

# FOOD SECURITY

WORKGROUP OF THE MULTICULTURAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE OF UTAH'S COVID-19 RESPONSE

## WHAT IS FOOD SECURITY?

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) defines food insecurity as a lack of consistent access to enough food for an active, healthy life and refers to a lack of available financial resources for food at the household level. Extensive research, however, reveals food insecurity is a complex problem that does not exist in isolation. Low-income families are affected by multiple, overlapping issues like lack of affordable housing, social isolation, chronic or acute health problems, high medical costs, and low wages. Effective responses to address food insecurity must address the overlapping challenges posed by the social determinants of health" ([Feeding America](#)). Our diverse and multicultural communities in Utah have been disproportionately impacted by COVID-19 in the areas of health, economic stability, housing, and food insecurity. There are various intersectional obstacles that are preventing diverse and multicultural communities from accessing emergency food resources.

The Food Security Workgroup found that these barriers include: Transportation (Accessible and affordable), Documentation and ID(s), Cultural Relevance, Fresh Food, Language Access, Digital (Online) Access, Hours/Days of Operation, Hygiene Kits, Personal Protective Equipment.

The workgroup's approach to address these rising and interconnected concerns has been a commitment to communication, coordination and collaboration of the multiple entities working in the food emergency ecosystem.

## GOALS OF THE WORKGROUP



### SHORT TERM GOALS

- Add Community Mobile Neighborhood Distribution Point at Comunidades Unidas (CU).
- Increase awareness for families who qualify for "Pandemic EBT" in Utah.
- Create inclusive, interactive, culturally comprehensive statewide interactive food pantry map.
- Collaborate with partners to increase flexibility so that as many people as possible can sign up for, and easily remain on, SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program).



### LONG TERM GOALS



- Help formalize a standardized food pantry application form across Utah in multiple languages.
- Forecasting food insecurity through data gathering.
- Consider equity in food distribution resiliency.

## KEY TERMS

- **Social determinants of health:** Defined as the conditions in the environments in which people are born, live, learn, work, play, worship and age that affect a wide range of health, functioning and quality-of-life outcomes and risks ([Feeding America](#)).
- **Food equity:** The expansive concept that all people have the ability and opportunity to grow and to consume healthful, affordable, and culturally significant foods ([University of Buffalo, Global Health Equity](#)).
- **Racial equity:** The condition that would be achieved if one's racial identity no longer predicted, in a statistical sense, how one fares. When we use the term, we are thinking about racial equity as one part of racial justice, and thus we also include work to address root causes of inequities not just their manifestation. This includes elimination of policies, practices, attitudes and cultural messages that reinforce differential outcomes by race or fail to eliminate them ([Center for Assessment and Policy Development](#)).

## RESOURCES

- [Utah Food Bank](#)
- [Utahns Against Hunger](#)
- [Salt Lake Education Foundation](#)
- [United Way 211](#)
- [Food Pantries](#)

## WORKGROUP-SPECIFIC COMMUNITY PARTNERS

- The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints
- Comunidades Unidas
- Salt Lake City Mayor's Office
- Salt Lake County Mayor's Office
- United Way of Salt Lake
- Utah Department of Workforce Services
- Utahns Against Hunger

If organizations are interested in partnering with the food security workgroup, please contact Celina Milner at [Celina.Milner@SLC.gov](mailto:Celina.Milner@SLC.gov). We will work with members of the workgroup to determine common areas of interest and program feasibility.

## RACIAL EQUITY AND INCLUSION FUND

The Racial Equity and Inclusion Fund is providing COVID-19 grants for community organizations and nonprofits who serve disproportionately impacted communities. Apply through August 21st at [multicultural.utah.gov](https://multicultural.utah.gov). Donations are also welcome.