

INSTITUTIONAL CULTURAL COMPETENCY OF
EMERGENCY FOOD PROVIDERS DURING THE
RECESSION

by

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A THESIS

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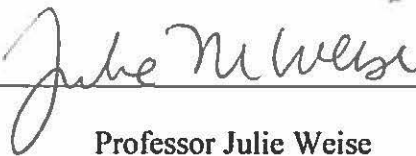
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Between 2000 and 2010, the Latino population's growth counted for over half of the overall population growth in the U.S. Emergency food providers were unprepared for the increase in Latinos' needs for emergency food assistance. Emergency food providers demonstrated mixed levels of institutional cultural competency in their attempts to meet Latinos' needs immediately before, during, and after the most recent economic recession. The increased demand for emergency food during the recession encouraged Feeding America and its network members to dedicate more resources to increasing the amount of food distributed than to making services more accessible and culturally acceptable for Latinos. One food bank in Oregon created an outreach program to increase Latinos' access to its services, made Latinos' needs institutional priorities, and thus increased its institutional cultural competency. Its progress proved exceptional because most providers did not significantly increase their institutional cultural competency. The lessons from emergency food providers' shortcomings during the recession inform recommendations of what those providers must do in the future to increase Latinos' access to both emergency and non-emergency food services.

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Introduction

The U.S. emergency food assistance network's process of institutionalization accelerated between 2006 and 2016 as a result of the most recent economic recession. The continued institutionalization manifested in an increase in the number of people receiving emergency food assistance and the number of pounds of emergency food distributed, an increase in the system's capacity to distribute fresher and healthier emergency food items, and an increase in the number of nonemergency food programs such as nutrition and cooking classes. Those activities served largely to further entrench emergency food providers' role in society by making them more sophisticated. In 2008, the national food bank network leader, America's Second Harvest-America's Food Bank Network, changed its name to Feeding America, focused on re-branding, and increased its financial resources through partnerships with corporations. Feeding America made these changes in response to the increased demand for emergency food during the recession. The economic recession resulted in the expansion and specialization of emergency food assistance.

Other developments immediately before, during, and immediately after the recession influenced the emergency food network's trajectory. As food banks' activities and food distribution increased during the recession era, so did their awareness of Latino hunger issues and their desire to better serve Latinos. The Latino population in the United States increased by forty-three percent between 2000 and 2010, and its growth accounted "for over half of the . . . increase in the total population of the United

States.”¹ During the same time period, academic institutions, food banks, civil rights advocacy organizations, and the federal government documented Latinos’ disproportionate experiences of poverty and food insecurity. Latino-specific advocacy organizations like the National Council of La Raza described the reasons for Latinos’ historical and continued under-enrollment in public food assistance programs such as food stamps (re-named Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, or SNAP, benefits). A few academic researchers documented Latinos’ specific barriers to accessing emergency food services. Many Latinos, some of which were immigrants, felt unwelcome at food pantries when staff and volunteers did not speak Spanish, needed more culturally appropriate food items, and were afraid to seek emergency food services because of confusion around whether or not food banks were affiliated with the government and had connections to immigration enforcement. The convergence of factors during the recession era raises several compelling questions: what relationship existed between Latinos and emergency food providers, and how did the network’s growth during and after the recession change that relationship? How effective was the emergency food assistance network in meeting the needs of Latinos—did Latinos who needed emergency food assistance receive it, and did food banks improve upon their methods of delivering that emergency food?

The number of Feeding America network members engaged in outreach to Latinos increased between 2006 and 2016. The outreach intended to both increase Latinos’ use of emergency food and increase Latinos’ enrollment in SNAP benefits and

¹ Sharon R. Ennis, Merarys Ríos-Vargas, and Nora G. Albert, “The Hispanic Population: 2010,” U.S. Census Bureau, issued May 2011, accessed February 12, 2016, <http://www.census.gov/prod/cen2010/briefs/c2010br-04.pdf>, 2.

other public food assistance programs. Feeding America dedicated greater amounts of institutional resources to researching and discussing Latino hunger. The publications of Feeding America and the publications and activities of its network members, however, reveal that the national emergency food network's increased outreach to Latinos lacked the necessary components to reduce Latinos' biggest barriers to receiving emergency food services. Several years after the end of the economic recession, most emergency food providers did not demonstrate institutional cultural competency. FOOD For Lane County, the third largest food bank in Oregon, developed a Multicultural Outreach Program between 2007 and 2016. Through the program, the organization gave higher priority to local Latinos' needs and increased its overall institutional cultural competency. FOOD For Lane County's progress was not representative of that of other food banks around the country during the same time period. FOOD For Lane County's progress resulted from the food bank's advantages that other food banks did not have during the recession. The organization was of a certain size and scope, one key staff leader generated the momentum necessary to secure sustainable funding for the program, and the organization had a history of creating internally-run, decentralized programs.

The assessment of the history of the institutional cultural competency of Feeding America, of the national emergency food network as a whole, and of FOOD For Lane County between 2006 and 2016 utilized criteria based on a combination of sources. The sources included the recommendations made by researchers to specific food banks during 2012 and 2013, the barriers Latinos faced in accessing emergency food assistance documented by researchers during the recession era, and the cultural

competency guidelines for social service providers working with Latinos published in social work journals. The recommendations in the conclusion of this paper build off of the same sources that informed the criteria used to assess emergency food providers' levels of institutional cultural competency. Other researchers' previous work in studying individual food banks' services for Latinos contributed to the structure of this research.

For emergency food providers, institutional cultural competency in relation to Latinos during the recession era required them to have made Latinos an institutional priority by incorporating Latinos' needs into both their strategic plans and their financial budgets. Institutional cultural competency required that providers reflect on their organization's relationship with Latinos, consult Latino community members in order to better understand the perspectives of local Latinos and build positive relationships, customize programs and services to fit local needs, conduct targeted outreach, incorporate Latinos representative of the local population into staff and volunteers, and use Latinos' feedback and expertise in program evaluation. An increased level of institutional cultural competency meant that emergency food services were made more accessible to Latinos as well as more culturally and socially acceptable.

Feeding America publications and other food bank publications show how the emergency food network's relationship to Latinos changed during the recession era. The national-level study first examines Feeding America's discussion of Latino hunger and Latino outreach by its network members within the organization's publications. Feeding America network members' websites and documents describe the outreach efforts

conducted by emergency food organizations around the country and reveal the varying degrees to which organizations increased their institutional cultural competency.

Documents from Oregon Food Bank, the leader of the statewide food bank network, FOOD For Lane County grant proposals, strategic plans, and program assessments, and interviews with FOOD For Lane County staff describe the emergency food network in Oregon and tell the story of how, why and when FOOD For Lane County developed the Multicultural Outreach Program. FOOD For Lane County's publications about hunger in Lane County, Oregon, data published by nearby private research institutes and public universities on food insecurity among Latinos, and past University of Oregon Master's theses detail the barriers local Latino immigrants faced in obtaining food and inform the assessment of whether or not FOOD For Lane County increased its institutional cultural competency.

The emergency food network's relationship to Latinos improved between 2006 and 2016 because more food banks engaged in Latino outreach and Feeding America articulated its awareness of Latino hunger. But Feeding America did not prioritize improving Latinos' access to its network members' services, only a small minority of network members conducted Latino outreach, and the outreach conducted did not address all the major barriers faced by Latinos, particularly by migrant farmworkers and undocumented immigrants, in accessing network members' services. Feeding America expressed a desire for its network members to be culturally competent, but the organization did not prioritize Latino hunger in the ways necessary to increase its network members' capacities for institutional cultural competency. The increased outreach to Latinos by the emergency food network and the other changes that occurred

within the network during the recession era did not result in the majority of emergency food providers providing more accessible and more culturally and socially acceptable services for Latinos. FOOD For Lane County's Multicultural Outreach Program increased the food bank's institutional cultural competency but also revealed that the organization's unique circumstances helped it overcome the obstacles that other Feeding America network members faced in becoming more culturally competent. FOOD For Lane County's exceptionality among other food banks during the recession era emphasized what other providers needed to have done in order to better serve Latinos.

Background

Research Focus on Latinos

Historically marginalized groups in the U.S. other than Latinos, especially communities of color, have also experienced disproportionate rates of food insecurity and structural barriers to accessing emergency food assistance and public food assistance programs. The national food bank network leader, Feeding America, as well as some of its network members (including Oregon Food Bank), published studies on African-Americans' and Native Americans' experiences of hunger. The outreach efforts conducted by a select few food banks around the country during the recession era, however, targeted Latinos and responded to the growth of the Latino population and the increased national discussion about immigration policy. Because of the connections between changes in the emergency food network during the recession era and the simultaneous growth of Latino communities, the relationship between the network and Latinos in particular provided the opportunity for in-depth discussion of how private social service providers related to one community of color. More research is needed on the historical relationship between the emergency food network and other communities of color in the U.S. in order to address the equally important needs of those communities for greater access to culturally acceptable and relevant services.

Terminology

In order to gain an in-depth understanding of how emergency food providers related to a specific group of people during a certain time period, this paper follows the emergency food network's usage of certain terminology in order to refer to people.

Because the national-level study of the food bank network draws from Feeding America publications, Feeding America's language choices served as the guide. Feeding America explained in its 2010 *Hunger in America* research that it used the terms "Hispanic" and "Latino" interchangeably, in following with the U.S. Census Bureau's use of terms, "to refer to persons of Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Central and South American, Dominican, Spanish, and other Hispanic descent; they may be of any race."² This paper generally gives preference to "Latino" over "Hispanic," but does use them interchangeably when analyzing sources that do so. The choice of one term with which to refer to a group of people that comprise an incredibly rich and diverse set of cultures, languages, and histories is necessary for the purposes of this study but is not intended to diminish the importance of personal narratives.

The choice of terminology with which to discuss the emergency food network reflects the use of certain language both by the emergency food system's publications and by the literature on food banks' history and activities. Although "hunger" and "food insecurity" have received different definitions by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Feeding America used "food insecurity" and "hunger" interchangeably in many of its documents for marketing and promotion purposes. This paper, therefore, uses them interchangeably. The words "emergency" and "charitable" are used interchangeably, and "emergency food" refers to food distributed by charitable agencies or social service agencies at no charge to eligible people. "Emergency food network," or "system," refers to the entire set of activities operated by emergency food

² Feeding America, "When the Pantry is Bare: Emergency Food Assistance and Hispanic Children," 2010, accessed February 12, 2016, <http://www.feedingamerica.org/hunger-in-america/our-research/latino-hunger-research/latino-hunger-exec-summm.pdf>, 1.

providers in the U.S. Feeding America's member network represented the entire system's activities because eighty percent of the nation's food banks were a part of the Feeding America network.³ "Emergency food providers" included food pantries, soup kitchens, and shelters. Most food banks entered into contracts with emergency food providers, called "partner agencies," and partner agencies then delivered the food to people. Food banks that ran their own programs, such as FOOD For Lane County, also directly delivered emergency food.

Historical Context

The history of the emergency food system's relationship to Latinos fits into the broader narrative of the history of anti-poverty programs and economic inequality in the U.S. during the latter half of the twentieth century. The welfare state that was built between the 1930s and 1960s declined when Lyndon B. Johnson's vision for the Great Society was not realized and the legislative momentum behind the social policies of the War on Poverty ended. The private, charitable sector—the growth of which food banks have played a large part in the past few decades—emerged and expanded rapidly after significant decreases in social program spending. Those decreases came throughout the 1980s with the Reagan administration's policies and in the 1990s with so-called welfare reform.

Historical works most relevant to the research questions and findings of this thesis include the documentations of the history of social programs in the U.S. during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, documentations of how those programs impacted

³ Douglas L. O'Brien and Halley Torres Aldeen, "Hunger in America 2006: Executive Summary," America's Second Harvest - The Nation's Food Bank Network, 2006, accessed February 12, 2016, <http://www.mathematica-mpr.com/~media/publications/PDFs/finalhungerexecsumm.pdf>, 1.

or were influenced by communities of color, and documentations of the changes to social programs during three main periods of events in U.S. history during the twentieth century, which were the New Deal, the War on Poverty, and welfare reform in the 1990s (which was preceded by the erosion of social spending during the 1980s). The connections between communities of color and social programs, however, have been drawn by only a few historians. Even fewer historians have woven the experiences, stories, and perspectives of communities of color into their discussion of anti-poverty programs in the post-welfare-reform era.

Historical writings focused on the U.S. welfare state have discussed the interplay between the public and private sectors during the twentieth century, but these discussions have not been updated since the start of the twenty-first century. These discussions also have not delved deeply into public food assistance programs. The historical literature on the food stamp program's relationship to communities of color is limited, with the exception of Annelise Orleck's brief discussion of it in her works.

Jennifer Klein analyzed the historical development of corporations' provision of social welfare programs to employees throughout the twentieth century. Klein dealt with the larger topics of the dynamics of public and private welfare systems in the U.S. and their relationships with the political and cultural shifts during the New Deal and World War II.⁴ Klein addressed private insurance policies of employers and the political developments of the 1960s, 70s, and 80s, but not the increased use of nonprofit, private organizations by the government during the 80s and 90s. Other

⁴ Jennifer Klein, *For All These Rights: Business, Labor, and the Shaping of America's Public-Private Welfare State* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2003), 1-6.

historians of the New Deal have focused on different aspects of the realities and legacies of New Deal legislation, but they have remained interested mostly in the political developments associated with the changes in social spending associated with the New Deal. Some authors, however, have brought race into their discussions of the political developments associated with social spending. Gary Gerstle and Steve Fraser asserted that the political transformations in the 1940s that involved the “substitution of race for class as the great, unsolved problem in American life” limited social programs during the War on Poverty.⁵ Some authors dealt more explicitly with racial justice issues as they pertained to welfare programs in the twentieth century.

Two historians made race relations central to their accounts of the politics of the New Deal. Patricia Sullivan, for example, posited that the actions of activists shaped policies and cultural developments later in the twentieth century. Patricia Sullivan asserted that “racial realities shaped the democratic movements of the New Deal Era.”⁶ Racial justice activists in the 1930s and 1940s, furthermore, helped pave the way for the civil rights movement of the 1960s.⁷ Sullivan’s focus on how the relationship between the federal government, the Democratic Party, and the South changed during the New Deal involved but did not center on the relationship directly between social spending and racial politics of the time period.

Linda Gordon, another historian of the New Deal, asked more direct questions about the history of welfare between 1890 and 1935. She specifically described the

⁵ Gary Gerstle and Steve Fraser, introduction to *The Rise and Fall of the New Deal Order, 1930-1980*, eds. Gary Gerstle and Steve Fraser (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1989), xix.

⁶ Patricia Sullivan, *Days of Hope: Race and Democracy in the New Deal Era* (London: The University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 9.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 275.

historical transformations in the meaning of “welfare” in the U.S., and her account addressed the gendered development and provision of welfare. Her observations of the change over time of the American vision of and for welfare programs connect to the observations of sociologist Janet Poppendieck, the author of the main sources of literature on the history of food banks. Poppendieck drew conclusions about the political, economic, and cultural mindsets that drove the increase in emergency food assistance. Gordon similarly identified that “values and ideas about how, how much, when, and by whom the needy should be helped [influenced] our welfare system as much as do the federal budget, eligibility criteria, and unemployment rates.”⁸ The experiences of single mothers receiving and not receiving public welfare assistance shaped her historical account of welfare’s origins. Gordon also analyzed the relationships between early welfare programs, immigrant women, and women of color.⁹ Gordon asked questions about the nature of the welfare programs that those women received assistance from. Although Gordon’s primary concern was with the gendered aspects of welfare, she did incorporate race and class into her writing. The account of the structure of those programs is unique in its detailing of how programs were or were not effective in meeting those women’s needs. Gordon’s discussion of race made her analysis of social programs in the U.S. work against the tendency of historical accounts to erase the stories and experiences of people of color.

Theda Skocpol’s influential analysis of the political origins of social policies in the U.S. also dealt with programs in the late 1800s and early 1900s. She framed early

⁸ Linda Gordon, *Pitied But Not Entitled: Single Mothers and the History of Welfare 1890-1935* (New York: MacMillan, Inc., 1995), 2.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 15-35.

welfare programs' primary concern with single mothers and children in the early twentieth century in terms of how the U.S. almost had a "maternalist welfare state" and addressed the evolution of the public's negative perception of what was meant by welfare.¹⁰ Skocpol's conclusions of the origins of social policy, written through a political lens, did not directly engage race and ethnicity issues. Scholars Annelise Orleck and Hazirjian made grassroots political movements, including those started and led by communities of color, the center of their documentation of the history of social programs during the War on Poverty between 1964 and 1980.

