Diaper Ministry

Presenter: Mildred R. Polk, ACS Federation President
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PHASE A: BEFORE YOU BEGIN

A.1 – INTRODUCTION

This section focuses on helping you decide whether a diaper bank is an appropriate and viable response to diaper need in your community. The more thorough and well organized your feasibility study or needs assessment is, the easier it will be to get your diaper bank up and running.

You are likely to find that many of your first ideas and assumptions are challenged. This is fine. Unexpected challenges do not automatically mean that a diaper bank is not needed or workable. They simply mean that some of your plans need to be modified. What is important is that you remain flexible and let the actuality of your findings guide your decisions.

During your research, you will meet representatives of the local anti-poverty community, the childcare community and/or the elder care community, health care providers, service agencies and potential donors. These contacts, often called constituencies, will ultimately play an important role in the success of your program. So, present your plans and research in a serious, well-informed, organized manner. In this sense, you will be using your research phase not only to collect information, but also to market your program’s credibility.

Your needs assessment or feasibility research can be expected to yield information about how your program should, and in some cases must, operate. In fact, often what should or must be done influences whether a program can be done. Your needs assessment or feasibility research can also provide background information that you can use to raise awareness in your area about diaper need in your community.

A.2 - MEASURE DEMAND: EVALUATE POTENTIAL RECIPIENTS

A Community Need Assessment will provide valuable information about what the current and potential diaper needs in the community may be. A complete needs analysis includes the following components: client identification, partner identification, current service providers, number of clients and other pertinent poverty statistics. Without proper information about the potential need, duplication of services and inability to sustain the project over the long term may be inevitable. Be aware that Needs Assessments should be conducted every three to five years as part of the larger strategic planning process. Conceptualizing needs assessments, from the beginning, as a continuous process encourages the organization to take advantage of every encounter with a customer/client to find out more about what they want and expect. The assessments are required to decide which programs to start, which to change, and which to end. Perceiving a need is not the same as researching whether there is a viable method to sustain that service in a Community. After running a couple of diaper drives, discuss the viability of a Diaper Bank in your area. As a part of a Community Needs Assessment a SWOT Analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) of a forming a local Diaper Bank will give a more complete picture of the viability of the organization.

A formal Needs Assessment will assist with focusing on goals and objectives which can lead to the establishment a 501(c)(3) organization and ultimately meeting the community’s diaper needs. Trends and
issues should be considered: constituents, structure, culture, economic capabilities, interested parties, competitors, political climate, legislative abilities, regulations and concerns. The information generated in a needs assessment is critical when establishing an agency Case Statement.

Questions to Consider

- What is the need in our community?
- How many children under three years old live in low-income families here?
- Do local agencies have examples of how diapers have made a difference in people's lives?
- What is the policy regarding washing diapers at the local Laundromats?
- What requirements do area childcare programs have regarding diapers?

Bankable Ideas

- Raising awareness of diaper need is the first step to addressing the need.
- Be sure to personalize diaper need with stories of real people in your community.
- Learn about diaper need on a national level by reading some of the articles link here.
- Use statistics to describe diaper need in terms of the local community.
- Tell your friends and families and social groups what you have learned about diaper need.
- Seek out opportunities to speak to local civic groups and media outlets to raise awareness.
- Craft a 30-second “elevator speech” about diaper need in your area. You'll be ready when the topic comes up!

A.3 - RAISE AWARENESS OF DIAPER NEED IN YOUR COMMUNITY

Diaper need is often not well known or understood, although awareness has been rising. Potential supporters of your program may need to be educated about diaper need in your community. People who do not have small children rarely consider diapers, and are often surprised to learn that nearly 1 in 3 families in America struggle to afford diapers for their children and that federal assistance programs like SNAP and WIC do not provide for diapers.

An insufficient supply of diapers can cause a family to spiral deeper into poverty and distress. Most childcare programs require parents to bring diapers, so parents without sufficient diapers cannot leave their children in childcare to attend work or school. Families unable to afford diapers are forced to choose between a range of undesirable alternatives that can severely impact the health and wellbeing of both their child and their household. A survey commissioned by Feeding America found that many families report cutting back on basics such as food, utilities or child care in order to purchase diapers for their children. Other families report leaving their children in soiled diapers for a longer period of time than they otherwise would have. Some families even resort to cleaning out or drying soiled disposable diapers and reusing them in order to meet their diaper needs.

These alternatives can have severe repercussions for the health, economic and emotional wellbeing of the child, parent and household. Leaving children in soiled diapers longer than they should can lead to diaper rash, infections, irritability and difficulty in mother-child attachment. More immediately, leaving their children in diapers longer between changes can cause the child to cry until the diaper is changed, adding yet
another stressor to a parent struggling to make ends meet. A study published in the medical journal *Pediatrics* found a link between maternal depressive symptoms and diaper need.

These consequences can lead to lower self-esteem and depression among parents who are not able to obtain adequate diapers. They can also lead to fewer economic opportunities for parents and greater health risks for children and their families.

In the case of older children and adults with disabilities who suffer from incontinence, many are unable to use insurance or Medicare or Medicaid funds to purchase incontinence supplies, which can cost more than $2 apiece. A lack of incontinent supplies may hinder mobility and a person's ability to live independently, and can cause embarrassment, affecting self-esteem and emotional wellbeing.

While the majority of families in the United States are aware of food banks, few are aware of the existence of diaper banks. One of your first tasks in starting a diaper bank is raising awareness of the need for the diaper bank in your community. As we will discuss, there are many ways to do this—diaper drives; speaking at local social clubs, professional organizations, schools, and fraternal organizations; issuing press releases in connection with the formation of your diaper bank or in connection with your first distribution of diapers to agencies. Using social media such as Facebook and Twitter are also very effective ways to communicate your message.

When discussing diaper need, offer both statistics and personal stories of how diaper need impacts local families’ lives. Work with local social service agencies to gather these statistics and stories. Also, be ready to address questions regarding cloth diapers and the environmental impact of disposable diapers. Although some diaper banks are able to make a meaningful difference by distributing cloth diapers, cloth diapers may not be practical for families without access to private laundering facilities or whose children attend childcare programs that accept only disposable diapers. We recommend that diaper banks that are interested in distributing cloth diapers verify that their clients have laundering facilities and/or provide access to laundering facilities as part of their service. We also recommend that diaper banks give training to clients on how to care for cloth diapers, and offer a trial period for families to see if cloth diapering works for them.

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Bankable Ideas

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A.4 - HOLD A DIAPER DRIVE TO EVALUATE COMMUNITY POTENTIAL

Diaper banks begin with diaper drives. Initially there is an agency or group (formal or informal, a company, school, congregation, nonprofit agency, or government entity) that decides to host a drive helping one or two local agencies or a diaper bank. There are many great tools available to encourage these diaper drives that the National Diaper Bank Network is happy to share with you. Diaper drives can yield large numbers of diapers, and they provide a forum for you to share your story about community need with small groups. Diaper drives can be a great first step in raising awareness of diaper need and the need for a diaper bank in the community. Starting a Diaper Bank is really about creating community wide diaper drives that are on-going. Media partners can make your inaugural event a huge success. In metropolitan areas such as Phoenix a month long community wide diaper drive successfully brought in 600,000 diapers. First drives can bring in anything from hundreds of diapers to tens of thousands, or even more diapers. After a few drives, you will have a basis to evaluate how much you will be able to rely on drives and in-kind donations and how much you will need to raise money to buy enough diapers. Some diaper banks are able to acquire the diapers they distribute through diaper drives. Through your diaper drive, you may also be able to identify people who would be willing to support your effort with donations and/or volunteer time as you move toward starting a diaper bank. A diaper drive is like a food drive—only for diapers. By holding a diaper drive, you will help babies in your community receive a basic essential, and raise awareness of the fact that many mothers struggle to obtain enough diapers for their children.
How to Host a Diaper Drive
for beginners

Visit National Diaper Bank Network’s website to download our diaper drive toolkit!

Partner with a local diaper bank

Pick a theme for the diaper drive

Recruit volunteers

Set goals for collection and develop a timeframe

Choose a location(s)

Announce your diaper drive through social media, press releases, and flyers!

Collect and deliver the diapers to the diaper bank

Share results on social media

LET’S CLOSE THE DIAPER GAP.
For information call: (203) 821-7348
or email: info@diaperbanknetwork.org

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Diaper Drive Steps

1. Find an organization that will receive your donated diapers. If there is no diaper bank in your area, contact agencies like women’s shelters, food pantries, publicly funded childcare centers, health clinics and church programs.

