



Getting Started with Your Own Food Insecurity Program

WITHOUT A DOUBT, individual health center and partner food organization efforts to address food insecurity and related health effects are innovative, productive and show positive results.

The following recommendations are offered to health centers that wish to take steps to address food insecurity in their communities:

COLLECT DATA

- ✓ Create a map of existing food distributors/resources in your community
- ✓ Include food insecurity and food desert measures in your Community Needs Assessment
- ✓ Implement the validated two question Hunger Vital Sign™ food insecurity screen into your practice and document results (available in English and Spanish at <http://childrenshealth-watch.org/public-policy/hunger-vital-sign/>)
 - We (I) worried whether our food would run out before we (I) got money to buy more
 - The food that we (I) bought just didn't last and we (I) didn't have money to get more
- ✓ Create a database to measure desired outcomes in any food intervention started at the center
- ✓ Track food resource usage and link to health outcomes
- ✓ Show the medical economics argument for the cost of food programs as they reduce risk for cardiovascular, endocrine and mental health morbidity and mortality

PLAN

- ✓ Engage community partners in problem solving
- ✓ Contact regional and national food security organizations for assistance
- ✓ Offer staff a chance to develop food resource solutions
- ✓ Contact successful health centers for mentorship and advice

ADVOCATE FOR FUNDING AND PARTNERSHIPS

- ✓ Advocate for policies that allow health centers to fund food resources for patients through national, state and local departments of education, agriculture and labor
- ✓ Link food security efforts with health, racial and economic justice activities in your community for better state and national policy and program development