



No Kid Hungry Grantee Cohort: Promising Practices to End Rural Child Hunger

OVERVIEW

Share Our Strength's No Kid Hungry campaign is pleased to announce our 2022 cohort of community-based organizations working to alleviate child hunger and food insecurity in rural communities across the United States. Through the 'Promising Practices to End Rural Child Hunger' initiative, Share Our Strength will provide \$298,250 in grant funding to support the work of community-based organizations. In doing so, this initiative seeks to identify, document, and better understand promising practices within rural communities that achieve one or more of the following outcomes:

- Increase food security among rural children
- Increase participation in one or more of the federal Child Nutrition Programs
- Decrease stigma associated with accessing federal Child Nutrition Programs and/or additional food assistance resources
- Promoting and supporting enrollment of SNAP, WIC, and/or Pandemic - EBT programs as well as the Child Tax Credit.
- Broad-based community engagement to understand and address community needs related to child food security, as well as sustained partnerships to sustain meaningful interventions over time.

During the grantee selection process, an equity priority was established at the outset, with preference given to projects benefiting Communities of Color and/or communities experiencing persistent poverty. From over 221 grant inquiries received, 11 organizations were invited to submit a full proposal, of which 7 received grant funding as cohort members. Brief descriptions of each project and a link to each organization's website are below for reference.

A vital cohort component includes quarterly virtual meetings, allowing participants to share best practices, ask questions, and receive technical support and resources as needed. Grantees will also work

alongside Share Our Strength to document and promote grant-funded activities by developing case studies, press releases, and webinars.

Please contact Share Our Strength at bestpractices@strength.org with questions about this project or our work with rural communities.

GRANTEES

Arlee Community Development Corporation (arleecdc.org)

The Arlee Community Development Corporation (Arlee CDC) was formed in 2002 as a vehicle for people who love the Jocko Valley to have a say in their community's development. As an unincorporated region that spans the Flathead Reservation, Lake, Missoula, and Sanders Counties, the Arlee CDC has provided a voice for the Jocko Valley and has undertaken and supported projects to increase youth, family, and community vitality. Arlee CDC will assist and foster the planning and development of projects deemed beneficial socially, physically, economically, and culturally to the public interest of the Arlee-Jocko Valley community.

The Arlee Youth Food Sovereignty initiative includes leadership & community activities focusing on three main projects. These projects focus on the development of youth involvement in local food security through gardening, ag, cooking & leadership development skills led by local Indigenous practitioners.

Center Pole (thecenterpole.org)

The Center Pole is a Native non-profit grassroots organization founded in 1999. The "Living Culture" campus is located at the foot of the Little Big Horn Battlefield National Monument on the Crow Indian Reservation in Montana. For over 20 years, they have listened to their community. Originally founded as a youth development organization, the Center Pole has expanded its work to include diverse interwoven projects and programs which meet the expressed needs of their people for a stronger Crow community. The expansion includes an alternative energy demonstration project, food sovereignty, digital archives, an art and culture facility, an indigenous media and education center, and a radio station to give the Crow people a voice.

Center Pole teaches and models entrepreneurship through social enterprises: a cafe and coffee shop, a Native Arts gift shop, a resale shop, trail rides, battlefield tours, and tipi stays. These enterprises create sustainability for their programs while offering job training and employment to community members.

Center Pole's goals for this grant are to build and improve on existing programming including building local food systems via the Montana Food Bank Network, improving food pantry infrastructure, and training additional community food agents in food sovereignty, food bank operations, and traditional foods.

Chattanooga Area Food Bank (chattfoodbank.org)

Founded in 1972, The Chattanooga Area Food Bank's mission is to lead a network of partners in eliminating hunger and promoting better nutrition in their region. They serve a unique 20-county region: 11 counties in Southeast TN and nine counties in Northwest GA ranging from isolated, rural communities

to disadvantaged urban populations.

The Chattanooga Area Food Bank is partnering with the local community organizations to implement this project. The Chattanooga Area Food Bank will support these organizations in implementing a food delivery model to increase child food security across the rural and persistently impoverished county. Traditionally, their food distributions occur twice weekly, where families travel to receive food assistance. However, transportation is a key barrier for many families in Grundy County, especially those living in the county's northern and western areas. Food distribution sites are up to 40 miles from some residents' homes, making it extremely time-consuming to visit.

To target feeding children, it is essential that the Chattanooga Area Food Bank eliminate as many barriers to food assistance as possible. To do this, they propose establishing a home delivery food assistance model. The Chattanooga Area Food Bank has experience and success implementing this model in two other counties in their service region. They believe Grundy County would greatly benefit from this program. The Chattanooga Area Food Bank will partner with the local community organizations to deliver 30 pounds of food to approximately 75 families with children each month through the home delivery model. The home delivery program will prioritize families with children under five years old but will be open to all households with children under the age of eighteen. They will allow families to request food assistance through delivery twice per month, ensuring they serve a minimum of 150 unique families each month throughout the year. At the point of delivery, they will screen families for SNAP and provide application assistance to all eligible households. They will also provide food preparation and nutrition education materials relevant to the food being delivered

Feeding Southwest Virginia (feedingswva.org)

Feeding Southwest Virginia (FSWVA), a food bank, has been fighting hunger since 1981 and is the region's largest supplier of charitable food relief. Its mission is to nourish neighbors, engage community partners, and develop solutions to address food insecurity. FSWVA is a locally owned and operated member of Feeding America and the Federation of Virginia Food Banks. The food bank serves 26 counties and nine cities in Southwest Virginia through two distribution centers in Salem and Abingdon, Virginia, and the Community Solutions Center in Roanoke.