2. Pick a theme. It can be simple, like “Moms helping Moms,” “Girl Scouts Giving Back,” or more elaborate, like “Stuff the bus” in which people are encouraged to donate enough diapers to fill a bus. Set a goal and develop a way to track your progress, such as with a thermometer chart.

3. Set a date and find a location for your diaper drive. It should last at least a week and as long as a month. You’ll need a location where people can drop off diapers—ideally, somewhere central, like the local library, a church or business willing to help out. You can have more than one location.

4. Find volunteers who can help collect and deliver donated diapers. Ask your friends and neighbors to help.

5. Spread the word! Send press releases to local media outlets, post notices in local businesses (especially those that are drop off locations), announce the drive through Facebook and Twitter.

6. Collect the diapers and deliver them to your partner organization.

7. Let everyone know how it went. Send out a press release with your partner organization about the drive.

8. Don’t be disappointed if you do not meet your original goal. The first time you do anything can be hard.

Bankable Ideas

- Publicity is the key to any successful diaper drive. Media outlets are often looking for feel good stories about community wide activity to help others. Work with your partner organization to issue press releases before and after the drive.

- As with potential recipients, you may eventually want some of the potential donors as partners in your program. Work to establish sound, professional relationships with them.

- Seek out leaders in your local child care and/or elder services, education, and health organizations. Having their support will build the program’s credibility with potential donors and potential recipient agencies. They may also make good board members.

- You may want to consider asking especially enthusiastic donors to help you find other potential donors.

- Don’t be discouraged if you do not receive a large number of diapers on your first few efforts. Evaluate what worked and what did not, and adjust accordingly during your next try.

A.5 - WORKING WITH THE LOCAL ANTI-POVERTY COMMUNITY

In many cases, a diaper bank’s long-term success will rest on its ability to gain the support and cooperation of other local anti-poverty and community service organizations. So, program planners should get to know their local community service community.
Most communities have some form of an anti-poverty and/or child welfare network. Food banks, religious institutions, public health and community service organizations will often be able to help program planners identify organizations which would be interested in partnering with a diaper bank.

If there are other diaper banks in your community, an additional diaper bank may not be needed. It might be possible to merge your efforts or help the existing diaper bank expand its services.

Coordination with other anti-poverty and child welfare groups is important:

- It gives your diaper bank greater credibility with potential donors.
- It appeals to agencies that work with more than one local anti-poverty and/or child welfare group and may otherwise feel they are in the middle of opposing forces.
- It gives your diaper bank a ready-made technical assistance network.
- It can prevent the trials and errors of going it alone

**Questions to Consider**

- What are the leading components of our anti-poverty and child welfare communities?
- How do the members of the communities work together? Has a network developed?
- How can we best introduce ourselves to the leaders of the local anti-poverty community?
- How would our program complement other anti-poverty programs?
- Are there any groups that are already collecting and distributing diapers? If so, is there a need for another group? Would the new program be expected to cooperate with the established ones? Might they merge efforts? How could the relationship between the programs be structured?

### A.6 - ASSESS POTENTIAL EXPENSES & SOURCES OF SUPPORT

It would be premature to begin plotting the specific details of a program's operating budget and fund-raising strategy during the preliminary research period. After all, a program's probable expenses and likely sources of income cannot be projected until you have decided how your diaper bank will be structured and how it will operate. (Organizational and operational models are discussed in Phase II of the manual.) However, it is not too early to begin estimating the costs and resources of the program. Things to consider include overhead costs such as a space to operate, communications systems (e.g., telephones, computers), storage space, and transportation (if you chose to deliver the diapers). And of course, there are the diapers. Some of these items you may be able to obtain as donations, but a general idea of the expenses you will face will help you estimate the amount of money you will need to raise and the number of diapers you will be able to distribute.

- Your program budget may be larger in the first year than in subsequent years. A first year's budget will comprise both start-up costs and general operating costs. Start-up costs may include such major capital expenses as office furnishings, computers, vehicle, and warehouse equipment.
- The viability of most nonprofits depends on meeting financial demands. Planners should have strong indications that they can attract sufficient financial support before launching a nonprofit endeavor.
• Potential donors and recipient agencies will be more responsive to a diaper bank that has thought carefully about its finances. They may not want to get involved in a program with a weak financial base or vague financial plans. You will need to create a budget that you can share with others.

• Ideally, a program’s potential income should be at least close to its anticipated expenses. If it doesn’t, re-plan operations to meet the level of funding that seems to be available.

**Questions to Consider**

• Roughly how much cash support will we need to get the program up and running?

• What are the approximate start-up costs (equipment, initial supplies, etc.)?

• What are our approximate operating costs (salaries, rent, etc.)?

• Which of these direct cash expenses can be reduced or eliminated with non-cash support (volunteer staffing, professional assistance, and donated equipment and supplies)?

• What are the program’s potential sources of cash income? Consider individuals, corporations, and foundations, etc.

• What are the program’s potential sources of noncash assistance (e.g., volunteer staff and professional assistance, donated equipment, supplies, diapers, office space, warehouse space, professional time)?

**Bankable Ideas**

• Be realistic. Fundraising is time and labor intensive, and most donors get many more requests for funding than they can support. A diaper bank will likely compete with several older and better-known anti-poverty programs for the same charitable dollars. Do not assume that doing good work will make money appear.

• Always look for hidden costs. They are everywhere!

• Do not undervalue non-cash support, which can include donated professional services, donated advertising space or time, and in-kind gifts of equipment and supplies.

• Review the annual reports of other organizations in the local anti-poverty community. These reports can give insights into the potential community of donors and granting agencies that might be inclined to support your project.

**PHASE B: DEVELOP YOUR DIAPER BANK’S BUSINESS PLAN**

**B.1 - GENERAL OPERATING AND ORGANIZATIONAL OPTIONS AVAILABLE TO NEW PROGRAMS**

When the preliminary research is complete, you are ready to begin considering how the program will operate and how it will be structured.

**B.2 - CHOOSE YOUR GEOGRAPHIC SCOPE**

There are no set rules for defining a program’s geographic service area. Some diaper banks serve particular sections of a town or city, while others serve an entire city, several towns, several counties or even a state.

In deciding on geographic scope, new programs typically weigh the following factors:

1. Where potential recipient agencies are located: Existing diaper banks have found it both time- and cost-effective to recruit groups of agencies that are in the same general area.
2. What area the program can afford to service: This, too, is a particularly important factor for those diaper banks that deliver the diapers, and must cover transportation expenses. Cost is also an issue for the agencies if they are picking up diapers – they will have to cover the cost of transportation and the time their staff will spend away from work.

3. Where is the closest diaper bank? If there is already another diaper bank in the vicinity, can you partner with that diaper bank to expand its range?

B.3 - CHOOSE YOUR DEMOGRAPHIC FOCUS

A diaper bank may focus on specific populations (i.e. the elderly, homeless children, pregnant teenagers) by serving particular types of agencies (e.g., homeless shelters, childcare centers, women’s shelters). As with geography, there are no rules for choosing a demographic focus. Most choose to serve all populations and types of social service programs that help a diaper-wearing population. Others set demographic criteria that potential recipient agencies must meet.

Selecting the demographic focus may define the type of diapers or diapering supplies you distribute. Service to pregnant mothers and their infants only means that you need only infant sizes of diapers. Likewise, service to disabled children means that you need considerably larger diapers or a wider variety of sizes than you would need if you served only infants and toddlers. If you have selected a particular demographic focus, make sure that is clear to your potential donors and recipient agencies. A diaper bank focused on providing incontinence supplies for the elderly will have little use for a truckload of newborn sized diapers. Likewise, an agency serving an elderly clientele would not be well served by a diaper bank focused on providing baby supplies.

B.4 - CHOOSE AN ORGANIZATIONAL MODEL

Another set of issues facing new diaper banks are those involving the structure of the program. Many diaper banks affiliate with an existing not-for-profit, tax-exempt organization and operate as a project or program of that organization. This has many advantages: an affiliated diaper bank can utilize the parent organization’s structure, facilities, tax-exempt status, fundraising, and public relations capacities, and board of directors. The new diaper bank will also be able to rely on the parent organization’s established public image and credibility. This relieves a new diaper bank from having to start from scratch, and gives it more time to develop its operational aspects.

Working with a parent organization, on the other hand, can have its disadvantages. The relationship can burden a new program with administrative and policy responsibilities not directly related to its diaper distribution operations. Additionally, your diaper bank may find itself having to compete with the organization’s other projects for funding and for the board’s attention, and may have trouble developing a separate image and identity in the community.

