

NCSL HUNGER PARTNERSHIP

Bringing Legislators to the Table

Addressing Hunger Through Public-Private Partnerships



Bringing Legislators to the Table: Addressing Hunger Through Public-Private Partnerships

2019 EDITION

BY CHESTERFIELD POLKEY

The National Conference of State Legislatures is the bipartisan organization dedicated to serving the lawmakers and staffs of the nation's 50 states, its commonwealths and territories.

NCSL provides research, technical assistance and opportunities for policymakers to exchange ideas on the most pressing state issues, and is an effective and respected advocate for the interests of the states in the American federal system. Its objectives are:

- Improve the quality and effectiveness of state legislatures.
- Promote policy innovation and communication among state legislatures.
- Ensure state legislatures a strong, cohesive voice in the federal system.

The conference operates from offices in Denver, Colorado and Washington, D.C.

Contents

Acknowledgments	v
About the Author	v
About the NCSL Hunger Partnership	v
Hunger Partnership Members	v
Introduction	1
SNAP Partnership	3
1. SNAP Train-the-Trainer.....	3
2. SNAP Task Force	4
3. Fresh Access Program	5
Child Nutrition Partnerships	7
1. Summer Meals Program.....	7
2. Breakfast After the Bell and Universal Breakfast	8
3. Parents as Teachers Program.....	9
Healthy Food Access Partnerships	11
1. Recipe for Success and Production Garden.....	11
2. Hunger Councils and Grand Isle Collaborative Project	12
3. Healthy Corner Store Initiative and Heart Smarts Program	13
4. Full Lives Program	14
Food Distribution Partnerships	17
1. Community Food Rescue.....	17
2. Loaves & Fishes	18
3. Senior Food Pack Program and Mobile Food Pantries	19
4. Darden Harvest and Food Donation Connection.....	20
Bilingual and Multicultural Partnerships	22
1. Lucha Contra El Hambre	22
2. Bilingual Culinary Training Program	23
3. New American Sustainable Agriculture Project	24

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) Hunger Partnership thanks the individuals and organizations for their contributions to “Bringing Legislators to the Table: Addressing Hunger Through Public-Private Partnerships.” We especially appreciate our Hunger Partnership members and friends for recommending public-private partnerships and legislation to highlight in this publication. This update would not be possible without you.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Chesterfield Polkey is a 2018-2019 Bill Emerson National Hunger Fellow placed with the NCSL Hunger Partnership. The Emerson National Hunger Fellowship is a program of the Congressional Hunger Center in Washington, D.C., that seeks to fight hunger by developing leaders. Polkey has worked on a range of hunger and nutrition issues at NCSL as well as developed written material for the NCSL Immigrant Policy Project.

Originally from Jacksonville, Fla., Polkey has dedicated his time to eliminating poverty through advocating for stronger nutrition-driven policy, improving Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program outreach to low-income communities, and collaborating with those who have or currently experience food insecurity. Before NCSL, he was placed at Just Harvest, a grassroots anti-poverty organization in Pittsburgh, Polkey graduated from Macalester College in 2018 with a degree in sociology.

ABOUT THE NCSL HUNGER PARTNERSHIP

The NCSL Hunger Partnerships connects public- and private-sector partners whose focus is to improve the availability of healthy food for hungry families. The partnership brings together legislators, legislative staff and interested businesses to identify and share innovative and successful policies and programs to reduce hunger in America. The Hunger Partnership was launched in 2010 to raise the visibility of hunger in America and highlight innovative solutions.

HUNGER PARTNERSHIP MEMBERS

■ Legislators

Senator Renee Unterman,
Georgia, co-chair

Senator Eddie Lucio Jr., Texas,
co-chair

Senator Thomas Alexander,
South Carolina

Representative Barbara Ballard,
Kansas

Representative LeAnne Burch,
Arkansas

Senator Patrick Gallivan,
New York

Representative G.A. Hardaway,
Tennessee

Senator Judy Lee, North Dakota

Representative Walt Leger III,
Louisiana

Senator Holly Mitchell,
California

Representative John Mizuno,
Hawaii

Assemblyman Felix Ortiz,
New York

Delegate Christopher Peace,
Virginia

Representative Eric Pettigrew,
Washington

Representative Omeria Scott,
Mississippi

Representative Randall Shedd,
Alabama

Senator John Unger,
West Virginia

Representative Toni Walker,
Connecticut

Representative Mary Jane
Wallner, New Hampshire

■ Legislative Staff

Gail Gronert, specialist assis-
tant to the speaker, California

Charles Sallee, deputy director,
Legislative Finance Committee,
New Mexico

Steven Hernandez, executive
director, Commission on
Children, Connecticut

■ Corporate Partners

General Mills

No Kid Hungry and Share Our
Strength

Darden Restaurants

■ Advisory Partners

Congressional Hunger Center

Food Research and
Action Center

Feeding America

Introduction

State legislators are in a unique position to tackle hunger and increase access to healthy food and work with a variety of partners on innovative projects. Legislators who are leading on nutrition and hunger issues simultaneously wear the hats of policymaker, hunger champion and community leader. As policymakers, legislators can direct and provide incentives for state agencies to implement new programs, catalyze coordination among agencies, give startup or expansion funding to promising initiatives and formally recognize organizations fighting hunger in their communities. As hunger champions, they can form legislative hunger caucuses, create days for hunger awareness and elevate the visibility of hunger through their websites and social media. As community leaders, they can bring together the public, nonprofit, corporate and foundation sectors to inspire meaningful change and imagine innovative solutions for low-income communities.

Federal and state dollars spent on nutrition programs improve both educational and health outcomes for families across the United States. Anti-hunger programs like the [Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program](#) (SNAP), the School Breakfast Program and the National School Lunch Program lower rates of food insecurity, diabetes and other diseases by ensuring healthier diets and fewer hungry children. Additionally, SNAP benefits the community at large, increasing revenues for farmers, retailers, food processors, and food distributors, along with their employees' incomes. For every \$5 in federal funding for SNAP benefits, \$9 is generated in economic activity. These programs not only produce better outcomes and stronger local economies, they face little risk. A report by the Congressional Research Service found fraud in SNAP is relatively rare. State legislators can work with these and other programs to ensure participation for those who are eligible, reduce hunger and improve accountability.

Within this publication are 17 examples of innovative programs that involve partnerships among multiple organizations with federal, state or local support. This publication has categorized programs broadly by their purpose and the federal nutrition programs they seek to leverage and promote. The themes are:

- **SNAP Partnerships**, including programs that provide outreach, offer application assistance, work with local and state officials, and increase access to food retailers that accept SNAP.
- **Child Nutrition Partnerships**, including programs that increase access and improve the quality of in-school and out-of-school nutrition programs for children.
- **Healthy Food Access Partnerships**, including programs that improve access to healthy food in urban and rural low-income communities, increase access to locally grown produce for low-income consumers and help improve the diets of low-income students.
- **Food Distribution Partnerships**, including programs that improve the quality of food available at food banks and pantries, increase client choice, and provide alternative means for populations, like seniors, to acquire food.
- **Bilingual and Multicultural Partnerships**, including programs that use food as a vehicle for both bolstering employment opportunities and decreasing food insecurity among multicultural, immigrant and refugee populations.

