Bringing Legislators to the Table
Addressing Hunger through Public-Private Partnerships

National Conference of State Legislatures
The Forum for America’s Ideas
Acknowledgements

This publication was made possible through support and input from countless individuals and organizations. Thanks go to those who helped identify contacts, assisted in framing the project and reviewed and edited report drafts, particularly Ann Morse, Sheri Steisel and Jennifer Arguinzoni. Thanks also go to the members of the NCSL Foundation Hunger Partnership for their leadership and advice and to those who provided national perspective, including:

17th Class of Bill Emerson National Hunger Fellows
Phil Blalock, National Association of Farmers’ Market Nutrition Programs
Rev. Doug Greenaway and Samantha Lee, National WIC Association

Megan Lott, National Farm to School Network
Ned Porter and Maggie Reynolds, Wholesome Wave
Yvonne Siu, Corporate Voices for Working Families
Courtney Smith, Share Our Strength
Ellen Vollinger, Food Research and Action Center

Special thanks go to those at state and local organizations who work tirelessly to serve and advocate on behalf of people who experience hunger in their communities and who shared their insights for this publication, including:

Erika Argersinger, Children’s Alliance of New Hampshire
Kia Baker, Inter-Faith Food Shuttle
Carol Barker, Auburn School District
Jessica Bartholow, Western Center on Law and Poverty
Patti Baum, Healthy New Hampshire Foundation
Kristen Coats and Marla Ianello, Upper Valley HEAL
Teresa Cook, Ohio District 5 Area Agency on Aging
Lisa Corbett, Three Square Food Bank
Dawn Crayco, End Hunger Connecticut!
Frank Diggs, Connecticut Department of Social Services
Allison Goodman, City Schools of Deeprwater
Angel Gutierrez, Catholic Charities
Cindy Hallman and Sharon Pierson, Desert Mission Food Bank
Joyce Hardy, Arkansas Hunger Relief Alliance
Senator Steven Horsford and Polly Bates, Culinary Academy of Las Vegas
Michael Iceland and Ki Kim, The Food Project
Jon Janowski, Hunger Taskforce of Wisconsin
Cheryl Jones-McLeod, Maryland Hunger Solutions

Kevin Keegan and Kaleisha Biggs, Family League of Baltimore
Alison Keller, United Way of Central and Northeastern Connecticut
Dr. Phil Kenkel, Oklahoma State University
Mike Koch, New Britain Public Schools
Rick McNary, Nuname, Inc.
Grace Mekelski, Vermont Department of Health
Mario Obledo, Jr., San Antonio Food Bank
Jennifer Owens, Georgia Organics
Carrette Perkins, New York City Coalition Against Hunger
Nancy Pope, New Mexico Collaboration to End Hunger
Dana Pritchet, North Dakota Department of Agriculture
Dr. David Procter, Kansas State University
Brianna Almaguer Sandoval, The Food Trust
Andrew Schiff, Rhode Island Community Food Bank
Commissioner Scott Soares, Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources
Kathy Underhill and Katherine Moos, Hunger Free Colorado
Bob Waldrop and Chelsea Simpson, Oklahoma Food Cooperative
Don Wambles, Alabama Farmers’ Market Authority

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Advisory Partners

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One in seven U.S. households was food insecure at some point in 2009. The prevalence of food insecurity is at its highest level since 1995, when the first national food security survey was conducted. Despite record high rates of food insecurity, academics, advocates and policymakers insist that hunger is a solvable problem.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture and state agencies administer 15 federal nutrition programs, which provide vital benefits to low-income families and significant economic stimulus to local economies. For example, in federal fiscal year 2010, 40.3 million people participated in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). The USDA estimates that, for every $5 in individual benefits, at least $9 is generated in the local economy.

In the last year, the private and non-profit sectors have committed significant resources to address hunger in America, leveraging federal programs and enlisting their employees, customers and clients to improve the availability and accessibility of affordable, healthy food for those who need assistance.

State legislators play a significant role in addressing hunger in their roles of overseeing the administration of federal programs, regulating and funding state programs, and convening otherwise disconnected partners to promote effective programs and encourage participation.

The NCSL Foundation for State Legislatures launched this initiative to raise the visibility of hunger in America and highlight innovative and lasting solutions. The goal of this initiative is to connect the public and private sectors to improve the availability of healthy food for hungry families. The Hunger Partnership links legislators, legislative staff and interested businesses to identify innovative and successful programs and develop bipartisan, balanced and concise materials and mechanisms to support legislators in their efforts to reduce hunger in America.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

State legislators are in a unique position to tackle hunger and increase access to healthy food. Legislators simultaneously wear the hats of policymaker, hunger champion and community leader. As policymakers, legislators can direct and provide coordination among agencies, give start-up or expansion funding to promising initiatives and establish an award to recognize an organization 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. In short, state policymakers have the chance to serve as leaders in the battle to end hunger in the United States, starting with their communities and their states.

Within this publication, Bringing Legislators to the Table: Addressing Hunger through Public-Private Partnerships, are examples of innovative programs that involve partnerships among multiple organizations and state-level support. This publication has categorized programs broadly by their purpose and the federal nutrition programs they seek to leverage and promote. The thematic areas are:

I. Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Partnerships, including programs that provide outreach, offer application assistance and increase access to food retailers that accept SNAP;

II. Child Nutrition Partnerships, including programs that increase access and improve the quality of in-school and out-of-school nutrition programs for children;

III. Food Distribution Partnerships, including programs that improve the quality of food available at food banks and pantries, increase client choice, and provide clients with the knowledge to choose healthier and more cost-effective foods;

IV. 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 seniors.

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

The guide was researched and published by the NCSL Foundation Hunger Partnership. The author consulted several national organizations to identify states with promising programs and campaigns and, in turn, relied on state-level administrators and non-profit staff to identify innovative programs. Leadership from state and local organizations provided the information in the program profiles that follow. Although the author identified numerous innovative partnerships across the country, featured programs were selected using the following criteria:

- Involves both the private and public sectors, including state-level support, whether through provision of funding, technical assistance or other resources;
- Demonstrates innovation in program delivery;
- Provides evidence of success and promise of self-sustainability;
- Involves a diverse array of organizations, including supermarkets, restaurants, farmers, child care providers, schools, religious institutions, emergency food providers, health providers, private citizens, and additional community-based organizations;
- Benefits a wide variety of consumers, including children, youth, seniors, people with disabilities, and racially/ethnically diverse populations;
- Reflects diversity in rural and urban locales and various regions of the United States.

The promising practices within this guide illustrate not only what is being done across the country, but how legislators can play a vital part in leveraging resources and expertise to address the challenge of hunger in America.
In the Statehouse

Legislators can direct or grant state agencies authority to purchase locally grown foods. In 2010, the Massachusetts legislature enacted **HB 4919, requiring the state to make reasonable efforts to procure foods locally.** The law requires the state to purchase local foods unless the cost is more than 10 percent greater than the cost for comparable food produced outside the state. The law also requires the Department of Agriculture and the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education to collect data from food producers and schools to facilitate increased local food procurement.

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Organization

The Food Project (TFP) provides leadership development opportunities for youth and adults from diverse backgrounds and works to increase access to healthy food for residents of the greater Boston area. Each year, TFP involves teens and thousands of volunteers to farm nearly 40 acres in and around Boston and increase the community’s capacity to grow its own food. TFP is funded by a large number of individual, community and local corporate donors. Read more at [http://www.thefoodproject.org](http://www.thefoodproject.org).

Youth Leadership Development

TFP provides leadership development opportunities for youth in the greater Boston area. Youth participate in summer programs, academic year programs and internships with TFP. The Summer Youth Program employs more than 100 youth ages 14 to 17 in crews that work in the gardens, sell produce at the farmers’ market, prepare and serve lunches at hunger relief organizations and prepare community meals using fruits and vegetables from the garden. Summer Youth Program participants are eligible to apply for the Academic Year Program, which employs teens who work on Saturdays and during optional after-school hours. In addition to the tasks performed by summer participants, academic year participants speak at conferences and external events about their work at TFP. Alumni of either program may apply to become interns, who complete project-based work and further develop job and public speaking skills. In 2010, TFP employed 145 teens in its three leadership development programs.

Build-a-Garden

Although many low-income residents of Boston want to garden, they often lack the resources, expertise or appropriate space to do so. Soil studies show that land in low-income neighborhoods contains dangerous levels of lead and is not safe for traditional gardening. TFP's Build-a-Garden program helps new and experienced gardeners build the infrastructure and knowledge to grow food successfully and safely near where they live. Interested community members and community groups fill out an application, and TFP provides accepted applicants with a raised bed garden or container garden kit; seeds and transplants; a printed growing guide; workshops; and additional support by phone, e-mail, blog and newsletter. In 2010, TFP built 205 raised beds, a nearly 100 percent increase over 2009.