Some diaper banks prefer instead to operate independently and apply for tax-exempt status under the IRS Code § 501(c)(3). That process is time consuming (it can take 6 months to a year for a completed application to be approved) and expensive, as it entails some dedicated legal and accounting effort to establish the processes and procedures and to fill out the application. Getting started this way typically takes
significantly more time, effort, and money because a new diaper bank has to build a program and an organization at the same time. For some, the benefits outweigh the initial costs. Independent diaper banks report enjoying freedom in designing, managing, and charting their future. Running and supporting a diaper bank is, after all, the organization’s only focus.

When considering fiscal sponsorship, consider the following questions:

1. Look for a fiscal sponsor that is a good mission fit. Fiscal sponsors typically work within certain parameters. Some like arts groups while others have expertise in human services. Find one that is a good fit to your mission.

2. Check out the cost of working with a fiscal sponsor. Ten percent of yearly income is common, but it might be a higher percentage for programs receiving government grants that have to be audited, and/or reimbursable grants, meaning the project must spend the money and then get reimbursed by the grantor. Fiscal sponsors may be put in the position of floating the upfront money.

3. Look for active sponsorship...not just a pass through, which is illegal. In a pass through, the parent organization collects funds for the sponsored program, but provides no control or oversight over the program. An active sponsor should provide financial and programmatic oversight and may even provide educational opportunities and networking events.


It is possible to transform an affiliated organization into an independent organization. In fact many diaper banks start as an affiliated organization and, as their operation expands, find it more beneficial to become an independent organization.

Questions to Consider

- Will the new program be run as a free-standing, independent organization, or will it function as a project of a host or parent organization?
- How formal an organization will your diaper bank be?

B.5 - ADDITIONAL ORGANIZATION DECISIONS

Volunteer vs. Staff, Formal vs. Informal; the formality/informality of the organization is a continuum. On one extreme are formal organizations, which are operated by full-time, paid professionals, perhaps with a complement of volunteers; are located in a commercial facility and utilize standard commercial office equipment and supplies; work under the authority of a board of directors; operate with an established budget, which is supported through a fund raising strategy; and have obtained tax-exempt status as a 501(c)(3) organization granted by the IRS.

At the other extreme, low-structure programs are run largely or completely by volunteer staff; operate out a residence, or a social service, religious or community center; operate without a formal budget, soliciting supplies and equipment donations and making purchases on an “as needed” basis—often with
money collected by ad hoc fund-raising efforts; use personal vehicles to pick up and deliver diapers; and operate without Internal Revenue Service tax-exempt status.

An organization may obtain formal IRS tax-exempt status while operated by a volunteer staff. Likewise, an organization may be a sponsored project of a fiscal sponsor while having a professional staff. Diaper banks should choose the level of formality that matches their organization and resources.

We do recommend, if you are planning on raising money for your diaper bank, that you either apply for IRS tax-exempt status or work with a tax-exempt fiscal sponsor. For many donors, that status is a shorthand for a legitimate charitable organization, and they cannot deduct their donation to your diaper bank from their income tax unless you are either an independent charitable organization under IRS Code 501(c)(3) or operating under the fiscal sponsorship of one.

B.6 - CHOOSE A GREAT NAME

A name helps define a new program. The name it adopts will be the label by which its community will recognize the program and interpret its efforts. As such, new programs should carefully select a name. Pick a simple, easy-to-remember name, and make sure that no other organization or business in your community has the same or similar name. If you use the phrase “Diaper Bank” in your name, be sure to add another modifier it to distinguish it from other diaper banks. Also, if you use a geographical place in your name, describe your location accurately. Consider using a symbol or logo along with your name. An image will enhance understanding of the service your program offers.

Come up with several possibilities and “test market” them among friends, local anti-hunger programs, and potential donors. Getting outside appraisals of the proposed names will help planners choose one that is clear and carries the right message to donors and the public. This requires extra effort but, in the end, is easier than having to change the program’s name.

Questions to Consider:

• Is our name limiting? Does it imply that our work is confined to helping only certain groups, or that we service only a limited geographic area, or that we will deal with only very specific kinds of diapers?
• Is our name too expansive? Does it suggest that we provide services we do not?
• Does the name we are considering carry any potentially offensive or sectarian connotations which might distance us from certain segments of our community?
• Is the name memorable? Will it attract attention and arouse public curiosity about what we do?
• Is the name similar to that of another organization that is currently operating? Is it likely to confuse potential clients and donors?

PHASE C: OPENING YOUR DOORS

C.1 –TASKS INVOLVED IN DEVELOPING A DIAPER BANK AND STARTING OPERATIONS

This section of the manual addresses issues a program planner should consider before the program “opens its doors.”
Several themes that are repeated in this section of the manual are efficiency and the importance of building a program that appeals to donors and agencies. The importance of building a safe, reliable, “user-friendly” diaper bank cannot be overemphasized.

You may be surprised to see how many program design decisions are interrelated. For example, the level of staff training depends in large part on how duties will be allocated. The number of staff among which duties can be divided is often dictated by the amount of money the program can devote to staff-related expenses. How much is spent on staffing, in turn, may depend on the success of fund raising. Program planners need to recognize that one design decision may decide a host of others.

This fact can be daunting. Often, there are no clear-cut answers. Diaper banks have been able to wade through the sometimes uncertain design process by weighing their options, making tentative decisions, acting on them, and revising them as necessary. Veterans stress that there are no prescriptions — that a certain amount of flexibility and trial and error are necessary and should not be interpreted as failure.

At the same time, impatience with detail, perhaps from zeal to get diapers to people who need them, is harmful to a sound program. Resist the temptation to rush or to assume you can solve major problems as you go along.

C.2 - SELECT AND RECRUIT RECIPIENT AGENCIES

Recipient Agencies are those entities that will distribute diapers received through diaper banks to people who need diapers. They are one of a diaper bank’s most important constituencies. The information that program planners collect during their preliminary research should give them an overview of a program’s pool of potential recipient agencies in their community. The next step is to decide which of the groups in that pool they would most like to sign on as actual recipient agencies. Plan to visit each agency. A site visit can often reveal aspects of the program’s operation that might not be evident during a telephone call or a meeting apart from the agency.

When recruiting agencies, you should be prepared to describe the program in detail, including these aspects:

- Liability
- Your diaper bank’s other recipient agencies
- Your diaper bank’s scheduling practices
- Your diaper bank’s record keeping requirements
- Your diaper bank staff’s training and qualification

Questions to Consider

- Which agencies have the greatest need for diapers?
- What groups of people does the agency serve?
- Have we chosen to serve a particular demographic, and if so, what agencies serve that population?
- Which agencies can best use the diapers?
- Is the agency unusually far away from your diaper bank, and if so, will that be an impediment to getting diapers to them? Will the agency be willing to pick up diapers?
• Does the agency have a good track record in the community?
• Can the agency accommodate the diapers?
• Does the agency have clean, dry storage space available for diapers?
• Is the agency willing to report on how many diapers are distributed and to whom?
• Does the agency have a good reputation with the public?

Bankable ideas
• A diaper bank’s success depends on having strong relationships with its recipient agencies.
• Recruiting a group of respected and responsible recipient agencies enhances a new diaper bank’s credibility with the health department, potential donors, other anti-poverty groups and other potential recipient agencies.
• Making decisions concerning the program’s breadth and depth of service to recipient agencies without strong agency input could result in having to revisit those decisions (and the organizational structure and mission) after discovering that assumptions made were incorrect.

C.3 - FIND A HOME FOR YOUR DIAPER BANK

Although many diaper banks begin out of person’s home, storage and distribution needs can become overwhelming. If the decision is made to look for commercial storage, keep in mind that while diapers have the advantage of not being perishable, but they still must be kept dry and they can take up a lot of space. As a rule of thumb, a 10 x 15 foot storage locker can store approximately 50,000 diapers. As you grow, keep in mind that if you want to be able to sort and distribute from your storage location, you should look for approximately 1000 square feet in order to store, sort and distribute 300,000 diapers.

If you decide you cannot store that many diapers in space you currently have access too, contact your partner agencies or other social service agencies to see if they have excess warehouse space they will be willing to share or rent at a reduced rate. See if you can obtain donated space or a reduced rate for warehouse space from local businesses or property management companies. You can also consider less conventional storage options. The Greater Hampton Roads Diaper Bank operates out of an old shipping container it has electrified and insulated. For many years, the Los Angeles Diaper Drive operated out its founder’s garage, distributing more than a million diapers a year.