Each program profile includes information about the problem(s) the program seeks to address, how the program works, who benefits, the names of major partners and funding sources, and program results.

The publication also showcases 16 enacted bills that target hunger and poverty. These pieces of legislation demonstrate how state legislators are taking action on these issues and working with local organizations to produce effective results. These examples illustrate how some state legislators are leveraging state and federal dollars to reduce hunger by partnering with local organizations or passing legislation.

This guide was researched and published by the NCSL Hunger Partnership. The author consulted with national organizations and Hunger Partnership members to identify states with promising programs and campaigns and, in turn, relied on staff in nonprofit organizations to identify innovative programs. Leadership from state and local organizations provided the information in the program profiles that are listed in this guide.



SNAP Partnership

1. SNAP Train-the-Trainer

Idaho Hunger Relief Task Force | Idaho

ABOUT THE ORGANIZATION

The Idaho Hunger Relief Task Force is a statewide coalition of 21 public and private members dedicated to addressing hunger and food insecurity across Idaho. Since 2008, the task force has conducted research and raised public awareness about the roots of hunger as well as supported the development of anti-hunger programs.

OPPORTUNITY

One in 7 Idahoans struggle with food insecurity and live below the federal poverty level. More than 76% of all Idaho SNAP participants are in families with children and almost 24% are, or live with, elderly or disabled members.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The SNAP Train-the-Trainer program arose from focus groups conducted by the task force with recipients and potential recipients of SNAP benefits. These focus groups highlighted two critical barriers to participation: 1) misinformation about SNAP eligibility and the application process and 2) the perceived stigma of receiving public benefits. The program provides important information about the SNAP program to advocates and leaders across the state. Through five trainings, Train-the-Trainer unpacks the SNAP application process as well as other relevant nutrition programs in a clear and effective manner. The Train-the-Trainer guide can be used for independent learning, staff trainings and general community presentations.

The training is broken into five modules:

- Overview: provides insights into the state's SNAP program and administration.
- Eligibility: discusses eligibility, including differences for groups like senior citizens.

- Application: demonstrates the application and recertification process.
- Use: shows the Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) card and where benefits can be used.
- Nutrition Education: highlights innovative programs like Cooking Matters and Eat Smart.

IMPACT

In 2018, the Idaho Hunger Relief Task Force held nine in-person trainings with senior housing centers, food banks, community action organizations, college campuses and AmeriCorps VISTA. The trainings coincide and bolster participation in other programming, including the task force’s prescriptive fruit and vegetables program, EBT at farmers markets, and stronger farm to fork efforts.

PARTNERSHIP

The Idaho Hunger Relief Task Force works with organizations like the Food Research & Action Center, Mazon, Pacific Source, St. Luke’s and Clif Bar, as well the Idaho Department of Health and Welfare, to train participants.

CONTACT INFORMATION

- Kathy Gardner, Director
Idaho Hunger Relief Task Force
info@idahohunger.org

2. SNAP Task Force

Food Bank for New York City | New York

ABOUT THE ORGANIZATION

For more than 35 years, the Food Bank for New York City has been working toward ending food insecurity and poverty across all five boroughs. Through direct service, financial and nutrition education, and political advocacy, the Food Bank for New York City aims to not only eliminate hunger but also its root causes.

OPPORTUNITY

One in 5 children in New York City live in households experiencing food insecurity. Meanwhile, soup kitchens and pantries suffer from shortages of fresh fruits and vegetables. SNAP directly alleviates food insecurity and promotes food choice by allowing families to make food purchases using an EBT card. However, barriers to SNAP exist, including stigma and a confusing application process.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Since 2004, the Food Bank for New York City has chaired the New York City SNAP Task Force. The task force provides a forum and platform for SNAP advocates to discuss changes and trends in the SNAP administration of New York City. With a coalition of more than 200 SNAP advocates, service providers, government representatives and anti-hunger experts, the SNAP Task Force has significantly improved access to SNAP benefits for low-income workers.

The task force comes together monthly to discuss changes to SNAP administration, describe the current state of application assistance, and present its mediation model to resolve application issues for residents. Mediation involves understanding the obstacles that applicants face in applying for SNAP. These can include mistakes, such as SNAP caseworkers not logging submitted documents or submitting changes in a timely manner. The coalition interacts with partners from city, state and federal entities to discuss and mediate these problems.

IMPACT

Since forming the task force, mediation has expanded and become more successful. In April 2019, more

than two-thirds of applicants who sought out mediation had their cases resolved within one to five days. By having city and state agencies present during monthly meetings, the task force can establish a connection between those working regularly with SNAP applicants and those who implement SNAP policy at the local level.

PARTNERSHIP

The Food Bank for New York City works alongside service providers and national and state advocacy organizations, as well as the New York Human Resources Administration, the New York Office of Temporary Disability Assistance and the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) to coordinate the task force.

CONTACT INFORMATION

- Lauren Phillips, Government Relations Manager
Food Bank for New York City
lphillips@foodbanknyc.org

3. Fresh Access Program

Just Harvest | Pennsylvania

ABOUT THE ORGANIZATION

Founded in 1986, Just Harvest educates, empowers and mobilizes people to eliminate hunger, poverty and economic injustice by influencing public policy, engaging in advocacy and connecting residents in the Greater Pittsburgh community to public benefits.

OPPORTUNITY

According to the Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank, Allegheny County has a food insecurity rate of 14.2% and a child food insecurity rate of 17.8%. Farmers markets provide an opportunity for families to buy fruits and vegetables to improve nutritional outcomes and reduce hunger.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Started in 2013, Just Harvest partnered with local farmers markets to launch the Fresh Access program to improve the nutrition and food choice among low-income residents in the Greater Pittsburgh community. The program enables shoppers at farmers market to use their credit, debit and SNAP EBT cards to purchase nutritious and healthy food. Running generally from May to November, farmers markets provide another important avenue to improve nutritional outcomes among greater Pittsburgh residents.

Customers can find the Just Harvest tent at 22 farmers markets and farm stands around Allegheny County. At the tent, shoppers swipe their card to receive tokens from a staff member or volunteer. These tokens can be used just like cash to purchase fresh produce, baked goods, and meat and dairy products. Additionally, customers using EBT cards receive an extra \$2 to spend on fruits and veggies for every \$5 they spend at the market.

The Fresh Access program benefits more than just SNAP recipients. The token exchange process provides a new option for those who normally do not carry cash and depend on their cards. The universality of the benefit helps diminish the stigma that EBT card users face as a result of biases against public assistance recipients.

