

Hunger Solutions for the Faith Community

A guide for congregations seeking to improve
food security in Dallas County.



DALLAS
COALITION
for HUNGER
SOLUTIONS

dallashunger.org

5TH EDITION, 2021

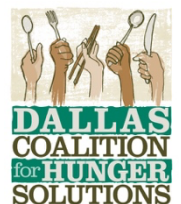
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The Dallas Coalition for Hunger Solutions (DCHS) is comprised of organizations and individuals committed to improving food security in Dallas County by empowering residents to gain equal access to healthy food. DCHS is chaired by United States Representative Eddie Bernice Johnson. Members of the leadership team represent the following organizations: Children at Risk, Community Council of Greater Dallas, Dallas Baptist Association, Episcopal Diocese of Dallas, Baylor Scott & White Health, Dallas County Health & Human Resources, Child Poverty Action Lab, GROW North Texas, North Texas Food Bank, Parkland Foundation, The Senior Source, Texas Hunger Initiative, and United Way of Metropolitan Dallas. For more information, contact Wyonella_henderson-greene@baylor.edu or call 214-951-7780. Visit us online at dallashunger.org.

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Introduction

More than 1 in 5 adults and 1 in 4 children in Dallas County are food insecure and at risk of hunger. These statistics represent thousands of individuals who struggle each day to acquire enough food to get by. This is both unacceptable and unnecessary.

The faith community already plays a major role in improving food security in our city. Each congregation can take additional steps to ensure that children, families, and seniors have the nutritious food they need to flourish.

Included in this guide are creative solutions to the problem of hunger. These solutions already exist in the community, and they need the support of local congregations. They generally require limited financial resources, but they can make a very substantial impact on hunger.

Congregations, as well as anyone who is concerned about hunger, will benefit from the resources included in this guide. Download a copy at www.dallashunger.org.

For more information about the faith action team of Dallas Coalition for Hunger Solutions, contact:

Wyonella Henderson-Greene, DCHS coordinator, (214-951-7780 or wyonella_henderson-greene@baylor.edu);

Faith Action Team Leadership Circle:

Dabney Dwyer, co-chair (214-500-7205 or dwyerdab@gmail.com)

Chelsie Hoard, co-chair (214-319-1155) or chelsiehoard@dba.net)

Wendy Hardeman (214-308-0859 or wendy@sharing.life)

Pastor Julius Bamibe (214-391-2800 or comforterchristiancenter@yahoo.com)



American Heart Association



Overview

The American Heart Association (AHA) is one of the largest and most trusted voluntary health organizations in the world. For nearly a century, AHA has been dedicated to improving the health and wellbeing of all Americans. The mission of AHA is to be a relentless force for achieving longer, healthier lives; by bringing rigorous scientific research, establishing clinical health care guidelines, providing trust-worthy patient and caregiver resources, evidence-based policies, and equity-focused community programming. AHA is unique among health-related organizations in the ability to work on all levels of the healthcare system while furthering advances in nutrition science and policy.

Impact on Hunger

- Heart Disease is the leading cause of death in Dallas County. Research suggests that access to healthy and nutritious food combined with other lifestyle changes can have an impact on the prevalence of this chronic disease.
- AHA has focused on extending life after a cardiac event. Addressing prevention in order to reduce the prevalence of heart disease includes the impact on risk factors such as access to nutritional food.
- Access to healthy food contributes to well-being, chronic disease prevention, healthy life expectancy and academic performance.

"I was diagnosed at 31 with diabetes, Hypertension, an irregular heartbeat...I decided in 2006 that I could not fight a disease I did not fully understand, so have spent the last 15 years teaching the community the need for awareness and prevention. Part of my health journey was to make a lifestyle change and encourage thousands to do the same. I live today because I fell in love with three words from AHA, "Learn and Live" Mercedes Cruz.

How to Help

- AHA can provide congregations and faith-based organization with nutrition and healthy food resources.
- Having members of your congregation complete an AHA healthy food survey can be the start for understanding nutritious food choices and connecting congregants to eligible programs.
- If members of your congregation are struggling with heart disease or have had a stroke, the AHA has community programs and materials to assist with food choices and access.
- AHA can provide support for your congregation on tobacco policies and healthy food options.

AHA can make available professional staff to come speak and educate your congregation (or set up a Zoom call) about healthy food and nutrition and the impact on heart disease.