Farmers’ Markets and Community Supported Agriculture

TFP sells a portion of its produce through five community supported agriculture projects and at five farmers’ markets in the Boston area. TFP also provides staff and strategic support to the Boston Bounty Bucks program, an incentive program that provides a dollar-for-dollar match up to $10 for customers who buy produce at farmers’ markets with SNAP or WIC.
I.  SNAP PARTNERSHIPS

SNAP Outreach to Newly Eligible Families
Arkansas Hunger Relief Alliance  |  Arkansas
http://www.arhungeralliance.org/

Organization
The Arkansas Hunger Relief Alliance (AHRA) is a network of food banks and food pantries throughout Arkansas. In 2009, the Alliance and its members provided more than 25 million pounds of food to hungry Arkansans.

Opportunity
A recent study by Feeding America found that just 28 percent of people who receive emergency food in Arkansas participate in SNAP.

Program Description
The SNAP outreach initiative at AHRA, part of the Arkansas No Kid Hungry Campaign, provides SNAP outreach materials to likely eligible families and SNAP outreach resources to staff and volunteers at food banks and pantries. AHRA works with the state to develop and distribute the materials and with staff and volunteers at local food banks and pantries to increase SNAP participation statewide.

As recently as 2010, the Arkansas Department of Human Services (DHS) distributed just one type of brochure to likely eligible SNAP clients; it featured photographs and messages targeting seniors. AHRA saw the need to also target families and newly eligible households. AHRA worked with DHS to produce and distribute a new SNAP brochure featuring photographs of families and supportive messages. The brochure emphasizes that SNAP benefits are available for a families who “fall on tough times” and that spending SNAP dollars bolsters the local economy.

AHRA also developed training materials to empower food bank and pantry staff and volunteers to assist emergency food clients with SNAP applications. AmeriCorps VISTA members working for AHRA train staff and volunteers to learn commonly reported barriers to SNAP participation, program myths and facts, and how to help clients complete online and paper SNAP applications. The VISTAs are also developing a train-the-trainer program so food bank staff can conduct trainings for volunteers at their partner food pantries.

Results
To date, 47 foods banks and pantries across Arkansas have received SNAP outreach training. SNAP enrollment has increased since the project’s inception, and state eligibility workers report seeing a large and increasing number of applications bearing the Share Our Strength stamp, which is imprinted on applications completed in food banks and pantries.

AHRA also worked with DHS to create a question on the online application that links applications with AHRA’s outreach efforts. DHS will also continue to credit paper applications with the Share Our Strength stamp to AHRA’s initiative, with the first official data available in July 2011.

Partners and Funding
The SNAP outreach initiative is a partnership between the Arkansas Hunger Relief Alliance, the Arkansas Department of Human Services, and AHRA’s network of food banks and pantries. Funding and in-kind resources are provided by Walmart, Share Our Strength, AmeriCorps VISTA and Feeding America. The Governor's Office procured computers for food pantries, and local Internet providers offer free or discounted Internet to pantries that do not have service.

In the Statehouse
State legislators can create or join legislative caucuses on hunger. The 68-member Arkansas Legislative Hunger Caucus, which includes members from both parties, meets regularly to discuss and advance hunger-related policies. Caucus members participate in events hosted by AHRA, including serving as wait staff during their Serving Up Solutions dinner.

State legislators can provide much-needed funding to hunger relief organizations. In 2011, the Arkansas legislature enacted HB 1649, appropriating $2 million to the Arkansas Hunger Relief Alliance and its membership network.

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Partners and Funding

Making Dinner a SNAP is a partnership between Ohio District 5 Area Agency on Aging, five independently owned supermarkets, the Richland County Department of Job and Family Services, and local senior centers. SNAP is administered by county agencies, rather than a single state agency. Funding for the project’s first 18 months was provided through one of 14 grants nationwide for independent SNAP outreach projects. Pending approval, ongoing funding will be provided through the Ohio state USDA SNAP Outreach Plan. Volunteers for the project are coordinated by AAA and local senior centers.

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Making Dinner a SNAP
District 5 Area Agency on Aging | Ohio
https://www.aaa5ohio.org/snap.asp

Organization
Ohio District 5 Area Agency on Aging Inc. (AAA) is a private non-profit designated by the State of Ohio to be a Planning and Service Area as required in the federal Older Americans Act. AAA provides information and referrals, supportive and in-home services, and training for a service and resource network for seniors and people with disabilities in AAA’s nine-county service area.

Opportunity
Seniors and people with disabilities, especially those living in rural areas, are consistently under-enrolled in SNAP. AAA estimated 700 likely eligible seniors were living in its service area.

Program Description
Started in 2010, AAA’s “Making Dinner a SNAP” works to increase SNAP participation among seniors in Richland County and conducts cooking demonstrations to show seniors how to make healthy, low-cost meals. The program is a partnership between AAA and five small grocers in Richland County.

AAA brings a portable, private screening booth equipped with a computer and Internet connection into supermarkets. Outreach volunteers trained by AAA help staff the booth by talking with clients about the benefits of SNAP participation; assisting clients with the online pre-screening form; and, if they are eligible, helping clients complete a paper SNAP application. The applications are sent to staff at the local Department of Jobs and Family Services who conduct eligibility interviews, gather verification documents and disburse benefits.

Cooking demonstrations are provided near the booth by a local volunteer chef. A local senior center provides food for the demonstrations. The chef distributes healthy, low-cost recipes and talks with clients about how to stretch their SNAP dollars.

AAA posts the screening booth schedule on its website and advertises the schedule in inserts in grocery bags, flyers, television ads, and announcements in church and food pantry newsletters.

AAA attributes the project’s success to its partnerships. Project staff said grocers were the natural partners because they were the “common denominator” among seniors who were otherwise disconnected from benefit programs and geographically isolated. Small, rural grocers know their customers by name and help steer likely eligible seniors to the booth. In addition, the partnership with the senior center allows the cooking demonstrations; they are not possible under the USDA grant, since food is not an allowable outreach grant expenditure.

Results
To date, AAA has helped more than 500 seniors pre-screen for SNAP at grocery stores, 246 of whom received benefits as a result.
The Connecticut Department of Social Services (DSS) provides services to the elderly, people with disabilities, families and those who need help to maintain or achieve their full potential for independent living. DSS administers 90 legislatively authorized programs and one-third of the state budget.

Opportunity
Seniors and people with disabilities face unique challenges in enrolling in public programs and often demonstrate particularly high need for such benefits. Lack of access is exacerbated by state budget cuts that cause eligibility offices in rural and less densely populated areas to close or operate fewer hours per week with fewer staff members.

Program Description
Started in 2005, the Rx-Xpress is a mobile benefits screening, enrollment and referral facility designed to reach seniors, people with disabilities and low-income households in rural or underserved areas of Connecticut. DSS actively partners with other state agencies and various anti-hunger and health care-related non-profit organizations to conduct or augment planned benefits enrollment events.

The bus is a self-contained facility that is accessible to the most vulnerable populations in the state. The bus is equipped with four computer workstations, a printer/scanner/fax machine, a TV and DVD player, an interactive whiteboard for trainings, a wall of brochures and a satellite that provides continuous Internet access even in remote areas of the state. The workstations provide privacy for clients while they talk with DSS staff. Bus computers have the same software as permanent state offices, so bus staff can make eligibility determinations on the spot. To maximize accessibility, the bus has a wheelchair lift and external and internal hand rails.

The bus accepts requests to visit community events and organizations, including SNAP outreach events, emergency food distribution sites, senior centers, libraries, pharmacies, health centers, street fairs, churches and farmers’ markets. The DSS bus comes to mobile pantry drops, for example, where emergency food from Food Share, a local food bank, is distributed in rural parts of the state. The bus is also used by state Medicaid staff to train new benefits counselors and community staff in rural areas. The bus’s stops are posted in advance on the Connecticut Aging Services Division website.

Results
The bus has provided services to almost all of the state’s 169 urban and rural towns. From November 2005 to October 2010, the bus provided services at 459 events to 8,090 individuals who may not otherwise have had access to a DSS office to enroll in SNAP. The bus helped facilitate 1,790 SNAP applications. Staff estimate that one in 10 applicants is certified for benefits on the spot.

Partners and Funding
SNAP outreach provided by the DSS Rx-Xpress is a partnership between the state Department of Social Services, End Hunger Connecticut!, the Hispanic Health Council and the Connecticut Association for Human Services. Together, the partners work to identify events for the bus, and the bus helps meet the organizations’ SNAP outreach goals. The bus is staffed by representatives from DSS and staff from other state agencies and partner non-profit organizations as needed. Start-up funding for the project was provided by the State Pharmaceutical Assistance Program in preparation for the launch of Medicare Part D. Ongoing funding is provided through general DSS funds.

In the Statehouse
Legislators can adopt state policy options to increase access to federal nutrition programs. In 2009, the Connecticut legislature enacted SB 843, increasing the income limit for SNAP eligibility to 185 percent of federal poverty and eliminating the asset test under categorical eligibility.