IMPACT

Just Harvest has transacted more than \$1 million in sales from 2013 to 2018. Based on a survey of 183 Fresh Access customers in 2018, over 78% of respondents reported that the program was easy to use and led to an increase in purchased fruits and vegetables. Just Harvest continues to partner with new farmers markets to expand the scope and magnitude of the token exchange program.

PARTNERSHIP

To ensure greater food choice for low-income residents, Just Harvest coordinates and works with the city of Pittsburgh, local municipalities, neighborhood organizations, participating local farmers, the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services and the USDA.

CONTACT INFORMATION

- Averyl Hall, Fresh Access Coordinator
Just Harvest
averylh@justharvest.org

What Can Legislators Do?

- Raise awareness of SNAP in the community through press events, your newsletter or website, or through resolutions.
- Visit social service organizations, farmers markets and food banks to learn more about SNAP and see partnerships in action.
- Lead a meeting with state agencies or governors to work on outreach and engagement to improve the administration of SNAP in your district.

EXAMPLES OF INNOVATIVE LEGISLATION

Alaska

In 2018, Alaska took steps to improve the SNAP application process. The legislature enacted HB 286, which creates opportunities to collaborate with private partners, like Code for America, to develop a single on-line application for public assistance programs.

Arkansas

Similar to a task force, bipartisan efforts to address hunger can include a legislative hunger caucus. In Arkansas, Democrats and Republicans worked together to form a Hunger Caucus to develop and support bills that would reduce hunger and relieve families.

Washington

In 2019, the Washington State Legislature enacted HB 1587, the Access to Fruits and Vegetables on Limited Income Act. The law creates incentive programs at farmers markets, grocery stores and health care sites that provide extra benefits to purchase fruits and vegetables when basic food benefits like SNAP are used.

SNAP Resources

- [Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program](#)
- [SNAP Data Tables](#)
- [Farm Bill of 2018](#)
- [Food Insecurity in the United States](#)
- [NCSL SNAP](#)
- [NCSL SNAP Work Requirements Fact Sheet](#)
- [USDA FNS YouTube Channel](#)
- [Disaster SNAP](#)



Child Nutrition Partnerships

1. Summer Meals Program

Presbyterian Healthcare Services | New Mexico

ABOUT THE ORGANIZATION

Serving seven communities across New Mexico, Presbyterian Healthcare Services is a locally owned, not-for-profit health care system and provider. Presbyterian owns and operates eight hospitals, including 981 beds, and plans to open a ninth medical center in the state.

OPPORTUNITY

Food insecurity is a problem in New Mexico, with over 1 in 4 New Mexican children struggling with hunger. Federal and state nutrition programs provide a safety net for children to access healthy and nutritious food. However, there is a significant drop in program participation as children begin their summer break from school. In 2016, the summer meals program reached 35% of children who received free or reduced-price lunches.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Presbyterian developed its summer meals program in 2016, along with other food-access programs, to ensure children a healthy meal every day of the year. By 2017, five of Presbyterian's eight network hospitals were providing free meals and snacks to children at a Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) meals site. The federally funded, state-administered SFSP reimburses program operators who serve free nutritious food to children and teens in under-resourced areas. In 2018, the program provided more than 1.5 million healthy meals and snacks to children across the United States during the summer time.

Presbyterian provides meals and snacks on weekdays and weekends through its regular food service models. Children can come and receive free food from the hospitals. To participate in the program, hospitals must submit certain materials, including a program plan, sample budget and other items. SFSP also re-

quires hospitals to promote summer meals programming through in-hospital flyers, outreach to local organizations, and information disseminated through radio, newspapers and social media.

IMPACT

Since the program's start in 2016, Presbyterian has served over 9,000 meals across New Mexico in urban, suburban and rural communities. Including meals during the school year, the health care system has provided over 20,000 meals to children across the state.

PARTNERSHIP

Presbyterian's summer meals programming in New Mexico resulted from collaboration between the service provider and hospital administrators, community health stakeholders, site food service directors, USDA, and the New Mexico Children, Youth and Families Department.

CONTACT INFORMATION

- Leigh Caswell, Vice President, Community Health,
Presbyterian Healthcare Services
lcaswell@phs.org

2. Breakfast After the Bell and Universal Breakfast

Galena Park High School | Texas

ABOUT THE ORGANIZATION

Galena Park High School is a public secondary school in Galena Park, Texas, that serves the city of Galena Park and portions of Jacinto City, Houston and unincorporated Harris County.

OPPORTUNITY

In 2018, the USDA selected the Galena Park Independent School District to implement a free breakfast and lunch program through the Community Eligibility Provision. Galena Park High School worked to ensure that universal meals be partnered with alternative breakfast models to ensure maximum participation among all students.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The Community Eligibility Provision is a meal service option for schools and school districts in impoverished areas. Participating schools can serve free breakfast and lunch to all enrolled students without collecting household applications. These schools are instead reimbursed by the USDA using a formula based on the percentage of students categorically eligible for free meals, which is based on their participation in other specific means-tested programs like SNAP. Galena Park High School expanded upon this program through alternative breakfast programming. In addition to traditional cafeteria breakfast, Galena operates:

- **Grab and Go Carts:** Students can pick up a bag of breakfast food and a beverage from a cart after traditional breakfast has ended. These high school students can then eat and drink the meal during their first period.
- **Second Chance Breakfast:** Galena Park High School has built in time between first and second period to offer breakfast. During this short mid-morning break, students can eat breakfast.

PARTNERSHIP

Galena Park High School, along with the rest of the school district, receives funding from the USDA and the Texas Education Agency to guarantee free breakfast to every student.

IMPACT

Since implementing these alternative breakfast models, participation has sharply increased from 200 students to more than 800 students. The combination of the measures with universal breakfast ensures more students staying focused during class, less stigma and better health and educational outcomes.

CONTACT INFORMATION

- John Puder, Regional Manager for Child Hunger Outreach
Baylor University's Texas Hunger Initiative (THI) Houston Office
John_Puder@baylor.edu

3. Parents as Teachers Program

ABLE Families | West Virginia

ABOUT THE ORGANIZATION

ABLE Families has empowered families in the rural Tug Valley area of northern Mingo County, West Virginia, through education and direct assistance. The nonprofit was founded in 1995 as a faith-based agency by the Sisters of St. Joseph of Wheeling to improve the lives of women and children in poverty.

OPPORTUNITY

According to Bread for the World, over 1 in 4 children and 1 in 5 women live in poverty in West Virginia. Families living in poverty are disproportionately more likely to experience worse health outcomes than those with higher incomes. This problem escalates in areas where families are isolated from social and economic resources.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

ABLE Families operates a parent-to-parent intervention program that focuses on improving the health and child development of low-income families in socially isolated areas. The Parents as Teachers (PAT) program provides bimonthly visits to participating families to improve life skills including literacy, provide nutrition education, and link families to public and private resources. Able Families, a member of the national PAT program, invites families to join at high schools, drug treatment centers and other community spaces.