If you are in a position to buy large quantities of diapers or otherwise receive truckloads’ worth of product, you may want to find a space with a loading dock that can accept a 53 foot long tractor-trailer truck. A trailer generally holds between 250,000 and 350,000 diapers, and generally offers diaper banks the lowest price per diaper for those able to buy in those quantities. However, in order to accept delivery from a truck, you need a loading dock. A loading dock is a raised platform that allows the truck to back up directly to an opening to the warehouse allowing for easy unloading with a pallet jack or forklift. The average standard loading dock is between 48” and 54” high.

C.4 - EQUIPMENT AND SUPPLIES

A program’s operational model will be the single most important factor that influence its equipment needs. Generally, diaper banks need standard office and communications equipment, and depending on their
storage space, warehouse equipment such as pallet jacks. Diaper banks that deliver diapers will also need transportation equipment.

We recommend that new programs thoroughly investigate and compare the various types of communications equipment they are likely to need. At a minimum, diaper banks need a reliable phone system. Many benefit from the flexibility and convenience afforded by fax machines and an answering system. In the 21st century, a computer is also a very important tool in a diaper bank’s communication tool kit. Many diaper banks find a website a very important part of their communication strategy, and others also rely heavily on Facebook and Twitter to raise awareness of their mission. Computers also provide a means of storing records and developing inventory systems, even if they are based on simple spreadsheet programs. One does not need a “super computer” for most diaper bank operations, but a reliable desktop or laptop computer should be considered part of basic office equipment.

Programs will also want to look at equipment necessary for proper storage of diapers, including warehouse equipment such as a pallet jack or a forklift, or even sturdy shelving that allows the diaper bank to optimize its available space if your program is operating in a space other than a warehouse. If you decide to get a forklift (which may be required if you do not have a loading dock), remember that you will also need a driver. Beyond that, you might consider a desk for your phone and computer and workspace, and a table or counter where you can sort diaper orders or repackage diapers.

Using appropriate and reliable equipment is an important way to ensure that diapers are being distributed safely and efficiently, and it reduces a program’s liability exposure. Taking time to thoroughly investigate equipment needs will help preclude investment in items that become obsolete or outgrown as the program expands. Donors and agencies are impressed by programs that make thoughtful, correct use of equipment.

Questions to Consider

- What equipment will we need to complete the required forms and records?
- How much can we afford to spend on equipment?
- How will our choices of equipment and supplies be influenced by geography, local ordinances, our own handling policies, and the quantity of diapers we plan to distribute?
- Are we limited in the number of diapers we can buy or accept by not having the right kind of warehouse equipment to deal with large shipments of diapers?
- What non-essential equipment might help us to operate more safely and efficiently?

Bankable Ideas

- Donations of equipment and supplies donated (as “gifts in-kind”) can save thousands of dollars.
- Buying used equipment can save money. But, for equipment like a fork lift or trucks, be sure to have a qualified professional inspect the used equipment beforehand to make sure it is in good condition and will not be more trouble than it is worth. 
- Donated equipment that cannot be integrated into the program can actually be a burden.
• Do not overlook the importance and costs of proper maintenance and employee training. • Plan for growth when choosing equipment.

C.5 - RECORD KEEPING AND TRACKING DIAPER DONATIONS

Many grant applications and reports request specific data about the size and scope of demonstrated performance as well as expected reach of the program. Developing a method for collecting and maintaining information that can be used in grant applications will pay dividends in the end.

• Information must be collected accurately and completely and maintained in such a way to be easily accessible for several important reasons. A well-organized information base is essential for program evaluation and planning.
• It enables programs to respond to requests from agencies, funders, and other important constituencies.
• It allows a diaper bank to document its actions in the event they are challenged, as would be the case if the program were the target of a lawsuit.

There are several different ways of managing the information collected. A program's finances are likely to dictate the type of system it adopts. Some programs have computerized forms and records. Others record information manually in logs or daily journals. Whatever the system, we strongly recommended that the program establish its record keeping protocol before opening its doors.

Certain specific program and administrative matters that will require documentation are:

• Donor information, including any general correspondence with your diaper bank, and a running account of the types, dates and amounts of any donations.
• Agency Information, including any site visits, training records, profile of the number and types of clients served, types and amount of diapers needed, general correspondence with your diaper bank, and a running account of the types and numbers of diaper received, and dates of receipt.
• Periodic Inventory check in the warehouse and pick-up or delivery scheduled and completed.
• Donor and Agency recruitment information.
• Vehicle Records (if diapers are delivered), including a log of daily usage, mileage, routes covered, drivers, problems, and any routine maintenance or repairs performed.

There are many software accounting products available specially designed for nonprofits. Consult with other nonprofit organizations for recommendations, and consider evaluating various options during free trial periods.

Questions to Consider

• What information needs to be collected? How best will it be recorded and stored? Will our records system allow us to retrieve information easily?
• What record keeping tools and supplies will we need before we open?
• What record keeping tasks will we ask of our donors and recipient agencies?
Will our information management system keep pace with the program as it grows?

**Bankable Ideas**

- Experienced programs recommend making one person accountable for the overall accuracy of the information system and giving that person the authority to request timely, complete information from the rest of the staff and recipient agencies.
- To the extent possible, try to minimize the number of different record systems you keep.
- Make forms easy to understand.
- Do not be surprised if your first record keeping systems needs to be revised after your program has been operating for a while. Anticipate changing needs by designing an initial system that is flexible and can accommodate growth.
- Many grant applications and reports request specific data on the size and scope of demonstrated performance as well as expected reach of the program.
- Sound record keeping protects a program should its practices ever be questioned.
- For the sake of planning and budgeting, agencies need to keep track of how many diapers they have received from your diaper bank.
- Donors and agencies are more responsive to a program that carefully tracks where diapers come from, where they go, and how they are distributed.
- Donors often want information on what activities they supported, how many diapers they helped get distributed, and how many children and families they have helped.
- Some donors like to know the exact extent of their participation and how it compares to that of other donors.
- Be prepared to offer donors and recipient agencies copies of records concerning pick-ups and deliveries.

**C.6 - STAFFING NEEDS**

With the general operational and structural issues settled, new programs are ready to consider their staffing needs. This requires identifying and dividing the many tasks involved in running a diaper bank.

There are no set rules on staffing a diaper bank. The size of the staff and the division of responsibilities among its members depend on a variety of factors:

- **Operational model.** Diaper banks that deliver diapers may need more staff because of the added responsibility of operating and maintaining vehicles.
- **Organizational model.** New independent programs typically need to build both a program staff and a support staff. Programs established under a parent organization, however, sometimes inherit program and support staff from the parent organization or use the parent’s staff on an “as needed” basis.
- **Your diaper bank’s size.** Programs serving a large number of receiving agencies are likely to require more staff than those serving a small number of agencies.
• Your diaper bank’s budget. The amount of money a program is able to allocate for employee salaries, insurance, fringe benefits and training will influence the size of its staff.

• Your diaper bank’s use of paid versus volunteer staff. Programs choosing to use volunteers as well as paid staff are usually able to engage significantly more staff than those choosing to use only paid staff.

The staff is the engine of every diaper bank, whether they are paid or volunteer. Staff members can be links to the program’s important constituencies—donors, agencies, other social services and anti-poverty organizations. A skilled, competent staff is the best asset a new program can present to these constituencies.

Questions to Consider

• What are the tasks that must be done, and how they should be divided into staff positions?
• What is the best mix of full-time, part-time, and volunteer staff to fill these positions?
• What skill levels and work experience are needed to successfully fill the positions that have been created?
• How much can be budgeted to help the program attract, train and retain committed and qualified staff? How do the program’s salaries compare to those offered by comparable programs?
• Who will recruit, screen, and select new staff?

Bankable Ideas

• Draft clear and complete job descriptions for each position to be created. This will help you organize the program’s initial staff needs, and to identify overlapping responsibilities. Keep job descriptions up-to-date as the program grows. Keeping track of employees’ responsibilities will help with overall program management, allow you to gauge growth, and decide when additional staff are needed.
• Ideally a program would be able to find and afford a staff with all of the various areas of expertise needed to run a diaper bank. Realistically, this is often not possible. Prioritize the skills you need and find individuals who, as a group, meet these requirements. Train them to fill in their skills gaps. Recruit professional experts or consultants for specialized assistance like legal or accounting advice.
• New programs often miscalculate their staffing needs because they underestimate the time involved in a diaper bank operation. They fail to realize that a running a diaper bank is labor and time intensive.
• Ideal candidates will offer flexibility, willingness to learn, sensitivity, tolerance, and the skills needed to discharge their responsibilities

C.7 - RECRUIT AND MOTIVATE VOLUNTEERS

One of a new diaper bank’s early planning tasks should be to examine the many ways diaper banks can use volunteers. Knowing how volunteers can be used will help a program decide if it will engage volunteers and, if so, what role they will play.

