The Iowa Food Systems Council’s Food Access & Health Work Group invites you to step up to the plate. We all have something to bring to the table to end food insecurity and obesity in Iowa. Here is a list of things you can do NOW to cultivate food security and improve the health of your community.

**Individual**
- Grow a garden! Donate extra garden produce to a food pantry. Find a food pantry near you at www.Cultivatelowa.org
- Volunteer at a food pantry or meal program
- Share a Twitter or Facebook post from Cultivate Iowa, Feeding America, or your local food pantry to educate your friends about food insecurity
- Take the SNAP Challenge and live on just $4.50 of food a day (http://frac.org/initiatives/snapfood-stamp-challenges/)

**Organization (work, school, church)**
- Start a garden at your school, office, civic organization or church and donate produce to a food pantry or other community organization
- Provide information about the benefits of participating in school lunch, SNAP or WIC to people served by your organization
- Prepare healthy meals and snacks for those served by your organization, especially children in the summer
- Promote the use of SNAP benefits for the purchase of edible plants and seeds

**Community**
- Encourage your local food pantries to register at www.ampleharvest.org
- Plant edible landscaping and urban orchards in public spaces
- Lease garden plots on unused public land
- Glean food from farmers’ markets to donate to food pantries

**Policy**
- Learn more on how Federal legislation impacts food security in Iowa (Farm Bill, Child Nutrition Act, Older Americans Act)
- Learn about tax incentives for food donation, funding for food banks, and other policies proposed to the state legislature
- Talk to your legislators about how food insecurity is impacting your community (find your legislator at www.legis.iowa.gov/Legislators/find.aspx)
- Start or join a food policy council

**Resources**
- Food Access & Health Work Group: iowafoodsystemsCouncil.org/food-access-health/
- Regional Food Systems Working Groups: www.leopold.iastate.edu/regional-food-systems-working-group
- Food Research and Action Center Farm Bill Primer: http://frac.org/leg-act-center/farm-bill-2012

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Cultivate Food Security in Iowa!

**The Issues**
- Almost 400,000 Iowans—including one in five children—are hungry and do not get enough healthy food to eat on a regular basis.
- Two-thirds of adults and one-third of children and adolescents are obese or overweight.
- Lower-income families living in underserved communities are more likely to be both hungry and overweight.
- Without access to foods that can help families and communities stay healthy, disease and health care costs will continue to rise.

**The Causes**
- Processed food is often cheap, plentiful and easier to stock for longer periods of time – making it an attractive option to small stores.
- Many Iowans who live in poverty also live in a food desert, a rural or urban area with limited access to affordable and nutritious foods.
- Schools are serving meals to hungry kids, but it is a challenge to serve healthy meals with tight food budgets.
- More than 400,000 Iowans receive food assistance. Many families struggle to feed their kids and find it next to impossible to incorporate healthier foods as well.