

Hunger Solutions for the Faith Community

A guide for congregations seeking to improve
food security in Dallas County



DALLAS
COALITION
for HUNGER
SOLUTIONS

dallashungersolutions.org

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The **Dallas Coalition for Hunger Solutions** (DCHS) is a coalition of organizations and individuals committed to improving food security in Dallas County by empowering residents to gain equal access to healthy food. DCHS is chaired by United States Representative Eddie Bernice Johnson. Members of the leadership team represent the following organizations: Children at Risk, Community Council of Greater Dallas, Dallas Baptist Association, Episcopal Diocese of Dallas, FEED 3, GROW North Texas, North Texas Food Bank, Parkland Foundation, The Senior Source, Texas Hunger Initiative, and United Way of Metropolitan Dallas. For more information about DCHS, contact wyonella_henderson-greene@baylor.edu, call 214-951-7780, or visit us online at www.dallashungersolutions.org.

Hunger Solutions for the Faith Community, 3rd edition.

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Introduction

Almost 1 in 5 adults and more than 1 in 4 children in Dallas County are food insecure and at risk of hunger. These statistics represent thousands of individuals who struggle each day to acquire enough food to get by. This is both unacceptable and unnecessary.

The faith community already plays a major role in improving food security in our city. Each congregation can take additional steps to ensure that children, families, and seniors have the nutritious food they need to flourish.

In this guide (created by DCHS's faith action team) are tested, effective solutions to the problem of hunger. These solutions already exist in the community, and they need the support of local congregations. They generally require limited financial commitments. But they can make a very substantial impact on hunger.

Congregations, as well as anyone who is concerned about hunger, will benefit from the resources included in this guide. Download a copy at www.dallashungersolutions.org.

For more information about the faith action team of Dallas Coalition for Hunger Solutions, contact DCHS coordinator Wyonella Henderson-Greene (214-951-7780 or wyonella_henderson-greene@baylor.edu); faith team co-chairs Dabney Dwyer (214-500-7205 or dwyerdab@gmail.com), or Jana Jackson (214-319-1167 or janajackson@dba.net).



Community Distribution Partnership



Overview

Community Distribution Partners (CDPs) with Crossroads Community Services provide healthy food, nutrition, and life-skills education to low-income families in their neighborhoods. Our two primary goals are to help ensure that all people in Dallas County have ready access to nourishing food, and to provide life-skills education that can help reduce obesity in impoverished areas.

"Crossroads has helped us serve families that were not able to get food, and it has been a blessing to us to help serve our community" *Dallas Community Fellowship, Inc.*

Our CDP network is comprised of approximately 80 local non-profit organizations and agencies including congregations, community centers, and low-income housing communities. Crossroads is a mini-food bank for organizations too small or not suited to be a North Texas Food Bank agency.

Impact on Hunger

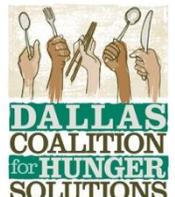
- Crossroads developed the CCS system that aligns the kinds and amounts of food people receive with the recommendations of the Dietary Guidelines for Americans (DGA), based on each person's age, gender, and activity level.
- Churches and non-profit organizations share Crossroads' client database and use their available resources of facilities, vehicles, volunteers, and love to offer not just more food, but a variety of foods that have high nutritional value.
- Churches and non-profit organizations work together in communities with high rates of food insecurity to help families stay within their monthly budgets, thus alleviating financial crises.

How to Help

A partnership with Crossroads allows you to obtain large quantities of nutritious groceries and distribute them to pre-registered families every month. A team picks up food from Crossroads and transports it to your facility. The food is distributed to your pre-registered families on the same day. Congregations pay a "shared maintenance fee" for the food they receive.

Contact

Contact Jesse Kramer, program director, jkramer@ccsdallas.org or 214-560-2511 ext. 402. Or, visit our website, www.ccsdallas.org. Click on "How to Help." There is a 3-step enrollment process and a list of prerequisites that should be met prior to becoming a Community Distribution Partner.