Contact

Jenny Eyer, MPH, VP, Health Strategies, St. 105 Decker Ct 200, Irving, Tx 75062
jenny.eyer@heart.org, office 214.441.4256, mobile 214.499.0301



Community Gardens



Overview

Community gardens enable families to grow vegetables in abundance, to share produce with neighbors, and to potentially benefit from selling at local farmers' markets. Community gardens help individuals move towards food security and to help build stronger communities.

Successful community gardens use wood chips, leaves, and cover crops to build healthy soil. Other characteristics of good gardens include using organic soil and materials, seed saving for use the following year, and selecting crop varieties that give high yields without disease and pest problems. Community gardeners do not use any chemicals. They save on water costs by using deep mulching and drip irrigation. While community gardens do need some structure to keep them going, a well-run community garden can provide enough food year-round for families to use for their own needs, lower their food costs, and share with their neighbors.

Impact on Hunger

- Give individuals and families opportunities to harvest food from their own land or in a community garden setting.
- Provide access to nutritionally rich foods that may otherwise be unavailable to low-income families and individuals.
- Greater yield per acre than traditional large-scale farming.
- Thousands of pounds of fresh produce donated to food pantries.

How to Help

Does your congregation have an area of your property that is not in use? Consider using that land for a community garden. Resources for beginners are available on websites such as www.communitygarden.org. Also, GROW North Texas guides groups that want to start community gardens. The Urban DCHS's Urban Agriculture Team has website resources to help congregations begin their projects. Visit www.dallashungersolutions.org.

The North Texas Food Bank encourages partner gardens to donate 10 percent of the yield to a partner food pantry. It also provides volunteers for planting, harvesting, and weeding. Contact nutrition@ntfb.org.



Contact

Congregations with questions about starting or improving a community garden may contact Susie Marshall, susie@grownorthtexas.org.

Community Distribution Partnership

Overview

Community Distribution Partners (CDPs) with Crossroads Community Services provide healthy food, nutrition, and life-skills education to low-income families in their neighborhoods. Two primary goals of this program are to help ensure that all people in Dallas County have ready access to nourishing food, and to provide life-skills education that can help reduce obesity in impoverished areas.

“We build meaningful relationships with our neighbors through our Crossroads CDP. Levels of trust deepen as our volunteers and clients share concerns, struggles, prayer requests, hugs and celebrations. One mom expressed how thankful she is for this program because it is helping her family through a particularly difficult season of life. We think being a Crossroads CDP is one of the most meaningful connections our church has with our community” *Debbie Seider, First Baptist Church, Richardson.*

Crossroads' CDP network is comprised of approximately 80 local non-profit organizations and agencies including congregations, community centers, and low-income housing communities. Crossroads is a mini-food bank for organizations that are too small or not suited to be a North Texas Food Bank agency.

Impact on Hunger

- The CCS system developed by Crossroads uses the Dietary Guidelines for Americans (DGA) to determine types and amounts of nutritious food for individuals based on age, gender, and activity level.
- Churches and non-profit organizations share Crossroads' client database and use their facilities, vehicles, volunteers, and love to offer not just more food, but a variety of foods that have high nutritional value.
- Churches and non-profit organizations work together in communities with high rates of food insecurity to help families stay within their monthly budgets, thus alleviating financial crises.

How to Help

A partnership with Crossroads allows congregations to obtain large quantities of nutritious groceries and distribute them to pre-registered families every month. A team picks up food from Crossroads and transports it to the distribution site. The food is given to pre-registered families on the same day. Congregations pay a “shared maintenance fee” for the food they receive.

Contact

Community Relations Coordinator Erica Dallas, edallas@ccsdallas.org, or call 214-560-2511, ext. 203. Or, visit ccsdallas.org. Click on “How to Help.” There is a 3-step enrollment process and a list of prerequisites that should be met prior to becoming a Community Distribution Partner.



Community Distribution Partnership



Overview

Sharing Life Community Outreach in Mesquite serves as a food hub for the North Texas Food Bank. This means that congregations can provide food for their food-insecure neighbors by ordering it from Sharing Life, and then distributing it, from their own site, to pre-registered clients the same day. Now, congregations without the resources to provide a full-scale food pantry can serve their neighbors in an efficient way with minimal cost.

