Food for the Hungry (FH) works with various governmental and quasi-governmental agencies worldwide to accomplish our mission of ending poverty. These agencies include the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), U.S. Department of State, the World Food Programme, the Canadian International Development Agency and UNICEF.

Questions sometimes arise around these partnerships. For instance, can FH receive funding from USAID and stay true to its objectives? Can FH work with government or inter-government agencies and retain a distinctively Christian mission? Do partners need to hold to the same distinctively Christian mission that FH adheres to in order for a partnership (funding or otherwise) to be successful?

The FH Board of Directors, global executive leadership and regional leadership have determined that the FH mission can be carried out with these kind of partnerships and gives FH an opportunity to speak into governmental issues addressing poverty.

### A MISSION OF PARTNERSHIP

FH’s relationship with governmental agencies and organizations, like the United Nations, is partly based on receiving funds - and about FH blessing leaders and beneficiaries. In carrying out our mission, FH is committed to walking with churches, leaders and families. We work together with beneficiaries to share ideas and find solutions to end poverty. God has placed FH in a unique position to “walk with” governments as they seek to solve problems that exist in
communities. Without engaging these entities, FH would send a message that we have nothing to offer in finding answers to issues. By working with these governments, we bring God’s truth into plans to create sustainability.

**GOD’S WORD IS TRUE**
FH engages with governments, because as an organization rooted in God’s Word, we have valuable perspectives based on a biblical approach that can make a difference in shaping the way problems are addressed. FH was a leading contributor to Government, Global Poverty and God’s Mission in the World: An Evangelical Declaration that details this biblical perspective.

**MISSIONS IN CONTRAST OR COLLABORATION?**
Instead of refusing funding partnerships with governmental agencies and other secular organizations, FH works to evaluate a potential partner’s alignment with the FH mission. For instance, in 2010, FH provided tents to shelter victims of the earthquake in Haiti. The purchase and distribution of those tents was made possible by a grant made by the U.S. Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA). FH and OFDA overlap in a mission to give shelter to those who are homeless due to disasters, even though OFDA does not have a distinctly Christian mission.

Francis Schaeffer, a leading 20th Century Christian teacher, popularized the term “co-belligerency” as he encouraged the U.S. evangelical church to engage with others in sanctity of life issues. Schaeffer said, “A co-belligerent is a person with whom I do not agree on all sorts of vital issues, but who, for whatever reasons of their own, is on the same side in a fight for some specific issue of public justice.” The statement could be modified to say, “A co-belligerent is a partner organization that does not hold to precisely the same mission, but for whatever reasons of their own, is on the same side in the effort to end poverty.”

**A DEMONSTRATION OF RESPECT**
The apostle Peter in 1 Peter 2:17 instructs Christians to “show proper respect to everyone: Love the brotherhood of believers, fear God, honor the king.” In Romans 13, the apostle Paul writes, “Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established.” God, in His complete sovereignty, has strategically placed governments in power in order that He may make His glory known through them.

As FH seeks and engages in government partnership, either the U.S. government or another entity, it is an opportunity to affirm leaders that what they do is good and worthy of respect and honor. When we see a country devote resources toward the alleviation of hunger and disease, we can rejoice and commend their efforts.

**RECEIVING ACCOUNTABILITY**
As a recipient organization, engagement with governments automatically opens FH to additional scrutiny and review. When partnerships are developed with governmental and quasi-governmental organizations, FH is held to high accountability standards that are demanded by the taxpayers and others who support these agencies. Submitting to this accountability strengthens FH. Representatives from these organizations review FH’s work with their own eyes. They frequently require third party evaluators, they interview the people in the communities FH serves, and they pour through FH’s bookkeeping. This accountability serves FH and every donor that gives to this mission. Governments hold FH accountable for the sake of the public good - and that’s good for all of us.

Are governments and quasi-governmental organizations perfect? No. Does an organization like FH need to balance government-funded programs with other priorities? Yes. Does FH need other funding sources? Absolutely. And, as we constantly work to hold all of these issues in tension, we grow stronger.