Volunteers can play many roles in a diaper bank. Some programs are entirely volunteer operated; others use none at all.
Most diaper banks use at least a few volunteers. There are both advantages and disadvantages of volunteer staffing. Remember that, with the exception of salary and benefits, volunteer staff need all the training and staff support as described above as much as paid staff.

Properly-trained volunteers can be a great money saving asset. Improperly trained volunteers can place a program at risk. Reliable and competent volunteers can reduce the paid staff’s workload by assuming responsibility for select tasks, projects, and initiatives. Unreliable and/or incompetent volunteers may require constant supervision and direction and can place a greater burden on paid staff.

Volunteers may stay with a program for years. Others may leave after a few days. High turnover is a fact of life for programs using volunteers.

Because community service is often valued at the corporate or organizational level, you may find volunteers coming to you for reasons beyond wanting to help your diaper bank. There are many different types of volunteer force. Often, organizations or corporations will assemble groups of volunteers for short term, discrete projects that they can use as team building activities and displays of their civic commitment. Or schools may require students to volunteer as part of a community service requirement.

Some donors and agencies will credit a diaper bank for using volunteers.

Do not make the mistake of undervaluing your volunteer staff. The nonprofit organization Independent Sector estimates that volunteer staff time was valued nationally at an average of $22.55 per hour for 2013. The Federal Government’s Corporation for National and Community Service has good information on volunteer management issues, including volunteer retention and community factors that influence volunteering. See the website at http://www.volunteeringinamerica.gov/

Also, do not undervalue the importance of developing a volunteer force to your fundraising prospects. Research shows that people who volunteer are more likely to donate money to your organization than those who don’t, and two-thirds of volunteers give money to the organizations where they donate their time. On the same note, asking donors to share something other than their money (like their time and talents) can help cultivate lasting, committed relationships. VolunteerHub has some great guides to helping turn volunteers into donors and donors into volunteers.

Questions to Consider

- How do other diaper banks and similar programs use volunteers? In what roles have they proven to be the most/least effective?
- What initial and ongoing training and supervision will volunteers require? How much can we expect them to cost?
- Who within your diaper bank will be accountable for designing the volunteer program, recruiting and training volunteers, monitoring their work, and addressing volunteer-related issues as they arise?
Bankable Ideas

- Using volunteers is a great way to involve the community in the program.
- Volunteers can boost a diaper bank's collection and distribution capacity without increasing its costs.
- Using volunteers can significantly reduce salary expenses.
- Engaged volunteers can be a significant source of donations, and enthusiastic donors can become volunteers.
- Always remember that volunteers are important and valuable resources — not just free help. As such, they need to be trained, supervised, motivated, praised and evaluated as carefully and thoughtfully as paid staff. Avoid falling into the trap of thinking that because they do not receive a salary, volunteers do not require the same level of attention and development as salaried staff.
- Low morale often accounts for high volunteer turnover. Extra efforts to recognize the contributions of volunteers will help keep morale high and turnover low, and may help your financial bottom line as well.

C.8 - TRAINING YOUR STAFF

Because the field of diaper banking is relatively new, it may be difficult to find staff with prior diaper bank experience. But many general skills are applicable to operating a diaper bank (scheduling, fund raising, accounting, public relations, inventory management, etc.). Staff training programs should help staff adapt those skills to a diaper bank.

While no two diaper banks will have the same training needs, all programs have to offer the following:

- Administrative training, which includes information management, computer and office equipment usage, office procedures and policies.
- Management training, which includes fundraising, public and media relations, project management, budgeting and fiscal management, staff recruiting and management, board development and relations, and strategic or long-term planning.
- Practical information, which includes tips on communications with current and potential donors and agencies; community relations; and crisis management.

New programs should expect that staff training will vary from position to position.

There are many organizations that offer training to nonprofit organizations at free or reduced rates. Assess your training needs and contact local educational organizations to see what training is available. If training needed is for a particular computer application, contact the manufacturer to ask if they have free or reduced rate training available for nonprofits.

There is a tendency to become less concerned with training needs over time. Time and budget constraints, perhaps combined with a general feeling that staff is doing its job well, keeps many programs from following through on their long-terms training plans.
Questions to Consider

• What are our immediate and long-term training needs? How will training vary from position to position?
• Will paid staff and volunteer training differ? If so, how?
• Is any particular training suggested or required by a governmental agency? Will they provide it?
• Do our potential recipient agencies have a preference for the way we train?
• How much time and money must we spend on training? Are there any entities that offer free or discounted training to nonprofit groups?
• Does our insurance policy contain any training stipulations? Can we lower our insurance costs by providing certain types of training?
• What types of training programs are the most and least successful in preparing other diaper banks?

Bankable Ideas

• Consider training after forming a general idea of how the program will be staffed
• Keep in mind that it takes a certain amount of time to train people. Build training time into a program’s start-up and growth plans. For example, if possible, plan to start training a new driver at least two weeks before he/she is expected to actually assume responsibility for a route.
• Consider asking an existing diaper bank if your new diaper bank’s staff could visit for a day or two or on-the-job-training and observation.
• Program directors are often more attentive to the staff’s training needs than to their own. Do not overlook the fact that everyone needs initial and ongoing training.
• Realize that staff inherited from a host or affiliated organization may need to help adjusting to their new jobs. Early training will make it easier for them to identify with your diaper bank.
• Programs need to respond to the special training needs of their volunteers. Training is an often-overlooked volunteer reward and motivator.
• Local technical, vocational and business schools may offer courses on project management, fiscal administration, and nonprofit management.
• Be sure to include training in the budget. While local nonprofit associations and community colleges may provide some terrific free programs for nonprofit members, there may still be some costs involved in travel.

C.9 - LIABILITY AND INSURANCE

Liability is the legal responsibility for loss or injury to someone else. It is a risk that any organization assumes when operating. While diaper banks are generally low risk operations, a diaper bank may face potential liability for warehouse operations, transportation of the diapers, or any other risk inherent in running an office and a distribution program. Consider what sort of risks you face and what sorts of insurance could offer coverage for those risks.

If you incorporate as a non-profit organization, you may also want to look into Directors and Officers (“D&O”) Insurance for your officers and board of directors. Many states limit the liability of directors of
nonprofit boards, but no state eliminates potential liability completely. Costs for lawsuits begin before a court
assesses blame. Even if a court ultimately determines that the diaper bank and its board of directors did
nothing wrong, the cost of defending against a lawsuit can cost thousands of dollars.

Volunteer protection acts, Good Samaritan laws, or similar provisions, can be found at the federal and
state levels. These laws limit the civil liability of certain organizations’ and entities’ volunteers under specific
circumstances.

The federal Volunteer Protection Act of 1997 (VPA) (42 U.S.C. §§ 14501 et al.) provides protection to
nonprofit organizations’ and governmental entities’ volunteers for harm caused by their acts or omissions on
behalf of the organization or entity. The act does not require that an emergency declaration be in place for its
protections to apply. VPA applies to an uncompensated volunteer for acts of ordinary negligence committed
within the scope of the volunteer’s responsibilities. If the volunteer’s responsibilities are covered by licensure
laws, the volunteer must be properly licensed, certified, or authorized by the appropriate authorities as
required by the law in the state in which the harm occurred.

The federal Bill Emerson Good Samaritan Food Donation Act of 1996 (42 U.S.C. §1791) protects
companies and organizations who donate apparently wholesome food in good faith to a nonprofit
organization for the ultimate purpose of distribution to people in need from liability. The act was passed with
the intention of prevention the waste of good food and to encourage donation to food banks, food pantries,
and soup kitchen.

These laws help protect nonprofits and their volunteers from liability in the execution of their
charitable purpose absent gross negligence. The federal laws provide a floor for liability. Each state may have
additional protections for the nonprofits and their volunteers operating within their state. But no law
protects a nonprofit from all liability, and many protection laws exclude paid staff.

No operation is without risk. That said, some enterprises are riskier than others. Insurance
premiums generally follow the level of risk—if it is a low risk, the premium is generally inexpensive.