Impact on Hunger

- Congregations typically serve smaller numbers of families, more often. Therefore, families receive a regular supply of food to supplement their diets and do not have to travel among several pantries each week to acquire the food they need.
- Because congregations are serving the same families each week, personal relationships develop. As they get to know their clients, congregations can help families with other issues that might be contributing to their food insecurity.
- Congregations do not have to organize food drives or otherwise spend time trying to acquire the appropriate foods for their families in need. The hub provides the congregations with fresh meat, vegetables, dairy, grains, and canned goods for a small handling fee.

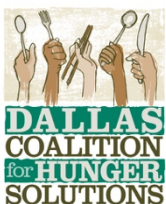
“At Feed Lake Highlands, we develop long term relationships with residents living along the Whitehurst corridor in Dallas. We are God’s little grocery store! Laughter fills the room as our team members and program members shop side by side. We do more than put food on a table and fill a pantry. We give joy, friendship, hope, and food to our neighbors in need” *Jill Goad, Feed Lake Highlands, The New Room.*

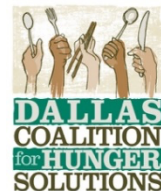
How to Help

Congregations can complete the required application to become a community distribution partner with Sharing Life. If approved, your congregation will receive food from Sharing Life for a small handling fee. Congregations distribute the food to families the same day they acquire it. Sharing Life provides the training and support needed.

Contact

Wendy Hardeman at hub@sharinglife.org or 214-308-0856, for more information about Sharing Life’s Community Distribution Partner program.





Public Policy Roundtables

Overview

The Public Policy Action Team of the Dallas Coalition for Hunger Solutions educates congregations about public policy issues that affect hunger and food insecurity in our communities. The team also helps congregations understand how to advocate for access to a healthy, nourishing, and sufficient diet for all North Texans at all stages of their lives. Congregations can request a public policy roundtable, presented by the team, which will educate on:

- The legislative process -- federal, state and local --and how laws are made.
- Administrative rule-making, and how rules affect anti-hunger laws and policy.
- Advocacy tools that help congregations influence public policy outcomes.

Impact on Hunger

The unified voice of a congregation's advocacy against hunger helps:

- Strengthen federal child nutrition programs (school lunch and breakfast, afterschool meals, summer meals, and WIC).
- Protect existing SNAP benefits and oppose measures that weaken the program.
- Assure that more needy seniors have access to SNAP and senior nutrition programs.
- Support legislative changes that eliminate barriers to urban farming and community gardening as a strategy to improve healthy food access.
- Increase funding for nutrition incentives for low-income shoppers that encourage purchases of fruits and vegetables.

"We hosted the Public Policy team at my church. This was the first *time* I had heard a specific presentation on both state and federal policy affecting hunger in our communities. The presentation was very enlightening and increased my understanding on ways to communicate to our representatives....having a voice that ultimately can affect food insecurity in this country." *Dabney Dwyer,*

How to Help

- Schedule an educational public policy roundtable for your congregation.
- Support the advocacy initiatives of the Dallas Coalition for Hunger Solutions to strengthen nutrition programs and improve healthy food access.
- Stay informed by signing up for the Coalition's public policy newsletter, **Policy Matters**, which reports on current anti-hunger policy and legislation and provides opportunities for advocacy and engagement. If you would like to receive this newsletter by visiting <http://dallashungersolutions.org/public-policy>.

Contact

Wyonella Henderson-Greene at wyonella_henderson-greene@baylor.edu or 214-951-7780 for more information.



Eating Well is a SNAP!



Overview

Too many seniors struggle with being able to afford a healthy and balanced diet. The Senior Hunger Action Team of the DCHS has an interactive presentation for low-income seniors designed to assist them in eating well on a limited budget. The presentation includes information about which foods to eat to have a balanced diet, how to purchase healthy foods more economically, and the variety of resources, including SNAP, financial assistance that seniors can use to supplement their grocery budget.

Impact on Hunger

- Senior hunger is a significant and growing problem, with more than 20,000 seniors in Dallas County living below the poverty line.
- More than 50 percent of seniors in Dallas County who are eligible for food assistance through SNAP are not utilizing that assistance.
- Sharing this information helps seniors eat well while also making it easier to apply for SNAP financial benefits and access other food resources.

