



My Drift

Title: Hawaii Food Bank

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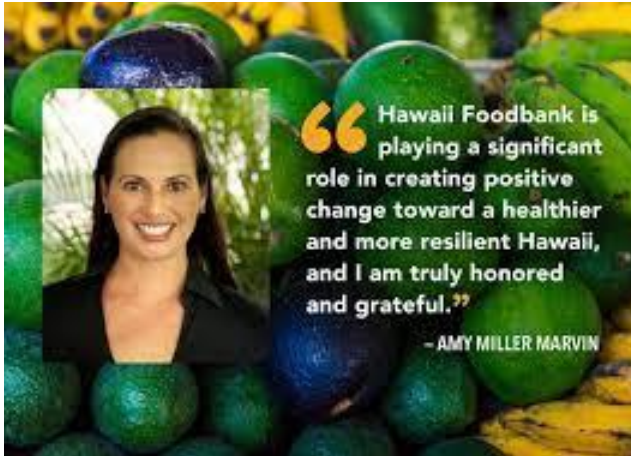
Hawaii Food Bank

Below is a list of problems with the Hawaii Food Bank along with a few recommendations to improve it. This write-up was provided to me by a friend and former co-worker Steven Barnes. Please read his issues/thoughts/ideas and if you have any comments or other ideas on the subject, let me know.



Now don't get me started about the Food Bank. I can agree with a charity providing a helping hand or a bootstrap out of the ditch. But not one where there is no term limit for help. I can't support this organization. And there are a number of reasons it will not have my support. Here we go:

1. There's no endgame. The organization has no goal to be reduce its need. They take pride in growth. I do not know what criteria the Food Bank uses to qualify a client. Frankly I don't think there is a ceiling or limit to being a Food Bank client. Once you start getting freebies at the Food Bank, when do you stop? Does the Food Bank impose a limit such as 3 years, or 5 years or even 10 years to reach the maximum and inform a client that they cannot longer collect the freebie? The client must make room for a new client to receive help. I don't support any charity that has no client endgame.



Amy Miller Marvin



Ron Mizutani

2. The Hawaii Food Bank currently has a staff of 70 full time employees state-wide. About one third work in the warehouse and on delivery/pickup teams. What do the other white collar employees do? The current (since Feb 2022) president and CEO of the Hawaii Foodbank is Amy Miller Marvin. Previously, she was the senior vice president and COO of the Bernice Pauahi Bishop Museum. The previous president and CEO of the Hawaii Foodbank (Apr 2018-Feb 2022) was Ron Mizutani who previously was a TV personality/broadcaster. With that name recognition comes a high salary. I will presume \$110,000-120,000 annually until proven different. According to Indeed, the average Hawaii Food Bank salary ranges from approximately \$44,725 per year for Communications Coordinator to \$84,853 per year for Director. Average Hawaii Food Bank hourly pay ranges from approximately \$15.55 per hour for Warehouse Worker to \$35.33 per hour for Director of Human Resources. Let's assume the remaining staff of 47 make an average of \$50,000. That's an annual salary budget of at least \$ 2,350,000 – excluding warehouse staff. Where does that money come from? If they can pay that kind of money in salary how much of a total budget is the Hawaii Food Bank managing? What percentage of the entire budget is this \$ 2,350,000? How much is the warehouse and transportation staff worth? \$30,000-\$40,000 annually each times 23? \$805,000 average. Add that to the front office staff cost. $\$2,350,000 + \$805,000 = \$ 3,155,500$ give or take \$10,000-\$20,000 that's more than \$3 million a year for salaries.

3. I submit that the Food Bank is inefficient, that the business model is flawed and should be overhauled. The actual count, the exact numbers are unknown and maybe are not even calculable. So, this is simply an example. One thousand citizens go to the grocery store or big box store and buy five cans of

food and decide to donate one can to the Food Bank. The can might cost \$1. The can costs the store 80 cents, the can cost the distributor 60 cents. There's a 40 cent mark up since it arrived by ship. Each citizen donating one can times 1,000 cans equals (of course) 1,000 loose cans with a total retail value of \$1,000 but actually a wholesale value of \$600 and we didn't price out the labor of managing each can into a batch of cans.