Before transitioning to the PAT program, ABLE Families coordinated the Maternal Infant Health Outreach Worker (MIHOW) program. Like PAT, this program employed parents from the local community to educate participating families about child health, nutrition and parenting. It also provided resources to different services like food banks and medical centers for participating families.

IMPACT

In 2018, ABLE Families had 100 families participating in the Maternal Infant Health Outreach Worker program in Mingo County. Each family was visited once per month unless the family was high risk due to factors such as illiteracy or extremely high rates of food insecurity; in those cases, families were visited twice a month. The PAT program currently assists 90 families.

PARTNERSHIP

ABLE Families partners with the West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources, the national PAT program, and other private and faith-based partners to guarantee effective programming.

CONTACT INFORMATION

- Marlene Spaulding, Executive Director
ABLE Families
mspaulding@ablefamilies.org

What Can Legislators Do?

- Raise awareness of programs, including the Summer Food Service Program, National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs, and the Women, Infants, and Children program.
- Encourage community members to participate in these programs through press events, your newsletter or website, or through resolutions.
- Lead a meeting with state agencies or governors to work on outreach and engagement to promote child nutrition programs in your district.

Examples of Innovative Legislation

Oregon

In 2019, Oregon increased funds to boost the number of students benefitting from federal nutrition programs. The legislature enacted HB 3427, a school funding package that included \$40.5 million for school breakfast and lunch programs, and \$1 million in grants to school districts to buy equipment for Breakfast After the Bell.

New Hampshire

In 2019, New Hampshire enacted SB 82, which requires schools to make at least one free or reduced cost meal available to children who meet federal eligibility guidelines.

New York

In 2019, New York enacted NY S 1504, which includes grants for public elementary and secondary schools to purchase the equipment necessary for Breakfast After the Bell.

Child Nutrition Resources

- [USDA Child Nutrition Program Participation](#)
- [AECF Nutrition Program Participation at State Level](#)
- [USDA SFSP Website](#)
- [USDA FNS YouTube Channel](#)
- [Feeding America's Map the Meal Gap: County Food Insecurity](#)
- [Share Our Strength Summer Meals Website](#)
- [USDA School Lunch Program](#)
- [USDA School Breakfast Program](#)



Healthy Food Access Partnerships

1. Recipe for Success and Production Garden

New Hampshire Food Bank | New Hampshire

ABOUT THE ORGANIZATION

Sponsored by Catholic Charities New Hampshire, the New Hampshire Food Bank serves as the only food bank in the state, providing nutritious food and resources to hundreds of thousands of food insecure New Hampshire residents. The food bank distributes food to more than 425 partner agencies.

OPPORTUNITY

In New Hampshire, 1 in 9 residents experience hunger. At the same time, the National Restaurant Association reports that 37% of its member base believes labor recruitment is a growing challenge. The food bank recognized this unique opportunity to both boost food production and train residents to fill the labor gap.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The New Hampshire Food Bank developed two programs to combat food security and unemployment among low-income residents: the Recipe for Success Culinary Job Training Program and the Production Garden. The former is an eight-week course where individuals facing financial hardship can gain the skills and experience needed for employment in the food service industry. The program draws refugees, drug and alcohol rehabilitation program graduates, seniors who were forced to retire early, and young adults who want to join the culinary industry.

Students learn about food preparation, nutrition, safe food handling, and cleaning and sanitation. In addition to training, students cater events and prepare large quantities of food each day. Through these strenuous tasks, participants learn conflict management, teamwork and how to work in a professional setting. Students also receive training on basic financial skills, resume writing and interview techniques.

Along with training future food industry employees, the food bank operates a fresh produce garden. Located in North Manchester, the production garden provides produce for the Culinary Job Training Program as well as the food bank's 425 partner agencies. The food bank collaborates with volunteers from the community to water, weed and harvest the produce. They grow a variety of vegetables.

IMPACT

Both programs are effective at developing new workers and providing food to the New Hampshire community. The Recipe for Success students, along with three food bank staff members, provide 2,500 to 3,000 meals a week to homeless shelters and afterschool programs. Nearly everyone passes the course and receives an official certificate from the National Restaurant Association. Additionally, more than 15,300 pounds of produce were distributed from the Production Garden in 2018, thanks to the nearly 20,000 hours logged by volunteers.

PARTNERSHIP

The New Hampshire Food Bank works alongside a variety of private-sector partners including Share Our Strength, the Weyerhaeuser Foundation and State Farm Good Neighbor. The food bank works with the New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services to provide SNAP benefits to eligible participants.

CONTACT INFORMATION

- Jayson McCarter
New Hampshire Food Bank, Recipe for Success Chef Instructor
jmccarter@nhfoodbank.org

2. Hunger Councils and Grand Isle Collaborative Project

Hunger Free Vermont | Vermont

ABOUT THE ORGANIZATION

Since 1993, Hunger Free Vermont (HFV) has advocated for anti-poverty policy and worked with state agencies and community groups to develop sustainable solutions to end hunger. The organization offers training and assistance to Vermont schools, child care providers, advocates, service providers and health professionals to increase enrollment in SNAP and other federal and state anti-poverty programs.

OPPORTUNITY

In the state of Vermont, nearly 10% of the population lives in food insecure households. Over 30% of households have incomes low enough to qualify for SNAP. Economic inequality also constitutes a major problem in areas such as Grand Isle County, where community surveys revealed a high rate of childhood hunger among families. Physical and social isolation leads to increased hunger in this community.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

HFV organizes 10 councils on hunger across all 14 counties to develop multi-sector approaches to end food insecurity in all areas of the state. The hunger council in Grand Isle County noticed significant economic disparities in the area and an already existing collaboration to improve the lives of Grand Isle County residents.

HFV developed the Partnership for a Hunger-Free Grand Isle County with support from the University of Vermont Medical Center Foundation to establish and expand nutrition programs to eligible residents. The coalition promotes strategies to eliminate obstacles to food access and the stigma associated with public benefits. Its work breaks down into six programmatic areas:

- **Food Access Community Engagement.** HFV invited all Grand Isle County residents to participate in a hunger-oriented community survey with results shared through community discussions.
- **Food Resources Guide.** HFV distributes a guide on federal nutrition programs and the application process to key service providers and community members.
- **Food Shelf on Wheels.** HFV supplements Meals on Wheels programming by adding a “pop-up” food distribution service at a local church.
- **School Nutrition Programs and Gleaning.** HFV organizes gleaning field trips to collect excess food from farms, grocers, restaurants, etc., and advocates for stronger child nutrition programs.
- **Farmers Market Access.** HFV provides transportation and incentives to travel to a farmers market, and participants receive \$10 to purchase food at the farmers market.
- **Community Medical Providers Outreach and Screening.** HFV works with health care providers to screen patients for food insecurity and connect patients with nutrition resources as needed.

