

Food Champion Toolkit

PUBLIC HEALTH-DAYTON & MONTGOMERY COUNTY

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Overview

How should this toolkit be used?

The intended purpose for this toolkit is to uphold the values of the Food Equity Coalition by educating people on the prevalence of community food insecurity, connecting those struggling with consistent access to local and federal resources, and encouraging advocacy and volunteerism to help increase community food security in Montgomery County, Ohio.

Definitions

Food Security

- A household's consistent ability to provide enough food for every person in the household for an active and healthy life (adapted from Feeding America).

Food Insecurity

- Disruption of food intake or eating patterns because of lack of money or other resources (Food Access Research Atlas, USDA).

Community Food Security

- A fair and sustainable food system that benefits our economy, our environment, and all people (adapted from Whole Measure for Community Food Systems).

Community Food Security

- Everyone, no matter their race, income, or ability, can access and afford a basic healthy diet to work to support a food system that produces this vision (Center for Social Inclusion).

How are Food Security and Insecurity Measured?

The USDA uses the following question to assess household food security. This survey is conducted along with the Current Population Survey (CPS). The CPS is a national survey conducted by the Bureau of the Census for the Bureau of Labor Statistics and provides data for the Nation's monthly unemployment statistics, annual income, and poverty statistics.

1. *"We worried whether our food would run out before we got money to buy more." Was that often, sometimes, or never true for you in the last 12 months?*
2. *"The food that we bought just didn't last and we didn't have money to get more." Was that often, sometimes, or never true for you in the last 12 months?*
3. *"We couldn't afford to eat balanced meals." Was that often, sometimes, or never true for you in the last 12 months?*
4. *In the last 12 months, did you or other adults in the household ever cut the size of your meals or skip meals because there wasn't enough money for food? (Yes/No)*
5. *(If yes to question 4) How often did this happen—almost every month, some months but not every month, or in only 1 or 2 months?*
6. *In the last 12 months, did you ever eat less than you felt you should because there wasn't enough money for food? (Yes/No)*
7. *In the last 12 months, were you ever hungry, but didn't eat, because there wasn't enough money for food? (Yes/No)*
8. *In the last 12 months, did you lose weight because there wasn't enough money for food? (Yes/No)*
9. *In the last 12 months did you or other adults in your household ever not eat for a whole day because there wasn't enough money for food? (Yes/No)*
10. *(If yes to question 9) How often did this happen—almost every month, some months but not every month, or in only 1 or 2 months?*

More information, including questions asked to households with children, can be found [here](#)

Dietary Guidelines

MyPlate

MyPlate is the current nutrition guide from the USDA's Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion. It helps Americans make better food choices with proper daily intakes of nutrition and support a healthy life.

MyPlate encourages Americans to,

- Make half your plate fruits and vegetables, focusing on whole fruits
- Make half your plate fruits and vegetables, varying your veggies
- Make half your grains whole grains
- Vary your protein routine
- Move to low-fat or fat-free dairy milk or yogurt (or lactose-free dairy or fortified soy versions)

For more information about MyPlate, visit the What is [MyPlate](#) page. On this website, you can find more information about each food group, recipes, recommendations for different life stages, and more.

Nutrition Assistance Qualifications

Food Assistance Benefits

- The Food Assistance Program, formerly called food stamps and now known as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), helps eligible low-income families stretch their food budgets and buy healthy food. In Ohio, food assistance benefits are distributed electronically through the Ohio Direction Card.
- You may qualify for SNAP if your household's monthly income is at or under 130 percent the federal poverty line. You can find the current poverty guidelines at www.aspe.hhs.gov/poverty-guidelines . Some households above the monthly income limit may also qualify if someone living in the home is disabled or elderly.
- To apply for food assistance in Ohio, visit <https://jfs.ohio.gov/ocomm/applyforbenefits.stm>

WIC

- The Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) provides healthy foods to pregnant, postpartum, and breastfeeding women, infants, and children up to age 5. WIC also encourages breastfeeding and provides breastfeeding support.
- You may qualify if you meet certain income eligibility and state residency.
- More information about WIC in Montgomery County can be found at <https://www.phdmc.org/child-maternal-health/women-infants-and-children-wic>

Produce Perks

- Produce Perks is a nutrition incentive program available to SNAP participants. Receive \$1 for every \$1 you spend when you shop with your SNAP/EBT Ohio Direction Card at participating locations.
- In Montgomery County, participating locations include farmers markets, local grocers, and through specific prescription programs.
- More information, including a current list of locations can be found at <https://produceperks.org/>

Seniors Farmers' Market Nutrition Program

- The Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program serves low-income seniors, ages 60 or older, who are at or below 85% of the Federal Poverty Line. Eligible seniors receive \$50 in coupons to spend on fresh, local fruits and vegetables. More information can be found at: <https://www.homefull.org/food-2/senior-farmers-market-nutrition-program/>

