

TAKE ACTION!

Iowa Food Systems Council's Food Access & Health Work Group



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.



**IOWA FOOD
SYSTEMS COUNCIL**

IowaFoodSystemsCouncil.org

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.CultivateIowa.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
- Feeding America's Map the Meal Gap: <http://feedingamerica.org/hunger-in-america/hunger-studies/map-the-meal-gap.aspx>
- Food Research and Action Center Farm Bill Primer: <http://frac.org/leg-act-center/farm-bill-2012>
- Facebook pages related to solving food insecurity: www.facebook.com/CultivateIowa; <https://www.facebook.com/feedingiowa>; www.facebook.com/AmpleHarvest.org