



A WHITE PAPER

Hunger & Food Security in Wisconsin and Dane County

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Despite great prosperity and wealth in our nation, some members of our society still face challenges with basic human needs. The experience of eating and preparing food is something we all have personal experiences with, yet we frequently see that the flexible food budget compared to other household expenses make food one of the first things to get scaled back when money is tight. Anyone who falls into that boat and doesn't know when their next meal is coming might be considered "food insecure."

Food security is the access to sufficient food for a healthy and active life for all household members at all times. Conversely, *food insecurity* occurs when food access is insufficient or uncertain for at least one person in the household at some point in the year. When households are food insecure, people worry about food running out without having money to buy more. Often, they cut back on the size of meals or skip meals due to lack of money.

How common is food insecurity in Wisconsin and Dane County?

According to the USDA, over one in ten households (11.6%), totaling over a quarter million of all Wisconsin households, are food insecure. Feeding America's Map the Meal Gap uses slightly different methodology to determine that 12.4% of all people and 20.4% of children in Wisconsin are food insecure as compared to 11.8% and 17.5% respectively in Dane County.

Further breaking down food insecurity rates by household type, we see that the rate of food insecurity exceeds one in three for some of the most vulnerable groups, including households that contain disabled person (37.7%), Hispanic households (34.5%), African-American households (34.6%), Single mothers (34.9%), and households below 100% of the federal poverty level (37.3%).¹

Some food insecure households are considered to have "very low food security," which occurs when one or more individuals reduce food intake or change normal eating patterns. Within households with food insecurity, it is more likely that one or more individuals will experience hunger, the body's physiological response to not consuming enough food. Food insecurity and hunger can have a variety of significant health consequences. Wisconsin saw sharp increases in food insecurity during the Great Recession of 2008 in line with those experienced by the rest of the nation. While the rate has declined somewhat as the economy has improved, food insecurity remains higher than it was prior to the recession. Although the mainstream press calls

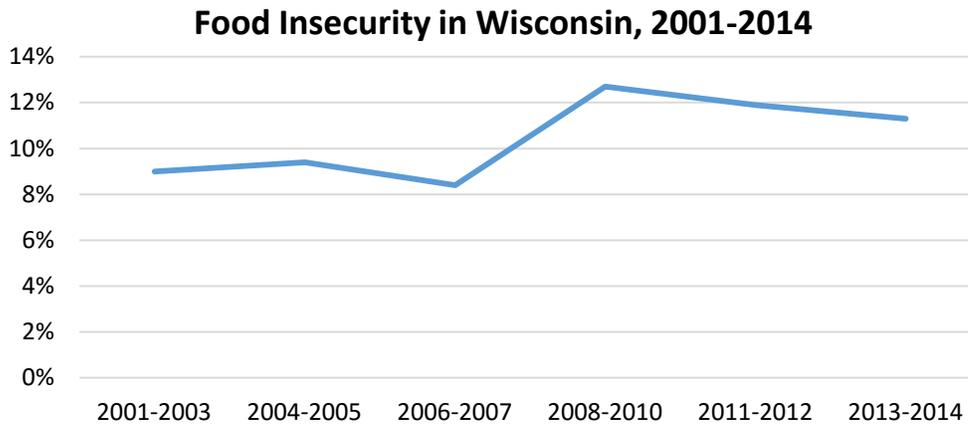
Healthy eating and food security: Tradeoffs

Food security is related to healthy eating, but they are not entirely overlapping concepts. Children and adults living in food insecure households tend to consume diets that are comparatively lower in fruits and vegetables, overall variety, and nutrient content. Also, some members of food insecure households (especially adult women) are at increased risk of being overweight or obese, however if providing food for families is a priority, occasionally this comes at the cost of prioritizing the nutritional value of that food.

This tradeoff is the difference between malnutrition, the inability to eat healthfully, and undernutrition, or the inability to eat enough food. This is an important distinction for policy purposes as some anti-obesity and healthy eating initiatives can improve overall nutrition standards but may have unintended consequences of increasing stigma around participating in nutrition programs which are essential for food improving food security.

