

There are numerous organizations in the country working to feed their local children on weekends using many different models. Most are independent, and so we asked our program coordinators what benefit they derived from being united under one national umbrella organization.

Here is what they said:

Program 1

First, having the benefit of the greater organization worked out our rules and guidelines, accounting, banking, 501 (3) (c) and ability to use that to get donations and use the Food Bank have been crucial for us, along with the initial seed money and gifts. I don't think our program would have happened without those things. I wouldn't be able to get a BOD together. The people who started it certainly did not have the time to invest and even after I took over, it would've been difficult to sustain. This program allows a site to begin with very limited resources and grow from there. These things have been able to allow me to streamline processes that make managing the actual program with our volunteers and coordinators very easy.

Second, we have significant mutual resources within our network. Tapping into them allows us to learn best practices and to support each other. I've learned so many best practices from this group for fund raising, food drives and the food bank. I've been the beneficiary of surplus from other sites and have also been able to pay it forward with our surplus.

I'm also excited to share with other towns that don't have a program for all the reasons above and cause more programs to seed and grow easily for the reasons above. The existing programs in those towns are not organized, are costlier than they need to be, and I see flaws and liabilities that our handbook corrects for.

Program 2

It has benefited my program specifically being connected because other chapters have shared food they had an abundance of prior to it expiring. We have also done this for others with the free popcorn we got last year.

Program 3

The 100% donation, 100% volunteer impacts our region .

The tiered organization.

The simplicity of the menu best bang for what we are doing .

Program 4

For me, I needed a turnkey program that made sense. End 68 had that structure, and it was easily laid out for me -- with experience behind it. There wasn't duplicated effort to set up another 501(c)(3), and deal with the reporting. I like that there's a national organization that provides additional accountability; accountability is important to donors. I like that there are other cities that have tried things that work and who are willing to share information. There are shared administrative benefits, and marketing was available already (logos and other materials). However, there's a nice balance with flexibility to do what works on a local level too. To me, End 68 is a nice blend of a national organization with local flexibility. There's collaboration available, too, with a variety of experiences to draw upon. There is a lot of ad hoc work out there, which is great; but End 68 has a plan and structure that ensures continuity of services to students.

Program 5

Discipline, standards, moral support - every program is going to go through some rough patches and need to hang on to the big picture when things get tough. That, and corporate support - large businesses are not likely to back small local efforts with limited reach.

Program 6

For us, the benefit came in learning how to run a program before actually launching one. After volunteering for a year before starting our own program, we really understood the commitment.

Program 7

I enjoy being able to leverage our relationships. If someone has extra food, they are willing to reach out. If there is a company out there willing to donate/fundraise for us and it crosses town lines, there can be collaboration. There are idea sharing and resources you can reach out to if you have questions/concerns.