Community Distribution Partnership



**SHARING
LIFE™** Demonstrating
compassion™

Overview

Sharing Life Community Outreach in Mesquite serves as a food hub for the North Texas Food Bank. That means that congregations can provide food for their hungry neighbors by acquiring it from Sharing Life, and then distributing it to pre-registered clients the same day at their own building. Now congregations without the resources to provide a full-scale food pantry can serve their neighbors in an efficient way.

Impact on Hunger

- Congregations typically serve a smaller number of families, more often. That means that families receive a regular supply of food to supplement their diets and don't have to travel among several pantries each week to acquire the food they need.
- Because congregations are serving the same families each week, personal relationships develop. As they get to know their clients, congregations can help families with other issues that might be contributing to their food insecurity.
- Congregations do not have to organize food drives or otherwise spend time trying to acquire the appropriate foods for their families in need. The hub provides the congregations with fresh meat, vegetables, dairy, grains, and canned goods for a small handling fee.

"We serve families large and small who are going through financial difficulties due to medical bills. It's really fun to meet new friends from our neighborhood, and to many, it's a blessing to be able to receive food!"
Galloway Avenue Baptist Church, Mesquite.

How to Help

Congregations can complete the required application forms to become a community distribution partner with Sharing Life. If approved, your congregation will receive food from Sharing Life for a small handling fee. Then, you will distribute the food to families the same day you acquire it. Sharing Life provides the training and support that you need.

Contact

Contact Wendy Hardeman, wendy@sharinglifeoutreach.org or 214-308-0856, for more information about Sharing Life's community distribution partner program.



Community Gardens



Overview

Community gardens enable families to grow vegetables in abundance, to share produce with needy neighbors, and to benefit from selling at local farmers' markets. Community gardens help individuals achieve food security and build communities.

"One of the objectives of the garden at Temple Emanu-El is to respond to biblical teachings to provide for the poor. The Temple supports the Vickery Meadow food pantry, and we provide fresh produce from the garden. We are learning that many crops common to immigrant communities are easy to grow in Dallas. Fresh produce is appreciated and preferred to canned food" *Temple Emanu-El.*

Successful community gardens use wood chips, leaves, and cover crops to build healthy soil. Other characteristics of good gardens include using organic soil and materials, saving seeds for replanting, and selecting crop varieties that give high yields without disease and pest problems. Community gardeners do not use any chemicals. They save on water costs by using deep mulching and drip irrigation. A well-run community garden can provide enough food year-round for families to provide for their own needs, lower their food costs, and share with their neighbors.

Impact on Hunger

- Gives individuals and families opportunities to harvest food from their own land or in a community garden setting.
- Provides access to nutritionally rich foods that may otherwise be unavailable to low-income families and individuals.
- Greater yield per acre than traditional large-scale farming.
- Thousands of pounds of fresh produce donated to food pantries.

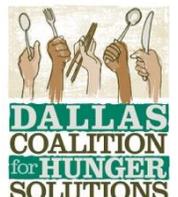
How to Help

Resources for beginners are available at www.communitygarden.org. Also, GROW North Texas guides groups that want to start community gardens. The DCHS's Urban Agriculture Team has website resources to help congregations begin their projects. Visit www.dallashungersolutions.org.

The North Texas Food Bank encourages partner gardens to donate 10 percent of the yield to the food bank. It also provides volunteers for planting, harvesting, and weeding. Contact nutrition@ntfb.org.

Contact

Contact Anita Mills, anita@grownorthtexas.org or 214-450-4606, for more information about community gardens.