¹ Bartfeld, J. Food insecurity and food hardships in Wisconsin. 2015. Based on calculations from the 2001-2014 Current Population Survey Food Security Supplement.

current economic trends a “recovery,” families hardest hit by the economic downturn have not recovered, and many experienced food insecurity prior to 2008.



A food security survey of clients of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) determined that over half (54%) of WIC clients are food insecure and 21% have very low food security².

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) participation can offer another indicator of food insecurity. While the SNAP participation rate has stopped accelerating as it was at the beginning of the Great Recession, the rates are coming down much more slowly than they went up, indicating an economic recovery that is slow to reduce the symptoms of food insecurity.³

Free and reduced-price school meal rates can also offer insight into food insecurity. In Dane County, 34% of all students are eligible for free or reduce-price meals. In Madison Metropolitan School District this number jumps to 55%. With the recent availability of the Community Eligibility Provision, a new funding mechanism for schools with high populations of “identified students” who are already participating in SNAP and certain other qualifying criteria, 18 schools in the Madison Metropolitan School District are now offering free breakfast and lunch to all students. This reflects a recognition that certain areas of Madison are higher in need for support from school meals programs.

Why is food insecurity a problem?

Food insecurity is a challenge for anyone who is afflicted, but it can be particularly devastating for children. In childhood, food insecurity can lead to a variety of physical, cognitive, and psychosocial stressors. Even when controlling for poverty, children from food insecure households have been shown to score lower on measures of arithmetic skills while also being more likely to have repeated a grade and more likely to have been seen by a psychologist. Food insecure teenagers were more likely to have been suspended from school and have difficulty forming relationships.⁴ Children in food-insecure households may experience disrupted

² Wisconsin Department of Health Services, Division of Public Health. Food Insecurity in the Wisconsin WIC Population. 2012. Reference P0-01100

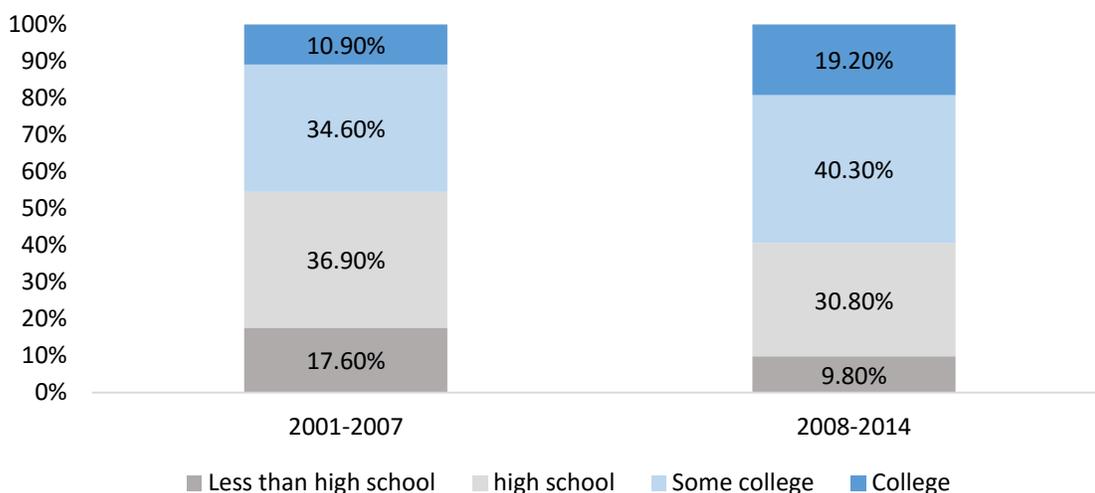
³ Wisconsin Department of Health Services. FoodShare Wisconsin Data. Accessed November 2015 from www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/foodshare.

