



# News Release

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## Arizona Food Banks Benefit From Federal Government Food Distribution

*DES Hunger Relief Program continues to accept surplus food*

**PHOENIX** – Truckloads of frozen chicken, eggs, raisins and blueberries will come to Arizona in the fall, stocking food banks with millions of dollars’ worth of food that doesn’t usually make its way onto food bank shelves.

The Department of Economic Security’s (DES) Hunger Relief Program had already agreed to accept 120 truckloads of these and other unique food items. This week, the agency was offered more than a dozen additional truckloads of the so-called “bonus” foods, made available through the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Emergency Food Assistance price support and surplus removal program.

“This is exciting news for our families who are most in need of emergency food,” said Hunger Relief Program Manager Linda Hamman. “With limited resources to purchase food, we typically order [non-perishables such as] rice, beans, pasta, canned vegetables and [canned] fruit. I am grateful for the opportunity to include dairy, protein, and fruit in the emergency food boxes and in meals served at soup kitchens.”

Thanks to the cooperation of state food banks which will store the items, DES was able to accept more than \$3 million dollars’ worth of these bonus foods. Many other states are unable to accept these food items in such large quantities because of their limitations on storage for these perishables. The bonus foods other states are unable to accept are offered to states, like Arizona, which can store the items.

Partners of the Hunger Relief Program, which include regional food banks such as St. Mary’s Food Bank Alliance, United Food Bank, Community Food Bank of Southern Arizona, St. Vincent DePaul, Yuma Community Food Bank and local food pantries, will distribute it directly to low-income individuals in emergency food boxes and meals. In fiscal year 2016, the Food Bank Network helped 4.5 million Arizonans, and distributed 133 million pounds of food to low-income households.

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*The Arizona Department of Economic Security makes Arizona stronger by helping Arizonans reach their potential through temporary assistance for those in need, and care for the vulnerable.*

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