

CITY OF SAN ANTONIO – 2005 ICMA ANNUAL AWARDS ENTRY:

**PROGRAM EXCELLENCE AWARD – OUTSTANDING PARTNERSHIPS:  
INTERGOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION**

**DESCRIPTIVE NARRATIVE – DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY INITIATIVES/PROJECT  
HOPE**

**Scope:**

In 2003, the City of San Antonio's Department of Community Initiatives entered into a successful, public-private partnership with San Antonio Food Bank, Inc. to initiate the Healthy Options Program for the Elderly (HOPE) Project enhancing food security for low-income seniors residing in the City.

The Department of Community Initiatives administers the City of San Antonio's Comprehensive Nutrition Project (CNP), which operates 71 senior nutrition sites throughout the City. In May 2003, the CNP began an effective collaboration with the San Antonio Food Bank to improve senior nutrition through enhanced access to nutritious food products. With the help of center managers and site volunteers, needy seniors are identified and qualified using United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) income eligibility criteria, which require applicants to be at 185% of the federal poverty guideline or with a household income of \$34,040 or below for a family of four.

After enrollment, seniors began receiving monthly allotments of food delivered directly to the centers by the San Antonio Food Bank. Seniors do not have to be registered with the CNP to obtain services from Project HOPE, but do have to be 60 years or older. Food from Project HOPE is also distributed to homebound seniors enrolled in the CNP that are no longer capable of attending a senior nutrition center.

### **Measurable Results:**

Project HOPE enhances food security to seniors by providing 25 pounds of food, twice per month to over 3,500 eligible seniors. Seniors receive an assortment of breads and pastries, fresh produce, refrigerated and frozen products, dry goods and beverages. Each dollar leveraged garners \$20.00 worth of food for seniors. Project HOPE, working in partnership with the City's CNP, ensures that seniors receive adequate supplemental food security to enhance their nutritional health and well-being. As part of this effective community collaboration, the San Antonio Food Bank also conducts Food Stamp outreach encouraging eligible Project HOPE participants to enroll in Food Stamps; further enhancing food security for those seniors most in need.

#### **Program Year 2003-2004**

Unduplicated Seniors Served -	4,478
Pounds of food Distributed to Seniors -	2,760,165
Value of Food Distributed	\$4,388,663.00

### **Lessons Learned:**

In addition to enhancing food security to seniors, Project HOPE discovered that seniors also needed assistance with preparing a nutritious meal. As a result, Project HOPE through a registered dietician provided nutritional education classes in conjunction with cooking demonstrations. These classes were designed to improve senior nutrition and maximize use of the food products provided.

Also, seniors provided feedback requesting fresh fruits and vegetables. Through this feedback, Project HOPE responded by refining the product mix for a more nutritionally balanced package to include more fresh fruits and vegetables.

The response to Project HOPE by the seniors served has been overwhelming, therefore providing formidable challenges in terms of food distribution and participant data management. The response for the general senior community required the recruitment of additional volunteers from the general public, as the program expands its participant base beyond the Senior CNP Nutrition Centers. Implementation of a new information management system was necessary in order to manage the continued growth participation and food distribution data.