⁴ Alaimo, K., Olson, C.M., and Frongillo, E.A. Jr. Food Insufficiency and American school-aged children’s cognitive, academic, and psychosocial development. 2001. Pediatrics, Vol. 108, issue 3.

eating habits that may range from mild to severe, and both children and adults in food insecure households have greater risk of nutritional deficits.⁵

In adults, food insecurity is linked to higher risk for low-birth weight or premature birth (Borders et al., 2007), an increased risk for obesity and diabetes, and poorer quality of life. Food security is related to worse academic outcomes and lower wages. While food insecurity is more common among those with lower education, a troubling trend has emerged in that in recent years the growth in food insecurity in Wisconsin has been among those with at least some college education. Whereas from 2001-2007, 54% of food insecure people had not attended college, from 2008-2014 this number drops to 40.6%.⁶

Food insecurity in Wisconsin by education, 2001-2014



Food security is an equity issue

The unequal access to food is at heart an issue of equitable distribution of resources. Income, access to transportation, availability of retail outlets, and other factors are all dimensions of inequity that impact a household’s ability to find food. Many of these dimensions see further disparities when breaking down by race and geography.

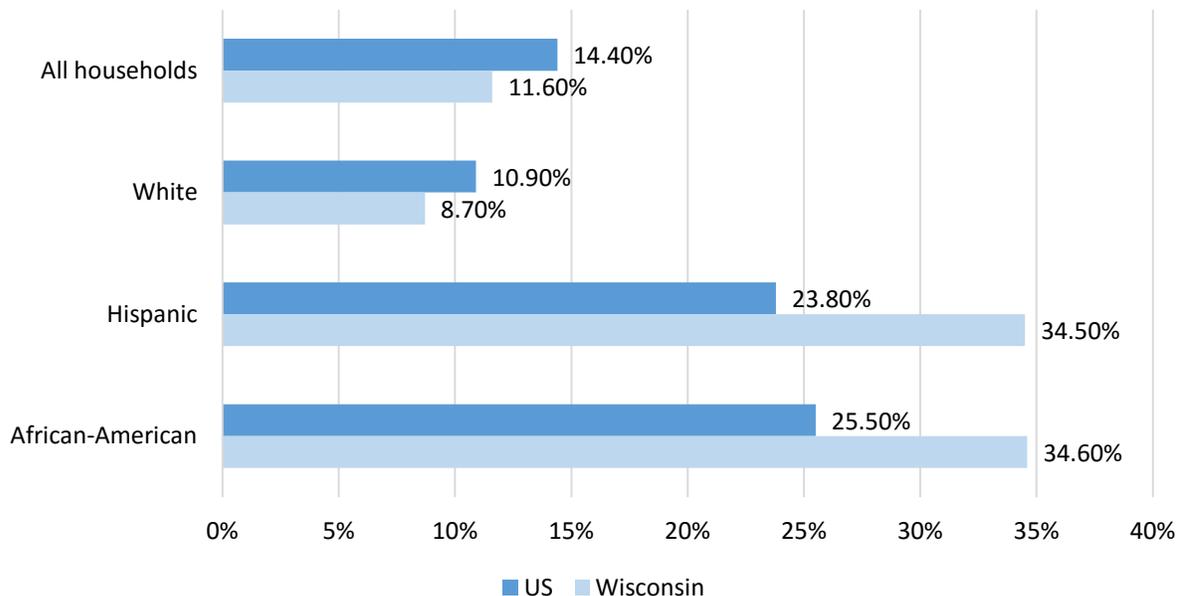
Looking at the food insecurity rate specifically highlights this situation. While Wisconsin has a lower overall food insecurity rate than the United States as a whole (11.6% compared to 14.4% from 2011-14), local demographics mask underlying inequities. While whites in Wisconsin have lower rates of food insecurity than the national average, Hispanic and African-American households have significantly higher food insecurity rates compared to their state and national counterparts. Because white households

⁵ Center on Hunger and Poverty, Brandeis University. The Consequences of Hunger and Food Insecurity for Children: Evidence from Recent Scientific Studies. 2002.

⁶ Bartfeld, J. Food insecurity and food hardships in Wisconsin. 2015. Based on calculations from the 2001-2014 Current Population Survey Food Security Supplement.

substantially outnumber black and Hispanic households the overall food insecurity rate across all households remains low.