Make a careful assessment of how you operate and what could go wrong. Note, if you are delivering
diapers, you will want to have coverage for possible traffic accidents. Laws regarding the liability of
nonprofits in certain instances vary by state. Consult an insurance professional or an attorney to understand
the state insurance laws for nonprofits.

State and federal law may offer some protection from liability for possible injury caused by the good
faith actions of volunteers, but be sure you know the limits of those laws.

C.10 - SECURING INSURANCE

A diaper bank’s exact insurance needs depend on the particulars of its structure and functions. One
constant, however, is that all diaper banks need liability insurance.
Depending on a diaper bank’s operation, the diaper bank may need to consider securing the following types of insurance:

- Plant and equipment insurance
- Employee-health and workers compensation insurance
- Unemployment insurance
- Liability coverage for the board of directors

We recommend that diaper banks consult an insurance advisor to determine the type and level of insurance needed.

**Questions to Consider**

- Do we own the warehouse, and do we have the appropriate coverage for risk of fire, flood, theft, and accidents? If we do not own, what does the landlord’s insurance cover, and what coverage should we have on top of that?
- Do we operate in a high crime area, or is it a relatively secure location? Are we covered in the event of a theft? There have been instances where diaper banks were robbed of their diapers.
- Do we deliver diapers? Do we have coverage for possible traffic accidents?
- Do we have frequent visitors to our site? Are the steps and pathways in good repair?
- Is the board covered in the event of a lawsuit?
- What forms of insurance, and in what amounts, are required by law? Beyond legal considerations, what insurance do we need for our particular program?
- How much should we expect to spend for adequate insurance coverage?
- Can we get special nonprofit rates?
- If we have a fiscal sponsor, do we need to obtain coverage in addition to that carried by our parent organization?

**Bankable Ideas**

- Without adequate insurance, one unfortunate incident can jeopardize the whole program. Note, some states require businesses to carry specific types of insurance. Check with a lawyer, your local chamber of commerce or your state’s secretary of state’s office to find what is required by law for your diaper bank.
- Some social service agencies offer special group health, life and accident insurance for employees of nonprofit organizations.
- Donors and agencies are more likely to cooperate with a solidly insured program.

**C.11 - FIND PROFESSIONAL SPECIALISTS**

Outside professionals can be of great help in the myriad specialized tasks required of diaper banks: accounting, fundraising, public relations, graphic design and layout, computer system design and installation, scheduling, truck maintenance and repair, personnel recruitment and development, insurance and legal work.
Questions to Consider

- In what areas does our program most need specialized professional assistance?
- What local professional firms or individuals have demonstrated an interest in helping other local nonprofits? Are any involved with anti-poverty efforts or child welfare efforts? Are they charging for their time, offering a discounted rate, or providing pro bono services?
- Can you identify professionals that have gone untapped by local nonprofits?
- Which professional specialists seem to have enough time to take on our work? What level of commitment can they make to the program?
- Do we want to seek media coverage? How much time and money are we willing to commit to our media strategy?
- How actively are other local anti-poverty groups pursuing media coverage? If we are too impasive, are we likely to get lost in the anti-poverty crowd?
- Does the local media often feature stories on childhood or elderly poverty? Are there reporters who specialize in social programs? Do we have any natural points of entry with them? How can we best attract and retain their interest?
- Will our advisory board play a role in our media strategy? Should we recruit a board member with media relations experience?
- Are there local firms that provide media consulting? Can we recruit a media specialist to work at pro bono rates?

Bankable Ideas

- Consider “pitching” the program to the media from an unusual perspective – for example, from that of the driver or recipient agency
- Media relations may not be a top priority concern in the busy first few months. However, a little planning may save the costs of putting together a haphazard strategy later.
- Promoting your grand opening is a good way to start building interest in the program.
- Tie your program into national events, like Diaper Need Awareness Week and the Diaper Banks in America Conference.
- Consider events and holidays that lend themselves to mention of diaper banks— for instance, Mother’s Day and Father’s Day are good holidays for feel good stories about helping parents.
- Choose media opportunities carefully.
- You may want to consult with a professional public relations or advertising specialist who may also be willing to volunteer their services. Many professional public relations firms have pro bono programs or reduced fees for nonprofit organizations.
- Try to build lasting relationships with local reporters and their assignment editors—you will know who to call with a press release and the reporter will know to call you for a story on child or elder poverty.
- Be on the lookout for media figures who would make good board members.
C.12 - MAP OUT A FUNDRAISING PLAN

Fundraising needs to be a top priority, even if the program runs on a moderate budget. Too often, nonprofit groups start up with the belief that money will appear as the mission is clearly stated and the need is great (the “Field of Dreams” approach). This is unrealistic. Fundraising is a competitive business and demands careful planning and persistent follow-through.

The information gathered during the feasibility research should give a preliminary idea of which organizations might be interested in the programs and how much support they might give. A comparison of that information to your projected expenditures will indicate how much will need to be raised. There are many ways to approach fundraising—and they have all been written before. So, rather than try to summarize the many “how to’s” of fundraising, this manual directs users to a variety of organizations and publications that focus specifically on fundraising.

One source of “fundraising” unique to diaper banks is diaper drives. Not only will diaper drives bring in diapers, which, to the extent they free funds that would otherwise be spend buying diapers add to the organization’s available funds, they often also bring in cash. Whenever hosting a diaper drive, be sure to publicize the fact that people can donate money, not just diapers.

You can also host “virtual diaper drives” by setting up a “wish list” with an internet retailer. For example, both Amazon and Babies R Us have wish lists on which diaper banks could identify the brands and sizes wanted and put onto their website, or email the link to their supporters. Amazon also has a link that allows you to link your wish list to your Facebook page.

Another possibility is to host a “coupon drive.” Although this is less helpful for larger diaper banks, which buy in bulk and can negotiate special discounts, this can be helpful for smaller diaper banks that are unable to buy in bulk.

Additionally, there are dozens of ways to raise money directly. Several approaches that groups embarking on a fund-raising strategy should consider are soliciting funds:

- From foundations
- From local corporations and businesses
- Through direct mail campaigns
- Through grassroots efforts and special events

Questions to Consider

- Do we have any personal or organizational ties to potential funders? How can we best use these ties?
- How can our board be structured to help design and implement our fundraising plan? What fundraising expectations do we have for our board members?
- What kind of fund raising experience should we look for when hiring staff? Where can staff receive training in fundraising? How will fundraising responsibilities be delegated among the staff?
Bankable Ideas

- Without adequate funding, programs become crisis management operations at best, or are not sustainable and are forced to close their doors.
- Getting started on sound financial ground will help you attract agencies, donors and grantors. Signs of fiscal instability will cause these groups to lose confidence in your program.
- Staff often become so involved in their programmatic work that they procrastinate on their fundraising responsibilities. So, assign fundraising responsibilities to one or two people, and closely monitor their efforts.
- Fundraising and staff and board composition are closely related. New staff and board members should be told about their fund-raising roles and responsibilities up front. There should be a conscious effort to recruit board members who have relationships with potential funders. Having to a prestigious board will give your program credibility with potential funders.
- Some funders, like the United Way and city and county governments, prefer to support well-established, ongoing and stable programs. While your program might someday meet their criteria, new programs are often more successful with other local funding sources (i.e., small businesses, family foundations, etc.).

PHASE D: READY TO GROW

D.1 - FOR EXISTING DIAPER BANKS READY TO IMPROVE AND EXPAND PROGRAMS

This section of the manual is for operating diaper banks that are beginning to consider ways to improve and, if they choose, expand their operations. This section is divided into two parts. The first part discusses the value of, and offers guidance on, measuring or evaluating how well a program has functioned since it started. Such an evaluation is important because it helps programs see if they are prepared to handle the added pressures and demands that accompany growth. The second part guides programs through the primary considerations involved in deciding to expand and outlines various issues that programs deciding to expand might consider in designing a growth strategy.

D.2 - ASSESSING YOUR PROGRAM

Program assessment or program evaluation is a formal term for stepping back and objectively measuring your achievements and identifying programmatic strengths and weaknesses. Assessment is the work that needs to be done before a program can set short- and long-term goals for improving or expanding its operations.

When is the right time to begin an assessment? The answer varies from program to program. You may want to wait until you are beyond the hectic start-up phase so you can more accurately measure the achievements of a day-to-day routine and make more realistic projections of your future capacities. Still, it is good practice to establish a periodic practice, possibly on an annual basis, of comparing your strategic plans to your current operations and make the appropriate adjustments.
The value of a program assessment is not limited to new diaper banks. Even well-established diaper banks benefit from careful evaluation of their operations and review of the systems, assumptions, procedures and relationships on which their programs have been built.

