



DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC SECURITY

Your Partner For A Stronger Arizona

Janice K. Brewer
Governor

Clarence H. Carter
Director

April 19, 2013

To Whom It May Concern:

The statewide Hunger Advisory Council of the Arizona Department of Economic Security (DES) supports the valiant efforts of both the Yavapai Food Council and the Child Hunger Alliance for Yavapai County.

During the past three years, our Council has appreciated the solid step-by-step progress that the Verde Food Council has achieved in producing data-driven studies that clearly describe the conditions of widespread hunger and its causes in Yavapai County. These include: *Food Bank Recipients in the Verde Valley (2007-08)*, *Free/Reduced Student Meals in Yavapai County Schools (2009)*, *St. Mary's Deliveries to Verde Valley Emergency Food Providers (2010-11)*, *Ending Child Hunger in Yavapai County (2012)*, and *School Meals in Yavapai County Schools: Student Meal Gaps (2013)*.

We believe this body of work on Yavapai County accurately documents the level of hardship that has befallen much of rural Arizona since the Great Recession. We recognize that other rural counties in Arizona would be greatly challenged in developing this level of expertise in conducting similar studies.

These reports and their findings provide the evidence that has fueled the establishment of the Child Hunger Alliance – Yavapai County, which is now engaged in drawing together community organizations for implementation of the report's recommendations. We fully support and heartily applaud these efforts, and believe that similar grassroots organizing is needed well beyond Yavapai County.

Now that the *Verde* Food Council has agreed to several requests to expand its service area throughout the entire county in becoming the *Yavapai* Food Council, we are pleased to offer our support for that expansion of service. As a nonprofit, the Yavapai Food Council will provide a vehicle for funding strategic action projects to reduce child hunger in schools and child care centers throughout the county, and be a model for other rural areas in our state.

Providing effective hunger relief resources to Yavapai County's three large food deserts requires innovative thinking and programming. We affirm the value of the creative ideas that the Alliance proposes and desire to see them implemented with appropriate funding through grants, corporate contributions and public donations.

We recognize that virtually all funding that furnishes food to hungry children comes from the federal government. This makes the provision of food in Yavapai County extremely dependent on federal programs. Work of the Yavapai Food Council gives more opportunity to diversify food sources for hungry children and their families – whether this is through local programs or expansion of access to existing opportunities to feed children, thereby creating more stability to work toward food security, reducing the prevalence and severity of child hunger throughout our state. For that reason, we especially value the efforts of the Yavapai Food Council and the new Alliance in mobilizing local resources to reduce hunger.

The statewide Hunger Advisory Council encourages the support of the Yavapai Food Council and the Child Hunger Alliance through funding and productive partnership.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ginny Hildebrandt". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Ginny Hildebrandt
Katherine P. (Ginny) Hildebrand, Chair

DES Hunger Advisory Council
Chairperson

cc. Linda Hamman Arizona Department of Economic Security
Harvey Grady
Julie Hall-Allison