Food Insecurity in the US and Wisconsin by Race and Ethnicity



Four legs of the table: A model for food security

Due to the nature of food security as a condition based on both economic and social factors, there is a wide array of types of work being done that can contribute towards community food security. In order to best capture this work and help establish linkages between different parts of the food system, a model has been developed to conceptually organize efforts to reduce food insecurity.⁷



⁷ Ending Hunger in Wisconsin. Wisconsin Food Security Consortium. 2008. Archived version.\

Community food security requires four areas, or table legs, to work together. Absent any of the legs, the table would not be on a steady foundation. Each of these legs provides insight into the overarching status of food security in Dane County and Wisconsin. The legs include:

1. Economic security

The overarching economic context that contributes to income, wages, personal finance, and the ability to have money to spend on food.

2. Access to affordable and nutritious food

The ability to live within reasonable distance from food retail and other methods of providing food that are both affordable and healthful.

3. Nutrition assistance programs

The safety net of federal programs that augment income and help supply food to those at risk of hunger.

4. The emergency food system

The food banks, food pantries, meal sites, and shelters that serve individuals and families during food crises.

Leg 1: Economic Security

Food security can be an asset to the economy while food insecurity can be a drag. High rates of malnutrition can lead to an economic drop of 4 to 5 percent.⁸ According the Center for American Progress and Brandeis University, hunger costs our nation at least \$167.5 billion per year.

That relationship with the economy goes both ways: food security and our economy are fundamentally linked. Food security is more prevalent when households have income above the federal poverty level, when local unemployment rates are lower and prevailing wages are higher. Further, there are connections between rent, access to public transportation, and availability of basic needs like housing and healthcare.

When families struggle to make ends meet, acquiring sufficient food through conventional means can be difficult or impossible. A number of trends have emerged that put increasing strains on economic security, and therefore food security, in Wisconsin. Low-wage jobs, limited educational opportunities, the high cost of childcare, and the rising costs of housing, energy and healthcare all create substantial challenges for families. A range of assistance programs— from tax credits to subsidized childcare to public health insurance to energy assistance— can help fill the gap. Unfortunately, funding constraints, lack of awareness, and logistical barriers often limit participation.

Research shows that low-income and high costs of living are both important predictors of food insecurity. Because of this, effective efforts to promote food security must include efforts to reduce poverty, increase family economic resources, and ensure that the cost of living does not limit other opportunities. Specific

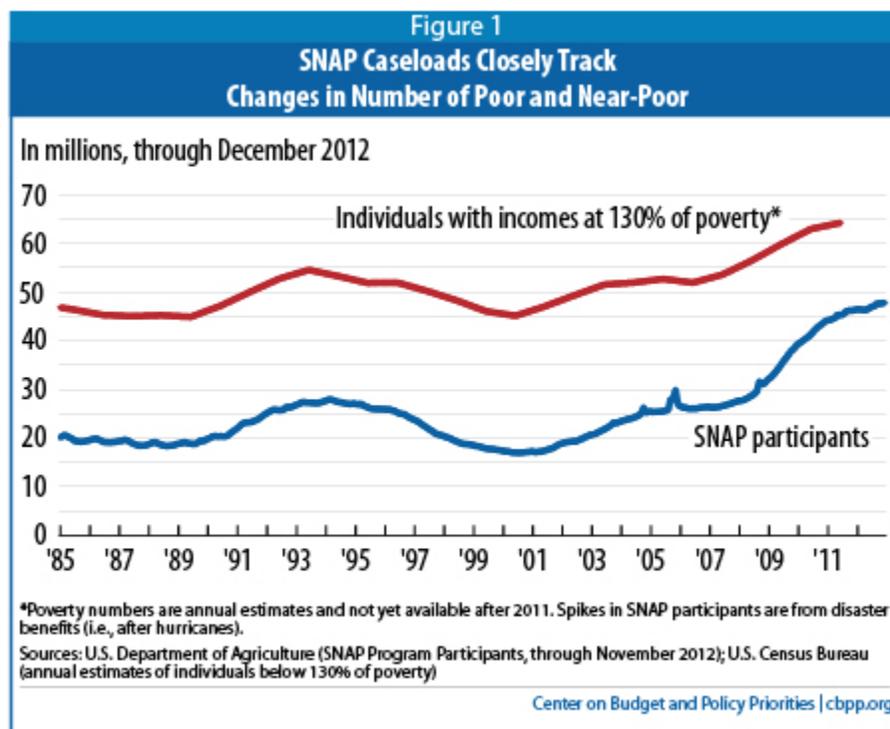
⁸ UN Food and Agriculture Organization. State of Food Insecurity in the World. 2015.

goals to increase family economic security include increasing access to education and training, improving job opportunities, making housing and energy more affordable, and ensuring that people utilize available forms of economic assistance to help meet basic needs.