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Hunger Free Hotline
Hunger Free Colorado  |  Colorado
http://www.hungerfreecolorado.org/hunger-free-hotline.html

Organization
Launched through a merger of organizations in 2009, Hunger Free Colorado (HFC) is a statewide anti-hunger organization that acts as the leading authority on the issue of hunger in the state. HFC works to streamline federal and local benefits systems and advance innovative solutions to Colorado’s hunger challenges through policy, coalition building, collaborative programming and targeted awareness building.

Opportunity
Many people who are currently eligible for but are not enrolled in SNAP in Colorado have never navigated the public benefits system. At the same time, county eligibility offices are overwhelmed with clients.

Program Description
In 2011, Hunger Free Colorado launched the Hunger Free Hotline to help those seeking assistance navigate the complex system of federal nutrition programs. The hotline operates Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. through a toll-free line with more than 1,000 referral resources. The hotline is staffed by three “resource navigators” and a hotline supervisor who are trained to make callers aware of federal assistance programs, conduct high-level eligibility pre-screenings, locate places to apply, and tell callers which documents to bring to interviews. Staff can assist callers in either English or Spanish. The purpose of the hotline is not to simply answer questions but to inform callers about programs and give them the tools to apply.

By engaging callers in more robust conversations, staff can tailor their referrals to the callers’ unique situations and gather rich data about callers’ demographics, income, household composition and program eligibility. HFC staff use the data to inform their state advocacy and to help educate legislators about the needs of constituents in their districts.

To drive traffic to the hotline, HFC partnered with WIC clinics, churches, county offices and other community-based organizations across the state to distribute or display more than 100,000 double-sided business cards, flyers and posters.

Results
Still in its first year, the hotline receives an average of 40 calls daily. HFC hopes to help at least 2,500 Colorado residents apply for SNAP by the end of the year and complete an impact assessment.

Resource navigators report that many callers are new to the public benefits system and have never needed to seek assistance. Because the staff provide callers with a thorough introduction to SNAP and other benefits, county staff members report that clients who have used the hotline come to county offices better prepared for their interviews and are more often eligible for benefits.
Restaurant Meals Program
Los Angeles Department of Public Social Services  |  California
http://www.ladpss.org/dpss/restaurant_meals/

Organization
The Los Angeles Department of Public Social Services (DPSS) administers programs to low-income residents to alleviate hardship and promote health, personal responsibility and economic independence. In California, county departments partner with the state to administer benefit programs.

Opportunity
California has the lowest SNAP participation rate among seniors and people with disabilities in the nation and under-enrolls people who are homeless.

Program Description
Started in Los Angeles in 2005, the Restaurant Meals Program (RMP) allows seniors, people with disabilities, and people who are homeless to use their SNAP benefits in qualifying restaurants. Participants can still spend their SNAP dollars in supermarkets, but RMP allows an alternative option better suited to their needs for those who lack access to kitchens or physical capacity to prepare all their meals. Meal delivery programs and senior centers can also participate to help cover food costs.

RMP is an option states can participate in without additional legislation or federal waiver by certifying recipients for the program, soliciting participation by eligible restaurants, entering into a Memorandum of Understanding with each restaurant, and informing recipients of the names and addresses of participating restaurants.

Restaurants interested in participating must welcome all SNAP recipients eligible for RMP, offer a low-cost menu for program participants, agree to SNAP rules prohibiting the restaurant to charge sales tax or gratuity, and post signage stating they accept Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT). Restaurants with a point of sale (POS) terminal with a PIN pad can work with their third-party processor to accept SNAP. Otherwise, the state Department of Social Services will provide a free EBT terminal.

In Los Angeles, SNAP recipients eligible for RMP are electronically authorized to participate, and their EBT cards are automatically made to work in POS terminals that accept EBT. To participate, eligible SNAP recipients locate a store with an EBT sign, swipe their EBT card to verify eligibility, order from the restaurant menu, and swipe again to pay. The participants’ remaining SNAP balance will appear on the receipt.

Participating restaurants include Subway, Burger King, Wendy’s and Pizza Hut. Many of the restaurants participate in the Kids LiveWell Campaign, launched in 2011 and coordinated by the National Restaurant Association. Restaurants will develop healthy items that meet strict nutrition criteria designed for children.

Results
As of June 2011, L.A. County had 1,113 restaurants and 63, 389 cardholders enrolled in RMP. In the same month, RMP sales totaled $3 million statewide, with the bulk of transactions occurring in L.A. County.
II. CHILD NUTRITION PARTNERSHIPS

Partners and Funding

Breakfast in the Classroom is a partnership between the New Britain School District (which administers the program), End Hunger CT! and the other partners on the Connecticut Breakfast Expansion Team (which provides technical support) and a number of funders, including the Connecticut Department of Education, General Mills, the New England Dairy and Food Council, and got breakfast? The USDA School Breakfast Program provides federal reimbursements for meals.

In the Statehouse

In 2006, the Connecticut legislature included in its annual budget $50,000 for up to 10 small grants to help schools begin Breakfast in the Classroom. The program is currently funded at $50,000 annually, and schools apply for grants under a competitive process.

In 2009, the Connecticut Speaker of the House formed the Legislative Task Force on Children in the Recession. The task force recommends budget and policy actions to help families. The task force includes lawmakers from both parties; researchers; parent advocates; the staffs of Connecticut's congressional delegation; and business, philanthropy and nonprofit staff.

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Breakfast in the Classroom

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Organization

The Consolidated School District of New Britain includes 14 schools enrolling 10,000 students. As of June 2011, 72 percent of New Britain’s students were eligible for free or reduced-price school meals.

End Hunger Connecticut! is a statewide anti-hunger organization that engages in advocacy, outreach, education and research and serves as a comprehensive anti-hunger resource for policymakers, community organizations and low-income families.

Opportunity

According to the Food Research and Action Center, from 2006 to 2009, Connecticut ranked last in the nation in the number of schools participating in the School Breakfast Program, compared to the number of schools participating in the National School Lunch Program.

Program Description

Breakfast in the Classroom provides a school breakfast to every student in the school in their classrooms at the beginning of the instructional day, regardless their eligibility for free and reduced-price school meals. Schools provide the breakfasts free to all students, thereby increasing participation and reducing stigma associated with eating school meals. Beginning with just one pilot school in 2006, New Britain School District has been implementing and expanding Breakfast in the Classroom programs across its elementary schools.

On a typical day, the school food service staff arrive one hour before the school day begins to prepare and bag breakfasts for each student. Individual breakfast bags are placed into larger, hard containers that are delivered to each classroom. Teachers lead students from the cafeteria to the classroom, where students pick up a breakfast bag and eat their meals. Teachers record which students consume breakfast so the school can receive federal reimbursements for free- and reduced-price meals and use breakfast time to introduce the day’s activities. Following breakfast, students place trash in a large bag, and the container and bag are placed in the hallway for retrieval by food service and janitorial staff.

Results

New Britain has expanded Breakfast in the Classroom to five elementary schools. Over time, schools achieve a participation rate of between 75 percent and 83 percent. After starting the program, the increase in participation by students eligible for free and reduced-price breakfast garners sufficient additional federal reimbursements to offset the loss in revenues for paid and reduced-price breakfasts, making Breakfast in the Classroom a sustainable, cost-neutral option for districts.
Farm to School Program
City Schools of Decatur | Georgia
http://www.decaturfarmtoschool.org/

Organization
City Schools of Decatur (CSD), an independent public school district, serves approximately 3,400 students in eight schools.

Opportunity
Georgia ranks second in the nation in child obesity; one in three children in Georgia is obese. Obesity costs the state an estimated $2.54 billion each year. At the same time, the Georgia Department of Education serves 1.5 million meals each day, providing a logical point of intervention.

Program Description
Starting in 2009, CSD has been working with Georgia Organics, Oakhurst Community Garden Project and a variety of funders to implement a district-wide, comprehensive farm to school program. CSD’s farm to school model involves integration of locally grown produce into school meals, curriculum integration and gardening.

CSD provides meals through scratch cooking at two base kitchens, which distribute food to finishing kitchens equipped with basic tools for heating, cooling and preparing food to be served to students. To begin incorporating fresh fruits and vegetables in school meals, Georgia Organics partnered with Cooks Warehouse to provide three training sessions to 25 CSD food service staff in basic knife skills, presentation, salad bar preparation and portion sizing. Cooks Warehouse and the CSD Farm to School Parents donated knives, knife sharpeners, knife rollers and two industrial food processors to the base kitchens. CSD introduces “produce of the month” in schools and serves popular items on an ongoing basis.

Georgia Organics and Oakhurst Community Garden Project also held two series of intensive classes for CSD teachers, training them in the basics of farm to school, local food systems and garden-based nutrition education. Through the course, teachers created replicable lesson plans that incorporate farm to school concepts and skills.

CSD currently works with Oakhurst Community Garden Project to maintain a garden at each school where student and teachers hold class sessions and work in the garden. An Oakhurst staff member travels to each school to provide garden-based education and help the students plant, tend and harvest the produce. The students are able to taste test the produce during lunch after it is harvested, and teachers incorporate it into lessons.