Local Data/Reports

There are several places you can find community food security data for Montgomery County, including:

- Feeding America’s Map the Meal Gap: <https://map.feedingamerica.org/>
- The USDA’s Food Environment Atlas: <https://www.ers.usda.gov/data-products/food-environment-atlas/go-to-the-atlas/>
- Public Health – Dayton & Montgomery County’s Community Health Assessment: <https://www.phdmc.org/report/community-health-assessment>
- The Miami Valley Regional Planning Commission’s Grocery Store Accessibility: <https://www.mvrpc.org/transportation/2040-lrtp-transportation-projects-background-and-information/lrtp-accessibility-analysis>
- For more local data and reports, check out the “Data & Reports” section on the Montgomery County Food Equity Coalition page: www.mcfoodequitycoalition.org
- Hall Hunger Initiative also provides food resource mapping and more at: www.hallhunger.org

Advocacy Resources

Where to Donate?

House of Bread - serving free lunch 365 days a year. Updates on Facebook.

Miami Valley Meals - hiring out of work chefs to prepare healthy, delicious meals. More on Facebook.

Gem City Market - a community owned co-op grocery store. News about opening day and other events on Facebook.

Dayton Foodbank Inc. - supporting more than 100 partner food pantries. Schedule and more on Facebook.

East End Community Services - supporting families in East Dayton. More on Facebook.

Covid Relief Fund of Dayton Foundation and United Way of Greater Dayton - helping nonprofits meet community needs.

Homefull - from neighborhood gardens to an innovative Mobile Grocery Store, Homefull is there to help those in need. Updates on Facebook.

With God's Grace - A food pantry and mobile distribution. Lots more on Facebook.

Good Neighbor House - providing food, clothing, medical and dental services. Latest on Facebook.

Source: Hall Hunger Initiative

Amplifying Your Voice

If you are interested in advocating for increased community food security in your community, we suggest reaching out to your local elected officials:

- Ohio House of Representatives District Map: <https://ohiohouse.gov/members/district-map>
- Ohio Senators: <https://www.senate.gov/states/OH/intro.htm>
- Montgomery County Commissioners: https://www.mcoho.org/government/elected_officials/board_of_county_commissioners/index.php
- Reach out to the mayor or city commissioners in your community

Additional Advocacy Resources

- Visit The Foodbank, Inc.'s advocacy page for additional opportunities. They have ideas or how to support the local food system, advocating for those experiencing food insecurity, and more at: <https://thefoodbankdayton.org/volunteer/advocate/>
- Food Research & Action Center: <https://frac.org/action>

Volunteering Opportunities

[The Foodbank, Inc.](#)

[United Way of the Greater Dayton Area](#)

[House of Bread](#)

[Good Neighbor House](#)

Reach out to a local food pantry asking if they need help!

Sustainable/Low Waste Food Practices

Community Support Agriculture

What Is It?

Community Supported Agriculture consists of a community of individuals who pledge support to a farm operation so that the farmland becomes, either legally or spiritually, the community's farm, with the growers and consumers providing mutual support and sharing the risks and benefits of food production.

Source: [USDA National Agriculture Library](#)

How Can I Get Involved?

Check [Local Harvest!](#)

Why?

Advantages for farmers:

- Get to spend time marketing the food early in the year, before their 16-hour days in the field begin.
- Receive payment early in the season, which helps with the farm's cash flow.
- Have an opportunity to get to know the people who eat the food they grow.

Advantages for consumers:

- Eat ultra-fresh food, with all the flavor and vitamin benefits.
- Get exposed to new vegetables and new ways of cooking.
- Usually get to visit the farm once a season.
- Find that kids typically favor food from "their" farm—even veggies they've never been known to eat.
- Develop a relationship with the farmer who grows their food and learn more about how food is grown.

Source: [Local Harvest](#)

Reducing Food Waste

What Is It?

Compost is organic material that can be added to soil to help plants grow. Food scraps that we would usually throw away could be composted instead.

Benefits of Composting:

- Enriches soil, helping retain moisture and suppress plant diseases and pests.
- Reduces the need for chemical fertilizers.
- Encourages the production of beneficial bacteria and fungi that break down organic matter to create humus, a rich nutrient-filled material.
- Reduces methane emissions from landfills and lowers your carbon footprint.

Source: [Environmental Protection Agency](#)

Local Compost Resources

- The Foodbank, Inc. has an at-home composting program. Learn more by visiting their website at: <https://thefoodbankdayton.org/>
- Five Rivers MetroParks provides education on composting in your backyard. Learn more here: <https://www.metroparks.org/get-started-composting/>