

Anti-Hunger Playbook

55TH ARIZONA STATE LEGISLATURE
FIRST REGULAR SESSION

*A legislator's guide to
ending hunger in 2021*

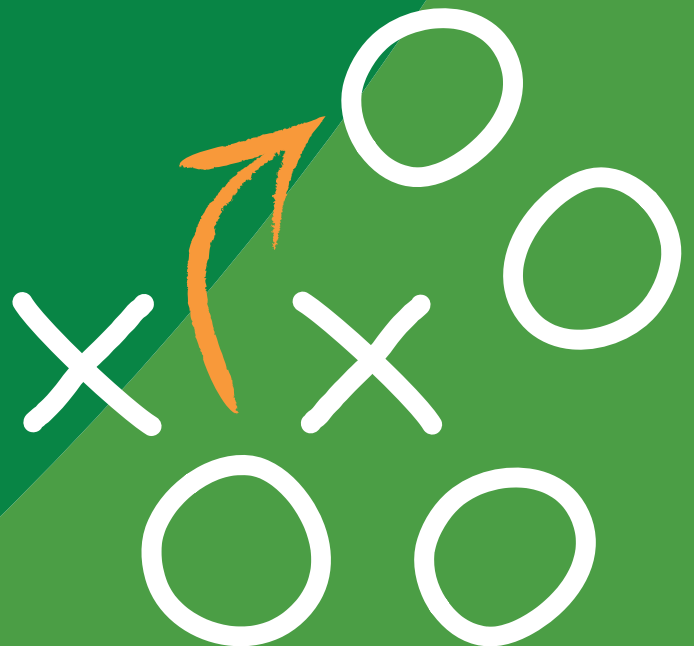
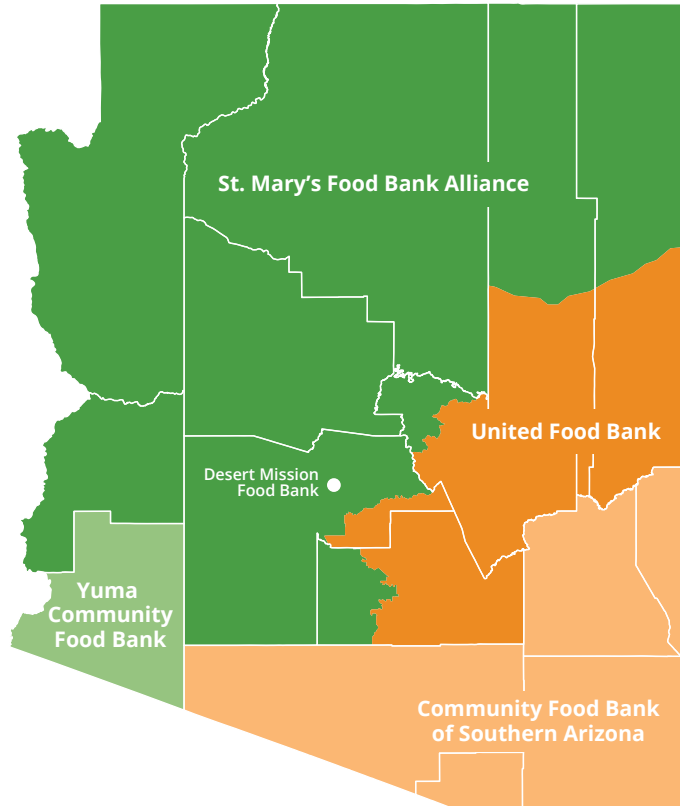


Table of Contents

Arizona Food Bank Network and Members	1
A Note from Angie Rodgers, President and CEO	2
Food Insecurity: Quick Facts	3
Fighting Hunger During a Pandemic: AzFBN Response	4
Fighting Hunger During a Pandemic: Federal Response	5
SNAP: Quick Facts	6
School Meals: Quick Facts	7
Our Stories: Arizonans Facing Hunger	8
Take Action: Support AzFBN's 2021 Policy Priorities	11
Take Action: Support AzFBN Partners	12
Notes & References	13

Arizona Food Bank Network and Members



About Us: The Arizona Food Bank Network (AzFBN) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to achieving a hunger-free Arizona. Our mission is to develop solutions to end hunger through food banking, public policy, and innovation. We support our member food banks and the statewide emergency food network with transportation and distribution, anti-hunger advocacy, and outreach to partners.

