Case Study: OC Hunger Alliance Backbone

Executive Summary



The OC Hunger Alliance (OCHA) is a collective impact collaborative focused on systems-level change to address both immediate food insecurity and the root causes of hunger in Orange County. Abound Food Care (Abound) serves as the backbone agency of OCHA, coordinating over 30 cross-sector partners across five working groups: Access, Equity, Advocacy, Data, and Food Systems. Abound has been critical in coordinating response efforts, shifting food distribution norms, leading food recovery, and catalyzing funding into systems change efforts on behalf of OCHA.

Forming OCHA to Address Hunger and Poverty

Recognizing that the complex, interconnected challenges facing Orange County's charitable feeding network could not be solved alone, OCHA was founded in 2019 by Abound, Second Harvest Food Bank of Orange County, and the OC Food Bank, a program of Community Action Partnership of Orange County. A 2024 needs assessment, commissioned by OCHA and carried out by Charitable Ventures, identified systemic issues and pointed to the interconnectedness of food security with other social drivers of health, thus highlighting the importance of addressing food insecurity systemically. This underscored the resolve of the founders to develop an Executive Committee of eight cross-sector agencies and eventually bring 35 cross-sector partners into the alliance, across five working groups.

Building Collective Impact

The OCHA Executive Committee identified working group focus areas: access, equity, advocacy, data, and food systems. As a collective impact collaborative, OCHA members have developed and implemented strategic initiatives, or 'pillars,' supported by shared metrics that measure collective impact and inform decision-making. This data-driven approach enables members to learn from results, continuously refine and optimize their efforts, and drive meaningful systems change. OCHA's strategic pillars include CalFresh Enrollment, Enhanced Services — which uses a wraparound case management approach to address food insecurity — and Client Choice. As OCHA's backbone agency, Abound provides the administrative, strategic, and operational infrastructure required to convene OCHA member organizations, implement pillars, and analyze shared data.

OCHA Achievements

As the backbone of OCHA, Abound has helped catalyze and facilitate significant collective impact, including:

- **Built and strengthened OCHA's infrastructure:** Expanded the collaborative from three founding organizations to 35 cross-stakeholder entities; established five working groups; and added an Alliance Director.
- **Advanced strategic initiatives:** Oversaw implementation of the CalFresh Enrollment, Enhanced Services, and Client Choice pillars, with additional initiatives in development.
- **Advanced Client Choice as a standard practice:** Facilitated the adoption of the Client Choice model as the preferred approach to food distribution in OC.
- **Catalyzed investment in the food system:** Regranted over $400,000 to OCHA members to strengthen data capacity and provide enhanced services.
- **Mobilized resources for critical needs:** Catalyzed over $1.5M into emergency food funding during the 2025 CalFresh interruption and $500,000 for edible food recovery efforts in 2026.
- **Strengthened policy engagement:** Adopted the California Food Banks' Policy Agenda and coordinated advocacy across 10 in-district offices.

Going forward, Abound Food Care will deepen OCHA's partnerships and projects within Orange County while working to engage new organizations and develop new projects that best suit the needs of the county's many diverse communities.







About Abound Food Care: As an insider with multi-sector experience, we have the unique skills and knowledge to solve complex food system problems to empower nonprofits to feed more people. We optimize the food system with our scalable solutions that align public, private, and nonprofit resources and stakeholders. Our solutions include edible food recovery, food donation coordination, solar powered refrigeration units, and regional programs and alliances. Regional programs can be tailored with additional services, including grant management and administration, enhanced procurement, coordinated logistics, and repurposing kitchens. Since our inception, Abound Food Care has empowered thousands of stakeholders to create healthier communities with better food access and less food waste.