Improve job opportunities

Quality jobs play an important role in ensuring food security. Food insecurity is less common in households with a worker than in households without a worker, and the risk of food insecurity is lower in states with higher prevailing wages compared to other states. By improving the quality of work and access to available work for Dane County residents, food insecurity rates would be predicted to be reduced. According to the USDA’s Economic Research Service, an increase of 1 percentage point in the unemployment rate was correlated with a 0.5 percentage point increase in food insecurity prevalence.⁹

Looking at SNAP participation rates as an indicator of overall food insecurity, we see that it closely mirrors the overall poverty rate.¹⁰ By reducing poverty, SNAP participation naturally declines. This is ideal for a federal program designed to nimbly respond to economic conditions and it is why the 2009 American Recovery and Reinvestment Act recognized that in the face of the Great Recession, boosting SNAP benefits can add value to the local economy. The USDA estimates that for every \$1 spend on SNAP, \$1.75 is generated in the local economy.



As working parents struggle to make ends meet, childcare can become a major concern and an expensive addition to already tight budgets. Access to affordable and appropriate childcare is essential for working parents. Job opportunities can also be increased by improving access to existing workforce opportunities through public transportation.

⁹ United States Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service. Prevalence of U.S. Food Insecurity Is Related to Changes in Unemployment, Inflation, and the Price of Food. Economic Research Report No. (ERR-167) June 2014

¹⁰ Center on Budget and Policy Priorities. SNAP Caseloads Closely Track Changes in Number of Poor and Near-Poor.

Housing and energy costs account, on average, for the two largest family expenditures on a month-to-month basis. These expenses put considerable pressure on family budgets and they are major factors contributing to food insecurity. Research confirms that the greater the cost of housing in a community, the greater the risk of food insecurity.

A variety of assistance programs and tax credits are available to help individuals and families make ends meet. However, awareness of and participation in available programs is low. When people receive available support in a variety of areas, it frees up critical resources that can be used to meet food-related needs. One way to simplify this process is to use the ACCESS website, an online resource that allows individuals quickly and easily to test their eligibility for benefits, apply for benefits, check on their benefit status and report changes for FoodShare, BadgerCare Plus, energy assistance, and several other benefit programs.

The Earned Income Tax Credit is one of the most important anti-poverty programs and subsequently one that is essential for helping low-income families avoid food insecurity. Helping families with tax preparation is a great investment of time and resources.

Increase access to education and training

Limited educational attainment increases the risk of food insecurity and hunger, by reducing people's ability to earn self-sufficiency wages. However, while education and training are important, they cannot come at the cost of limiting access to other important resources. Recent changes to the FoodShare Employment and Training (FSET) program have made it so that all Able Bodied Adults without Dependents (ABAWDs) who do not have qualifying work or employment will need to undergo training for 80 hours each month in order to receive SNAP Program benefits. Those who do not adhere to this schedule will only be allowed to receive three months of SNAP in a three year period. By making training and nutrition assistance come at odds with each other, these programs can be detrimental to overall food security.

Recommendations:

- Develop living wage ordinances and paid time off policies that encourage stable employment
- Support renewal of childcare and earned income tax credits
- Increase available education and training

Leg 2: Access to Affordable & Healthy Food

To ensure food security, families need dependable access to retail food outlets and other regular sources of healthy and affordable food. Families also need skills to purchase and prepare healthful foods. Prices are lower while food quality and variety are better in supermarkets and large grocery stores, compared to other food outlets such as small groceries and convenience stores which may be more prevalent in low-income neighborhoods.

- Availability of supermarkets varies by location.
- Living close to a supermarket or grocery store reduces the risk of food insecurity, and low-income areas tend to have fewer and lower quality retail food options.
- Nutrition education can improve food choices.