AzFBN Member Food Banks: AzFBN member food banks (below) provide emergency food assistance to people in all 15 counties through a network of nearly 1,000 food pantries and other partner agencies. Collectively, these food banks distributed **220 million pounds of food, or roughly 170 million meals**, to Arizonans in need in 2020.¹ The map above reflects each food bank's service area. *Note: HonorHealth Desert Mission Food Bank is a member within St. Mary's Food Bank Alliance's service area.*

In partnership with



Our members



A Note from Angie Rodgers, President and CEO

Thank you for joining our movement to end hunger. You see, by even opening this playbook, you acknowledge that hunger is a problem in our state and you want to learn more—and commit to doing something about it! Congratulations on your election, and we welcome you.

The Arizona Food Bank Network (AzFBN) supports our member food banks in the distribution of emergency food; works with policymakers—like you—to ensure all Arizonans have equitable access to nutritious food; and engages key partners like schools, health care providers, and other nonprofits in education and outreach. COVID-19 has challenged emergency food providers and policymakers alike to meet the growing demand for nutrition assistance. This work will continue into the 2021 legislative session.

We want to thank you for supporting our work to end hunger in your district and across the state. In the past year, we secured an additional \$950,000 in the state budget to store and distribute food available from the USDA's trade mitigation program. Governor Ducey provided a \$1 million allocation from the **Crisis Contingency and Safety Net Fund** to help with increased demand at our member food banks (*see page 4*). We were able to launch Friends of the Farm, a pilot farm-to-food-bank program that helps get Arizona-grown produce and protein from small-scale producers to families in need (*see page 11*).

Federal resources provided by the **Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA)** and the **Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act** through cities and counties supported a grant-making program to help food banks meet unprecedented demand and allow small pantries to keep their doors open. Grants were made to organizations in all 15 counties. Private donor resources were also used to support organizations in rural communities.

This year's playbook aims to help you understand and address hunger through data, stories, key points from the pandemic response, and AzFBN's policy priorities for 2021. We hope this playbook will be a resource for you as you make important policy decisions to reduce hunger and poverty statewide.

We look forward to working with you this year to improve nutrition policies in our state. Please consider the Arizona Food Bank Network as a resource, and welcome to our fight to end hunger in Arizona.



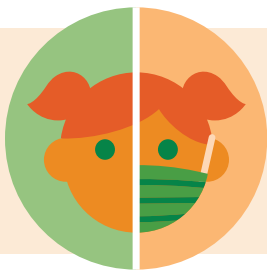
Sincerely,

A handwritten signature of Angie Rodgers in blue ink. The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Angie Rodgers
President and CEO

What is food insecurity?

Food insecurity is the inability to reliably access sufficient nutritious food to support an active, healthy lifestyle, due to a lack of physical, social, or financial resources.² Food insecurity requires both **immediate relief**, such as emergency food assistance from food banks, and **long-term solutions** focused on reducing poverty and increasing equitable access to healthy food.



Who is food insecure in Arizona?

Pre-Pandemic³

937,000 people and 1 in 5 children

Estimated impact of COVID-19⁴

1.4 million people and 1 in 4 children

According to analysis of the U.S. Census Bureau's COVID-19 Household Pulse Survey, nearly 400,000 adults in Arizona had received emergency food aid from a food bank, school, religious organization, or family/friends.⁵

In October, **nearly 50 percent of Arizonans did not have confidence they would be able to afford sufficient food** for the next four weeks, according to the COVID-19 Household Pulse Survey.⁶



Who lives below the poverty line in Arizona?⁷



1 in 7 Arizonans and 1 in 5 children⁸

Prior to the pandemic, Arizona's poverty rate had declined for eight consecutive years due to a strong economy and low unemployment. As income inequality increased nationwide, however, many households were still left behind.

Fighting Hunger During a Pandemic: AzFBN Response

In 2020, more than 570,000 people in Arizona tested positive for COVID-19, and many more are struggling with hunger as a result of the dual public health and economic crises. Nearly **1.4 million Arizonans could face food insecurity this year**, many for the first time. Here's how AzFBN and our members focused our efforts in three core areas to help address hunger in communities statewide.

