

Conversation Harvest | June 28, 2023

# Building Networks to Alleviate Food Insecurity

## WORKSHOP SUMMARY

This [interactive workshop](#) was designed to guide participants through the process of creating a food security “benefits resource guide” tailored to the location and populations they serve. Facilitators led activities designed to help family service providers immediately implement food security knowledge in their local communities. Using the Spectrum of Prevention framework, participants identified and viewed programs and services in their communities in ways that can support efforts to reduce food insecurity among military families.

## FOOD SECURITY RESOURCE GUIDE

The OneOp Food Security Resource Guide (FSRG) can help you create a localized reference guide of food programs and resources. You can use your FSRG to guide your work and networking around addressing food security and use it to generate a resource guide you can share with others who work with families. The guide is divided into six sections. Participants in the Building Networks to Alleviate Food Insecurity workshop shared resources that fit into each of these sections.

## RESOURCES

### Immediate Assistance

- [Armed Service YMCA](#)
- [Air Force Aid Society Emergency Fund](#)
- [Navy-Marine Relief Society](#)
- [Hello Fresh Beyond the Box](#)
- [Blue Star Families Food Closet](#)
- [The Salvation Army](#)
- [Food pantries](#)

### Public Nutrition Assistance Programs

- [SNAP](#)
- [SNAP - Double Up Bucks](#)
- [Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children \(WIC\)](#)

### Community Education Services

- [Cooperative Extension](#)
- [Financial Readiness Program](#)
- [USDA Indigenous Food Sovereignty Initiative](#)
- [Thrifty shopping plans and recipes](#)
- [SNAP-Ed](#)

### Community-based Providers

- [Defense Health Agency](#) clinics and providers
- [Meals on Wheels](#)
- [Pie in the Sky](#)
- [Meal Monkey Program](#)
- [Area Aging Offices](#)
- Churches
- [Community Action Agencies](#)
- [Feeding America](#)
- Community-supported Agriculture
- Local farms
- Community gardens
- [EveryONE Project Neighborhood Navigator](#)
- [Dysphagia Food Bank](#)
- Community hospitals
- [Family Promise](#)

### Individual and Family Programs & Services

- [Community and Tribal Veteran Services Officers](#)
- [Grow Your Own Food](#)
- [Congregate meal programs](#) at Aging and Disability Resource Centers
- [Financial readiness Program at ACS](#)
- Greening & food recovery programs

Conversation Harvest | June 28, 2023

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## SPECTRUM OF PREVENTION

Workshop participants brainstormed existing examples and ideas for potential food security efforts that fit within each of the six levels in the Spectrum of Prevention:

- Strengthening Individual Knowledge & Skills
- Promoting Community Education
- Educating Providers
- Fostering Coalitions & Networks
- Changing Organizational Practices
- Influencing Policy & Legislation.

## IDEAS

### Strengthening Individual Knowledge & Skills

- Military OneSource Health Coaching
- Military OneSource Community Resource Form
- Cooking Matters
- Grow Your Own Food
- Family and Consumers Sciences courses
- Commissary partnership with installation nutritionist to host healthy shopping classes
- Budgeting counseling
- Economic Security Courses with Military OneSource
- Head Start nutrition and cooking activities
- American Diabetes Association resources
- Faster Than Fast Food podcast
- Mental Health clinics may have programs that will help persons with budgeting
- Drug and addiction support programs may help with budgeting
- Budgeting class on base
- EFNEP- Expanded Food Nutrition Education Program
- Extension programs on financial counseling are also often offered at local offices
- VA Healthy Teaching Kitchen program for veterans and their families.

### Promoting Community Education

- Literacy programs : I had a grant program one year to do cooking program and budgeting ( gave bags of food away
- Presentations to community organizations & philanthropic groups.
- Newsletters
- Huddles/morning meetings
- Community online calendars
- Topics of the day for small groups and units
- Coffee Connect with the Blue Star Families
- College Food & Nutrition programs
- Outreach to local radio & television stations
- We are working with Public Affairs for a YouTube series
- Area Aging Offices and Area Disability Resource Centers are avenues to promote community education to a varied audience
- Farm to Table events

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## Educating Providers

- Soldier and Family Readiness Group briefs, especially before a deployment
- Food Banks that provide services to pantries & partner agencies. We do a presentation at our regional Food Bank Annual Summit
- Educate providers about the stereotype that its just low ranking members with lots of kids. One life event will knock anyone off the fence. A LTC or Col can be food insecure.
- [OneOp](#)
- Provider Town Halls. My team and I briefed the Child and Family Behavioral Health Providers during their morning huddle.
- We were sure to educate the nursing staff within our MTF (primary care) since they often are the ones initially able to detect (risk of) food insecurity
- We offer battalion and brigade-level Steering Committees the opportunity to use our food pantry and branch location to host meetings and a chance to educate them on our services in person.

## Influencing Policy & Legislation

- [MAZON](#) is a national organization with a Veteran focus which directly lobbies congress
- There was money released just this week by the federal government to states for food banks etc
- There is growing interest in [developing food-related benefits and programs as part of Medicare and Medicaid](#). This is just beginning but the agenda is being set.
- [State dietetic associations](#) generally have a public policy arm. Including them can bring in another advocate
- Medical insurance is paying for medically necessary meals
- There are companies that have a goal to help food insecure population, such as [We Don't Waste](#).
- At a Unit level the commander can have a food policy letter. It can address worksite food and asking the food insecurity vital sign on all members with body composition issues.
- Our pantry participated in a county-level food policy council and it was a fantastic experience and opportunity.
- Homelessness policy programs

## Fostering Coalitions & Networks

- Partnering with [New Parent Support Program](#) & [NMCERS](#) who may be able to share with families.
- Each installation has an installation helping agency where all agencies get together to address hot issues. We call ours the Community Action Team and Community Action Board
- [Joining Forces](#)
- [Inter-Service Family Assistance Committee](#)
- [Blue Star Families](#)
- We have the [Hudson Valley Taskforce](#) here in NY, to include, VSO's, BSF, National guard Reps and more!
- Connecting with local [Feeding America](#) chapter to join an existing coalition or foster a new network
- [Continuum of Care Groups](#)
- [Community Action Agencies](#)
- We had the [Feeding Champaign County Food Summit](#) this spring.
- [Food Policy Council Directory](#).

## Changing Organizational Practices

- [MHS Genesis](#) has an intake question that screens. Every medical clinic has that capability
- We have integrated the Food Insecurity Screening questions in our EMR here at [the VA](#).