

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR CANDIDATES FOR PUBLIC OFFICE

Background Information and Instructions:

Election years are important times to get candidates and public officials to speak about issues you care about. While non-profits exempt from federal taxes under section 501(c)(3) of the tax code, as public charities are, may not participate in, or intervene in political campaigns for or against candidates, they may undertake non-partisan candidate education and public education. The attached candidate questionnaire can help foster public discussion during this election year of policies to address hunger and other issues affecting low-income people.

What you can do as a 501(c)(3), includes:

- i Use the questionnaire, in a non-partisan manner, providing it to all candidates for the same office;
- i Use the questions at candidate forums and debates;
- i If you disseminate candidates' answers prior to the election, make sure you include the full responses of all candidates. Do not include any judgment or evaluation of the answers, or a statement of your organization's position on the issues addressed. In other words, the reader should be able to evaluate the answers without your organization directly or indirectly suggesting any "correct" answers.

What you can't do, up through election day, is:

- i Explicitly or implicitly endorse a candidate;
- i Ask candidates a series of questions framed in a way which suggests what your organization thinks is the right answer;
- i Present candidate forums, or distribute answers to candidate questions, in a way that evaluates the candidates or suggests what you think the "correct" answer is.

Note that, after the election you can use the questions and answers in any way you want in order to get the elected official to adopt or implement a position – i.e., distributing them publicly or reminding the official.

You should consult legal counsel if you have any concerns or questions.

We hope that you will find the questionnaire helpful in fostering public education and dialogue with leaders.

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- 1) What specific steps would you take to address the problem of hunger in the United States?
- 2) How would you improve access to nutrition for low-income families, children and elderly? Are there rules relating to eligibility that should be changed?
- 3) What policies would you propose in the following areas:
 - a) food stamp benefits and eligibility?
 - b) school-based meals and child nutrition outside school hours (e.g., summer and afterschool food)?
 - c) food programs for young children in child care?
 - d) WIC?
 - e) congregate meals, home-delivered meals, and emergency food assistance?
- 4) Should payments in any of these programs be changed?
- 5) What would you suggest to educate the public and officials re: the extent and causes of hunger in the United States and the solutions thereto?
- 6) Hunger usually is a reflection of poverty, as well as families' struggle to pay for other basic needs. What policies would you propose to ensure low-income families :
 - a) access to livable incomes?
 - b) access to affordable housing?
 - c) access to health coverage?
- 7) How would you propose to reduce child poverty?