Food Banking



- Distributed 220 million pounds of food (170 million meals) statewide—18 percent more than in 2019



- Served nearly 460,000 people each month
- Led frequent ongoing mobile distributions in tribal communities and other hard-hit areas
- Provided emergency grants to 83 agencies in all 15 counties to help them safely keep their doors open and expand capacity, with funding from Arizona Together and leveraged resources from other private donors



- Developed home-delivery pilot programs for seniors, strengthened infrastructure, and supported struggling small-scale producers through AzFBN's Friends of the Farm program, using Crisis Contingency and Safety Net funds



- Worked closely with 450 National Guard members each month to distribute food quickly and safely

Advocacy

AzFBN advocacy seeks to end hunger by implementing policy-based solutions. In 2020, our advocacy shifted to extending federal flexibilities that allowed food banks and nutrition programs to feed the growing number of Arizonans out of work and school. This included outreach on school meals, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, formerly food stamps), Pandemic EBT, and other programs.

Innovation

AzFBN's innovation programs aim to increase food security so that fewer Arizonans need access to the emergency food network. In 2020, we focused on closing gaps in the food system and addressing disparities exacerbated by the pandemic. This included supporting schools with emergency grants, waiver requests, and home delivery of meals in rural areas, as well as coordinating food distribution to tribal nations.

Fighting Hunger During a Pandemic: *Federal Response*

The federal government provided critical resources and support to address food insecurity during COVID-19. The **Families First Coronavirus Response Act** and the **Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act** established flexibilities and new benefits to address food insecurity during the COVID-19 public health emergency.

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, formerly food stamps) is an electronic benefit that helps families experiencing hardship buy groceries.

- The application process was streamlined for safety, by temporarily extending certification periods and waiving face-to-face interviews.
- Participants received the maximum benefit for their household size through emergency allotments.
- SNAP Online allowed families to purchase groceries through Amazon, Walmart, and Aldi/Instacart.⁹

Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)

WIC provides supplemental foods, nutrition education, breastfeeding promotion and support, and health care referrals to low-income pregnant, postpartum, and breastfeeding women, infants, and children under five who are determined by health professionals to be at nutritional risk.

- Women can apply for and receive WIC benefits remotely during the pandemic.
- Families can enroll or re-enroll in WIC without an in-person clinic visit.
- Substitutions could be made for food items that were unavailable due to supply chain issues.

Pandemic Electronic Benefits Transfer (P-EBT)

P-EBT helps families buy groceries to replace missed school meals. When schools were closed in spring 2020, the Arizona Department of Economic Security (DES) issued P-EBT to eligible school-aged children and younger children in Head Start programs and preschools. (*Learn more about P-EBT on page 7.*)

Support for Food Banks

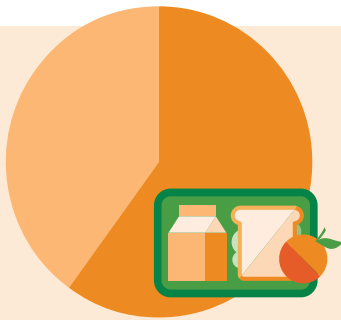
- Additional food and administrative resources were provided for the Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP).
- Fresh produce, dairy, and protein were distributed temporarily through the Farmers-to-Families Food Box Program.

SNAP: Quick Facts

Food banks can't fight hunger alone. For every meal a food bank can provide, SNAP provides up to nine. It is America's largest and most effective anti-hunger program. Eligible families use an electronic benefit card to purchase food at more than 4,200 retailers and grocers across Arizona.

\$1.70	SNAP benefit per person per meal (2020 monthly average) ¹⁰
\$229,141,899	infused into Arizona's economy each month (2020 monthly average) ¹¹
877,225	Arizonans participating in SNAP each month (2020 monthly average) ¹²
67%	Arizona SNAP participants are children, older adults, or people with disabilities ¹³
2 out of 3	adults who participate in SNAP work full time ¹⁴
34	farmers' markets and grocers accept Double-Up Food Bucks, the nutrition incentive program that helps SNAP participants access more fresh fruits and vegetables ¹⁵

School meals are critical to students' health and well-being, especially for low-income children. The National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and School Breakfast Program (SBP) ensure kids have the nutrition they need to learn, play, and grow. Research shows that receiving a free or reduced-price school lunch reduces food insecurity, obesity rates, and poor health.¹⁶ When the pandemic caused schools to temporarily shut down, children's access to meals was seriously affected.