A program assessment can be a comprehensive examination of the operation, or it can examine individual aspects of a program over a period of time. For instance, a diaper bank might opt to examine its administrative policies over a period of several months before moving on to evaluate operational functions. This step-by-step approach takes longer but is less disruptive. Each diaper bank has its own particular goals and its own definition of "success." The first step in designing a program assessment is to determine how to measure the program’s success. Depending on the goals you have set, the following are a few of the general issues that might be examined in an assessment.

**Program Operations**

- How safely and efficiently does the program operate on a day-to-day basis?
- Do program staff adhere to established policies for storage and distribution of diapers? Are these policies sufficient?
- Are the program’s scheduling systems and policies working effectively? Do the diapers get to the agencies quickly and safely and reliably? Are there inefficiencies or interruptions in service?
- Would additional equipment and supplies enable the program to operate more efficiently and safely?

**Agency Recruitment**

- Have the program’s recruitment efforts resulted in the desired number of and types of agencies?
- How many agencies are working with the program on a consistent basis? How do these numbers compare with the program’s expectation and capacities?
- Are recipient agencies able to use the type and number of diapers we have distributed?

**Agency Relations**

- How well does the program meet expectations?
- Are the diapers helping families in need? Are there enough diapers? Are they the types & sizes of diapers most in demand?
- Do agencies think that working with the program is rewarding? Do they find it convenient? Do they think the program staff members are competent, well-trained and polite?
- Are agencies pleased with the training their staff receives through your diaper bank?
- Are agencies involved with the program beyond receiving diapers (e.g., in community-relations activities, in fundraising, board participation, etc.)?
- Are they recommending the program to other agencies and potential donors?
- Are there systems in place to ensure that the program maintains regular, ongoing communications with the donors and recipient agencies?
- Are agencies maintaining the right statistics (records?) for our program reporting?
Anti-poverty, Child Welfare, and Health Care Industry Outreach

- Has the program earned the support and cooperation of the local social service and anti-poverty community?
- Has the program established itself as a member of this community? Do the other groups see the program as performing a vital service and operating in a manner that advances the community as a whole?
- Do other groups readily share information with the program?
- Has the program created opportunities for these groups to directly participate in or support the program (e.g., by providing technical assistance)?

Public Outreach

- How well has the program publicized its activities?
- Has the program built sufficient name recognition? Is its public image positive? Is the image accurate?
- Is the public aware of the problem of diaper need in the community? Do they view the program as important to helping provide basic human needs and helping people rise from poverty?
- Does the public think of the program in situations where they have excess diapers or diapering supplies? Do they bring the diapering supplies to your diaper bank?
- Does the public express support for the program with volunteer work, financial contributions and technical assistance?

Diaper Bank Outreach

- Are other diaper banks aware of your program?
- Does your diaper bank follow developments in the field? Does it take advantage of other programs and share its experience with other programs?
- Is it connected to the National Diaper Bank Network?

Staff Management

- Is the program’s staff structured and utilized in a manner that maximizes the program’s ability to operate safely and efficiently?
- Are responsibilities well distributed among staff? Do all staff members have a clear understanding of their responsibilities?
- Is the staff performing competently and professionally? Has it grown and adapted as the program has matured?
- Do the various work styles help or hinder the program’s safe and efficient operations? Do they reflect well on the program?
- Is staff turnover a problem? If so, why?
- Do we have the right mix of staff skills to work most efficiently and effectively?
**Information Management**

- Is the program established complete and efficient information recording procedures? Does it have the right materials (i.e., forms and records)? Does the staff adhere to procedure and use the materials correctly?
- Is information stored in a way that makes it easy to retrieve, analyze, and report to interested parties?
- Are the program’s key constituents (e.g., donors, agencies) satisfied with the type and frequency of information given them?

**Board Utilization**

- Is the board of directors being used appropriately and to their best capacities?
- Is the board (demographically and professionally) balanced? Are all of the program’s key constituencies represented on the board?
- Is the board focusing on the right issues?
- In what areas is the board best utilized and under-utilized? (e.g. fundraising, technical assistance, etc.)?
- Are roles and responsibilities clearly communicated and understood?
- Are board assignments monitored? Are members showing any signs of boredom?
- Have we had a board assessment lately?

**Fiscal Management**

- Are the program’s finances managed in a manner that maximizes its service capacity?
- Does the program’s financial condition restrict its ability to meet its diaper distribution goals or to operate safely and efficiently?
- Does the program operate within its budget projections? If not, why?
- Is the fund-raising strategy generating enough cash and in-kind support to meet the program’s needs? Is the strategy demanding excessive amounts of staff time and/or program money?

**Cost Effectiveness**

- What does it cost to distribute 10 diapers? How does this cost compare to projections?
- How does the cost per diaper compare to that of other diaper banks?
- Has the cost increased or decreased since the program began operating?
- Can it be expected to increase or decrease in the coming months? By how much? Is the cost-per-diaper justifiable?
- Can cost-effectiveness be improved?

**D.3 - CONDUCTING A PROGRAM ASSESSMENT**

Once you know what elements of your program will be assessed, you need to consider the process you will use to conduct the evaluation.
Several general suggestions to consider when planning your assessment process:

- Try to involve all relevant groups (staff, boards, donors, agencies, etc.) in both the design and implementation of the assessment. Broad participation will ensure that the assessment takes into account the diverse range of interests in a diaper bank, and will help build a consensus in support of recommendations or changes that may result from the assessment.
- Try to make the process of collecting information "user-friendly.” Match collection methods and tools to various groups involved in the assessment. Be careful to avoid methods or tools that are inconvenient.
- Try to frame the information collection process so that it appeals to the self-interest of the groups involved. Let them know that their cooperation will help you to better respond to their needs and concerns.

*With these suggestions in mind, here are various methods of conducting an assessment:*

- One-on-one meetings/interviews (e.g., meeting with an individual donor): such meetings, set in a personal, engaging atmosphere, are sure to draw a response. But, they can also be very time consuming.
- Group meetings/focus groups (e.g., presenting issues for discussion to a group of donors): such meetings may be more time-efficient and can be effective in building consensus. But, they can be dominated by the most aggressive participant and get sidetracked.
- Mail or telephone surveys/questionnaires: Surveys and questionnaires are the easiest ways to reach a large audience. But, it is often difficult to get a quick or complete response, and people may be annoyed by telephone surveys.

Your choice of methods should be made on a case-by-case basis using your best judgment and past experience in communicating with the groups you plan to involve in the assessment. Other diaper banks may also be able to share their experiences on specific assessment methods with certain groups.

**D.4 - INTERPRETING ASSESSMENT FINDINGS**

Each program will read the information it collects through the lens of its particular goals and priorities. Regardless of how the information is interpreted, however, most diaper banks are likely to find that their programs have both particular strengths and deficiencies. They are likely to discover opportunities that, if pursued, would allow the program to expand the scope of its operations. The best guidance is to build on strengths and remedy deficiencies first, and then pursue expansion opportunities.

**D.5 - MAKING NEEDED PROGRAM IMPROVEMENTS**

As a general rule, a diaper bank should focus on addressing any problems or improving any weaknesses before considering growth opportunities. How a program chooses to make improvements depends on its particular long- and short-term priorities and goals.
While there are decisions that only the individual program can make, it may be helpful to keep two considerations in mind:

1. There is always room to change how a program operates. Staying with a system or structure just because “that’s the way it has always been done” stifles innovation and improvement.

2. Organizational assumptions may need revision. Some of the basic assumptions on which the program was established may no longer hold true (e.g., “We can only serve a certain portion of the city,” or “Our agencies only want diapers we can deliver, not diapers we might be able to broker”). It is likely that other diaper banks have faced similar challenges and may be able to share ideas and experiences that can be applied, with modification, to your program. Do not hesitate to tap into the network; such information sharing can save a lot of time and energy.

Once a program is satisfied with its improvement efforts, it can begin to explore if and how it might expand. The considerations involved in these decisions are explored in the next section.

**D.6 - EXPANDING THE PROGRAM**

Virtually every diaper bank will discover that the need greatly exceeds the money and diapers it could possibly collect, yet even so each will most likely experience growth in its first year of operation. New programs grow—almost automatically—as more people learn of them. However, long-term growth is deliberate and proactive and requires careful planning.

Should we grow? At this point, it should be noted that this manual recognizes that not every diaper bank must get bigger. Rather, its intent is to help those programs that can and should expand map out a realistic plan.