Results
All eight schools in CSD have incorporated locally grown produce and farm to school curricula into their operations. Upon implementing farm to school programs and eliminating their competitive, a la carte line in the middle school and high school during four of five school days, paid school meal participation increased so much that it more than made up for revenues lost from the sale of a la carte items.

Statewide, Georgia Organics has involved 360 schools and six full school districts to integrate farm to school programs.

Partners and Funding
Decatur’s Farm to School Program is a partnership between CSD and private growers. The state Department of Education provides ongoing technical assistance and staff funding. The local Board of Education provides financial support for personnel costs. Oakhurst Community Garden Project maintains school gardens at each of CSD’s schools and teaches gardening to students. Federal reimbursements are provided through the USDA National School Lunch Program.

The project was initiated using staff and resource support from Georgia Organics, in-kind equipment donations from Cooks Warehouse and funding from Decatur Education Foundation.

In the Statehouse
Legislators can raise the visibility of scalable solutions by recognizing programs that work. In 2011, Georgia adopted HR 589/SR 508, recognizing March 30, 2011, as Farm to School Day at the state Capitol and the benefits of farm to school programs for students, farmers, schools, communities and the environment. Georgia Organics and others served to 250 legislators, staff and lobbyists a meal using recipes being prepared in six Georgia school districts.

Legislators can facilitate local purchasing. In 2009, the Georgia legislature enacted SB 44, allowing schools to give preference to local products.

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The New Mexico Collaboration to End Hunger is a coalition of more than 80 public and private partners. The New Mexico Department of Children, Youth and Families works with the Collaboration to identify areas of high need, recruit summer meals sites and provide technical assistance and monitoring. Summer breakfast and lunch costs are reimbursed through the USDA Summer Food Service Program. Additional project funds are provided by Share Our Strength, ConAgra Foods, Wells Fargo, Sandia National Labs, and a number of community and family foundations.

**Contact**

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### Intergenerational Summer Food Program

New Mexico Collaboration to End Hunger  |  New Mexico  
http://endnmhunger.org/work/programs/summer.html

#### Organization

Formed in 2007, the New Mexico Collaboration to End Hunger is a coalition of more than 80 partners from the public and private sectors that work on a variety of initiatives to reduce food insecurity in the state. The Collaboration’s programs focus on increasing the visibility of hunger; developing and implementing a state plan to reduce childhood hunger; and advocating for local, state and federal policies that alleviate hunger in New Mexico. The Collaboration’s efforts during the past four years have helped more than 28,000 New Mexicans move out of food insecurity.

#### Opportunity

The Collaboration estimated that at least 110,000 New Mexican children were missing vital summer meals. At the same time, senior isolation affects a large proportion of New Mexico’s older residents.

#### Program Description

The Intergenerational Summer Food Program provides summer breakfasts, lunches and weekend backpacks to children in qualifying neighborhoods throughout New Mexico. The New Mexico Collaboration to End Hunger works with state agencies to increase the number of sites across the state and receives private funding to pay for weekend backpacks, which are not covered by USDA summer meal reimbursements. Funding for community gardens is also provided through private sources.

Private and state partners meet regularly before the start of summer meals to identify areas of high need and recruit intergenerational meal sites. This has been an increasingly important function of the partnership, since state and local budget constraints have caused schools in rural areas of New Mexico to either close altogether or close before the end of the summer, eliminating formerly operating summer meals sites. The current sites are mapped on a public website, www.summerfoodnm.org, where current and prospective participants can locate sites near where they live.

Sites provide summer breakfast, lunch and weekend backpacks packed by senior volunteers on Friday mornings. Parents/guardians and senior volunteers can pay just $2 to receive the same healthy meal and eat with the children. Programs have not reported significant fiscal impacts from providing paid meals to adults and seniors.

Intergenerational sites also provide enrichment programming, and nearly half the current sites also have a community gardening program, through which seniors teach children to garden. Produce from the gardens is served in the summer meals and sent home with children for each family’s use.

#### Results

The program has been scaled up over the past five years. This year, 70 summer meals sites are participating in the Intergenerational Program—including 30 with community gardens—serving 8,200 children and involving 600 senior volunteers.
Mobile Summer Meals Program
Auburn School District  │  Washington
http://www.auburn.wednet.edu/ChildNutrition/SummerLunchProgram.html

Organization
The Auburn School District provides high quality education to 14,600 students in 22 schools in four towns and areas in King and Pierce counties.

Opportunity
More than half of Auburn’s students are eligible for free or reduced-price school meals during the year, yet many children in the district were not able to travel to traditional summer meals sites.

Program Description
Since 2005, the summer meals program in Auburn has been a completely mobile program in which the district sponsors and provides all food to participating sites. The mobile summer meals program provides both hot and cold entrees to children ages 1 through 18 from June through August.

Food for the program is prepared in central kitchens, each of which prepares food for up to seven sites. The food is loaded into buses that have been retired from use and donated by the Department of Transportation. The buses have been converted with hot boxes, insulated containers and other equipment to safely transport meals and keep them at the temperature intended for consumption. Each bus makes up to seven stops Monday through Friday at sites, including parks, schools, churches, apartment complexes, gymnasiums and community centers. Buses stop at most sites for 10 minutes and at parks, where there is less parent supervision, for 30 minutes.

The program offers five lunch options daily, one of which is a hot entree that changes every day on a two-week cycle. Upon arriving at the site, district and site staff unload a table and chairs, arrange the meal options in a buffet-style line, allow the children to pass through the line to make a meal selection, and record the number of meals delivered. To accomplish this, the program employs five bus drivers, one parent educator, and eight to 10 district students, who ride in the bus and help with meal distribution and record keeping at the sites.

The program is advertised to students in a flyer they take home at the end of the academic year. Participating apartment complex managers agree to include a program flyer in letters sent to tenants when rent is due. Once the meals sites are operational, program staff display large yard signs outside the sites, and each bus has donated signage that says, “FREE SUMMER MEALS FOR KIDS.” The list of sites appears on the Auburn School District website, and interested families can call a hotline for the site nearest their residential address.

Results
In 2011, Auburn School District serves between 1,800 and 2,000 meals per day at 39 sites across the district. The program has a nearly 26 percent participation rate, far higher than the 2010 national average of 15 percent.

Partners and Funding
The Mobile Summer Meals Program is a partnership between Auburn School District; the state Department of Education; and various public and private organizations such as parks, schools, churches, apartment complexes, gymnasiums and community centers. Volunteers from the Boy Scouts of America provide enrichment activities for students at some of the sites once a week. The state provides training and technical assistance. All program funding flows from the USDA Summer Food Service Program.

In the Statehouse
Legislators can help hunger-relief agencies, which report increased demand and insufficient resources, to fundraise at no cost to the state. In 2011, the Washington Legislature enacted HB 1211, allowing public utility companies to request voluntary donations for hunger relief organizations across the state.

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Summer Meals Innovation
Culinary Academy of Las Vegas  |  Nevada
http://www.theculinaryacademy.org/

Organization
The Culinary Academy of Las Vegas (CALV) is non-profit training academy that develops hospitality workers for employment in Las Vegas’ restaurants, hotels, bars, casinos and other entertainment venues. CALV works to help people develop careers with great wages, opportunities and benefits.

Opportunity
In 2010, 149,000 children in Clark County School District (CCSD) received free or reduced-price meals, and CCSD was also home to an estimated 6,000 homeless children. At the same time, a very small portion of eligible children participated in the Summer Food Service Program.

Program Description
CALV’s involvement with the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) began in 2003, when the organization was approached by the Food Bank of Northern Nevada, which hoped to help the state Department of Education increase the number of summer meals sites. CALV became the vendor for the six summer meals sites operating in Las Vegas and has steadily increased its role, since CCSD budget constraints would have forced it to close some sites where there was no education programming.

CALV’s culinary students prepare SFSP lunches in one of their teaching kitchens and transporting them to 33 sites across CCSD. A typical lunch consists of a turkey and cheese sandwich on whole wheat bread, fresh carrots and ranch dressing, an apple and low-fat milk. In recent years, CALV’s executive chef has made voluntary nutritional improvements to the menu, including using fresher fruits and leaner meats and lowering the average daily sodium of the meals by 800 to 1,000 milligrams. This year, CALV is piloting a hot meals site because serving hot meals increases program participation.

CALV has partnered with Three Square Food Bank, which serves as another summer food vendor in Nevada, in an initiative called “Neighbors for Nutrition: Feeding Our Future.” Through Neighbors for Nutrition, CALV and Three Square co-sponsor town hall-style meetings to recruit new summer meals sites, distribute lists of meals sites to community organizations, and operate a “call, text or click” initiative. A Three Square staff member carries a cell phone that receives text messages with residential addresses, and she replies with the closest summer food site. Interested families can also call the Three Square hotline or locate the site for themselves on Three Square’s website. The summer meals program was featured in 72 news stories between June and July 2011.

