009

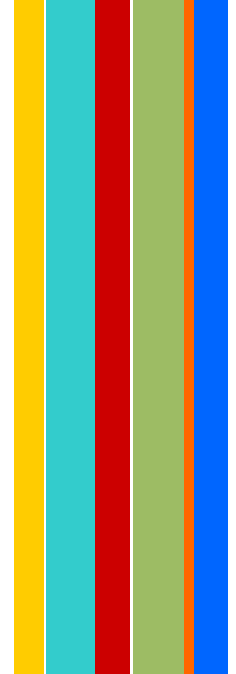
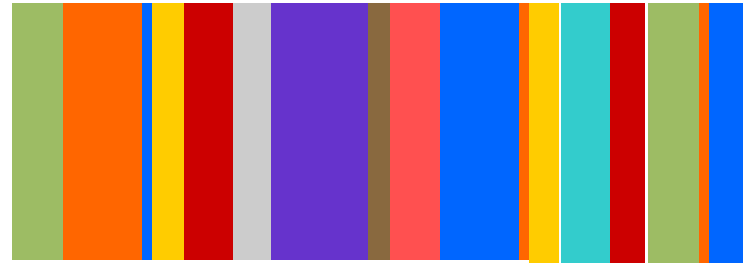
CELEBRATES
30 YEARS
OF MOBILIZING
COMMUNITIES AGAINST
HUNGER

LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

From time to time over the 23 years I have worked with Florida Impact, someone will ask, “What exactly does Impact do?” This document seeks to answer that question from a perspective that spans 30 years—the length of our existence as Florida’s leading statewide, anti-hunger policy organization.

Those who would address hunger within the political and economic framework that is the United States usually take two diametrically opposite approaches. The first deals with the immediate needs of those without food by delivering what’s left over from our collective tables. Though necessary, it does little in getting to the causes of hunger, so we can stem the tide if not end it altogether. Doing that would require the second approach: a dramatic policy or whole-system change to ensure that all are guaranteed nourishment, housing, education, and health care. This country’s history of sporadic, insufficient policies providing for a livable wage is proof enough of the sluggish pace of real change. In fact, a whole generation has moved from infancy to adulthood in just my time with this organization, so making them wait for this grander vision would have been unwise.

Until systemic change is accomplished, Florida Impact staff and its network of supporters have become adept at leveraging the often under-utilized federal dollars intended for but not reaching Florida’s low-income families. Funded by private, charitable contributions and grants, Impact efficiently addresses hunger through the leveraging of this sizeable public commitment into Florida’s communities.



It conducts aggressive outreach strategies at both the state and community levels to ensure that federal food and child nutrition programs are fully accessible to those for whom they are intended. And it coordinates and informs the direct involvement of community leaders like you in advocating for more responsive public policies, programs, and budget priorities.

There are two ways a nonprofit can measure its success: 1) by the number of dollars it generates for service; and 2) by the number of people it serves. I invite you to read on as we present the measure of 30 years of accomplishments and Impact’s unique contribution to that grander vision of a hunger-free Florida.

Debra A. Susie

Executive Director

The U.S. Congress authorizes multiple child nutrition programs designed to underwrite costs for local organizations that feed children in low-income communities. All but one (WIC) are entitlement programs, which means: if they come, you can feed them! Some of these resources get stuck in the pipeline between Washington and the state and local bureaucracies appointed to administer them. Florida Impact works to identify and eliminate these barriers, so that Florida's eligible families can derive maximum benefit.

SCHOOL BREAKFAST PROGRAM Florida Impact and many of its school food service allies successfully persuaded the 1989 Florida Legislature to mandate the national School Breakfast Program in all of the state's elementary schools. When the bill was first filed in 1980, children had no access to a school breakfast in 22 Florida counties (one out of three school districts). Nine years later—when the bill finally became law (and 14 years after school breakfast was established as a federal program)—there were still 16 counties in which a child could not get a school breakfast.

NOW . . .

- Florida's school breakfast program serves well over half a million children (over 77 percent of them from low-income families).
- Over 99 percent of Florida schools (including middle- and high-school) offer the federal School Breakfast Program, ranking Florida among the top five states in the nation.

Since the mandate was fully implemented, the number of children who participate in the program has **more than doubled** (125%), representing **over half a billion dollars in additional federal revenues to the state** for feeding children.

SUMMER NUTRITION PROGRAMS FOR CHILDREN In 2005 the federal Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) was only reaching 1 in 10 of Florida's children from low-income families, and there were six rural counties in which children had no access to the program at all. The state summer nutrition programs' average daily attendance dropped 45% over the prior four years; and with each, Florida was hemorrhaging federal funds designated for hungry children. In response, Florida Impact organized a network of leaders that drafted and passed the Willie Ann Glenn Act (WAG)—state legislation that requires summer food programs to operate in or near elementary schools where 50 percent or more children are eligible for free or reduced-price school meals. At least one site in each county must stay open for the full 35 day of summer. By 2007, the WAG Act's full effect on the state was dramatic. From 2003, total summer nutrition meals went up 75% and served more than double the number of children with a comparable increase of federal funds.