IMPACT

Overall, HFV has increased access to affordable healthy food to all populations. Additionally, HFV now sponsors 10 regional hunger councils, connecting the more than 1,000 local community leaders to advocate against food insecurity in every county.

PARTNERSHIP

HFV collaborates with farmers markets, health centers, local government and the Vermont Department of Health to run these programs.

CONTACT INFORMATION

- Katy Davis
Hunger Free Vermont, Community Health Initiatives Director
kdavis@hungerfreevt.org

3. Healthy Corner Store Initiative and Heart Smarts Program The Food Trust | Pennsylvania and New Jersey

ABOUT THE ORGANIZATION

Founded in 1992, The Food Trust is working to ensure that everyone has access to affordable, nutritious food and information to make healthy decisions. Working with neighborhoods, schools, grocers, farmers and policymakers, The Food Trust developed a comprehensive approach to improved food access that combines nutrition education and greater availability of affordable, healthy food.

OPPORTUNITY

According to a recent study by the USDA, 29.7 million lower-income Americans live more than 1 mile from the nearest supermarket. They struggle to feed their families healthy foods, travel great distances to the nearest supermarket, pay higher prices for lower-quality food at corner stores and suffer from higher rates of chronic diet-related diseases. A study published in American Academy of Pediatrics News found that the average Philadelphia student purchases more than 350 calories on each visit to the corner store—and 42% of them shop at corner stores twice a day, five days a week. Corner stores, as small businesses embedded in local economy and community fabric, need strong partners and specialized support to identify ways to make fresh and healthy food economically viable and sustainable for their communities.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

In 2004, The Food Trust developed the Healthy Corner Store Initiative (HCSI) to increase the availability and awareness of healthy foods in neighborhoods that lack supermarkets and/or other fresh food retailers. The Food Trust works in partnership with local public agencies, health care providers, and community-based partners and residents to develop and support healthy corner store networks in rural and urban communities alike. The Food Trust's staff of seasoned practitioners currently lead direct HCSI programming in partnership with more than 1,000 stores across six states (California, Delaware, Indiana, New Jersey and Pennsylvania).

Through healthy food retail programming, corner store owners receive training around sourcing and stocking healthy food options, including fresh produce. The Food Trust's healthy food retail technical assistance provides stores with display equipment and merchandizing guides for stocking healthy foods and beverages, along with marketing kits to help build awareness and demand for new, healthy products.

Community engagement is a core component of The Food Trust's HCSI programming. The Food Trust recruits and hires people from the neighborhood in which HCSI take place. These individuals are hired as members of the local HCSI team and provide vital on-the-ground support to stores. They identify culturally relevant healthy food and fresh produce that people in their community want to eat and promote the efforts and changes that store owners are making. For example, in Philadelphia, The Food Trust partners with more than 350 corner store owners, the majority of whom are native Spanish speakers and part of the city's growing Latino business community. In addition to the hired residents or "outreach associates," The Food Trust developed bilingual marketing and nutrition education materials, participated in community-based events and worked with local popular media outlets.

IMPACT

Since 2010, the HCSI has expanded to include 1,000 small food stores across six states and across both urban and rural regions. The Food Trust has also provided technical assistance to small stores in more than 30 states.

PARTNERSHIP

The HCSI was started by The Food Trust in 2004 and in the years since, has included many local and community-based partners and funders. Major partnerships that have supported expanding the initiative include store owners and community members, the Philadelphia Department of Public Health, the Pennsylvania Department of Health, the New Jersey Department of Health, Campbell's Soup Company, AstraZeneca Healthcare Foundation, Jefferson Center for Urban Health, and the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development.

CONTACT INFORMATION

- Bridget Palombo, Senior Associate
The Food Trust
bpalombo@thefoodtrust.org

4. Full Lives Program

Greater Twin Cities United Way | Minnesota

ABOUT THE ORGANIZATION

United Way improves lives by mobilizing the caring power of communities around the world to advance the common good. The nonprofit tackles education, income and health disparities through its 1,200 local United Way offices, including Greater Twin Cities United Way (GTCUW).

OPPORTUNITY

Nearly 350,000 Minnesotans live in food deserts—neighborhoods that lack access to affordable and nutritious food. While it falls in the food desert category, North Minneapolis is an area where efforts have been underway for years—and significant progress made—to improve issues related to poverty and institutional disinvestment, racism, education and health outcomes.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

In 2017, United Way created and launched the Full Lives Program to strengthen the North Minneapolis community food system. Made possible by a grant from the General Mills Foundation, this community-led program was designed to provide residents with access to affordable, nutritious food and food-related jobs. GTCUW worked innovatively with local nonprofit organizations like Appetite for Change, Northpoint Health and Wellness, Project Sweetie Pie and Pillsbury United Communities, among others, to develop projects centered on improving the community food system. GTCUW and the General Mills Foundation invested \$1.5 million in organizations to help advance the following goals:

- Increase food skills, availability and access to healthy and culturally appropriate food.
- Increase consumption and affordability of healthy food.
- Support job skills development and increase incomes for low-income minority, immigrant and refugee residents.

IMPACT

The Full Lives Program provided one-time, two-year grant funding for 14 projects across 11 organizations in North Minneapolis. These projects have collectively reached more than 30,000 people with their programs, strengthened over 100 community gardens, created 145 youth jobs and 45 jobs for adults, and helped bring a new grocery store to the neighborhood. Some examples of programs include:

- Green Garden Bakery, a youth-run bakery that promotes health and sustainability through gardening and selling vegetable-based goods.
- Appetite for Change, an organization that created a food aggregation table linking corner store owners with farmers market vendors, gardeners, non-local produce distributors and others.
- Twin Cities Mobile Market, a mobile grocery store retrofitted on a city bus that delivers low-cost, healthy produce and food to low-income seniors and residents at five sites throughout North Minneapolis.

The success and innovation of the Full Lives Program has inspired other communities to replicate its design. United Way of Buffalo and Erie County in New York was the first site set to adopt the community food systems model, serving as a demonstration site for other communities. In this and other expansions, United Way will work to leverage expertise of the United Way network to support adoption, design, implementation and evaluation.

PARTNERSHIP

The Full Lives Program was formed as the result of a collaboration between the General Mills Foundation and the Greater Twin Cities United Way. City agencies, including the City of Minneapolis Coordinator's Office of Sustainability and the Minneapolis Department of Health, have supported the work of the program as well.

CONTACT INFORMATION

- Alyssa Banks, Program Officer
Greater Twin Cities United Way
alyssa.banks@gtcuw.org

What Can Legislators Do?

- Raise awareness of innovative nonprofit work that encourages eating healthy food among a variety of populations.
- Encourage community members to volunteer for their local food bank, anti-hunger organization or school.
- Lead a meeting with state agencies or governors to work on outreach and engagement to increase participation in programs.