A central problem for many communities and neighborhoods is the lack of sufficient retail food outlets that sell healthy, affordable food. Researchers have described these areas as *food deserts*: geographic areas

where consumers have relatively poor access to affordable and nutritious food. The stores within a food desert, if they exist at all, have higher prices and/or a limited variety and quality of foods. Food deserts are more common in rural areas and inner cities that lack retail options and in places where large distances or limited transportation may restrict access.

Strategies to improve the access include addressing the lack of affordable grocery outlets that offer healthy choices, promoting nontraditional methods of food buying such as farmers markets and community supported agriculture, and increasing consumer skills related to food selection, preparation, processing and safety.

Support access to food retail in areas of focus

By supporting retail grocery outlets in low-income communities, facilitating transportation, and promoting healthy inventories, some of the problems of food deserts can be alleviated.

Food access can be tackled by making food retail outlets more available, but it can also be achieved by making transportation options more realistic and manageable. Some communities have had success with cab vouchers and expanded bus lines that go from within an area of need directly to the area of focus.

Recent efforts by the City of Madison and Madison Food Policy Council have established funds that are designed to encourage retailers to move into underserved areas, provide funding for transportation to residents in areas of low access, and establish funds for existing retailers to improve healthy food options.

By encouraging smaller stores to accept WIC benefits, not only will the local community be served and low-income residents have another place to spend benefits, but WIC minimum nutrition standards will also increase the inventory of diverse, healthy, affordable, and culturally appropriate food choices for all shoppers.

Support retailers who provide healthy, nutritious food choices

Beyond the grocery and convenience stores there are other direct-market retail options that can help meet food needs in our community, including farmers' markets, CSAs, and buying clubs.

Farmers markets are an important tool for increasing access to healthy food. Farmers' markets are often flexible and can be established in locations based on local need and convenience. For these reasons, efforts to increase availability of Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) technology that can allow these markets to accept SNAP benefits is essential. Incentive programs that match part of the SNAP purchases are additionally useful for drawing new clients to the market and expanding access to fresh fruits and vegetables. Beyond SNAP, farmers markets are also the vehicle for the Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program and the WIC Farmers' Market Nutrition Program. These benefits can further be directed towards families that will be able to spend more resources on fresh fruits and vegetables.

CSAs are another retail option gaining in popularity due in part to the ability of many local healthcare providers to provide reimbursements for CSA memberships.

While community and school gardens are not thought to be a viable source of the majority of food for most low-income families due to the time and energy needed to grow one's own food, some families do use gardens to support their food budgets. Beyond improving food security, however, gardens can be very useful in altering taste preferences among individuals by exposing people to different types of fresh food.

To the best they can, Dane County and the City of Madison should support these programs so that families can continue to build a more individual relationship with the food system.

Improving the quantity of food available to families can be accomplished by increasing the amount of food input. It can also be accomplished by reducing food waste. Farms with better relationships with the local emergency food system may be better able to find use of produce that would otherwise go unharvested. Restaurants and cafeterias may also be open to learning how to save unused food rather than disposing of it.

Leg 3: Nutrition Assistance Programs

Federal nutrition programs provide critical food resources to economically vulnerable families, and are an important line of defense against food insecurity.

- Households in states with higher food stamp use among eligible households have a lower risk of food insecurity. In 2012, an estimated 59% of eligible people received food stamps (FoodShare) in Wisconsin— compared to 65% nationally.
- Wisconsin ranks 43rd Nationwide in the ratio of students participating in the School Breakfast Program to those who participate in the National School Lunch Program.

When households lack sufficient income to meet basic needs, the federal nutrition programs provide essential food resources to protect and enhance food security. These programs include the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP; known as FoodShare in Wisconsin), Senior Meals, the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC), the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), the School Breakfast Program (SBP), Summer Food Service Program (SFSP), the Child and Adult Care Food Program and more.

Two other federal programs, The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) and the Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP), are discussed in Leg 4 (Emergency Food Assistance) because they provide food through emergency channels.