Authors of chapters in the 2011 book *War on Poverty: A New Grassroots History, 1964-1980*, edited by Annelise Orleck and Lisa Hazirjian, contributed new knowledge to the history of anti-poverty programs and communities of color in the U.S. Latino community members and leaders mobilized to increase their influence on the use of funds provided by the federal government for general social program purposes starting in 1964. Latinos participated in their own advocacy, organizing, and political efforts during the War on Poverty to advocate for their control over the programs funded by the federal government. Jesus Salas, a former labor organizer, helped lead and develop a civil rights movement in the 1960s in Milwaukee, Wisconsin on the city's Latino South Side.¹¹ Religious leaders also organized migrant farmworkers. "Tejanos and other Latino migrants," Rodriguez writes, "fought to define themselves as

¹⁰ Theda Skocpol, *Protecting Soldiers and Mothers: The Political Origins of Social Policy in the United States* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1992), 2.

¹¹ Marc S. Rodriguez, "Defining the Space of Participation in a Northern City: Tejanos and the War on Poverty in Milwaukee," in *The War on Poverty: A New Grassroots History, 1964-1980*, ed. Annelise Orleck and Lisa Gayle Hazirjian, (London: The University of Georgia Press, 2011), 110.

central to the ‘community’ that UMOS [a Community Action Agency] had been created to help” and “sought political and administrative control of an agency that was supposed to incorporate maximum feasible participation of the community members it served.”¹² The Economic Opportunity Act, furthermore, “created separate program funding streams to address the special needs of America’s migrant farmworkers.”¹³ Latino farmworkers were an important group whose unique barriers to food assistance were overlooked by most emergency food providers during the most recent economic recession.

The legacies of both the War on Poverty and grassroots movements that emerged during the implementation of 1960s legislation continued to impact food distribution programs well into the beginning of the twenty-first century, even as the distribution of food changed dramatically. Public food assistance programs such as food stamps, free and reduced breakfast and lunch programs, and Medicaid originated during the War on Poverty.¹⁴ Those programs were “the most common public assistance programs utilized” by Latino families in the early 2000s.¹⁵

Historians have not investigated whether or not social programs, whether distributed by private or public entities, have been effective in meeting the needs of minorities since the 1980s. Historians have also not addressed questions about the equity of services provided by the nonprofit sector. Overall, historians’ accounts of the development of and changes to anti-poverty programs in the U.S. do not address the

¹² Ibid., 111.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Annelise Orleck, conclusion to *The War on Poverty: A New Grassroots History, 1964-1980*, ed. Annelise Orleck and Lisa Gayle Hazirjian (London: The University of Georgia Press, 2011), 440-41.

¹⁵ Yoshie Sano, et al., "Understanding Food Insecurity Among Latino Immigrant Families in Rural America," *Journal of Family and Economic Issues* 32, no. 1 (2011): 119.

impacts of policies in the 1980s and 1990s on public and private food assistance. The historical literature on social programs since 1980 is small, and the gaps in the historical literature are only partly filled by the work of scholars in other disciplines.

Historians have not published specifically about the development of private food organizations like food banks. The history of food banks has been documented primarily by just a few scholars in other disciplines like sociology and political science, and the existing literature does not investigate the racial equity of the distribution of services. Racial equity is addressed typically only in discussions of the disparities in poverty and food insecurity rates among minorities—the question of equity is not applied to analyses of the actual distribution of emergency food services. The existing works on the development of food banks situate food banks as a relatively recent phenomenon that began with the creation of TEFAP and the distribution of surplus farm commodities to stabilize the economy in the early 1980s. The works do not ground the history of food banks in the larger history of anti-poverty programs or the development and decline of the public welfare state.

Most authors contributing to the literature on food banks in the past two decades cite Janet Poppendieck's 1998 book, *Sweet Charity? Emergency Food and the End of Entitlement*. Poppendieck's book is the only one to date that focuses entirely on emergency food since the 1980s. Her earlier book, *Breadlines Knee Deep in Wheat: Food Assistance in the Great Depression* focused on the provision of anti-hunger efforts by the government earlier in the 20th century. Race did not play a large part in that book, but was addressed in the epilogue in a discussion of the eligibility of immigrants

for food stamps in the second half of the twentieth century.¹⁶ Poppendieck also referenced that Blacks and Mexicans received lower amounts of assistance during the Great Depression in certain U.S. cities like Dallas, Texas.¹⁷

Questions of race and ethnicity were given only brief mention in *Sweet Charity?* and were not central to any part of Poppendieck's critique of the private distribution of emergency food assistance. She vaguely implied that race may have played a role in the interactions between staff and volunteers providing emergency food assistance and people receiving assistance came in her discussion of the tendency of the provision of charitable food assistance by large organizations to dehumanize recipients and depersonalize relationships.¹⁸ An interviewee critiquing the trend in the mid-1990s of more emergency food providers serving hot meals restaurant-style—one of providers' many attempts to increase the dignity and choice of assistance recipients—for its formality and increase of the distance between providers and clients. The interviewee stated that the café trend was “kind of a white middle-class thing” because it assumed that “white tablecloths [equaled] dignity.”¹⁹ Poppendieck's analysis of the experiences of clients at food pantries and soup kitchens, however, did not delve deeper into questions of racial disparities or cultural differences between staff and clients.

A few works have addressed the intersections of immigration issues and public welfare programs, but again have been written mostly by writers in other disciplines. Yi

¹⁶ Janet Poppendieck, *Breadlines Knee-deep in Wheat: Food Assistance in the Great Depression* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1986), 276.

¹⁷ Janet Poppendieck, *Breadlines Knee-deep in Wheat: Food Assistance in the Great Depression* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1986), 26.

¹⁸ Janet Poppendieck, *Sweet Charity? Emergency Food and the End of Entitlement* (New York: Viking, 1998), 238.

¹⁹ Poppendieck, *Sweet Charity*, 247.

Zhang's 2015 dissertation, *A Reconsideration of Labor Supply of Immigrants and Social Welfare Programs*, focused on the connections between immigration issues and social programs since the 1980s. It also discussed Mexican and Cuban immigrants' participation in the labor force upon arrival to the U.S. The work, published in the humanities and social sciences, was not historical in nature and dealt primarily with questions of the relationship between immigrants' ages, use of welfare, and fluctuations in the U.S. economy. Zhang's research concentrated on elderly immigrants' participation in public programs (such as Social Security and Temporary Assistance to Needy Families) and whether or not those programs contributed to immigrants' self-sufficiency.²⁰ It did not focus on the private, charitable distribution of social services.

The literature on food banks lacks a historians' point of view and lacks any substantive focus on the relationships between the emergency food network and communities of color. The historical literature on the long history of anti-poverty programs in the U.S. and their relationships with communities of color is not up-to-date with the rise of the charitable sector distributing social services and the relatively recent phenomenon of food banks in particular. This thesis contributes to the existing literature on the history of social programs in the United States because it not only focuses on changes to social programs since the decline of the welfare state through the 1980s and 1990s but also incorporates questions of race and ethnicity into a historical analysis of the equity of the distribution of emergency food. Research questions pertaining to the racial, ethnic, and cultural dimensions of the food assistance services provided by the

²⁰ Yi Zhang, *A Reconsideration of Labor Supply of Immigrants and Social Welfare Programs*, *Dissertation Abstracts International, A: The Humanities and Social Sciences* 76, no. 2 (2015).

nonprofit sector in the U.S. in the past fifteen years are addressed for the first time in this thesis. This work encourages scholars in other disciplines—who have contributed the majority of the existing literature on the history of emergency food assistance—to work against the erasure of certain groups’ histories by documenting the historical relationships between emergency food social programs and communities of color.

Sociologists and political scientists have provided the historical background necessary to understand the significance of the rapid growth of the emergency food network since the 1980s. Lipsky and Smith wrote that the spread of the conceptualization of social problems as emergencies during the 1980s, which was accompanied by an “unprecedented scope” of emergency-style services, had “major consequences for the cost and character of social policy.”²¹ Lipsky and Smith identified the federal government’s use of nonprofit service agencies—which included the government’s use of food banks to distribute surplus farm commodities in the early 1980s—as a key element of the emerging phenomenon of treating hunger as an emergency.²² The government began to use community organizations to distribute social services after World War II, but greatly increased the means for cooperation with nonprofits during the War on Poverty with the passage of the Economic Opportunity Act, which created Community Action Agencies.²³ Lipsky and Smith asserted that the government’s utilization of nonprofits to distribute and deliver services had many advantages. One was the fact that organizations like food banks reduced government

²¹ Michael Lipsky and Steven Rathgeb Smith, “When Social Problems Are Treated as Emergencies,” *Social Service Review* 63, no. 1 (1989): 5.

²² *Ibid.*, 15.

²³ *Ibid.*

“concern about outreach efforts” because public criticism of food banks’ failure to deliver services was less likely than public criticism of public programs’ failure to deliver services.²⁴ Lipsky and Michael predicted aspects of food banks’ shortcomings. Because of variability across the country in the size and availability of emergency food services, and because of the inherent instability of emergency responses to social problems, Lipsky and Smith predicted “vast inequities” in the emergency food system.²⁵

Daponte and Bade, in their documentation of the history of the emergency food network in 2000, did not make a specific prediction but observed that the heterogeneity in the network was important to understanding how the network operated and the significance of the network’s rapid growth after the 1980s. Because “food and resources [entered] the system at the state, county, municipal, and neighborhood [levels] local conditions [impacted] both the supply of and demand for food.”²⁶ The most significant change in delivery of assistance to the poor between 1980 and 2000 was most likely the increased presence of food pantries.²⁷

While emergency food assistance existed as early as the Great Depression in the U.S. in the form of breadlines and soup kitchens, the phenomenon of emergency food became a well-recognized and highly organized network by 2016 over the course of only about thirty years.²⁸ Food banking, however, has roots in the 1960s. The majority

²⁴ Ibid., 18.

²⁵ Ibid., 19.

²⁶ Beth Osborne Daponte and Shannon Lee Bade, “The Evolution, Cost, and Operation of the Private Food Assistance Network,” Institute for Research on Poverty Discussion Paper no. 1211-00, September 2000, accessed online, February 12 2016, <http://www.irp.wisc.edu/publications/dps/pdfs/dp121100.pdf>, 44.

²⁷ Ibid., 1.

²⁸ Poppendieck, *Sweet Charity?*, 13.

of the existing literature on the history of food banking identifies the first food bank as being the St. Mary's Food Bank, which John Van Hengel created in 1967 in Phoenix, Arizona. St. Mary's eventually grew into America's Second Harvest, which became Feeding America in 2008.²⁹ The Black Panther Party, however, contributed greatly to the food banking movement in the 1960s, and its service model has been considered by some scholars in the anti-hunger community to be indicative of the tension within the food banking industry that continues today regarding the network's historical lack of focus on social justice.³⁰ The Black Panther Party's Breakfast for Kids Program also influenced the development of Second Harvest Food Bank of Santa Cruz County, which was one of the few food banks that developed Latino-specific outreach methods and demonstrated cultural competency during the recession era.³¹

The emergency food system's process of expansion and growth, called "institutionalization" by food assistance historian Janet Poppendieck, began in the 1980s. Poppendieck's 1998 book, *Sweet Charity? Emergency Food and the End of Entitlement* established a history of food banking in the U.S., explained the process of institutionalization as a result of a political shift away from entitlements towards charity, and criticized the charitable food system for focusing more on increasing its distribution capacities than its potential to impact legislation. "Institutionalization," wrote Poppendieck, "is a good word, because it implies not only that an organization or

²⁹ Grace Budrys, *How Nonprofits Work: Case Studies in Nonprofit Organizations* (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2013), 166-7.

³⁰ Jessica Powers, "A History of Emergency Food in the US," Prezi presentation, 2013, last modified August 2015, accessed February 19, 2016, <https://prezi.com/v-76nnp83de2/a-history-of-emergency-food-in-the-us/>.

³¹ Ibid.

cluster of activities becomes an ‘institution,’ but also that is [*sic*] does so in interaction with the other, pre-existing institutions of society.”³² She identified government and business as the pre-existing institutions with which the emergency food system had become more closely connected with.³³

Several pieces of legislation—along with changes in political sentiment, Reagan’s economic policies, and an economic recession in the early 1980s—contributed to the growth of the emergency food system.³⁴ The federal government created the Temporary Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) in the early 1980s. It allocated funds for the federal government to purchase surplus farm commodities to stabilize market prices and protect farmers’ profits. The government then distributed those commodities through food banks to people in need of food during the 1980s recession. Most of the food banks featured in this study were founded during the 1980s. TEFAP and the first food banks were intended to meet needs created by temporary circumstances. In 1990, however, the program’s name changed to The Emergency Food Assistance Program, but retained its acronym, in order to reflect that the need for emergency food had not diminished and would persist. Food banks remained reliant on TEFAP commodities for its food distribution activities until well after the most recent recession in 2008. In 1996, the Bill Emerson Good Samaritan Act reduced the amount of liability faced by corporations considering making donations of surplus food and nonfood products to emergency food organizations. It helped food banks portray themselves as smart investments to large corporate donors. The Good

³² Poppendieck, *Sweet Charity?*, 140.

³³ *Ibid.*, 140.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 107-140.

Samaritan Act, therefore, fueled the growth of the interconnected food rescue and food banking movements.

Latino Barriers to Accessing Emergency Food Assistance

The historical events that shaped the development of the emergency food system also greatly impacted Latinos' access to emergency food and public food assistance programs. The most important of these historical events was the 1996 Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA), also known as welfare reform. It impacted Latinos' access to public food assistance programs like food stamps (now known as SNAP, or Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, benefits). PRWORA limited participation in the food stamp program for legal noncitizens and made all undocumented immigrants ineligible for food stamps. PRWORA restrictions for immigrants decreased Latinos' enrollment in food stamps and created confusion and enhanced stigma about the complex set of criteria people had to meet in order to be eligible, and its effects on Latinos' familiarity with and access to public food assistance programs lasted for the next twenty years.³⁵ Undocumented immigrants and certain documented immigrants remained ineligible for SNAP benefits in 2016.³⁶ In 2007, even before the recession began, only half of Latinos who were eligible for food stamps participated in the program, and less than half of eligible non-

³⁵ Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, "Facts About Latinos in the Food Stamp Program," Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, April 19, 2007, accessed February 12, 2016, <http://www.cbpp.org/research/facts-about-latinos-in-the-food-stamp-program>.

³⁶ Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, "A Quick Guide to SNAP Eligibility and Benefits," Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, November 5, 2015, accessed February 12, 2016, http://www.cbpp.org/research/a-quick-guide-to-snap-eligibility-and-benefits#_ftn6.

citizens participated.³⁷ Immigrants with children comprised households with members with different immigration statuses. These mixed-status households experienced language barriers and feared being asked for documentation when trying to access services. Latino immigrants faced extra barriers to accessing emergency food and to understanding their eligibility for public food assistance programs. Latinos' historical under-enrollment in food stamps influenced this paper's study of Feeding America's SNAP outreach programs, which emerged during the recession and a few of which targeted Latinos specifically.

Three separate researchers in 2012 and 2013 published studies of Latino food bank clients and made recommendations for food banks to improve their services for Latinos. In 2010, community members and leaders of Maricopa County, Arizona told staff that belonged to the Association of Arizona Food Banks that the local network was not doing enough to meet Latinos' needs given the increasingly hostile climate towards immigrants in the state. The Association of Arizona Food Banks responded by commissioning researchers two years in a row to study the barriers faced by Latinos in the area to receiving emergency food assistance and to recommend changes food banks could make to increase Latinos' access to emergency food assistance.