Examples of Innovative Legislation

California

In 2017, California sought to improve the work and capacity of corner stores to serve healthy foods. The Legislature enacted AB 97, the Budget Act of 2017, which included funding to increase the percentage of corner stores in low-income communities using energy-efficient refrigeration equipment to maintain their healthy foods.

Hawaii

In April 2019, Hawaii passed SB 50 to fund the Nutrition Employment and Training Program. It encourages SNAP recipients to enroll in college or career training programs by providing, in addition to students' SNAP benefits, reimbursement for gas, books, supplies and uniforms. Students in this program are exempt from SNAP's 24 hours per week work requirement.

New Jersey

In 2019, New Jersey passed AB 4704, the Food Desert Produce Pilot Program Act, which creates a two-year program that works with private partners to establish weekly produce markets in three food desert communities.

Healthy Food Access Resources

- [Feeding America's Map the Meal Gap: County Food Insecurity in the United States](#)
- [National Consumers' League: Corner Stores](#)
- [Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis Food System Initiatives](#)



Food Distribution Partnerships

1. Community Food Rescue

Manna Food Center | Maryland

ABOUT THE ORGANIZATION

Since opening its doors in 1983, Manna Food Center has grown from serving hundreds of people each year to serving more than 30,000 Montgomery County residents. Manna Food Center aims to eliminate hunger in the county through food distribution, nutrition education and advocacy for a stronger social safety net.

OPPORTUNITY

In Montgomery County, nearly a quarter of solid municipal waste, or 146,000 tons, is unused food. These food items stem from all sources, including grocery stores, farmers, restaurants, schools and caterers. Wasted food contributes to greenhouse gas pollution and squanders critical resources in the production of that food. At the same time, 63,000 residents struggle with food insecurity. Manna launched Community Food Rescue in 2014 to redirect unsold surplus food before it is wasted. New technological developments can help address this gap.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Inspired by a student-run food recovery program, Community Food Rescue (CFR) partners with hunger relief organizations, volunteers and businesses to diminish food waste in their community. Through a county grant, the program uses ChowMatch, a real-time matching software for recovering and distributing unused food items. ChowMatch connects anti-hunger organizations like food pantries and soup kitchens with businesses that donate unsold food, as well as volunteers to transport the food.

Using ChowMatch, businesses schedule “food runs” where they enter food categories of their unused food, quantity of food and appropriate pick up times. ChowMatch matches the donation with one of the

network agencies and rotates agency selection to ensure equal distribution. ChowMatch then sends out an email to a volunteer base. Volunteers can choose to transport that food run.

In addition to using new technological developments, the CFR program educates food recipient agencies and offers competitive mini-grants to increase rescuing capabilities. Education includes workshops on food safety, written guidelines, brochures, website resources and videos about how to handle and transport recovered food safely. CFR also tests volunteers on food safety knowledge before they become active food runners. Along with training, Manna Food Center provides mini-grants for hunger relief organizations to buy refrigerators, storage space and other infrastructure to safely store food.

IMPACT

Since CFR's start in 2015, the network has grown to include 176 donors, 70 food recipient organizations and 145 volunteers. Cumulatively, 5,345,002 pounds of food have been collected, representing nearly 4.5 million meals.

PARTNERSHIP

Manna Food Center partners with the Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services as well as multiple community businesses and nonprofit agencies.

2. Loaves & Fishes

Food Recovery Program and Gleaning | South Carolina

ABOUT THE ORGANIZATION

Founded in 1991, [Loaves & Fishes](#) has tackled hunger by recovering and redistributing food. The Greenville-based nonprofit partners with businesses, farmers, restaurants and other organizations with extra food to address the food waste and food insecurity present in Greenville County, South Carolina.

OPPORTUNITY

More than 63,000 residents in Greenville remain food insecure with two-thirds of them in single-parent families with young children. At the same time, there are massive amounts of edible food being thrown away by grocery stores, restaurants and other food-making organizations.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

With the help of volunteers, Loaves & Fishes organizes both food recovery trips and food distribution trips. The organization operates seven days a week. Each day, volunteers travel to food donors, including farmers, restaurants, catering companies, etc., to pick up food that would otherwise be wasted. Waste usually stems from mis-stocking, accidental over-orders or aesthetic reasons. Volunteers pick up this food using refrigerated boxed trucks, and then bring it straight to the food recipient, such as a food pantry or homeless shelter. Most of these trips are planned ahead of time; however, Loaves & Fishes also works with call-ins.

To maximize the amount of donated produce, Loaves & Fishes works with farmers and other organizations for gleaning operations. Loaves & Fishes partners with the Society of St. Andrews' Beechwood Farms gleaning program. Volunteers from the society glean, or extract, food that is unsellable because of aesthetic reasons. Volunteers from Loaves & Fishes travel to pick up the gleaned food items to redistribute to the nonprofit's partners.

IMPACT

In 2018, Loaves & Fishes coordinated the donation of more than 2.2 million pounds of food to 96 partner agencies around Greenville County. Thanks to the 200 volunteers and 150 food donors, Loaves & Fishes served nearly 280,000 Greenville individual residents.

PARTNERSHIP

Loaves & Fishes partners with a variety of private partners. It does not partner with the state of South Carolina. However, similar nonprofits in other states do receive assistance from their state government. For example, the Vermont legislature passed the [Universal Recycling Law](#) in 2012, which bans disposal of food waste. This legislation led to an increase of 40% in food donations.

CONTACT INFORMATION

- Katie Plowman, Operations Manager
Loaves & Fishes
katie@loavesandfishesgreenville.org

3. Senior Food Pack Program and Mobile Food Pantries

Great Plains Food Bank | North Dakota

ABOUT THE ORGANIZATION

Serving as the only food bank in North Dakota, Great Plains is the largest anti-relief organization in the state. Through its staff and large volunteer base, the food bank administers federal child nutrition programs, collaborates with disaster relief organizations, and distributes food to more than 213 partner agency feeding programs across North Dakota and Clay County, Minnesota.

OPPORTUNITY

Across the country, an estimated [7.2%](#) of seniors age 60 or older experienced food insecurity in 2019. Several factors contribute to senior hunger, including disability or functional limitations, lack of reliable social support, lack of reliable transportation and a lack of income. Seniors require additional support to fight back against hunger.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The Great Plains Food Bank developed the Senior Food Pack Program from the USDA's Commodity Supplemental Food Program. The USDA program is a commodity-based program, providing nutritionally balanced, shelf-stable food packages. North Dakotans age 60 and over with incomes of less than 130% of the federal poverty line are eligible for the program. The Food Bank runs this program in 25 counties across North Dakota, feeding seniors from all demographics.

Food packages include a variety of foods, such as milk, juice, oats, cereal, rice, pasta, peanut butter, dry beans, canned meat, poultry, fish, and canned fruits and vegetables. In 2018, the Great Plains Food Bank introduced fresh produce into its food packages.