Results
Since 2003, CALV has become the largest summer meals vendor in Nevada, serving an average of 4,000 meals per day at 33 sites across CCSD. CALV received the 2008 USDA Western Region Sunshine Award for improving the nutrition and quality of meals and a second award in 2010 for increasing participation and community partnerships.

In the Statehouse
As business people and community leaders, legislators can personally support nutrition programs in their states. Senate Majority Leader Steven Horsford, the Chief Executive Officer of CALV, has engaged in the partnerships described here to become the largest summer food vendor in the state and grow a social enterprise that helps low-wage and unskilled workers build marketable experience.

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WIC Food and Nutrition Centers
Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Chicago | Illinois
http://www.catholiccharities.net/services/nutrition

Organization
Catholic Charities is the service arm of the churches in the Archdiocese of Chicago. In 2010, Catholic Charities operated more than 159 programs at 156 locations across Cook and Lake counties, helping more than 1 million people move toward self-sufficiency.

Opportunity
Between 1991 and 1992, the state Department of Public Health and Catholic Charities engaged in conversations on how to reduce perceived fraud, waste and abuse in the WIC program.

Program Description
Started in 1993, Catholic Charities’ WIC Food and Nutrition Centers are places for WIC participants to receive WIC health services and nutrition education and redeem WIC food coupons for approved foods. Catholic Charities operates 18 WIC centers across Chicago in partnership with the state and city departments of public health and a large number of non-profit and corporate partners. Staff at Catholic Charities report this public-private model for WIC service delivery is unique across the country.

Catholic Charities’ WIC centers, rather than supermarkets, are certified to accept WIC coupons in Chicago and carry only WIC-approved foods. The centers are clean, welcoming environments for WIC customers and spare them the task of discerning which products in the store are approved for WIC. Unlike some traditional retail environments, the centers also enable participants to redeem 100 percent of their benefits, whereas traditional supermarkets that do not carry the full line of WIC foods compel WIC customers to shop at several stores or forfeit part of their food package.

Chicago’s WIC clinics and WIC nutrition education facilities are also located in centers. Participant mothers, infants and children complete the clinic visits required to certify and recertify for the program in the same location where they shop for WIC foods and participate in nutrition education programs. WIC clinics have partnered with the state Department of Public Health to ensure that all children receive vaccinations. All centers have a kitchen where WIC participants are engaged in cooking demonstrations to help them prepare healthy meals with WIC foods.

The centers serve as one-stop shops for many low-income families. Some centers offer intensive case management services; local public health offices with doctors; summer feeding programs for children; and programs for seniors, including the Commodity Supplemental Food Program. The centers also offer child care for children from birth to age 5 while their parents and guardians receive services. The child care, provided at no cost, involves children in activities that help build socialization, health, nutrition and literacy.

Results
Since 1993, the WIC centers have served millions of low-income women, infants and children. Participants report that the co-location of services help them access programs that are normally geographically inaccessible to them.

Partners and Funding
The WIC Food and Nutrition Centers are a partnership between Catholic Charities; the Illinois Department of Public Health; the Chicago Department of Public Health; and a number of non-profits, economic development corporations and corporate food manufacturers, including Mead Johnson Nutrition. Catholic Charities operates the centers with funding from the state. Economic development corporations help procure and rehabilitate the buildings in which centers are located. Food manufacturers provide technical assistance when items are added to the WIC food package. The USDA WIC Program provides federal funding.

In the Statehouse
Legislators can create planning committees on hunger. In 2010, the Illinois legislature enacted SB 3158, creating a statewide Commission to End Hunger. The Commission identifies funding to support anti-hunger work, compiles barriers to food access and promotes public-private partnerships.

Legislators can increase participation in summer food programs. In 2009, the Illinois legislature enacted SB 1977, continuing a year-long pilot program requiring schools where 50 percent of students qualify for free and reduced-price meals to operate a summer food site.

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Nutrition and Physical Activity Self-Assessment for Child Care
Upper Valley HEAL  |  New Hampshire
http://www.uvheal.org/

Organization
The Upper Valley Healthy Eating Active Living Partnership (UV HEAL), hosted by the Children’s Hospital at Dartmouth-Hitchcock, links and supports community members and organizations to increase consumption of healthy foods and promote physical activity.

Opportunity
Early child care centers and Head Start facilities are ideal points of intervention to increase low-income children’s access to fruits and vegetables and improve the quality of meals served through the Child and Adult Care Feeding Program.

Project Description
The Nutrition and Physical Activity Self-Assessment for Child Care (NAP SACC) is an evidenced-based model to help early child care facilities create policies, practices and environments for children and staff to increase healthy eating and physical movement. The intervention, part of a statewide effort, is being implemented by five grantees, including the Upper Valley HEAL in northern New Hampshire.

UV HEAL’s partnership with child care providers and Head Start facilities begins when a HEAL staff member identifies a mid- to large-size facility in the target area. Staff present the NAP SACC model to the staff, who are often willing to take on the project because it allows them to self-identify assets and areas for improvement and work with a consultant to craft solutions that make sense for their center. Every participating center commits to making one nutrition, one physical activity and one policy change, although many centers make several changes in each area. Facilities have made changes such as switching from whole to skim milk, providing age-appropriate portions and increasing facilitated movement activities. The NAP SACC consultant works with center leadership to create a strategic plan to achieve the goals, provides training for center staff, and connects the center with non-profits that can help make the changes.

Many of the centers make long-term menu changes to incorporate more fruits and vegetables. HEAL staff connected the centers with Willing Hands, a local food recovery organization, which donates fruits and vegetables from local restaurants and food cooperatives. The produce is integrated into the meals, used to teach lessons and sent home with the children at the end of the week. In addition, five of six participating centers have created or increased the size of their gardens and taught children about growing and consuming produce through a 16- to 22-week curriculum called Early Sprouts.

Results
After a three-month intervention with the NAP SACC consultant, centers are using 80 percent of the best practices available, a 17 percent increase on average. After six months, centers still maintain many policy and practice changes.

Partners and Funding
Implementation of NAP SACC is a partnership of the Upper Valley HEAL and private and Head Start-funded child care centers. Many of the centers provide food to children through the USDA Child and Adult Care Food Program. Additional produce is rescued from restaurants and grocers and donated by Willing Hands.

UV HEAL is funded and supported by the Children’s Hospital at Dartmouth-Hitchcock, Foundation for Healthy Communities, HNH foundation, Anthem Blue Cross Blue Shield, Endowment for Health, Harvard Pilgrim Health Care Foundation and the NH Charitable Foundation.

Additional funding for implementation of the NAP SACC model is provided by the state Department of Health and Human Services.

Implementation of the Early Sprouts program is made possible by HNH foundation, which provides grant funding, and Keene State College, which developed and tested the program’s effectiveness.

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III. FOOD DISTRIBUTION PARTNERSHIPS

1. 4th Street Market
Desert Mission Food Bank  |  Arizona
http://www.jcl.com/content/foodbank/programs.htm

Organization
The Food Bank is a program of the John C. Lincoln Health Network’s Desert Mission community programs, which provide child care, health and dental services, and neighborhood development in North Phoenix. Desert Mission Food Bank provides food, nutrition education and benefits assistance to residents in its service area.

Opportunity
Low-income Arizonans need access to emergency food in a dignified format that empowers them to make choices that work for their families.

Program Description
Started in 2004, the 4th Street Market is Desert Mission Food Bank’s client choice model for emergency and low-cost food provision. The market offers customers the opportunity to shop for foods their family will eat.

Families who visit the market for free emergency food must self-report a household income less than 185 percent of federal poverty and show a piece of U.S. mail with an address inside Desert Mission’s 150-square-mile service area. Households can receive up to six emergency food packages a year. The package is a mix of standard items and items chosen by the family. Standard items include canned goods and frozen meats, and families shop with a volunteer to choose among dairy items, breads and produce.

One-third of visitors to the market purchase low-cost food using cash or SNAP benefits. Market foods cost on average 30 percent less than the same items in the supermarket, and meats cost on average 45 percent less. Shoppers do not verify their income or place of residence to shop, and there is no limit on the number of times a family can shop each year. Shoppers who spend at least $15 receive “bonus products,” including breads/pastries and produce. Families receiving emergency food can also purchase some items in excess of the emergency food package.

The Food Bank employs a chef who develops recipes using the foods available at the market at the time and demonstrates how to cook them on the market floor. All Desert Mission Food Bank visitors can receive assistance from an on-site services coordinator, who helps them identify programs for which they may be eligible, pre-screen, and enroll. The Food Bank weighs all outgoing food at a specialized cash register and keeps data on food and household characteristics in a robust, searchable database.

Results
In 2010, the food bank distributed 29,113 emergency boxes. Twenty-five percent of customers used SNAP to purchase low-cost food, leveraging the value of their federal dollars.

Partners and Funding
4th Street Market is a partnership between the John C. Lincoln Health Network and two state agencies. The state Department of Economic Security administers federal funding for emergency food through The Emergency Food Assistance Program. The state Department of Health Services provides funding through the Arizona Nutrition Network to support the market chef and cooking demonstrations. Wal-Mart supports the food bank with in-kind donations of dry goods, produce and grocery carts; store-level grants; and staff volunteer time.