In Arizona, Christina Martínez wrote in 2012, Latinos were not only disproportionately affected by the economic recession but also faced a more and more hostile political and social climate "exacerbated" by increasingly restrictive

³⁷ Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, "Facts About Latinos in the Food Stamp Program," April 19, 2007.

immigration policies.³⁸ Latinos also made up almost half of all food bank clients in Arizona.³⁹ Martínez cautioned service providers against conflating Latino and immigration issues when acknowledging their connections to one another.⁴⁰ Martínez recommended that food banks take the following actions to improve services for Latinos: include culturally appropriate food items in emergency food boxes, prioritize increasing organizational Spanish-language capacity by recruiting and retaining staff *and* volunteers with high level language skills, create one unified intake form for all partner agencies to use in order to ensure Latinos would not be asked about their immigration status and to ensure the collection of race and ethnicity data of clients to help food banks better understand the demographics of their clients and local populations' needs, regularly re-visit TEFAP Civil rights trainings and hold partner agencies accountable for implementing the skills developed by the training.⁴¹ She also recommended continual outreach to Latinos, which would require food bank staff to build relationships with local Latinos, utilize the expertise and already-existing personal connections of partner agency staff and volunteers, identify areas where additional pantry sites were needed, and communicate clearly through flyers and local Spanish media that food banks were not connected to the government.⁴²

Other researchers also made recommendations during the recession era for how social service providers, including food banks and other food organizations, could

³⁸ Christina Martínez, "Closing the Gap: Enhancing the Client Experience at Food Banks," Bill Emerson National Hunger Fellow writing for the Association of Arizona Food Banks, 2012, accessed February 16, 2016, <https://www.azfoodbanks.org/images/uploads/Closing%20the%20Gap%20-%20Enhancing%20the%20Client%20Experience%20at%20Food%20Banks%2002-12.pdf>, 4.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 27.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 27-31.

⁴² *Ibid.*

improve their operations. In 2007, for example, researchers at the Center for Social Policy at the University of Massachusetts Boston reported that non-Latino service agencies had much to learn from Latino service agencies. One non-Latino service provider asserted that “Latino agencies are the best in terms of reaching their population. Other agencies who are working with Latino folks should try to copy their practices.”⁴³ The National Council of La Raza in 2010 called for Latinos’ perspectives to be understood and for their voices to be “heard in the national conversation” because they were “essential to crafting effective solutions.”⁴⁴ Those solutions needed to specialize according the unique needs of Latinos because a “one-size-fits-all approach” would not work.⁴⁵ Martínez asserted that “the most effective way of developing outreach strategies is doing so with community input.”⁴⁶

Sara Mia Salinas’s research on the food preferences of Latino food bank clients in 2013 revealed that Latinos desired more culturally appropriate food items and wanted culturally relevant cooking and nutrition education opportunities in order to improve their families’ health.⁴⁷ Salinas asserted that it was crucial for food banks to “involve the Latino food bank clients in every step of the program and material development

⁴³ Anny Rivera-Ottenberger and Elaine Werby, “Latino Participation in Food Assistance Programs: A Study Conducted for Project Bread,” The Center for Social Policy at UMass Boston, March 2007, accessed February 12, 2016, http://scholarworks.umb.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1012&context=csp_pubs, 40.

⁴⁴ National Council of La Raza, “Comer Bien: The Challenges of Nourishing Latino Children and Families,” 2011, accessed February 18, 2016, http://publications.nclr.org/bitstream/handle/123456789/1135/comer_bien.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y, 4.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 48.

⁴⁶ Martínez, “Closing the Gap,” 31.

⁴⁷ Sara Mia Salinas, “Sabores Latinos: A Needs Assessment of Food Preferences of Latino Food Bank Clients,” Master’s thesis, San Jose State University, 2013, 50-53.

process in the form of pilot tests.”⁴⁸ Matthew Mellon recommended in 2011 that the food bank network not only conduct outreach to Latinos but conduct outreach to Latino community-based organizations, particularly churches and faith groups, to build partnerships and establish them as food pantry sites.⁴⁹ These partnerships would allow the food bank network to build relationships in the Latino community because of pastors’ connections to the community.⁵⁰

Mellon grouped Latinos’ barriers to emergency food assistance into six categories: the prevalence of racial discrimination and bias at food pantries and in their communities more generally in Arizona, confusion regarding identification requirements at food pantries even though food pantries were prohibited by federal law from requiring social security numbers, fears of being deported as a result of seeking food assistance, language barriers between clients and food bank and pantry staff, insufficient numbers of food pantry locations in areas of Phoenix where many food insecure Latinos lived, and confusion about whether or not extra referral paperwork was required to obtain an emergency food box.⁵¹

Mellon and Martínez directed their recommendations to specific food banks in Arizona, and Salinas directed hers to a food bank in California. No similar studies of barriers faced by Latinos in accessing emergency food assistance exist for the national food bank network leader, Feeding America, or its network members as a group. The

⁴⁸ Ibid., 50.

⁴⁹ Matthew S. Mellon, “Advancing Equity within the Emergency Food Provider Network in Maricopa County,” Bill Emerson National Hunger Fellow writing for the Association of Arizona Food Banks, February 2011, accessed February 16, 2016, <https://www.azfoodbanks.org/images/uploads/Hunger%20Free%20Community%20Report%20Complete.pdf>, 19.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 19.

⁵¹ Ibid., 4-7.

framework of institutional cultural competency allows for the analysis of how emergency food providers during the recession era involved Latino hunger issues in their institutional cultures, strategic goals, programming, and financial priorities of the organization. The framework goes beyond just assessing how individual staff or volunteers demonstrated cultural competency as individuals in their interaction with Latino clients. Researchers' analyses and recommendations to a few specific food banks contained important insights that demonstrated the importance of increasing the institutional cultural competency of food banks at the national level.

Framework for Assessing Institutional Cultural Competency

The assessment of the history of the institutional cultural competency of Feeding America, of the national emergency food network as a whole, and of FOOD For Lane County between 2006 and 2016 utilized criteria based on the following sources: the recommendations made by researchers to a few individual food banks around the country during 2012 and 2013, the barriers Latinos faced in accessing emergency food assistance as documented by researchers during the recession era, and cultural competency guidelines for social service providers working with Latinos put forth in social work journals.

For food banks, institutional cultural competency in relation to Latinos during the recession era required them to have made Latinos an institutional priority by incorporating Latinos' needs into both their strategic plans and their financial budgets. Institutional cultural competency also needed to include the following processes: reflecting on their organization's relationship with Latinos, consulting Latino community members in order to better understand the perspectives of local Latinos and

build positive relationships, customizing programs and services to the local need as well as conducting targeted outreach, incorporating Latinos representative of the local population into staff and volunteers, using Latinos' feedback and expertise in program evaluation, and involving Latinos in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of programmatic changes. The goal of these efforts needed to be to reduce Latinos' specific barriers to accessing emergency food assistance and to make services more accessible and culturally acceptable to Latinos.

The social services literature established standards for what constituted cultural competency in providing services for Latinos. The standards' consideration of the diversity encapsulated within the "Latino" label and of the experiences of recent immigrants made the guidelines more specialized than general cultural competency guidelines. The standards addressed medical service providers, but contained lessons applicable to emergency food providers. According to social services professor Kurt Organista, in 2009 there were multiple dimensions of culturally competent social services practice for Latinos. Three of them were particularly important for emergency food providers to follow. First, social service providers needed to "increase service availability and access" by conducting customized outreach to particular groups and adjusting service methods to make them more culturally acceptable.⁵² Food banks, therefore, needed to make their food pantries structured differently so that they were more culturally acceptable to Latinos and needed to customize their outreach efforts to the unique needs of Latino residents in their service areas. Secondly, Organista said,

⁵² Kurt C. Organista, "New Practice Model for Latinos in Need of Social Work Services," *Social Work* 54, no. 4 (2009): 301, accessed February 19, 2016, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/215268449?accountid=14698>.

providers needed to “assess problems in the social and cultural context,” which involved thinking of Latinos’ barriers to services as “embedded in historical and living legacies of oppression.”⁵³ This required the emergency food network to recognize that Latinos’ barriers to accessing food stamps stemmed from not just language barriers but also a history of oppressive immigration policy, particularly in places like Arizona whose political climates became more hostile to Latinos during the recession era. Organista recommended another area of improvement: that providers increase service accountability by incorporating Latinos in the “development, delivery, and evaluation of services.”⁵⁴ This required food banks to incorporate Latinos into the planning of their outreach efforts, their staff and volunteers, and their evaluation of services.

The barriers documented and recommendations made by researchers during the recession era shaped the following questions: Did food banks reduce language barriers for Latinos? Did food banks reduce Latinos’ unfamiliarity and discomfort with seeking food assistance and otherwise adjust their programs so as to make the experience more culturally acceptable for Latinos? Did food banks reduce misconceptions and fears that immigrants would be asked for documentation at food pantries? Did food banks conduct SNAP outreach, and did they advocate for changes to citizenship eligibility requirements? Did food banks increase the numbers and types of culturally appropriate food available at distribution sites? Did food banks build relationships with Latino agencies in the area? Did food banks seek to understand Latinos’ perspectives and experiences and incorporate their expertise and wisdom into the planning,

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 304.

implementation, and evaluation of outreach efforts? Did providers incorporate Latinos' needs into their branding and marketing schemes?

What food banks did not do and did not say in relation to Latinos was as important to understand as what food banks did do and did say in relation to Latinos during the recession era. The framework outlined above allowed the author to assess Feeding America's institutional cultural competency, the institutional cultural competency of a few of its network members, and to summarize the institutional cultural competency of the network as a whole between 2006 and 2016 by gauging if the outreach efforts to Latinos were conducted by a large majority of Feeding America network members. In the case study of FOOD For Lane County's Multicultural Outreach Program, the author's access to more detailed information about the food banks' activities and the local context allowed for an in-depth analysis of how the food bank's development of the program demonstrated a greater degree of institutional competency than other Feeding America network members.

Prior to the most recent economic recession, the emergency food network had grown more entrenched in U.S. society, but the next major phase of emergency food's institutionalization came with the recession that began in December 2007 and ended in June 2009.⁵⁵ During the recession era—the few years preceding the recession, the main two years of the recession, and the several years after it in which increased unemployment, underemployment, and food insecurity rates remained—the emergency

⁵⁵ Steven F. Hipple, "The labor market in 2009: the recession drags on," Bureau of Labor Statistics Monthly Labor Review, March 2010, accessed February 12, 2016, <http://www.bls.gov/opub/mlr/2010/03/art1full.pdf>, 3.

food system's transition from being an "emergency" response to a temporary need towards a "chronic" response to a permanent need accelerated.⁵⁶ The emergency food network's transition to a regular and reliable source of food involved an increase in nonemergency and emergency food programs created and operated by food banks. Efforts also began within the network to become more culturally competent in providing services to Latinos. Six years after the recession technically ended, however, many Latinos, especially migrant farmworkers, recent documented immigrants, and undocumented immigrants still faced major barriers to accessing the services of emergency food providers. The following study of the Feeding America network's relationship with Latinos between 2006 and 2016 reveals that despite the network's growth, most providers did not make the programmatic changes necessary to increase their institutional cultural competency.

⁵⁶ Feeding America, "Food Banks: Hunger's New Staple Preliminary Findings," last modified September 27, 2011, accessed February 12, 2016, <http://www.feedingamerica.org/hunger-in-america/our-research/hungers-new-staple/or-hungers-new-staple-executive.pdf>, 1.

The Feeding America Network and Outreach to Latinos, 2006-2016

Several themes emerge from the examination of the emergency food assistance system's relationship to Latinos between 2006 and 2016. The recession accelerated the institutionalization of the emergency food network, and emergency food providers demonstrated mixed levels of institutional cultural competency. During the recession, many food banks, at the leadership of Feeding America, responded to the increased demand for emergency food due to high unemployment and underemployment rates by increasing the amount of food distributed. They evaluated their success by counting the number of people fed with numbers of pounds of food. This detracted from the time and money institutions spent on understanding Latino hunger, which contradicted Feeding America's recognition that Latinos had been disproportionately affected by the recession and comprised a large number of food bank clients. Some food banks' relationships with local Latino community members changed as those food banks conducted more Latino outreach, but some food banks initiated no additional Latino outreach, and many emergency food providers lacked a nuanced and deep understanding of the needs and perspectives of local Latinos in their area. Latino-focused service providers and Latino advocacy organizations helped distribute emergency food assistance. They had advantages over traditional emergency food providers because of their connections to Latino community members.

Feeding America was responsible to a certain degree for its network's relationship to Latinos because it repeatedly described itself as the leader of America's fight against hunger and because network members entered into contracts with Feeding

America. The Feeding America network also comprised most of the activities of the emergency food system in the U.S.

Feeding America somewhat increased its institutional cultural competency during the recession, but its progress was minimal. Its failure to make Latino hunger a top organization priority, to incorporate Latinos into the marketing of programs, and to provide best practice standards for institutional cultural competency to its network members inhibited the progress of its network members. Feeding America's awareness of the complexity of Latino hunger issues, however, increased during the recession era. It published Latino hunger research studies in 2009 and 2010. In one of those studies, it made a series of inadequate recommendations in 2009 about how providers could be more culturally competent. Its shortcomings meant that only a few network members went beyond SNAP outreach to Latinos and did more to increase Latinos' access to emergency food services. The network members that did go beyond the inadequate recommendations made by Feeding America demonstrated institutional cultural competency because they targeted SNAP outreach to reduce Latinos' barriers to enrollment in public food assistance programs, increased the number of Spanish-speaking staff and volunteers to reduce language barriers, and collected race and ethnicity data of clients to better understand local needs. The changes to the emergency food system during the recession, however, did not result in all of Latinos' unique needs being met and the majority of emergency food providers did not demonstrate institutional cultural competency in providing services to Latinos.

In order to understand why Latino outreach efforts by a few food banks in the past ten years were unique, it is necessary to grasp how the size and scope of the

Feeding America network changed during the recession era. The network's substantial increase in food distribution activities—part of its response to increased demand for emergency food during the recession—furthered its institutionalization. In 2006, before the recession, the Feeding America network distributed food to fewer Latinos than the group's food insecurity rates called for.⁵⁷ Emergency food workers in Chicago attributed Latinos' under-usage of food pantries to the widespread fear among immigrants of being deported. One worker explained that “when [Latinos] see people set up food boxes and giving [*sic*] away food they think it's a sting.”⁵⁸ It was clear prior to the recession that the emergency food system needed to improve Latinos' access to services. By 2010, Latinos comprised a significant number of clients receiving services through Feeding America's network.⁵⁹

In 2008, America's Second Harvest-The Nation's Food Bank Network changed its name to Feeding America, established itself as a brand to raise awareness of its mission, formed an ad council to raise awareness of hunger, created an entertainment council to utilize celebrities' public attention, and increased its use of cause marketing.⁶⁰ The first of Feeding America's five goals of its 2008 strategic plan was “source and distribute more food.”⁶¹ Under the leadership of Feeding America, the emergency food network deepened its ties to both the federal government and large

⁵⁷ Carlos Sadovi, “Latinos shun food pantries, study finds,” *ChicagoTribune*, February 24, 2006, accessed February 20, 2016, http://articles.chicagotribune.com/2006-02-24/news/0602240317_1_food-banks-latinos-greater-chicago-food-depository.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

⁵⁹ Feeding America, “When the Pantry is Bare,” 5.

⁶⁰ Budrys, *How Nonprofits Work*, 167.

⁶¹ Feeding America, “2008 Annual Report,” accessed February 20, 2016, http://www.feedingamerica.org/about-us/about-feeding-america/annual-report/feedingamerica_2008_annual_report.pdf, 1.

corporations during the recession era. By 2013, Feeding America received more food and nonfood products than ever before from businesses and the federal government.⁶²

Poppendieck's analysis of the influences of supply and demand on the growth of the emergency food system during the 1980s ended up foreshadowing what would happen to the system during the 2008 recession. In 1998, Poppendieck warned that measuring the level of need by counting the number of people seeking emergency food assistance would restrict the system to a path of never-ending expansion.⁶³ The idea was that counting the hungry would enable the organization to count the number of people it fed, and hence measure its success.⁶⁴ The 2008 recession exacerbated the root causes of hunger by increasing economic inequality and fueled Feeding America's determination to address hunger by counting the hungry.

The recession increased the demand for emergency food assistance,⁶⁵ and Latinos were disproportionately affected by the recession that began in late 2007 and increased unemployment and underemployment from 2008 onward.⁶⁶ In 2006, America's Second Harvest distributed two billion pounds of food and grocery products to about twenty-five million people.⁶⁷ By 2014, it distributed three billion pounds of food and grocery products to more than forty million people.⁶⁸ Feeding America's major institutional changes allowed it to direct the emergency food system towards

⁶² Budrys, *How Nonprofits Work*, 171-6.