How to Help

- Arrange a live online video presentation or in-person presentation to bring *Eating Well is a SNAP!* to seniors in your congregation. Each presentation includes a SNAP application assistance Navigator available to answer questions and help interested seniors apply for SNAP following the presentation.
- Volunteer to be on the team of presenters. Each presentation is delivered by members of a volunteer speaker's bureau. Each presentation includes a nutrition education presenter and a SNAP/food resources presenter. You and others from your congregation can be trained to present.

"All of the presentations and presenters were excellent! I think that all of our residents found the information helpful" *April Parker, Social Services Director, Carpenter's Point Senior Living.*

"I am glad I came in to hear about eating well. It's going to help me eat better" *Senior at Magnolia Trace Senior Community.*

Contact

Contact Wyonella Henderson-Greene, wyonella_henderson-green@baylor.edu or 214-951-7780, for more information about *Eating Well is a SNAP!*



Meals on Wheels



Overview

VNA Meals on Wheels provides hot, nutritious, freshly prepared meals five days a week to Dallas County residents who cannot cook for themselves due to illness, advanced age, or disability. These meals contribute to the overall health and well-being of participating seniors. Without VNA Meals on Wheels, these seniors would go hungry.

Impact on Hunger

- Many seniors are in desperate need of nutritious meals and human contact in Dallas County.
- For many homebound elderly, sick, and disabled individuals, the difference between continuing to live in their own homes and moving into institutional care is a nutritious, home-delivered meal.
- Distributing Meals on Wheels provides social interaction for isolated, homebound seniors.
- Meals on Wheels also allows for advocacy and identification of needs for additional food and other in-home services.

How to Help

Your congregation can:

- Deliver meals during a "Day of Caring"
- Customize your own "Day of Caring" for your congregation by selecting delivery routes in your neighborhood to be delivered on a specific day of your choosing. This introduces potential volunteers to Meals on Wheels.
- There are opportunities for virtual deliveries which are phone calls to check in on clients done from the comfort and safety of volunteer's homes.

"During my Christmas vacation, I discussed with my husband how we needed to set a better example for our son and daughter of giving back to the community. My children were 12 and 4 years old when we began volunteering. Now, three years later, they look forward to each delivery. Outside of working as a computer analyst for an aviation company, being a mother and part-time student, the VNA Meals on Wheels calling has become a major purpose in my life. I am proud and happy to serve"
Angela Broomfield, Concord Baptist Church.

Contact

Contact Tracie Demery, demeryt@vnatexas.org, call 214-689-2653 or visit vnatexas.org for more information.



Out-of-School Child Meals



Overview

The federally funded **summer meals program** is designed to fill the summer hunger gap when children and teens are out of school and most at risk of going hungry. In Dallas County, more than 70 percent of children rely on meals during the school year. However, less than 15 percent participate in summer meals in spite of the more than 1,000 summer meals locations.

Afterschool programs are also critical in providing many children with healthy, nutritious meals after school in addition to keeping young people supervised and safe. In the U.S. today, 8.4 million children participate in an afterschool program in their community, while 15.1 million children go home alone after school. For many of these children, that meal or snack they receive at their afterschool program is the last food they will have until a school breakfast the next morning.

Impact on Hunger

- Increases number of children and families aware of available free meals.
- Decreases risk of child food insecurity.
- Increases opportunities for safe and fun meal environments for children and teens.

How to Help

- **Donation Drive:** Sites are always in need of more bubbles, water balloons, soccer balls, jump ropes, face paints, coloring books, temporary tattoos — you name it!
- **Adopt-a-Site:** Congregations can serve a site regularly throughout the summer or during the school year. Volunteers can provide games, art programs and other activities providing additional incentive for children to come and participate, at the same time reducing food insecurity in the community.
- **Become a Site:** If your location is a gathering place for children, consider becoming a meal site. If deemed eligible, you can be connected with meal program providers to bring meals directly to your site and provide at-risk youth direct access to meals in the out of school time, when they are most at risk.
- **Spread the Word:** Promote feeding programs through congregation announcements and bulletins, by distributing flyers in the community, or posting on social media. Spreading the word about the programs is helpful!

"We have just concluded the eighth year of our summer lunch program. During the 10 weeks of the program, we served 9,000 sack lunches, 1,500 weekend snack bags, and 75 pizzas! The ministry would not thrive as much as it does without the support and love of our community and the church volunteers. They donated water, juice, cookies, popsicles, chips, and books. I am proud to serve as the summer lunch coordinator for my church. It is a true blessing!" *Elizabeth Greer, Custer Road United Methodist Church.*



Contact

Contact Catherine Nicholson at catherine_nicholson@baylor.edu or 214-920-3634 for more information about out-of-school meals.