The key to these programs' effectiveness is their capacity to provide households with significant amounts of supplemental food assistance through normal, non-emergency channels such as grocery stores, schools, camps, youth programs, community and senior centers, and day care providers.

Improving access to these resources is essential but is often complicated by stigma, excess bureaucracy, federal restrictions on eligibility, limited benefits, low participation by eligible households, limited availability of programs in some communities, and insufficient community-based outreach.

Methods to improve participation in federal nutrition programs include strengthening underutilized programs, reducing barriers to participation, and improving state and federal policy, procedures and funding.

Reduce barriers to participation in federal programs

Tens of thousands of Wisconsin households are eligible for but not participating in federal nutrition programs. By increasing public awareness of hunger and federal food programs and by conducting outreach to underserved populations, more people will utilize these important nutrition resources.

This can be accomplished through use of individual stories and narratives and sensitization training and workshops. Educating community partners in other areas (such as access to health care) about the importance of food security will help those individuals learn how they can serve as a community access point for community resources.

Of particular interest is improved participation among children and seniors, two populations with high rates of food insecurity and unique challenges. While children make up about half of all SNAP participants and 47% of all SNAP households contain children, there is still room for growth in school meals participation. The School Breakfast Program represents the largest opportunity for delivering meaningful increases in nutrition to children in low-income school districts. Exploring alternate models for breakfast delivery, such as breakfast in the classroom, can increase participation substantially.

Meanwhile, seniors participate in SNAP at significantly lower rates than food insecurity and poverty rates would suggest. Factors which contribute to this include stigma associated with stigma associated around participation in “welfare”, the place-bound nature of many seniors’ living arrangements, and the perception that benefits will be inadequate.

By establishing more community access points, improving information about program features, reducing stigma, and emphasizing the importance of quality customer service by all providers, barriers to participation in federal nutrition programs will be reduced and more eligible people will participate.

Improve state and federal policies, procedures and funding

There is a close interplay between state administration of nutrition assistance and federal rules and regulations which guide each nutrition program. This allows state and federal legislative change to occur which has broad impacts at the local and county levels. Tracking legislation is important to understanding future challenges. The two primary pieces of legislation for these programs are the Farm Bill and the Child Nutrition Act, both of which are authorized on five-year cycles.

Recommendations:

- Assess gaps and encourage retailers to accept SNAP and WIC benefits
- Support school districts in adopting the breakfast after the bell model and community eligibility funding mechanism to increase school breakfast participation
- Increase the number of Summer Food sponsors and participating children.
- Increase use of community application sites, which may be less stigmatizing and more comfortable for many customers than interacting with Dane County Human Services.

Leg 4: Emergency Food Assistance

Emergency food assistance refers broadly to the provision of food or meals to low-income people by charitable, private sector agencies outside of normal, routine food channels. Such agencies and programs serve as a local nutritional safety net for families in our community. These food sources are intended to serve as “emergency” or short-term supplemental food sources yet some individuals and families are forced to use them on an ongoing food sources. While donations are generously received from public and private sources, major increases in food insecurity could cause challenges for these providers in the short term.

Emergency food providers include *food banks, food pantries, meal sites* and *shelters*. Food banks are non-profit, community-based organizations that receive and distribute foods to charitable feeding sites at low or no-cost. Food banks collect food through food drives, corporate contributions, government commodity programs and outright purchases. In Wisconsin, ten food banks serve regional areas or individual counties. They rely on volunteers and paid staff to sort, store and distribute food. Dane County is served by both the Community Action Center of South Central Wisconsin and Second Harvest Food Bank of Southern Wisconsin.

Food pantries provide direct and immediate food assistance to low-income households at risk of hunger. Pantries often make referrals to link households to other resources, such as the federal nutrition programs. Pantries often operate with minimal funds on a part-time basis and depend upon a volunteer workforce. Households typically receive a 3-5 day supply of shelf stable food once per month.

Meal sites provide hot meals. Shelters may or may not have a meal component, but those that do may serve additional meals while

Many food insecure people are not eligible for key income support programs or are unaware of their eligibility. In other instances households decline to participate in federal programs because of stigma, low benefits, bureaucracy or other reasons. Since not all food insecure households can or do access government resources, emergency food providers are central to ensuring that communities have a nutritional safety net.