⁶³ Poppendieck, *Sweet Charity?*, 132.

⁶⁴ Budrys, *How Nonprofits Work*, 178-9.

⁶⁵ Feeding America, "Hunger in America 2014: National Report," August 2014, accessed February 12, 2016, available for download from <http://www.feedingamerica.org/hunger-in-america/our-research/hunger-in-america/>, 1.

⁶⁶ Feeding America, "When the Pantry is Bare: Emergency Food Assistance Executive Summary," 2010, accessed February 12, 2016, <http://www.feedingamerica.org/hunger-in-america/our-research/latino-hunger-research/latino-hunger-exec-sum.pdf>, 1.

⁶⁷ O'Brien and Aldeen, "Hunger in America 2006: Executive Summary," 1.

⁶⁸ Feeding America, "Hunger in America 2014: National Report," 3.

delivering more food to the people that experienced food insecurity as a result of the recession, but it also led it to exclude possibilities for engaging Latinos in its re-branding efforts.

Feeding America used its annual reports to communicate its strategic goals and institutional priorities throughout the recession era. In 2008, the first of five goals was to increase the amount of food distributed.⁶⁹ Feeding America intended for its new name in 2008 and its subsequent re-branding marketing campaigns “to help the public better understand the issue of hunger in America.”⁷⁰ Donations, corporate partnerships, and advocacy efforts increased the following two years. The organization’s annual reports continued to create images and infographics centered around the numbers that measured its progress. Numbers were the measurement of choice for evaluating success for everything from pounds of food distributed, to meals served, to advertisements run, social media activity and followers, celebrities involved, legislators contacted, dollars raised, and organizations enlisted, and corporations partnered with.⁷¹

Feeding America’s so-called movement, however, did not incorporate Latino hunger issues into the center of its re-branding efforts. The methods employed by the organization to help the public better understand hunger in America did not feature Latino hunger issues front and center. While Feeding America published studies on

⁶⁹ Feeding America, “2008 Annual Report,” 1.

⁷⁰ Feeding America, “Advancing Hope for a Hunger-Free America: 2009 Annual Report,” 2010, accessed March 8, 2016, http://www.feedingamerica.org/about-us/about-feeding-america/annual-report/feedingamerica_2009_annual_report.pdf, 15.

⁷¹ Feeding America, “Feeding Families, Feeding Hope: 2015 Annual Report,” 2015, accessed March 8, 2016, http://www.feedingamerica.org/about-us/about-feeding-america/annual-report/2015-feeding-america-annual.pdf?s_src=W163ORGSC&s_referrer=google&s_subsrc=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.feedingamerica.org%2Fabout-us%2Fabout-feeding-america%2Fannual-report%2F%3Freferrer%3Dhttps%3A%2F%2Fwww.google.com%2F, 17-23.

Latino hunger, and discussed Latinos' access to network member's services in a variety of its publications, annual reports during the recession era did not feature catchy phrases about the organization's progress in relation to Latinos. Absent were any reports of increases in the number of tortillas served, the number of pounds of salsa ingredients distributed, or percentage of staff and volunteers in the network that were both bilingual and bicultural. Feeding America's re-branding efforts comprised some of the largest impacts on the emergency food network during the recession era, but the marketing materials did not prominently feature Latino-specific barriers to food assistance, and therefore signaled that Latino barriers to food assistance were not a priority of the organization. Feeding America did not significantly increase its institutional cultural competency during the recession era in part because of how it went about its re-branding efforts. Its strategies excluded the possibilities for it and its network members to engage hungry Latinos during the recession era.

Feeding America reached forty-five percent brand awareness in 2015,⁷² and the years had seen a use of similar marketing strategies by its network members. In 2016, the Regional Food Bank of Oklahoma's website prominently featured a live counter of the number of meals provided so far.⁷³ Its website was available for translation into Spanish.⁷⁴ Member food banks of the Feeding America network also began using similar branding and marketing mechanisms during the recession era. The way organizations communicated about their activities to the public changed as quantifiable achievements were given more focus in organizational documents. This was true of

⁷² Feeding America, "Feeding Families, Feeding Hope: 2015 Annual Report," 13.

⁷³ Regional Food Bank of Oklahoma, "Regional Food Bank of Oklahoma," website homepage, accessed March 6, 2016. <https://www.regionalfoodbank.org/>.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

food banks that also tried to engage and outreach to Latinos. The Regional Food Bank of Oklahoma, for example, had started the “Hispanic Initiative,” but by 2015 Latino hunger still did not feature prominently in its publications seeking to communicate the complexity and severity of hunger in Oklahoma to the general public and potential donors.⁷⁵ In a 2011 review of the Regional Food Bank of Oklahoma’s capacities, a study coordinator reported that pantries noticed a decline in Hispanic clients after anti-immigrant legislative developments. In the author’s recommendations for how partner agencies of the food bank could improve, however, deportation fears were not mentioned. Partner agencies wanted to better serve Hispanics, but did not “have the expertise or resources to do so.”⁷⁶ The author recommended that the food bank provide training and translated documents to partner agencies, but did not provide more in-depth analysis or guidance for the large food bank, and did not state that the needs of Hispanic clients would require major institutional-level changes.⁷⁷

Food banks did not incorporate Latino hunger issues or Latino barriers to accessing food assistance into the marketing or their branding. Branding and marketing were the key ways that the emergency food network, led by Feeding America, tried to engage the public on hunger issues and generate momentum for political advocacy about public food assistance programs and the root causes of hunger. They also described the organization’s methods of evaluating its programs and services and the activities of network members. Despite organizations’ expressions of the desire to better

⁷⁵ Regional Food Bank of Oklahoma, “Hunger In Oklahoma,” 2015, accessed March 6, 2016, <https://www.regionalfoodbank.org/uploads/hungerinamerica2015.pdf>, 1-6.

⁷⁶ Regional Food Bank of Oklahoma, “Capacity Study Report 2011,” 2011, accessed March 6, 2016, http://www.beeforbackpacks.org/assets/capacity_report2012.pdf, 32.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

serve Latinos, and their articulation of awareness and (albeit generalized) understanding of Latinos' barriers to accessing emergency food assistance, organizations did not actually prioritize Latinos in their branding and marketing schemes. The absence of references to language barriers, culturally appropriate food items, and immigration policies in the most prominent of national-level campaigns demonstrated that Latinos were not a top priority for Feeding America, despite its acknowledgement in 2010 that Latinos were "the fastest growing population of food bank clients in the United States."⁷⁸

Feeding America demonstrated a very minimal degree of institutional cultural competency at the outset of the recession, and over the course of the recession demonstrated mixed amounts of institutional cultural competency. Feeding America did not involve Latino hunger in its branding efforts, and did not involve Latinos in the evaluation of its services to Latinos, but it did make an effort to better understand Latinos' needs by commissioning research studies on Latino hunger. Feeding America also showed an increased level of institutional cultural competency when it encouraged network members to conduct more culturally competent SNAP outreach efforts in 2010, which showed that the organization recognized that Latinos needed extra outreach efforts because of their historic under-enrollment in food stamp benefits.

Feeding America suggested actions food banks could take to improve their services for Latinos in 2010. Its recommendations, however, did not demonstrate that Feeding America intended to make it a strategic plan goal to make sure its members prioritized Latino outreach as much as other programs. They also did not give food

⁷⁸ Martínez, "Closing the Gap," 27.

banks the in-depth instruction and guidance needed to develop culturally acceptable and relevant programming. The elements of improving services that Feeding America neglected to discuss spoke volumes about Feeding America's lack of understanding of the complexity and difficulty that food banks faced in trying to garner institutional momentum enough to develop, fund, implement, and evaluate Latino-specific outreach programs and to incorporate those programs permanently into the institution's culture and mission. Feeding America's recommendations did not include the following suggestions: to hire Latinos to conduct outreach services, to assess the unique types of needs among Latinos in food banks' local service areas by seeking to understand the voices, perspectives, and experiences of Latinos, incorporating Latinos' expertise and wisdom into the planning, implementation, and evaluation of outreach programs, and how to adjust the set-up of food pantries to be more culturally and socially acceptable. The recommendations focused primarily on increasing Latinos' enrollment in federal food assistance programs by conducting SNAP outreach to Latinos, which revealed that Feeding America understood Latinos' historical under-enrollment in food stamps but did not address the fact that undocumented immigrants would not be eligible for SNAP benefits and would therefore require more specialized outreach by food banks.

Feeding America recognized that the "unique and significant needs of Hispanic families" required food banks to make some sort of change.⁷⁹ Feeding America framed its recommendations as suggestions, instead of requiring that network members make them top priorities. It suggested that organizations "consider implementing culturally-appropriate food acquisition practices, increasing Spanish-language web presence,

⁷⁹ Feeding America, "When the Pantry is Bare," 5.

hiring bilingual staff persons, or developing and distributing multi-lingual resource materials.”⁸⁰ A few select food banks, in collaboration with Latino service agencies or in their own with the help of key culturally competent staff members, implemented some of Feeding America’s suggestions. Again, however, the diversity within Latino communities and the needs of farmworkers went unacknowledged in 2010.

Feeding America did not give guidance on how food banks were to assess how its suggestion of “whatever level appropriate”⁸¹ of Latino outreach applied to their service areas, and so many food banks did not customize outreach to the specific needs of local Latinos. Food banks needed a framework to work from in order to know how to go about building relationships in the Latino community. In 2014, Feeding America mentioned that agencies with more connections to farmworkers helped in distributing emergency food services, but Feeding America did not suggest that organizations collaborate with and consult with Latino-led agencies.

Feeding America also demonstrated minimal institutional cultural competency in its evaluation of its services in relation to Latinos. In 2010, Feeding America measured its success in meeting Latinos’ needs by counting the number of Latinos that had accessed its services. Feeding America claimed that Hispanic children “particularly benefited” from its services and that it had “clearly improved the well-being of low-income children.”⁸² That method of measurement showed that Feeding America’s evaluation of its effectiveness in serving Latinos was narrow to the point of excluding

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² Michael Martinez-Schiferl and Sheila R. Zedlewski, “Emergency Food Assistance Helps Many Low-Income Hispanic Children,” Urban Institute, Brief #1, October 2010, accessed February 12, 2016, <http://www.feedingamerica.org/hunger-in-america/our-research/latino-hunger-research/emergency-food-assistance.pdf>, 6.

considerations of how the network had or had not addressed Latinos' experiences of discrimination and bias at food pantries, or how services might have been provided differently depending on the political climate around immigration policy in particular areas. The organization made no inquiry as to how the children had felt when accessing the network's emergency food services, or whether or not the families that they went with to access services were familiar with food items or knew how to cook with the food items. Feeding America did not incorporate Latinos into the evaluation of its own programs, but chose to use its own quantitative metrics instead.

Additionally, Feeding America, as of 2010, had not examined the probable and possible distance between Latino clients and non-Latino outreach workers that occurred because of language barriers and Latinos' fears of being asked for immigration documents. Feeding America did not recognize how the recession, its re-branding process, and changes in its mission had increased its distance from people who were trying to access its services. This lack of awareness made it feel less of a sense of urgency about prioritizing Latinos' needs. "Feeding America," wrote sociology professor Grace Budrys in 2013, had "virtually no interaction with the people who [got] the food," and so the beneficiaries of the organization had "virtually no voice in how the organization [operated]."⁸³

Food banks received no guidance from Feeding America on how to secure sustainable funding for the Latino outreach programs during the recession, during which food banks scrambled to make their budgets accommodate the increased use of emergency food. Feeding America acknowledged some of the barriers Latinos faced in

⁸³ Budrys, *How Nonprofits Work*, 183.

accessing food assistance, but did not make developing cultural competency a top priority at the outset of the recession. Feeding America did not demonstrate a significant degree of institutional cultural competence during the recession era, and so many of its network food banks were not empowered to increase their institutional cultural competency. A few food banks stood out as exceptions because of SNAP outreach efforts, collaboration with Latino-led agencies, and attempts to meet migrant farmworkers' unique needs. Sources on Feeding America and its network members show that food insecurity among migrant and seasonal farmworkers in high agricultural production areas of the U.S. was an important thing for food banks to take into consideration in their outreach. Some food banks did not incorporate farmworkers' needs into their outreach, but the few that did so demonstrated a greater amount of institutional cultural competency because of their ability to customize outreach to the specific needs of the local Latino population.

Feeding America expressed a desire for its network members to better meet the needs of Latinos through SNAP outreach. Feeding America led its network members to start engaging in general SNAP outreach programs in 2007.⁸⁴ When Feeding America evaluated SNAP outreach programs across the country in 2014, it described outreach attempts by a few network members that demonstrated cultural competency. A few SNAP outreach programs demonstrated institutional cultural competency because of the specific, underserved groups (like Latinos) that food banks had observed as being important. Food banks did not target specific populations, but reported that they reached

⁸⁴ Budrys, *How Nonprofits Work*, 177.

vulnerable groups like Latinos.”⁸⁵ Food banks “[formulated] outreach strategies that [took] into consideration geographic location, as well as characteristics of populations in the service area, including race/ethnicity, language, disability status, age, gender and immigration status.”⁸⁶ The fact that outreach responded to specific, local circumstances and situations among the populations within emergency food providers’ service areas demonstrated that some food banks conducting the SNAP outreach were flexible enough to customize outreach. The ability to customize outreach to local circumstances was one part of an organization’s ability to incorporate Latino concerns into its financial priorities, organizational culture among staff and volunteers, and strategic plans. Food bank staff acknowledged that Spanish “was a necessary second language requirement for outreach workers.”⁸⁷ They recognized how much language barriers impacted Latinos’ access to food assistance. Understanding Latinos’ unique barriers and needs was a key part of making services more accessible and socially and culturally acceptable. Additionally, staff found it was very important to build trust with individuals from immigrant communities.”⁸⁸ A few food banks recognized the importance of establishing rapport and personal connections when working with Latinos. One outreach program visited a “migrant farmworker employer site,” and “food banks [chose] to partner with these unique community agencies or businesses because of their access to local community populations who may be otherwise difficult

⁸⁵ Shana Alford, Elaine Waxman, and Colleen Heflin, “2014 Executive Summary: SNAP Outreach Case Studies Coast to Coast,” Feeding America, November 2014, accessed February 12, 2016, <http://www.feedingamerica.org/hunger-in-america/our-research/program-evaluation/snap-outreach-evaluation.PDF>, 2.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 9.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

to reach.”⁸⁹ By trying to build relationships with Latinos and Latino-specific service providers, as well as trying to utilize for Spanish-speaking outreach workers, some food banks began to incorporate Latino hunger needs into their institutional priorities. Feeding America, by 2014, had acknowledged the existence of need among migrant farmworkers, a population it had not previously discussed, and it had identified that agencies offering specific services to minority populations had an advantage in being able to provide culturally competent services. It also recognized the benefits of food banks’ collaboration with those organizations. Feeding America did not, however, go so far as to recommend that other food banks do the same as the ones featured in its overview of SNAP outreach programs. The institutional cultural competency of a few food banks increased because of the ways in which they conducted SNAP outreach efforts, but not all food banks did that kind of outreach.

Food stamp outreach in California increased as more food banks created CalFresh (California’s name for the federal food stamp program) outreach programs and began to offer materials and resources in multiple languages, including Spanish. In Alameda County, California, for example, the Alameda County Community Food Bank operated a CalFresh outreach program that offered enrollment assistance and other resources in multiple languages other than English, including Spanish.⁹⁰ The outreach efforts included a radio advertisement that the food bank also made available on its website. The English and Spanish versions followed different scripts. The Spanish

⁸⁹ Ibid., 5.

⁹⁰ Alameda County Community Food Bank, “CalFresh Outreach,” accessed March 6, 2016, <http://www.accfb.org/outreach/>.

version featured two male voices, and in the conversation one man encouraged the other to solicit help from the Calfresh outreach staff at the food bank by phone and explained the benefits and advantages of enrolling in the food stamp program.⁹¹ The other man was at first reluctant because he was busy working and was worried that soliciting food stamps would impact his immigration status and access to other services in the future.⁹² The first man reassured him that food stamps were a traditional program that would not negatively impact his status, and that assistance was available in Spanish.⁹³ The English version featured a male voice and a female voice, presumably a couple, finding out that they were probably eligible for food stamps through Calfresh even though the man was about to buy a car and was receiving unemployment benefits.⁹⁴ The two radio spots featured characters that expressed different reasons for their doubts about whether or not they were eligible for food stamps.