In the Statehouse
Legislators can establish funding opportunities for food banks that are cost-neutral for the state. In 2011, the Arizona Legislature enacted SB 1402, authorizing the state to produce a special anti-hunger license plate. Each plate will result in a $17 donation to the Association of Arizona Food Banks, which will distribute the funds among its food bank network.

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Backpack Buddies Program is a partnership between Inter-Faith Food Shuttle; more than 30 schools; a number of civic and faith-based groups; Feeding America; and corporate funders, including Newman’s Own, Blue Cross Blue Shield, ConAgra, Kraft and Food Lion. The North Carolina legislature holds three food drives in the state capitol each year and the legislative pages provide weekly volunteer assistance packing and distributing the backpacks.

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Organization
Inter-Faith Food Shuttle is a food bank and food rescue organization that pioneers innovative, transformative solutions designed to end hunger in its service area. In 2010, Inter-Faith Food Shuttle rescued more than 6.5 million pounds of food from more than 300 donors and delivered it to 212 programs and agencies in seven counties.

Opportunity
More than 100,000 children in Inter-Faith’s service area are eligible for free and reduced-price school meals, meaning they are at greater risk for food insecurity and may not have access to food over the weekend.

Program Description
For more than 10 years, the Backpack Buddies Program has provided children from food insecure households with meals and snacks for the weekend, when schools are not providing free and reduced-price meals. Inter-Faith Food Shuttle provides the donated food and volunteers to pack and deliver the backpacks and works with local schools to identify children in need of weekend food and to collect the backpacks to be returned to the food bank at the beginning of each week.

Each backpack contains enough food for six meals, including two canned vegetables, one canned fruit, two canned meats or meat stews, two packages of noodles, two 100 percent juice boxes, three boxes of shelf-stable milk, two healthy snacks and two breakfast items.

A backpack for one child for the entire academic year costs $350. Donors and volunteers can be involved by sponsoring one or more backpacks, organizing food drives for backpack-approved foods or “adopting” backpacks. Volunteers who adopt backpacks purchase food for a backpack, fill it and transport it to the Inter-Faith Food Shuttle each week.

The program has a strong focus on nutrition and works with corporate partners and donors to secure wholesome, nutrition products for the backpacks. Rather than sugary cereals, for example, backpacks carry oatmeal, whole grain cereals or grits.

Results
The Backpack Buddies Program serves 1,040 students each week—a total of approximately 6,240 meals each week at more than 30 sites.
Raising the Bar on Nutrition
RI Community Food Bank  |  Rhode Island
http://www.rifoodbank.org/Programs/RaisingtheBaronNutrition/tabid/188/Default.aspx

Organization
The Rhode Island Community Food Bank solicits, stores and distributes donated food, USDA commodities through The Emergency Food Assistance Program, and grocery products to 185 member agencies across the state. In partnership with government and community leaders, the Food Bank works to end hunger in Rhode Island.

Opportunity
People eligible for emergency food are at higher risk for both food insecurity and diet-related diseases. Many clients report that cost is a barrier to consuming healthy foods.

Program Description
Started in 2009, Raising the Bar on Nutrition is a program of the Rhode Island Community Food Bank funded by state and private money. The program provides low-income consumers with the tools and knowledge to cook healthy, affordable meals using low-cost items from the supermarket or food pantry.

Raising the Bar on Nutrition is a six-week class in which program participants receive nutrition education and observe a class instructor cooking a healthy, low-cost meal. Classes are held once a week for 30 to 45 minutes. During the first class of the series, the instructor distributes a packet of recipes. Each week, the instructor prepares one of the recipes using an electric skillet at the front of the classroom and invites the participants to taste the meal at the end of the session. Following the class, participants receive the ingredients to make the meal at home. If it is available, recipients receive other foods from the pantry.

The class is based on recipes developed by Mary Flynn, PhD, RD, LDN, a research dietitian at the Miriam Hospital in Providence. Dr. Flynn originally developed the recipes for a study aimed at improving the nutritional status of people undergoing treatment for or in remission from cancer. The recipes, presented in her recent book, The Pink Ribbon Diet, encourage fruit, vegetable and whole grain consumption. These plant-based meals are less expensive and lower in calories than meals centered around meat entrees.

Results
Dr. Flynn completed an evaluation of the impact of the program on more than 100 participants in the pilot. Six months after completion, program participants were still consuming significantly more fruits and vegetables than in the month prior to the program, and their SNAP benefits were lasting significantly more days of the month. Detailed results have been submitted for publication in the Journal of Hunger and Environmental Nutrition.
Hunger-Free North Dakota Gardens Project
North Dakota Department of Agriculture | North Dakota
http://www.agdepartment.com/Programs/LocalFoodsInfo.htm

Opportunity
One in 12 North Dakota residents seeks charitable food assistance every year. Demand for charitable food assistance increased by nearly 20 percent in 2009 alone. At the same time, many North Dakota residents grow excess produce or have the ability to grow and donate excess produce to charitable organizations.

Program Description
Started in 2010, the Hunger-Free North Dakota Gardens Project encourages North Dakota farmers and growers to plant and donate extra produce to the state’s hunger relief organizations. The Garden Project is a small initiative of the North Dakota Department of Agriculture (NDDA) and the Great Plains Food Bank, through which locally grown produce goes to low-income and food insecure North Dakota residents. The Gardens Project is part of NDDA’s broader Local Foods Initiative.

The project’s stated goals are to 1) grow and distribute 500,000 pounds of fresh produce to North Dakota’s 244 food pantries, shelters and charitable organizations; 2) build a distribution system to supply North Dakota with fresh and healthy produce; 3) recognize the quantities of fruits and vegetables grown in the state; 4) improve local diets through donation of and education about local foods; and 5) connect local produce to communities through farmers and gardeners.

North Dakota gardeners and farmers are encouraged to plant an extra row of produce or glean their fields and donate the harvest to the Garden Project. Participants leave their donations at organizations publicized on the NDDA website, including area pantries, soup kitchens, churches, domestic violence shelters and senior programs. These organizations pre-registered with NDDA and weigh and report to NDDA the amount of produce they receive each year.

The project engenders secondary local partnerships. The Bismarck Community Garden, for example, organized by a group of volunteers on land provided by the Bismarck Parks and Recreation Department, offers garden plots at no charge if all produce is donated to the initiative. Burleigh County Soil Conservation District donated land in Menoken, and volunteers from First Presbyterian Church of Bismarck plant and tend the field, then donate all the produce to the Garden Project.

Results
In 2010, 41 food pantries and organizations reported receiving 361,500 pounds of fresh, local produce donations across the state. The project is in its second year, and North Dakota Department of Agriculture staff report that more than 65 organizations are registered to received donated produce.

Partners and Funding
The Hunger Free ND Gardens Project is a partnership between the North Dakota Department of Agriculture, the Great Plains Food Bank, a number of state and local associations and coalitions, and North Dakota growers and gardeners. The Department of Agriculture provides funding for one employee to coordinate the program and a small budget to cover the costs of promotional materials and correspondence. Great Plains Food Bank coordinates and transports large donations of produce to organizations across the state. Associations and coalitions help with public outreach and donate space and resources for Hunger Gardens.

In the Statehouse
States can provide funding for one-time efforts that show promise of being self-sustaining in the future, including pilots and expansions of programs that have been successful. In 2009, Senator Judy Lee sponsored SB 2231, providing a one-time grant of $350,000 to the state Department of Human Services to contract with the Great Plains Food Bank to expand its network into rural, underserved areas in the state.

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IV. HEALTHY FOOD ACCESS PARTNERSHIPS

Healthy Corner Store Initiative
The Food Trust | Pennsylvania
http://www.thefoodtrust.org/php/programs/corner.store.campaign.php

Organization
The Food Trust works to make healthy food available to all. In partnership with neighborhoods, schools, grocers, farmers and policymakers, the Trust engages in nutrition education and a variety of programs to promote greater availability of affordable, healthy food in Philadelphia.

Opportunity
Through its work on school-based nutrition interventions, the Trust realized that the positive health effects of school-based initiatives were reduced by students’ consumption of low-nutrient, calorie-dense foods outside school. The Trust commissioned a study that was eventually published in *Pediatrics*. It reported the average Philadelphia student spends $1.07 and purchases more than 350 calories on each visit to the corner store, and 53 percent of Philadelphia students shop at corner stores at least once a day.

Program Description
The Healthy Corner Store Initiative is a partnership between staff at The Food Trust and corner store owners across Philadelphia. The Trust provides funding, training and technical support to store owners as they improve the availability of fresh food in their stores.