Souper Schools



Overview

Using Souper Bowl of Caring as a catalyst, congregations can partner with a local school to provide support for food-insecure students through an on-site food pantry.

"When I saw a parent lifting her three-year-old daughter into the school dumpster to look for food, it broke my heart. The food pantry at my school, sponsored by Mission Oak Cliff, has largely prevented that level of desperation. Our families are so grateful for the assistance" *Yamile Callas, PTA mom, James Bowie Elementary School. Mission Oak Cliff is a ministry of Cliff Temple Baptist Church.*

Impact on Hunger

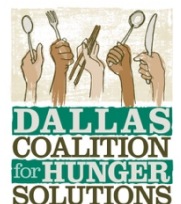
- Food pantries in schools feed families as well as students.
- On-site pantries are more accessible to families with school-age children because the children attend these schools every weekday during the school year.
- Parents develop stronger relationships with school personnel, thus potentially improving the child's academic progress.
- By developing a positive relationship with the school via the food pantry, congregations can identify other ways to serve the school, which can benefit the entire community.

How to Help

- Register to have a Souper Bowl of Caring campaign at www.tacklehunger.org.
- Meet with local school administration to determine if an on-site food pantry needed. Work together to design something that will benefit the school, the students, and their families. (Note: if your local school does not need an on-site pantry, your congregation can still conduct a Souper Bowl campaign. See p. 8).
- Conduct your Souper Bowl campaign. Encourage both the congregation and school to participate!
- Contribute the food donated to the school to stock the pantry. Report your results at www.tacklhunger.org.
- Go to our Tackle Hunger Map at map.tacklehunger.org to find a local food charity and volunteer or donate resources to help them help others.

Contact

Alison Reese, Alison.reese@souperbowl.org for questions about Souper Bowl of Caring. Contact your local school for specific information about campus needs.



Senior Community Meals



Overview

The Dallas County Older Adult Services Program provides 200,000 meals per year at their senior centers. However, what the DCHHS offers is much *more than a meal*. To improve food security among seniors, DCHHS also provides information and activities to promote health, wellness, mental fitness, and nutrition education.

Impact on Hunger

The services provided by DCHHS impact senior hunger by:

- Providing well-balanced meals designed to meet a senior's nutritional needs.
- Providing social interaction that encourages healthy eating.
- Collaborating with other organizations to address food insecurity among seniors.
- Providing health and nutrition education for seniors.
- Supplementing a senior's food consumption so that disposable income can be re-allocated to pay for housing, utilities, and prescription medications.

How to Help

- A congregation can assist with meal service at their local senior center.
- Volunteers can teach fitness classes or lead other activities that improve seniors' nutrition, health and well-being and are fun, too!
- Congregations can encourage their senior adult members to participate in the services offered at their local senior center.
- Congregations can donate funds to provide additional supplies that enrich the health, wellness and fun activities provided by the center.
- Congregations can host a senior center at their facilities based on need, qualifications, and availability.

A man at our senior center is on a limited income. The meals he receives at the center make a huge difference for him. He says that without the program he would only eat one meal a day, typically from a fast-food restaurant. He enjoys the new friends he has made, and he wants more seniors, particularly the 'younger' seniors age 60 - 65 like himself, to know about the meals and activities available.
Volunteer, Emeritus Center.

Contact

Mark Edwards, program administrator, DCHHS Older Adult Services Program, 214-819-1862 or mark.edwards@dallascounty.org



More Hunger Solutions

Cooking Matters

Cooking Matters is a 6-week course that teaches participants to shop smarter, use nutrition information to make healthier food choices, and cook affordable meals. It is a direct service program of Share Our Strength and offered locally through the North Texas Food Bank. Contact nutrition@ntfb.org to learn more. You can locate nutrition information/recipes/cooking demos or schedule a class at ntfb.org/our-programs/nutrition-services.

Souper Bowl of Caring

The Souper Bowl of Caring's annual *Tackle Hunger* campaign is an easy way for congregations to directly impact local hunger on the day of the Big Game. To participate, register your congregation at souperbowl.org. On game day, collect money or canned goods. Then, donate your collection to the soup kitchen or food pantry of your choice. Don't forget to report your participation at souperbowl.org.