The outreach done by food banks for the Calfresh program, which increased during the recession era, demonstrated that some California food banks had a slight understanding of the concerns that were common among Latinos in accessing public food assistance programs, such as the fear of being asked for documentation and that receiving benefits would impact their immigration status applications. SNAP outreach efforts made some food banks slightly more culturally competent as institutions because the prioritization of outreach about a public food assistance program, conducted by a

⁹¹ Alameda County Community Food Bank, Calfresh Outreach Program, Spanish radio spot audio recording available online from food bank's website, accessed March 6, 2016, http://www.accfb.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/OneApplication_Spanish.mp3.

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ Alameda County Community Food Bank, Calfresh Outreach Program, English radio spot audio recording available online from food bank's website, accessed March 6, 2016, http://www.accfb.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/OneApplication_English.mp3.

few food banks in Spanish, addressed Latinos' historic under-enrollment in food stamps because of the confusion and fear that resulted from the citizenship eligibility requirements that were enacted in 1996.

Some food banks prioritized building their organization's Spanish language capacity by recruiting bilingual volunteers and staff. The Rhode Island Community Food Bank, for example, sought an intern with a high level of literacy in both English and Spanish because it wanted to translate web and print materials into Spanish. It intended to provide Spanish-language media with translated materials in order to increase Spanish-speakers' awareness of their programs, and to generate more financial support among Hispanic businesses in the area.⁹⁵ The food bank wanted more support in fulfilling its mission to distribute "10 million pounds of food per year to families in need."⁹⁶ That food bank showed an interest in tailoring outreach to Latinos in order to help it reach its goal of distributing a certain number of pounds of emergency food per year. It acknowledged the large and important presence of Hispanics in the community and expressed a desire to make Hispanics more aware of its services and more comfortable accessing its services.⁹⁷

The recession impacted the strategic goals of the emergency food network and made emergency food providers less flexible as institutions to the needs of minority communities, particularly Latinos. Food banks were at an inherent disadvantage in providing services to Latinos, and Latino organizations were instrumental in drawing food banks' attention to their own shortcomings and helping them to make changes. The

⁹⁵ Cindy Elder, "Food Bank Seeks Spanish Translator," Rhode Island Community Food Bank, accessed February 20, 2016, http://www.rwu.edu/sites/default/files/downloads/rwu_request_form_0.doc, 3.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 4.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

small number of Feeding America food banks whose outreach efforts during the recession went beyond SNAP outreach experienced many challenges to becoming more culturally competent, especially in their attempts to acquire more culturally appropriate food items for distribution.

In Connecticut, Latino service agencies and churches with Spanish-language worship services operated emergency food programs that were able to acquire, although with great difficulty and with the use of other organizations with connections to the Latino community, culturally appropriate food items.⁹⁸ An employee at Latino Community Services articulated her awareness of the diversity within the Latino community and said that the food bank directed donations of products like mangoes, plantains, and jicama to Latino-majority neighborhood distribution sites.⁹⁹ The emergency food providers in Rhode Island and Connecticut provided services with a degree of institutional cultural competency because of their connections to Latino-focused organizations. The acquisition of culturally appropriate food items enabled food banks to increase service availability and access. Traditional emergency food providers found themselves at a disadvantage during the recession, and their cultural competency capabilities increased with the presence of Latino service agencies in their service area, but only if they built partnerships with those organizations. Some food banks in Connecticut, even if they were located in areas in which residents predominantly spoke

⁹⁸ CT Latino News, "Food Banks Challenged To Provide Latinos Familiar Foods," 2014, accessed February 20, 2016. <http://ctlatinonews.com/2014/09/11/food-banks-challenged-to-provide-latinos-familiar-foods/>.

⁹⁹ Ibid.

Spanish and large numbers of immigrants lived, focused their resources on the distribution of nutritious food rather than culturally appropriate foods.¹⁰⁰

In 2012, a Salvation Army in Phoenix, Arizona noticed that food items would be left outside the store by Latino clients who did not want to keep unfamiliar food items in the emergency food boxes they took home. The Salvation Army consulted both clients and staff about what food items they would prefer, used that advice to ask donors for more donations of *fideos* (noodles), and made *fideos* a staple item in the emergency food boxes. Staff noticed a decrease in the amount of food left after emergency food box distribution times.¹⁰¹

Some food banks reduced some of Latinos' barriers to food assistance because they dedicated a large amount of institutional resources to creating specific programming especially for the purpose of becoming more culturally competent when providing services to Latinos. Some food banks responded to the requests and recommendations of Latino organizations and Latino community leaders, or incorporated the perspectives and voices of food pantry clients who happened to be Latinos into their development of programs and services. The Regional Food Bank of Oklahoma, for example, identified through an agency survey in 2010 that it lacked services for Spanish-speaking clients and their families. It responded by creating the "Hispanic Initiative" to eliminate barriers and promote community.¹⁰² The food bank described that it had five ways it aspired to be "Hispanic-friendly." It wanted its partner

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ Martínez, "Closing the Gap," 28.

¹⁰² Regional Food Bank of Oklahoma, "Frequently Asked Questions," accessed February 20, 2016, <https://www.regionalfoodbank.org/uploads/ffk-forms/hispanic-food-pantry-resources-english.pdf>, 1.

agencies to have “bilingual signage and forms, extended hours of operation, [to] avoid asking for SSNs, [to include] more raw ingredients, and [to advertise] services in Spanish.”¹⁰³ These efforts to be more culturally competent paralleled the changes FOOD For Lane County. But, as outlined earlier, the Regional Food Bank of Oklahoma also did not incorporate Latino concerns into its publications, the aim of some of which was to help the public better understand hunger in Oklahoma. Emergency food providers across the country demonstrated mixed levels of institutional cultural competency when providing services to Latinos during the recession era.

Some providers in the network attempted to improve their services for Latinos and made changes to their nutrition and cooking education programs in order to reduce language barriers for Latino food bank clients and to make recipes and class curriculums more culturally relevant. These actions aligned with Sara Mia Salinas’ recommendations to one food bank in California in 2013. Several years after the recession ended, the anti-hunger organization Share Our Strength partnered with other national food organizations and corporations to translate its Cooking Matters curriculum into Spanish. The Spanish-language version of the course’s text became more than just a direct translation from the English version. Recipes differed between the versions to make recipes reflect cooks’ potential interests based on their language backgrounds. The recipes were designed to utilize common food pantry staples while making them more culturally familiar and acceptable.¹⁰⁴ The Spanish-language version, for example,

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ Mercedys Ruby, personal interview by author at FOOD For Lane County offices, Eugene, Oregon, February 3, 2016.

contained a recipe for a quesadilla made with tortillas, peanut butter, and banana slices.¹⁰⁵

Researchers' work during the recession era to document the complexity and causes of Latinos' experiences of food insecurity clarify how diversity within the Latino community was important for service providers to understand in their implementation of practices to become more culturally competent as institutions. Migrant and seasonal farmworkers in North Carolina experienced high rates of food insecurity despite their close proximity to, and direct labor in, the production of fresh food. In 2004, scholars Quandt et al. wrote that food insecurity was "extremely high among Latino farmworkers in North Carolina."¹⁰⁶ The authors recommended that the local area food pantries expand their outreach efforts beyond the indigenous rural community to farmworkers, but that the goal should be for clients to establish independence from emergency food providers.¹⁰⁷ More sustainable solutions required national-level, long-term policy changes related to the regulation and economic structure of the industrial agricultural system in the U.S.¹⁰⁸ Academic researchers documented Latino farmworker food insecurity rates before the recession, and made recommendations to the emergency food system to increase its outreach efforts. Ten years later and after the official end of the most recent economic recession, however—despite the emergency food system's expansion and increased food distribution in partnership with large corporate donors, including food producers and growers and other agribusinesses—Latino farmworkers

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ Sara A. Quandt et al., "Household Food Security Among Migrant and Seasonal Latino Farmworkers in North Carolina." *Public Health Reports* 119, no. 6 (2004): 573.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., 575.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

across the country continued to experience high rates of food insecurity even as they contributed directly to the feeding of most other U.S. residents.

Laura-Anne Minkoff-Zern wrote in 2014 about her ethnographic research with Mexican immigrant farmworkers and non-emergency and emergency food providers in three counties in the Northern Central Coast region of California. She observed that food banks were “a primary source of food” for undocumented and food insecure individuals in the area, and that about seventy-five percent of food bank clients at Second Harvest Santa Cruz County were farmworkers.¹⁰⁹ Food insecurity among immigrant farmworkers increased as a result of increased California-Mexico border “militarization.”¹¹⁰ This occurred during the same time period as the economic recession that disproportionately impacted people of color in the U.S., especially Latinos.

Scholars documented Latino farmworkers’ experiences of food insecurity before and after the most recent economic recession, and the extra barriers that those individuals faced in accessing nonemergency food and emergency food assistance. Undocumented farmworkers were ineligible for food stamp benefits, documented farmworkers faced language barriers and fear of deportation barriers when seeking public food assistance, and most farmworkers’ vulnerabilities were exacerbated by unprotected working conditions.¹¹¹ Some scholars critiqued the food assistance

¹⁰⁹ Laura-Anne Minkoff-Zern, “Subsidizing Farmworker Hunger: Food Assistance Programs and the Social Reproduction of California Farm Labor,” *Geoforum* 57, (2014): 93-4.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 93.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, 91-8.

system—both public and private, emergency food networks—for failing to engage politically with the structural causes of farmworker food insecurity.¹¹²

In 2010, Sano et al. published accounts of Latino experiences of food insecurity in Michigan, Iowa, Oregon, and California. They cautioned against generalizing about Latinos' experiences from their carefully-selected case studies, citing that specific cases could not “represent the entirety of the diverse experiences of rural Latino immigrants” because the Latina immigrant mothers in their study varied in immigration status, length of residency in their location at the time of the study, their type of employment, and the size of their families.¹¹³ Food banks, therefore, in order to have increased their institutional cultural competency during the recession era, needed to better understand the experiences of Latinos in their local area and the ways that they were unique.

Sano et al. asserted that food insecurity and other health and wellness outcomes for Latino immigrant families would result only if, at local levels, local business and government leaders, social service providers, and Latino immigrant families collaborated to engage in long-term efforts.¹¹⁴ Latinos needed to be part of the solution. Feeding America's publications show that the organization did not, at the national level, incorporate Latinos into its evaluation of whether or not it had been successful during the worst of the economic recession in meeting Latinos' children's' food needs. This went against Sano et al.'s publication of the same year, in which they wrote that

¹¹² Ibid., 91-98.

¹¹³ Sano, et al., "Understanding Food Insecurity Among Latino Immigrant Families," 111-23.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., 120.

children of undocumented Latino parents were at a higher risk than other Latino children of being food insecure.¹¹⁵

Latinos' use of public and private food assistance "depended not only on need, but also on awareness, past experiences and cultural norms regarding assistance."¹¹⁶ Many families were reluctant to go to food banks and food pantries because of the cultural stigma against relying on assistance and because they felt unwelcome in their communities, especially after hearing stories of people being treated poorly if they did not speak English well.¹¹⁷ Between 2001 and 2004, Latino mothers who resided for most of the year in rural Oregon communities and who had immigrated to the U.S. within the past twenty years felt that their communities were unfriendly and they did not have safe spaces to take their children to play.¹¹⁸ The research on the diversity of the types of needs among Latinos across the country highlights the diversity within Latino communities that Feeding America and many of its network members failed to acknowledge.

How well emergency food organizations understood and communicated with Latinos, and to what degree Latinos were incorporated into decision-making processes about the development of the services those organizations provided, had direct impacts on whether or not Latinos felt comfortable accessing services supplied and supported by food banks. Some emergency food providers in the network demonstrated institutional cultural competency because they made attempts to understand the localized nature of Latinos' needs and customized outreach and programs to accommodate those local

¹¹⁵ Ibid., 121.

¹¹⁶ Ibid., 119.

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

¹¹⁸ Ibid., 113-119.

needs. The Second Harvest Food Bank of Santa Cruz County (from here on “Second Harvest”) in California was a food bank that demonstrated institutional cultural competency because of its understanding of the needs of migrant and seasonal farmworkers in its service area.

As of 2012, within the entire Feeding America network, there were “several nutrition education programs that [integrated] cultural competence into all components of their programming and activities.”¹¹⁹ Second Harvest met many of the criteria for institutional cultural competency in administering its nonemergency, educational services to Latinos during the recession era. Similarly to FOOD For Lane County, its ability to increase its institutional cultural competency was enhanced by its local context (although its circumstances were very different). Second Harvest was the first food bank in California, and so it was well-established, and was of a certain size and scope, when the recession started. It also had a baseline level of institutional cultural competency because of its institutional history, culture, and location. Second Harvest historically incorporated social justice into its programs and services, because The Black Panther Party’s Breakfast for Kids Program started the food bank.¹²⁰ Second Harvest’s geographic location and proximity to large numbers of Latinos influenced its levels of cultural competency. Because it was located in a major agricultural production area of California, it was familiar with the cyclical patterns of food insecurity of the Latino farmworkers that worked to harvest crops in the area. At the end of harvest

¹¹⁹ Tara Pascual and Jessica Powers, “Cooking Up Community: Nutrition Education in Emergency Food Programs,” 2012, accessed February 12, 2016, www.whyhunger.org/uploads/fileAssets/a86cb1_10a252.pdf, 46.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, 49.

season, workers' families generated less income and had difficulty in acquiring food. Second Harvest planned a food distribution effort specifically for farmworkers' families at Christmas time in 2015.¹²¹ The food bank's proximity to food producers allowed it to access large donations of fresh food, and fresh produce items were valued among its Latino clients.¹²² The food bank not only translated its nutrition education materials into Spanish but also wrote them so that they would be accessible for clients that had low literacy levels.¹²³ Bicultural and bilingual staff helped the organization build relationships between service providers and those accessing services.

Other Latino-focused organizations around the country pointed out Feeding America's lack of focus on Latino hunger and shaped Feeding America's attempts to become more culturally competent. LATINO Magazine's No Más Hambre initiative sought to raise awareness of Latino hunger and to mobilize Latinos in the movement to address the population's disproportionate levels of hunger. Corporate executives, emergency food system representatives, Latino advocates and leaders, and government officials attended a summit in 2011. Feeding America CEO Vicki Escarra, the keynote speaker, stated that she was "deeply grateful to LATINO Magazine and to their partners for bringing [people] together . . . for the first time to make sure that low-income Latino communities have access to emergency food assistance resources."¹²⁴ Latino organizations were crucial to the growth in Feeding America's attention to Latino

¹²¹ Second Harvest Food Bank Santa Cruz County, "Christmas Project Delivers Food & Produce to Farmworker Families," December 18, 2015, accessed February 20, 2016, <http://www.thefoodbank.org/category/foodbank-blog/christmas-project-delivers-food-produce-to-farmworker-families/>.

¹²² Pascual and Powers, "Cooking Up Community," 49.

¹²³ Ibid.

¹²⁴ LATINO Magazine, "No Más Hambre," 2011, accessed February 20, 2016, <http://www.latinomagazine.com/summer11/events/nomashambre11.pdf>, 3.

hunger during the recession era. LATINO Magazine made Feeding America more aware of the unique needs of Latinos. The Latino organization decreased the distance between the institution and its beneficiaries. The partnership that Escarra announced between Feeding America and ConAgra Foods reflected that the interconnectedness of food banks and corporations, which increased during the recession, had impacts even on the national network's relationship with Latinos.

Other partnerships between Feeding America, Latino organizations, and corporations reflected similar trends. In 2007, America's Second Harvest (Feeding America the following year), the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC), and Tyson Foods, Inc. formed a partnership to distribute one million pounds of protein per year for the next three years to communities with large Latino populations. The purpose, according to LULAC, was to "to explore the issue of hunger and hunger relief initiatives among Latino communities."¹²⁵

In Arizona, Latino organizations helped traditional emergency food providers distribute emergency food assistance. Because of the climate that became more hostile towards Latinos as a result of the passage of Arizona Senate Bill 1070, immigrant Latinos tended to "rely upon Latino community-based organizations and churches for emergency food while avoiding non-Latino organizations due to a fear of discrimination."¹²⁶

Between 2006 and 2016, the recession occurred, food banks' accelerated institutionalization manifested in their growth and specialization, and food banks

¹²⁵ League of United Latin American Citizens, "Media Advisory," July 10, 2007, accessed February 20, 2016, <http://www.lulac.net/advocacy/press/2007/tyson1.html>.