Community Partner Program



Community Partner Program

Overview

The Community Partner Program (CPP) is a way for congregations to assist low-income community members with applying for SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) and other important public benefits via the web portal, www.yourtexasbenefits.com. Your congregation, mosque or organization can serve as a Community Partner in collaboration with the Texas Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC). Through HHSC and Texas A&M AgriLife Extension, a Community Partner Support Specialist will work with the Community Partners by providing training, technical assistance and program guidance.

“One major challenge for our parishioners is that their first language is Spanish. As a bilingual church, we are able to interpret their needs and submit their applications. Thank you for your training and for sending a representative to inform our congregation about food and health benefits. We pray that we may continue to help families in need of food and medical care. We want our church to be a haven for assistance” *Debra Vela, San Francisco de Asis Iglesia Episcopal.*

Impact on Hunger

Why is SNAP so important?

- It reduces food insecurity.
- It improves household nutritional intake and helps prevent childhood obesity.
- Every \$1 of SNAP benefits spent returns \$1.79 to the local economy.
- SNAP allows family to focus on their long-term goal of working towards self-sufficiency rather than their short-term food needs.

How to Help

There are two ways congregations can be Community Partners:

- Self-service site: Your organization provides an internet connected computer and private space for clients to apply for and manage their benefits online.
- Assistance site: In addition to provide computer access, your staff or volunteers are trained as “navigators” to help community members fill out the online benefits application.

Contact



For more information about the Community Partner Program and how your organization can become a Community Partner, contact Jade Edgar, jade.edgar@ag.tamu.edu, 979-204-9186; Brandi Sewell, brandi.sewell@ag.tamu.edu, 214-258-8324.

Cooking Matters



Overview

Cooking Matters is a 6-week course that teaches participants to shop smarter, use nutrition information to make healthier choices, and cook delicious, affordable meals. Cooking Matters also offers one-session courses, including *Cooking Matters at the Store*. Cooking Matters is a direct service program of Share Our Strength offered locally through the North Texas Food Bank.

Cooking matters is dedicated to empowering low-income individuals and families with the tools necessary to maintain a healthy diet on a limited budget.

Impact on Hunger

- A high percentage of participants in the course graduate, taking with them improved nutrition practices, eating habits, and food budgeting skills.
- Families on a tight budget learn food and shopping skills to make affordable, healthy meals at home.
- The *Cooking Matters at the Store* tour helps families learn how to shop wisely and make their food purchases go further.

"I've learned so much during the last six weeks. I'm eating and cooking smarter because of it. I think that if I continue I'll live a longer, active, and healthier life" *John, participant.*

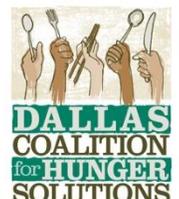
"The teacher taught food facts, and then she prepared a dish to eat. Near the end of the classes, they met at the grocery store. The teacher taught them how to shop for the best prices and nutritional value. Great class!" *First Baptist Church, Carrollton.*

How to Help

Congregations can host a one-session class or a 6-week course for adults, families, teens or children. Congregations are encouraged to provide volunteers to serve as grocery shoppers and classroom managers in addition to providing space for classes.

Contact

Contact Alisha Ford, nutrition@ntfb.org or 214-632-1333, for more information about completing a nutrition education request form. The nutrition services team can also connect you with additional resources (handouts, workshops) that are available in addition to Cooking Matters. Visit www.cookingmatters.org for more information.





Drop-In for a Meal



Overview

Approximately 1000 high school students in Dallas Public Schools are food insecure due to homelessness. These students are temporarily living in cars, shelters, sleeping on a friend's couch, or living on the streets.

Dallas high schools have drop-in centers that provide some food, clothing, personal items, school supplies, and a listening ear to these homeless students. Congregations can help them get their best start to the day by providing a nutritious breakfast before they go to class. Or, they can provide a satisfying meal to end the day.

Impact on Hunger

- A nutritious breakfast enables students to learn better throughout the day.
- Students can more easily arrive on time for school because they do not have to spend time looking for breakfast on their own.
- Students who might "make do" with a bag of chips as a meal substitute can improve their nutrition.