Virtual SNAP Assistance

Host a Virtual SNAP Workshop for your congregation to learn about SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) benefits and receive financial assistance that can add to grocery budgets. Contact the North Texas Food Bank Social Services Assistance Team at snap@ntfb.org and write *Virtual SNAP Workshop Request in the Subject Line*. Access to a computer/laptop or Android Phone is all that's needed for personal assistance and same day filing. Congregations can also help their low-income neighbors apply for SNAP by becoming a certified Navigator with the North Texas Food Bank. Contact Alana Pierre for details at alanap@ntfb.org.



Helperfinder

Helperfinder is an online database which locates free or low-cost programs and services in your community. Simply visit helperfinder.org to help those in need locate necessary resources or go to helperfinder.org/churches and **click Suggest a Program** to make sure your congregation's programs are updated and accessible to members in your community.



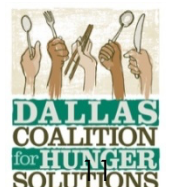
VOMO

VOMO is an online volunteer mobilization platform. Congregations, small groups, families, and individuals can visit beaneighbor.vomo.org to find and volunteer with local organizations working to meet needs in the community.

Remember you can call 211 or visit 211Texas.org, too!

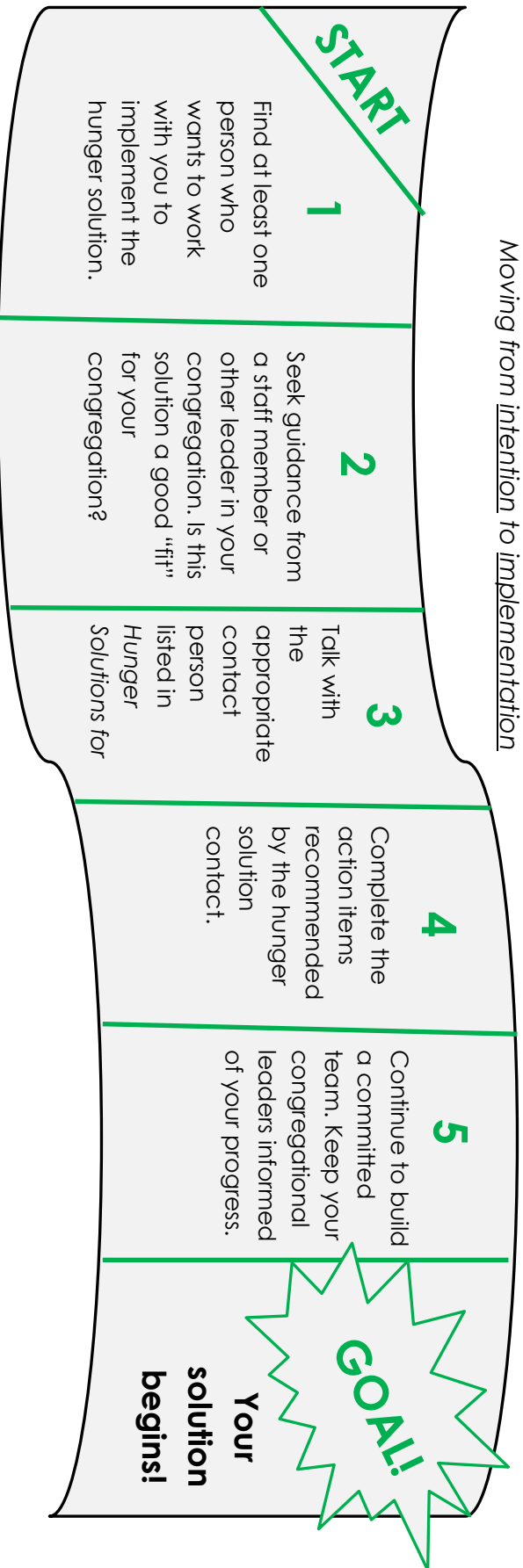
Let us know about your hunger solution!

Contact us to let us know how you are improving access to Healthy food in your own community.



The Path to Success

Moving from intention to implementation



The hunger solution I want to begin or improve is _____.

Looking at the path (shown above), my implementation is at number _____.

My biggest challenge is _____.

The faith community action team can help me by

My action steps are:

	Description	Due Date	Notes	Date Completed
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				
6				
7				
8				