¹²⁶ Mellon, "Advancing Equity within the Emergency Food Provider Network," 4.

increased their outreach efforts to Latinos. Many initiated SNAP outreach efforts as a result of Feeding America's push for SNAP outreach among its network members. SNAP-specific outreach reached some Latinos. A smaller number of emergency food providers demonstrated increased institutional cultural competency by increasing Latinos' access to public food assistance programs. Latinos in the service areas of those providers had more access to services, but the barriers faced by migrant farmworkers and undocumented immigrants were only reduced by a select few organizations. Most providers within the emergency food network did not significantly increase their institutional cultural competency because Feeding America did not provide them with the instruction and leadership that they needed in order to make Latino engagement a financial possibility.

A case study of one Oregon food bank's development of its Multicultural Outreach Program showed how the program increased the organization's cultural competency in ways that other Feeding America providers did not. It also showed that the food bank was not perfect in its outreach methods and did share many of the struggles experienced by providers around the country. FOOD For Lane County was able to increase its institutional cultural competency, however, because it was atypical as an organization to begin with. Its progress during the recession era was not representative of what other food banks were able to do during that time period, and therefore its achievements inform recommendations of what other food banks can do in the future to improve their services for Latinos.

Case Study: FOOD For Lane County's Multicultural Outreach Program, 2007-2016

FOOD For Lane County (FFLC), a food bank in Lane County, Oregon, increased its institutional cultural competency during the recession era. The food bank did not do everything it needed to in order to reduce local Latinos' barriers to accessing food assistance, but through its development of its Multicultural Outreach Program (MOP) between 2007 and 2016 it conducted targeted outreach to Latinos and changed its institutional climate. The set of changes FFLC made to its organization during the recession era were more than what most other emergency food providers did in Oregon and around the country, and so FFLC was remarkable. The progress FFLC made was not representative of other food banks' efforts, but the obstacles FFLC faced in conducting its Latino outreach and the ways in which FFLC did not demonstrate institutional cultural competency were representative of the experiences of many other emergency food providers.

The MOP increased the overall institutional cultural competency of FFLC because the organization incorporated Latinos' needs more into its institutional culture, included Latino outreach into its financial priorities, somewhat changed its recruitment and training of staff and volunteers, and changed a few programs after it reached a better understanding of local Latinos' needs for more accessible and more culturally acceptable services. FFLC did not perform some key actions that it needed to, however, in order to have made Latino hunger a front and center priority for the organization. Despite its creation of an entire internally-run program specifically to improve underserved populations' access to services, FFLC ultimately did not develop enough

strong relationships with local Latino community members and Latino-focused organizations, did not dedicate enough resources to make the multicultural outreach coordinator staff position full-time, and did not recruit Latinos to help in the outreach efforts.

FFLC was atypical and had advantages over other food banks in the state of Oregon that enabled it to innovate the changes made through the implementation of its strategic plan for the MOP. FFLC's size and institutional culture and history predisposed it to being able to establish the MOP as one of its many previously-existing internally-run, decentralized programs. FFLC, despite its advantages, faced many of the same structural obstacles and organizational shortcomings as other food banks during the recession era—including the leader of Oregon's emergency food network, the Oregon Food Bank—that decreased their capacity to practice institutional cultural competency. FFLC's MOP distinguished the organization as progressive in working with Latinos in comparison to many other emergency food providers around the country, but the program was not perfect. The lessons learned during the recession era from FFLC and the shortcomings of the leader of the statewide network of which it was a member, Oregon Food Bank, highlight the specific ways in which food banks could increase their institutional competency in the coming years.

Oregon's Emergency Food Network

Oregon Food Bank's activities during the recession era reveal how the Oregon emergency food system grew more institutionalized, and that Oregon Food Bank did not demonstrate a high degree of institutional cultural competency at the start of the recession but increased its capacity a few years after FFLC did. Although the

organization began around 2010 to better understand Latino hunger issues on a local level through its Community Food Assessments, the organization did not begin to make Latinos a real priority until 2011, when it began to actively seek ways to better engage Latinos after no Latinos showed up to a Spanish-language outreach and community networking event hosted by OFB in Benton County, Oregon. Oregon Food Bank increased its outreach to Latinos in 2011, but FFLC's Multicultural Outreach Program preceded those efforts, and the MOP was more comprehensive. The growth of Oregon Food Bank paralleled the growth of the national emergency food network during the recession. Oregon Food Bank, however, because of its institutional history and culture of pioneering advocacy efforts and community food systems organizing, distinguished itself from many other Feeding America network members during the recession.

Like Feeding America, the Oregon Food Bank Network (of which FFLC was a member) increased the pounds of food it distributed after the start of the recession. Emergency food box distribution increased by forty-one percent.¹²⁷ Oregon Food Bank increased its community organizing, advocacy about the root causes of hunger, and cooking, gardening, and hunger education programs.¹²⁸ The Oregon Food Bank created the FEAST (Food, Education, Agriculture, Solutions, Together) Program in 2009 to support community food security.¹²⁹ But OFB did not prioritize Latinos' needs in its advocacy efforts. Despite Latinos' historical under-enrollment in food stamps because of eligibility restrictions established in 1996 by PRWORA, OFB's advocacy efforts at

¹²⁷ Oregon Food Bank, "OFB Network Stats," Oregon Food Bank: Understanding Hunger, 2016, accessed February 18, 2016, <http://www.oregonfoodbank.org/understanding-hunger/ofb-network-stats>.

¹²⁸ Oregon Food Bank, "Oregon Food Bank: A Brief History," Oregon Food Bank: About Us, 2016, accessed February 18, 2016, <http://www.oregonfoodbank.org/about-us/oregon-food-bank-brief-history>.

¹²⁹ Ibid.

the state and federal legislative levels during 2012 and 2013 Congressional debates about SNAP benefits did not address citizenship eligibility requirements.¹³⁰

The Oregon Food Bank’s FEAST (Food, Education, and Agriculture Solutions Together) event series—meant to promote discussion in order to build “a healthier, more equitable and resilient food system”¹³¹—did not effectively incorporate Latino voices into its efforts. In 2011, the Benton County Health Department and the Oregon Food Bank held a FEAST event in Spanish, and even though many “interested in connecting with the Latino community showed up,” no Latino community members came.¹³² The absence of Latinos at a Latino outreach event “prompted a reevaluation of how food organizations can work to connect with and meet the needs of Latino community members.”¹³³ OFB expressed the desire to improve its services for Latinos but in 2011 had not made the necessary institutional changes.

OFB progressed over the next few years. In the following two years, OFB addressed Latino hunger concerns in its organization’s assessments of rural community food systems in Oregon and by reducing language barriers for Latinos among its nonemergency services. Feedback from participants and partner agencies led the Oregon Food Bank to offer *Seed to Supper*, its gardening education course, in Spanish

¹³⁰ Oregon Food Bank, “SNAP discussions in Washington DC,” Advocate: News, December 3, 2012, accessed February 18, 2016, <http://www.oregonfoodbank.org/advocate/news/stories/articles/jeff-in-dc?source=%2Fadvocate%2Fnews%2Fstories%3Fpage%3D3>.

¹³¹ Oregon Food Bank and Spencer Masterson, “The State of Our Community Food System: A Summary of Community Food Assessments in Rural Oregon,” The Oregon Food Bank, 2013, accessed February 17, 2016, PDF available for download from: <http://www.oregonfoodbank.org/our-work/building-food-security/community-programs/community-food-assesments>, 6.

¹³² Oregon Food Bank, “Linn County Community Food Assessment Addendum,” accessed February 17, 2016, PDF available for download from: <http://www.oregonfoodbank.org/our-work/building-food-security/community-programs/community-food-assesments>, 72.

¹³³ Ibid.

starting in late 2013.¹³⁴ In early 2014, Oregon Food Bank collaborated with another organization to have an Americorps VISTA member coordinate “garden education outreach in [Portland, OR] Metro-area Latino communities.”¹³⁵

Oregon Food Bank’s 2013 Community Food Assessment report identified minority populations as facing extra barriers to accessing emergency food assistance. Oregon Food Bank demonstrated its awareness of the specific barriers that migrant farmworkers faced in accessing food during the winter. The food bank wrote that “a group of Latinos needing food resources confessed that they were afraid of discrimination and language barriers faced at food bank agencies, and they were unaccustomed to the food given in emergency food boxes.”¹³⁶ Many Latinos also did not know whether or not they were eligible for programs like SNAP.¹³⁷ Three years after the recession officially ended, Latinos in a rural area in Oregon, particularly migrant farmworkers, continued to face significant obstacles to accessing emergency food assistance. La Clínica del Cariño, a community health center for seasonal, migrant farmworkers, provided a variety of services including emergency food distribution at migrant camps.¹³⁸

Oregon Food Bank, unable to adequately meet the food needs of Latinos because of its inherent institutional distance from a minority population, was able to better meet Latinos’ needs when it partnered with Latino-led or Latino-focused

¹³⁴ Oregon Food Bank, “Food Matters!” Oregon Food Bank Food Matters! Newsletter, Spring 2014, accessed February 17, 2016, PDF available for download from <http://www.oregonfoodbank.org/about-us/publications>, 2.

¹³⁵ Ibid.

¹³⁶ Oregon Food Bank and Spencer Masterson, “The State of Our Community Food System,” 10.

¹³⁷ Ibid.

¹³⁸ Ibid.

organizations. This paralleled the experiences of other food banks around the country that benefitted from the assistance or expertise of Latino agencies or organizations, or who relied on those organizations altogether for the distribution of emergency food assistance to Latinos. Traditional emergency food providers were inherently distanced from minority groups because of their entrenched methods of providing services. Organizations with greater amounts of institutional cultural competence—mostly Latino-led organizations—could better reduce the barriers faced by certain Latinos, such as farmworkers, because of their experience in establishing rapport and previously-existing, community-based relationships between staff, volunteers, and clients. The critical contributions of Latino organizations to the operations of Oregon Food Bank Network members show that the network was unable to effectively meet the unique needs of Oregon Latinos, especially migrant farmworkers, on its own. The Oregon network utilized the help of those organizations to increase its institutional cultural competency.

Feeding America's and Oregon Food Bank's relationships with Latinos, and the emergency food network's furthered institutionalization over the past ten years, show that FFLC was remarkable in its development of an outreach program created specifically with Latinos in mind. The Oregon Food Bank's shortcomings highlight that FFLC was an exception and the changes FFLC made with the MOP were not representative of the actions of other Oregon food banks during the recession era. FFLC, even without an example of a program to follow, created its own, and was therefore remarkable within the state of Oregon and at the national level. The story of how FFLC started its outreach program, and the ways it did and did not demonstrate

institutional cultural competence during the recession era hold important lessons for the national emergency food network. The local context of Lane County helps frame what the local needs of Latinos were—in this case, recently settled Latino immigrants—and that FFLC’s programmatic changes during the recession era increased the organization’s institutional cultural competency.

Local Context: Latino Experiences of Hunger in Lane County

In 2003, Latinos comprised 6.5 percent of Oregon adults, but comprised twenty-seven percent of food insecure adults in Oregon.¹³⁹ A local research body recommended that “Repairing the safety net for immigrant Latino families should also be a high priority. Under federal rules, Oregon could provide these benefits to legal immigrants, but the state has chosen not to do so.”¹⁴⁰ University of Oregon scholar Joanna Bernstein’s 2012 research on the strategies undocumented Latino/a immigrants utilized to survive in Lane County revealed that there were many undocumented immigrants in Lane County who faced numerous barriers to integrating into the community, and who suffered from food insecurity. Bernstein’s work provided guidance on evaluating the cultural competency of FFLC by describing some of the needs specific to Latinos in Lane County. It also described what local institutions had failed to do for Latinos in the past, and explained what service providers needed to do in the future. Bernstein’s work centered on the historical lack of outreach on the part of city governments and asserted that “the city cannot try to engage a marginalized population that they essentially know

¹³⁹ Oregon Center for Public Policy, “Oregon Latinos More Likely Food Insecure,” from Oregon Hunger Issues: Finding #4 from OCPP’s Analysis of a State Health Survey, Oregon Center for Public Policy, December 11, 2003, accessed February 12, 2016, <http://www.ocpp.org/2003/issue031211-4.pdf>, 1.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.

nothing about.”¹⁴¹ Food banks could not understand how they could improve their services if they did not understand the population they were trying to reach and did not reflect on what their relationship with that group had been in the past. FFLC was one of few food banks in the Feeding America network that did engage such self-reflection and information-seeking activities.

The Latino population grew eighty-five percent in the Eugene/Springfield area (the population center of Lane County) between 2000 and 2010,¹⁴² and the number of undocumented Latino/a immigrants, most of whom were from Mexico and represented diverse backgrounds and languages, also increased. The three largest barriers recent immigrants faced to integrating into the community were obstacles to obtaining government-issued Photo IDs or Driver’s licenses, language barriers, and pervasive feelings of fear and isolation as a result of racialization and criminalization.¹⁴³ These three barriers affected their access to food, especially emergency food assistance. Lack of transportation to and from distribution sites would have made carrying heavy food boxes impossible. The language barriers were particularly large for undocumented immigrants from indigenous areas whose first language was an indigenous language. Bernstein recommended that institutions “form relationships with leaders from the undocumented Latino immigrant community.”¹⁴⁴

¹⁴¹ Joanna Bernstein, “Maneuvering the System: How Undocumented Latino/a Immigrants Survive and Adapt to Living in Lane County, Oregon” (Master’s thesis, University of Oregon, June 2012), 4-5.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, 3.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, 29-31.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 46.

Program Overview

The MOP was created to increase access to services among underserved population in Lane County, and FFLC wanted to specifically focus on Latinos in its outreach efforts. FFLC's awareness and understanding of Latinos' needs grew after it made an effort to study them in 2007. The MOP created a specific staff position, the Multicultural Program Coordinator, to coordinate the outreach efforts to Latinos and to teach cooking and nutrition classes in Spanish.

FFLC's programs changed over time to address the specific needs of Latinos. The organization received a grant in order to start the program. The two main goals of the MOP during the grant period from July 2010 to June 2013, according to the organization's grant proposal, were to "1) improve infrastructure to increase accessibility of FFLC's food programs for multicultural populations and 2) increase multicultural usage of FFLC services."¹⁴⁵ FFLC began tracking the usage of its services by ethnic group for the first time "to address the need for accurate program evaluation."¹⁴⁶ FFLC budgeted for other employees at the organization to incorporate a few hours each week into their schedules for supporting the goals of the initiative, which demonstrated that more people were supportive of the MOP within the organization than just Edmonds.¹⁴⁷ FFLC met seven of ten goals by the end of the grant period: all partner agencies (pantries) completed an Limited English Proficiency (LEP) plan, FFLC successfully reached agreements with five additional partner agencies in the community who would start distributing food to multicultural populations, eighty staff

¹⁴⁵ Karen Edmonds, "FOOD For Lane County Grant Proposal to The Collins Foundation," early 2010, in author's possession, 9.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 11.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 16.

and volunteers from FFLC's food distribution network attended cultural competency trainings each year (led by the Multicultural Outreach Coordinator), FFLC conducted two culturally appropriate food drives each year, and by the end of the period the Strategic Plan Progress Report reported that the "ethnicity of food box clients is more representative of people in poverty than ever before."¹⁴⁸ Because of the Multicultural Outreach Program, in 2013, the percentage of food box recipients who self-declared as Hispanic/Latino increased eleven percent, up from six percent in 2010.¹⁴⁹

The responsibilities of the Multicultural Outreach Coordinator also included being responsive to the language needs of other cultural groups, including Russian, Ukrainian, and Japanese families. The coordinator worked with partner agencies to develop LEP plans to reduce language barriers for Latinos.