4. And at least a few citizens will remove an aged can for donation nearing expiration from their pantry and place the new can in the pantry. The Food Bank will take the time to review the expiration of the donated can and discard those expired or too close. What is that percentage of expired cans that will be disposed of? 3-5%? More? Maybe 7-10%? That reduces the net value of the remaining by 3-10% each collection cycle. This does not even count the labor and effort to dispose of the expired cans. Point is the good cans value is reduced from \$600 to \$ 580+?

5. Food Bank Food Drive Collection. To collect the donated funds and food is not without its own costs. Signage, handled fish nets, buckets, boxes, bags, T-shirts for staff and volunteers are not free. Someone pays. Probably from Food Bank budget. Cost of doing business?

6. These 1,000 citizens handle that can moving it from store shelf, to cart, to bag, to car, to move and into a corner of their pantry. Then on some occasion such as the Food Bank Collection Day, it's moved from pantry to car and dropped off while in route to a soccer game. A Food Bank volunteer picks the can back up from the drop off box, to the bigger box and on to the truck that will take it back to the warehouse. The truck of course burns gas and is driven by a fulltime paid employee with insurance. At the warehouse, full time and volunteers remove the big box and begin sorting the cans of food into same type or maybe even brand maybe they stop check its expiration date and throw away any that are close to expiration and place good ones on a shelf. This requires attention to detail, labor to handle each can/case or bag of food. How much of the paid warehouse staff salaries go to this effort? Three-five persons? This could be costing the Food Bank \$100,000 annually sorting cans and bags.

7. Time for client distribution. The warehouse staff and volunteers start sorting food into boxes and bags? These boxes and bags are not free. There is a cost. The cans are sorted again to one-two of each food type into groups for

clients. More warehouse effort and labor. This is part of the annual warehouse salary costs.

8. Other charities and sources for food. Other charities offer free distribution of food. While Food Bank clients stand in line waiting for their turn, they share stories with each other where they can get additional free food. The list of sources, charities and locations grows as more clients learn of sources. How does anyone measure the quantities distributed to each family? Where are the safeguards to insure people don't abuse the system? Don't get more than they need then sell it to a neighbor? Please tell me the Food Bank clients don't share how to game the system and abuse the charity? When does a little abuse reach the unacceptable level?

9. This may not be the solution, but it must be better than the current method.

A. Encourage and accept donations from the public/citizens. Fund raise like any other charity that uses money not food.

B. Do not accept loose cans. The labor and effort required to sort, manage over and over the small batches/loose cans/bags is not efficient. This reduces the quantities purchased retail.

C. Accept only cases, pallets or large bundles of supplies and food staples when donated.

D. Purchase only from big box, distributors and sources that bypass the grocery wholesaler and grocery themselves. They will increase the bang for the buck considerably. Example - that same 1,000 cans would cost us less than the \$600 net value.

E. Assuming the Hawaii Food Bank is the largest or one of the largest food charities, consolidate. The president and senior staff will develop partnerships with other charities to maximize efforts such as labor, transportation and staff. Agreements to concentrate efforts to merge the operations of other charities and food distribution sources under a single roof. Build a client database. Develop a new or use the SNAP system to register, regulate and monitor client food distribution to reduce/eliminate over issue abuse.

F. Invest in machinery and equipment that reduces the human labor required to measure and group client distribution. Such equipment could/should funnel individual lines of cans/boxes into a variety box versus manhandled, sorted and boxed. Long term will reduce the necessary warehouse staff.

G. Cost cutting of staff and efficiencies. Hawaii Food Bank currently has 70 full time employees. Efficiencies from monetary donation vice can goods, sorting equipment, and purchase power by buying from distributions vice citizen retail purchases from grocery stores will reduce the current staff salary costs. That can be used to buy more case/boxed and palletized food products. And charity operation consolidation will reduce redundancies and waste while insure less client abuse. Place term limits on how long a person can be on the authorized client. This compassionately sets a deadline on duration of client participation and insure clients take steps to become self-sufficient.

Show me where this will not work. But only do so where you can refine the ideas with the overall goal of making the organization more efficient, reducing waste, excesses and abuses.

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