

Addressing Food Insecurity Among College Students

THE LANDSCAPE OF THE FEEDING AMERICA NETWORK

WHAT IS THE FEEDING AMERICA NETWORK DOING TO ADDRESS COLLEGE HUNGER?

129

food banks are currently engaging in college hunger activities.



Of the 200 food bank members of the Feeding America network, the majority are offering services to address college hunger, such as operating campus food pantries and/or mobile distributions. College hunger services are frequently initiated in response to the requests and needs of college partners, as identified via existing partnerships with college representatives or research around college hunger.

COLLEGE HUNGER STRATEGY

Food banks most commonly target college students through an approach that focuses on access, having identified a college campus as a location in the community where individuals in need can access food bank services.

64



food banks identify college campuses as a location where individuals can access food bank services.

19



food banks call out college hunger in their strategic plan.

COLLEGE HUNGER SERVICES

Among the 129 food banks engaged in college hunger activities, direct food distribution is the most common approach to addressing college hunger reported, followed by SNAP application assistance directed at college students and engagement in policy and advocacy efforts related to college hunger.

110



food banks engage in direct food distribution.

33



food banks engage in policy and advocacy efforts related to college hunger.

39



food banks engage in SNAP application assistance directed at college students.

AMONG THE 110 FOOD BANKS ENGAGED IN DIRECT FOOD DISTRIBUTION TO COLLEGE STUDENTS:

98 food banks operate

316
CAMPUS
PANTRIES



51 food banks operate

124
MOBILE
DISTRIBUTIONS



440
DIRECT FOOD
DISTRIBUTIONS



WHAT ARE THE FACILITATING FACTORS THAT DRIVE SUCCESSFUL COLLEGE HUNGER SERVICES?

Four broad categories of facilitators of college hunger services emerged from food banks' survey responses and in-depth interviews.

RELATIONSHIPS & PARTNERSHIPS

Securing **commitment from school leaders** is critical to a successful college hunger initiative, as is obtaining broad engagement from across the institution.

For direct food distributions on campuses, **engaging the student life/affairs department** can be a successful strategy for building support.

Utilizing and **honoring the knowledge of those within the college community** is also an important practice. This allows individuals from across the institution to feel heard, and possibly gain support and engagement.

Locating a **champion within the college/university** is a way to strengthen partnerships and relationships, especially when engaging in direct-food distributions.

Fostering **authentic and supportive relationships** is vital to successful college hunger services, including building relationships with staff at on-campus pantries, students needing SNAP assistance, or legislators.

Lastly, **coalitions, task forces, and working groups** offer a valuable space to generate solutions for mitigating college hunger.

ACCESS

Devising a **strategy for addressing the stigma** associated with college hunger among students and administrators is key. Combining college hunger services with events is one way to create a welcoming environment to reach students.

Anticipating bureaucratic red tape can **help mitigate internal politics**, though it can require substantial time to navigate these challenges.

OPERATIONS

Creating **formal documents**, such as manuals, to guide and replicate college hunger initiatives is tremendously helpful in facilitating effective college hunger services.

Intentional efforts to **train additional personnel** have potential to allow college hunger services to reach a wider array of students.

When possible, designating **food bank personnel to focus on aspects of college hunger** is a key to success.

Although staffing direct food distributions at college campuses can be challenging, **combining the forces of students, volunteers, and designated on-campus staff members** is one way to achieve success. Having unique models, or various iterations of a model, may prove useful given the unique college/university contexts.

AWARENESS

Tailored marketing is recommended to effectively spread awareness of college hunger services. The use of technology (e.g., texting, apps) presents one possible innovation in reaching the college student population, but all channels require thoughtful planning and execution.

Hosting or participating in campus events, especially for SNAP application assistance, is a useful tactic to increase awareness.

WHAT CAN FEEDING AMERICA DO TO SUPPORT FOOD BANKS IN ADDRESSING COLLEGE HUNGER?

Food banks identified concrete ways that Feeding America can support food banks in addressing college hunger, other than providing food and funding.



ABOUT THIS BRIEF

During 2018-2019, Feeding America and the Claremont Evaluation Center (CEC) collaborated to understand the response of Feeding America network food banks in addressing food insecurity among college students. The evaluation team leveraged interviews with selected food banks and a College Hunger Survey, open to the 200 food banks in the Feeding America network, to explore the landscape of services to address college hunger.

9 PRELIMINARY FOOD BANK INTERVIEWS

150 RESPONSES TO THE COLLEGE HUNGER SURVEY

10 FOLLOW-UP FOOD BANK INTERVIEWS



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