60% of 1 million kids
received free or
reduced-price meals

Pre-Pandemic

Prior to the pandemic, 1 million children in Arizona attended schools that participate in NSLP. Approximately 60 percent of the students received free or reduced-price meals.

Pandemic

A sample of school meal service at 30 districts in spring 2020 showed that the average decline in meal service was 90 percent. Some districts served only two lunches for every 100 lunches they did the year prior.

School nutrition departments and partners worked tirelessly to get meals to students by using new flexibilities allowed by the USDA, including serving a week's worth of bagged lunches at one time that parents could pick up from schools and other meal sites. In October 2020, the USDA allowed **all children under 18 to receive free meals** through September 2021.

Pandemic EBT (P-EBT)

P-EBT is a new program, enacted by Congress in March 2020, that provides families with the value of the free or reduced-price meals that children missed because of school closures or schedule changes. Arizona was among the first states to implement P-EBT in April.



- **787,410 children** received benefits across Arizona.
- The average benefit per child for spring 2020 was **\$254** total.

Congress authorized P-EBT for the 2020-21 academic year, including benefits for children under six. The Arizona Department of Economic Security (DES) will begin issuing those benefits in 2021.

Our Stories: Arizonans Facing Hunger

Demand at food banks during the COVID-19 pandemic spiked across Arizona as businesses and schools temporarily shut down in the spring and again as cases started to surge in the fall. AzFBN spoke with food bank clients, families picking up free school meals, small-scale producers, and partners about their experiences with food insecurity, unemployment, health, and more.



Cordelia, Food Pantry Client

AVONDALE

"People are desperate. I'm retired, but with prices at the grocery store so high, or shelves empty, [the pandemic] impacts retirees too. We're so thankful for **Robey Pantry** and its volunteers. I bring my neighbor, who doesn't drive, and share food with my sister, who has lung disease and needs to stay home. It's been a rough year. I've had six cousins pass away from the virus, and I'm just trying to stay safe myself."



Sterling Johnson, Farm Manager

AJO

"With or without the COVID-19 crisis, it's not only important to make sure that all people have access to food, but also that what food we have, we share with others. I'm a member of the Tohono O'odham Nation and the farm manager at the **Ajo Center for Sustainable Agriculture**. Before COVID-19, we ran a farmers' market and provided free seeds. When the pandemic hit, we were in between planting seasons, but local farmers donated produce, and we've served about 1,300 people a week."



Dr. Leticia Ruiz, School Meal Provider

SOUTH PHOENIX

"This is a working-class neighborhood. About 90 percent of children get free or reduced-price meals, and we [Tepeyac, Inc.] serve about three times as many grab-and-go meals with support from **St. Mary's Food Bank**. Many parents have lost their jobs, had their hours cut back, or simply have to stay home to care for their children. I hope lawmakers understand how much the school lunch program helps families who are in great need, and I hope they're looking ahead to what might happen to the children who rely on these meals if the schools don't reopen."

Our Stories: Arizonans Facing Hunger

Ashley, Food Bank Client

TEMPE

"I never expected to be at a food bank—I was doing just fine. I recently finished a master's program and had a good amount of savings because I'm living with my family—helping my parents out and saving up until I get a 'real' job. When the restaurant where I work shut down, I went through my savings quickly. With unemployment, I'll have enough to get by. I just won't have any money left to my name. My mom heard about **United Food Bank** on the news, and this is our second time here. It really helps. The food goes a long way."



Matt, Parent

PHOENIX

"I had people lined up for jobs before, but I had to close my recruiting business and now I'm the one looking for work. We've picked up these free bagged lunches for the boys at Encanto Elementary School, since their preschool shut down in March. It's let us cut our food budget way back, which means we can afford to continue their therapy for feeding and swallowing issues."