"Our youth group takes dinner to Promise House on the second Wednesday of each month. Our students enjoy getting to know the students when they serve this meal. We have been doing it for 2 years now. In fact, Promise House joins us for our Wednesday worship services every few weeks!" *Kenny Cheshier, Cliff Temple Baptist Church.*

How to Help

Congregations can adopt one day a week, or a month, to provide a warm meal to students who visit the school's drop-in center. A team of volunteers can prepare and serve the meal. Best of all, they can get to know students and be supportive of their efforts to remain in school during a difficult time in their lives.

Contact

Contact Mark Pierce, district homeless liaison for the Dallas Independent School District, mpierce@dallasisd.org or 972-749-5789, for information about providing a meal at a drop-in center.





Eating Well is a SNAP!



Overview

Too many seniors struggle with being able to afford a healthy and balanced diet. The Senior Hunger Action Team of the DCHS has an interactive presentation for low-income seniors designed to assist them in eating well on a limited budget, with a focus on how the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) can help them purchase healthy items to supplement their diet. The presentation includes information about which foods to eat to have a balanced diet, how to purchase healthy foods more economically, and the variety of resources, including SNAP, that seniors can use to supplement their diet.

"All of the presentations and presenters were excellent! I think that all of our residents found the information helpful" *April Parker, Social Services Director, Carpenter's Point Senior Living.*

"I am glad I came in to hear about eating well. It's going to help me eat better" *Senior at Magnolia Trace Senior Community.*

Impact on Hunger

- Senior hunger is a significant and growing problem, with more than 20,000 seniors in Dallas County living below the poverty line.
- More than 50 percent of seniors in Dallas County who are eligible for food assistance through SNAP are not utilizing that assistance.
- Sharing this information helps seniors eat well while also making it easier to apply for SNAP and access other food resources.

How to Help

Bring Eating Well is a SNAP! to your congregation. The program can be presented to a group of seniors. Each presentation includes having an application assistance navigator available to help seniors apply for SNAP on the spot.

Volunteer to be on the team of presenters. Each of the presentations are given by members of a volunteer speaker's bureau. Each presentation includes a nutrition education presenter and a SNAP/food resources presenter. You and others from your congregation can be trained to present.

Contact

Contact Wyonella Henderson-Greene, wyonella_henderson-green@baylor.edu or 214-951-7780, for more information about Eating Well is a SNAP!



Meals on Wheels



Meals on Wheels

Overview

VNA Meals on Wheels provides hot, nutritious, freshly-prepared meals five days a week to Dallas County residents who can't cook for themselves due to illness, advanced age, or disability. These meals contribute to the overall health and well-being of participating seniors. Without VNA Meals on Wheels, these seniors would go hungry.

Impact on Hunger

- Many seniors are in desperate need of nutritious meals and human contact in Dallas County.
- For many homebound elderly, sick, and disabled individuals, the difference between continuing to live in their own homes and moving into institutional care is a nutritious, home-delivered meal.
- Distributing Meals on Wheels provides social interaction for isolated, homebound seniors.
- Meals on Wheels also allows for advocacy and identification of needs for additional food and other in-home services.

How to Help

Your congregation can:

- Deliver meals during a "Day of Caring" hosted by VNA Meals on Wheels.
- Customize your own "Day of Caring" for your congregation by selecting delivery routes in your neighborhood to be delivered on a specific day of your choosing. This introduces potential volunteers to Meals on Wheels.
- Sign up with VNA Meals on Wheels to provide regular meal delivery weekly or monthly.

"During my Christmas vacation, I discussed with my husband how we needed to set a better example for our son and daughter of giving back to the community. My children were 12 and 4 years old when we began volunteering. Now, three years later, they look forward to each delivery. Outside of working as a computer analyst for an aviation company, being a mother and part-time student, the VNA Meals on Wheels calling has become a major purpose in my life. I am proud and happy to serve"
Angela Broomfield, Concord Baptist Church.