FFLC began as early as 2007 to attempt to reach a deeper understanding of Latinos' needs by developing targeted outreach strategies. FFLC's planning and preparation for the MOP started in 2010 and demonstrated a shift in the organization's attitude towards, and engagement with, the needs of people of color, specifically Latinos, in Lane County. FFLC did not hire Latino immigrants as Multicultural Outreach Coordinators, but the people hired as coordinators over the course of six years were bilingual. Over the years, the coordinators focused more on developing connections with Latinos in the community. The MOP did reduce some of the barriers Latinos experienced in attempting to access FFLC's food pantries. In 2014, the

¹⁴⁸ FOOD For Lane County, "FOOD For Lane County 2010-13 Strategic Plan Progress Report," received from Karen Edmonds March 2015, in author's possession.

¹⁴⁹ FOOD For Lane County, "2013-2014 Annual Report," FOOD For Lane County, 2014, accessed February 17, 2016, https://foodforlanecounty.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/FFLC_Annual_Report_2013-2014.pdf, 2.

organization solicited feedback from community members accessing services, which demonstrated the organization's interest in incorporating Latino community members' desires and opinions into its evaluation of outreach methods.

Indicators of Institutional Cultural Competency

FFLC, founded in 1984, was both a member of the Oregon Food Bank Statewide Network and a distribution partner for Feeding America.¹⁵⁰ FFLC was atypical in the state of Oregon to begin with. It was one of the larger food banks in Oregon and had an institutional culture of supporting and operating decentralized, internally-run, and community-based programs. A few key staff members were present at the organization at the onset of the recession that happened to have backgrounds in serving Latinos in other service contexts. Those staff members were key to generating the institutional momentum necessary to secure internal funding and support for the MOP.

FFLC's advantages over other Oregon food banks show that the MOP was not representative of the outreach conducted by other food banks in Oregon and around the country during the recession. FOOD For Lane County's own institutional culture, cultivated from the start by the original founder of the organization, contributed to the circumstances that enabled the creation of the MOP. Its institutional culture and the backgrounds of its staff gave FFLC a baseline level of cultural competency and predisposed it to creating outreach efforts customized for Latinos. The previous existence at FFLC of internally run programs, programs innovated and run completely

¹⁵⁰ FOOD For Lane County, "About Us," FOOD For Lane County, 2016, accessed February 12, 2016, <https://foodforlanecounty.org/go-learn-more/about-us/>.

by FFLC, made the organization more inclined to dedicate program resources specifically to multicultural outreach with a focus on Latinos.

Karen Edmonds, the Programs and Services Director, had a professional background in conducting Latino outreach for an educational institution.¹⁵¹ Her background informed her belief that multicultural outreach with a focus on Latinos was an “essential direction” that FFLC needed to go when she arrived at her position in 2008, and she was “interested in seeing our organization be responsive to the changing demographics of the community.”¹⁵² Other staff members’ awareness of Latinos’ needs also contributed to Edmonds’ efforts to generate enough institutional momentum to secure a sustainable source of internal funding for the program prior to applying for a grant.¹⁵³ Edmonds had the impression that the founding director of FFLC set a culture within the food bank that it was possible for it to serve the community with internally-run programs. FFLC had the necessary “size and scope” in order to have enough resources and institutional capacity to do multicultural outreach.¹⁵⁴ FFLC was one of the three largest food banks in Oregon.¹⁵⁵ FFLC had a long history of program innovation. Edmonds explained that “We’ve got a lot of programs we run ourselves, which is pretty unusual, and so other food banks may not see [Latino outreach] as their role because they haven’t stepped into the area of programming.”¹⁵⁶ FFLC had a unique set of circumstances that were present that facilitated its development of the MOP.

¹⁵¹ Karen Edmonds, personal interview by author at FOOD For Lane County offices, March 13, 2015.

¹⁵² Ibid.

¹⁵³ Ibid.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid.

The other unique circumstance that was present was the advocacy of Latino leaders in the community. Other FFLC staff had observed the importance of doing more outreach before Edmonds arrived.¹⁵⁷ FFLC viewed itself as “the leader in alleviating food insecurity in Lane County,” but also as a “collaborative leader.”¹⁵⁸ Before Edmonds arrived at FFLC, a staff member at FFLC and Karen’s predecessor held a focus group. They brought together a group of Latino leaders and service providers, seeking guidance on how FFLC could move the program forward in order to better serve the Latino community.¹⁵⁹ Focus group attendees suggested that FFLC create a dedicated staff position for multicultural outreach. FFLC staff present at the organization prior to the initiation of the Multicultural Outreach Program demonstrated aspects of cultural competency at individual levels. The organization’s response to the suggestions at the focus group—it created the Multicultural Outreach Coordinator staff position—was what helped the organization increase its cultural competency at the institutional level. FFLC sought the perspectives of Latinos in the organization’s service area, sought to understand the nature of Latino hunger in its community by commissioning an intern to do a study in 2007, and worked to plan for the financial sustainability of the multicultural outreach program.

During the recession, FOOD For Lane County demonstrated a high degree of institutional cultural competency when it was developing the Multicultural Outreach Program because it engaged in a process of introspection and self-reflection about its institutional relationship to Latinos. In 2007, for example, the organization had an intern

¹⁵⁷ Ibid.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid.

research Latinos' needs and write about FFLC's past engagement, or lack thereof, of Latino community members in need of services. Because of the research by Klingensmith in 2007, and a focus group held by a multicultural outreach coordinator in 2014 with Latino community members, FFLC increased its understanding of the structural barriers face by Latinos in Lane County to accessing emergency food assistance, which included language barriers, a lack of transportation, and a lack of familiarity with the food pantry system.

FFLC's preparation for the outreach and its increased awareness of the Latino community's growth and need began in 2007. Thomas Klingensmith, the Programs and Services Intern for FFLC, wrote a report that detailed why FFLC should prioritize outreach to the Latino community and what those outreach efforts should look like. Klingensmith, an affiliate of the institution of FFLC, expressed awareness of the responsibilities of that institution to a community it had not previously held itself accountable to. The organization attempted to understand the needs of Latinos and for the first time took into account how Latinos perceived the organization: because many Latinos viewed FFLC's services as "just for Americans," Klingensmith stated, "this is a basic view that will either need to be changed or somehow accommodated within a new paradigm of service in order to allow new and healthy interactions between the Latino community and FFLC."¹⁶⁰ In 2008, Klingensmith's report increased incoming Programs and Services Director Karen Edmonds's assessment of FFLC's awareness of the needs of, and diversity within, the local Latino community. Edmonds cited the

¹⁶⁰ Thomas Klingensmith, "Hunger in the Latino Community of Lane County: A Report Prepared for FOOD For Lane County," 2007-8, in author's possession, 4.

report in March 2015 as one of the things that influenced her to start the Multicultural Outreach Program.¹⁶¹ In commissioning, keeping, reading, and using Klingensmith's document, Edmonds recognized FFLC's responsibility and accountability to the Latino community. The organization connected its role in the larger community to the needs of Latinos, a significant segment of the population.

Other primary sources provide evidence for how FFLC's MOP changed how the organization viewed itself in relation to the Latino community. FFLC's grant proposal to the Collins Foundation, prepared by Edmonds in early 2010, specifically demonstrated the level of awareness that the organization had of the Latino community, the organization's motivations for increasing outreach, and to what degree the organization saw the Latino community as being integral to the leadership of the outreach efforts. FFLC identified that it needed to "reduce the cultural and language barriers that limit diverse populations' access to food assistance programs" because "this need is especially urgent for our Latino community, the largest and fastest growing ethnic group."¹⁶² The organization admitted that "while FFLC has maintained the spirit of equal access to its services, Latinos and people of color are not accessing services as frequently as they could."¹⁶³ FFLC cited a the recent rapid growth in the Latino student population in Oregon and higher poverty and food insecurity and hunger rates among Latinos in Lane County as evidence of the high amount of need among Latinos.¹⁶⁴ Edmonds expressed that by the time she came to FFLC in 2009, enough people at the

¹⁶¹ Karen Edmonds, personal interview, March 13, 2015.

¹⁶² Karen Edmonds, "FOOD For Lane County Grant Proposal to The Collins Foundation," early 2010, in author's possession, 2.

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*, 7.

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 6.

organization were aware of the need to be receptive to her push for internal support within the organization to start the Multicultural Outreach Initiative.¹⁶⁵

Edmonds' strategic securing of sustainable funding for Latino outreach prior to receiving the Collins Foundation grant showed FFLC's intent to make multicultural outreach a permanent priority.¹⁶⁶ The vision for the staff position of Multicultural Outreach Coordinator was for that staff member not to stand alone within the organization with their activities, but to raise awareness within the whole organization, and to infuse their advocacy into all of FFLC's programs, activities, and development.¹⁶⁷ Edmonds cited that change can be difficult within a food bank, that securing internal support ensured the longevity of funding for the MOP, and that starting new programs was difficult for FFLC as a food bank. She said that a few people who at first questioned the need for Latino outreach, by the time of the interview in March of 2015, had begun to be the folks in the organization to vocalize when a document needed to be translated into Spanish.¹⁶⁸

FFLC did a somewhat inadequate job of building direct relationships with local Latinos other than the original focus group attendees in 2007 in order to inform itself about the diverse perspectives within the Latino community. It was not until 2014, when a Multicultural Outreach Coordinator incorporated Latinos into the organization's evaluation of MOP services by holding a Spanish-language focus group with Latino immigrants in a rural part of Lane County. At an institutional level, FFLC needed to have done more to build relationships with local Latinos and gain deeper

¹⁶⁵ Karen Edmonds, personal interview, March 13, 2015.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid.

¹⁶⁸ Karen Edmonds, personal interview by author at FOOD For Lane County offices, March 13, 2015.

understandings of the diversity with the Latino community. At the individual level of its staff and volunteers, FFLC also needed to have done more. For the first several years of the MOP, FFLC's frontline staff that was conducting outreach and interacting with Latinos did not build sufficient relationships with Latino members because there was a lack of continuity between the person conducting outreach and the people administering services at food pantries. The interactions between staff and Latinos, however, improved between 2014 and 2016. By 2016, the Multicultural Outreach Coordinator was present on a regular basis at a pantry site frequented by Latino clients.¹⁶⁹

Other than the one Spanish-language focus group in 2014, FFLC did not evaluate its services and engagement of Latinos in creative ways. In its annual reports, the organization evaluated its success primarily in quantitative measurements. It reported an increase in the number of Latino visitors to its food pantries—an important indicator of Latinos' access to services, but not an indicator of the cultural or social acceptability of the services accessed. That knowledge would have had to be solicited more purposefully from local Latino clients, with the help of more partnerships with Latino-focused nonprofits in the area and Latino community leaders.

Although Edmonds generated support to secure sustainable, internal funding for the MOP for when the grant period would end in 2013, FFLC as an institution did not dedicate enough institutional resources to actually make Latino hunger a top financial (and therefore institution-wide) priority. Six years after the start of the program,

¹⁶⁹ Mercedys Ruby, personal interview by author at FOOD For Lane County offices, Eugene, Oregon, February 3, 2016.

furthermore, the Multicultural Outreach Coordinator position remained part-time and had seen a high rate of turnover.

FFLC also became more culturally competent through the creation and implementation of the mobile pantry system, which ended up attracting Latinos because of the structure and format that was different compared to other FFLC pantries.

Multicultural Outreach Coordinator Tait Duus stated that the mobile pantry, operated like a party, a “fiesta,” and exemplified “another cultural difference.”¹⁷⁰ The mobile pantry visited a church, Iglesia Casa de Luz, that Latino clients felt more comfortable visiting because of the comfortable atmosphere and they were more likely to see other church members and Spanish-speakers.¹⁷¹ FOOD For Lane County increased its institutional cultural competency when it recognized Latinos in the local area needed a pantry that could foster community and would be more culturally and socially acceptable, and so it directed the mobile pantry to visit a Spanish-speaking church. At this location, Latinos knew more of the other visitors to the pantry and would be more likely to trust that they would be safe at the location and would be able to obtain transportation to the site.

The benefits of the collaboration between FFLC and a Spanish-speaking church in order to make the pantry system more accommodating of local Latinos’ unique needs showed that all of FFLC’s other pantries would face difficulties in making the same kind of adjustments. FFLC’s pantry system was set up in such a way that continuity was

¹⁷⁰ Alfredo Tait Duus, personal interview by author at FOOD For Lane County offices, Eugene, Oregon, March 16, 2015.

¹⁷¹ Mercedys Ruby, personal interview, February 3, 2016.

not present between service providers and clients.¹⁷² Edmonds expressed doubt that pantry set-ups would change.¹⁷³ When the “person doing the outreach [was not] the one providing the services at the pantry,” it created extra challenges.¹⁷⁴ Latino services organizations in the area such as Huerto de La Familia (the Family Garden) had an advantage in providing services to Latinos because they had structures and skills and relationships built over time that FFLC did not have.¹⁷⁵

Between 2006 and 2016, FFLC increased the number of millions of pounds of food it distributed per year and increased the level of sophistication in how it delivered emergency and nonemergency food to residents of Lane County. The Multicultural Outreach Program was developed over this same time period, and it represented a significant shift in the organization because it was the first attempt by the organization to conduct specific outreach with Latinos in mind, and the development process of the program created the opportunity for the organization to take its first evaluation of its relationship with a specific ethnic or racial group in its service area.

Tait Duus, the Multicultural Outreach Coordinator in 2014, stated that the most important part of his job was to form personal relationships with the participants. Developing relationships was an important aspect of culturally competent social service practices for Latinos. The Multicultural Outreach Program increased the number of Latino volunteers at the organization because participants in nutrition education and cooking classes became volunteers. One woman taught tamale-making classes to share

¹⁷² Karen Edmonds, personal interview by author at FOOD For Lane County offices, March 13, 2015.

¹⁷³ Ibid.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid.

her culture with other program participants.¹⁷⁶ FFLC's biggest struggle was to retain bilingual staff and volunteers.¹⁷⁷

FFLC's commitment to soliciting feedback from Latino immigrants accessing services at the organization and incorporating Latinos into decision-making processes in the organization increased in 2014. Tait Duus conducted a focus group in Cottage Grove in August 2014 with a group of women immigrants who accessed one of FFLC's partner agencies food pantries. Duus asked questions of the focus group participants that revealed his desire, as a representative of the institution of FFLC, to solicit feedback from members of the community that he was and continues to try to make services more appealing and accessible to. The focus group represented an attempt by the institution to make community members' preferences and needs prioritized, and was therefore a demonstration of cultural competency. The questions sought to understand recent immigrants' lived experiences in Lane County.

FFLC also communicated to the public that the accessibility of its services was an organizational priority. The organization's annual reports and partner agency manuals reflected the organization's recognition of outreach to underserved populations as top priorities. In 2014, it asked all partner agencies that it distributed food to "actively engage in this same ethic, by ensuring that food assistance programs are open, welcoming and sensitive to the needs of diverse clients."¹⁷⁸ Partner agencies were required to have at least one bilingual representative at each food distribution site that

¹⁷⁶ Alfredo Tait Duus, personal interview, March 16, 2015.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid.

¹⁷⁸ FOOD For Lane County, "Annual Report 2011-2012," FOOD For Lane County, 2012, accessed February 17, 2016, <https://foodforlanecounty.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/Annual-Report-2011-12.pdf>, 2.

they maintained.¹⁷⁹ FFLC evaluated prospective partner agencies' applications based on several factors, including that agency's commitment to FFLC's ethic of open access to its services. All agencies were required to complete a Limited English Proficiency (LEP) plan, which described how the agency would both "provide outreach to and serve people with limited English language skills."¹⁸⁰ The staff position of Multicultural Outreach Coordinator made it possible for FFLC to hold itself and partner agencies accountable. The Coordinator's duties included working with partner agencies to develop, implement, and maintain LEP plans.¹⁸¹ The coordinator also advertised FFLC's services, particularly the days of its mobile pantry, on local Spanish-language radio announcements.¹⁸² The Multicultural Outreach Coordinator also taught Cooking Matters classes in Spanish, and so FFLC's nutrition and cooking education programs became more culturally relevant.¹⁸³ FFLC hired receptionists who were bilingual in Spanish and English, and for the times that there were receptionists filling in that could not speak Spanish, there were scripts written out in Spanish that they could read off of to let callers know that someone would get back to them soon.¹⁸⁴ FFLC's efforts to reduce language barriers faced by Latinos demonstrated cultural competency, but not completely because the organization was not close enough to immigrant groups in the area to know that speakers of indigenous languages might face extra barriers to accessing its services.

¹⁷⁹ Mercedys Ruby, personal interview, February 3, 2016.