Ultimately, the long-term objective is to reduce demand for emergency food services with households meeting their food needs through higher wages and better access to nutrition and other assistance programs that enable them to obtain food through normal channels. In the meantime, the short-term objective is to make sure that we support and sustain the emergency food system.

By increasing overall food supplies, using pantries to support statewide outreach for federal nutrition programs, improving volunteer services, and ensuring that emergency food is a universal safety net, emergency food assistance in Wisconsin can achieve both the long and the short-term objectives.

Increase overall food supplies for emergency food providers

Increases in food and transportation costs, a declining economy, and a decline in overall food donations have had a dramatic impact upon the emergency food system. Unfortunately, decreased supply is coupled with increased demand.

In order to improve the ability of emergency programs to get sufficient food donations, there must be improved marketing and awareness of the existence of the emergency food providers in our community. At a system level, this will attract increased donations to food banks. On an individual level, it can attract donations to food pantries, shelters, and meal sites.

Connecting emergency food providers to gleaning efforts that seek to reduce food agricultural and commercial food waste can increase the quality and volume of food entering the system. Local farmers cite transportation and time as the biggest reason why any food would go unharvested, and those obstacles can be overcome with volunteer support.

The Four Legs model is particularly effective at connecting the ground-level work being done in food pantries and shelters to ongoing outreach efforts for federal nutrition programs and other types of income

maintenance. For example, food pantry volunteers may see connections to SNAP outreach, yet may not fully recognize the importance of connecting families to healthcare resources. Many food insecure households are unaware of their eligibility for federal nutrition programs. In other instances households decline to participate in federal programs because of stigma, low benefits, bureaucracy or other reasons. Since not all food insecure households can or do access government resources, emergency food providers are central to providing information and referrals.

The emergency food safety net must be sustainable

Although there are over 50 food pantries in Wisconsin, there are rural areas of the state where households do not have access to emergency food. Some food pantries are not open during enough hours or days of the week, and some pantries do not provide adequate levels and/or nutritional quality of food.

The number of food pantries is notoriously difficult to quantify. They exist in faith-based institutions which may or may not receive TEFAP commodities. Pantries which do not receive TEFAP may not have reporting requirements, making it difficult to quantify their impact in the community.

Beyond measurement, pantries in Madison and Dane County need to be in good communication with one another. This will allow pantries to share best practices, learn about how to not duplicate effort, and improve overall coverage for low-income areas. The Dane County Food Pantry network can receive support from other groups in order to better network with hours of operation, service areas, and recognizing gaps or hard to reach areas in our communities.

Communities across the country have begun to see success from mobile pantries which are able to meet the local needs more effectively than brick-and-mortar sites. These projects involve a truck or delivery vehicle making regular stops in areas that may not have the resources for a pantry, and can more nimbly serve rural and suburban areas with fewer resources.

Capacity building in the emergency food system

Food pantries rely upon a workforce that is staffed primarily by volunteers and few paid staff. Volunteers often make decisions about hours of operation, food safety, food variety and availability, and customer service. Many pantries report high average age of volunteers and a lack of new, younger volunteers. There is concern about where the volunteer replacements will come from in the future and whether the volunteer workforce can be sustained.

In order to ensure the sustainability of the emergency food system, Madison and Dane County should be involved in developing the capacity and training of volunteers and staff. This may include training in areas such as cultural sensitivity, consumer respect, poverty awareness, and eligibility for nutrition programs and other resources. Pantries can be promoted as opportunities for experience in other areas, such as college/universities and other institutions.

Beyond food pantries, there are additional connections and collaborations that could facilitate statewide dialogue in the specific areas that address funding and food acquisition. Creating a better infrastructure for the anti-hunger agencies in Wisconsin and Dane County to collaborate will benefit the entire emergency food system. If these agencies were in better communication, they would be able to share data and give a more comprehensive assessment of how many pounds of food are being distributed through emergency food each year.

Recommendations:

- Support training and capacity building for pantry managers and staff
- Foster collaboration and data sharing between private food banks and those receiving government commodities