Chaz Shelton, Farmer

TUCSON

"Making fresh food affordable and accessible is the heart and soul of Merchant's Garden, and we believe that healthy food shouldn't be a luxury. We've been lucky to leverage our partnership with the **Community Food Bank of Southern Arizona** to get the leafy greens we grow into Tucson schools. But COVID-19 hit us hard and forced us to rethink our business model. Friends of the Farm has been an absolute lifesaver. It's allowed us to distribute food outside of Pima County and to get our produce to the people who need it most."



Our Stories: Arizonans Facing Hunger



Juan & Maria, Food Bank Clients

YUMA

"We thought that life couldn't get much better. We both had good jobs and a nice home. Maria had just given birth to our second child. Everything was perfect. Then the layoffs began because of the virus. Both of us were out of a job and wondering how we would put food on the table. We're grateful for **Yuma Community Food Bank.**"



Michael, Food Bank Client

PHOENIX

"I'm an electrician so I have to be careful of the virus with any customers. My wife was in the first wave of people let go from her company, and the wait for unemployment has left her without any income at all yet. We've been here to **Desert Mission Food Bank** before, due to lack of income at times. I don't think people understood the situation at food banks prior to the virus. It's hopefully been a learning experience for our government—that we need some things in place that can be implemented quickly to reduce the chance of this many people being affected this drastically ever again."



Chef John Hohn, Food Pantry Chef

SELLS

"With the grant money, we got a refrigerated van that's going to help us provide about 200,000 meals a year for the next five years. We're really grateful."

*Chef John and his team at **GAP Ministries/Kitchen** used a refrigerated van, which they purchased in part with state resources, to bring 400 meals and gallons of milk to Ali Chuk, a town of fewer than 200 people about 130 miles southwest of Tucson.*

Take Action: Support AzFBN's 2021 Policy Priorities

Our legislative and administrative advocacy centers on ensuring emergency food assistance is available to anyone who needs it, improving accessibility of federal nutrition benefits, and addressing the root causes of food insecurity and poverty.

1. Strengthen Capacity & Build Resiliency for Arizona's Food Banks



Food banks play a critical role in improving the health and nutrition of Arizona's most vulnerable citizens, and the state has recognized the importance of supporting emergency food assistance since 1987. However, in the past 15 years, demand at food banks has increased by 45 percent while the Coordinated Hunger Services line item administered by DES has remained the same. We estimate that 1.4 million Arizonans struggled with food insecurity in 2020, many for the first time. Arizona's food banks need additional support to meet current unprecedented demand and withstand the multiyear recovery ahead. AzFBN and its members request **an additional \$1 million in annual ongoing funding**.

2. Support & Expand Friends of the Farm



Friends of the Farm (FoF) is a pilot farm-to-food-bank program that helps Arizona's small-scale producers and food-insecure families. FoF purchases Arizona-grown fruits, vegetables, dairy, eggs, and meat for distribution throughout our network of food banks and pantries. It provides a reliable market for small-scale producers, offers unique variety to food bank clients, and invests in a strong local food system. It has been a lifeline during the COVID-19 pandemic, when many small-scale producers lost much of their business. To date, FoF has worked with **more than 20 farms in five counties** to acquire and distribute **over 275,000 pounds** of locally grown food to families in need with planned purchases in additional counties and tribal communities. AzFBN is requesting **\$500,000 in annual ongoing funding** to expand the program.

3. Make SNAP Fully Accessible to Formerly Incarcerated Individuals



In 2017, the legislature passed a partial elimination of the "SNAP drug-felon ban," a lifetime ban from SNAP for people previously convicted of a drug felony. While that was a strong first step, more needs to be done to make food assistance fully accessible to eligible individuals who have already paid their debt to society. Evidence shows that eliminating the ban reduces recidivism.¹⁷ Compliance with the partial ban burdens state eligibility workers as well as individuals trying to rebuild their lives. AzFBN proposes the **full elimination of the ban**. In doing so, we would join 26 other states that have eliminated the lifetime ban.

Take Action: Support AzFBN Partners

1. SNAP Fruit and Vegetable Match Appropriation



Double Up Food Bucks doubles the value of SNAP benefits used at farmers' markets, mobile markets, and corner stores across Arizona, helping people bring home more healthy produce while also supporting local farmers. AzFBN supports Pinnacle Prevention's efforts to continue a much-needed expansion of this program statewide through its request for \$1 million in annual ongoing funding.