¹⁸⁰ FOOD For Lane County, "FOOD For Lane County Partner Agency Manual," 2014, accessed February 18, 2016, https://foodforlanecounty.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/FFLC_PA_Manual_2014.pdf, 9.

¹⁸¹ Ibid.

¹⁸² Alfredo Tait Duus, personal interview, March 16, 2015.

¹⁸³ Mercedys Ruby, personal interview, February 3, 2016.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid.

An indicator that FFLC struggled to adjust its institutional operations enough to provide culturally acceptable services to Latinos, similarly to other food banks around the country, was the lack of Latino visitors to the Dining Room. The Dining Room was FFLC's location for serving restaurant-style, nutritious meals at no charge to visitors. A Multicultural Outreach Coordinator described the difficulties that FFLC had faced in getting Latino clients to visit the Dining Room.¹⁸⁵ Latino clients tended to value the connections in their cultures between family and food, and the public, restaurant-style atmosphere of the Dining Room made the service less culturally and socially acceptable.¹⁸⁶

FFLC's MOP constituted a significant change in the organization in that it was the first coordinated, conscious attempt by the organization to build relationships with members of the Latino community. The organization saw the building of relationships as a key to improving their capacity to get emergency food to those who needed it in the area. Six years after the initiation of the program, however, the food bank needed to dedicate more resources to the MOP. The MOP increased FFLC's institutional cultural competency because programmatic changes impacted certain organizational operations outside of the scope of the program, the program received the designation of its own staff member, and the program began to incorporate the perspectives of local Latinos into its own assessment of the program's effects. The organization seemed unwilling and unable to both dedicate the resources to make the position full-time and decrease turnover.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid.

FFLC increased its own awareness of the Latino community, the Latino community's awareness of FFLC's programs, and its ability to engage the Latino community during the recession era. The MOP specifically targeted Latinos by building relationships between the institution's representatives and Latino members of the community. Bilingual materials, Spanish radio announcements, and other efforts that communicated that documentation was not required at food pantries and that there were bilingual staff at food pantries. The materials showed that FFLC was willing to prioritize, at least to a certain extent, Latinos' needs.

FFLC's institutional cultural competency increased because of its concerted efforts to reduce language barriers for Spanish-speakers, the increase in the number of Latino volunteers in the organization, the increased usage of emergency food services by local Latinos, and its incorporation of Latino immigrants' perspectives into its evaluation of the program. FOOD For Lane County demonstrated cultural competency in its staffs' desire to make outreach an organizational priority and secure sustainable sources of funding. The organization's shortcomings in meeting the needs of Latinos included its neglect to hire Latinos on as Multicultural Outreach Coordinators, its maintenance of the coordinator position as part-time over the course of six years, and its institutional inflexibility that left food pantry set-ups, with the exception of the mobile pantry at Iglesia Casa de Luz, largely unchanged.

Lessons for the National Network

The FOOD For Lane County case study implies what other network members needed to have done in order to better reduce Latinos' barriers to accessing emergency food services. FOOD For Lane County increased its institutional cultural competency

by becoming more flexible and adjusting a few of its operational structures, training and re-training volunteers and staff, and recruiting more bilingual volunteers and staff. The challenges that FFLC faced during the recession era in improving services for Latinos were shared by many other food banks around the country. FOOD For Lane County's local context provided it with several factors and advantages: Latino leaders in the area were empowered to make suggestions as to how the food bank could improve its services for Latinos, the local area had a history of Latino-led and Latino-specific advocacy because of the presence of other Latino-focused nonprofit organizations, and the statewide network to which FFLC belonged had familiarity with advocacy about the root causes of hunger and operating nonemergency food programs. FOOD For Lane county was also unique because its own institutional history provided it with a large size and scope, a culture of having previously innovated internally-run programs, and a few key staff members that had a baseline of individual cultural competency and advocated for the outreach program's creation. FOOD For Lane County's possession of these factors enabled it to start the Multicultural Outreach Program, and because not all other food banks around the country during the recession had those circumstances, the majority of emergency food providers did not make the same amount of institutional cultural competency progress that FFLC did. FOOD For Lane County, exceptional among Feeding America network members, highlights the absence of comprehensive outreach programs that focused on not only increasing Latinos' participation in public food assistance programs but also increasing Latinos' access to emergency food services.

Conclusion

Lessons Learned

The historical relationship between the emergency food system in the U.S. and Latino communities is an important part of the story of the institutionalization of food banks and the history of anti-poverty programs in the U.S. Latinos were left behind by the major changes to, and growths in, the emergency food network during the recession era. The absence of certain programmatic changes by Feeding America and the majority of its network members showed that they did not establish a high level of institutional cultural competency between 2006 and 2016. FOOD For Lane County's development of its Multicultural Outreach Program marked the food bank's significant progress during the recession era towards making Latinos' needs a higher priority worthy of resources. That food bank's progress was not representative of the progress that other providers made during the recession because most food banks did not have the same advantages that FOOD For Lane County had, and were unable to make the necessary changes to their institutional climates.

Emergency food providers became more focused during the recession era on shaping the public's understanding of hunger by promoting emergency food as its own movement and using certain marketing techniques. While individual providers engaged in this style of marketing and publicity, Feeding America engaged directly in re-branding efforts after its name change in 2008 and directed major resources towards brand awareness and targeted potential donor populations. Latinos issues were not represented adequately in the images and graphics that accompanied the re-branding initiatives. Feeding America narrowed its possibilities for engaging food insecure

Latinos and Latino community leaders by not incorporating Latinos' needs directly into its branding efforts.

An overview of the national emergency food system's relationship to Latinos immediately before, during, and immediately after the most recent economic recession reveals that Feeding America did not demonstrate institutional cultural competency, but that a few of its network members did. The network member food banks that demonstrated institutional cultural competency were exceptions and were not representative of the whole network during the recession era. The emergency food system in the U.S. failed to make the necessary organizational and programmatic changes to make emergency food services more accessible and more culturally and socially acceptable to Latinos. The majority of emergency food providers, despite the network's increased capacities as a result of its expansion during the recession (directed and led by Feeding America), did not: 1) address the structural and root causes of poverty and food insecurity that disproportionately affected Latinos, including food stamp citizenship eligibility requirements, farmworker labor protections, and immigration policies; 2) reflect on its own historical relationship to Latinos; 3) build enough relationships with Latinos at the local levels to understand the diverse needs and perspectives among Latino communities (if a high number of undocumented individuals existed, for example); 4) make Latino hunger a big enough institutional priority to establish sustainable funding sources for Latino outreach efforts for both public food assistance programs and emergency food services; 5) evaluate their outreach efforts to Latinos using creative criteria customized to local populations' needs and situations; and 6) incorporate Latinos representative of local populations into staff and volunteers.

The changes made by a select few food banks during the recession era indicated what emergency food providers did and did not do well in the past, and what they could do better in the future.

Policy Implications

The historical lessons from emergency food providers imply that providers will need to make changes to their institutions in terms of both how their individual staff and volunteers interact with Latino clients and in terms of how their organizations as a whole engage Latino community members and prospective Latino clients. Food banks around the country of a certain size and scope can take action to increase their institutional cultural competency. Emergency food providers that are smaller than providers like FOOD For Lane County will have, as the case study and the study of the national emergency food network showed, a harder time coming up with the resources to make the necessary changes to institutional culture and programs and policies. Feeding America needs to publish guidelines for smaller providers. Smaller providers that are partner agencies of food banks, however, will be able to get help from their food banks and will be able to partner with other area agencies to increase their capacities.

The recommendations in this paper come from a historical background and seek to create a working template that could be used by food banks of a certain size that need assistance in understanding how to implement recommendations in their local areas, which will be different from other areas around the country. The recommendations are outgrowths of the historical analysis of Feeding America and network member's publications, and they address how food banks around the country can increase their

institutional cultural competency and therefore improve Latinos' access to emergency food assistance and improve Latinos' experience of receiving that emergency food assistance. The recommendations build on the research conducted by scholars during the recession era. They also build on Mellon's assertion that emergency food providers required changes at both the individual and institutional levels and that institutional change would require "collective change in organizational culture at food banks and food pantries so that equitable services for Latinos become normalized."¹⁸⁷

In order to practice institutional cultural competency, increase Latinos' access to services, and better meet the needs of a diverse group of people that comprise a significant number of food bank clients, more emergency food providers need to create internally-run, decentralized programs like FOOD For Lane County's Multicultural Outreach Program. Food banks also need to increase the number of SNAP outreach efforts to Latinos, and collaborate with Latino-specific service agencies. Most importantly, food banks need to seek to understand the experiences and perspectives of Latinos in their local service areas, as Latinos' needs will vary depending on the structural factors impacting residents' access to resources. Food banks must also incorporate Latinos into the planning and implementation of outreach programs, and dedicated staff positions for the outreach programs should be filled by members of the community it is trying to build relationships with.

¹⁸⁷ Matthew S. Mellon, "Advancing Equity within the Emergency Food Provider Network in Maricopa County," Bill Emerson National Hunger Fellow writing for the Association of Arizona Food Banks, February 2011, accessed February 16, 2016, <https://www.azfoodbanks.org/images/uploads/Hunger%20Free%20Community%20Report%20Complete.pdf>, 14.

The food bank system will not be able to respond effectively to the increased demand for emergency food assistance among Latinos unless it incorporates Latinos into its advocacy, publications, research, fundraising, strategic planning, and marketing strategies. The emergency food system must speak out about immigration policy, institutional racism, and citizenship eligibility requirements for SNAP benefits as it continues to dedicate more energy to legislative advocacy about poverty and public food assistance programs.

Feeding America, as the leader of the national emergency food network and the coordinator of the activities of the individual emergency food providers that will be making changes to their services for Latinos in the coming years, needs to make changes to its organizational structure and priorities in order to demonstrate greater institutional cultural competency. It needs to make Latino hunger a top priority for its network members, and its leadership needs to include changes to its branding strategies. Latino issues must be included into the goals of Feeding America's next strategic plan, need to be featured more prominently on Feeding America's website, and need to be addressed by the metrics that Feeding America uses to evaluate its success and communicate about that success to the public. Annual Reports should address explicitly, in their infographics, images, and quantitative breakdowns of yearly achievements, Latino-specific needs. The evaluation of success should go beyond the measurement of the numbers of pounds of food distributed to Hispanic children. Feeding America's program evaluation team must ask, and seek the answers to, the more complex questions about how Latinos' needs are or are not being met by network members' services. Those complex answers need written explanations as well as branding

representation. They can be represented by the same sorts of catchy, brand-promoting phrases and numeric representations that other Feeding America programmatic changes receive in the organization's publications. Reports could detail the number of bilingual and bicultural staff and volunteers recruited and retained, for example, or the number of tortillas (or other culturally appropriate food items) served by the network. Feeding America should encourage its network members to frame their progress in relation to Latinos in similar ways and recommend that providers apply their increased understanding of Latinos' needs and perspectives in their local area to their customization and evaluation of their own outreach efforts. Feeding America should conduct more detailed studies of the partnerships built between Latino-led agencies and traditional emergency food providers around the country and publish the findings in a way that food banks of a variety of sizes and scopes across the country can use to solicit help from other community-based organizations. Feeding America also needs to publish for its network members an explanation of the best practices for how providers with predominantly-white leadership can skillfully and respectfully build relationships with Latinos in their local areas and incorporate them into the planning, implementation, and evaluation of outreach efforts.

In order for individual emergency food providers to practice increased institutional cultural competency, they need to engage Latinos on a deeper and more meaningful level than they have in the past, which will require making Latino issues central to the institutions' missions, goals, and financial priorities. Changes must be made not only to overall organizational structures and climates but also their programs, staff, and volunteers. The objective of making such changes is to not only increase

Latinos' access to emergency food services but also increase Latinos' usage of nonemergency food services such as SNAP enrollment and cooking and nutrition education programs. Increased access necessitates that Latinos be more familiar with services offered by food banks and that those services, when Latinos interact with them, be administered in culturally and socially acceptable ways customized to local Latino populations.

First, emergency food providers need to shape their efforts to increase institutional cultural competency with a process of introspection that examines the historical relationship of their organization to local Latinos and seeks to understand the current-day needs of Latinos. Food banks can aid these processes by building relationships with Latino community members, leaders, and service agencies and by securing funding to conduct surveys and long-term outreach efforts. Providers need to incorporate Latinos into the planning, implementation, and evaluation of how changes to their organizations have or have not benefitted local Latinos. People representative of the local populations must be hired as permanent staff, and specific staff positions need to be created to coordinate the programmatic changes necessary to increase institutional cultural competency. They must do more than just translate already-existing organizational materials into Spanish. New documents are needed that address the fears and misunderstandings that exist and are different in every Latino community.

The barriers that Latinos may face around the country and that emergency food providers should try to assess in their local areas include, but are not limited to: language barriers, fears of deportation, assumptions that culturally appropriate food items are not available at pantries, need for more culturally appropriate food items and

fresh produce, lack of awareness of the types of services offered, lack of transportation to and from service sites (particularly among immigrants without identification and among farmworkers), absence of a sense of community at service sites, lack of relationships between service providers and clients, lack of familiarity with the food pantry system's functioning and purpose, cultural stigma against asking for financial assistance in a public setting, and cultural needs around the connections between the experience of food and family.

The limited scope of this project prevented interviews with Latino food bank clients—the most important evaluators of institutional cultural competency—at the national level and at the Oregon level for the case study. More research is necessary, therefore, in order to create a comprehensive and fully representative assessment of the institutional cultural competency of emergency food providers during the recession era. In-depth interviews with food bank staff, volunteers, and Latino clients around the country, as well as with Latino-led agencies' staff, volunteers, and clients around the country, will help to make the assessment of food banks' historical relationship with Latinos and levels of institutional cultural competency more complete.

Historical inquiry into food banks' relationships to Latinos over the past ten years offers new insight on the institutionalization of emergency food. While critiques of the emergency food system's corporate connections and opposition to its measurement of its success in pounds of food distributed grew in number, the critiques did not focus on the system's relationship to minorities. A 2015 food justice conference in Portland, OR, which Oregon Food Bank helped to host, marked the first time that the national food bank system expressed curiosity about how its own history of rapid growth and expansion might have impacted minorities' experiences of food insecurity and poverty. It was also the first time that food bank representatives collectively articulated two main things. First, they recognized that the network's larger food banks, as established institutions, were interconnected with other institutions in the U.S. influencing responses to racial and social justice issues. Second, they acknowledged that larger food banks therefore bore responsibility for their indirect and direct impacts on racial and social justice issues. Workshop titles at the conference included "The Role of Race and Privilege in Food Banking" and "GROWING HUERTOS: Food Justice and Latino Communities (Derechos de la Comida para Comunidades Latinas).¹⁸⁸ One of the several recommendations put forth by the conference was for food banks to "[m]ake racial justice a top organizational priority. Food banks must work to undo racism and privilege within their own organizations, in their community and in society at large in

¹⁸⁸ "Closing the Hunger Gap: Cultivating Food Justice Conference Program," Closing the Hunger Gap and WhyHunger, 2015, accessed February 19, 2016, http://thehungergap.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/0082_HungerGap_Program_View_090815.pdf, 19-20.

order to end hunger and poverty.”¹⁸⁹ Starting in 2015, there was a growing interest at the national level in making racial and social justice central to food bank activities.

The assessment of food banks’ institutional cultural competency contributes new knowledge that will be important as food banks enter a new phase of their evolution. If food banks are to be able to answer their own questions about how to contribute positively to racial and social justice movements and how to better meet the needs of minority groups, they need to know how they have or have not met the needs of those groups in the past. The Feeding America network will not become more culturally competent if it only examines its history in relation to government legislation, economic recessions, and the increases or decreases in the amount of food distributed to a certain number of people. It must examine its history in relation to all those things as well as its relationships to people of color, including Latinos. Feeding America and its network members need to examine their capacities as institutions to serve Latinos well in order to—as many in the anti-hunger community have urged—eliminate the need for emergency food assistance in the first place and try to put themselves out of business.

¹⁸⁹ Jessica Powers, “SPECIAL REPORT: AMERICA’S FOOD BANKS SAY CHARITY WON’T END HUNGER,” WhyHunger, January 2016, accessed February 19, 2016, <http://whyhunger.org/images/publications/Special-Report.pdf>, 8.

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