*Programs that are considering long-term expansion should ask the following.*

- Do we agree that we want to expand? Your diaper bank needs to be sure that both leadership (board) and staff are completely committed to long-term growth.
- Does our community need an expanded program? Diaper banks need to be sure that there is demand for a larger program. Sadly, agencies can almost always use more diapers. This, however, needs to be confirmed and the need must be characterized in order to shape the appropriate growth plan.
- Does the program have the capacity to expand without compromising its ability to reliably supply agencies on an on-going basis? Growth will require increasing staff and supplies, particularly diapers, and thus more money. Programs need to be sure they can meet and sustain the added costs of a larger program.
- Do we really need a strategy? Can’t we just grow as we go?

It is tempting to let your program grow on demand, but ultimately, uncontrolled growth can lead to serious resource problems.
Taking time to develop a growth strategy is important because:

- It allows your program to grow at its own pace.
- It permits your program to take the steps necessary to maintain the efficiency and integrity of its operations.
- It appeals to agencies that want assurance that their level of service will not be jeopardized by uncontrolled expansion.
- It appeals to funders who typically put more faith (and money) in programs with rational, well-researched expansion plans than in those that grow haphazardly.

**Funding Base**

Expansions need funding. While specific fundraising advice is beyond the scope of this manual, there are several points that merit mention here:

- Funders want to see that their support has or will have concrete results. Your funding prospects will be enhanced if your proposal includes a thorough, well-documented expansion plan with specific growth objectives.
- Emphasize the long-term nature of your expansion plan. Most funders are attracted to forward-thinking organizations and may be persuaded to provide support over a multi-year period. The prospects for multi-year funding may even be improved if your diaper bank is willing to commit to specific, realistic growth objectives as a condition for continuing support.

Finally, there are two general suggestions which all diaper banks should consider as they plan and implement their expansion efforts:

- Expansion should be built on a program’s established strengths
- Expansion activities should not reduce, or be perceived as reducing, the quality of the program’s current services.

There are many diaper banks that have already embarked on long-term expansion efforts and who would be happy to share their ideas and experiences. Once again, do not hesitate to tap into this tremendous information network.

We hope you find this information to be useful as you work to plan or improve your diaper bank. Good luck!
APPENDICES

A: WRAPPED IN LOVE
B: OUR GOAL SHEET
C: DIAPER DRIVE CHECKLIST
D: DIAPER COLLECTION FORM
APPENDIX A: WRAPPED IN LOVE

MISSION
To ensure that babies and adults in the community has enough diapers to remain clean, dry and healthy.

GOALS
• To supply diapers to families in crisis
• To educate Parents and to raise community awareness that basic human needs
• Also include diapers
• To support agencies with diapers to give to clients as the need arises
• To partner with organizations, Businesses, etc for donations of funds
• To purchase diapers

DIAPER DRIVE IDEAS
Locations
• Banks
• Gyms
• Offices
• Car Dealerships
• Grocery Stores
• Virtual drive
• Churches
• Libraries
• Schools
• Coffee Shops
• Fire Stations
• Swimming Pools
• Community Centers
• In lieu of gifts

Themes
• Baby Olympics
• Diaper Derby
• Stuff the bus
• Baby showers
• Dinner parties
• Other holiday-related themes
• Birthdays
• Mother’s Day
• Office or School Competition
• For any special occasion

Publicity
• Create a website
• Radio spots
• Use social media
• Post flyers in your library
• Post flyers in local businesses
• Add to your email signature line
• Have your partner organization promote
• Post flyers in your neighborhood or office
• Advertise in a newsletter or local newspaper

Other Tips & Tricks
• Great volunteer opportunity for individuals, offices, and schools
• Host a kickoff event _Personally Thank Your Volunteers
• Inform local print and news media (you never know!)
• Pass out donation envelopes for those who can donate monetarily
• Provide an incentive for most diapers collected
• Provide information on diaper need
• Recruit a volunteer committee to help run the diaper drive
• Set a goal and track your progress (count your diapers!)
• Take pictures to share in your recap and for future publicity
IN THE LAST THREE YEARS, 5.8 MILLION AMERICAN BABIES WERE BORN INTO POOR OR LOW-INCOME FAMILIES. That means as many as 2,600 diapers are needed per baby, per year – which adds up to more than 15 billion diapers annually.
APPENDIX C: DIAPER DRIVE CHECKLIST

- Meet with your Community Services Council
- Go with a vision to plan

1. Decide if you want to operate a Diaper Drive (see manual) or donate to a women’s shelter, food pantry, child care centers or open doors for a giveaway at your church.
2. Pick a theme – Example: Moms Helping Moms or Bundle of Hope
3. Set goals for collection – Develop a way to track your progress (see Diaper Collection Form)
4. Select a Start and End Date – Some diaper drives last for a week or a month.
5. Choose a Location – Pick one or two places or multiple places that are centrally located and willing to help, like a local library, Super Market or a business, label the collection bins clearly and colorfully and beautifully.
6. Find volunteers to help – Ask your friends, neighbors, family members, church members, etc. REMEMBER to use your young people.
7. Spread the WORD – Announce your diaper drive via social media, send press releases to local media outlets, announcements to churches, flyers and post notices within the community
8. Set Up Transportation – Depending on how many diapers are donated, think about what type of vehicle you will need.
9. Collect and Deliver Diapers – Rally the volunteers and deliver the donated diapers to your partner organization(s), agencies, etc. or do the drive at your church.
10. Post a Recap – Via social media, press releases, website, etc.
APPENDIX D: DIAPER COLLECTION FORM

Use this form to track your diapers. Provide this information to your council/benefitting organization.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SIZE</th>
<th>NUMBER OF DIAPERS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Newborn</td>
<td>____________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Size 1</td>
<td>____________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Size 2</td>
<td>____________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Size 3</td>
<td>____________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Size 4</td>
<td>____________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Size 5</td>
<td>____________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Size 6</td>
<td>____________________</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SIZE</th>
<th>NUMBER OF DIAPERS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Donations</td>
<td>____________________</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Pull-ups |  ________ | # Diapers |  ____________________  |
| Misc    |  ________ | # Wipes  |  ____________________  |
| TOTAL   |  ________ | Miscellany |  ____________________  |

Name:  ___________________________________________  Date:  ____________
Community Group:  ___________________________________________
Email:  ___________________________________________
Phone:  ___________________________________________
REFERENCES

- National Diaper Bank Network: www.nationaldiaperbanknetwork.org
- Start a Diaper Bank: http://nationaldiaperbanknetwork.org/start-a-diaper-bank/
- Diaper Need in America: http://nationaldiaperbanknetwork.org/what-is-diaper-need/ (click on State Information for information for your state)
- Diaper Facts: http://nationaldiaperbanknetwork.org/what-is-diaper-need/diaper-facts/
- Diaper Need: http://nationaldiaperbanknetwork.org/diaperawareness/
- Diaper Need Awareness Week September 26 to October 2, 2016
- Diaper Need Resources: http://nationaldiaperbanknetwork.org/help-for-diaper-banks/
- Cloth diapers http://www.cottonbabieslove.com/locations/join-in#become-a-host
- Children’s Defense Fund http://www.childrensdefense.org/
- Feeding America: In Short Supply http://nationaldiaperbanknetwork.org/manual/phase-1/
- What does it take to be grant ready? Grant Readiness Checklist – nationaldiaperbanknetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/3-Grant-Readiness-checklist.pdf
- www.charitynetuse.com
- Huggies
  Kimberly Clark Corporation for Huggies
  Dept. INT
  PO Box 2020
  Neenah, WI 54957-2020
  1-877-648-2484
- Diaperbanknetwork.org
- DC Diaper Bank www.dcdiaperbank.org
  202-656-8503 / info@dcdiaperbank.org
- Call Your Doctor’s Office and Hospital for Free Diapers
  Your pediatrician and local hospital are great resources to get free diapers. Often they’ll have a ton of samples on hand and be able to sign you up with special clubs that give out a ton of baby freebies like free diapers and free baby formula (http://freebies.about.com/od/babyfreebies/tp/free-baby-formula.htm)
- Register With Diaper Companies to Get Free Diapers
- Register with the following diaper companies
  - Huggies – www.huggies.com
  - Pampers – www.pampers.com
  - Luvs – www.luvsdipers.com
  - GoodNites - www.goodnites.com/na/
  - Questions call 855-BUY-DIAPERS
- Adult Diapers
  - www.yourdiaper.com
  - www.goldenagemedical.com