Contact

Contact Kim Peters, petersk@vnatexas.org or 214-689-2210, for more information about VNA Meals on Wheels.



Nourishing Neighbors



Overview

Many seniors who experience hunger lack convenient access to food sources like grocery stores and food pantries. This severely limits the opportunity for a balanced diet and a healthy lifestyle. The North Texas Food Bank does not want these hungry, homebound neighbors to be forgotten. Nourishing Neighbors is a program specifically targeting homebound seniors and mature adults with disabilities.

Impact on Hunger

- The volunteer-driven program allows our community to build stronger ties as we feed and socialize with neighbors in need.
- Participants receive at least 15-20 pounds of nutritious, easy-to-prepare food, including fresh produce and pet food, every other week.
- Community outreach is essential to this program. People who are homebound are often hard to identify simply because they are hidden behind the closed doors of their homes.
- Nourishing Neighbors is free to participants. It is funded by donations and depends on volunteer participation.

"Nourishing Neighbors has made a difference in my life. I wouldn't have the money for the medication I need without the program. I'm able to have fruit 2 times a day, when before I couldn't buy fruit because I couldn't get it home. Now I don't have to ask people to pick up things for me. It gives me a sense of independence" *Helen, a Nourishing Neighbors participant since 2012.*

How to Help

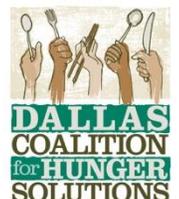
Your congregation can help by:

- Adopting a delivery route, whether it is an existing route or one in your neighborhood.
- Recruiting volunteers to deliver groceries to senior homes.
- Identifying persons in need and interviewing applicants for enrollment.

Contact

Contact Jennifer Mays, Manager of Senior Programs, nnteam@ntfb.org or 214-347-9589, for more information about volunteering with Nourishing Neighbors.

The North Texas Food Bank's Nourishing Neighbors program is an equal opportunity provider.





Out-of-School Child Meals



Overview

The federally-funded **Summer Meals Program** is designed to fill the summer hunger gap when children and teens are out of school and most at risk of going hungry. In Dallas County more than 70 percent of children rely on meals during the school year but less than 15 percent participate in Summer Meals, in spite of the more than 1,000 Summer Meals locations.

Afterschool programs keep young people safe, help working families and inspire learning. These programs are also critical in providing many children with healthy, nutritious meals after school. In the U.S. today, 8.4 million children participate in an afterschool program in their community, while 15.1 million children go home alone after school. For many of these children, that meal or snack they receive at their afterschool program is the last food they will have until a school breakfast the next morning.

Impact on Hunger

- Increases number of children and families aware of available free meals.
- Decreases risk of child food insecurity.
- Increases opportunities for safe and fun meal environments for children and teens.

How to Help

Donation Drive: Programs are always in need of more bubbles, water balloons, soccer balls, jump ropes, face paints, coloring books, temporary tattoos — you name it!

Adopt-a-Site: Congregations can serve a site regularly throughout the summer or during the school year. Volunteers can provide games, art programs and other activities providing additional incentive for children to come and participate, at the same time reducing food insecurity in the community.

Become a Site: If your location is a gathering place for children, consider becoming a meal site. If deemed eligible, you can be connected with meal program providers to bring meals directly to your site and provide at-risk youth direct access to meals in the out of school time, when they are most at risk.

“The youth look forward to this mission week every year. We’ve connected with the AmeriCorps members and wonder if some of the youth might consider AmeriCorps in their future. You get to connect with kids that you wouldn’t meet otherwise and provide hope beyond their sometimes difficult world by bringing freshness and fun to their games and mealtime.” *Ryan, Pastor at Central Presbyterian Church in Austin, TX*

Contact



Contact Loretta Landry, Dallas Summer & Supper Council, Leadership Team Co-Chair, Loretta_landry@baylor.edu or 214-951-7759, for more information about out-of-school meals.