2. Agriculture Workforce Development Program



Agriculture is one of Arizona's top industries, and our agriculture workforce is aging. This important pilot program is requesting a one-time, two-year appropriation of \$500,000 per year to provide internships or apprenticeships for beginning farmers to enter the workforce. AzFBN supports this new program, and we urge you to do the same.¹⁸

3. Arizona 2-1-1



Arizona 2-1-1 is an information and referral service that connects people in need with the resources they need during a crisis and relieves the burden on emergency responders. Led by the Crisis Response Network, 2-1-1 resumed its 24-hour live-answer service in July 2020, and became the state's go-to resource for community health and human services during the pandemic. Emergency food assistance was the fourth most-requested service by callers in 2020, after housing assistance, utility assistance, and disaster relief. Continued funding for a live-answer 2-1-1 is necessary to ensure people are connected with food banks and other vital services, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic.¹⁹

Contact Arizona Food Bank Network

Angie Rodgers
President and CEO
angie@azfoodbanks.org
(602) 528-3434, ext. 113

Ashley St. Thomas
Public Policy Manager
ashley@azfoodbanks.org
(602) 528-3434, ext. 115

1. Monthly data collected from AzFBN member food banks (listed on page 2) from January to December 2020.
2. USDA-ERS (United States Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service). *Measurement: What Is Food Security?* www.ers.usda.gov/topics/food-nutrition-assistance/food-security-in-the-us/measurement.
3. Feeding America. *Map the Meal Gap: Food Insecurity in the United States*. <https://map.feedingamerica.org>.
4. Feeding America. *The Impact of Coronavirus on Food Insecurity: 2020 Projected Overall Food Insecurity Rate*. www.feedingamericaaction.org/the-impact-of-coronavirus-on-food-insecurity.
5. Ibid.
6. U.S. Census Household Pulse Survey, Phase 2 (August–October 2020). Analysis by the Arizona Center for Economic Progress. *Measuring Household Experiences during the Coronavirus Pandemic*. www.census.gov/data/experimental-data-products/household-pulse-survey.html.
7. Ibid.
8. In 2019, the federal poverty line was \$12,490/year for an individual and \$21,330/year for a family of three. Poverty data for 2020 will be released by the U.S. Census in 2021.
9. U.S. Census Bureau. *Poverty & Income Data*. www.census.gov/quickfacts/AZ.
10. DES (Arizona Department of Economic Security). *SNAP Online Purchasing*. <https://des.az.gov/services/basic-needs/food-assistance/nutrition-assistance/snap-online-purchasing>.
11. DES, Family Assistance Administration. *Statistical Bulletins January 2020–November 2020*. Available for download at <https://des.az.gov/documents-center>.
12. According to Moody's Analytics, every \$1 in SNAP benefits spent generates \$1.70 in economic activity. The figure cited is an average of the monthly "total issuance" of SNAP statewide in 2020 multiplied by 1.7.
13. Ibid.
14. DES, Family Assistance Administration. Public Records Request: "SNAP Recipients: Seniors & People Living with Disabilities, January 2020–September 2020."
15. GAO (Government Accountability Office). *Federal Social Safety Net Programs: Millions of Full-Time Workers Rely on Federal Health Care and Food Assistance Programs*. October 2020. www.gao.gov/assets/720/710203.pdf.
16. Double Up Arizona. *How It Works*. www.doubleupaz.org/how-it-works.
17. Tuttle, Cody. 2019. "Snapping Back: Food Stamp Bans and Criminal Recidivism." *American Economic Journal: Economic Policy*, 11 (2): 301–27.
18. For more information about the Nutrition Assistance Incentive Benefit Match bill or the Agriculture Workforce Development bill, please contact Kenneth Steel at kennethsteel@pinnacleprevention.org.
19. For more information about 2-1-1 Arizona, please contact Justin Chase at Justin.Chase@crisisnetwork.org.

Photo Credits

Front Cover: Linda Kraemer (top left). *Urban Produce Shopping* by Caroline Attwood (top right).
Back Cover: Kate Radosevic (all).



Arizona Food Bank Network
340 E. Coronado Rd., Ste. 400
Phoenix, AZ 85004

(602) 528-3434 : Local
(800) 445-1914 : Toll-Free
(602) 528-3838 : Fax

In partnership with **FEEDING AMERICA**