REMOVING THE BARRIERS TO FEDERAL PROGRAMS THAT FEED FLORIDA'S CHILDREN



As one of a handful of states without its own income tax, securing funds from the Florida budget in down economies is a monumental task. Still Florida Impact succeeded in carving out funds for the state's most vulnerable populations.

ASSISTANCE TO HOMELESS FAMILIES

In 1987 Florida Impact secured state funds for the establishment of the new Emergency Family Housing Assistance Program (EFHAP), which provided one-time, direct assistance of up to \$400 to families who were without shelter or facing eviction. These grants were most often used for covering late rent or mortgage payments or for housing and utility deposits. Every state dollar in turn generated a dollar in federal match from the Temporary Emergency Financial Assistance Program.

Over 5,000 families were served by the program in its first year, with most counties expending their allotments in 45 days. The Program also acted as a catalyst for early state funding of local homeless coalitions. A network of these coalitions

would go on to form the Florida Coalition for the Homeless, for which Impact coordinated the first statewide organizing meeting. Over the three years the Florida Legislature maintained funding for EFHAP and coupled with the federal match draw, \$26 million was generated for direct assistance to homeless families.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING A big ticket item was the establishment in 1992 of the William E. Sadowski Affordable Housing Trust Fund. Florida Impact was (and still is) part of a unique coalition of Florida for-profits and non-profits that sought to address the need for an affordable housing stock with a dedicated source of state funding. The Sadowski Act dedicated 70 percent of its revenue from a 20-cent documentary stamp tax

SHAPING STATE POLICIES RESPONSIVE TO LOW-INCOME FAMILIES

on real estate transactions to local governments and the other 30 percent to the state to fund programs for the development of affordable rental housing units. From its inception to the current year, total appropriations from the Sadowski programs for housing are estimated at \$3.255 billion. This further stimulated private lending and federal funds and resulted in approximately \$19.7 billion of housing (built, rehabilitated or purchased).

An estimated 190,000-200,000 units have been assisted.

FOOD STAMPS FOR LEGAL IMMIGRANTS

The 1996 federal welfare "reforms" restricted the access of most legal immigrants to food stamps and social security,

which had a significant effect on Florida, the state with the fourth largest immigrant population. States were given the option to provide food stamp benefits to qualified immigrants who were no longer eligible for the federal program. Working closely with

Over the last 30 years, Florida Impact leveraged nearly \$4 billion in additional public funding to serve an estimated 800,000 low-income Floridians.

PROGRAM STRATEGY	ADDITIONAL FUNDS GENERATED	NUMBER OF PEOPLE SERVED
School Breakfasts	\$ 458,805,087	260,801
Summer Nutrition for Children	\$ 28,436,989	106,661
Assistance to Homeless Families	\$ 26,000,000	130,000
Affordable Housing	\$ 3,255,000,000	200,000
Food Stamps for Legal Immigrants	\$ 23,000,000	25,828
Transportation Funding for Food Banks	\$ 5,025,000	—
Food Stamp Outreach	\$ 60,300,000	67,000
TOTAL	\$ 3,856,567,076	790,290

Florida Legal Services, Impact reacted immediately in the 1997 legislative session and secured \$23 million in state funding to establish the Temporary Income Bridge Program for legal immigrants over the next two years.

TRANSPORTATION FUNDING FOR FOOD BANKS

In 1999, Impact persuaded Florida legislators to allocate new state funding for the Florida Association of Food Banks (FAFB) to transport and store existing supplies of food outside the state but inaccessible due to transportation costs. Over the first two years, the state budgeted \$325,000, which generated 2.6 million pounds of food worth \$4.7 million in wholesale value. FAFB continues to secure this transportation funding for itself annually.

TARGETING AGGRESSIVE OUTREACH TO UNDERSERVED POPULATIONS



THE FOOD STAMP HELPLINE In 1998—when the Food Stamp Program (FSP) participation rate was less than half of those projected to be eligible—Florida Impact uncovered an innovative way to leverage federal funds with private money to conduct aggressive food stamp outreach in Florida. The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) offered a 50-50 match of food stamp outreach funds to states that agreed to draw up a state plan for food stamp outreach. Florida declined to be one of those states until Impact offered its own private funding as the state's match. With these funds, Impact opened a statewide, toll-free, tri-lingual help-line, through which individuals could be prescreened for food stamp eligibility. Impact developed software that provided automated projections for FSP eligibility and monthly benefit levels and boasted a 97% accuracy rate. Data from the prescreening automatically populated a food stamp application, which was printed and mailed to the caller with a checklist of the supporting documents required for the caseworker interview .

In January 2001, Impact was one of the first fourteen organizations to receive a federal USDA food stamp outreach grant. With this funding, Impact field piloted its FSP prescreening software with community-based organizations and mobile units in Daytona Beach, St. Petersburg, Tallahassee, Jacksonville, and several rural counties in the southeastern part of the state.

During the same period in which these programs were running (2000-06), Florida's **food stamp participation rate increased by over one-third**. Florida also was among four states in which rates of **food insecurity significantly decreased** while the great majority of the country was seeing increases in food insecurity.

For more information on Florida Impact, go

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