As part of the city’s Get Healthy Philly campaign, the Trust has developed a three-tiered model by which corner store owners may participate in the Healthy Corner Store Initiative. Tier one involvement requires store owners to stock four new healthy products and post the Trust’s social marketing materials throughout the store. Once successful, stores become eligible for in-store training and support to help corner store owners stock, display, manage and price their healthy products. After they receive technical assistance, 100 stores will become eligible for store conversions that will provide equipment ranging in value from $1,000 to $5,000 for new shelving, refrigeration units, produce scales and other equipment to sustain the sale of healthy products.

The Trust also works to increase student demand for healthy corner store products through Snackin’ Fresh youth leadership teams. Snackin’ Fresh is a pilot program involving three schools with teams of about 20 students who engage in youth development activities, develop strategies to increase healthy food access in their communities, and run school and community gardens that sell produce to participating corner stores.

Results
As of 2011, 600 stores are participating in first tier engagement activities and most are eligible for and are pursuing technical assistance from the Trust. The Trust has completed 15 store conversions and is planning for 85 more. Sixty youth participate in leadership and gardening programs with Snackin’ Fresh.

Partners and Funding
The Healthy Corner Store Initiative is a partnership between *The Food Trust* and hundreds of *store owners* in Philadelphia. The project partners with the *Philadelphia Department of Public Health* through the city’s Get Healthy Philly campaign. During the project’s pilot years, a portion of the *Pennsylvania Fresh Food Financing Initiative’s* funding for store renovations went to improve corner stores.

In the Statehouse
State legislators can champion innovative economic development initiatives. In 2004, Representative Dwight Evans worked to include in a major state budget bill $30 million in grants, loans and tax incentives for supermarket development in areas with limited access to healthy food. The initiative has funded 88 fresh-food retail projects, creating or preserving 5,000 jobs and improving access to healthy food for 500,000 residents.

Legislators can form legislative groups to work on statewide hunger efforts. In 2009, Senator Mike Brubaker formed the *Pennsylvania Legislative Hunger Caucus*, which has helped move anti-hunger legislation and increase the visibility of hunger by starting the Capitol Hunger Garden.

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Partners and Funding

The farmers’ market EBT and incentive program is a partnership between the state Department of Agricultural Resources and the Department of Transitional Assistance, along with Harvard Pilgrim Health Care and Wholesome Wave Foundation, both of whom helped leverage state funding. Additional partners include the Federation of Massachusetts Farmers’ Markets and the City of Boston. Private farmers’ market operators administer the program at local markets.

In the Statehouse

State legislators can sponsor legislation that catalyzes cross-sector, interagency work on food policy. In 2010, the Massachusetts legislature enacted HB 4568, establishing a statewide food policy council. The 15-member council is developing recommendations to advance production of Massachusetts-grown crops and to develop and promote programs that increase healthy food access in communities where there is disproportionate prevalence of obesity and chronic disease.

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Farmer’s Market EBT and Incentive Programs

The Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources (MDAR) ensures the long-term viability of agriculture in Massachusetts and supports, regulates and enhances the rich diversity of its agricultural community.

Opportunity

In 2009, only 30 of Massachusetts’s 233 farmers’ markets accepted SNAP.

Program Description

Started in 2009, Massachusetts’s farmers’ market electronic benefit transfer (EBT) access and incentive programs help markets procure and maintain EBT terminals and encourage produce consumption among SNAP users.

The state Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA) granted $50,000 of federal recovery money to MDAR to launch a program to increase SNAP access and use at farmers’ markets. MDAR’s request for applications, sent to markets statewide, received requests totaling $70,000. Wholesome Wave contributed $20,000, and Harvard Pilgrim Health Care Foundation contributed $5,000 to meet excess demand. The project was formalized in an unprecedented Memorandum of Agreement between DTA, MDAR, Wholesome Wave, Harvard Pilgrim Health Care, the Federation for Massachusetts Farmers’ Markets and the City of Boston Mayor’s Office.

Grantees used the funding to purchase or rent and maintain EBT machines and conduct outreach and incentive programs. Grantees spent an average of $700 on a new EBT machine and $544 on average on monthly costs and transaction fees over the year. Most grantees that administered incentive programs to SNAP customers offered an ongoing dollar-for-dollar match program, giving SNAP users $1 for every SNAP dollar spent on fruits and vegetables up to $10.

MDAR staff provided four regional training sessions for market managers who received grants. MDAR also partnered with WIC offices, YMCAs, Boys and Girls Clubs and food pantries to advertise the program.

In addition, DTA started the Farmers’ Market Ambassador Program, which engages 40 people who receive cash assistance to meet their program work requirements by operating EBT machines at farmers’ markets. The program helps the state meet its TANF work participation rate requirements, while the workers become “ambassadors” for EBT, aiding in word-of-mouth advertising for the initiative. During the upcoming market season, the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority will donate funding to help ambassadors travel to and from the markets.

Results

The number of farmers’ markets statewide accepting SNAP grew from 30 in 2009 to 58 in 2010. Markets that accepted EBT but did not offer incentives averaged $867 in SNAP sales in 2010; markets that offered incentives averaged $2,587 in SNAP sales. A total of $116,813 in SNAP benefits was spent statewide in 2010, representing a 510 percent increase over 2009 sales of $19,199.
Senior Farmers’ Market Nutrition Program
Farmers’ Market Authority | Alabama
http://www.fma.state.al.us/Nutrition.aspx

Organization
The Farmers’ Market Authority (FMA) is a state agency established to help market agricultural products by providing the information, leadership and modern facilities necessary to move products from the farm to the consumer. The three-fold purpose of the agency is to 1) promote direct marketing avenues for Alabama agricultural products, 2) advocate for the interests and respond to the needs of farmers’ markets, and 3) educate farmers and consumers about the benefits of direct marketing.

Opportunity
SFMNP offers an opportunity to put federal dollars directly in the pockets of farmers. In addition, high demand exists for affordable produce among low-income seniors, who often live on fixed incomes, are at high risk for food insecurity and face challenges accessing other federal programs.

Program Description
Started in 2001, the Senior Farmers’ Market Nutrition Program (SFMNP) in Alabama provides low-income seniors with coupons they can redeem for produce at qualifying farmers’ markets and farm stands. In Alabama, the Farmers’ Market Authority administers the program.

Seniors receive a book of $4 coupons by signing up on the FMA website. FMA mails the books to the seniors’ homes, and recipients can take the coupons to any farmers’ market or farm stand listed on the FMA website. FMA directs shoppers to “inquire locally for exact [market] opening and closing dates,” and note that those dates may or may not coincide with the dates during which seniors may redeem their coupons, April 15 through November 15 of each year. Seniors may not receive change from their coupon, may not buy non-produce items such as ornamental pumpkins or gourds, and may not use coupons at other locations such as supermarkets.

The coupons, which are similar to checks, can be deposited directly into a farmer’s bank account. There is no lag time between the receipt of the coupon and revenue dispersal to farmers; according to FMA, this is an important aspect of the program.

Seniors can use their coupons only if the farmers’ market or farm stand has been certified through USDA Food and Nutrition Service and displays a “Farmers’ Market Nutrition Program” sign. FMA works to authorize farmers’ markets and farm stands to accept the coupons and provides ongoing training and technical assistance to certify farmers.

Results
As of May 2011, seniors could redeem their coupons at 136 farmers’ markets and 154 roadside farm stands statewide. Alabama’s SFMNP is the fourth largest program in the country, bringing $1.7 million in federal money into the state annually and benefiting 57,000 to 59,000 seniors. Alabama’s is one of the only SFMNPs that reaches every county in the state. The average coupon redemption rate is 90 percent.

Partners and Funding
SFMNP is a partnership between the State Department of Agriculture and Industries and private growers. Funding for the program is provided through the USDA Senior Farmers’ Market Nutrition Program.

In the Statehouse
Legislators can create agencies or programs within agencies to help increase the promotion of healthy foods. In 1965, the Alabama legislature established the Farmers’ Market Authority, an independent agency to deal specifically with farmers’ market-related issues and programs.

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The Farm Fresh Project is a partnership between NYCCAH, several local non-profits with CSA programs, and volunteers provided by AmeriCorps VISTA and State AmeriCorps. The state Department of Agriculture provides free EBT machines to NYCCAH for program administration.

In the Statehouse

States can build communities’ capacity to solve hunger as it exists in their neighborhoods. In 2011, the New York Legislature enacted SB 2803, allocating state department funding for aid to localities to prevent hunger, obesity and related issues.

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Farm-Fresh Project

New York City Coalition Against Hunger
http://www.nyccah.org/our-work/direct-food-access/farm-fresh/farm-fresh-project

Organization

The New York City Coalition Against Hunger (NYCCAH) represents more than 1,200 non-profit soup kitchens and food pantries in New York City and 1.4 million city residents who cannot afford enough food. By providing network coordination, volunteer and capacity building services, legislative advocacy and programs management, NYCCAH works to “move society beyond the soup kitchen.”

Opportunity

Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) programs are an increasingly popular model for direct marketing of agricultural products to interested consumers, but SNAP recipients usually cannot participate because CSAs require shareholders to pay large up-front fees. At the same time, SNAP recipients often live in neighborhoods where healthy food is inaccessible due to location or price.