The funding would enable FSWVA to serve children through monthly distributions of meal boxes through the 2022-2023 fiscal year. FSWVA will assume the full cost to serve food boxes to the children in these communities in the most effective way possible. \$50,000 in funding would allow us to distribute 2,610 boxes, or 13,050 total meals, to 435 unduplicated children who will face hunger over the next fiscal year, including during the 2022-2023 school year. The boxes will contain five nutritious meals each, as well as ten milks. FSWVA's primary goal with this project is to get as much food as possible into the hands of children and families who need it. The food boxes will be distributed to partner feeding sites in the counties of Lee, Dickenson, Grayson, and Wise. These communities, which see close to or over twice as much food insecurity as the state average rate for child food insecurity, are in great need of food assistance.

Foodlink (foodlinkny.org)

Founded in 1978, Foodlink is a regional food bank and nonprofit dedicated to ending hunger and building healthier communities by addressing both the symptoms and root causes of food insecurity.

They are the regional food bank for the Finger Lakes region of New York State and serve a ten-county service area comprising urban and rural communities.

Foodlink has offered a pop-up or mobile-style pantry for more than a decade, providing flexible programming to meet the needs of the above communities. They know there is a significant gap in service in rural, hard-to-reach areas. In response to these gaps, they have worked to develop their current Pop-Up Pantry network with partners strategically located in and around communities lacking a large capacity retail grocer. They also know that there are clients who attend multiple PUPs per month, often driving great distances to access additional food. Foodlink intends to analyze their rural service area and conduct a ten-county gap analysis and needs assessment to assess food access in their rural service area.

Harvest for the Hungry (harvestforthehungrytexas.org)

Harvest for the Hungry is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization fighting for those who struggle with food insecurity. H4H is located in Freeport, Texas, on 61 acres, where they grow farm-to-table fruits, vegetables, honey, eggs, fish, and other healthy foods so they can provide them year-round to those in need. H4H's mission is to provide healthy farm-to-table food to those in need. Harvest for the Hungry's vision is for those in need to have an experiential and educational visit to the farm. Those in need will have the opportunity to harvest fruits, vegetables, eggs, fish, and other healthy farm-to-table foods themselves, learn about the food sources and their nutritional value, and how to prepare the healthy farm-to-table food they harvest. Their goal is for an experiential visit to educate, enable, and equip those who come to the farm.

The project focuses on students and their families struggling with food insecurity in rural Brazoria County in biweekly 2-hour knowledge and hands-on gardening and nutritional education with students of elementary and middle/high schools (K-12th grade) at H4H's state-of-the-art education center located in Freeport, Texas. From August 2022 to 2024, H4H will provide biweekly 2-hour agriculture and nutrition education and experiential sessions in alignment with state, regional, and local food access efforts in collaboration with H4H partners. H4H partners include Texas A&M Agrilife Extension (i.e., Food and Nutrition Curriculum), Brazoria County Master Gardeners, Future Farmers of America, Brazoria County Dream Center Food pantry, Brazosport Cares Food Pantry, the Food Basket Food Pantry, the Boy Scouts of America, and other non-profit organization and businesses located in Brazoria County, Texas. The overarching goal of this project is to connect key stakeholders and set a strategic vision and direction between farmers, teachers, food pantries, local businesses, other non-profit organizations, low-income students (K-12th graders), and their families residing in rural Brazoria County, Texas.

Literacy Coalition of South Central Arkansas (literacycoalitionsca.org)

Previously known as Ouachita Calhoun County Literacy Council (OCCLC), Literacy Coalition- South Central Arkansas (LCSCA) was originally established in 1991 to teach adults how to read and teach English as a Second language. LCSCA's programs and projects are guided by the needs of adults and families in the literacy community. LCSCAs' mission is to assist adults and families in becoming self-sufficient, employable, and able to move on to higher levels of education.

The project is designed to engage forty unemployed and under-employed single parents in six-week learning circles with their Head Start and Kindergarten age children who may be at risk of falling behind

in levels going into the first grade. The project seeks to teach young children independent learning with strong academic and social skills while encouraging the parents to explore career choices, pursue higher education, and participate in community activities. The program aims to break cycles of generational poverty. At the end of the six-week, four 1/2 hour weekly sessions, parents will be offered an opportunity to enroll in one of five 6-8 weeks of employment-training class options to be immediately equipped with job skills.

Because children of low-income and no-income families are naturally at risk of hunger, LCSCA seeks to include 'End Rural Childhood Hunger' into the weekly parent and child time (PACT) curriculums of its six-week project. It will dedicate one and one 1/2 hours of the four and 1/2 hours weekly curriculum to teach about healthy foods, food purchasing, and food preparations. By including this curriculum, LCSCA will aim to educate parents and children on the importance of including cooked meals in household diets. Parents and children will share in fun food activities to learn about the importance of eating well-balanced, cooked foods for better health and saving money. In addition, and among other rewards of the curriculum, the families will be served a prepared meal to enjoy together each week. Families will be given the recipes of the meals so they can start a collection of easy-to-prepare menus at the end of the six-week program. For participating in a scheduled field trip to a local food bank and volunteering in a planned community project, families will be gifted free groceries. There will be eight 6-week session offerings (five families/each 6-week session) between September 2022 and September 2023 to accommodate forty adults and up to eighty children in the program's first year. A six-week E3RPlus program will be rotated in each county served.