Souper Bowl of Caring



"Our church has a new pastor, and we are looking for missions that a small church with older members can do. Souper Bowl of Caring is the perfect venue to celebrate God's love and bounty. Our congregation of about 75 members donated 200 cans of soup to Denton Christian Preschool so that each child (50 of them) was able to take home 4 cans each on Super Bowl weekend. We plan to do more to help them the rest of the year, and we will gather even more cans on Souper Bowl of Caring 2018!" *First Presbyterian Church, Denton.*

Overview

The Souper Bowl of Caring's annual Tackle Hunger campaign is an easy way for congregations to directly impact local hunger during the weeks leading up to the Super Bowl. The campaign uses the caring power of communities to stock the shelves of hunger relief organizations to help meet the basic needs of their clients.

The campaign comes at a critical time; many organizations report a decrease in donations and volunteers following the winter holiday season.

Impact on Hunger

- We mobilize a cross-section of congregations, businesses, schools and caring individuals to get involved in the fight against hunger locally.
- Direct support is important to beneficiary organizations.

Therefore, our registered volunteer groups identify a local food bank, food pantry or soup kitchen and donate 100 percent of their collection to that organization.

- The campaign offers a great opportunity for youth groups to take the lead in hosting your congregation's food drive.

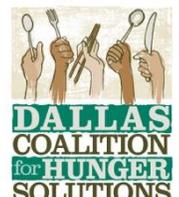
How to Help

Hosting a food drive is easy.

- Register your congregation at www.souperbowl.org.
- Identify a food bank, food pantry or soup kitchen.
- Host your food drive between January 1 and Souper Bowl Sunday.
- Deliver 100 percent of collected items to your designation organization.
- Report your total collection to www.souperbowl.org.

Contact

Contact Renee Gadson, North Texas Director, renee.gadson@souperbowl.org or 800-358-7687 ext. 706, for more information about Souper Bowl of Caring.



More Hunger Solutions

Included in previous guides

Congregate Meals

Congregate Meals, a program of Dallas County Health and Human Services, provides older adults with a nutritionally balanced meal in a group setting with peers (i.e., senior centers). It encourages social interaction as well as mental and physical activity. Congregations can help by volunteering at a local congregate meals senior center or hosting a congregate meals site.

Contact Jeanette Manzano, jeanette.manzano@dallascounty.org or 214-819-1864, for more information about Congregate Meals.

Family Garden Initiative

The Family Garden Initiative (FGI) uses unique methods to provide an urban garden to low-income families so that they can learn how to grow fresh vegetables. Each kit includes a portable 16 square foot garden, plants, seeds, watering can, care guide and recipe book. Congregations can help by underwriting the cost of garden kits for families in their communities and coaching them through the planting and growing process.

Contact Alex Marks, alex.marks@familygardeninitiative.org or 440-305-0344, for more information about the Family Garden Initiative.

AgriLife Nutrition Education

The Dallas County Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Office offers two nutrition education programs for families most vulnerable to food insecurity. These programs include basic nutrition, food preparation, food budget management and food safety. The Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) focuses on children and youth, and Better Living for Texans (BLT) is designed for older adults who are receiving or eligible to receive SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program). Congregations can help by scheduling, hosting and supporting lessons for families and older adults in their communities with limited resources.

Contact Cheryl Miller, cheryl.miller@ag.tamu.edu, or 214-688-0903, for more information about AgriLife Nutrition Education.

Let us know about your hunger solution!



Contact us to let us know how you are improving access to healthy food in your own community: Wyonella Henderson-Greene (214-951-7780 or wyonella_henderson-greene@baylor.edu), Dabney Dwyer (214-500-7205 or dwyerdab@gmail.com), or Jana Jackson (214-319-1167 or janajackson@dba.net).