Program Description

Started in 2007, the Farm-Fresh Project at NYCCAH connects low-income New Yorkers with healthy, affordable food through a CSA program near where they live. The project seeks to solve the paradoxical problems of hunger and obesity that many families experience.

Interested low-income families contact NYCCAH, which connects them with a CSA in their neighborhood. For low-income consumers, NYCCAH helps subsidize the up-front cost of the CSA share.

The model also accommodates SNAP consumers, who typically cannot pay the large up-front fee and are prohibited by federal regulations from using their benefits and not immediately receiving the purchased product. NYCCAH enables SNAP users to pay for their shares in pre-determined installments throughout the growing season. NYCCAH pays for the SNAP recipient’s CSA share at the beginning of the growing season, since that is when most of farmers’ growing costs accrue. Incremental payments by SNAP recipients are actually repayments to NYCCAH, collected on a wireless EBT terminal at the CSA drop location. SNAP recipients still share in the risks and rewards of harvest—their weekly boxes of food grow or shrink depending on the yield—but they can use their SNAP benefits as they are disbursed each month in compliance with federal regulation.

NYCCAH conducts outreach for the initiative at many of its food banks and pantries across the city. State and VISTA AmeriCorps volunteers conduct one-on-one outreach, offer presentations and staff a table at community events and health fairs.

Results

This year, NYCCAH is subsidizing 278 shares for low-income consumers, of whom 151 are SNAP recipient households. This is a significant increase over 2010, when NYCCAH subsidized shares for just 70 SNAP recipient households.
Organization
The San Antonio Food Bank (SAFB) is a non-profit organization that receives, stores and distributes truckloads of donated food to 525 service agencies across its 16 county service area. SAFB is a Feeding America affiliate and a member of the Texas Food Bank Network.

Social Services Call Center
Initiated in 2008, the Social Services Call Center provides benefits screening and enrollment services to SAFB visitors. The call center provides SNAP outreach and application assistance resulting from a partnership between the Texas Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) and SAFB. The SNAP Pilot Program within the Social Services Call Center was conceived during conversations between HHSC Commissioner Tom Suehs and SAFB President/CEO Eric Cooper, whose relationship was facilitated by state Representative José Menendez, a long-time friend of SAFB. The Center provides food bank clients access to the resources they need to apply for benefits onsite.

Visitors to the Center undergo an assessment of their needs, pre-screen for several benefit programs, and complete and send a paper application to HHSC, eliminating their initial trip to the state office. Eligibility workers at the San Antonio food bank are cross-trained with state eligibility workers and their performance is audited by the state. The Center has helped HHSC comply with federal regulations that require SNAP applications to be processed within 30 days of the initial application.

Second Chance Program
Started in 1999, The Texas Second Chance Program is a partnership between the Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDJC) and SAFB. The Second Chance Program provides people who are incarcerated for non-violent crimes in the Texas prison system the opportunity to participate in a six-month workforce development experience. Participants build warehouse and culinary experience, earn licenses to operate warehouse machinery, and connect with Texas professionals who volunteer to speak with the group during weekly classes. TDJC recruits program participants and provides administrative support to release the men for work.

Community Garden
The 5.5-acre SAFB Community Garden provides a space for nutrition and garden education for community members and SAFB clients. It is a source of organic fruits, vegetables and herbs for distribution to SAFB’s partner agencies and at SAFB’s Culinary/Community Kitchen. The garden provides summer volunteer opportunities for the entire community. The project is a partnership with the San Antonio Spurs, the Texas Department of Agriculture and USDA.

In the Statehouse
State legislators can champion bills that remove state-imposed administrative barriers to participation in federal programs. In 2011, the Texas Legislature enacted HB 710, eliminating the finger imaging requirement for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) applicants.

State legislators can assist anti-hunger organizations by creating state holidays and commending public-private partnerships. In 2011, the Texas Legislature enacted SR 145, establishing Texas Food Bank Day at the state Capitol and commending a grant program administered by the Texas Department of Agriculture and food bank programs. The Texans Feeding Texans grant provides $2 million in funding to the Texas Food Bank Network, which uses the funds to glean commodities from Texas farmers, purchase the gleaned produce for reduced prices, and distribute the produce throughout its food bank network.

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Although legislation and state agency support are important catalysts in anti-hunger efforts, time and resource constraints can push legislators to take more immediate action to raise the visibility of hunger in their communities. The following high-impact, low- or no-cost strategies are accessible to any legislator.

Strategy 1 | Leverage your websites and social media to raise the visibility of hunger.

In March 2011, Georgia state Senator Renee Unterman requested assistance from the Senate media team, scheduled a meeting with the executive director of the Atlanta Community Food Bank and drove to the food bank to commit her visit to film. Senator Unterman produced a 14-minute video about hunger in Georgia and the commendable work of the Atlanta Community Food Bank. Senator Unterman said her goals were to highlight the fact that the food bank serves the “two Georgias”—both urban and rural Georgia—and that food banks need the strong support of Georgians during the recession. She posted the video to YouTube and her Facebook page. View the video at http://youtu.be/U43q9lMo6dI.

Strategy 2 | Take your colleagues and staff in the legislature to visit a local anti-hunger organization.

In late 2009, Texas House Speaker Joe Straus brought a group of his district and capitol staff to the San Antonio Food Bank, located in Bexar County. The group took a guided tour of the facility and volunteered in the food bank’s community garden and can-sorting room to prepare emergency food for distribution. The visit was valuable because helped policy staff see first-hand the variety of services and programs at the food bank. The food bank does not simply provide emergency food; rather, it offers an array of programs to give low-income families in Texas a hand up.

Strategy 3 | Start an anti-hunger project on your state capitol grounds.

In early 2009, Senator Mike Brubaker established the Pennsylvania Legislative Hunger Caucus, which involves 77 legislators from both chambers and parties. The caucus, co-chaired by Senator Brubaker and Representative John Myers, started a 100-square-foot garden plot on the capitol grounds in Harrisburg. Now in its second year, the Capitol Hunger Garden is entirely funded by private companies, community organizations and individuals and relies on volunteers to tend and harvest the produce. The vegetables are donated to Pennsylvania’s 21 food banks. In its first year, the garden produced enough tomatoes, onions and green peppers to make 1,400 jars of salsa, which were offered to those who donated at least $25 to their local food bank. Find out more at http://www.pahungergarden.org/.
<table>
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<th>Glossary of Terms</th>
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<tr>
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<td><strong>Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Community garden</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Community Supported Agriculture (CSA)</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Food and Nutrition Service (FNS)</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Food desert</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Point of Sale (POS)</strong></td>
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low-income households are able to receive free or reduced-price meals through the program.

**Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program (SFMNP)** | USDA nutrition program that provides low-income seniors with a book of coupons to purchase fresh, locally grown fruits, vegetables and herbs with the goals of supporting farmers and increasing seniors’ consumption of fresh fruits and vegetables.

**Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC)** | USDA nutrition program that provides federal grants to states for supplemental foods, health care referrals, and nutrition education for low-income pregnant, breastfeeding and non-breastfeeding postpartum women, and to infants and children up to age 5 who are found to be at nutritional risk.

**Summer Food Service Program (SFSP)** | USDA nutrition program that helps state agencies, schools and community-based organizations provide free meals during summer months to children in low-income areas.

**Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)** | USDA nutrition program that supplements the food budgets of low-income people by providing benefits on an EBT card, through which consumers may purchase qualifying foods at supermarkets and other retailers.

**The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP)** | USDA nutrition program that provides low-income people with emergency food, primarily by supplying statewide and local emergency food providers with government-purchased commodity foods.
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The National Conference of State Legislatures is the bipartisan organization that serves the legislators and staffs of the states, 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 states in the American federal system. Its objectives are:

- To improve the quality and effectiveness of state legislatures.
- To promote policy innovation and communication among state legislatures.
- To ensure state legislatures a strong, cohesive voice in the federal system.

The Conference operates from offices in Denver, Colorado, and Washington, D.C.
Bringing Legislators to the Table
Addressing Hunger through Public-Private Partnerships

This booklet provides state legislators, legislative staff, interested businesses and not-for-profit organizations with practical examples of how to leverage resources and expertise across sectors to reach vulnerable populations. The four sections address partnerships by program category, including SNAP, child nutrition programs, food distribution programs and programs that increase access to healthy food. Each section describes innovative public-private partnerships, including the problem(s) the programs address, the names of major partners and funding sources, relevant legislation or legislator involvement and program results.

The NCSL Foundation Hunger Partnership was launched to raise the visibility of hunger in America and highlight innovative and lasting solutions. The goal of this initiative is to connect the public and private sectors to improve the availability of healthy food for hungry families. The Hunger Partnership links legislators, legislative staff and businesses to identify innovative and successful programs and develop bipartisan, balanced, and concise materials and mechanisms to support legislators in their efforts to reduce hunger in America.

Find out more at http://www.ncsl.org/hunger.

This publication was produced with support from the following organizations.