In addition to the Senior Food Pack Program, the food bank implemented a mobile food pantry program and a pop-up perishable food program. The former distributes fresh vegetables, meat, bakery items and boxed goods to a distribution site close to people in need. This program helps seniors or other community members who are unable to travel far distances to acquire food. The latter rescues perishable foods from grocery stores, bakeries, restaurants, hospitals, colleges, schools and grocery wholesalers in the Fargo-Moorhead and Bismarck-Mandan areas and delivers the food to shelters, soup kitchens and food pantries.

IMPACT

As of May 2019, the Great Plains Food Bank serves around 650 seniors every other month. Seniors have reported a high rate of satisfaction with the program and the introduction of fresh fruits and vegetables.

PARTNERSHIP

The Great Plains Food Bank partners with Feeding America, the nation’s largest hunger-relief charity, as well as with the North Dakota Department of Education and the United States Department of Agriculture.

CONTACT INFORMATION

- Jenae Meske, Program Coordinator
Great Plains Food Bank
jmeske@greatplainsfoodbank.org

4. Darden Harvest and Food Donation Connection

Throughout the U.S.

ABOUT THE ORGANIZATION

[Darden Restaurants](#) is committed to aiding in the fight against hunger through its partnership with Feeding America and [Food Donation Connection](#) (FDC).

In 2019, the Darden Foundation provided \$2 million to support Feeding America and its member food banks across all 50 states. For every dollar donated, Feeding America can supply 10 meals to people in need, adding up to 20 million meals in 2019. These efforts go hand in hand with the Darden Harvest program—established in 2003 with the support from FDC—in which every one of the restaurant group’s 1,800 restaurants donates food. FDC provides restaurants and retail establishments with alternatives to discarding surplus wholesome food by linking food service donors with surplus food to local hunger relief agencies.

OPPORTUNITY

Americans throw away more than 25% of the food they prepare—about 96 billion pounds of food waste each year, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. At the same time, more than 41 million people struggle with hunger in the United States, including 13 million children and 5 million seniors. That means 1 in 8 households are food insecure, living without consistent access to food.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Each day, across every Darden restaurant, surplus, wholesome food that isn’t served to guests is “harvested” and safely prepared for donation to a local nonprofit partner. Following a strict process to ensure the food’s quality and safety, the food is prepared, frozen and picked up regularly by an organization in the FDC network. FDC’s role is to link the donors with food rescue groups or organizations feeding the needy, and to assist in developing product quality and handling standards, tax valuation, donation reporting, and ongoing monitoring and follow-up to ensure program implementation and growth. In addition to tax benefits, donors receive corporate goodwill, enhanced community involvement and the added benefit of diverting quality food from the waste stream.

IMPACT

Darden Harvest donates nearly 8 million pounds of food every year. Since its inception in 2003, the Harvest program has donated more than 115 million pounds of food to community food banks across the country. That’s the equivalent of more than 95 million meals.

PARTNERSHIP

Darden Restaurants, in partnership with Food Donation Connection.

CONTACT INFORMATION

- Amanda Grimmer, Senior Director of Government Affairs
Darden Restaurants
AGrimmer@darden.com
- Jim Larson, Executive Director
Food Donation Connection
Jim.Larson@foodtodonate.com

What Can Legislators Do?

- Promote unique solutions to combatting hunger through press events, your newsletter or website, or through resolutions.
- Encourage food retailers in the private sector to partner with food banks to decrease food waste and hunger.
- Encourage community members to volunteer for their local food bank, anti-hunger organization or school.

Examples of Innovative Legislation

Georgia

In 2015, Georgia created incentives for businesses to donate food to nonprofit organizations. The legislature enacted [HB 426](#), which created a new exemption from state sales and use tax for individual taxpayers who donate food and food ingredients following a natural disaster. The exemption encourages Georgia residents to donate food to nonprofit organizations like food banks.

Maryland

In 2019, Maryland enacted HB 838, which establishes a Restaurant Meals Program within its Department of Human Services. This program allows disabled and senior residents to purchase certain foods at restaurants using a food supplement benefit.

North Dakota

In 2009, North Dakota enacted S 2231, which provided funds for a partnership between the state's Department of Human Services and the Great Plains Food Bank. The food bank developed innovative ways to reach rural areas, like the mobile food pantry.

Food Distribution Resources

- [Feeding America: Find Your Local Food Bank](#)
- [Feeding America Hunger Blogs](#)
- [America's Health Rankings: Food Insecurity of Seniors](#)
- [CSFP Food Package Toolkit](#)



Bilingual and Multicultural Partnerships

1. Lucha Contra El Hambre

Hispanic Federation | New York and Florida

ABOUT THE ORGANIZATION

Founded in 1990, the [Hispanic Federation](#) supports Latino families and strengthens Latino institutions through programming around education, health, immigration, civic engagement, economic empowerment and the environment.

OPPORTUNITY

Over 1 in 5 Latinos experience food insecurity and 1 in 4 Latino children live in food insecure households. Despite constituting 20% of all SNAP participants, SNAP enrollment for Latinos is significantly low. Only half of Latinos who are eligible for SNAP benefits enroll in the program. At the same time, Hurricane Maria forced an estimated 30,000 to 50,000 Puerto Ricans to relocate to Florida. Food access is vital to these disaster survivors.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Started in New York, the Lucha Contra El Hambre is dedicated to providing increased food access to food insecure households. Since 2015, the program also works out of Central Florida and has worked in cities including Atlanta, Newark, N.H., and Philadelphia. The program distributes food to 17 food pantries and social service organizations throughout New York City in addition to one-off events during the year. The Hispanic Federation ensures culturally appropriate food is distributed to Latino families. Their work also includes SNAP education and nutrition education.

In addition to its programming in New York, Lucha Contra El Hambre has been active in the greater Orlando,

Fla., area since 2015 and increased its anti-hunger efforts in the area post-Hurricane Maria. The Hispanic Federation held fundraisers to provide immediate relief for food, water and supplies.

IMPACT

The Lucha Contra El Hambre program distributes more than 85,000 pounds of food per year, providing an estimated 100,000 meals for areas served by Latino institutions. Since 2011, the program has provided more than 1 million meals to Latinos in Florida, Georgia, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania and Puerto Rico. Additionally, the Hispanic Federation developed a cash-assistance program in the form of one lump sum of \$1,000 for families who left Puerto Rico because of the hurricane. Between August and December 2018, this lump sum assisted families with moving expenses, transportation and purchasing food.

PARTNERSHIP

The Hispanic Federation distributes food through partnerships with Ford Motor Company, Bank of America, Emergency Food and Shelter National Board Program, and the New York City Department of Youth and Community Development.

CONTACT INFORMATION

- Diana Caba
Hispanic Federation, Senior Director of Economic Empowerment
dcaba@hispanicfederation.org

2. Bilingual Culinary Training Program

La Cocina VA | Virginia

ABOUT THE ORGANIZATION

In 2013, La Cocina VA formed to create opportunities for social and economic change through food distribution, empowerment through job training and community education. With the assistance of chefs, social workers, nutritionists, doctors and professional development experts, La Cocina VA began training low-income residents in the culinary arts. La Cocina VA has expanded from serving only Latinos to refugees and other low-income groups.

OPPORTUNITY

In the U.S., Latinos encounter obstacles hindering their ability to find steady work: language barriers, stigma and a new cultural environment for recent immigrants. Recent refugees also face similar barriers to finding employment. Culinary arts training provides an avenue for immigrants and refugees to gain new skills that can lead to employment within the food service and hospitality industry.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The Bilingual Culinary Job Training program is a 16-week course that prepares unemployed residents for careers in the food service industry as well as nutritious meals to the Greater Arlington community. Along with instruction, the free program provides food, equipment, facilities and uniforms. Participants receive meal preparation training and a ServSafe course by the National Restaurant Association covering food safety and sanitation. In addition to ServSafe certification, every student graduates with a certificate of completion from a workforce development program in the culinary arts by Northern Virginia Community College.

The Bilingual Culinary Job Training program supplements cooking education with English language classes, career readiness training and job placement assistance. Students receive 12 weeks of English classes that are contextualized for culinary employment. La Cocina VA's workforce development coordinator teaches an Employment Readiness Module and Life Skills Module, which cover topics such as personal growth, conflict resolution and techniques for successful job applications. Finally, students receive a one-month paid internship with one of the 50 culinary partners of La Cocina VA.

Program participants not only benefit themselves, but the community at large, making and donating more than 10,000 nutritious meals a year to low-income families. Meals consist of fruit, vegetables and lean proteins that are sent to affordable housing units managed by the Arlington Partnership for Affordable Housing and Volunteers of America homeless shelters. Along with meals, recipients receive the ingredients and recipes to make the meals themselves.

IMPACT

Most graduates of the Bilingual Culinary Job Training course make between \$14 and \$21 an hour. Nearly 88% stay at their internship site after their month-long internship ends and more than three-quarters are still employed after a year. After graduating, La Cocina VA offers another two years for more intermittent post-culinary training focused on adopting new techniques.

La Cocina VA plans to expand within the year to include a kitchen incubator for culinary entrepreneurs, a catering company employing previous program participants, and a community café that reflects the culture of participants.

PARTNERSHIP

La Cocina VA collaborates with a variety of employers, including grocery stores, hotels and restaurants, as well as private and public partners to fund existing programs and its upcoming expansion. La Cocina VA intends to build strong relationships with the Virginia government.

3. New American Sustainable Agriculture Project **Cultivating Community | Maine**

ABOUT THE ORGANIZATION

Since forming in 2001, Cultivating Community has been dedicated to growing sustainable communities by expanding access to healthy, local food and empowering children, low-income adults and refugee communities to work toward developing a sustainable food system. The nonprofit also teaches and advocates for ecological food production.

OPPORTUNITY

The United States has had a federally funded [refugee resettlement program](#) since 1980, creating a federal-state-nonprofit partnership for humanitarian relief. Refugees receive assistance through employment, social services and language training to become economically self-sufficient. State and local partners integrate refugees resettling in rural areas by creating models that tap refugees' existing skills through agriculture, helping them establish farms that provide both income and nutritious food for their families.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

To address both the need for local agriculture as well as refugee resettlement, the New American Sustainable Agriculture Project (NASAP) was formed. In 2009, Cultivating Community acquired ownership of the program from the local entrepreneurship-focused organization Coastal Enterprises Inc. NASAP provides participants access to land, skills, support and resources to launch and grow farm-based enterprises.

Refugee and immigrant farmers primarily work out of the organization's two incubator farms in Lisbon and Falmouth, Maine. Along with farming, participants sell the fresh vegetables they produce to generate income for themselves. Food grown goes to farm stands in low-income neighborhoods or is a part of community-supported agriculture. After graduating from the five-year program, participants can either remain and work on the two farms or launch their own farming enterprise to gain financial independence. Cultivating Community provides marketing, networking opportunities and some material support to build up the farm enterprise.

Cultivating Community provides space for families from similar areas and cultures to interact and bond with each other. Families and children of participants are always welcome in the farming space.

Additionally, much of what is produced is either sold or donated to the low-income refugee and immigrant community in Maine.

IMPACT

Under Cultivating Community, NASAP has eight graduates who are farming independently. There are 35 farmers in the program as of May 2019. NASAP farmers have used their connections to form their enterprises. For example, participants sold vegetables to Bates College through Cultivating Community. Now, multiple graduates sell the vegetables to Bates College and other organizations through their own co-op.

PARTNERSHIP

Cultivating Community partners with local and statewide foundations, private donors and the USDA. Cultivating Community is a member of the larger coalition of refugee-empowerment agricultural organizations.

CONTACT INFORMATION

- Alex Redfield, Farmer Training Program Director
Cultivating Community
alex@cultivatingcommunity.org

What Can Legislators Do?

- Raise awareness of programs that decrease hunger and promote work among immigrant and refugee communities through press events, your newsletter or website, or through resolutions.
- Visit anti-hunger sites that have bilingual or multicultural programming to learn more about your district's community.
- Encourage community members to volunteer for the local food bank, anti-hunger organization or school.

Examples of Innovative Legislation

Colorado

In 2019, Colorado developed a support system for those who need assistance in finding and maintaining employment. The legislature enacted HB 1107, which created a Department of Labor and Employment program to provide emergency employment support and job retention services to low-income state residents.

Maryland

In 2019, Maryland enacted [SB 1218](#), which formed the Ending Youth Homeless Grant program to focus on reducing youth homelessness. The law addresses the issue through looking at disparities based on race, ethnicity and citizenship status.

New Mexico

In 2019, New Mexico enacted HB 548, an appropriation bill, which provides nearly \$100,000 to develop strategies to increase immigrant family engagement in education.

Bilingual and Multicultural Resources

- [NCSL Immigrant Policy Project](#)
- [Migration Policy Institute: U.S. Immigrant Population by State and County](#)
- [DHS: Immigration Data & Statistics](#)
- [Refugee Admissions](#)
- [Feeding America: Hispanic and Latino Hunger](#)

NCSL Contacts:

Ann Morse

Director, Hunger Partnership
Washington, D.C.
202-624-8697
Ann.Morse@ncsl.org

Haley Nicholson

Policy Director, Health
Washington, D.C.
202-624-8662
Haley.Nicholson@ncsl.org



Tim Storey, Executive Director

7700 East First Place, Denver, Colorado 80230, 303-364-7700 | 444 North Capitol Street, N.W., Suite 515, Washington, D.C. 20001, 202-624-5400

www.ncsl.org

© 2019 by the National Conference of State Legislatures. All rights reserved.